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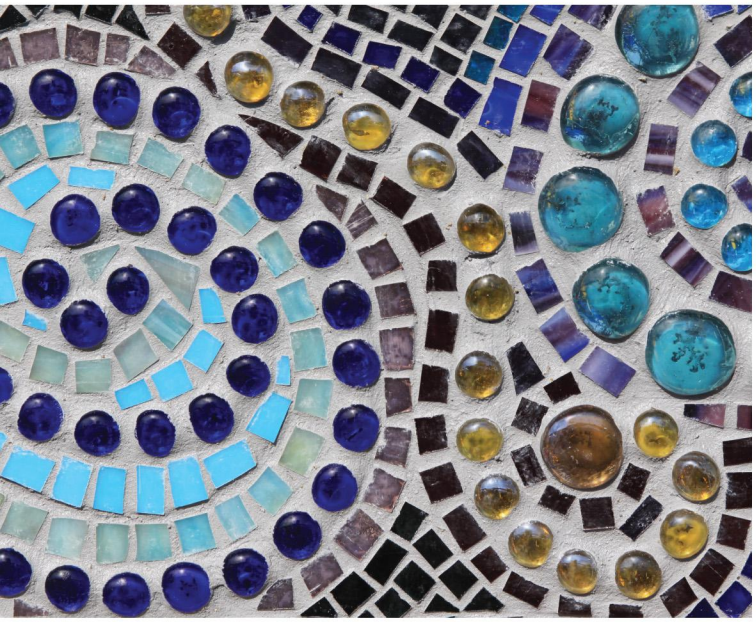
Culture and Psychology

7th Edition



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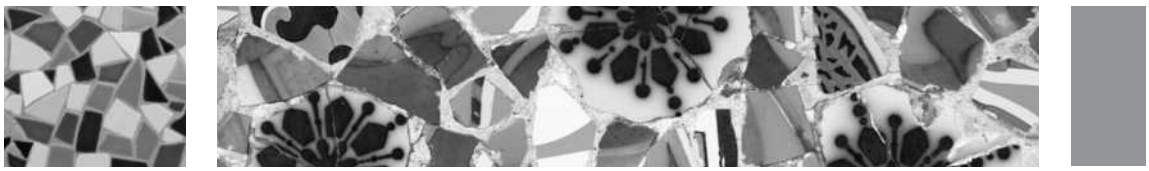

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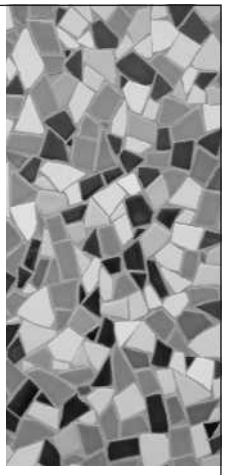

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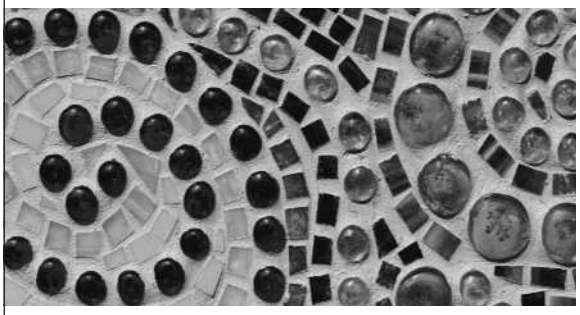

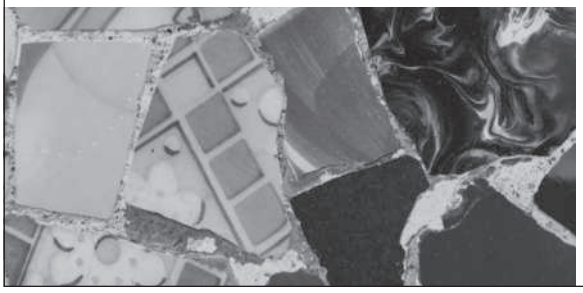

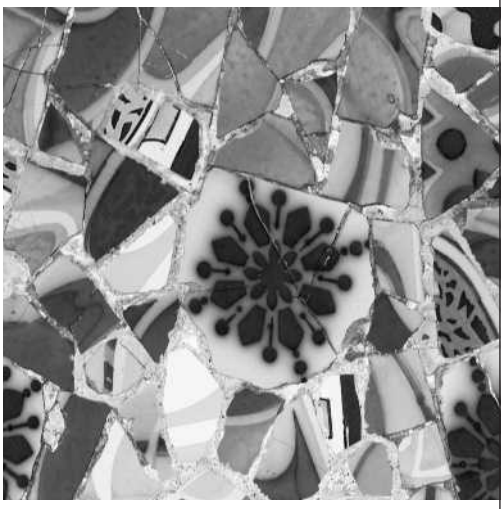

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***Culture and Psychology,* Seventh Edition**
David Matsumoto, Linda Juang

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To the memories of my mom and dad, for their wonderful teachings and the great family they gave to me.

—David Matsumoto

To Tayo and Keanu, for being my everyday reminders of our increasingly multicultural world.

—Linda Juang

About the Authors

David Matsumoto received his B.A. from the University of Michigan in 1981 with high honors in psychology and Japanese and subsequently his M.A. (1983) and Ph.D. (1986) in psychology from the University of California at Berkeley. He is currently professor of psychology and director of the Culture and Emotion Research Laboratory at San Francisco State University, where he has been since 1989. He is also director of Humintell, LLC, a company that provides research, consultation, and training on nonverbal behavioral analysis and cross-cultural adaptation. He has studied culture, emotion, social interaction, and communication for more than 35 years. His books include well-known titles such as *Culture and Psychology*, the *APA Handbook of Nonverbal Communication* (ed.), *Nonverbal Communication: Science and Applications* (ed.), the *Cambridge Dictionary of Psychology* (ed.), and *Cross-Cultural Research Methods in Psychology* (ed.). He is the recipient of numerous awards and honors in the field of psychology and is the series editor for the Cambridge University Press series on *Culture and Psychology*. He is also former editor-in-chief for the *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*.

Linda Juang is a professor of diversity and education at the University of Potsdam, Germany. She earned her B.A. in child development from the University of Minnesota, her M.A. and Ph.D. in developmental psychology from Michigan State University, and was a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Jena. Over the past two decades, she has studied adolescent development in various family, school, and cultural contexts. She has published and presented studies on immigration-related issues such as ethnic-racial identity, acculturation, and adjustment of culturally diverse adolescents and youth in the United States, Germany, and China. She is an associate editor for the journal *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*.

Brief Contents

Contents

Preface

First and foremost, we thank all previous, current, and prospective users of our book. We sincerely appreciate all the instructors for the hard work and efforts they make in the classroom every day in service of the education of future generations of leaders of our world and for the greater good that comes from those efforts. We thank all the students who have read this book; hopefully they were able to extract some things that can enrich their lives in some way. We appreciate all the kind notes, comments, questions, and messages that many of you have sent to us throughout the years. We appreciate all of you who come to introduce yourselves at meetings and conferences; meeting you in person is a special joy, and we thank you from the bottom of our hearts for the reception you always give us.

Content Improvements

We have taken all of your comments, suggestions, and critiques of the previous edition of our book to improve it substantially. With regard to content, we have thoroughly revised the book to focus on a few main messages and learning objectives that begin in Chapter 1. In that chapter, we now provide an overall framework concerning the association between culture and psychology and with which readers will be able to engage with the material in all subsequent chapters. Thus, the writing throughout all the chapters is tighter and more woven together with this foundational framework laid in the beginning of the book.

Because the entire text is now more focused and organized around a central framework, we have taken multiple steps to tighten the writing throughout and further improve the text. We have reduced many redundancies in writing and have eliminated citations and text content that were not relevant to the main message in each chapter and section that had just added more "facts" without substance. We have also eliminated additional text in each chapter that bolstered points already made, further reducing redundancies.

In balance, we have updated each chapter with new research citations and content that are directly relevant to the main messages of the chapter and centered on each chapter's learning objectives. Because of a renewed focus on main messages and learning objectives, we have also restructured several chapters to improve the flow of material and to bring their organization to be more consistent with current conceptual frameworks in the field. We also have brought all language consistent with the inclusion and diversity principles of the American Psychological Association, hopefully further bringing our text to be more inclusive of more people than in the past.

Pedagogical Improvements

In addition to the pedagogical devices utilized in the previous edition of the book, we have enhanced the pedagogy in a number of ways:

- Throughout all chapters, readers will find increased cross-callouts to other chapters in the book, and especially Chapter 1, to increase cohesion and integration of the main message and organizational framework laid out in Chapter 1 throughout and to tie topics together across chapters.

- Each chapter now includes a list of overall learning objectives for that chapter at the beginning of each chapter.
- Comprehension checks are now included at the end of each major section in each chapter.
- More bullet points are used in lists to make points throughout (like the one you're reading now!).
- As in the past, we have ensured ample inclusion of visual aids throughout the book, including margin definitions, key terms in a glossary, and numerous tables and figures.

Listing of Improvements for Each Chapter

In addition to these major changes described above, we list below the specific changes we have made in each chapter:

Chapter 1—An Introduction to Culture and Psychology

- Writing issues
  - Reorganized the material
  - Reduced many redundancies to tighten the writing throughout
  - Reduced chapter length
- Content issues
  - Expanded discussion of three dimensions differentiating human from nonhuman cultures (complexity, differentiation, and institutionalization)
  - Reduced discussion of groups with culture
  - Reduced discussion of culture-level values and focused on Hofstede because it remains the most widely used characterization of culture-level values
  - Updated Hofstede's value dimensions to include his sixth dimension
  - Updated section on "Beliefs" with new research on beliefs in a zero-sum game and religiosity
  - Expanded discussion of tightness–looseness distinction with new studies
  - Revised model of association between culture and mental processes and behavior
    - Including discussion of the press of culture and the push of noncultural (biological) factors on behavior;
    - Expanded discussion of the cyclical nature of culture and behavior;
    - Included new section on changing cultures

Chapter 2—Cross-Cultural Research Methods

- Reorganized material so that the initial focus is on cross-cultural comparative studies because these are the prevalent type of study in cross-cultural research and psychology and serve as the backbone to the research cited in this book

- Condensed material on types of cross-cultural comparisons. The difference between inclusion of contextual factors and exploratory vs. hypothesis testing studies was blurred because inclusion of context factors is the difference between exploratory vs. hypothesis testing studies
- Within the section on "Bias and Equivalence," reorganized the material to highlight measurement bias, linguistic bias, and response bias first because these are arguably the most important types of biases to focus on and those that have received the most research attention
- Streamlined the discussion on other types of cross-cultural research because they are secondary to cross-cultural comparisons

Chapter 3—Enculturation

- Included recent reviews on parenting styles and child outcomes, co-sleeping, and cyberbullying around the world

Chapter 4—Culture and Developmental Processes

- Included description of recent international research consortium for the study of temperament
- Added a section to describe how moral development starts early among children in different cultures

Chapter 5—Culture, Self, and Identity

- Reorganized the material, focusing first on the theory of independent vs. interdependent self-construal
- Included new figures highlighting findings from important studies
- Reorganized and tightened the writing on contemporary views of self across cultures
- Included a new section on the nature and function of self-esteem with recent cross-cultural research
- Included a new section on identity continuity

Chapter 6—Culture and Personality

- Eliminated superfluous material in measurement of personality across cultures section (much of it was discussed in Chapter 2)
- Clarified writing of theories of the origins of traits, contrasting these theories, especially the five-factor theory, more clearly to the five-factor model
- Separated discussion of cultural differences in mean, aggregate levels of traits into its own section, and highlighted two hypotheses about the source of these differences
- Included a new figure representing the framework integrating universal and culture-specific aspects of personality based on a distinction of two different domains of personality

Chapter 7—Culture and Gender

- Updated terminologies and acknowledged gender as more than the binary of being male and female
- Included Hyde's gender similarity hypothesis based on meta-analysis of gender and cognitive and psychological variations
- Included a meta-analysis of gender and math performance across countries
- Updated the section on gender and housework across cultures and added a new figure
- Updated the section on gender stereotypes to illustrate that stereotypes can change over time
- Updated the section on ethnicity and gender roles with more recent literature

