CROSS-CULTURAL PSYCHOLOGY

Critical Thinking and Contemporary Applications

EIGHTH EDITION

ERIC B. SHIRAEV AND DAVID A. LEVY

Routledge

"Levy and Shiraev have done it again – this book is right on the mark, richly digging into the complexity and depth of cross-cultural psychology examining new perspectives, dimensions, and ideas. Perfect timing for today's world. The book is essential reading for anyone in psychology and the behavioral sciences – don't miss this one!"

Fred Bemak, George Mason University and University of Malta
Counselors Without Borders, Founder.

"Given the increasingly multicultural nature of modern societies, this insightful and mature excursion into the dynamics of cross-cultural psychology could not come at a more propitious time. This is important reading and highly recommended."

Jim Sidanius, *Harvard University, USA.*

"This classic text is a must-read for those in the fields of psychology and related social and behavioral sciences. It is an engaging and informative resource for anyone interested in learning how the intricate web of cultural customs, values, and norms permeate our lives and shapes us into who we are."

Denis Sukhodolsky, *Yale University, USA.*

"I had the privilege to use this text in teaching both undergraduate and graduate courses. This text aims to spark the students' motivation to learn about cultural contextual variables affecting human behavior, cognitions, and emotions. It offers a critical thinking paradigm and specific exercises, which are priceless in this field and could be applied in other subfields of psychology."

Sergei Tsytsarev, *Hofstra University, USA.*

"Shiraev and Levy provide a scholarly analysis of cross-cultural psychology that is informative, intriguing, and enjoyable to read. Their descriptions of contemporary applications convey critically important insights for addressing intergroup conflicts and disparities."

Cheryl Koopman, *Stanford University, USA.*

"In an era marked by increasing globalization, polarization, and cultural diversity, the importance of understanding cross-cultural psychology cannot be overstated. For over two decades, Dr. David A. Levy and Dr. Eric Shiraev have been at the forefront of this field, guiding students and researchers through the intricate world of cultural dynamics. Since its inception 23 years ago, this textbook has held the prestigious position of being the #1 international best-seller in its category. The 8th edition promises to be an even more vital resource in the field of cross-cultural psychology. It tackles an array of current and pressing topics, such as social justice, LGBTQ+ rights, critical race theory, disenfranchisement, green values, global warming, digital culture, and the war in Ukraine. With each chapter, Dr. Levy and Dr. Shiraev shed light on how these issues intersect with cross-cultural psychology, providing readers with critical insights and perspectives. As societies around the world grapple with the challenges and opportunities of multiculturalism, this textbook equips readers with the knowledge and tools needed to navigate this complex landscape."

Graduate School of Education and Psychology Newsroom,
https://gsep.pepperdine.edu/newsroom/articles/dr-david-levy-8th-edition-publication.htm

Cross-Cultural Psychology

This international best-selling textbook provides an interdisciplinary review of the theories and research in cross-cultural psychology. The dynamic author team brings a diverse set of experiences in writing this text that provides cross-cultural perspectives on a wide range of applied topics.

Written in a conversational style that transforms complex ideas into accessible ones, the text incorporates a unique critical thinking framework, including *Critical Thinking* boxes, which helps students develop analytical skills. *Exercises* interspersed throughout promote active learning and encourage class discussion. *Case in Point* sections review controversial issues and opinions about behavior in different cultural contexts. *Cross-Cultural Sensitivity* boxes underscore the importance of empathy in communication.

New to this eighth edition:

- **An entirely new chapter** addressing modern social justice movements, LGBTQ+ issues, reproductive rights and abortion, environmental justice, digital culture and social media, nationalism, health care, spirituality, and holistic treatments.
- **Updated sections** to reflect research on traditional vs. nontraditional cultures, global trends, DSM-5-TR, gender identity, race, acculturation, cultural customs, immigration, indigenous populations, cultural syndromes, and the treatment of mental disorders.
- **New pedagogical boxes** analyzing issues such as critical race theory, gender pronouns and language ownership, cultural appropriation, Putin and international aggression, colonization, political propaganda, parenting styles and the Tiger Mom personality, the Twittification Effect, cultural relativism, prayer and healing, and morality and religion.
- **Updated online resources** for teachers (including test banks, figures, tables, and graphs) and students (chapter abstracts, key terms, relevant links).
- **Over 240 recent references**, particularly on studies of non-Western regions such as Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America, as well as the United States and Europe.

Bringing cross-cultural perspectives on key psychological topics such as cognition, sensation, perception, consciousness, intelligence, emotion, motivation, human development, psychological disorders, social perception, personality and more, this text is an essential resource for all students of cultural psychology. Its numerous applications also prepare students for working in various multicultural contexts such as teaching, counseling, business, health care, and social work.

Eric B. Shiraev, Ph.D., teaches at George Mason University, USA. He is an author, a co-author, and co-editor of more than 20 books and numerous publications in the fields of cross-cultural studies and political psychology. Besides his teaching and scholarly work, Dr. Shiraev writes policy briefs and opinion essays for government agencies, NGOs, and the media.

David A. Levy, Ph.D. is an award-winning professor of psychology at Pepperdine University, USA. He is also a practicing psychotherapist, media consultant (CNN, CBS, NBC, PBS, NPR, Fox, NatGeo), and author (*Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *Tools of Critical Thinking*, *Life Is a 4-Letter Word*).

Cross-Cultural Psychology

Critical Thinking and Contemporary Applications

EIGHTH EDITION

ERIC B. SHIRAEV AND DAVID A. LEVY

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

*Dedicated to those who display the curiosity and courage to seek the truth . . .
especially Richard Dawkins, John McWhorter, Sam Harris, Neil deGrasse Tyson, and
Thomas Szasz. And of course, to my beloved wife, Mary Jane Levy.*

D.L.

*To those who encouraged us and continue to motivate us by their words and
deeds . . . especially James Sidanius and Vladimir Shlapentokh.*

E.S.

BRIEF CONTENTS

DETAILED CONTENTS

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Dr. Eric B. Shiraev is a professor, researcher, and author. He completed a postdoctoral program in the United States at the University of California, Los Angeles. He served in various positions at Oregon State University, George Washington University, and George Mason University. He is Head of CARP, a research laboratory that studies character assassination and reputational politics. His research interests are diverse. He is author, co-author, or co-editor of 25 books and numerous peer-reviewed publications in the fields of psychology, history of science, cross-cultural studies, and political psychology. In his publications, he has developed a distinct multidisciplinary approach to analyze human behavior. In addition to teaching and scholarly work, Dr. Shiraev writes opinion essays for the media around the world. He resides near Washington, DC. Visit his site: www.ericshiraev.com

Dr. David A. Levy has extensive experience as a teacher, therapist, writer, and researcher. He is professor of psychology at Pepperdine University's Graduate School of Education and Psychology, where he has been teaching graduate courses since 1986. He received his B.A. degree in Theater Arts from University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), a M.A. degree in psychology from Pepperdine University, a second M.A. degree in psychology from UCLA, and his Ph.D. in psychology from UCLA, where he specialized in social psychology, with minors in psychological assessment and personality psychology. He served as Visiting Professor of Psychology in the Soviet Union, where he delivered lectures and workshops in psychology and psychotherapy at Leningrad (now St. Petersburg) State University, the Leningrad Academy of Science, and the Bekhterev Psychoneurological Institute. He was honored as a Harriet and Charles Luckman Distinguished Teaching Fellow at Pepperdine, and a recipient of the Shepard Ivory Franz Distinguished Teaching Award and Charles F. Scott Fellowship at UCLA. Dr. Levy holds a professional license in psychology. He has worked in a wide range of private practice and inpatient psychiatric settings, supervised clinical interns, and utilized his expertise in psychological testing (particularly the MMPI) in forensic cases.

Dr. Levy's numerous theoretical and empirical research studies have been published in scientific journals and presented at professional conferences. His book, *Tools of Critical Thinking: Metathoughts for Psychology*, garnered widespread acclaim in both academic and clinical settings for its innovative approaches to improving thinking skills. He co-authored (with Eric B. Shiraev) eight editions of *Cross-Cultural Psychology: Critical Thinking and Contemporary Applications*, which became an internationally best-selling textbook. He is also the author of *Family Therapy: History, Theory, and Practice*, which was the first textbook on the topic available to Russian readers. His Levy Optimism–Pessimism Scale (LOPS) has been utilized internationally in a variety of research contexts, and he is a member of the Board of Editors for the *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*. More recently, Dr. Levy has published *Life Is a 4-Letter Word: Laughing and Learning Through 40 Life Lessons*, and *Shots of Wisdom: Laughing, Wincing, and Learning Through Life's Lessons*.

Dr. Levy is also the author of numerous satirical articles, including "The Emperor's Postmodern Clothes: A Brief Guide to Deconstructing Academically Fashionable Phrases for the Uninitiated," "How to Be a Good Psychotherapy Patient," "Psychometric Infallibility Realized: The One-Size-Fits-All Psychological Profile," "Stinks and Instincts: An Empirical Investigation of Freud's Excreta Theory," and "A Proposed Category for the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM): Pervasive Labeling Disorder."

