CULTURE AND PSYCHOLOGY

SIXTH EDITION

DAVID MATSUMOTO • LINDA JUANG

CULTURE AND PSYCHOLOGY

CULTURE AND PSYCHOLOGY

SIXTH EDITION

David Matsumoto

San Francisco State University and Humintell

Linda Juang

University of Potsdam

CENGAGE Learning™

Australia • Brazil • Mexico • Singapore • United Kingdom • United States

CENGAGE Learning®

Culture and Psychology,
Sixth Edition
David Matsumoto, Linda Juang

Product Director: Erin Joyner
Product Manager: Timothy Matray
Content Developer and Senior Content Project Manager: Tanya Nigh
Product Assistant: Kimiya Hojjat
Art Director: Vernon Boes
Manufacturing Planner: Karen Hunt
Production Service and Compositor: Lumina Datamatics Inc.
Photo and Text Researcher: Lumina Datamatics Inc.
Text and Cover Designer: Lisa Henry
Cover Image: Masterfile, alexmakatova

Library of Congress Control Number: 2015960088

ISBN: 978-1-305-64895-1

Cengage Learning
20 Channel Center Street
Boston, MA 02210
USA

Cengage Learning is a leading provider of customized learning solutions with employees residing in nearly 40 different countries and sales in more than 125 countries around the world. Find your local representative at **www.cengage.com.**

Cengage Learning products are represented in Canada by Nelson Education, Ltd.

To learn more about Cengage Learning Solutions, visit **www.cengage.com.**

Purchase any of our products at your local college store or at our preferred online store **www.cengagebrain.com.**

Printed in the United States of America
Print Number: 01 Print Year: 2016

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. He subsequently earned 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 working 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 over 30 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 many 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 and her M.A. and Ph.D. in developmental psychology from Michigan State University, and was also a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Jena in Germany for three years. Over the past 20 years, she has studied adolescent development in various family and cultural contexts. She has published and presented studies on immigration-related issues such as ethnic identity, acculturation, and adjustment of culturally diverse adolescents and youth in the United States, Germany, and China.

BRIEF CONTENTS

CONTENTS

PREFACE

WE WOULD LIKE TO BEGIN BY FIRST THANKING YOU—past, current, and prospective future users of our book. We sincerely appreciate all of you for all the hard work and efforts you make in the classroom every day in service of the education of future generations of our world, and for the greater good that comes from those efforts. We appreciate all the kind notes, comments, questions, and messages that many of you have sent to us throughout the years. And we appreciate all of you who come to introduce yourselves at meetings and conferences. It is especially a joy to meet you in person, and we thank you from the bottom of our hearts for the reception you always give us.

We would also like to thank the reviewers of the previous edition of the book. They provided us with many valuable comments, which guided us in the current revision. We thank the reviewers especially for the many positive comments about so many parts of the book. We can only hope that our revisions have improved the book even more.

We also would like to thank the editors and production staff at Cengage. They have been professional, competent, and courteous throughout the years, and have kept us on track in the revision of this edition. We also thank Hyisung C. Hwang for her review and edit of the entire book manuscript from start to finish. Her comments and suggestions were invaluable and helped us to improve the readability and content of the material tremendously.

There are many changes that we have made that are applicable throughout the book. With regard to content, you will see that we have reorganized the structure of the book. We moved the chapter on self and identity (formerly Chapter 13) up to Chapter 5. We follow this with chapters on personality (Chapter 6) and gender (Chapter 7), followed by cognition (Chapter 8) and emotion (Chapter 9). We hope that this structural change aids readers in moving through the material in a way that presents the larger factors of influence (development, personality, gender) before discussing specific topics (emotion, cognition, language, social behavior, etc.).

Also with regard to content, we have tightened the writing throughout, and in many cases have deleted material that was superfluous to the main message of the chapter. We did this because one of the concerns we had about the book was that we were presenting too many "facts" without a coherent message in some places. This situation was partly due to the burgeoning numbers of cross-cultural studies that have been published in recent years, and our previous wish to be comprehensive and inclusive of the literature. But sometimes this lost our focus on the important messages of the chapter. Thus we decided to reduce the number of facts by removing material we deemed superfluous to the main message of each chapter so that readers can stay focused on that main message.

We have also made a number of significant changes with regard to pedagogy. In this edition, you'll notice a larger trim size for the book, which should aid in reading. We have also added text call-outs to important phrases, and now include glossary definitions in the margins when the words first appear. We have added more figures and tables in all chapters to break up the monotony of reading and to provide visual examples of the text material. We have also added substantially more cross-referencing to related topics in other chapters throughout the book.

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

- Simplified the writing and the message throughout, deleting sections that were not directly relevant to the main message of the chapter, and reordered some material
- Included more call-outs to other professions as end users are not always psychology students
- Clarified the concept of universal psychological toolkits
- Included more call-outs to material that will be explored in the rest of the book, cross-referencing other chapters
- Updated figures and added a few more to aid understanding; dropped old Figure 1.2, which was too complex
- Updated the writing with two new citations

Chapter 2—Cross-Cultural Research Methods

- Simplified the writing and the message throughout, especially concerning the types of cross-cultural research and types of cross-cultural comparisons
- Deleted sections that were not directly relevant to the main message of the chapter
- Reordered some material
- Reincorporated brief discussion of the evolution of cross-cultural research
- Included more figures and tables to organize and summarize the material, including tables organizing types of cross-cultural research and types of cross-cultural comparisons
- Redrew Table 2.1 and split into two tables
- Expanded on the "Exploration and Discovery" section
- Added a new question in the "Suggestions for Further Exploration" that invites students to find their culture and compare its scores with other scores and their experiences

Chapter 3—Enculturation

- Simplified the writing and the message throughout
- Added more figures to aid understanding
- Deleted Figure 3.2 (from the 5th edition) as it was unclear
- Deleted overlapping material with former Chapter 5 on math achievement. The education section now focuses on the education system as an important source of enculturation.
- Added content on "tiger mothering"
- Updated the writing with 13 new citations

Chapter 4—Culture and Developmental Processes

- Added a section on Vygotsky's sociocultural theory on cognitive development
- Updated, deleted, and rewrote sections on attachment to reflect the newest research and theorizing about this topic
- Included more figures and tables (such as Piaget's and Kohlberg's stages) to organize and summarize the material
- Deleted sections that were not directly relevant to the main message of the chapter (such as section on "Other Cognitive Theories" and "Other Developmental Processes")
- Updated the writing with four new citations

Chapter 5—Culture, Self, and Identity (formerly Chapter 13)

- Moved the section on attributional styles to Chapter 14, as we considered it to better fit the chapter there, especially with the decision to move this chapter up in the book sequence
- Paid attention to repositioning the theory of independent vs. interdependent self-construals within a larger perspective of theoretical views of the self and the evolution of thought concerning culture and self
- Simplified the writing and the message throughout, reordering and restructuring as necessary
- Included more figures and tables to organize and summarize the material
- Updated the writing with 12 new citations

Chapter 6—Culture and Personality (formerly Chapter 10)

- Simplified the writing and the message throughout, reordering and restructuring as necessary
- Included one additional figure and one additional table to organize and summarize the material
- One figure included clarified the five-factor theory (FFT); also revised the writing in this section to clarify the distinction between the five-factor model (FFM) and FFT
- Updated the writing with nine new citations

Chapter 7—Culture and Gender (formerly Chapter 6)

- Included a new table as suggested comparing the differences between "sex" and "gender" as described in the book
- Moved the section on sex from Chapter 14 to this chapter
- Consolidated the writing on jealousy that overlapped with that elsewhere
- Updated the writing with three new citations

Chapter 8—Culture and Cognition (formerly Chapter 5)

- Provided an overall structure for the chapter in a new figure early on, focusing on attention, then sensation and perception, then higher order thinking in the first half of the chapter, and consciousness and intelligence in the second half
- Consequently, moved the section on attention up first before sensation and perception
- Consolidated and integrated info on math performance from Chapter 3; reduced the amount of facts listed in the section on math and focused on the cross-cultural elements
- Figure 5.4 (now Figure 8.8) was made larger
- Reduced the amount of coverage in the section on intelligence, focusing on cross-cultural aspects
- Updated the writing with nine new citations

Chapter 9—Culture and Emotion (formerly Chapter 8)

- Moved the initial section on the cultural regulation of emotion to later, after the presentation of basic emotions, and integrated with the section on the "Cultural Calibration of Emotions"
- Separated the discussion of cultural regulation of basic emotions, the cultural construction of subjective experience, and cultural construction of concepts, attitudes, etc. into three separate sections
- Dropped the detailed discussion of front-end calibration, and cleaned up the presentation of front- and back-end calibration throughout, simplifying the description
- Redrew original Figure 8.10 into new, simpler figure
- Added a new reflection question at the end of the chapter
- Updated the writing with 12 new citations

Chapter 10—Culture, Language, and Communication (formerly Chapter 9)

- Added two new figures and one new table to facilitate understanding, especially to elaborate on cultural differences in nonverbal behaviors
- Included new section concerning recent research on possible bilingual advantages in cognitive processing
- Updated the writing with 21 new citations