Chapter 8—Culture and Cognition

- Totally reorganized the material. Assembling sections on attention, categorization, reasoning, attribution (which was moved from Chapter 14) and memory under the analytic vs. holistic cognition framework, which is the dominant framework in culture and cognition research today
- Within the section on memory, included new categorization of recent cross-cultural research on memory, focusing on the work of Wang and colleagues
- At the end of the analytic vs. holistic cognition section, included discussion of the social orientation hypothesis and studies that challenge for balance and to foster critical thinking
- Eliminated previous sections on problem-solving, regrets and counterfactual thinking, dreams, and pain because they were not as relevant to the main takeaways of this domain of cross-cultural research today
- Considerably shortened discussion of intelligence and refocused that discussion on contributions of cross-cultural psychology to understanding and assessment of intelligence

Chapter 9—Culture and Emotion

- Included new message and citations that integrate previous controversies and debates about universal and culture-specific aspects of emotion
- Reorganized the chapter to correspond more closely to the new, integrated message and to streamline the chapter organization

Chapter 10—Culture and Communication

- Included more examples from more diverse cultures and languages
- Streamlined the writing and takeaway message concerning the Sapir–Whorf hypothesis
- Streamlined the discussion of intracultural (interpersonal) communication
- Revised the section on presumed bilingual advantages in cognition
- Merged concepts formerly considered separate related to "foreign language processing difficulties" and "foreign language effect"

Chapter 11—Culture and Physical Health

- Restricted the chapter to provide better, more organized coverage of the material
- Separated ecological-level influences from individual-level ones
- Reduced superfluous writing and coverage
- Included a brief section on Culture and COVID-19

Chapter 12—Culture and Mental Health

- Reorganized introductory material to streamline presentation of issues concerning definitions of normality across cultures and their implications to classification and assessment of psychopathology
- Reduced redundant material concerning assessment previously covered in Chapter 2 on measurement and assessment across cultures
- Added a new section on anxiety disorders
- Updated cultural syndromes of distress and added discussion distinguishing between such syndromes and culture-specific labeling of misfortunes in life

Chapter 13—Culture and Psychological Interventions

- Retitled the chapter title and section heads to more contemporary language related to psychological interventions
- Restructured the chapter to incorporate evolution in research areas in the last decade
- Previous section on "Treatment Issues" now relabeled as "Cultural Challenges to Psychological Interventions," and four new subsections now identified
- Included new section on "Face Concerns"
- "Culturally Competent Services" now labeled "Culturally Informed Services," and three new subsections now identified
- Removed the section on "Cultural and Clinical Training" as its main message is covered in "Improving Cultural Competence" subsection within "Culturally Informed Services" and in the Conclusion

Chapter 14—Culture and Social Behavior

- Dropped the material on person perception, face recognition, and attractiveness as cross-cultural research in these areas really has not provided a coherent, take-away message
- Moved the section on attributions to Chapter 7 on cognition
- Consolidated material on conformity, compliance, obedience, and cooperation under the rubric of "social influence"
- Expanded material on discrimination with new research
- Consolidated previous tables 14.2 and 14.3 into one table
- Inserted six new figures from recent research
- Deleted cumbersome tables on list of stereotype words used in classic research as they were unnecessary, additional "facts"

Chapter 15—Culture and Organizations

- Consolidated writing on Hofstede's dimensions, organizational culture and climate, person–organization fit, and attitudes about work into a single "Culture and Organizational Culture" section
- Tightened the writing on Hofstede's dimensions, referring to Chapter 1 and focusing on their associations with organizational culture
- Consolidated writing on two sections—Motivation and Productivity and Leadership—into a single section
- Moved the section on creativity originally in Chapter 8 to this chapter.
- Included a new section on cross-cultural competence (aka cultural intelligence) in the section entitled "Working in Different Cultures"

Instructor Resources

Instructor resources for *Culture and Psychology,* 7th edition, are available online. Instructor assets include an Instructor's Manual, PowerPoint slides, and a test bank powered by Cognero. Sign up or sign in at **www.cengage.com** to search for and access this product and its online resources.

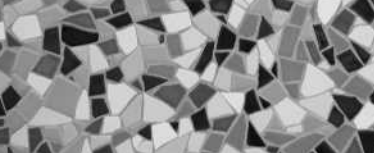
Acknowledgments

The result of all the changes mentioned in the Preface is an improved conceptual and empirical coverage of the major theories and research in cross-cultural psychology in all domains of study that overlap with the major domains of psychology typically covered in broad survey courses. None of these improvements would have been possible without the help and support of so many instructors who have adopted our book, students who have read the book, and reviewers who provided constructive points to us in the past. Again, thank you to all.

Finally, we would like to thank the entire Cengage team for bringing this 7th edition to fruition—Colin Grover, Cazzie Reyes, Sheila Moran, Kim Beuttler, and Jessica Witczak—and Priyanka Mandal of Lumina Datamatics. All have been professional, competent, and courteous throughout the years and have kept us on track in the revision of this edition. Without you, none of this would have been possible. We also would like to give very special thanks to Matthew Wilson for their amazing contributions to this effort and many others.

Finally, although we are indebted to so many people who have helped us along the way in the writing of this book, any errors in the book are only ours.

David Matsumoto and Linda Juang
San Francisco, CA, and Potsdam, Germany
January 2022




An Introduction to Culture and Psychology

Chapter 1

Chapter Contents

Learning Objectives

1.1 Explain how the study of culture can impact psychological theories and knowledge, and the ultimate goals of the field of psychology.

1.2 Define culture and explain the origins of human cultures.

1.3 Contrast culture with race, personality, and popular culture.

1.4 Explain what differentiates human cultures from nonhuman cultures.

1.5 Describe different elements of human cultures, especially the various components associated with subjective elements, and give examples.

1.6 Describe the association between culture and mental processes and behavior.

Many decades ago, a classic work stated that every person is in certain respects

- like all other people
- like some other people, and
- like no other person (Kluckhohn, Murray, & Schneider, 1953).

Over a century of cross-cultural research in psychology has brought this message home: that there are some universal aspects to all human beings—we are all alike in certain ways. But we are also members of important cultural groups, making us similar to others in our groups. And we are like no one else, each individual unique and different. In this book, we'll learn about how this message is represented in the various domains of psychology.

This message is important in today's ever-diversifying world, which has created a wonderful environment for personal challenge and growth, but also increased potential for misunderstandings, confusion, and conflict, much of which we see every day. Finding ways to keep us all apart and separate is easy; finding ways to find common ground is not. Cross-cultural psychology offers a way to do so by uncovering similarities as well as differences in people's mental processes and behavior.

1-1 Psychology with a Cultural Perspective

The Goals of Psychology

The field of psychology essentially has two main goals. The first is to build a body of knowledge about people. Psychologists seek to understand behavior when it happens, explain why it happens, and predict it before it happens. Psychologists achieve this by conducting research and creating theories based on findings from that research.

The second goal of psychology involves helping improve peoples' lives. Psychologists achieve this in many ways as therapists, counselors, trainers, and consultants. Psychology also achieves this goal by providing information to students and professionals in other fields, such as nursing and health care, business, and teaching, to help them in their professions as well. Psychologists and many others work on the front lines, dealing directly with people to affect their lives positively (Figure 1.1).

These two goals of psychology—creating a body of knowledge and applying that knowledge—are closely related. Psychologists and other professionals take what psychology as a field has collectively learned about human behavior and use that knowledge as a basis for their applications and interventions. This learning initially comes in the form of academic training in universities. But it continues well after formal education has ended through continuing education and individual scholarship—reviewing the literature, attending conferences, and joining and participating in professional organizations. Psychologists and professionals in many other fields engage in lifelong learning processes that help them intervene in people's lives more effectively, all influenced by research and knowledge generated in psychology. Researchers often understand the practical implications of their work, and many are well aware that the value of psychological theory and research is often judged by its practical usefulness in society (e.g., refer to Gergen et al., 1996). Theories are tested for their validity not only in the halls of science but also on the streets, and they should be revised because of what happens on those streets. Real life is ground truth for psychology.

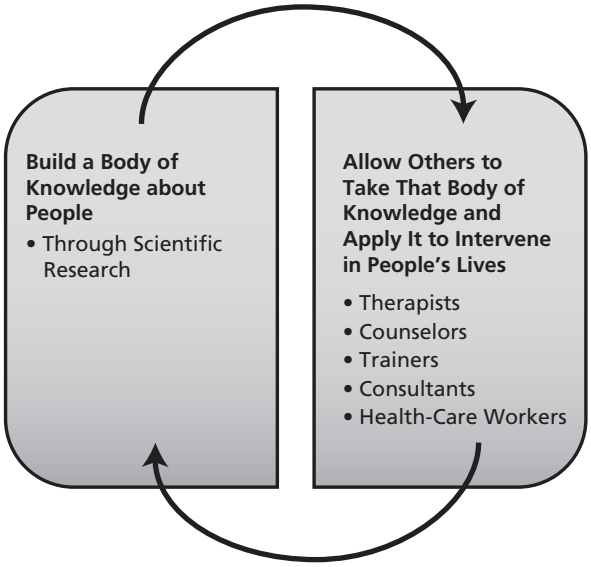


Figure 1.1 The Goals of Psychology as a Field

Psychology across Cultures

Because knowledge generation is an important part of the field of psychology, having a good grasp of how that knowledge is generated is important. As a science, empirical research is the vehicle by which knowledge is generated in psychology. Psychological research involves a methodology—a procedure—for collecting data about people's mental processes and behavior in very specific ways. Effective research methodologies have advantages of allowing fairly unequivocal conclusions to be drawn about data and findings. But one important aspect to realize about research is that research methodologies also constrain or limit the nature of the data collected. Another way of saying this is that *data and findings are always limited by the parameters of the methods used to generate the data.*

For example, if a study involves data collection about behavior on a computer in a laboratory at a university, an open question is whether or not that behavior would occur outside the laboratory where the person is free to act. If a study involved people reporting how they would behave, then an open question would be if people actually do what they say they would do in reality. If a study only included participants of a single gender, are the findings applicable to other genders? If a study only included 20-year-old university students taking introductory psychology classes (which is true of most studies), are the findings applicable to nonstudents, or people of other ages? If a study included only samples from the United States, or mainly with students from affluent backgrounds in North America or Western Europe (which is true of most studies in psychology; Henrich et al., 2010; Rad, Martingano, & Ginges, 2018), are the findings applicable to people from other parts of the globe?

Cross-cultural research and psychology asks the last question above: Is what we know about human behavior true across cultures (Figure 1.2)? **Cross-cultural research** does so by including people of differing cultural backgrounds in psychological studies. Thus, cross-cultural research involves a specific methodological feature, which allows for comparisons of findings across people from different cultures. **Cross-cultural psychology** is a domain of psychology that takes findings from

cross-cultural research A research methodology that tests the cultural parameters of psychological knowledge. Traditionally, it involves research on human behavior that compares psychological processes between two or more cultures. In this book, we also incorporate knowledge contrasting human cultures versus nonhuman animal cultures. This approach is primarily concerned with testing the possible limitations of knowledge gleaned from one culture by studying people of different cultures.

cross-cultural psychology A subdiscipline within psychology that examines the cultural foundations of psychological processes and human behavior. It includes theoretical and methodological frameworks that posit an important role for culture and its influence on mental processes behavior, and vice versa.

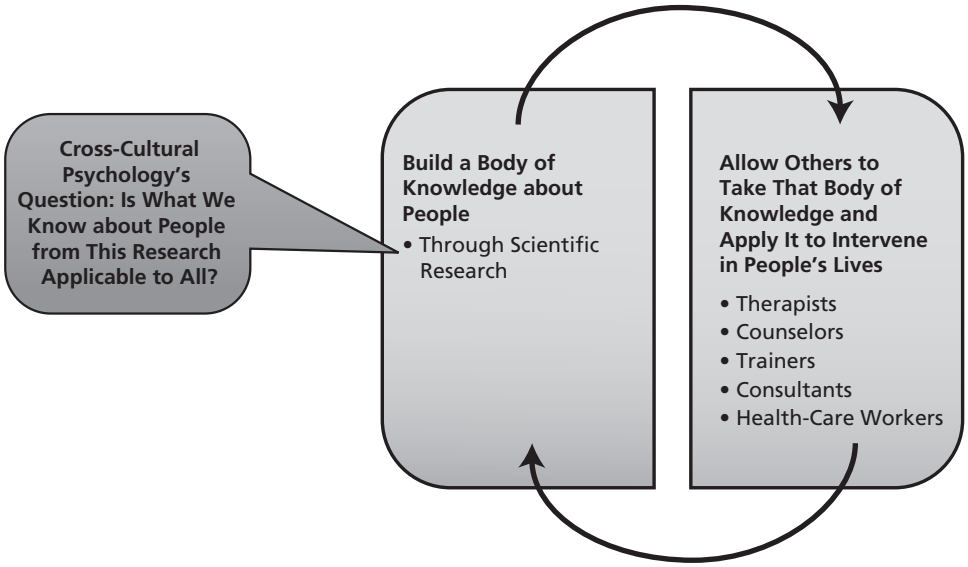


Figure 1.2 The Goals of Psychology as a Discipline

cross-cultural research and examines cultural parameters of psychological knowledge and how knowledge about people and their behavior from one culture may or may not hold for people from other cultures, and creates or revises psychological theories accordingly.