As a media consultant, Dr. Levy has appeared on dozens of television and radio broadcasts (including CNN, CBS, NBC, PBS, A&E, and E!), providing psychological perspectives on current events and examining issues and trends in the mental health fields. He has also worked as a professional director, producer, writer, and actor in motion pictures, television, and on the stage. He received an Emmy nomination for Outstanding Performance in a Network Television Series, and he was a guest star on the television series *Cheers*, where he portrayed the leader of Frasier's low self-esteem group (a role which he adamantly insists is *not* type-casting). Please visit his website: www. davidlevypsych.com.

PREFACE

We cordially invite you to explore the eighth edition of *Cross-Cultural Psychology: Critical Thinking and Contemporary Applications*. Just over 25 years ago, when we were preparing the first edition of this book, it was our modest hope that many students and instructors would find it useful. We certainly did not anticipate that the text would soon find a receptive audience not only in the United States and Canada but also in the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, the Czech Republic, Russia, Turkey, Germany, and many other countries around the globe. An Indian edition of the text has been published specifically for the South Asian market, for distribution in India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives. Our book was also translated into *Bahasa Indonesia* (the official language of Indonesia) and released for worldwide distribution. Indonesia is the fourth most populous nation in the world; of its large multi-ethnic population, the number of people who speak Indonesian fluently is fast approaching 100 percent, thus making Indonesia one of the most widely spoken languages on earth. Our book has also been translated into Czech, Arabic, Greek, Bulgarian, and Macedonian. We have had the good fortune to receive and respond to a plethora of emails from readers across five continents.

The expanding interest in cross–cultural psychology is understandable. The field is exciting, fascinating in its content, important in its applications, and challenging in its goals and aspirations. Yet, it is sometimes scarcely able to keep pace with the rapidly changing conditions of modern times.

Some of these changes are welcome; others are alarming. Seemingly invincible barriers – both physical and metaphoric – that separated people for hundreds, even thousands of years are increasingly cracking, crumbling, and finally collapsing before our eyes. Within a relatively short period of human history, the telephone, radio, motion pictures, television, computers, e-mail, smart phones, the Internet, social networks, and artificial intelligence have drastically altered our perceptions of time, space, culture, and each other. One key click and, in an instant, you are inundated with a flood of facts and opinions. Click again, and you are virtually on the opposite side of the globe – or even on a different planet.

We travel and migrate from one place to another on a scale previously unknown – even unimaginable – in history. In North America, Europe, and Oceania, the share of the foreign–born population is at or near its highest level on record. More than 190,000 people each year apply for British citizenship, and the number is rising. The United States alone naturalizes more than 950,000 new citizens every year. Throughout each year in the second decade of this century, an estimated one million international students pursued their studies at various universities and colleges across the United States. According to the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System, the top ten countries sending these international students have been (in no particular order): India, South Korea, China, Saudi Arabia, Canada, Japan, Taiwan, Vietnam, Mexico, and Brazil.

It appeared that the world might be headed on a steady path to reducing the number of international conflicts. From Northern Ireland to the Basque province in Spain, from Bosnia to Angola, from Sri Lanka to El Salvador and Colombia, dozens of deadly ethnic, social, political, and religious conflicts were coming to an end. The world was witnessing former enemies negotiating with one another. Millions of people continued to learn about their basic social and political rights – and to demand protection from their governments. We increasingly realized that we all share many common ideals, hopes, and dreams. The world seemed destined to become a smaller and more welcoming place.

Or was it? Did such optimistic beliefs rest more on wishful thinking than on empirical evidence? Have we been guilty of confusing what "is" with what "ought" to be? A pessimist looking at today's world could conclude that the differences between cultural groups are, have been, and always will be, irreconcilable. What some perceive to be "global civilization," "cultural enlightenment," or "social evolution" may appear to others as largely illusory. Are we living in a state of denial that, beneath a perilously thin veneer, lurks raw human nature: selfish, greedy, and violent?

Millions of people remain the target of systematic violence. Religious extremism poses an increasingly treacherous problem. Refugee camps have not disappeared; in fact, new ones are having to be created. Authoritarian rulers (and "wannabe" rulers) in a growing number of countries – including in the West – are tightening their grip on power and reject pleas addressing the human rights of their citizens. Immigration faces serious resistance in wealthy countries. Japan and South Korea make it particularly difficult for foreigners to permanently migrate there. Consider the wars in Ukraine and Syria. Think about military conflicts in Libya, Sierra Leone, Timor, Sudan, Iraq, Kashmir, Afghanistan as well as in other places. . . . is there any valid reason to believe that the list won't continue to grow tomorrow?

To be sure, substantial progress has occurred. But even if the world is becoming smaller, what does this mean? To some individuals, "smaller" represents a sense of community, connectedness, and camaraderie. Meanwhile, to others, it is tantamount to cramped, crowded, and confining. To some, "we the people," are gradually merging together. To others, we are becoming more divided and intolerant. Who is right and who is wrong? Are we able to find a middle ground between these two polarized points of view? Can psychologists and other professionals make a difference in the global but disunited world?

In searching for answers to questions such as these, we (the authors) discovered an enormous body of theories, research, books, journal articles, and websites. Upon closer examination, however, what emerged was not particularly encouraging or even useful: lots of unsupported theories, lots of contradictory findings, lots of defensiveness and emotionally charged posturing, and lots of thinking that was a great deal less than clear. How does one even begin to sort through all of it? Is there a way to separate the proverbial wheat from the chaff? By what means can we thereby make informed decisions? These are some of the questions that we have been struggling with for some time, and largely what prompted us to write this book.

The story leading to our collaboration is worth noting in several respects. Although we both are of a similar age and share a number of common characteristics (from career choice to tastes in music, movies, and comedy), we grew up in very different worlds. The first author (Eric) was born and raised in the city of Leningrad in the former Soviet Union, where he obtained his first academic degrees before moving to California and then Virginia. He is a professor and an author or co-author of 26 books. The second author (David) was born and raised in Southern California, where he received his formal education and training, and where he currently works as a psychology professor, licensed psychotherapist, researcher, and author of several best-selling books.

Thus, each of us brings a distinctly unique set of experiences and perceptions to this project. We were struck by both the similarities and differences in our respective backgrounds, and we sought to utilize these complementary contributions to their maximum effect. In discussing our past, we discovered that as we were entering college, neither of us knew very much about cross-cultural psychology. By the time we started graduate school (Eric at Leningrad State University and David at UCLA), and after we met in Los Angeles at UCLA, our interest had begun to grow. But the real fascination with cross-cultural psychology emerged later, specifically when each of us spent an extended period teaching in the other's home country. The appeal has never waned and continues to this day . . .

GOALS OF THIS BOOK

We have endeavored to distill and synthesize the knowledge gained from our own respective educational, research, training, and life experiences into a manageable set of four primary goals:

- To introduce the field of cross-cultural psychology to college students in an engaging, comprehensive, and real-world way.
- To review contemporary theories, research, and their application in cross-cultural psychology, with particular focus on issues related to social justice, fairness, and inclusiveness.
- To provide the reader – both instructors and students – with a useful set of critical thinking tools with which to examine, analyze, and evaluate the field of cross-cultural psychology, as well as education in general.
- To assist current and future practitioners from a wide variety of fields and services.

INTENDED AUDIENCES

This book was designed with the following readers in mind:

- as a primary or supplementary text for undergraduate courses on cross-cultural psychology, multicultural psychology, and cultural psychology for college students from a diverse array of majors (including but not limited to psychology, sociology,

gender studies, communications, education, political science, history, anthropology, business, journalism, and philosophy).

- as a supplementary text for graduate cross-cultural psychology and multicultural psychology classes in areas such as counseling, psychology, social work, education, law, journalism, nursing, business, and public administration.
- for clinical psychologists, counselors, and social workers.
- for health care workers, administrators, educators, business women and men, and other practitioners who work in contemporary multicultural environments.
- as a resource reference for researchers in a wide array of disciplines.

CONTENTS

The book consists of 12 chapters. Chapter 1 reviews the main theories and approaches in the field of cross-cultural psychology. Chapter 2 introduces key principles of critical thinking and applies these tools directly to topics in cross-cultural psychology, by identifying common errors and providing useful antidotes. Chapter 3 presents and explains research methods in cross-cultural psychology. Chapter 4 focuses on cross-cultural aspects of sensation, perception, and states of consciousness. Chapter 5 is devoted to the interface of cross-cultural psychology, cognition, and intelligence. Chapters 6 and 7 are comprised of cross-cultural analyses of emotion and motivation, respectively. Issues related to human development and socialization are examined in Chapter 8. Chapter 9 focuses on the diagnosis, treatment, and critical examination of psychological disorders from cross-cultural perspectives. Chapter 10 highlights key issues in social perception and interaction. Chapter 11 addresses cross-cultural understanding of personality, social cognition, and the self. Finally, Chapter 12 identifies and discusses the most significant applied issues in cross-cultural psychology, including modern social justice movements; environmental justice; digital culture; nationalism, war, and peace; and health care, science, and spirituality.

WHAT MAKES THIS BOOK DIFFERENT?