Chapter 11—Culture and Health (formerly Chapter 7)

- Added more figures to illustrate chapter concepts
- Added discussion on an emerging field of study—cultural neuroscience
- Rearranged some sections for better flow
- Deleted sections not relevant to main message of chapter
- Former Figure 7.7 has been updated into a better graphic

- Acculturation is discussed in this chapter and non-Western remedies are discussed in Chapter 13
- Updated the writing with 12 new citations

Chapter 12—Culture and Psychological Disorders

- Completely updated section to include the newest DSM V conceptualization of "cultural syndromes of distress"
- Added information on the upcoming revisions for the ICD-11
- Added more figures and tables (such as table summarizing schizophrenia, depression, and anxiety) to illustrate key chapter concepts
- Rearranged some sections for better flow
- Deleted sections not relevant to main message of chapter
- Added more detail on the CBCL
- Added links to the ICD and DSM websites where students can find more detailed information on some of the issues discussed in the chapter
- Updated the writing with six new citations

Chapter 13—Culture and Treatment for Psychological Disorders

- Added more figures to illustrate chapter concepts
- Rearranged some sections for better flow
- Updated terminology to clarify indigenous healing, traditional medicine, and complementary medicine
- Updated the writing with eight new citations

Chapter 14—Culture and Social Behavior

- Moved the material on attributions from Chapter 5 to this chapter
- Moved the material on sex to Chapter 7
- Added a brief description of the sanctions used in the Yamagishi (1986) experiment
- Tightened up and clarified the discussion of the origin of stereotypes
- Dropped the discussion concerning "Need for Cognitive Closure" in the section on acculturation
- Included a new table on the content of stereotypes from 1933, 1951, and 1969
- Also included a new table from Karlins et al.'s (1969) analysis of changes in the favorableness of stereotype ratings across time
- Also included a new table from Madon et al.'s (2001) study of stereotypes
- Increased the overall number of tables and figures throughout to be commensurate with other chapters
- Tightened the writing throughout
- Updated the references with 17 new citations

Chapter 15—Culture and Organizations

- Updated the data in Table 15.4
- Changed the title and labels in Table 15.8 to be less offensive
- Redrew Figure 15.2 to simplify its message and content
- Included new writing on "Culture Shock and Reverse Culture Shock" in section on "Overseas Assignments"
- Tightened the writing throughout
- Updated the references with 10 new citations

We are excited about the many changes and improvements that were made to the book. We are also especially excited about the interest and growth in cultural and cross-cultural psychology today around the world. We sincerely hope that this book can help to facilitate that excitement even more in all readers, and to encourage strong, critical thinking about culture and psychology in the future. As always, if you have any comments or suggestions on how we can continually improve this work, please don't hesitate to let us know.

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
September, 2015

1 An Introduction to Culture and Psychology

CHAPTER CONTENTS

Most of what we know about the human mind, psychological processes, and human behavior comes from scientific research conducted in the United States involving American university students enrolled in introductory psychology courses as study participants. The information researchers get from those studies form the basis of what we think we know about people, and the basis of mainstream psychology. In this book we ask this simple question: Is what we know in mainstream psychology applicable for most people of the world? Besides raising that question, this book also looks to research involving participants from other cultures for those answers.

Why is asking that question important? All we have to do is to see how rapidly the world around us is changing, and how we live, work, play, and interact with people from many different cultural backgrounds more today than ever before. Think about this: Just over a century ago in 1904,

- The average life expectancy in the United States was 47 years.
- Only 14 percent of the homes in the United States had a bathtub.
- Only 8 percent of the homes had a telephone.
- A 3-minute call from Denver to New York City cost $11.
- There were only 8,000 cars in the United States, and only 144 miles of paved roads.
- The maximum speed limit in most cities was 10 mph.
- Alabama, Mississippi, Iowa, and Tennessee were each more heavily populated than California. With a mere 1.4 million residents, California was only the 21st most-populous state in the union.
- The average wage in the United States was 22 cents an hour; the average U.S. worker made between $200 and $400 per year.
- More than 95 percent of all births in the United States took place at home.
- Ninety percent of all U.S. physicians had no college education; instead, they attended medical schools, many of which were condemned in the press and by the government as "substandard."
- Sugar cost 4 cents a pound; eggs were 14 cents a dozen; coffee cost 15 cents a pound.
- Most women washed their hair only once a month and used borax or egg yolks for shampoo.
- The five leading causes of death in the United States were pneumonia and influenza, tuberculosis, diarrhea, heart disease, and stroke.
- The population of Las Vegas was 30.
- Crossword puzzles, canned beer, and iced tea had not yet been invented.
- There was no Mother's Day or Father's Day.
- One in 10 U.S. adults could not read or write.
- Only 6 percent of Americans had graduated high school.
- Marijuana, heroin, and morphine were all available over the counter at corner drugstores. According to one pharmacist, "Heroin clears the complexion, gives buoyancy to the mind, regulates the stomach and the bowels, and is, in fact, a perfect guardian of health."
- Eighteen percent of households in the United States had at least one full-time servant or domestic help.

- There were only about 230 reported murders in the entire United States.
- And we got this list from someone else whom we have never met, without typing it ourselves, on the Internet, which did not exist, on a computer, which did not exist.

The world is changing at an amazingly rapid pace, and one of the most important ways in which it is changing is in terms of cultural diversity. This increasingly diversifying world has created a wonderful environment for personal challenge and growth, but it also brings with it an increased potential for misunderstandings, confusion, and conflict.

Cultural diversity and intercultural relations are some of our biggest challenges. Those challenges are also our biggest opportunities. If we can meet those challenges and leverage them, we can achieve a potential in diversity and intercultural relations that will result in far more than the sum of the individual components that comprise that diverse universe. This sum will result in tremendous personal growth for many individuals, as well as in positive social evolution, bringing about mutual welfare and benefit built on interpersonal and intercultural respect.

This book was written with this belief—to meet the challenge of cultural diversity and turn that challenge into opportunity. Doing so is not easy. It requires each of us to take an honest look at our own cultural background and heritage, and at their merits and limitations. Fear, rigidity, and sometimes stubborn pride come with any type of honest assessment. Yet without that assessment, we cannot meet this challenge and improve intercultural relations.

In academia, that assessment begs fundamental questions about what is taught in our colleges and universities today. To ask how cultural diversity potentially changes the nature of the truths and principles of human behavior delivered in the halls of science is to question the pillars of much of our knowledge about the world and about human behavior. From time to time, we need to shake those pillars to see just how sturdy they are. This is especially true in the social sciences and particularly in psychology—the science concerned with people's mental processes and behaviors.

Psychology with a Cultural Perspective

The Goals of Psychology

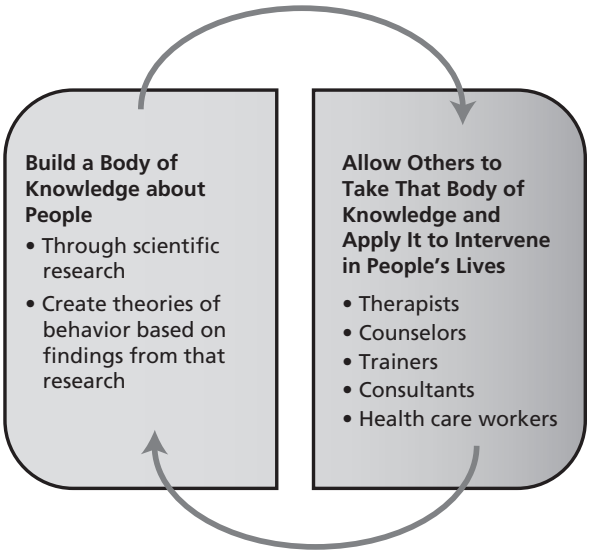
Psychology as a discipline is well equipped to meet the challenge of cultural diversity. One of the ways psychology has met this challenge is by recognizing the large impact culture has on psychological processes and human behavior. In the past few decades, a new and thriving subdiscipline within psychology known as **cultural psychology** has emerged to capture this spirit. In order to get a better handle on what cultural psychology is all about, it is important first to have a good grasp of the goals of psychology.

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.

As a discipline, 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 even predict it before it happens. Psychologists achieve this by conducting research and creating theories of behavior based on the findings from that research.

The second goal of psychology involves allowing others to take that body of knowledge and apply it to intervene in people's lives to help improve those lives. Psychologists achieve this in many ways: as therapists, counselors, trainers, and

Figure 1.1
The Goals of Psychology as a Discipline



consultants. The field of psychology also achieves this goal by providing information to students and professionals in many other fields, such as nursing and health care, businesspersons, and teachers, 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 in a positive fashion (Figure 1.1).

The two goals of psychology—creating a body of knowledge and applying that knowledge—are closely related. Psychologists and other professionals who are informed by psychology 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 a lifelong learning process that helps 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 (see, for example, Gergen, Gulerce, Lock, & Misra, 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.