Cross-cultural research and psychology can be understood as a matter of *scientific philosophy*—the logic underlying the methods used to conduct research and generate knowledge. Cross-cultural research is relatively easy to understand conceptually because it involves a change in the nature of participant characteristics (incorporation of people of different cultural backgrounds). But this simple change allows us to ask profound questions about the psychological nature of people, especially about whether information we have learned from monocultural studies is applicable to all people of all cultures.

Because cross-cultural research is a method, it is not topic specific. Cross-cultural psychologists are interested in a broad range of phenomena related to human behavior—from perception to language, child-rearing to psychopathology. What distinguishes cross-cultural psychology from others is not the topic of study but the interest in understanding the association between culture and behavior, testing limitations to knowledge using cross-cultural research methods, and understanding knowledge and theory on a global scale.

Impact on Psychological Knowledge

Scientific philosophy suggests that we have obligations to question the scientific process and the nature of knowledge learned about human behavior, especially because the standards of care used when we evaluate the rigor and quality of research are also bound by the cultural frameworks within which our science occurs (Pe-Pua, 1989). Knowledge created in psychology should be descriptive of all people because the field of psychology has an obligation to all whose lives are touched by its knowledge. This obligation is even greater in an ever-diversifying world.

Cross-cultural research and psychology play important roles in helping psychologists produce that knowledge. Cross-cultural research has sometimes confirmed what has been found in monocultural studies, but sometimes not, resulting in revisions of theories about behavior. As a result, there is an evolution in psychology, with culture incorporated as a necessary and important ingredient and the field finding ways to educate and be educated by knowledge informed by culture. We are in the midst of this evolution, making this a very exciting time for psychology.

By testing mental processes and behavior across cultures, cross-cultural psychology examines whether psychological theories and principles are **universal** (true for all people of all cultures) or **culture specific** (true for some people of some cultures). Psychology professionals should know which psychological processes are universal and which are culture specific. The impact of the growth of cross-cultural psychology and research has been enormous, and we introduce you to the main cross-cultural findings and theories in the major domains of psychology in this book.

universal A psychological process that is found to be true or applicable for all people of all cultures.

culture specific A psychological process that is considered to be true for some people of some cultures but not for others.

Impact on Our Own Lives

Psychological theories are only as good as their applicability to people in their lives (Amir & Sharon, 1988; Gergen et al., 1996), and a contribution of cross-cultural psychology to application is the process it fosters in asking questions. Practicing psychology with a cultural perspective is an exercise in critical thinking, and students of cross-cultural psychology can improve their critical thinking skills, asking questions such as is what we know true for all people regardless of their cultural backgrounds? If not, under what conditions do differences occur, and why? What is it about culture that produces such differences? What factors may contribute to these differences? Being skeptical yet inquisitive defines the process underlying psychology from a cross-cultural perspective. Improving critical thinking skills is even more important than content because it can be applied to all areas of our lives, especially in today's diverse world.

Understanding mental processes and behavior across cultures is also important for individuals in their personal and professional lives. Health-care workers, first responders, therapists and counselors, businesspeople—just about everyone—will live, work, or interact with people from differing cultural backgrounds and in diverse environments. Gaining a cross-cultural perspective on psychological knowledge can help inform those interactions, making them more effective and constructive for mutually beneficial outcomes.

Growth of Cross-Cultural Research and Psychology

Cross-cultural psychology has had a substantial impact on psychological knowledge in the past half-century and more. Much of it is due to increased awareness of the importance of culture as an influential factor on behavior and, unfortunately, increased awareness of the frequency of intercultural conflicts within and between countries (e.g., refer to Christopher et al., 2014). The flagship journal of the International Association for Cross-Cultural Psychology, the *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology,* has now passed its 50th year of publishing top-tier cross-cultural research. Other specialty journals also exist, and the number of research articles incorporating people of different cultures has increased tremendously in all other journals of psychological science. Theoretical models are increasingly incorporating culture, and the number of books involving culture has also increased.

Heightened interest in cross-cultural psychology is a normal and healthy development. Many scientists have come to recognize cultural limitations of knowledge and theories, and the increasing importance and recognition of cross-cultural psychology are reactions to this realization.

✓ Comprehension Check

1. What are the goals of the field of psychology? How does the field address those goals?
2. How does the study of culture impact the goals of the field of psychology?

1-2 What Is Culture?

Origins of Culture

Understanding psychology with a cultural perspective starts with a better appreciation of what culture is and where it comes from. Having a better appreciation of the origins of human cultures helps us appreciate cultures and cultural differences and similarities when we engage with them. Thus, we begin our introduction to culture by discussing its origins, which starts with acknowledging the environment and how it can influence behavior, because environments have a major impact on *how* humans live (Table 1.1).

Environment

Climate. A major component of the environment that influences behavior is climate. Some areas of the world like New York or Seoul have harsh winters and miserably hot summers. Others, like South and Southeast Asia, have hot, humid weather all year long, while other areas like the Middle East or North Africa have hot, dry weather all year long. Some areas have relatively mild climates, like San Francisco or Seattle. These ecological differences influence ways of living. Groups that live near the equator, in hot, humid, tropical areas, will adopt lifestyles that are very different from that of groups living in temperate or arctic zones. Those groups will have different dress

Table 1.1 Factors That Influence the Creation of Cultures

Group Life	Environments	The Evolved Human Mind
■ Division of Labor ■ Efficiency ■ Increase Survival Probability	■ Climate ■ Resources ■ Arable Land ■ Money ■ Population Density ■ Diseases ■ Previous Cultures ■ Contact with Other Cultures	■ Basic Human Needs and Motives ■ Universal Psychological Toolkit

styles, different ways of walking, different architecture, and different rituals and traditions, because of the climate.

An aspect of climate that is important to human cultures is known as **deviation from temperate climate** (Van de Vliert, 2009). Humans need to regulate their body temperatures and have an easier time doing so in temperate climates, which is around 22°C (about 72°F; Figure 1.3). Much colder or hotter climates make life more difficult and demanding, and harsher climates require people to do more to adapt. Harsher climates create greater risks of food shortage and spoilage, stricter diets, and more health problems (e.g., infectious and parasitic diseases tend to be more frequent in hotter climates; more in Chapter 11). Demanding climates require special clothing, housing, and working arrangements; and special organizations for production, transportation, trade, storage, and special care and cure facilities for food. Groups in hotter climates tend to organize their daily activities more around shelter, shade, and temperature changes that occur throughout the day. For example, part of Spanish culture is to shut down businesses in the midafternoon, during the hottest time of the day, and reopen later, pushing back working hours. There it is not uncommon for people to have dinner on the streets at 11:00 P.M. or midnight. People who live nearer the poles organize their lives around available sunlight. In psychological terms, more demanding cold or hot climates arouse a chain of needs shared by all inhabitants of an area (Van de Vliert, 2009).

deviation from temperate climate The degree to which the average temperature of a given region will differ from what is considered to be the relatively "easiest" temperature to live in, which is 22°C (about 72°F).

Resources. Another major component of the environment is resources, including the presence or absence of water or land to farm and grow vegetables or raise animals. Lands void of natural resources may encourage teamwork and community spirit among its members and relationships with other groups that have abundant resources in order to survive. These needs and relationships will foster certain psychological characteristics and attributes that complement teamwork, community spirit, and interdependence. In lands with abundant resources, groups would have less need for such values and attitudes, and these attributes would be less important.

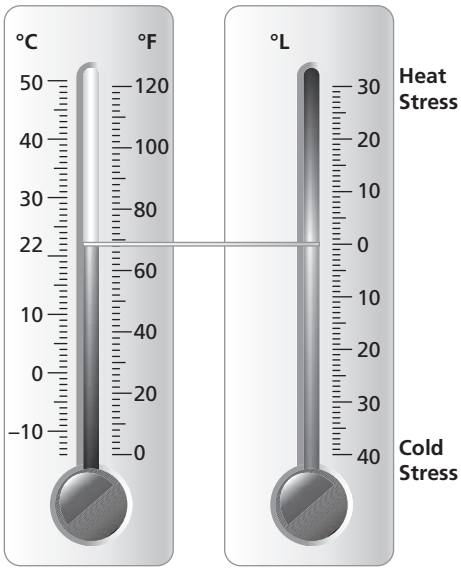


Figure 1.3 Thermometer for Measuring Livability

Source: Van de Vliert, E. (2017). Climatic imprints on personality. *Nature Human Behaviour, 1*(12), 864–865. DOI: 10.1038/s41562-017-0246-7

arable land The type of land that can sustain life by food production of some sort.

A related concept is **arable land**—the amount of land on which food can grow to sustain people in an area. Huge numbers of people in small spaces and scarce food will create different ways of living compared to small numbers of people in huge spaces with abundant food. Moreover, the type of food that can be produced can be linked to interesting psychological and cultural differences. In China, for example, people who live in regions with a history of farming rice are generally more interdependent on others around them, while people who live in regions with a history of farming wheat are generally more independent of others (Talhelm et al., 2014).

Perhaps the major type of resource that influences human cultures today is money. Money is a human cultural product, not a part of nature. Affluence—the amount of money available to a person or group—has major impacts on culture (Van de Vliert, 2009). Abundant money helps buffer the consequences of a lack of resources and harsh climates because people can buy things to make up for the lack of resources and harsh climate. This has interesting psychological consequences; people and groups with more money can afford to be less in sync with others because cooperation is not as essential for survival. People and groups with less money, however, need to cooperate in order to survive. This is perhaps why, even within countries, differences in affluence are associated with cultural differences.

Other Environmental Factors. There are many other environmentally related factors that influence culture, such as **population density**, which is the ratio of the number of people that live in an area relative to the size of that area. Some geographic areas, especially large urban centers, have lots of people living in a very small space, like New York City, Tokyo, Hong Kong, or Mexico City. Other areas have only few people in a very large area, like Alaska or the northern island of Hokkaido in Japan. Crowded places will influence how people live and behave, which will be different than living in an area with very few people.

population density The number of people living within a given unit of space. In a place like a city in which a large number of people live in a relatively small space, the population density is higher than in a rural area where fewer people live in each similar amount of space.

The incidence and prevalence of infectious diseases in different regions of the world also affect culture (Murray & Schaller, 2010), as do groups' previous cultures. This is especially true for immigrants, who come to a land with an already existing culture and must deal with the process of acculturation (covered in Chapter 14). Groups also differ in the amount of contact they have with other cultures through geographical proximity and accessibility. Is the environment bounded by many other regions with many other cultures, as in Europe? Or is the environment bounded by ocean, creating an island mentality of separateness, like Japan or the United Kingdom? One could argue that the United States has some aspects of an island mentality. All these factors influence people's attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors, and hence their culture.

The factors discussed here affect cultures within countries. In the United States, for instance, each part of the country has a local economy that comes from the geography, climate, and resources available. Growing corn on the northern Alaskan slopes is difficult; there is no timber or fishing industry in Death Valley; and there aren't many gold or coal mines in Florida. People still have to survive from what they can find around them (unless huge amounts of money are used to overcome the harsh environment, such as in Las Vegas). Harsh climates and scarce resources tend to push people toward valuing the idea of hospitality and helping one's family and neighbors. In very dissimilar places like the Middle East and northern Greenland, we find similar emphases on hospitality and helping, which is not as much emphasized in many other places, and much of these emphases result from geography and climate. People who

live in places with high population density and low resources need to cooperate in order to survive.