EMPHASIS ON CRITICAL THINKING

We firmly believe that critical thinking is the most vital and indispensable component of higher education and learning. Despite widespread consensus on this assertion throughout the educational community, however, it has been our experience that specific tools for critical thinking are rarely, if ever, provided to students during the course of their schooling. In other words, most people may be convinced of the value of critical thinking, but they are left not knowing quite what to do about it. This book seeks to remedy that dilemma.

We view critical thinking as a series of skills that can be successfully taught and learned. As such, we provide the reader with specific strategies, methods, and techniques – along with lots of practice – to achieve this goal. For purposes of this book, each critical

thinking principle (*metathought*) is illustrated primarily from the theory and application of contemporary cross–cultural psychology. Keep in mind, however, that these principles transcend the confines of any particular topic and can be utilized not only in a diverse array of fields, but also across cultures.

In one sense, we use critical thinking to teach cross–cultural psychology; in another sense, we use cross–cultural psychology to teach critical thinking. This bidirectional relationship underscores the interdependence between the *content* and the *process* of thinking and learning.

PEDAGOGICAL FEATURES TO ENHANCE LEARNING

We have included a wide variety of pedagogical devices throughout the text.

- **Exercises and Activities:** There are more than 30 exercises throughout the book that are strategically placed in every chapter. These can be utilized in any number of ways, including classroom discussions, demonstrations, debates, individual or group take-home assignments, term papers, and oral presentations.
- **"Critical Thinking" boxes:** These pedagogical aids were designed explicitly to provide practice in developing critical thinking skills as they relate to cross-cultural psychology. In Chapter 7, for example, we place a famous theory by the renowned psychologist Abraham Maslow under the "microscope" of critical thinking by exploring to what extent this theory might reflect Maslow's own subjective value system. In Chapter 9, we discuss and warn against common diagnostic biases associated with personality disorders. Among other tasks, students are asked to provide a critical evaluation of research samples and methods, to look for multiple causes of psychological phenomena, and to avoid stereotypical judgments.
- **"A Case in Point" boxes:** In some instances, vivid examples or stories are best able to speak for themselves. This special feature in each chapter reviews and illustrates controversial issues in cross-cultural psychology; displays cases and research findings; and introduces various opinions about human behavior in different cultural contexts. These boxes offer practical illustrations to academic studies or theories in cross-cultural psychology. As we have learned over the years, they have been used for both class discussions and written assignments.
- **"Cross-Cultural Sensitivity" boxes:** These sections featured in every chapter present controversial events, stories, anecdotes, and opinions that made headlines or went viral in the recent past. We use these cases to underscore the importance of empathy and critical thinking in interpersonal communications.
- **Figures, Tables, and Graphs:** These visual aids appear throughout the book to distill, consolidate, clarify, and expand on the information in the text. These are particularly useful for those who are inclined toward visual learning.
- **Chapter Summaries:** These synopses appear at the conclusion of every chapter. Students have reported that the summaries are an excellent pedagogical study tool for lectures and exams.

- **Vignettes:** Each chapter begins with a vignette: a description of a real-life case, situation, or problem related to the chapter's subject matter. The vignettes offer a "down-to-earth" view of the main topic of the chapter and bring cross-cultural theory closer to the student's personal experiences.
- **Online Resources:** The Routledge website (accessed at www.routledge.com/9781032407449) contains an excellent set of tools for classroom preparation and management. The instructor's section includes: a comprehensive test bank with over 900 multiple-choice, true/false, short-answer, and essay questions (including answers), PowerPoint lecture slides, class exercises, and/or discussion questions and links to related websites and videos clips (TED Talks, YouTube, etc.). The student's section includes: chapter outlines, key terms with definitions, and links to related readings and video clips, as well as the authors' Facebook page (search "cross-cultural psychology textbook") which features updates, commentaries, and discussion of current topics related to cross-cultural psychology. Many events are happening around us today that would have been difficult or even impossible to cover in the text when it was in production. Take, for instance, the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine, the continuing COVID-19 pandemic, and the cross-cultural aspects of dealing with these global challenges. We address these and many other issues on our Facebook page, where you can also explore employment opportunities and career choices related to cross-cultural psychology.

FOCUS ON APPLIED CONTEMPORARY PROBLEMS

We have dedicated ourselves to making this text as useful, practical, and relevant as possible. As a result, we make it a point to address a wide array of applied contemporary themes and to present cross–cultural analyses for many complex problems that society faces today – or is likely to face in both the near and distant future. Throughout, we attempt to strike a balance between not making the book too theoretical (and, therefore, not particularly useful in the real world) or too concrete (which would not cultivate broader, independent thinking).

UPDATES AND CHANGES IN THE EIGHTH EDITION

This edition of the book is updated with references to over 240 recent studies. In particular, there is new research and theoretical data on: traditional and nontraditional cultures, sex and gender, race, cultural customs, ethnic identity, ethnic stereotypes, immigration, personality, DSM–5–TR, religious beliefs, the self, intelligence, violence, happiness, parenting, stigma of mental illness, mood disorders, suicide prevention, cultural syndromes, schizophrenia, acculturation, evolutionary psychology, and the treatment of psychological disorders. The book includes new research data obtained on samples from South Korea, the Netherlands, the United States, Belgium, Russia, Arab countries, India, China, Germany, Canada, Japan, the United Kingdom, Botswana, Brazil, Zimbabwe, Finland, Iceland, Turkey, Austria, and Mexico. This research

includes recent data on Muslims, Christians, Hindus, Buddhists, Asian Americans, Native Americans, Arab Americans, Hispanic Americans, African Americans, as well as various immigrant groups.

Based on the feedback we have received from professors, students, and reviewers, most chapters underwent either significant updates or rewriting. Chapter 1 now has a clearer description of major theoretical approaches to cross-cultural psychology. Chapter 2 contains more specific applications to contemporary global issues (such as the effects of colonization and cultural relativism). New sections have been added to Chapter 5 (cultural appropriation vs. cultural appreciation), Chapter 6 (emotions and propaganda), Chapter 7 (Putin's aggression in Ukraine), Chapter 8 (Tiger Moms, "When does life begin?"), Chapter 9 (updates to reflect DSM-5-TR), and Chapter 11 (gender pronouns and language ownership). The most significant revisions appear in Chapter 12, which we reconceptualized and rewrote from the ground up. We address modern social justice movements (including critical race theory, white privilege, wokeness, Black Lives Matter, virtue signaling, identity politics, cancel culture, historical revisionism, #MeToo, reproductive rights and abortion, LGBTQ+ rights, homophobia, and ageism). This is followed by sections on environmental justice (green values, greenwashing); digital culture (social media, digital footprints, privacy, trolling, digital companionship); nationalism, war, and peace (fundamentalism, peace psychology); and health care (poverty, spirituality and science, pseudoscience, and holistic treatments).

Throughout this new edition, we continue to strive to make our own values clear and not to present our personal opinions as if they were "facts" or "truths." We encourage debate and even disagreement. But we also believe that despite all of our ethnic, cultural, religious, racial, and national differences, people can – in fact should – learn to become more understanding, respectful, caring, and tolerant of each other. Without being unduly optimistic, we do have faith in the enormous potential power of knowledge, reason, and compassion to help realize these goals.

It is obvious that cross-cultural psychology alone cannot solve the profound problems facing the planet. However, this knowledge, coupled with goodwill and informed action, can certainly foster a positive psychological climate in our groups and communities that might eventually generate mutually agreeable, useful solutions. We hope that our enthusiasm about cross-cultural psychology and critical thinking is contagious and will serve to enhance your own academic, professional, and personal growth.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We also take this opportunity to acknowledge the tremendous support we received at virtually every stage of this project's development from the entire team at Taylor & Francis, including Emilie Coin, Maddie Gray, Nigel Turner, Jane Fieldsend, and Edward Taylor.

On a more personal note, we wish to express our mutual feelings of thankfulness for our relationship to each other as colleagues, collaborators, comrades, and friends. The journey continues . . .

1

CHAPTER 1
UNDERSTANDING CROSS-CULTURAL PSYCHOLOGY

Most professional psychologists provide counseling in offices and clinics, teach in great academic halls and cozy classrooms, work in research laboratories, or present and discuss papers at domestic and international conferences. Others measure children's learning skills, conduct assessments in legal settings, or design ergonomically efficient dashboards for new video games and space travel. Yet others travel to troubled and hazardous places because somebody needs their help . . . Two psychologists, Fred Bemak and Rita Chung, left their relatively comfortable university offices near Washington DC in the United States and together rushed immediately to Thailand as soon as they saw reports about a devastating tsunami. In a few hours, they witnessed the deadly consequences of this unprecedented natural disaster. Both were seasoned professionals and had seen a lot in their careers, but nothing had really prepared them for the devastation they were about to encounter. It was beyond heartbreaking. The deadly impact of the flooding was instant and catastrophic. The human suffering caused by this catastrophe seemed immeasurable and never-ending.