Culture and Psychology

Because knowledge generation is an important part of psychology, we need to have a good grasp of how that knowledge is generated in the first place, and that is through scientific research. As we mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, most research on human behavior reported in mainstream psychology comes from studies conducted in the United States involving American university students enrolled in introductory psychology courses as study participants. Thus, most knowledge we have in psychology is based on studies with American students.

Considering that U.S. Americans comprise only a small fraction of the world population (around 5%), some scholars have questioned the applicability of findings to all or most people around the world based so much on a single demographic (Arnett, 2008). Some have suggested that most research to date is based on WEIRDOS—Western, educated, industrialized, rich, and democratic cultures—and is severely limited because WEIRDOS aren't representative of everyone as a whole and that psychologists routinely use them to make broad, and quite likely false, claims about what drives human behavior (Henrich, Heine, & Norenzayan, 2010).

We don't take such an extreme view; we believe that there is nothing inherently wrong with such research, and the findings obtained from American samples are definitely true for those samples at the times the studies were conducted. Those findings may be replicated across multiple samples using different methods, and many findings weather tests for scientific rigor that would normally render them acceptable as a truth or principle about human behavior. And, there are a number of universal psychological processes that can certainly be tested on WEIRDOS and that are likely applicable to non-WEIRDOS. Thus, rather than raising questions specifically about WEIRDOS, we believe that psychology should question the characteristics of the people in *any* study: Is what we know about human behavior true for all people, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, culture, class, or lifestyle (see Figure 1.2)?

Cultural psychology asks this question by conducting research with people of differing cultural backgrounds, and uses cross-cultural research as the primary research method that tests the cultural parameters of psychological knowledge. **Cross-cultural research** involves participants of differing cultural backgrounds and allows for comparisons of findings across those cultures. Cross-cultural research is a method that allows psychologists to examine how knowledge about people and their behaviors from one culture may or may not hold for people from other cultures.

As a method, cross-cultural research can be understood as a matter of *scientific philosophy*—that is, the logic underlying the methods used to conduct research and generate knowledge. This idea is based on a few assumptions. First, the results of

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.

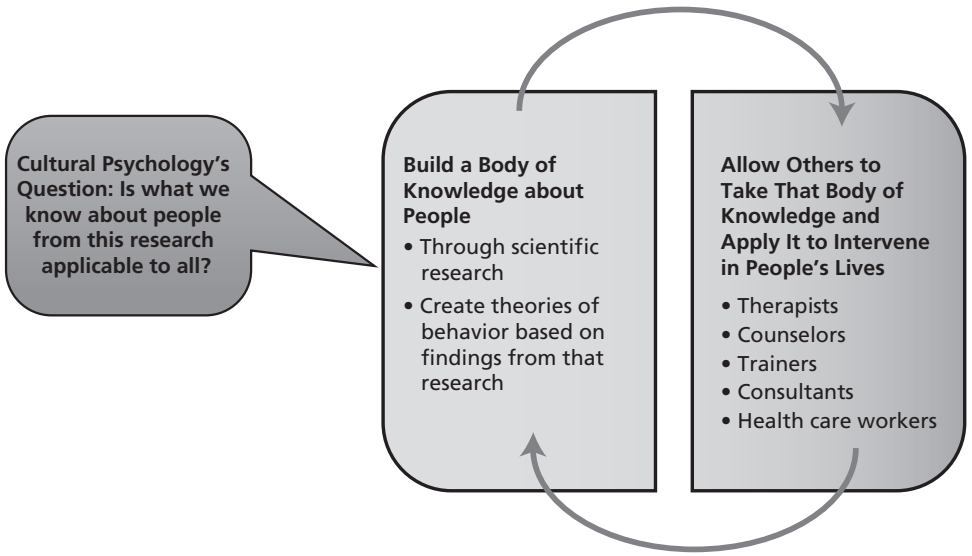


Figure 1.2 The Role of Cultural Psychology in Relation to the Goals of Psychology

any psychological research are bound by our methods, and the standards of care we use when we evaluate the rigor and quality of research are also bound by the cultural frameworks within which our science occurs (Pe-Pua, 1989). Theories depend on research to confirm or disconfirm them; research involves methods designed to collect data to test theories and their hypotheses. Methods involve many parameters, one of which includes decisions about the nature of the participants in the study. Cross-cultural research involves the inclusion of people of different cultural backgrounds—a specific type of change in one of the parameters of research methods. Thus, in some sense, cross-cultural research is relatively easy to understand conceptually because it involves a change in the nature of the participant characteristics (i.e., their cultural backgrounds).

But this basic change in research methods allows us to ask profound questions about what we think we know in mainstream psychology. We need to examine whether the information we have learned, or will learn in the future, is applicable to all people of all cultures or only to some people of some cultures. Scientific philosophy suggests that we have a duty and an obligation to ask these questions about the scientific process and about the nature of the truths we have learned, or will learn, about human behavior. The knowledge that is created in psychology should be accurate and descriptive of all people, not only of people of a certain culture (or race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, or sexual orientation). The field of psychology has an obligation—to its teachers, students, practitioners, and especially all the people whose lives are touched by its knowledge—to produce accurate knowledge that reflects and applies to them. Cross-cultural research plays an important role in helping psychologists produce that accurate knowledge for all because it tests whether what is true for some is also true for others.

This is not an easy challenge for the field to embrace. In almost any contemporary resource in psychology, cultural diversity in findings and cultural differences in research are widespread and commonplace. These differences are forcing psychologists to take a good, hard look at their theories and, in many cases, to call for revisions, sometimes major, in the way we have conceptualized many aspects of behavior. As a result, many psychologists see an evolution in psychology, with culture incorporated as a necessary and important ingredient. Some authors have even argued that the move toward a cultural psychology should really be a move toward a multicultural or even polycultural psychology— one that incorporates the unique psychologies of the multitude of cultures around the world that may not be assimilable into a single psychology (Gergen et al., 1996; Morris, Chiu, & Liu, 2015). Whether or not that position is accepted, current mainstream psychology is clearly moving in this direction, finding ways to educate and be educated by other psychological approaches in other cultures. This move involves basic changes in the way psychologists understand many aspects of human behavior. We are in the midst of this evolution in knowledge right now, making this time a very exciting one for psychology.

The Contribution of the Study of Culture on Psychological Truths

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.

The contribution that cultural psychology and cross-cultural research makes to psychology as a whole goes far beyond simple methodological changes in the studies. It is a way of understanding principles about human behaviors within a global perspective. Cross-cultural research not only tests whether people of different cultures are similar or different; it also tests possible limitations in our knowledge by examining whether psychological theories and principles are **universal** (true for all people of all cultures) or **culture-specific** (true for some people of some cultures).

Because cross-cultural research is a method, it is not topic-specific. Thus, cultural psychologists are interested in a broad range of phenomena related to human behavior—from perception to language, child rearing to psychopathology. What distinguishes cultural psychology from mainstream psychology, therefore, is not the topic of study but the interest in understanding cultural influences on behavior, and the testing of limitations to knowledge using cross-cultural research methods. The impact of the growth of cultural psychology and cross-cultural research on mainstream psychology has been enormous, and we introduce you to the main cross-cultural findings in various areas of psychology in the rest of this book.

The Contribution of the Study of Culture in 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 one of the main contributions of cross-cultural research to application is the process it fosters in asking questions. Practicing psychology with a cultural perspective is an exercise in critical thinking. 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 other than culture, such as socioeconomic class, heredity, or environment, may contribute to these differences? Asking these questions, being skeptical yet inquisitive, together define the process underlying psychology from a cultural perspective. This process is even more important than the content because it can be applied to all areas of our lives, especially in this multicultural world.

The Growth of Cultural Psychology and Cross-Cultural Research

Although cross-cultural research has been conducted for over a century, cultural psychology has truly made a substantial impact on psychology in the past two decades. Much of this popularity is due to the increased awareness of the importance of culture as an influential factor on behavior and, unfortunately, to increased awareness of the frequency of intercultural conflicts within and between countries (e.g., see Christopher, Wendt, Marecek, & Goodman, 2014). The flagship journal of the International Association of Cross-Cultural Psychology, the *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology,* has now passed its 40th year of publishing top-level cross-cultural research. Other specialty journals also exist, such as *Cross-Cultural Research* and *Culture and Psychology*. The number of research articles incorporating people of different cultures has increased tremendously in all top-tier mainstream journals as well, such as the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, Developmental Psychology,* and *Psychological Science.* Theoretical models are increasingly incorporating culture, and the number of books involving culture has also increased.

Broadly speaking, an increased interest in cultural psychology is a normal and healthy development. As psychology has matured, many scientists have come to recognize that much of the research and theories once thought to be universal for all people is indeed culture-bound. The increasing importance and recognition of cultural psychology are reactions to this realization.

What Is Culture?

Understanding psychology from a cultural perspective starts with a better appreciation of what is culture. Many scholars and laypersons use the words *culture, race, nationality,* and *ethnicity* interchangeably, as if they were all terms denoting the same

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.

concepts. They do not, and as we begin our study of culture and psychology, it is important to define exactly what we mean by the term **culture**.