Latitudinal Psychology. Exciting new research has led to the development of a **latitudinal psychology**, which has built on the recognition of the importance of climate and resources, especially affluence, mentioned previously (Van de Vliert, 2009; Van de Vliert & Kong, 2019; Van de Vliert & Van Lange, 2019). This theory suggests that harsh, demanding climates produce environmental stress, which, in turn, affects ways of living. These stresses, however, can be buffered by greater affluence, that is, money. People or groups with more money can purchase things and services (e.g., clothes, heating and air conditioning, refrigerators) to help manage environmental stresses. People and groups with less money cannot, and thus their ways of living are more affected by environmental stress.

latitudinal psychology A perspective that understands group differences in mental processes and behaviors according to a combination of distance from the equator and affluence.

Considering temperate climates (22°C, 72°F) as a midpoint, latitudinal psychology uses the north and south poles of the globe as points of reference to measure environmental stress, and locates human habitats in terms of their geographic position on a bipolar axis from the poles. In doing so, stress is the least when habitats are close to areas with temperate climate, and furthest from that climate, that is, closer to either pole. Using latitudes as reference points and accumulating global psychological data from multiple sources, a number of psychological variables have been associated with latitude in predicted ways, including creativity, aggressiveness, life satisfaction, individualism, trust, and suicidality (Van de Vliert & Van Lange, 2019).

For example, review Figure 1.4, which is a scatterplot graph of the association between latitude of residence and average creativity across many countries of the world. On average, creativity increases in countries away from a midpoint, which is not the equator because it's too hot, but slightly away in a temperate climate zone. Creativity increases on both sides of the graph, indicating that it increases toward both the north and south poles.

As another example, refer to Figure 1.5, which shows the same type of graph related to aggressiveness. On average, aggressiveness is highest near the midpoint and decreases on both sides of the graph as countries are nearer the poles.

Other data supporting a latitudinal perspective in psychology also exist. Across 108 countries, ancient climates conducive to dairy farming and lactose tolerance, combined with resources from industrial development, have been linked to freedom and autonomous individual choice (Van de Vliert et al., 2018). These kinds of data are new and exciting for the field and provide a different way for understanding various contextual influences on culture and behavior.

The Evolved Human Mind

From the beginning of time, all human groups have had the same problem, namely, how to survive, if not thrive, in the place they lived. In order to do so, they need to adapt to their environments. Fortunately, people do not come to the world as blank slates in order to create solutions. They come to the world with a **universal psychological toolkit** that provides them with the tools with which to adapt and survive (Table 1.2). The universal psychological toolkit refers to the needs, motives, and many tools—abilities and aptitudes—with which nature and evolution endowed humans in order to adapt to their environments and survive. These tools, or "cognitive gadgets" (Heyes, 2020), emerged with the evolution of the human brain and are important parts of the human mind.

universal psychological toolkit A set of basic psychological skills and abilities that people can use to meet their needs. These include complex cognitive skills, language, emotions, and personality traits.

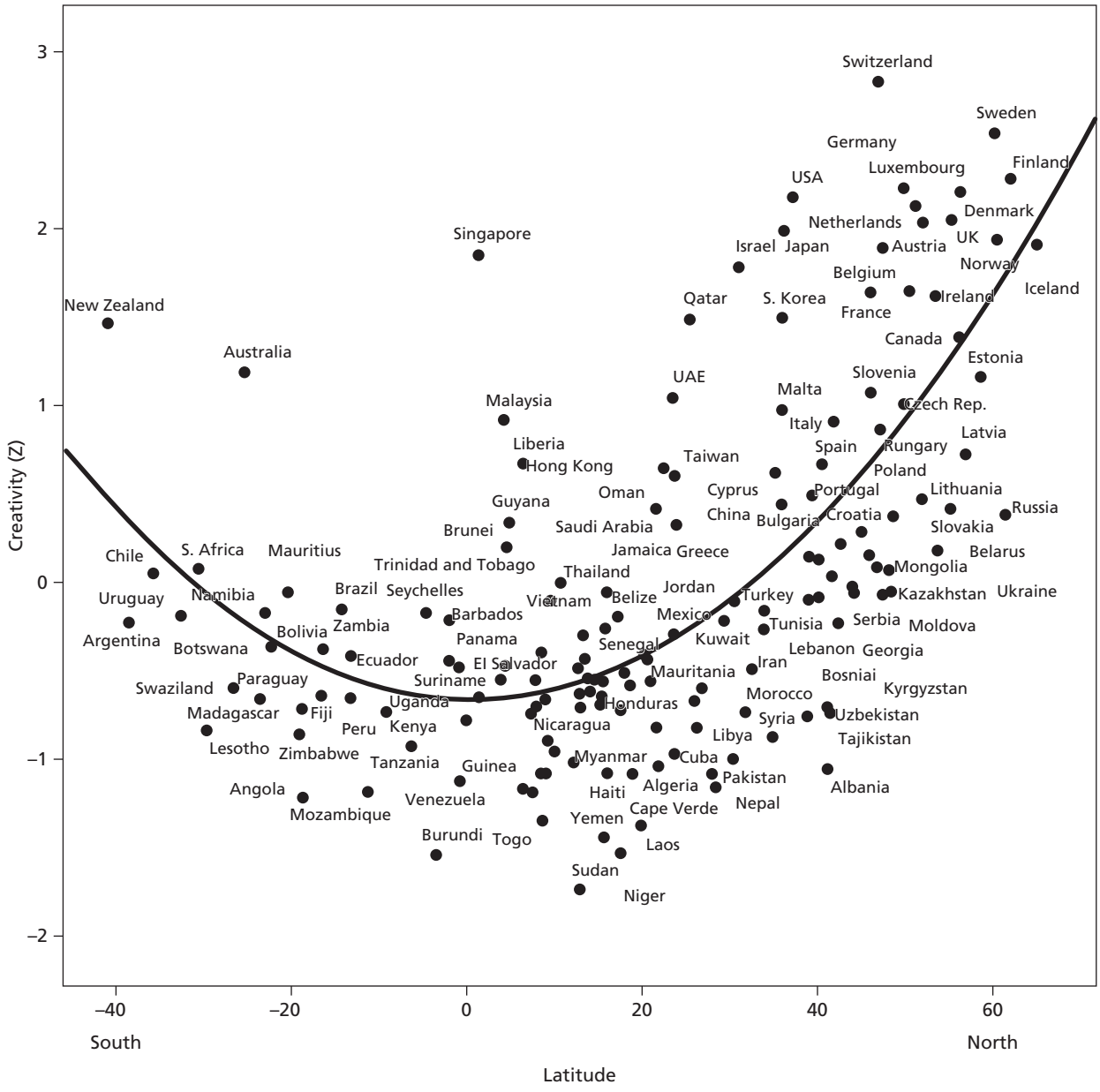


Figure 1.4 Latitudinal Distribution of Creativity. Scatterplot (with Best-Fitting Regression Line) Shows the Relationship between Latitude of Residence and Creativity. Each Dot Represents a Country's Population

Source: Van de Vliert & Van Lange (2019), p. 868.

Needs and Motives. Humans come to the world with basic needs that are ultimately related to reproductive success (Boyer, 2000; Buss, 2001). These include *physical needs*—the need to eat, drink, sleep, deal with waste, and reproduce—as well as *safety and security needs*—the need for hygiene, shelter, and warmth (remember our discussion above about climate). These needs are universal to all people of all cultures, and if these needs are not met, people don't survive.

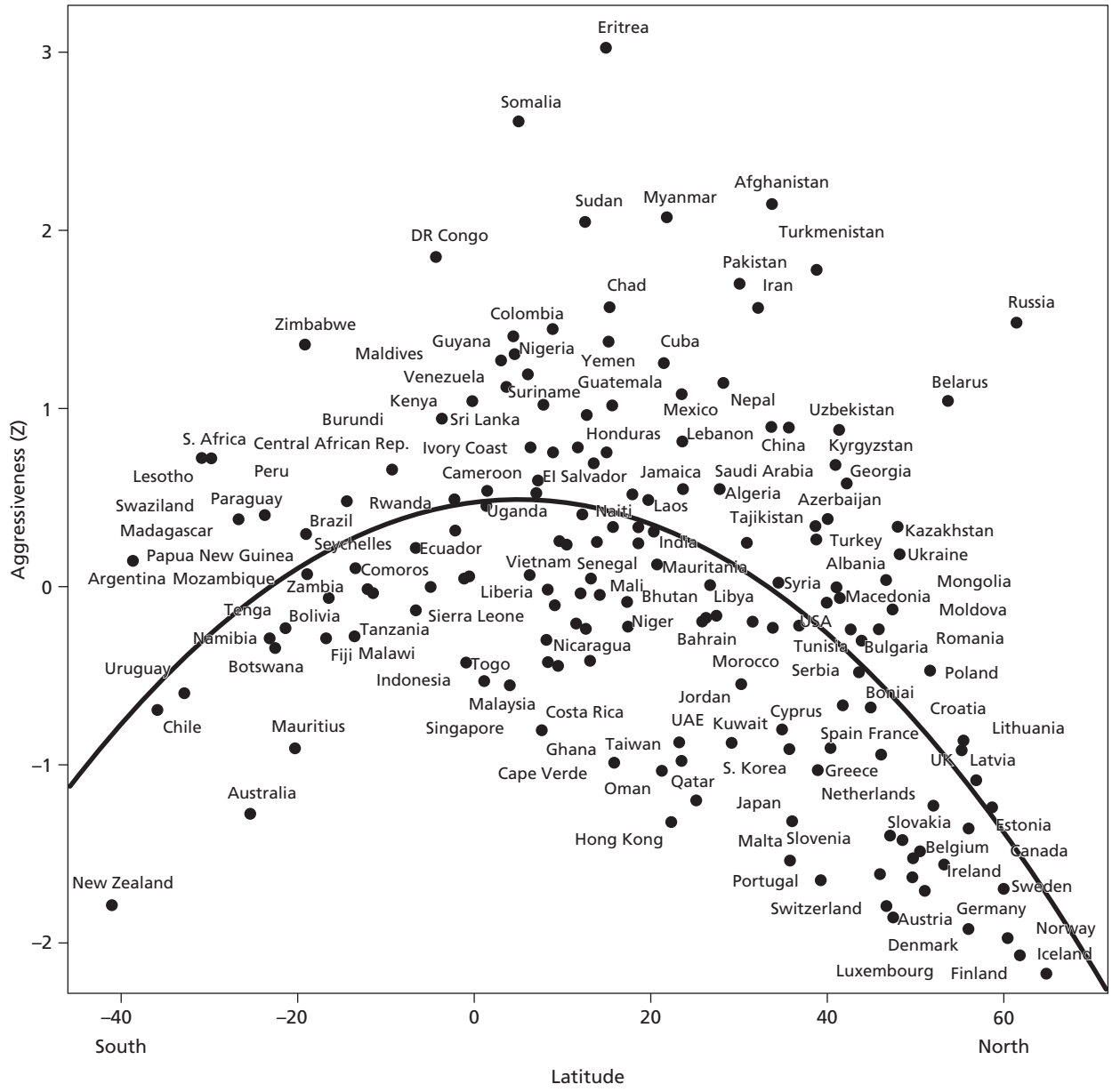


Figure 1.5 Latitudinal Distribution of Aggressiveness. Scatterplot (with Best-Fitting Regression Line) Shows the Relationship between Latitude of Residence and Aggressiveness. Each Dot Represents a Country's Population

Source: Van de Vliert & Van Lange (2019), p. 869

These basic needs are associated with social motives (Hogan, 1982; Sheldon, 2004), which are also ultimately related to reproductive success. Social motives include the *motive to achieve* and the *motive to affiliate with others*. Over history, people must have solved a host of distinct social problems in order to adapt and thus achieve reproductive success. These social problems include negotiating complex status hierarchies, forming successful work and social groups, attracting mates, fighting off potential

Table 1.2 Contents of the Universal Psychological Toolkit

Needs and Motives	Complex Cognitive Abilities	Emotions	Personality Traits
■ Physical Needs ■ Safety and Security Needs ■ Motives to Achieve ■ Motives to Affiliate with Others	■ Shared Intentionality ■ Verbal Language ■ Ratcheting ■ Memory ■ Hypothetical ■ Reasoning ■ Problem Solving ■ Planning	■ Basic Emotions ■ Self-Conscious Emotions ■ Moral Emotions	■ Extraversion ■ Neuroticism ■ Openness ■ Agreeableness ■ Conscientiousness

rivals for food and sexual partners, giving birth and raising children, and battling nature (Buss, 1988, 1991, 2001). People need to do these things in their everyday lives today, as well as throughout human history.