———

Hurricanes, typhoons, earthquakes, terrorist attacks, and other natural and human-made disasters could affect all of us, regardless of our nationality, religion, or ethnicity. These calamities reap destruction and havoc on our lives. They inflict immediate, acute, as well as long-lasting, negative physical and psychological damage. How can psychology professionals help people best address and overcome their sudden emotional suffering? Fred Bemak had tried to tackle this question for years. As a university professor, he developed several therapeutic methods of psychological intervention to help victims of large-scale disasters. These methods were theoretically sound, empirically tested, and apparently worked well in the laboratory, but their effectiveness in the "real world" is more complex. Is such therapy helpful to people who are usually hit hardest by disasters? What about migrant Latino communities in the United States, Aboriginal peoples in Australia, or Native American Indian reservations? Do these methods work in Africa, Pakistan, and Southeast Asia? Bemak founded Counselors Without Borders, a non-governmental, non-profit organization focused on studying and alleviating suffering around the world. He worked with his wife Rita Chung for over 25 years to study and implement various forms of psychological assistance to the victims of natural and human-made disasters. Yet can research methods and psychological interventions developed in one part of the world be effectively applied in other world regions? We know that sociocultural factors impact the way people act, think, feel, and recover from illness, and that the same psychological study may yield different results in different groups. What remains generally unclear is how substantial these differences are. If these differences are

somewhat negligible, then regardless of where we are born and raised, we can assume that our behavior and experiences are relatively similar and should be based on similar, universal mechanisms. If, on the other hand, these differences are significant, then as psychology professionals we need to pay closer attention to factors that distinguish people from dissimilar cultural backgrounds.

These and many other issues remain unsettled with regard to psychology as a field worldwide. For many decades since the inception of academic psychology back in the nineteenth century, psychological research lacked diversity. Research published in the United States for many years focused too narrowly on Americans, who comprise less than 5 percent of the world's population. A detailed analysis of peer-reviewed publications in leading academic journals in psychology until the end of the first decade of this century showed that more than 90 percent of research samples came from a small group of countries representing only 12 percent of the world's population (Henrich et al., 2010). Things are certainly changing today, but until recently, undergraduate college students composed almost two-thirds of research samples from the United States and more than three-quarters of samples in studies conducted in other countries. The problems caused by COVID-19 between 2019 and 2023 have seriously slowed down international psychological research. To summarize succinctly, the state of psychological science did not adequately represent the global population (Arnett, 2020; 2008), and scholars with degrees from European, U.S., and Canadian schools dominated psychological education and research (Lonner, 2019).

Further, English remains today the most acknowledged international language of science, including psychology. Scores of prominent journals appear in English, and most international conferences use English as their official language. Consequently, researchers with limited proficiency with English have diminished opportunity to promote their research and enrich global psychological diversity. True, many psychologists from South Korea, Japan, Egypt, or Brazil – because of their outstanding scholarship and proficiency in English – made their research recognized globally. However, there are outstanding contributions from many non-English parts of the world – including China, Indonesia, Pakistan, India, Brazil, Mexico, Japan, Russia, South Africa, Turkey, Iran, and Mexico, to name a few – research which often in the past went unacknowledged by many professional psychologists (Shiraev, 2015).

Cross-cultural psychologists attempt to overcome these biases and to be as inclusive as possible, with the goal of avoiding bias, and of uniting people worldwide through inclusion, mutual understanding, professionalism, curiosity, and appreciation.

WHAT IS CROSS-CULTURAL PSYCHOLOGY?

Were you given the opportunity to choose your place of birth? This apparently naïve question, nevertheless, deals with a very important fact of our lives: before reaching adulthood, most of us do not choose a place to live, a race to identify with, a language to speak, or a religion to follow. Growing up in cities, towns, and villages – whether it is

near a snowy Ann Arbor or in a humid Nairobi – people learn how to understand events around them according to the wishes of their parents, societal requirements, and traditions of their ancestors. The way people learn to relate to the world through feelings and ideas affects what these individuals do. Their actions, in turn, have a bearing on their thoughts, needs, and emotions.

Conditions in which people live vary from place to place. Human norms of behavior and experiences – formed and developed in various environments – may also fluctuate from group to group. These kinds of differences (and of course, similarities) are studied by cross-cultural psychology (Gudykunst & Bond, 1997).

Cross-cultural psychology is the critical and comparative study of cultural effects on human psychology. Please notice two important elements of this definition. First, this is a comparative field. Any study in cross-cultural psychology draws its conclusions from at least two samples that represent at least two groups of people. Second, because cross-cultural psychology inherently involves comparisons, and the act of comparison requires a particular set of critical skills; as such, the study of cross-cultural psychology is inseparable from critical thinking. We will examine the critical thinking principle of the similarity–uniqueness paradox in detail in Chapter 2.

Cross-cultural psychology examines psychological diversity and the underlying reasons for such diversity. In particular, cross-cultural psychology studies – again, from a comparative perspective – the links between cultural norms and behavior and the ways in which particular human activities are influenced by different, sometimes dissimilar, social and cultural forces (Lonner, 2019; Segall et al., 1990). For example, consider the question suggested by the opening vignette to this chapter: Do disaster survivors experience similar symptomatology across cultures (see Chung & Bemak, 2012; Bemak & Chung, 2008)? If they do, can a psychologist use an intervention aimed at treating posttraumatic symptoms in the United States as well as in other cultural environments, such as Sudan or Iran?

Cross-cultural psychology attempts not only to distinguish differences between groups, but also to describe psychological phenomena that tend to be common to all people and groups (Berry et al., 1992; Lonner, 1980). What kind of phenomena? For example, cross-cultural psychology attempts to identify commonalties with regard to the structure of human personality: relatively stable patterns of thinking, feeling, and acting. Such universal traits that can be described across cultures include: neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness (Schmitt et al., 2007; Costa & McCrae, 1997).

How is cross-cultural psychology different from **cultural psychology**? First and foremost, cultural psychology seeks to discover meaningful links between a culture and the psychology of individuals living in that culture (defined below). The primary belief of cultural psychology is that human behavior is meaningful only when viewed in the sociocultural context in which it occurs (Segall et al., 1999). For instance, a cultural psychologist may be interested in describing how Buddhism, as a religion, affects behavior and attitudes of married couples in Thailand. Or, a research scientist can be interested in
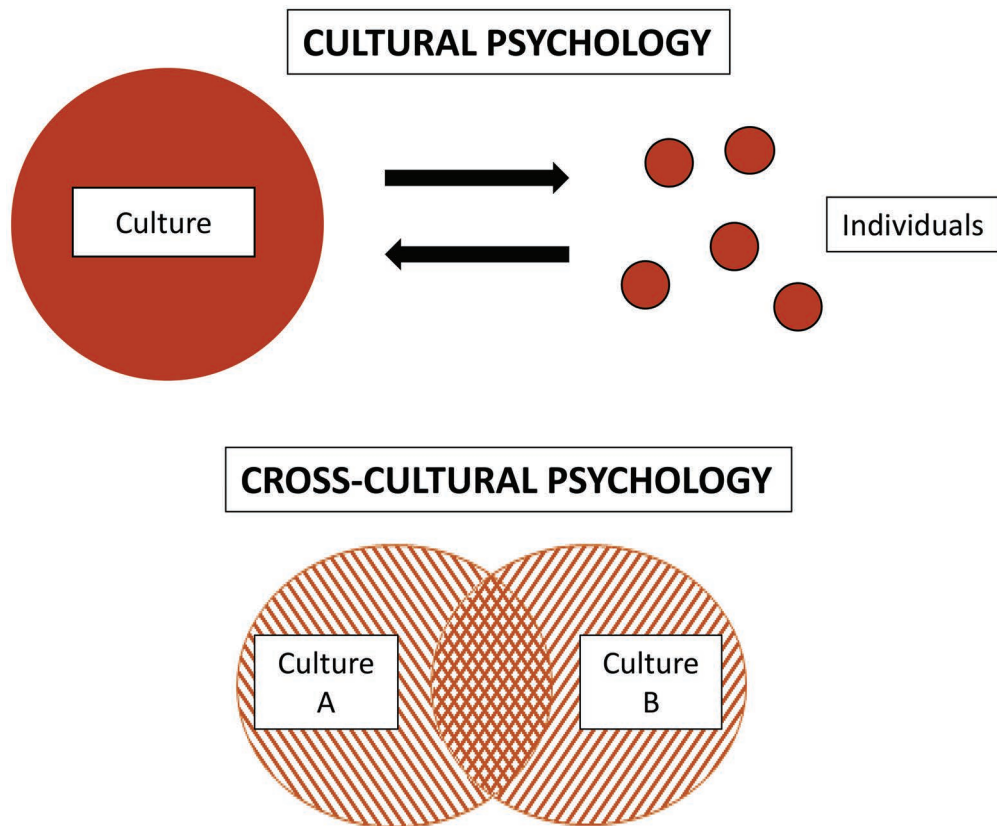
Figure 1.1 Cultural Psychology versus Cross-Cultural Psychology

investigating how fundamental principles of Islam are incorporated into an individual's consciousness and personality traits (Monroe & Kreidie, 1997). Cultural psychology advocates the idea that behavior and experience are essentially the products of an interaction between culture and the individual (Figure 1.1).