We use the word *culture* in many different ways in everyday language and discourse. We use the concept of culture to describe and explain a broad range of activities, behaviors, events, and structures in our lives. We use culture to describe rules, norms, learning, or problem solving; refer to the origins of a group and its heritage or traditions; and define the organization of a group (Berry, Poortinga, Segall, & Dasen, 1992; Kroeber & Kluckholn, 1952/1963). Culture can refer to 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). The concept of culture is used in many different ways because it touches on so many aspects of life. Culture, in its truest and broadest sense, cannot simply be swallowed in a single gulp—not in this book, not in a university course, not in any training program. Although we will attempt to bring you closer to a better understanding of what culture is and how it influences our lives, we must begin by recognizing and admitting the breadth, scope, and enormity of culture.

We should also recognize that the concept of culture has different meanings in other cultures. In Japan, culture may refer to flower arranging or 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. Let's begin our introduction to culture by discussing where culture comes from.

Where Does Culture Come From?

Understanding the origins of any human culture helps us to appreciate cultures and cultural differences (and similarities) when we engage with them. There are four important sources of the origins of culture: group life, environment, resources, and the evolved human mind (Table 1.1).

Group Life

Humans are social animals, and have always lived in groups. We learned many hundreds of thousands of years ago that living in groups was better than living alone (just as many other animal species have). A man or woman alone has trouble surviving the attacks of animals, feeding themselves, taking care of their children, and meeting all the other tasks of living. And we all want the companionship of others.

Groups increase our chances for survival because they increase efficiency through division of labor. The division of labor allows groups to accomplish more

TABLE 1.1 Factors That Influence the Creation of Cultures

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

than any one person can, which is functional and adaptive for all the members of the group. Division of labor allows for accomplishing more tasks so that survival rates increase. But there's a downside to living in groups, which is that there is potential for social conflict and chaos *because people are different*. Because of those differences, groups can become inefficient, reducing the probability for survival. And if groups are uncoordinated and individuals just do their own thing without consideration of others, conflict and disorganization will occur, which lead to social chaos.

Environment

Groups live in specific environments, and the ecologies of those environments have a major impact on *how* they live. One aspect of ecology that influences cultures is climate. Some areas of the world, like New York or Seoul, South Korea, have harsh winters and miserably hot summers. Other areas of the world, 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 all year long, like San Francisco or Seattle. These ecological differences influence ways of living. Groups that live near the equator, in hot, humid, tropical areas, will exhibit a lifestyle that is very different from that of groups living in temperate or arctic zones, with seasonal changes and extremely cold weather. Those groups will have different dress styles, different ways of walking, different architecture, and different rituals and traditions, just because of the climate.

More important to culture than the absolute temperature of an area is the **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 happens to be around 22°C (about 72°F). Much colder or hotter climates make life much more difficult and demanding, and these harsher climates require people to do more to adjust and adapt. Harsher climates also create greater risks of food shortage and food spoilage, stricter diets, and more health problems (infectious and parasitic diseases tend to be more frequent in hotter climates). Demanding climates require special clothing, housing, and working arrangements, special organizations for the production, transportation, trade, storage of food, and special care and cure facilities. People in hotter climates tend to organize their daily activities more around shelter, shade, and temperature changes that occur during 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 the working hours. There, it is not uncommon for people to be having dinner outside at 11:00 P.M. or even midnight. People who live nearer the poles may 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).

Another ecological factor that influences culture is **population density**. This is the ratio of the number of people that live in a specific area relative to the size of that area. Some geographic areas have lots of people living in a very small space; that is, they have large population density, like New York City, Tokyo, Hong Kong, or Mexico City. Other areas have only few people in a very large area; they have low population density, like Alaska or the northern island of Hokkaido in Japan.

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.

What's important about population density is the number of people in an area in relation to the amount of **arable land** in that area—that is the amount of land on which food can grow to sustain the people in that area. A huge number of people in a small amount of space with scarce food will create a different way of living compared to a small number of people in a huge amount of space with abundant food. Moreover, the type of food that can be produced can be linked to interesting psychological

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

and cultural differences. Within 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 around them (Talhelm, et al., 2014).

Other ecological factors also influence culture. For instance, global changes in climate across history have affected the evolution of humans (Behrensmeyer, 2006), as has the incidence and prevalence of infectious diseases in different regions of the world (Murray & Schaller, 2010). Unless we talk about the very beginnings of human life, most human groups live in a region with a previous culture; thus, their previous culture will have had an impact on the kind of culture they have now. This is especially true for immigrants, who come to a land with an already existing culture and must deal with the process of acculturation (which we will talk about later in Chapter 14). Finally, environments differ in the amount of contact they allow 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, like Japan, the United Kingdom. One could even argue that the United States has some aspects of an island mentality. All these factors are likely to influence people's attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors, and hence their culture.

Resources

Another source for the origin of cultures is resources. Resources can be natural, such as the presence or absence of water or land to farm to grow vegetables or raise animals. A land void of natural resources may encourage teamwork and community spirit among its members and interrelationships 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 a land with abundant resources, however, a group would have less need for such values and attitudes, and these attributes would be less important in its culture.

Perhaps the major type of resource that influences cultures today is money. Money is a human cultural product; it is not a natural resource part of the land or environment. Affluence, which refers to the amount of money available to a person or group, can have a major impact on culture (van de Vliert, 2009). Abundant money can help to buffer the consequences of a lack of resources and harsh climates, which in turn have 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.

Thus the combination of the environment (climate, population density, arable land, etc.) and resources (food, water, and affluence) are some of the most important factors that contribute to a culture. For example, in the United States, we have the most sophisticated technology and the most money any country has ever had, so we can live in a similar way almost anywhere in the country. Even then, each part of the country has a local economy that comes from the geography, climate, and resources available. It is hard to grow corn on the north slope of Alaska. There is no timber or fishing industry in Death Valley. There aren't many gold or coal mines in Florida. We all still have to make a living from what we can find around us (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.

The Evolved Human Mind

Fortunately, people do not come to the world as complete blank slates in order to deal with the problem of adapting to their environments and surviving. Survival depends on the degree to which people can adapt to their environments and to the contexts in which they live. To do so, they come to the world with specific needs and motives and with what we call a psychological toolkit that provides them with the tools with which to adapt and survive.

Needs and Motives Humans have 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 if they are to survive. They also include safety and security needs—the need for hygiene, shelter, and warmth (remember the discussion above about climate). These needs are universal to all people of all cultures.

These basic needs are associated with social motives (Hogan, 1982; Sheldon, 2004), which 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 rivals for food and sexual partners, giving birth and raising children, and battling nature (Buss, 1988, 1991, 2001). In fact, we need to do these things in our everyday lives today as well. All individuals and groups have a universal problem of how to adapt to their environments in order to address these needs and motives, and must create solutions to these universal 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.

Universal Psychological Toolkits Another resource that humans bring with them to the world is what we call the **universal psychological toolkit** (Table 1.2). The universal psychological toolkit is a term we use to refer to the many abilities and aptitudes that nature and evolution endowed humans with in order to help them to address their basic needs and social motives, and ultimately to adapt and survive. These tools 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.

TABLE 1.2 Contents of the Universal Psychological Toolkit

Cognitive Abilities	Emotions	Personality Traits
■ Language	■ Basic Emotions	■ Extraversion
■ Complex Social Cognition	■ Self-Conscious Emotions	■ Neuroticism
■ Memory	■ Moral Emotions	■ Openness
■ Hypothetical Reasoning		■ Agreeableness
■ Problem Solving		■ Conscientiousness
■ Planning		

For example, language is one of the tools 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, in fact, is a uniquely human product.

Another tool in our toolkit involves a host of cognitive abilities that allow for complex social cognition, memory, hypothetical reasoning, problem solving, and planning. For instance, one of the most important thinking abilities that humans have unlike other animals is the ability to believe that other people are intentional agents—that is, that they have wishes, desires, and intentions to act and behave. We know that we have our own intentions. But we also know that other people have their own intentions. And we know that they know that we have intentions. That's why being in the "public eye" takes on special meaning for humans, because we know that others can make judgments about us. And that's also why the anonymity of a darkened theater or an anonymous Internet chatroom or online cyberspace allows us to do and say things we normally wouldn't in person. Thus, we have causal beliefs (which form the basis for the study of *attributions,* which we will discuss later in Chapter 14). *Morality*, a uniquely human product, is probably rooted in this unique human cognitive ability (and we will discuss this 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 (we will discuss these more in Chapter 4). That is probably why we don't just take off our clothes in the middle of the street, have sex in the middle of the park in broad daylight, or just punch those with whom we disagree. Other animals, however, seem to not care as much.

Other animals can and do view themselves as somewhat intentional agents. But one thing that differentiates humans from other animals is the fact that we have the cognitive ability to share our intentions with others. One of the major functions of language, in fact, is to allow us to communicate a **shared intentionality** (Matsumoto & Hwang, 2016; Tomasello & Herrmann, 2010). The fact that we can read each other's facial expressions of emotion, and that this is a universal ability (see Chapter 8), also contributes to our ability to create shared intentions. Shared intentionality may be at the heart of social coordination, which allows for the creation of human culture (Fiske, 2000).