Intentionality. Humans are endowed with several amazing cognitive tools that allow for complex cognition. These tools emerged in conjunction with the coevolution of the human brain and culture (Heyes, 2020). One of the most important thinking abilities in the toolkit concerns intentionality—the wishes, desires, and motives to think and act. Humans are not unique in knowing that the self and others have intentions; other animals also have such cognitive abilities. What sets humans apart from other animals is *knowing that others know that one has* intentions, which can be summarized like this: "I know I have intentions, and that you have intentions; and I also know that you know that I have intentions." That's why being in public takes on special meaning for humans, because we know that others can make judgments about us, but the anonymity of darkened theaters or anonymous online chat rooms allows us to do and say things we normally wouldn't in person. That's also why we don't just take off our clothes in the middle of the street or just punch those with whom we disagree. Other animals, however, seem to not care as much.

Because of this complex cognitive ability, we have causal beliefs (which form the basis for *attributions,* which we will cover in Chapter 14). *Morality*, a uniquely human product, is rooted in this unique human cognitive ability (more in Chapter 4). This ability apparently turns on in humans around nine months of age (Tomasello, 1999), which is a critical time of development of many cognitive abilities (more in Chapter 4).

Verbal Language. Verbal language is another incredibly important tool in our toolkit. Humans, unlike other animals, have the unique ability to symbolize their physical and metaphysical world (Premack, 2004), to create sounds representing those symbols (morphemes), to create rules connecting those symbols to meaning (syntax and grammar), and to put all these abilities together in sentences. Moreover, since the use of papyrus to develop paper, humans developed writing systems so we can reduce those oral expressions to words on paper. This book, and everything you have ever read, are uniquely human products.

shared intentionality Knowledge about motivations concerning behaviors that are common among people in a group.

Language is an ability that sets humans apart from all others. The major function of human language abilities is to communicate a **shared intentionality** (Matsumoto & Hwang, 2016; Tomasello & Herrmann, 2010), that is, for humans to communicate

with others about what they are going to do and not do. Shared intentionality is at the heart of social coordination, which allows for the creation of unique aspects of human culture (Fiske, 2000). Increased social coordination because of shared intentionality allows humans to be extremely efficient in meeting and adapting to the demands of the environment in order to not only survive but also thrive.

Ratcheting. Humans also have the ability to build on improvements continually. When humans create something that is useful, it usually evolves to a next generation, in which it is even better. This is true for cell phones, computers, cars, music players, raising crops, breeding animals, and, unfortunately, developing weapons. Tomasello, Kruger, and Ratner (1993) called this the **ratchet effect**. Like a ratchet, an improvement never goes backward; it only goes forward and continues to improve on itself. The ratchet effect does not occur in other animals; monkeys may use twigs to catch insects, but they don't improve on that tool.

ratchet effect The concept that humans continually improve on improvements, that they do not go backward or revert to a previous state. Progress occurs because improvements move themselves upward, much like a ratchet.

Memory. Our cognitive toolkits also include the ability to have memories, and because we have memory, we can create histories, and because we can create histories, we have traditions, customs, and heritage (Balter, 2010; Liu et al., 2005; Liu et al., 2009; Paez et al., 2008; Wang, 2006; Wang & Ross, 2007). Our cognitive skills also include the ability to think hypothetically and about the future, to problem solve, and to plan. This allows us to plan things and worry about the uncertainty of the future, both of which form the basis of important human cultural practices.

Emotions. Humans are also endowed with the ability to have emotions. Emotions are rapid information processing systems that aid humans in reacting to events that require immediate action and that have important consequences to one's welfare with minimal cognitive processing (more in Chapter 8). They are part of an archaic, biologically innate system that we share with some other animals. Humans have many different types of emotions, such as basic emotions; self-conscious emotions like pride, shame, guilt, or embarrassment; or moral emotions such as outrage or indignation. As part of our evolutionary heritage, emotions have allowed humans to react immediately to events in the environment that have aided in our survival.

Facial expressions of emotion are an important component of the emotion system, and as we will learn in Chapter 8, some emotions are universally expressed and recognized across all cultures. Facial expressions of emotion also allow humans to share intentions, just like verbal language. Unlike verbal language, however, humans share the ability to produce facial expressions of emotion with some other animals.

Personality Traits. Humans also come to the world equipped with personality traits. These are partially biologically innate predispositions humans bring with them to the world that help them adapt to their environments, solve social problems, and address their basic needs. We'll discuss these more in Chapter 6, where we will cover universal personality traits of extroversion, neuroticism, openness, conscientiousness, and agreeableness.

Collectively, the universal psychological toolkit allows humans to adapt to their environments in order to meet their needs. That's why people born anywhere in the world can learn their specific cultural ways and language, because they all have basic toolkits that allow them to do so. People are pre-equipped with an evolved, naturally selected set of abilities and aptitudes that allows them to adapt, survive, and create human cultures.

Group Life

Despite the amazing capabilities humans come into the world with, people learned many hundreds of thousands of years ago that living in groups was better than living alone (just as many other animal species have). Being alone, a person has relatively more trouble surviving the attacks of animals, feeding themselves, taking care of children, and meeting all the other tasks of living than doing so with others. And humans generally want the companionship of others.

Living in groups increase the chances for survival because group life increases efficiency through division of labor. Division of labor allows groups to accomplish more than any one person can, which is functional and adaptive for all group members. Division of labor allows for accomplishing more tasks so that survival rates increase. Shared intentionality and all the tools in the universal psychological toolkit discussed earlier, especially language, allow us to achieve greater social coordination within our groups. Thus, humans can decide who will do what, when, where, how, and why so that any one person doesn't have to do it all.

But group life also has a potential downside, as possibilities for social conflicts and chaos increase because people are different. Because of those differences, groups can become inefficient, reducing probability for survival. Individuals can also have different goals and agendas, and even work to subvert group goals. If groups are uncoordinated and individuals just do their own thing without considering others, conflict and disorganization occur. Thus, living in groups also bring the potential for social chaos.

Group life therefore poses a problem for humans as they struggle to adapt to their environments in order to survive—how can any group increase social coordination (and thus efficiency) while at the same time decrease social chaos? The answer is culture.

A Definition of Culture

A Functional Understanding of Culture

Putting the previous section together, all human groups have a universal problem of how to adapt to their environments in order to address their needs and motives; thus, they must create solutions to these problems. These solutions can be very specific to each group because the contexts in which each group lives—the physical environment, social factors, and types and sizes of their families and communities—are different. Every human group requires social coordination; if people are coordinated, they are efficient in doing their part for their group to survive, and shared intentionality is at the root of social coordination. If groups are not coordinated, there is social chaos, which would undermine efficiency and ultimately survival. Thus we need to maintain social order and reduce social chaos, so we can accomplish tasks efficiently and survive.

Humans come to the world with universal psychological toolkits to create ways to adapt their behavior to their environment and maximize available resources in order to meet their needs, maintain social order, and reduce social chaos. These adaptations produce behaviors, ways of living, ways of thinking, and ways of being. These ways are adopted by groups to help them survive, if not thrive. These "ways" are culture. "Culture" is a metaphor for these ways, helping explain and describe those ways. Culture provides guidelines on what to do, how to think, and what to feel. Those guidelines are passed from one generation to the next so that future generations don't have to keep reinventing the wheel; cultural products are always ratcheted up, never down (Figure 1.6).

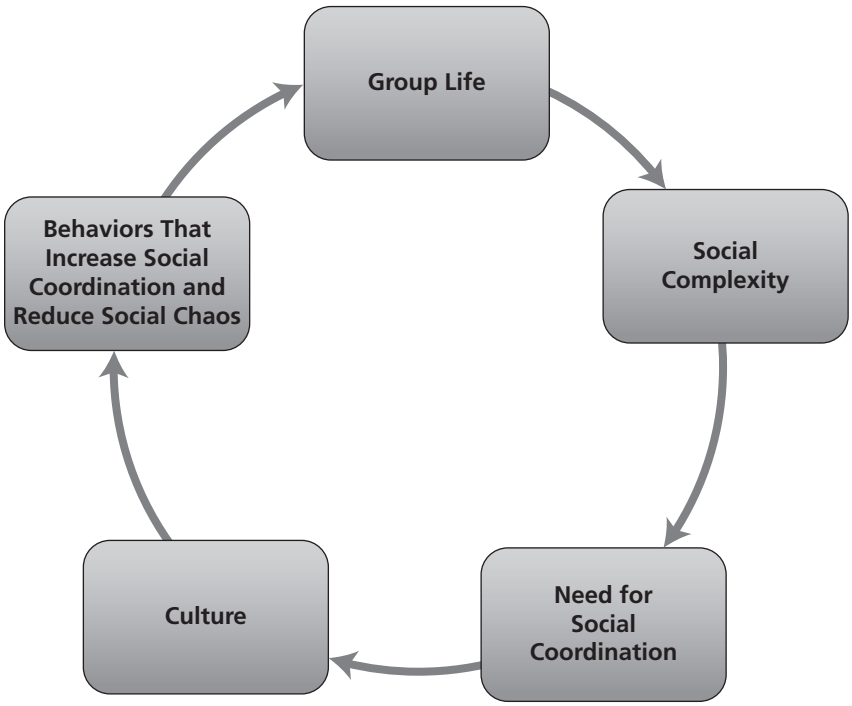


Figure 1.6 A Functional Understanding of Culture

Previous Definitions

Defining culture is very difficult because the word *culture* is used in many different ways in everyday language and discourse and touches on so many aspects of life. Over the years, many scholars have defined culture differently. Culture has been used to describe

- rules, norms, learning, or problem solving; the origins of a group and its heritage or traditions; and the organization of a group (Berry et al., 1992; Kroeber & Kluckholn, 1952/1963).
- general characteristics; food and clothing; housing and technology; economy and transportation; individual and family activities; community and government; welfare, religion, and science; and sex and the life cycle (Murdock, Ford, & Hudson, 1971; Barry, 1980; Berry et al., 1992).
- all capabilities and habits learned as members of a society (Tylor, 1865).
- social heredity (Linton, 1936).
- patterns of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinct achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts (Kroeber & Kluckholn, 1952/1963).
- the totality of equivalent and complementary learned meanings maintained by a human population, or by identifiable segments of a population, and transmitted from one generation to the next (Rohner, 1984).
- not only rules and meanings but also behaviors (Jahoda, 1984).

- aspects of personality (Pelto & Pelto, 1975).
- shared symbol systems transcending individuals (Geertz, 1975).
- the shared way of life of a group of people (Berry et al., 1992).
- an information-based system that allows people to live together and satisfy their needs (Baumeister, 2005).

The concept of culture also has different meanings in other cultures. In Japan, culture may refer to flower arranging or a tea ceremony. In France, culture might refer to art, history, or food. In the United Arab Emirates, culture may refer to traditions and religious rituals. Thus the concept of culture itself is culture-bound. Culture, in its broadest sense, cannot be fully covered in one place—not in this book, not in a university course, not in any training program. Thus, we must begin by recognizing the breadth, scope, and enormity of culture.

A Working Definition for This Book

culture A unique meaning and information system, shared by a group and transmitted across generations, that allows the group to meet basic needs of survival, pursue happiness and well-being, and derive meaning from life.

We define human **culture** as *unique meaning and information systems, shared within groups and transmitted across generations, which allow groups to meet survival needs, pursue happiness and well-being, and derive meaning from life.*

At their most elemental level, human cultures exist to enable us to meet basic needs of survival. Human cultures provide guidelines to meet others, procreate and produce offspring, put food on the table, provide shelter from the elements, and care for our daily biological essential needs. That's a part of culture we share with nonhuman animals (more later).

But human cultures are so much more than that. They allow for complex social networks and relationships. They allow us to enhance the meaning of normal, daily activities. They allow us to pursue happiness, and be creative in music, art, and drama. They allow us to seek recreation and engage in sports and organize competition, whether in the local community football club or the Olympic Games. Human cultures allow us to search the sea and space, and create mathematics as well as an educational system. They allow us to go to the moon, create research laboratories on uninhabitable areas like Antarctica, and send probes to Mars and Jupiter. Unfortunately, human cultures also allow us to have wars, create weapons of mass destruction, and recruit and train terrorists.