A CONDENSED HISTORY OF THE FIELD

Cross-cultural psychology, a relatively new field, descended from scientific general psychology. It is also part of an intellectual tradition, rooted first mainly in Europe but developed initially in the United States toward the end of the twentieth century. However, the old roots of cross-cultural psychology spread far into the history of contemporary science. Beyond its historical links with general psychology, cross-cultural psychology has diverse influences, including some that originate in disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, history, economics, political science, the humanities, and even biology, such as genetics and physiology. Many specific views that contributed to modern cross–cultural psychology will be described in every chapter in this book. Therefore, only a few important historical landmarks will be mentioned here.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, interest in comparative subjects in the social sciences grew. Psychological studies and anthropological observations in the middle of the twentieth century led many scientists to believe that the key to the understanding of human behavior was the interaction between individuals and their cultural environment. More and more psychologists in the twentieth century became increasingly convinced that human experience and behavior were impossible to understand without also learning about culture. By the 1960s, cross-cultural psychology began to establish itself as an independent discipline.

Among many notable developments, the 1960s were marked by the publication of an international study of cultural influences on visual perception (Segall et al., 1966) and the launch of the *International Journal of Psychology* (1966). In 1970, cross-cultural psychology was informally established by the publication of the *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*. Today, the editors of that journal focus on studies that describe the relationships between culture and psychological processes. They believe that all psychology is cultural, and all cultures are psychological. They seek to publish papers that present culture as a mediating and moderating variable or antecedent to all behaviors. The journal encourages comparisons between two or more cultures. It also includes studies of some cultural comparisons between minority or ethnic groups in the same country. Over the years, the *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology* has published more than 2,500 peer-reviewed, scientific articles (Lonner, 2019).

In 1972, the International Association for Cross-Cultural Psychology and the Society for Cross-Cultural Research were established. By the 1980s, two important books were published: the first edition of the *Handbook of Cross-Cultural Psychology* (Triandis et al., 1980) and the *Handbook of Cross-Cultural Human Development* (Munroe et al., 1981). *The Encyclopedia Of Cross-Cultural Psychology* (Keith, 2013) is a collection of studies relating to the fields of cross-cultural, cultural, and indigenous psychology contributed by scientists and scholars from around the world.

A CASE IN POINT

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE: A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF A LONG HISTORY

The story of women's right to vote – known as *suffrage* – is long, complicated, erratic, and frequently contentious. Ancient Athens is typically cited as the cradle of democracy. Yet, only adult male citizens who owned land were permitted to vote. It wasn't until over 2,300 years later – around the turn of the twentieth century – that New Zealand, Australia, and the Nordic countries became the first nations on earth to grant women the right to vote. It has been a bumpy course ever since. For example, although most Australians were given this right in 1902, it took until 1962 for Indigenous Australians to become enfranchised. Similarly, Canadian First Nation women had to wait until 1960.

Of note, the 15th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution enfranchised black men in 1870; however, it wasn't until 1920 that the 19th Amendment gave women the vote. Thus, many former male slaves had been granted the right to vote half a century before any woman (irrespective of race) was afforded this same right. Prior to 1920, several individual states (for example, Utah, Idaho, Washington, California) had granted limited voting rights to women. The period between WWI and the post-WWII era heralded a dramatic increase in the number of countries joining the ranks of women's voting enfranchisement. Countries in the Middle East are among the most recent nations to formally confer voting rights to women. As of the time of this writing, the only country left in the world that does not permit women to vote is the Roman Catholic capital, Vatican City (since only cardinals, who must be male, vote to elect the pope).

The following is an abridged chronological listing of countries in which all women were granted the right to vote in national elections.

New Zealand 1893

Australia 1902 (+ Indigenous Australians in 1962)

Finland 1906

Norway 1913

Denmark 1915

Canada 1917 (+ First Nation Women in 1960)

Russia 1917

Britain 1918

Germany 1918

Sweden 1919

Netherlands 1919

United States 1920

Brazil 1932

Turkey 1934

France 1945

Italy 1945

Japan 1945

India 1947

Israel 1948 (year of the country's establishment)

Greece 1952

China 1953

Mexico 1953

Egypt 1956

The Bahamas 1962

Switzerland 1971

Jordan 1974

Iraq 1980

Oman 1994

Saudi Arabia 2015

Adapted from www.insider.com/when-women-around-the-world-got-the-right-to-vote-2019-2.

BASIC DEFINITIONS

CULTURE

For the purpose of this book's educational goals, we define **culture** as a set of attitudes, behaviors, and symbols shared by a large group of people and usually communicated from one generation to the next. Attitudes include beliefs (opinions of political, social, ideological, religious, and other issues), values (deep-seated principles referring to moral behavior, happiness, life in general, etc.), and general knowledge (both empirical and

theoretical, scientific and nonscientific). Behaviors involve a wide variety of norms, roles, customs, traditions, habits, and practices. Symbols represent things or ideas, the meaning of which is bestowed on them by people themselves. A symbol can have the form of a material object, an amulet, a color, a musical sound, a slogan, a building, or anything else. People attach specific meaning to specific symbols and pass them to the next generation, thus producing cultural symbols. For example, a piece of land may mean little for a group of people living only a few miles away; the same land, however, may be a symbol of unity and ultimate glory for the people living on this land (Brislin, 2000).

Cultures can be described as having both explicit and implicit characteristics. Explicit characteristics are the set of observable acts regularly witnessed in this culture. These are overt customs, evident practices, and typical behavioral responses, such as saying or not saying "Hello" to a stranger. Implicit characteristics refer to the organizing principles that are inferred to lie behind these regularities based on consistent patterns of explicit culture. Grammar that controls speech when we describe gender, hidden norms of bargaining, or behavioral expectations in a particular situation all may be viewed as examples of implicit culture. Please remember that no society is culturally fully homogeneous. There are no two cultures that are either entirely similar or entirely different. We will discuss this critical thinking principle (the similarity–uniqueness paradox) in detail in Chapter 2.

SOCIETY, RACE, ETHNICITY, NATIONALITY, AND RELIGIOUS IDENTITY

You have probably noticed that many people in the media and social networks use terms such as "society," "culture," "race," "ethnicity," and "nationality" interchangeably. However, these terms are different. A society is a large social group sharing the same spatial or social territory, whereas a culture (as noted above) is a shared way of thought and interaction that these people practice. Moreover, the term "culture" differs in important ways from "race," "ethnicity," "nationality," and even "religious identity." We now discuss each of these in turn.

Race is defined by most researchers as a large group of people distinguished by certain similar and genetically transmitted physical characteristics. Historically, some researchers looked at each race as a more or less distinct combination of heritable morphological and physiological characteristics (Rushton, 1995). Levin (1995) and others have suggested that the differences among the races are also evolutionary. The "Negroid" race, according to this view, first appeared in sub-Saharan Africa approximately 110,000 years ago and later evolved into "Mongoloid" and "Caucasoid" races. In general terms, blacks (Africans, Negroid) are those who have most of their ancestors in the past one hundred thousand years from sub-Saharan Africa; whites (Europeans, Caucasians) have most of their ancestors from Europe; and East Asians (Mongoloid) have most of their ancestors from Pacific Rim countries.

Of course, in referring to population or racial group differences, we are discussing *averages*; these three racial groups overlap substantially on almost all physical and psychological measures (Anemone, 2011; Rushton & Jensen, 2005). It is also essential to underscore the

tremendous variability of such occurrences, because most physical traits appear to some degree in all populations. For example, some Germans have frizzy hair, and some Africans have red hair. Similarly, there are many dark-skinned European Americans and many light-skinned African Americans.

To a contemporary scientist, "race" is a term used to describe a population that differs from others in some distinguishable physical qualities. Historically, members of the population (each "race") were certainly capable of reproducing with members of other populations – but they generally did not. As a result, during periods of relative isolation, some specific physical characteristics emerged and were transmitted genetically. Thus, in the past, geographical isolation was a race-creating factor. Today, however, political, cultural, or religious factors are far more important in the explanations about the differences among races than are geographic limitations in the past (Gannon, 2016; Anemone, 2011).

Race can also be viewed as a social construct (Brace, 2005). Some researchers have argued that the term "race" is used mostly because it refers to particular experiences shared by many people who happen to belong to a category (Gould, 1994, 1997; Langaney, 1988). Arthur Dole (1995) recommended abandoning the term "race" altogether and instead using terms such as "continental origin" (African), "anthropological designation" (Caucasian), and "colonial history" (Latino or Latina) to describe large categories of people. When race is viewed as a social construct, most racial differences may, in fact, only reflect distinctions between arbitrarily established categories. Despite all of this, and due to myriad historic, political, and social developments, race remains an important feature of people's identification. For instance, in contemporary United States, the government may ask people their race when conducting a census. Further, many organizations, both public and private, request job applicants to identify their race or origin.

Although the term "Hispanic" has been officially used by the U.S. government since 1980, it is generally not used in Latin America. Some believe the term "Latino" is more appropriate. The argument is that the term "Hispanic" emphasizes the Spanish heritage but not other origins (Comas-Díaz, 2001). To reach a compromise, some people use the terms "Latino-Hispanic," "Latino/a," or "Latinx." (See Chapter 2 for an examination of the critical thinking principle of the evaluative bias of language.)