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

Another important ability that humans have that animals do not is the ability to continually build upon improvements. When humans create something that is good, it usually evolves to a next generation, in which it is even better. This is true for computers, cars, audio music players, and unfortunately, weapons. Tomasello, Kruger, and Ratner (1993) call 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.

Our cognitive skills also include memory, 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. This allows us to plan things and to worry about the uncertainty of the future, both of which form the basis of important cultural practices.

People are also equipped with the ability to have emotions. As we will learn later in Chapter 8, 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. They are part of an archaic, biologically innate system that we share with some other animals. People can have many different types of emotions, such as self-conscious emotions like pride, shame, guilt, or embarrassment, and moral emotions such as outrage or indignation.

Finally, people come equipped with personality traits. As we will learn in Chapter 6, humans around the world share a core set of traits that give them predispositions in order to adapt to their environments, solve social problems, and address their basic needs. Many cultures of the world are associated with differences in mean levels of several personality traits. Although it is possible that cultures shaped the average personalities of its members, it is also possible that groups of individuals with certain kinds of personalities and temperaments banded together in certain geographic regions because it was beneficial for their adaptation to the environment, and thus influenced culture. For example, cultures high on the dimension known as uncertainty avoidance (more below) are associated with higher means on the personality trait known as Neuroticism. It could be that uncertainty avoidant cultures produce more neurotic individuals; but it is also possible that more neurotic individuals exist in these areas in the first place because these traits are more beneficial for survival in those environments, and they help to create cultural systems that are more uncertainty avoidant.

Collectively, the universal psychological toolkits allow humans to adapt to their environments in order to meet their needs. Individuals differ in how much of these toolkits they have, or how they use them, but we all have pretty much the same toolkits. That's why anyone born anywhere in the world could be taken at birth and raised in a different culture, and they would have the basic toolkit to get along in that new culture, and the new culture would seem normal to them. They would think and act like other people in that culture. They would still have their own personal character, but it would be expressed in ways appropriate to their new culture. Thus, people come to the world pre-equipped with an evolved, naturally selected set of abilities and aptitudes that allows them to adapt, survive, and create cultures.

A Definition of Culture

A Functional Understanding of Culture Putting the previous section all together, we know that people have needs that must be met in order to survive, and come to the world with a universal psychological toolkit to help address those needs. They live in groups, and the groups exist in different ecologies, with different resources. Thus, groups of people need to adapt their behaviors to their ecologies by maximizing the use of their available resources in order to meet their needs; the abilities and aptitudes in their psychological toolkits give them the tools to adapt. These adaptations produce behaviors, ways of living, ways of thinking, and ways of being. These ways become the contents of a group's culture. The concept of "culture," in fact, is an abstract metaphor for these ways. Culture helps explain and describe those ways.

Living in groups requires social coordination. If we are coordinated, then people are efficient in doing their part for their group to survive. And shared intentionality is at the root of social coordination. If we are not coordinated, there is social chaos, which is one of the potential downsides of living in groups. Thus we need to keep social order and be coordinated and minimize social chaos, so we can accomplish tasks efficiently and survive.

To achieve social order, coordination, and group harmony, and avoid chaos, we create rules of life, or systems of living, or ways of being. This is culture. Culture provides guidelines or roadmaps on what to do, how to think, and what to feel. Those guidelines

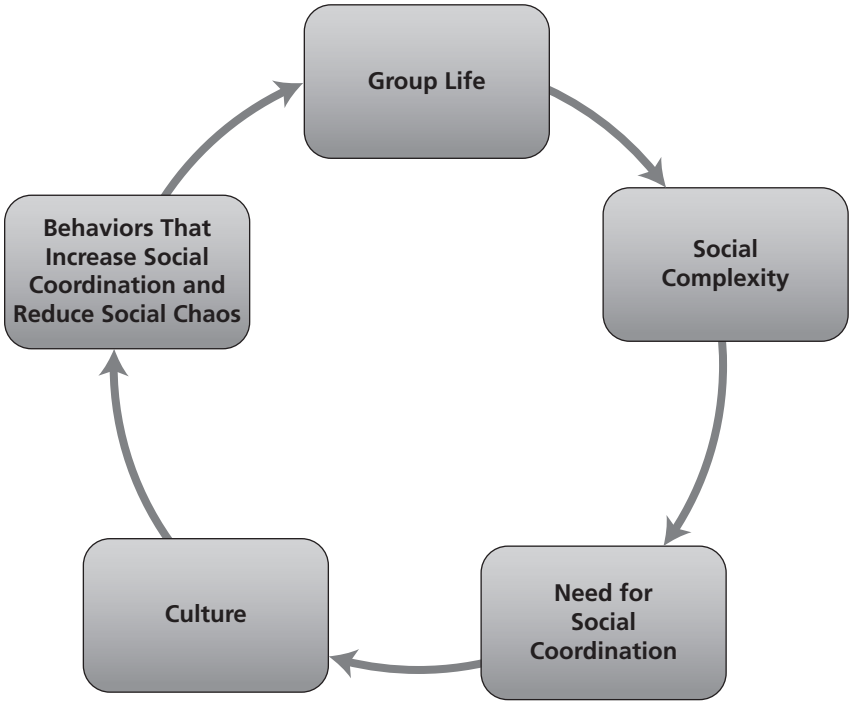


FIGURE 1.3 A Functional Understanding of Culture

are passed along from one generation to the next, so that future generations don't have to keep reinventing the wheel. That's why cultural products are always improved; they are always ratcheted up, never down. Have you ever noticed that computers and cell phones always get better, not worse? Same for raising crops, making cars, and all other cultural products. Those ways of living that groups create take advantage of our universal psychological toolkits to meet our basic human needs (Figure 1.3).

A Definition Over the years, many scholars have attempted to define culture. Tylor (1865) defined culture as all capabilities and habits learned as members of a society. Linton (1936) referred to culture as social heredity. Kroeber and Kluckholn (1952/1963) defined culture as patterns of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinct achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts. Rohner (1984) defined culture as 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. Jahoda (1984) argued that culture is a descriptive term that captures not only rules and meanings but also behaviors. Pelto and Pelto (1975) defined culture in terms of personality, whereas Geertz (1975) defined it as shared symbol systems transcending individuals. Berry et al. (1992) defined culture simply as the shared way of life of a group of people, and Baumeister (2005) defined culture as an information-based system that allows people to live together and satisfy their needs.

There is no one perfect or accepted definition of culture that everyone can agree upon. That's OK because culture is all encompassing. What is important, however, is that we have a working definition of culture for our use. In this book, we define

human **culture** as *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.*

Human cultures exist first to enable us to meet basic needs of survival. Human cultures help us to meet others, to procreate and produce offspring, to put food on the table, to provide shelter from the elements, and to care for our daily biological essential needs, all of which are necessary for survival.

But human culture is so much more than that. It allows for complex social networks and relationships. It allows us to enhance the meaning of normal, daily activities. It allows us to pursue happiness, and to be creative in music, art, and drama. It allows us to seek recreation and to engage in sports and organize competition, whether in the local community Little League or the Olympic Games. It allows us to search the sea and space. It allows us to create mathematics, as well as an educational system. It allows us to go to the moon, to create a research laboratory on Antarctica, and send probes to Mars and Jupiter. Unfortunately, it also allows us to have wars, create weapons of mass destruction, and recruit and train terrorists.

Human culture does all this by creating and maintaining complex social systems, institutionalizing and improving cultural practices, creating beliefs about the world, and communicating a meaning system to other humans and subsequent generations. It is the product of the evolution of the human mind, increased brain size, and complex cognitive abilities, in response to the specific ecologies in which groups live and the resources available to them to live. Culture results from the interaction among universal biological needs and functions, universal social problems created to address those needs, and the context in which people live. Culture is a solution to the problem of individuals' 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 may optimize the tapping of resources to meet survival needs. Out of all the myriad behaviors possible in the human repertoire, cultures help to focus people's behaviors and attention on a few limited alternatives in order to maximize their effectiveness, given their resources and their environment (Poortinga, 1990).

Is Culture a Uniquely Human Product?

If we understand culture as a solution to the problem of adapting to our contexts in order to meet basic biological and social needs, then one question that arises is whether humans are the only beings that have culture. After all, *all* living beings need to adapt to their life contexts so as to meet basic needs and survive. In fact, there are many characteristics of human cultural life that are shared with other animals. For example, consider:

- Many animals are social; that is, they work and live in groups. Fish swim in schools, wolves hunt in packs, and lions roam in prides.
- In animal societies, there are clear social networks and hierarchies. The staring game played by humans as children is used by animals to create dominance hierarchies. And like the human game, the animal that smiles or averts its gaze loses and becomes the subordinate.
- Many animals invent and use tools (Whiten, Horner, & De Waal, 2005). Perhaps the most famous initial 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).

- Many animals communicate with each other. Bees communicate via a complex dance concerning the source of flowers. Ants leave trails to communicate their paths to themselves and others. Relatives of monkeys who wash sweet potatoes at Koshima Island themselves began to wash sweet potatoes.