Human cultures do all this by creating and maintaining complex social systems, institutionalizing and improving cultural practices, creating beliefs about the world, and communicating meaning systems to other humans and subsequent generations. They are the product of the evolution of the human mind and complex abilities and aptitudes that are part of the universal psychological toolkit, in response to specific environments and the resources available. Cultures are products of the interaction among universal biological needs and functions, universal social problems needed to address those needs, and the context in which people live. Cultures are solutions to the problem of living, that is, groups' adaptations to their contexts to address their social motives and biological needs. As adaptational responses to the environment, cultures help to select behaviors, attitudes, values, and opinions that optimize the tapping of resources to meet survival needs and motives. Out of a myriad behaviors possible in the human repertoire, cultures help focus people's behaviors and attention on a few limited alternatives to maximize their effectiveness, given their resources and their environment (Poortinga, 1990).

What's Unique about Human Cultures?

All living beings need to adapt to their environments to meet basic needs and survive, and many characteristics of human cultural life are shared with other animals. Many animals are social and work and live in groups: fish swim in schools, wolves hunt in packs, and lions roam in prides. Many animal societies have social networks and hierarchies; the staring game played by humans is used by animals to create dominance hierarchies, and like the human game, animals that smile or avert their gaze lose and become the subordinate. Nonhuman animals invent and use tools (Whiten, Horner, & De Waal, 2005); perhaps the most famous example of this is monkeys who use twigs to get insects to eat. Japanese monkeys at Koshima Island washed sweet potatoes and bathed in the sea (Matsuzawa, 2001), and their relatives began to wash sweet potatoes. Many animals communicate with each other; bees dance to communicate the source of flowers; ants leave trails to communicate their paths to themselves and others. Thus, animals have at least a rudimentary form of culture consisting of social customs (McGrew, 2004) and solutions to the problem of adapting to context in order to meet basic needs for survival (Boesch, 2003; refer also to de Waal, 2013).

Yet human cultures are different from other animal cultures. Understanding how we are different serves as an important basis to understanding how humans are universally similar in important ways, because *the largest cultural difference in the world is not among the various human cultures around the world, but between human and nonhuman animal cultures*. This begs the question of what is unique about human cultures.

Several characteristics of human cultural life allow human cultures to be different from those of nonhuman animals. Human cultures are cumulative; knowledge, tools, technology, and know-how accumulate over time and continue to improve (recall our discussion above about ratcheting) (Dean et al., 2012). Humans have specialized socio-cognitive skills, which include teaching through verbal instructions, imitation, and prosociality that allow them to reach higher-level solutions when solving problems; other animals do not possess these skills, which prevents them from achieving a cumulative culture that rachets up (Dean et al., 2012). Human cultures have language, which allows them to share intentions within and among each other like no other animal species can.

For these and many other reasons, human cultures differ from animal cultures on three major dimensions: *complexity, differentiation,* and *institutionalization.* First, human cultures are complex. We have many levels of social structures, groups, communities, and so on, embedded within and branching across each other, and individuals can be members of multiple groups, organizations, and communities at any one time and especially across time.

Human cultures are differentiated. Role specialization is rampant throughout many human cultures, and we have people who do very different things in order for the entire cultural group to survive. Think about all the various jobs that exist in many human cultures today and how spread out yet interconnected they all are; all are collectively part of the differentiated machinery of human cultures that allows those cultures to function.

Finally, human cultures are institutionalized. We create organizations, governments, clubs, and many other social structures within many cultures, each with their own rules and norms. Businesses; churches, mosques, and temples; city, state, county, and federal governments; sport organizations, and the like all have their own structures at many levels of society, all contributing to human cultures.

These characteristics differentiate human from nonhuman cultures. For example, not only do humans make tools, but we also make tools to make tools. We create automated processes to make tools, create organizations to make the tools to make the tools, and mass distribute those tools around the world for global consumption. The same is true for growing and distributing food, which is one of the reasons many people can enjoy food from almost anywhere around the world almost any time of the year. These accomplishments are possible because humans have complex social cognition, language, shared intentionality, and ratcheting.

For these reasons, human cultural life is very unique and different from that of nonhuman animals. Humans have evolved to have unique human cultures, and human cultures ensure a great diversity in life. Increased diversity, in fact, greatly aids in survival, and humans appear to be doing a good job at surviving.

The Difference between "Society" and "Culture"

We distinguish between the terms "society" and "culture." *Society* refers to a system or structure of interrelationships among individuals and groups. *Culture* refers to the meanings and information that are associated with those social structures and interrelationships. "Family," for example, is a social group that exists all around the world. But each human culture gives the concept of family its own unique meaning, and individuals draw specific information from these meanings. "Older brother" is part of many families and thus of many societies. The meaning of "older brother," however, is different in different cultures. In some cultures, there is little difference between older or younger brothers or sisters—each is seen as an individual. In other cultures, age is associated with status in a hierarchy, and older brother is a relatively more exalted position within the family, associated with certain duties and obligations that do not exist with younger siblings.

Society and culture are terms often used interchangeably, most likely because one doesn't exist without the other, and in everyday discourse, "society" often refers to "culture." In this book, we focus on culture, which is the meaning and information system associated with groups.

Identifying Groups with Culture

Given our definition earlier, groups can be identified as having culture if they have a meaning and information associated with them that is transmitted across generations. One important marker of a cultural group is likely language. As we will discuss in Chapter 9, language is a symbol system that allows groups to represent meaningful things in its world by encoding them into symbols known as words, creating and incorporating unique rules (syntax, grammar, pragmatics) to manipulate those symbols, and communicating them among its members in unique ways. Language allows for symbolic representations of a meaning and information system of a group.

Even within languages, different dialects of a language often denote different subcultures. English, for example, is the primary language of England, parts of Canada, the United States, Australia, and New Zealand. The same is true of Spanish, French, and Arabic among various countries of the world. But there are differences in the specific use of languages across countries, and they denote interesting differences in cultures. Within countries, different dialects and regional differences in language denote differences in local and regional cultures.

Cultures are also associated with countries. "Country" is a geopolitical delineation of a world area, but they have the characteristics of culture. Countries are defined by specific boundaries that describe their environment—geography, climate, and natural resources. Countries also have their own unique sociocultural history, language, government, and economic base, all of which affect culture. At the same time, many countries have subcultures or may even be a constellation of different cultures without a major culture. There are major cultural differences, for instance, within countries in different regions of the world, such as the Middle East, North Africa, and South and Southeast Asia. Data from 35 African countries, for instance, demonstrated that ethnolinguistic distinctions are just as important as nation in delineating cultures (Van Pinxteren, 2020). Different cities within a country also have different cultures (Sevincer, Varnum, & Kitayama, 2017). In the United States, work has suggested the existence of 11 separate cultures (refer to Figure 1.7; from Woodard, 2011).

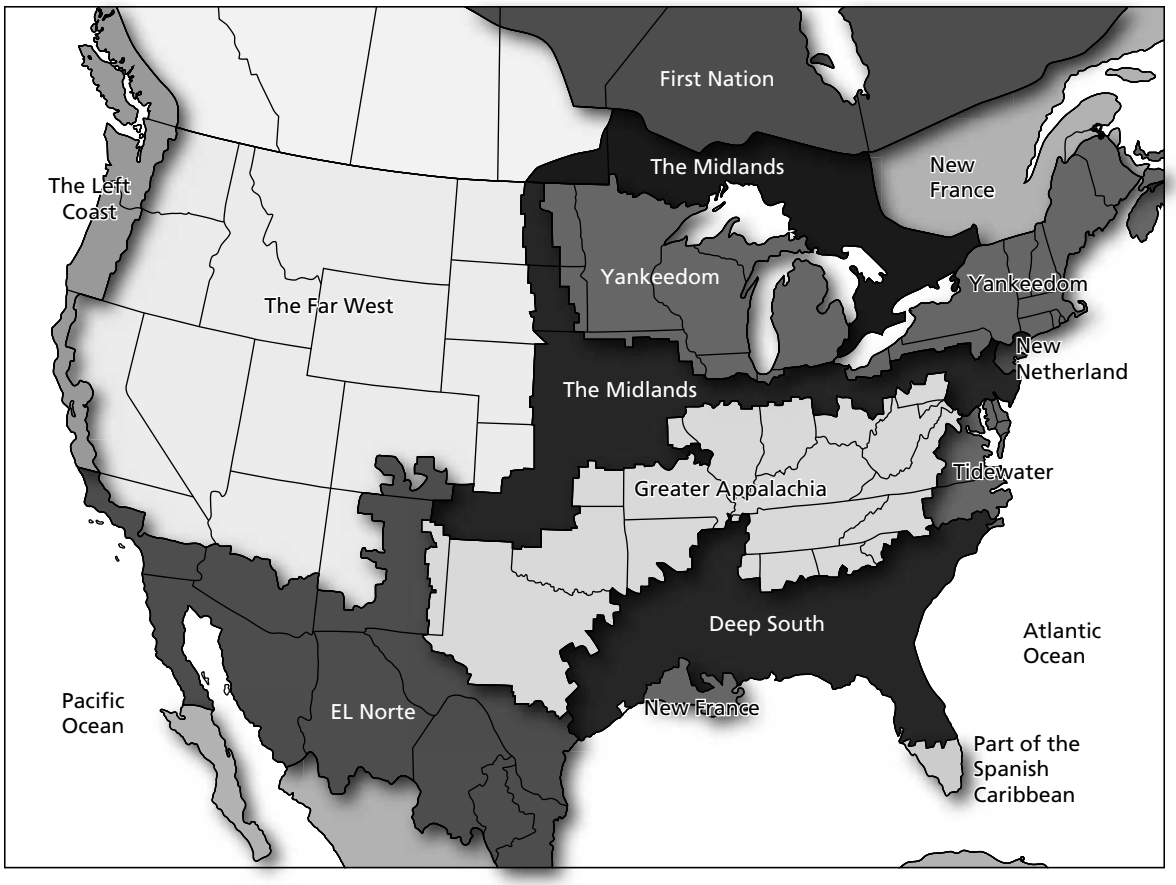


Figure 1.7 Different Cultures within the United States: The American Nations Today

Source: Woodard, C. (2011). *American nations: A history of the eleven rival regional cultures of North America.* Viking Press.

Different ethnic groups also have culture. The word *ethnicity* is derived from the Greek *ethnos*, meaning people of a nation or tribe, and is used to denote one's racial, national, or cultural origins. Ethnicity is generally used in reference to groups characterized by a common nationality, geographic origin, culture, or language (Betancourt & Lopez, 1993). But understanding the relationship between ethnicity and culture can be tricky because the term ethnicity is often equated with race, and as we will discuss later, race is not culture; and there are cultural differences in how people define ethnicity (Hamer et al., 2020). In this book, ethnicity has important associations with culture in terms of norms and values; the strength, salience, and meaning of ethnic identity; and attitudes associated with minority status (Phinney, 1996), all of which are aspects of culture. Culture makes ethnic group differences meaningful.

Many other groups can be considered cultural, such as gender (more in Chapter 7), disability (e.g., Conyers, 2003; De Clerck, 2010; Eddey & Robey, 2005), or sexual orientation (Herdt & Howe, 2007). We view these, and other descriptive terms referring to groups, as gatekeepers to important cultural distinctions—that is, in meaning and information systems shared by groups and transmitted across their generations. Thus, recognizing that one of the most important features of these social categories is its underlying culture—that unique set of shared attributes that influences its members' mental processes and behaviors—is crucial.

Contrasting Culture, Race, Personality, and Popular Culture

Culture and Race

Race is not culture and the terms should not be used interchangeably. There has been considerable controversy surrounding what race is (Anderson & Nickerson, 2005). Many scholars have suggested that there are three major races—Caucasoid, Mongoloid, and Negroid—but past studies of the origins of race have proposed as many as 37 (Yee et al., 1993). Although laypersons typically use physical characteristics such as skin color to define race, most physical anthropologists use population gene frequencies. Regardless of which characteristics are used, the concept of race is much less clear-cut than previously believed (Lewontin, Rose, & Kamin, 1984). Some authors have suggested that the distinctions among races are arbitrary and dubious at best (Zuckerman, 1990), and studies of genetic systems, including blood groups, serum proteins, and enzymes, have shown considerably more within-group than between-group variation, suggesting that racially defined groups are actually more similar than different.

There are also controversies about the origins of race. Prevalent theories posit a common ancestor originating in Africa 200,000 years ago, whose descendants migrated to other parts of the world. Other theories suggest that humans may have existed in multiple regions of the world as far back as two million years ago and that intermixing among regions occurred (Wolpoff & Caspari, 1997).