Ethnicity refers to a cultural heritage shared by a category of people who also share a common ancestral origin, language, traditions, and often religion and geographic territory. Ethnic groups can be further divided into smaller subgroups. Slavic people living in Europe (like Polish individuals, Russians, Ukrainians, or Bulgarians), historically shared common linguistic origins, yet they are different in many other cultural ways, many of which are shaped by politics. Conversely, formerly separate ethnicities can merge to form a "pan-ethnicity" and may eventually merge into one single – yet diverse – ethnicity. Racial and ethnic minorities are expected to become 50 percent of the U.S. population by 2050 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010, 2020). Do you think the United States could be considered an example of pan-ethnicity? Discuss your own examples of pan-ethnicities in class (Table 1.1).

Table 1.1 U.S. Population in 2010 and 2050 (The U.S. Bureau of the Census, estimates)

Race/Origin	2020 Census Estimates	% of Total Population	2050 Estimates	% Estimates of Total Population	% Change from 2010 to 2050
Total Population	329,000,000	100%	439,000,000	100%	0%
White, Non-Hispanic	223,600,000	60%	181,930,000	43.6%	–28.4%
Black	38,900,000	13.5%	59,693,000	14.3%	+1.3%
Hispanic-Latino	50,500,000	18.5%	119,044,000	28.6%	+12.6%
Asian	14,700,000	6%	38,965,000	9.3%	+4.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2010, 2020) Other racial categories are not included.

Nationality refers to a person's legal identification with a sovereign state. From the standpoint of international law, a sovereign state is commonly called a "nation," which is defined as a group of a people who share a common geographical origin, history, and language and are unified as a political entity. In short, a nation is an independent state recognized by other countries. For example, those who have the status of "national" of the United States means they are either citizens or have the unlimited right to reside in the United States but are not officially citizens. It is common to say the "Finnish nation," referring to people who live in the territory of Finland, speak the Finnish language, and have ancestors of Finnish origin. The meaning of a phrase such as "Pakistani nation," or "British nation," however, is more complicated, as the Pakistani and British populations are extremely diverse. For a psychologist, it is important to know that many individuals use the term "nationality" to refer to their territorial or linguistic roots: people say, "the Kurdish nation" or the "Tatar nation," although there is neither an independent Kurdish nor a sovereign Tatar state today. Keep in mind that nations can be "constructed" as a social category in people's minds, even before they acquire a physical space and gain legal sovereignty over it (Shiraev & Zubok, 2020). In sum, many people refer to themselves as a "nation" primarily because of how they think of themselves as a group (we will discuss identity in Chapter 11).

Religious identity indicates an individual's acceptance of knowledge, beliefs, and practices related to a particular faith, which is a strong belief in God, Gods, or other divine entities in accordance with the doctrines of a religion. Europe, North America, Australia, and South America are predominantly Christian. Almost two-thirds of Muslims live in Asia.

The strength of people's faith varies. Since the beginning of scientific polling almost 80 years ago, most Americans consistently report believing in God. The numbers went down from 90 percent in 2000 to about 80 percent 20 years later (Saad & Hrynowski, 2022). About two-thirds of adults in the United States reported being Christians by 2023, a 10 percent decline since 2000. The change in America's religious composition was largely the result of large numbers of people switching out of the religion in which they were raised

to become unaffiliated (Pew, 2022). Moreover, about three in ten Americans claimed that they were "religiously unaffiliated" (Pew, 2021). More people, every year, identify themselves as Buddhist or Muslim, though these groups are still relatively small: each is about 1 or 2 percent of the total population of the United States. Fewer than 2 percent identify themselves as Jewish. Globally, atheists or agnostics account for approximately 500 million people, which is roughly 7 percent of the total population. Those who identify as atheists were typically young, male, and educated, and were most likely to live in Northern Europe, Japan, and communist or formerly communist nations (Lipka, 2019; Keysar & Navarro-Rivera, 2013).

Religious teachings – which tend to emphasize honesty, modesty, and kindness toward other human beings – overall have a relatively similar impact on individuals regardless of their particular religious identity. While scientific knowledge can spread relatively quickly across the globe, religion has the "advantage" of having deep psychological and emotional roots, often reinforced by tradition, lifestyle, and the social institutions endorsing them.

To summarize this section, there is a great deal of confusion and variability in the way people around the world use the terms "race," "ethnicity," "nationality," and "religious identity." For example, being Jewish in Russia for years was considered as having a non-Russian "nationality." Christian Arabs residing in Israel don't call themselves Israeli Christian Arabs. Although they are Israeli citizens, Arabs have commonly seen their Israeli identity as a civic or legal one, but not as cultural. On the other hand, for most of the Jewish population, Israeli citizenship serves as both legal and cultural identity (Glenn & Sokoloff, 2010; Horenczyk & Munayer, 2007). What is often labeled as "race" or "ethnicity" in the United States is termed "nationality" in other countries, and in many places one's religious identity is indicated in their official identification cards.

A CASE IN POINT

ETHNICITY AND NATIONALITY: HOW THEY ARE INTERPRETED IN THE UNITED STATES (EXCERPTED FROM SHIRAEV & BOYD, 2008)

There are different ethnic groups within most nations, and the United States is no exception. Similarly, there can be different national groups within any ethnic group.

Same Nationality, Different Ethnic Groups

Martha and Martin are both U.S. citizens. In terms of their nationality, they are both Americans. However, ethnically, Martha is Brazilian because her parents emigrated from Brazil when she was a little girl, and she received her U.S. citizenship a few years ago. Martin is a seventh-generation New Yorker. His ethnic roots are mixed: Irish, French, German, and Russian.

Same Ethnic Group, Different Nationalities

Hamed and Aziza are both Palestinian exchange students living in New Jersey. Hamed's parents live in Tel-Aviv, and both he and his parents are Israeli citizens. Aziza is a Jordanian national and holds a Jordanian passport.

CROSS-CULTURAL SENSITIVITY

Fairfax Hospital emergency room was busy as usual on a typical Saturday afternoon. In nearly every emergency room, the patient has little privacy, and whatever one says is heard by anyone who happens to be around. A young doctor was busily examining newly arrived patients, and just finished questioning a woman – she was apparently in satisfactory condition. He was about to move on to the next patient waiting nearby.

"Doctor, where did you go to school?" the woman asked.

"Wake Forest," the doctor replied.

"And what's your nationality?" the curious woman continued.

"I am American," replied the doctor with a smile.

"No, no, what is your *nationality*?" insisted the lady. "You look Chinese or Vietnamese to me."

"Ma'am, I am American, I was born here. My parents came from China, but they are U.S. nationals too. You can call me Chinese American."

"Oh, I see," concluded the lady loudly. "I knew I was right. You are Chinese!"

Some people still associate the word "American" with a particular "European" look and "TV-anchor" accent. For some it is hard to comprehend that the United States has always been – and will continue to be – a multiethnic community. Our looks do not automatically determine our nationality or religion. "It's really not a big deal," said the doctor to one of the authors who witnessed this conversation and asked the doctor if he was offended by the woman's comments. "For as long as I live, I will always be correcting some people's remarks about my ethnicity. Some people simply do not learn." We know that doctors are not supposed to be mistaken in their predictions. However, our hope is that this prediction will eventually prove to be incorrect (or at least *mostly* mistaken).

We should not forget that not all human groups are constantly moving and mixing with others. Some governments significantly restrict immigration, although others are much more lenient. Some countries, like Saudi Arabia, require a person to convert to Islam before applying for citizenship there. In Myanmar, the government promotes Theravada Buddhism over other religions. In contrast, in the United States, Canada, the Netherlands, Brazil, and many other countries, cultural diversity is largely accepted: most people have freedom to choose the group(s) with which they wish to identify, and ethnic, religious, or national identity is becoming increasingly dynamic and a matter of individual choice.

KNOWLEDGE IN CROSS-CULTURAL PSYCHOLOGY

Knowledge is information that has a purpose or use. A fortune-teller is likely to explain to you that a dream is a "window" into your future. A scientist, in contrast, would explain the naturalistic biological mechanisms of dreams, suggesting that they cannot reliably predict anything. Pursuing various goals, people have developed different kinds of psychological knowledge. At least four categories of knowledge are recognized in psychology.

The first category is **scientific knowledge**. This type of knowledge is derived from the systematic observation, measurement, and evaluation of a wide range of psychological phenomena. Observations are organized and generalized in the form of scientific concepts and theories. A theory is a proposed explanation that helps us to understand how and why events are related. Theories generate predictions or hypotheses, which are then tested by various research methods, including experiments. Scientific views in psychology change – as they should – based on new data. What was considered "scientific" has varied through history and from country to country. Some scientific theories have garnered academic respect during certain periods, only to be replaced later by other theories. The practice of *phrenology* is an illustration. At a certain point in psychology's history, the direct link between "bumps" on the human skull on the one hand, and emotional and intellectual abilities of a person on the other, was considered scientific. Today such beliefs are widely rejected.