The list goes on and on. Thus it is clear that animals have at least a rudimentary form of culture consisting of social customs (McGrew, 2004) as we defined it above (responses and solutions to the problem of adapting to context in order to meet basic needs for survival) (Boesch, 2003). So the answer to the question—Is culture a uniquely human product?—appears to be *no* (see also de Waal, 2013).

Yet human cultures are different from other animal cultures, and understanding how we are different serves as an important basis to understanding how all humans are universally similar in important ways. Addressing the uniqueness of human culture begs the question of what unique skills humans have that other animals don't.

There are several characteristics of human social and cultural life that differentiates human culture from those of 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, Kendal, Schapiro, Thierry, & Laland, 2012). Recent research has demonstrated that 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).

Cumulative culture allows human cultures to differ from animal cultures on *complexity, differentiation,* and *institutionalization.* For example, not only do humans make tools. We make tools to make tools. We automate the process of making tools and mass distribute tools around the world for global consumption. Because humans have complex social cognition, language, shared intentionality, and ratcheting, human social and cultural life is much more complex than that of other animals. We are members of multiple groups, each having its own purpose, hierarchy, and networking system. Much of human cumulative culture is based on uniquely human cognitive skills, such as teaching and learning through verbal instruction, imitation, and prosociality (Dean et al., 2012). 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"

Although these terms are often used interchangeably, we distinguish between "society" and "culture." *Society* is "a system of interrelationships among people." It refers to the structure of relationships that exist among individuals. In human societies, individuals have multiple relationships with multiple groups, and the groups themselves have interrelationships with other groups. Thus human societies are complex. Nonhuman animals are also social and have societies.

Culture, however, refers to the meanings and information that are associated with those social networks. "Family," for example, is a social group that exists in both the human and nonhuman animal world. But human cultures give the concept of family its own unique meaning, and individuals draw specific information from these meanings. Moreover, different human cultures assign different meanings to this social group. Thus, while many societies have a structural system of interrelationships, the meanings associated with those systems are cultural. For example,

"older brother" is a 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. In other cultures, the older brother is a relatively more exalted position within the family, associated with certain duties and obligations that do not exist with other siblings.

Groups That Have Cultures

Given our definition of culture and what influences it, the next question that arises is, which human groups have culture? Certainly there are many groups of individuals that have culture, and here we discuss only a few (see Table 1.3).

Culture and Nationality

Nationality refers to a person's country of origin, and countries have their own cultures. This is because countries are associated with each of the factors that influence culture. For example, countries are defined by specific boundaries that describe their ecology—geography, climate, and natural resources. Countries also have their own unique sociocultural history, language, government, and economic base, all of which affect culture. Countries also have differences in mean levels of aggregate personality traits, which can affect culture.

Of course, this is a generalization, and although countries can certainly have a dominant culture, they can also have many subcultures. The concept of "country" is a geopolitical demarcation that may include many different cultures. There are vast cultural differences, for instance, within countries in the Middle East and North Africa. This is true within nearly all countries as well, including the United States, with the differences between the East and West Coasts, the South, the Midwest, Alaska, and Hawaii. Thus, we need to engage in a study of culture and psychology by first acknowledging the multicultural reality that exists around the world, both between and within countries.

Culture and Language

As we will discuss in Chapter 9, a cultural group defines meaningful things in its world by encoding its world in words, and by incorporating unique aspects of language (syntax, grammar, pragmatics). Thus different language groups typically have different cultures. Even if the language is the same, different dialects of a language often denote slightly different cultures. English, for example, is the primary language of England, parts of Canada, the United States, Australia, and New Zealand. But there are differences in the use of English in each of these countries, and they denote interesting differences in their cultures. Even within each of these countries, there are

TABLE 1.3 Contrasting Groups That Have Cultures from Social Constructs That Are Not Culture

Groups That Have Cultures	Constructs That Are Not Culture
■ Countries/Nations	■ Race
■ Language	■ Personality
■ Ethnicity	■ Popular Culture
■ Gender	
■ Disabilities	
■ Sexual Orientations	

different dialects and regional differences in the language that denote differences in local and regional cultures. In the United States, for instance, English is vastly different between the West Coast, Hawaii, the deep South, and the northeast.

Culture and Ethnicity

The word *ethnicity* is derived from the Greek *ethnos*, meaning people of a nation or tribe, and is usually used to denote one's racial, national, or cultural origins. In the United States, ethnic groups include African Americans, Asians and Pacific Islanders, Hispanics and Latinos, and Native Americans. Ethnicity is generally used in reference to groups characterized by a common nationality, geographic origin, culture, or language (Betancourt & Lopez, 1993). Understanding the relationship between ethnicity and culture can be tricky. To the extent that ethnicity refers to national origins, it may denote aspects of culture. But psychologists and laypersons often equate ethnicity with race, and as we will discuss below, this is problematic. Most importantly, ethnicity as a label has no explanatory value; although information about ethnic differences on a broad range of psychological phenomena can be useful, such information by itself does not explain the nature of the relationship between ethnicity and psychology. Exactly what variables related to ethnicity account for psychological differences among groups of individuals? The use of ethnicity (or race) as a categorical descriptor does little to address this important concern. Put simply, just knowing the ethnicity or race of a person does little to explain psychological outcomes in cognition, emotion, motivation, or health (Phinney, 1996). Given these limitations, psychologists need to go beyond the use of ethnic labels to explain individual and group differences.

Phinney (1996) has outlined three key aspects of ethnicity that deserve further attention: cultural norms and values; the strength, salience, and meaning of ethnic identity; and attitudes associated with minority status. We agree with the emphasis on culture as an underlying determinant of psychological functioning. Culture makes ethnic group differences meaningful.

Culture and Gender

Sex refers to the biological differences between men and women, the most obvious being the anatomical differences in their reproductive systems. Accordingly, the term *sex roles* is used to describe the behaviors and patterns of activities men and women engage in that are directly related to their biological differences and the process of reproduction (such as breast-feeding). *Gender* refers to the behaviors or patterns of activities that a society or culture deems appropriate for men and women. These behavior patterns may or may not be related to sex and sex roles, although they oftentimes are. *Gender role* refers to the degree to which a person adopts the gender-specific and appropriate behaviors ascribed by his or her culture.

Describing and understanding psychological gender differences requires us to go beyond the biological differences between men and women. Gender differences arise because of differences in the psychological cultures transmitted to men and women. Gender differences are thus cultural differences. Of course, men and women also belong to a larger culture such as a national culture, and their gender cultures may coexist within the larger culture. This is yet another example of how culture can be understood on multiple levels of analysis, as the definition of culture presented earlier in the chapter suggests.

Culture and Disability

Persons with disabilities share some type of physical impairment in their senses, limbs, or other parts of their bodies. Although the lay public has generally viewed the

main distinction of persons with disabilities as the physical impairments they have, a growing body of work has found important sociopsychological characteristics of disability as well (e.g., De Clerck, 2010). Persons with disabilities share the same feelings, ways of thinking, and motivations as everyone else. Beyond that, however, they also share some unique ways of thinking and feeling that may be specific to their disability. To the extent that they share certain unique psychological attitudes, opinions, beliefs, behaviors, norms, and values, they share a unique culture.

A number of authors have begun to describe the culture of disability (Conyers, 2003; Eddey & Robey, 2005). These works highlight the unique psychological and sociocultural characteristics of disabled individuals, refocusing our attention on a broader picture of the person in understanding the psychological characteristics of persons with disabilities. Seen in this light, psychological studies involving participants with disabilities can be viewed as yet another example of cross-cultural studies, as they involve comparisons not only of the presence or absence of impairment, but of more important conditions of culture.

Culture and Sexual Orientation

People form different sexual relationships with others, and the persons with whom they form such relationships constitute their sexual orientation. We often view these relationships as the sole or major defining characteristic of a person's sexual orientation. Yet one of the most important aspects of any sexual orientation—whether straight or gay, mono or bi—is the particular psychological outlook and characteristics that are shared by and unique to each orientation.

These distinctive psychological characteristics may be cultural. Understanding shared psychological attributes among people sharing the same sexual orientation as cultural (e.g., gay culture) has become well accepted in the social sciences (Herdt & Howe, 2007).

The common thread in this section is that people are often grouped on the basis of shared characteristics that are visible or otherwise easily identifiable (race, ethnicity, nationality, sex, disability, or sexual orientation). Although there may or may not be objective bases underlying these classifications or groupings, we cannot forget that they are important social constructs and categories. We use these groupings as mental categories, as Hirschfield (1996) has suggested with race. Problems occur, however, when we consider these mental categories as endpoints in and of themselves, instead of as gatekeepers to important sociopsychological—that is, cultural—differences (and similarities) among the categories. Thus, it is crucial to recognize that one of the most important features of each of these social categories is its underlying culture—that unique set of shared attributes that influences its members' mental processes and behaviors.