Many psychologists today agree that race is more of a social construction than a biological essential. People have a natural propensity to create categories, especially those dealing with human characteristics (Hirschfield, 1996). Because easily identifiable physical characteristics are often used in this category formation process, "race" becomes central to folk theories and thus gains cognitive and social meaning and importance. Race as a biological construct may be questionable, but race as a *social* construct is real (Smedley & Smedley, 2005).

Interesting issues arise when race is understood as a social construction. Category boundaries among the socially constructed races are ambiguous and vary with social

context (Davis, 1991; Eberhardt & Randall, 1997; Omi & Winant, 1994), and people of different cultures differ in their definitions of race. In some cultures, race is a continuum along a dimensional scale, not a category (Davis, 1991). Many Brazilians believe that race is not heritable and varies according to economic or geographic mobility (Degler, 1971, reported in Eberhardt & Randall, 1997). In some countries, socioeconomic mobility is associated with changes in perceptions of physical properties such as skin color and hair texture (Eberhardt & Randall, 1997).

"Racial" differences may be of little scientific value without an understanding of the underlying causes of similarities and differences observed (Betancourt & Lopez, 1993; Helms, Jernigan, & Mascher, 2005; Zuckerman, 1990). These causes will necessarily involve culture, as defined in this book, because culture is a functional concept that determines what is psychologically meaningful and important for different races. Culture gives race meaning.

Culture and Personality

Culture is not personality. Culture is a macro-social construct that characterizes groups; it is the social psychological frame within which individuals reside, much like the structure of our houses and homes. *Personality* refers to the unique constellation of traits, attributes, qualities, and characteristics of individuals within those frames; it refers to the individual differences that exist among individuals within groups.

Just because individuals exist in a culture and are representatives of a culture, they should not be equated with the culture or its attributes. Individuals have their own mental representations of culture, and these differing representations may be an aspect of their personality. But individual-level mental representations of culture are not culture on the macro-social level, a point we will come back to in Chapter 2. Culture, as we have defined it, involves a shared meaning and information system that is transmitted across generations. Personality and individual differences are not necessarily shared. Culture is relatively stable across individuals, whereas personality is vastly different. We'll discuss personality further in Chapter 6.

Culture and Popular Culture

Popular culture refers to trends in music, art, and other expressions that become popular among a group of people from time to time. Popular culture and culture as we have defined it share some similarities, most importantly the sharing of an expression and its value by a group. But there are important differences. Popular culture does not necessarily involve sharing a wide range of psychological attributes across various psychological domains; culture involves systems of rules that include attitudes, values, opinions, beliefs, norms, and behaviors. Also, popular culture refers to values or expressions that come and go as fads or trends within a few years; culture is relatively stable over time and even across generations (despite its dynamic quality and potential for change).

✓ Comprehension Check

1. Describe the factors that influence the origin of culture listed in Table 1.1.
2. What is the book's definition of culture? How do human cultures differ from nonhuman cultures? And how can we understand which groups have culture and which do not?

1-3 The Contents of Culture

Culture as a meaning and information system is an abstraction that refers to many aspects of our ways of living. Its contents can be divided roughly into two categories known as the objective and subjective elements of culture (Kroeber & Kluckholn, 1952/1963; Triandis, 1972).

Objective Elements

Objective elements of culture include explicit, physical manifestations of a meaning and information system, such as architecture, clothes, foods, art, or eating utensils—anything you can see and touch. Advertising, texts, mass media, music, social media, and YouTube videos are all physical, tangible, and important artifacts of culture (Lamoreaux & Morling, 2012; Morling & Lamoreaux, 2008). Examining the contents of these artifacts can give clues to culture. For example, an analysis of millions of digitized books—about 4% of all books ever printed—demonstrated changes in vocabularies, grammar, collective memory, adoption of technology, pursuit of fame, censorship, and historical epidemiology were evidence of cultural trends over time (Michel et al., 2011). Interesting cultural differences in meanings and associations with national flags have also been documented (Becker et al., 2017). Objective elements of culture are the focus of archaeology or physical anthropology.

Subjective Elements

Subjective elements of culture include all parts of culture that do not exist as physical artifacts. These include culture-level attitudes, values, beliefs, norms, and behavior. Subjective elements of culture tap into psychological processes that constitute the meaning and information systems of groups (Figure 1.8).

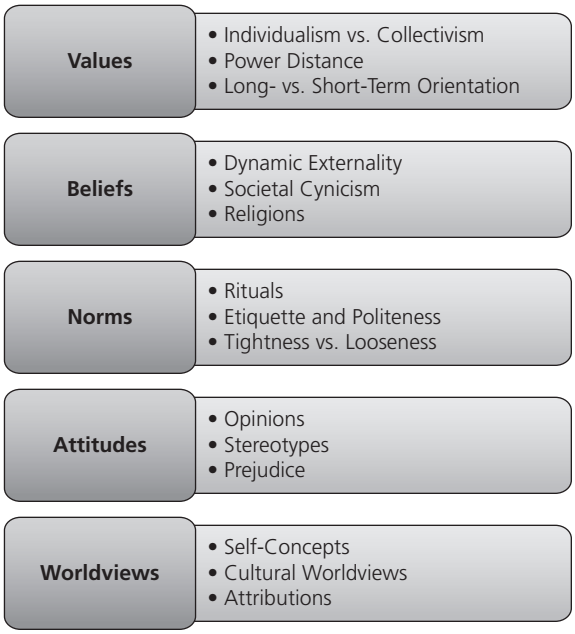


Figure 1.8 Subjective Elements of Culture

Values

Values are guiding principles that refer to desirable goals that motivate behavior, and define moral, political, social, economic, esthetic, or spiritual ethics. Values exist on two levels—individual and culture. Individual-level values are personal; culture-level (or cultural) values are shared, abstract ideas about what a social collectivity views as good, right, and desirable. Here we discuss culture-level values, which has received the most attention by research extracting the contents of culture.

values Trans-situational goals that serve as a guiding principle in the life of a person or group (e.g., kindness, creativity). Values motivate and justify behavior and serve as standards for judging people, actions, and events.

The most well-known set of cultural values comes from Hofstede, who originally reported data from 72 countries involving the responses of more than 117,000 employees of a multinational business organization, spanning over 20 different languages and seven occupational levels to his 63 work-related values items (Hofstede, 2001). Based on his original and more contemporary research, six value dimensions that differentiate cultural groups have been identified (Hofstede, 2011):

1. **Individualism versus Collectivism.** The degree to which groups will encourage tendencies for members to look after themselves and their immediate family only, or for them to belong to in-groups that look after its members in exchange for loyalty.
2. **Power Distance.** The degree to which groups will encourage less powerful members to accept that power is distributed unequally.
3. **Uncertainty Avoidance.** The degree to which groups will encourage members to feel threatened by unknown or ambiguous situations and develop beliefs, institutions, or rituals to avoid them.
4. **Masculinity versus Femininity.** The degree to which groups value success, money, and things as opposed to caring for others and quality of life, and the distribution of emotional roles among genders.
5. **Long- versus Short-Term Orientation.** The degree to which groups encourage delayed gratification of material, social, and emotional needs among its members.
6. **Indulgence versus Restraint.** The degree to which groups allow relatively free gratification of basic and natural human drives related to enjoying life and having fun, or whether it suppresses gratification of needs and regulates them through strict social norms.

Hofstede's culture-level value dimensions have provided interesting ways to characterize cultures. Instead of using country names or other descriptors, groups can be referred to as individualistic or collectivistic, long or short term oriented, or high or low on Power Distance. These dimensions allow for an understanding of groups along meaningful dimensions of psychological variability.

Some cultural values are nonnegotiable and are called **sacred values** (Atran & Axelrod, 2007; Ginges et al., 2007). They differ from other values because they incorporate moral beliefs that drive action in ways dissociated from prospects for success. Across the world, people believe that devotion to core values (such as the welfare of their family and country or their commitment to religion, honor, and justice) is, or ought to be, absolute and inviolable. Such values outweigh others, particularly economic ones. Many of us have learned some things we regard as moral values, some of which may be a part of religion. Most of us believe there is something morally wrong with letting down your team members. Most Americans believe you shouldn't cheat on your spouse. Some cultures permit people to have multiple spouses. Some cultures believe that a family's honor depends on the chastity of women in the family, and it is more important than their lives.

sacred values Values considered to be nonnegotiable. They differ from normal values because they incorporate moral beliefs that drive action in ways dissociated from prospects for success. Across the world, people believe that devotion to core values (such as the welfare of their family and country or their commitment to religion, honor, and justice) is, or ought to be, absolute and inviolable. Such values outweigh other values, particularly economic ones.

Differences in values (and beliefs; more below) lead to different characterizations of cultures. Over the years, many characterizations have been proposed such as shame or guilt cultures (Piers & Singer, 1971), honor cultures (Cohen et al., 1996; Vandello et al., 2009), face and dignity cultures (Kim, Cohen, & Au, 2010; Ting-Toomey, 1994), high- or low-context cultures (Hall, 1966, 1973; Matsumoto et al., 2009), and power or hierarchical cultures (Matsumoto, 2007a; Torelli & Shavitt, 2010). We will return to discussions of honor cultures in Chapter 14 (in discussions of aggression), and of high- or low-context cultures in Chapter 10 (in discussions of communication styles).

There have been many other large-scale attempts at identifying cultural values, notably by Schwartz (Schwartz & Ros, 1995) and the Globe project (House et al., 2003). But by far, Hofstede's approach and the dimension of individualism versus collectivism have received the greatest attention in cross-cultural research., being used to predict and explain many differences across cultures, especially in many aspects of thinking and emotions (Oyserman & Lee, 2008; Schimmack, Oishi, & Diener, 2005; Triandis, 2001). Much of the works described later in this book use this dimension to understand cultural differences.

Beliefs

beliefs A proposition that is regarded as true. People of different cultures have different beliefs.

Beliefs are propositions that are regarded as true, and like values, exist on the individual and cultural levels. We focus here on culture-level beliefs, also known as **social axioms** (Bond et al., 2004; Leung et al., 2002). These are general beliefs and premises about oneself, the social and physical environments, and the spiritual world; they are assertions about the association between two or more entities or concepts. People endorse and use them to guide their behavior in daily living, such as "belief in a religion helps one understand the meaning of life."

social axioms General beliefs and premises about oneself, the social and physical environment, and the spiritual world. They are assertions about the relationship between two or more entities or concepts; people endorse and use them to guide their behavior in daily living, such as "belief in a religion helps one understand the meaning of life."

Leung et al. (2002) demonstrated the universal existence of five types of social axioms on the individual level in 41 cultural groups. Bond et al. (2004) then conducted culture-level analyses on these data (more about the differences between individual-level and culture-level analyses in Chapter 2) and demonstrated that two social axiom dimensions existed on the cultural level:

1. **Dynamic Externality.** This dimension represents beliefs concerning external forces such as fate, a supreme being, and spirituality. It aids citizens to mobilize psychologically to confront environmental difficulties. "Belief in a religion helps one understand the meaning of life" and "good deeds will be rewarded, and bad deeds will be punished" are examples. Cultures high on this dimension tend to be more collectivistic, conservative, hierarchical; have high unemployment levels, less freedom, and fewer human-rights activities; and have aspirations for security, material resources, and longer life.
2. **Societal Cynicism.** This dimension represents an apprehension or pessimism of the world. "Caring about societal affairs only brings trouble upon oneself" and "kind-hearted people usually suffer losses" are examples. Cultures high on this dimension believe that the world produces malignant outcomes, that they are surrounded by inevitable negative outcomes, and that individuals are suppressed by powerful others and subjected to the depredations of willful and selfish individuals, groups, and institutions.

belief in a zero-sum game The proposition that social relations are basically antagonistic—that one person's gain occurs at the expense of others' losses.

Research has expanded knowledge of social axioms on the topic of **belief in a zero-sum game**, which is a belief system about the antagonistic nature of social relations—that one person's gain occurs at the expense of others' losses. In a study of 37 nations, people, and countries who believed more strongly in a zero-sum game engaged more in win–lose social exchanges over limited resources than people and countries that did not have such beliefs (Różycka-Tran, Boski, & Wojciszke, 2015). Belief in a zero-sum game was negatively associated with GDP, corruption, the human

development index, the democracy index, and subjective well-being, and positively with inflation rates and income disparities.