The second category of psychological knowledge is referred to as **folk theories** (or **popular beliefs**) and encompasses a collection of popular beliefs and assumptions. This "everyday psychology" is formulated "by the people, for the people." Its assumptions vary from the general (such as a belief in the ability of dreams to predict the future) to the very specific (that a particular item of clothing will bring good luck during a job interview). This type of knowledge will sometimes lead individuals to believe that a replica or symbol of something (like an idol or statue) is equivalent to the person or the thing itself (Johnson et al., 2011). Along similar lines, the Hua in New Guinea hold a folk belief that food carries a substance which transmits the essence and social status of the person who produces or prepares it; consequently, the Hua have developed special rules regarding what foods may be eaten and by whom and how food must be cooked (Johnson et al., 2011; Meigs, 1988). A fascinating example of folk beliefs is the Hindu practice of offering food to a god or goddess. Receiving food back from them

is considered a blessing (Johnson et al., 2011). For the Hindu, eating another person's food is a humbling act; moreover, eating food that has been in another person's mouth (and thus touched by their saliva) carries the essence of the other person (Dalal, 2010; Babb, 1975).

Popular beliefs might or might not be in line with scientific theories. We can ask a person who is acting angrily to take a deep breath and "cool down." Although the person's actual body temperature is unlikely to decrease that quickly, this popular belief, when conveyed in words, may nevertheless deter that individual's angry outburst. Millions of educated people today continue to be apprehensive about particular numbers. Many Christians avoid the numbers 666 and 13, but have no problem with the number 4 – which, by contrast, is aversive to many people in Southeast Asia. Countless people believe in superstitions and have faith in astrological horoscopes. Untold numbers of people believe that when a black cat crosses your path, something bad will happen to you. A scientist, on the other hand, is likely to show you scientific evidence that cats have very little to do with good or bad luck. (In fact, cats make great pets.)

As was the case many years ago, popular beliefs today have a remarkable influence on the lives of billions of people. Scientific knowledge remains in constant competition with popular beliefs, sometimes corroborating them while at other times uprooting them. For example, there has been a common belief in many countries that immoral acts, such as theft or treason, may cause mental or other types of illness in people who committed this act (Haslam, 2005). Science, however, does not provide any evidence to support these claims. Historically, many people routinely, but mistakenly, associate certain national or ethnic groups with salient personality traits and/or features: Americans are supposed to be ambitious but rude, the British are courteous and grumpy, the Chinese are polite but obedient to authority, Russians are strong but unemotional, and so on. Scientific research has established that such simplistic generalizations are inaccurate (Terracciano & McCrae, 2007). (In this regard, the critical thinking principle of the representativeness bias will be discussed in Chapter 2.) Nevertheless, some folk beliefs do contain useful observations and promote certain healthy practices. For centuries, people have relied on such beliefs to steer clear of harmful, poisonous, or contaminated food products. Schaller (2006) termed the collection of cognitions and behaviors that facilitate avoidance of disease threats the *behavioral immune system*.

The third category of psychological knowledge is found in human values. In contrast to folk beliefs, this type of knowledge stems from cohesive and stable perceptions about the world, the nature of good and evil, right and wrong behavior, and the purpose of human life. **Ideological (value-based) knowledge** is different from popular beliefs because it is grounded on a set of clearly articulated standards, which do not require empirical scrutiny. Ideological or value-based knowledge can be perceived as dogmatic, in that its principles typically are not open to challenge or scrutiny. For example, the deep-seated belief in the existence of the soul as a nonmaterial and immortal substance is an unquestionable value to many people. Religion as a social institution offers one of the most prominent kinds of value-based knowledge. For instance, in contemporary South Korea, for some people smartphones coexist with traditions of direct communication with multitudes of

gods and spirits. Such communication is enabled by several hundred thousand professional mediators, called *manshin* (Song, 2016; Sarfati, 2010).

The fourth type of knowledge is represented by **legal knowledge**. This knowledge is revealed in the form of formal laws and other prescriptions established by authorities (from tribal or community leaders to a central government). This knowledge includes the rules and principles that can be used by authorities and people themselves to pass judgments about psychological aspects of human behavior. Legal knowledge provides grounds for important decisions about life and death, marriage, people's sanity, the ability to raise children, and so forth. For example, what is considered "death" in most Western societies from the legal standpoint has little to do with people's religious beliefs in existence of the soul. The legal indicator of physical death is the cessation of brain activities. In another example, the question of whether the person is mature enough to get married and competent to stand trial are not decided by custom but by some identified legal rules. Spanking and hitting as forms of punishment of children are widely practiced all over the world. Many parents (feel free to ask around) still consider some physical violence against children normal. In the United States, however, most parents recognize that an act of physical aggression against a child would be illegal – even though there are some states that still allow some "mild" physical punishment of children (Jenkins, 2018).

It is critical for psychologists to treat all types of knowledge with understanding, sensitivity, and respect. However, this does not mean that psychologists are required to live in a world devoid of facts, personal beliefs, or values. (We will discuss this critical thinking principle, called the naturalistic fallacy, in depth in Chapter 2.) The four types of knowledge are deeply interconnected. Common sense assumptions, such as how to deal with deep sadness or how to interpret dreams, have always been part of people's knowledge about mental phenomena. At certain times in history, value-based doctrines, often embedded in organized religion, have had a tremendous impact on popular, scientific, and legal knowledge. Value-based, deeply seated cultural knowledge tends to resist rapid changes, but over time it transforms as well. Legal psychological knowledge changes together with continuous transitions taking place in society (Shiraev, 2011).

CULTURAL TRADITIONALISM VS. NONTRADITIONALISM

Two types of general cultural constructs can be identified. One is called **traditional culture**, which is a cultural construct based on traditions, rules, symbols, and principles established predominantly in the past. It is essentially about behaving and thinking in the manner generally accepted in the past. The other type is **nontraditional culture** (often called "modern" or "contemporary" culture), which is based on new, usually untested ideas and practices. Of course, this is not to imply that these two constructs are mutually exclusive. (In this regard, see our discussion on the critical thinking principle of differentiating dichotomous and continuous variables in Chapter 2.) The prevalence of science-based knowledge, technology, and social innovations is typically associated

Table 1.2 Racial Categories in the United States

White (includes people of European, Arab, and Central Asian origin)
Black (includes people of African origin)
Native American (includes people of American Indian, Eskimo, and Aleut origin)
Asian (includes people of East Asian and Pacific Islander origin)
Hispanic (includes people of South and Central American origin)

with nontraditional cultures. A "traditional" way of communication is sending a letter in an envelope. A more nontraditional way is to send a text. What is nontraditional today becomes traditional tomorrow. The traditional culture is likely to be confined in local and regional boundaries. It tends to be conservative and somewhat intolerant of innovations. The nontraditional culture tends to be absorbing and dynamic. The image of reality in contemporary nontraditional cultures is expanding; in contrast, traditional cultures tend to be restricting: The image of reality embraces only a certain set of ideas associated with a particular doctrine attached to tribe, religion, ethnic group, or territory. The key differences between traditional and nontraditional cultures – which often overlap – are listed in Table 1.2.

Traditional society structures people's lives and gives them little choice in their actions: Most things in their daily living are prescribed to people by authorities, little room for change. Traditional societies via religious practices (like requiring particular clothing) and other cultural imperatives (like rejecting certain foods) prescribe to the individual how they are to understand good and evil, desirable and undesirable objects, valuable and worthless actions, sanity and insanity, and so forth. In traditional Chinese culture, for instance, women's roles were outlined primarily by their family roles as daughter, wife, and mother, and their obedience was to, respectively, their father, husband, and son (Cheung & Halpern, 2010). China today has changed and continues to change. Modern cultures slowly forming in countries like China embrace new gender roles emphasizing political, social, and economic equality between men and women. In contrast, gender roles in traditional cultures (like in local, usually rural, communities) tend to remain discriminatory, allowing women fewer educational, economic, and social opportunities as compared to men. It should be understood, however, that traditional values and norms do not always require coercion. Many people representing traditional cultures accept – even embrace – their norms and follow them willingly. Many people follow tradition because it often brings perception of certainty and predictability to their lives, which distinguishes these people from other groups. In contrast, nontraditional cultures generally embrace the freedom of choice. However, this is not without cost, because choice often is associated with compulsory tolerance (people "should" accept something they may not like) and confusion (facing too many choices). Psychologist Barry Schwartz (2015, 2004) showed that people in consumption-oriented communities spend too much time choosing among different foods, gadgets, cars, clothes, and vacation destinations. This array of options can lead to so-called "choice congestion" and frustration concerning indecision or mistakes people make when exercising their options.

EMPIRICAL EXAMINATION OF CULTURE

We often refer to people by saying, "She is from a different culture," or "Let us consider their unique cultural background." Many academic psychologists have been working and continue to work on the premise that cultural differences can be conceptualized in terms of cultural polarities. Among them are high- versus low-power distance, high- versus low–uncertainty avoidance, and collectivism versus individualism. We now consider each of these three polarities.

Power distance is the extent to which the members of a society accept that power in institutions and organizations is distributed unequally (Summereder et al., 2013; Hofstede, 1980). It is assumed that there are cultures that measure high and low on power distance. Most people in "high–power distance" cultures generally accept inequality between the leaders and the led, the elite and the common, the managers and the subordinates, and breadwinners and other family members.