Contrasting Culture, Race, Personality, and Popular Culture

Culture and Race

Race is not culture, and the terms should not be used interchangeably. There is considerable controversy surrounding what race is (Anderson & Nickerson, 2005). Many contemporary scholars suggest that there are three major races—Caucasoid, Mongoloid, and Negroid— but past studies of the origins of race have proposed as many as 37 different races (Yee, Fairchild, Weizmann, & Wyatt, 1993). Although laypersons typically use skin color, hair, and other physical characteristics to define race, most physical anthropologists use population gene frequencies. Regardless of which biological or physical characteristics one uses to define race, the very 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). Even 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 is also controversy about the origins of race. Prevalent theories posit a common ancestor originating in Africa 200,000 years ago, whose descendants then migrated to other parts of the world. Evidence for these theories comes from physical anthropology and archaeology. Other theories and apparently conflicting sets of evidence, however, 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 these folk theories and thus gains cognitive and social meaning and importance. And although race as a biological construct may be questionable, 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).

Our view is that "racial" differences are of little scientific or practical use without a clear understanding of the underlying causes of the similarities and differences observed (Betancourt & Lopez, 1993; Helms, Jernigan, & Mascher, 2005; Zuckerman, 1990). These causes will necessarily involve culture, as we defined in this book, because culture is a functional concept that determines what is psychologically meaningful and important for different races. Culture is what gives race its meaning.

Culture and Personality

Culture is not personality, and just because individuals exist in a culture and are representatives of a culture, they should not be equated with the culture. Culture is a macro, social, group-level construct; 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.

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 the next chapter on research methods. Culture, as we have defined it, involves a meaning and information system that is shared among individuals and transmitted across generations. Personality and individual differences are not necessarily shared. Culture is relatively stable across individuals, whereas personality is vastly different.

Culture versus Popular Culture

From time to time, it is fashionable to refer to fads that come and go as "culture." This is also referred to as "popular culture" by the mass media and in everyday conversation. *Popular culture* refers to trends in music, art, and other expressions that become popular among a group of people.

Certainly popular culture and culture as we have defined it share some similarities—perhaps most importantly, the sharing of an expression and its value by a group of people. But there are also important differences. For one, popular culture does not necessarily involve sharing a wide range of psychological attributes across various psychological domains. Culture as defined here involves a system of rules that cuts across attitudes, values, opinions, beliefs, norms, and behaviors. Popular culture does not involve a way of life.

A second important difference concerns cultural transmission across generations. 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).

Thus, although culture and popular culture have some similarities, there are important differences. The cross-cultural literature in psychology and the culture described in this book is the culture defined in this chapter, not popular culture (although the psychology of popular culture is a topic well deserving of consideration).

The Contents of Culture

As culture is a meaning and information system, it is an abstraction that we use to refer to many aspects of our ways of living. The contents of culture can be divided roughly into two major categories—the objective elements of culture and the subjective elements of culture (Kroeber & Kluckholn, 1952/1963; Triandis, 1972).

Objective Elements

The objective elements of culture involve objective, explicit elements that are physical. These would include architecture, clothes, foods, art, eating utensils, and the like. In today's world, advertising, texts, architecture, art, mass media, television, music, the Internet, Facebook, and Twitter are all physical, tangible, and important artifacts of culture (Lamoreaux & Morling, 2012; Morling & Lamoreaux, 2008). A recent study analyzed millions of digitized books—about 4% of all books ever printed—to investigate cultural trends over time (Michel et al., 2011) and demonstrated changes in vocabularies, grammar, collective memory, the adoption of technology, the pursuit of fame, censorship, and historical epidemiology. The objective elements of culture are much of the focus of archaeology or physical anthropology.

Subjective Elements

The subjective elements of culture include all those parts of a culture that do not survive people as physical artifacts. They include psychological processes such as attitudes, values, beliefs, as well as behaviors. Cultural psychologists are generally much more interested in the subjective elements of culture because they tap into psychological processes and behaviors (see Figure 1.4).

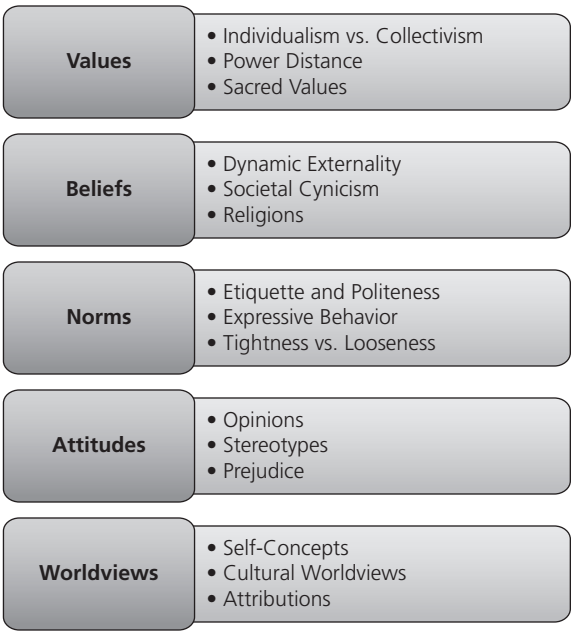


FIGURE 1.4
The Subjective Elements of Culture

Values

values A 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.

Values are guiding principles that refer to desirable goals that motivate behavior. They define the moral, political, social, economic, esthetic, or spiritual ethics of a person or group of people. Values can exist on two levels—personal values and cultural values. Personal values represent transitional desirable goals that serve as guiding principles in people's lives. Cultural values are shared, abstract ideas about what a social collectivity views as good, right, and desirable.

Scientists have suggested several ways in which cultures differ from one another on their values. The most well-known approach to understanding cultural values comes from work by Geert Hofstede. He studied work-related values around the world, and to date has 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). Hofstede suggests that there are five value dimensions that differentiate cultures:

- **Individualism versus Collectivism.** This dimension refers to the degree to which cultures will encourage, on one hand, the tendency for people to look after themselves and their immediate family only, or, on the other hand, for people to belong to ingroups that are supposed to look after its members in exchange for loyalty.
- **Power Distance.** This dimension refers to the degree to which cultures will encourage less powerful members of groups to accept that power is distributed unequally.
- **Uncertainty Avoidance.** This dimension refers to the degree to which people feel threatened by the unknown or ambiguous situations, and have developed beliefs, institutions, or rituals to avoid them.
- **Masculinity versus Femininity.** This dimension is characterized on one pole by success, money, and things, and on the other pole by caring for others and

quality of life. It refers to the distribution of emotional roles between males and females.

- **Long- versus Short-Term Orientation.** This dimension refers to the degree to which cultures encourage delayed gratification of material, social, and emotional needs among its members.

Another approach to understanding cultural values comes from Shalom Schwartz, who has identified seven cultural values that are universal (all descriptions taken from Schwartz & Ros, 1995, pp. 96–97).

- **Embeddedness.** The degree to which cultures will emphasize the maintenance of the status quo, propriety, and restraint of actions or inclinations that might disrupt the solidarity of the group or the traditional order. It fosters social order, respect for tradition, family security, and self-discipline.
- **Hierarchy.** The degree to which cultures emphasize the legitimacy of hierarchical allocation of fixed roles and resources such as social power, authority, humility, or wealth.
- **Mastery.** The degree to which cultures emphasize getting ahead through active self-assertion or by changing and mastering the natural and social environment. It fosters ambition, success, daring, and competence.
- **Intellectual Autonomy.** The degree to which cultures emphasize promoting and protecting the independent ideas and rights of the individual to pursue his/her own intellectual directions. It fosters curiosity, broadmindedness, and creativity.
- **Affective Autonomy.** The degree to which cultures emphasize the promotion and protection of people's independent pursuit of positive experiences. It fosters pleasure and an exciting or varied life.
- **Egalitarianism.** The degree to which cultures emphasize transcending selfish interests in favor of the voluntary promotion of the welfare of others. It fosters equality, social justice, freedom, responsibility, and honesty.
- **Harmony.** The degree to which cultures emphasize fitting in with the environment. It fosters unity with nature, protecting the environment, and a world of beauty.

Of these approaches to values, individualism versus collectivism has by far received the greatest attention in cross-cultural research. It has been used to both 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 work cited and described later in this book use this dimension to understand cultural differences.

The Hofstede and Schwartz cultural values are not mutually exclusive of each other, and they shouldn't be because they are merely different ways of examining cultural value systems. For example, Hofstede's individualism is positively correlated with Schwartz's affective and intellectual autonomy and egalitarianism (Schwartz, 2004). Power distance is positively correlated with long-term orientation, embeddedness, and hierarchy (Schwartz, 2004). And individualism, affective and intellectual autonomy, and egalitarianism tend to be negatively correlated with power distance, long-term orientation, embeddedness, and hierarchy.

Some cultural values are non-negotiable. These are called **sacred values** (Atran & Axelrod, 2007; Ginges, Atran, Medin, & Shikaki, 2007) and they differ from normal values because they incorporate moral beliefs that drive action in ways dissociated

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.

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. We have all 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 wife or husband even if they don't have particular religious beliefs. Some cultures permit a man to have more than one wife or a woman to have more than one husband. Some cultures believe that a family has honor that depends on the chastity of the women of the family and it is more important than the life of the woman.

Differences in values (and beliefs; see 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, Nisbett, Bowdle, & Schwarz, 1996; Vandello, Cohen, Grandon, & Franiuk, 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).

Beliefs

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

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."