One important belief system that characterizes many cultures is **religion**, which are organized systems of beliefs that tie together many ways of life for large groups of people (Saroglou & Cohen, 2011). Different religions are similar in the sense that they all help people manage themselves in order to avoid social chaos and provide social coordination. But they all do so in different ways and have different, specific beliefs associated (e.g., existence of one vs. more than one God).

religion Organized systems of beliefs that tie together many attitudes, values, beliefs, worldviews, and norms. They provide guidelines for living.

Cross-cultural research on religion has flourished in the early 2000s and has proffered interesting insights. A belief in God has been associated with self-regulation, reinforcement of social norms, and risk-taking (Laurin, 2017), all of which allow groups to coordinate socially and avoid social chaos. Participation in religious services of all kinds has also been associated with many positive aspects of functioning across cultures, including happiness, life satisfaction, mental and physical health, meaning and purpose, character and virtue, and close social relationships (VanderWeele, 2017).

The concept of religiousness has been delineated along four basic dimensions: believing, bonding, behaving, and belonging (Saroglou, 2011, 2019). Data from 14 countries varying in religious heritage (Catholicism, Protestantism, Orthodox Christianity, Judaism, Islam, and Buddhism/Taoism) showed that the four dimensions were distinct across cultures and religions, differentially preferred across cultural zones, and characterized by distinct features (Saroglou et al., 2020). Believing and bonding were primarily related to spirituality and preferred in Western secular societies, while behaving and belonging were valued in religious societies and related to fundamentalism, authoritarianism, and low openness. Belonging and bonding were uniquely associated with life satisfaction, and believing was uniquely related to existential quest and decreased life satisfaction (refer to Figure 1.9; from Saroglou et al., 2020, p. 569).

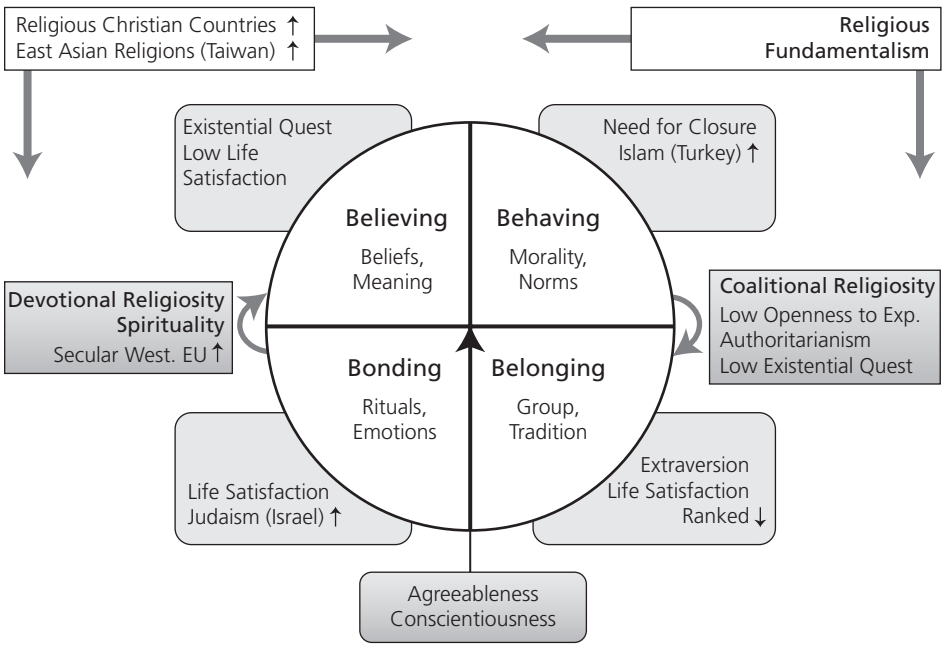


Figure 1.9 Synthesis of the Main Findings on the Characteristics of the Four Dimensions of Religiousness

Source: Saroglou et al. (2020) p. 569.

Norms

norms A generally accepted standard of behavior within a cultural or subcultural group.

Norms are generally accepted standards of behavior for any cultural group, and describe behavior that members of a culture have defined as "appropriate" in a given situation. All cultures provide expectations about people's behavior through norms, which increase social coordination and decrease social chaos. In some cultures, people wear little or no clothing, while in others people normally cover almost all their bodies. Many different types of norms exist, including norms describing typical beliefs, values, or behavior of one's group (Shteynberg, Gelfand, & Kim, 2009), as well as norms for controlling one's emotional expressions (Matsumoto et al., 2009; Matsumoto et al., 2008).

rituals Culturally prescribed conduct or any kind of established routine or procedure.

Normal behavior is related to social rituals across cultures. **Rituals** are culturally prescribed conduct or any kind of established procedure or routine. These include religious rituals such as a bride's walking down the aisle with her father in weddings in many cultures, or doing daily or weekly prayers. Rituals are important because they reinforce cultural meaning systems by reducing ambiguity of things that "should" be done in a situation.

etiquette Culturally prescribed code of behavior that describes expectations for polite behavior.

Some rituals are related to politeness, and many cultures reify norms of politeness in shared behavioral patterns called **etiquette**. This is a code of behavior that describes expectations for polite behavior. Cultures differ in how much they value etiquette, and in cultures that value etiquette, they are considered signs of maturity and sanity. Forms of etiquette are culture specific, so that what kinds of behaviors are deemed polite differs across cultures. In some cultures like the United States, "looking others in the eye" is often considered a form of respect; in others, doing so is often considered disrespectful, and avoiding looking directly at another person when talking, especially higher-status others, is considered good manners. In the Middle East and North Africa, showing the soles of one's feet is often regarded as insulting; people who cross their legs in a meeting may unwittingly offend their interacting partners.

tightness versus looseness A dimension of cultural variability that refers to the variability within a culture of its members to norms. Tight cultures have less variability and are more homogeneous with respect to norms; loose cultures have more variability and are more heterogeneous.

An important dimension of cultural variability with respect to norms involves a concept known as **tightness versus looseness** (Pelto, 1968), which has two components: The *strength of social norms*, or how clear and pervasive norms are within societies, and the *strength of sanctioning*, or how much tolerance there is for deviance from norms within societies. Pelto (1968) coined this term, arguing that traditional societies varied in their expression of and adherence to social norms. In Pelto's work, Pueblo Indians, Hutterites, and Japanese were examples of tight societies, in which norms were expressed very clearly and unambiguously, and severe sanctions were imposed on those who deviated from norms. The Skolt Lapps of northern Finland and Thais were examples of loose societies, in which norms were expressed through a wide variety of alternative channels, in which there was a general lack of formality, order, and discipline and high tolerance for deviant behavior.

Surveys of 6,823 people in 33 countries demonstrated the importance of tightness–looseness as an important cultural dimension (Gelfand et al., 2011). It is part of a loosely integrated system that incorporates ecological and historical components, such as population density, resource availability, history of conflict, and disease, with the strength of everyday recurring situations in facilitating mental processes and behaviors. The tightest cultures in this study—with the strongest social norms and sanctions for social transgressions—were Pakistan, Malaysia, Singapore, and South Korea; the loosest were Ukraine, Estonia, Hungary, and Israel.

Cultural tightness (vs. looseness) has been considered to result from two factors. One is threats to survival, both historical and current, and includes resource scarcity, wars, terrorism, natural disasters, political turmoil, water safety, and others. Societies living under such conditions would have to create strong norms and sanctions to deal

with such threats. The other factor is sociopolitical context, including how traditional the society has been and institutional repression. Together, these factors interact to influence cultural tightness, which, in turn can influence psychological processes on the individual level (refer to Figure 1.10 from Uz, 2015, p. 321).

Cultural tightness can also be applied to regions within countries. In the United States, states associated with higher incidences of natural disasters, greater disease prevalence, fewer natural resources, and greater degree of external threat had higher tightness (Harrington & Gelfand, 2014). Tighter states also had higher levels of social stability (lowered drug and alcohol use, lower rates of homelessness, and lower social disorganization), higher incarceration rates, greater discrimination and inequality, lower creativity, and lower happiness, relative to loose states (refer to Table 1.3 from Harrington & Gelfand, 2014, p. 2).

The tightness–looseness construct has also been applied to differences across provinces in China. Across 31 Chinese provinces (Chua, Huang, & Jin, 2019), culturally tight provinces were associated with increased governmental control, constraints in daily life, religious practices, and exposure to threats; but they were also associated with urbanization, economic growth, better health, greater tolerance toward the LGBTQIA+ community, and gender equality. Differences between tight and loose provinces in China and across 32 countries have been linked to rice (vs. wheat) farming (Talhelm & English, 2020). Premodern rice farming may have created strong social norms because such farming relied on irrigation networks, and rice farmers coordinated their water use and monitored each person's labor contributions. Rice villages also established strong norms of reciprocity to cope with labor demands that were twice as high as crops like wheat.

Attitudes

Attitudes are evaluations of things occurring in ongoing thoughts about those things, or stored in memory. Cultures facilitate attitudes concerning actions and behaviors, which produces cultural filters, which we will discuss in Chapter 14; these serve as the basis of stereotypes and prejudice. Cultures also foster attitudes that are not tied to

attitudes Evaluations of objects occurring in ongoing thoughts about the objects, or stored in memory.

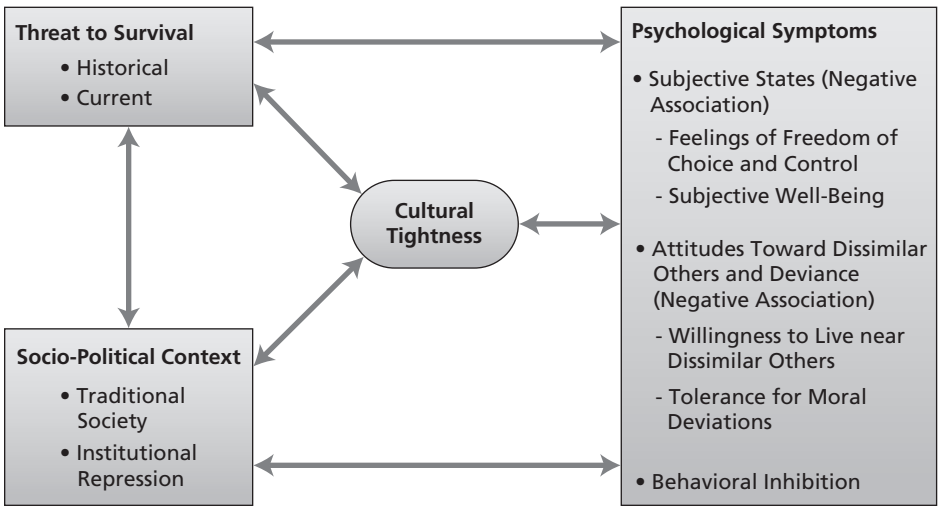


Figure 1.10 A Framework for Cultural Tightness

Source: UZ (2015) p. 321.

Table 1.3 State Tightness-Looseness Rankings

Rank	State	Srore
1	Mississippi	78.86
2	Alabama	75.45
3	Arkansas	75.03
4	Oklahoma	75.03
5	Tennessee	68.81
6	Texas	67.54
7	Louisiana	65.88
8	Kentucky	63.91
9	South Carolina	61.39
10	North Carolina	60.67
11	Kansas	60.36
12	Georgia	60.26
13	Missouri	59.60
14	Virginia	57.37
15	Indiana	54.57
16	Pennsylvania	52.75
17	West Virginia	52.48
18	Ohio	52.30
19	Wyoming	51.94
20	North Dakota	51.44
21	South Dakota	51.14
22	Delaware	51.02
23	Utah	49.69
24	Nebraska	49.65
25	Florida	49.28
26	lowa	49.02
27	Michigan	48.93
28	Minnesota	47.84
29	Arizona	47.56
30	Wisconsin	46.91
31	Montana	46.11
32	Illinois	45.95
33	Idaho	45.50
34	Maryland	45.50
35	New Mexico	45.43
36	Rhode Island	43.23
37	Colorado	42.92
38	New Jersey	39.48
39	New York	39.42
40	Alaska	38.43
41	Vermont	37.23
42	New Hampshire	36.97
43	Hawaii	36.49
44	Connecticut	36.37
45	Massachusetts	35.12
46	Maine	34.00
47	Nevada	33.61
48	Washington	31.06
49	Oregon	30.07
50	California	27.37

Higher scores indicate greater tightness.

Source: Harrington and Gelfand (2014) p. 2.