A **belief** is a proposition that is regarded as true, and different cultures foster different belief systems. Cultural beliefs are known as **social axioms** (Bond et al., 2004; Leung et al., 2002). These are 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 cultural-level analyses on these data, and demonstrated that two social axiom dimensions existed on the cultural level:

- **Dynamic Externality.** This dimension represents an outward-oriented, simplistic grappling with external forces that are construed to include fate and a supreme being. It is the culture-level reflection of the belief structures that form part of a psychological constellation that 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 of beliefs that comprise this dimension. 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 a longer life. There is a strong sense of spirituality in this dimension.
- **Societal Cynicism.** This dimension represents a predominantly cognitive apprehension or pessimism of the world confronting people. "Caring about societal affairs only brings trouble upon oneself" and "kind-hearted people usually suffer losses" are examples of beliefs of this dimension. 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.

Religions are organized systems of beliefs, and are important to many people and cultures (Saroglou & Cohen, 2011). They tie together many attitudes, values, beliefs, worldviews, and norms. They provide guidelines for living. Religions are all similar in the sense that they serve a specific need—to help people manage themselves and their behaviors with others in order to avoid social chaos and provide social coordination. But they all do so in different ways. In some cultures like in the United States, religions can be considered somewhat separate from one's daily life practices. It's compartmentalized, like going to church on Sunday. In other cultures, religions are more infused with daily life, and it is impossible to think of daily practices without their religious meanings and connotations. In some cultures like the United States, there is a clear separation between religions and government. In other cultures, religions are so infused in the culture that it is impossible to think of culture, state, and religion separately. These differences are neither good nor bad; they are just the way things have evolved in different regions of the world.

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

Norms

Norms are generally accepted standards of behavior for any cultural group. Norms dictate the behavior that members of any culture have defined as the most appropriate in any given situation. All cultures give guidelines about how people are expected to behave through norms. For instance, in some cultures, people wear little or no clothing, while in others people normally cover almost all of their bodies. Recent research has uncovered norms for describing the behaviors of people of other cultures (Shteynberg, Gelfand, & Kim, 2009), as well as norms for controlling one's expressive behavior when emotional (Matsumoto et al., 2009; Matsumoto et al., 2008).

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

Norms and others kinds of social conventions are a normal aspect of our everyday lives. They can arise as the unintended consequence of people's efforts to coordinate with each other locally on small scales, and even global norms can emerge from these small-scale, local interactions even though people have no idea about the larger population or that they are coordinating on a larger, global scale (Centola & Baronchelli, 2015). Thus, large institutions or organizations are not necessary for the development of norms.

Normal behavior is related to social rituals in different cultures. Rituals are culturally prescribed conduct or any kind of established procedure or routine. These might include religious rituals, a bride's walking down the aisle with her father in American weddings, and having a cup of coffee in the morning. Rituals are important because they reinforce cultural meaning systems.

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 social behavior according to contemporary cultural and conventional norms within a cultural group. Etiquette is a big part of many cultures, although cultures often differ in what is polite, and what kinds of behaviors are deemed polite, and thus appropriate and "good." They are considered signs of maturity and sanity within each culture. People who don't follow social rules are considered strange in some way. Politeness is culture specific so that what is polite behavior in one culture is often different in another. For example, in some cultures, it is considered good manners and a sign of respect to avoid looking directly at another person. In the American culture, however, people are taught to "look others in the eye" as a form a respect. In the Middle East and North Africa, showing the soles of one's feet is insulting; Americans who cross their legs in a meeting may be unwittingly communicating this insult to 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). Tightness–looseness has two key 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) was the first to coin this term, arguing that traditional societies varied in their expression of and adherence to social norms. In his work, the Pueblo Indians, Hutterites, and the Japanese were examples of tight societies, in which norms were expressed very clearly and unambiguously, and in which severe sanctions were imposed on those who deviated from norms. By contrast, he identified the Skolt Lapps of northern Finland and the Thais as loose societies, in which norms were expressed through a wide variety of alternative channels, and in which there was a general lack of formality, order, and discipline and a high tolerance for deviant behavior.

Recent research involving surveys of 6,823 people in 33 modern nation or cultures has demonstrated the importance of tightness-looseness (Gelfand et al., 2011). This dimension appears to be 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. (Note that that ecological and historical components mentioned in this model and documented in this research are exactly those environmental factors we discussed earlier in this chapter as part of the foundational building blocks of culture.) The tightest cultures in this study—that is, cultures with the strongest social norms and sanctions for social transgressions—were Pakistan, Malaysia, Singapore, and South Korea; the loosest cultures were Ukraine, Estonia, Hungary, and Israel.

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

cultural worldviews Culturally specific belief systems about the world. They contain attitudes, beliefs, opinions, and values about the world. People have worldviews because of evolved, complex cognition; thus, having a worldview is a universal psychological process. The specific content of worldviews, however, is specific to and different for each culture.

self-concept The cognitive representations of who one is, that is, the ideas or images that one has about oneself, especially in relation to others, and how and why one behaves. The sum of one's idea about one's self, including physical, mental, historical, and relational aspects, as well as capacities to learn and perform. Self-concept is usually considered central to personal identity and change over time. It is usually considered partially conscious and partially unconscious or inferred in a given situation.

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 specific kinds of actions, such as believing that democracy is the best form of government. In many other cultures, especially in the past, people believed that most people aren't capable of understanding government, and that countries are best ruled by kings who are very religious or spiritually advanced.

Worldviews

Cultures also differ importantly in **cultural worldviews**. These are culturally specific belief systems about the world; they contain attitudes, beliefs, opinions, and values about the world. They are assumptions people have about their physical and social realities (Koltko-Rivera, 2004). For example, American culture fosters a worldview centering on personal control—that you are in control of your life, destiny, and happiness. Many other cultures do not foster this worldview; instead, one's life may be in the hands of God, fate, or the supernatural.

An important aspect of our worldviews is how we think about our self—what we know of as our **self-concept** (which we will discuss more in Chapter 5). In the United States, we tend to think that we are responsible for our choices, and that we are independent individuals. In other cultures, however, people see themselves as fundamentally connected with others, and do not consider themselves as unique, separate individuals. In some cultures, it is assumed that fate makes choice inevitable, or that

everybody depends on everyone else. In these cultures, all choices are group choices and everyone expects to share both the benefits and the failures of everyone's choices.

People have worldviews because of evolved, complex cognition; thus, having a worldview is a universal psychological process. The content of worldviews, however, is specific and different to each culture. Also, it's important to remember that behaviors and cultural worldviews are not necessarily related to each other; people of different cultures may have a belief about something that may not correspond with what their actual behaviors are (Matsumoto, 2006b); what people say is not always what they do. This distinction also needs to be taken into account when understanding the relationship between culture and psychology: cultural differences in worldviews may or may not be associated with cultural differences in behaviors.

How Does Culture Influence Human Behaviors and Mental Processes?

How can we understand the relationship between culture and human behaviors and mental processes? We believe that culture influences psychological processes—behaviors and mental processes—through the process outlined in Figure 1.5. Cultures exert their influences on individuals primarily through situational contexts because cultures give social contexts important meanings, and it is these meanings that drive behavior. (Recall the discussion of the cultural dimension of tightness vs. looseness above, and the important of situational contexts there.) We learn cultural meanings and information associated with specific situational contexts. Newborns have no culture (although they may very well have biological and temperamental dispositions to learning certain cultural tendencies; see Chapters 3 and 4). Individuals begin the process of learning about their culture, and more specifically, the rules and norms of appropriate behavior in specific situations and contexts, through a process known as **enculturation**, which we will discuss in Chapter 3. The enculturation process gradually shapes and molds individuals' psychological characteristics, including how individuals perceive their worlds, think about the reasons underlying their and other people's action, have and express emotions, and interact with others in specific contexts. As children grow older, they learn specific behaviors and patterns of activities appropriate and inappropriate for their culture in specific situational contexts.

enculturation The process by which individuals learn and adopt the ways and manners of their specific culture.

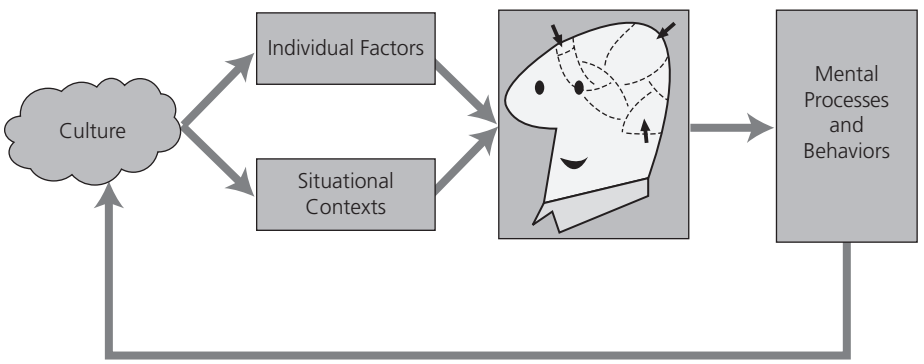


FIGURE 1.5 How Culture Influences Behavior