An old caste-based Indian society was likely to be one of high-power distance. Expectedly, there are also cultures low on power distance, in which equality is a preferred value in relationships. Studies reveal that people in hierarchical, high power-distance cultures tend to assign stricter behavior rules associated with social status (e.g., "when you become a father you should make decisions and act like a respectable head of the family"). People in high–power distance cultures tend to emphasize structure, orderliness, and stability (Summereder et al., 2013). On the other hand, people in low power-distance cultures tend to be more inclusive, egalitarian, and less preoccupied with the behavioral rules attached to the status ("when you become a father, you will choose your own style of behavior"). In many studies, it has been shown that people in the United States, on the average, were measured as representing a relatively egalitarian, low power-distance culture. Alternatively, Japan and South Korea have been commonly viewed as more hierarchical and higher in power distance (Matsumoto, 2007). Studies also show that, on the individual level, high measures of power distance were rooted in an individual's social dominance orientation – a measure of a person's preference for hierarchy within any given social system (Sidanius & Pratto, 2001). People accepting social hierarchy tend to see social, gender, ethnic, and other groups as unequal. It has been shown that these attitudes were most likely formed early in life (Lee et al., 2007). Of course, many political and social developments in the 2020s, especially ones that occurred during and after the COVID years, could have influenced the measures of power distance in various countries.

Uncertainty orientation refers to common ways used by people to handle uncertainty in their daily situations and lives in general. This phenomenon is measured on a continuum between uncertainty acceptance and uncertainty avoidance. **Uncertainty avoidance** is the degree to which the members of a society feel uncomfortable with uncertainty and ambiguity in their lives. People in cultures measured high on uncertainty avoidance tend to support beliefs promising certainty and to maintain institutions protecting conformity. Likewise, people in cultures measured low on

uncertainty avoidance are apt to maintain nonconformist attitudes, unpredictability, creativity, and new forms of thinking and behavior. A study of 135 nations found that low scores of uncertainty avoidance were correlated with helping behavior, such as assisting strangers and donating money to charity (Smith, 2015). People who accept uncertainty tend to respond to uncertain situations by seeking information and engaging in activities that directly resolve the uncertainty. People who are certainty oriented tend to defer to rules, customs, or opinions of other people, including authority figures, to resolve uncertainty (Sorrentino et al., 2008). Research shows that people in Eastern and Western cultures as groups tend to differ in how they handle uncertainty. In particular, studies in the past showed that Eastern cultures such as Japan or China historically tended to be more "uncertainty avoidant" than Western cultures such as France or Canada (Hofstede, 1980). Always keep in mind that cultural characteristics tend to evolve, especially in the age of digital interconnectedness and global travel (McCornack & Ortiz, 2017).

Collectivism and **individualism** are perhaps the most frequently mentioned and carefully examined of all cultural characteristics (Van Hoorn, 2014; Triandis, 1989). Individualism is typically interpreted as complex behavior and experience based on personal independence, self-reliance, and concern for oneself and one's immediate family or primary group, as opposed to concern for other groups or the society to which one belongs. Collectivism, in contrast, is typically interpreted as behavior based on interdependence, collective responsibility, concerns for others, and care for collective traditions and group values. Collectivism and individualism can be studied on the level of so-called "strong ties" (among family members and close friends) and on the level of "weak ties" appearing among casual acquaintances (Granovetter, 1973). Group norms in collectivist cultures – above everything else – are likely to direct individual behavior. In general, people in collectivist cultures tend to prefer harmony-enhancing strategies of conflict resolution, whereas people in individualistic cultures prefer more competitive strategies. Research has shown that while collectivism was measured high in Asian countries, traditional societies, and the former communist countries, individualism was measured high in Western countries (Triandis, 1996). North Americans, in comparison to Western Europeans and Asians, showed a predominance of independence and individualism, as opposed to the interdependence and collectivism of other groups (Kitayama et al., 2010).

There is a compelling argument that in history, collectivism was rooted in a scarcity of resources. If you, as a group, have few resources, you are likely to band together with other members of the group. Thomas Talhelm of the University of Virginia and his colleagues suggested that the most important factor, in their view, affecting collectivism therefore is agricultural (Talhelm et al., 2014). The West's staple is mostly wheat; the East's is mostly rice. Before the mechanization of agriculture in the past 100 years, a farmer who grew rice had to expend twice as many hours doing so as one who grew wheat. In other words, rice growers (living mostly in the East and South) historically needed more people to produce their harvest as compared with wheat growers (living mostly in the West and North).

Collectivist and individualist tendencies may have important social consequences. As an example, research during the global COVID-19 pandemic showed that the more individualistic a country was, the more COVID cases and mortalities it had. The more individualistic participants happened to be, the chances were higher that they would not adhere to social isolation measures (Maaravi et al., 2021).

COLLECTIVISM AND INDIVIDUALISM: FURTHER RESEARCH

Harry Triandis (1926–2019), who is considered a co-founder of cross-cultural psychology as a discipline, offered a more detailed and sophisticated understanding of the individualism–collectivism phenomenon (Triandis, 1996). He suggested examining vertical and horizontal dimensions of collectivism and individualism. In the vertical cultural syndrome, people refer to each other from power and achievement standpoints. They communicate with one another as employees and employers, as parents and children, and as leaders and the led. People are also engaged in various activities as friends, family members, and co-workers. Thus, benevolence and equality may represent the horizontal cultural syndrome. Authoritarian regimes, for example, are likely to emphasize equality (horizontal level) but not freedom. Western and other modern democracies tend to emphasize freedom (vertical level) but not necessarily equality (Kurman & Sriram, 2002).

People in more traditional societies such as India in the past tended to be vertical collectivists. Most people in the United States can be viewed as vertical individualists. In the studies conducted in the early 1990s, people in Sweden were seen as horizontal collectivists. Why? Americans tolerated inequality to a greater extent than did people in Sweden; Swedes for many years have been willing to be taxed at higher rates, so that income inequality is reduced (Triandis, 1996). These attitudes, of course, change with time and are often based on many socioeconomic and psychological factors. Sustained economic success or long-term difficulties tend to make people change their views of equality (O'Neal, 2019).

National examples of collectivism and individualism also vary. For instance, collectivism in the United States is different from collectivism in Asia. The Asian form of collectivism puts pressures on individuals to avoid disagreements with others, because in Asian cultures, on the average, a concern about harmony with and happiness of others has historically been seen as more important than one's own personal comfort (Xu, 2021; Barnlund, 1975, 1989). (See Figure 1.2 Sociocultural Orientations.)

Fijeman and colleagues (1996) conducted a classic study in Hong Kong, Turkey, Greece, the Netherlands, and the United States. The subjects were college students who were asked to express their opinions regarding eight hypothetical situations of psychological and economic need. In particular, the participants were asked to indicate their readiness
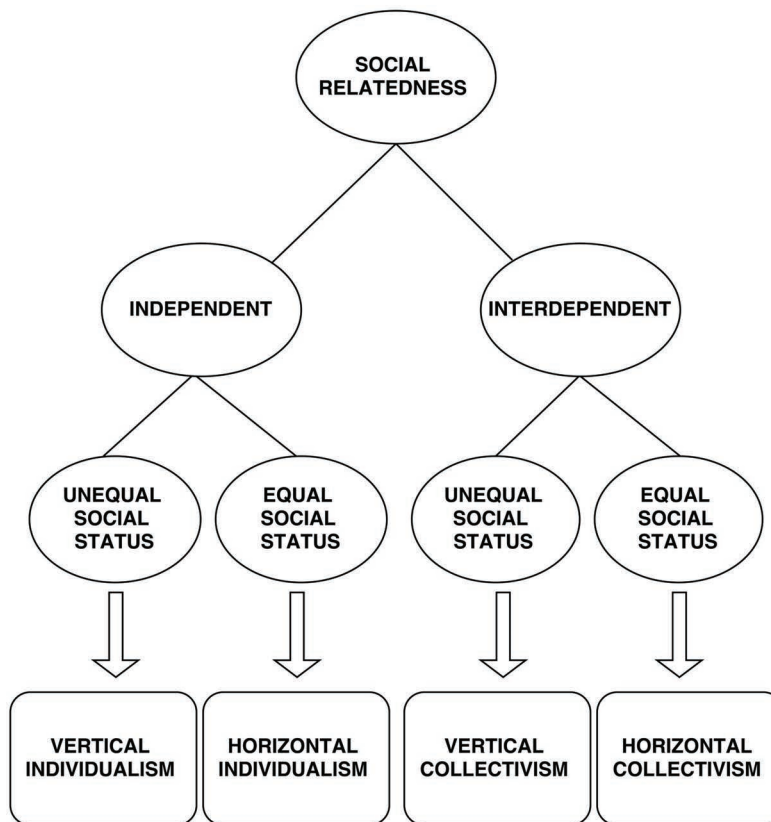
Figure 1.2 Sociocultural Orientations
Note: For the purpose of simplicity and clarity, the sorting variables and types of sociocultural orientations in this figure are displayed as categorical in nature. However, all of the constructs included in this illustration of are, in fact, continuous variables. See Chapter 2 for a discussion of the critical thinking principle of differentiating dichotomous versus continous variables.

to help others with money, goods, or personal hospitality. This study challenged some simplifications in the traditional understanding of collectivism and individualism. The main point was that people in collectivist cultures not only expected to contribute to others but also expected others to support them back. In contrast, people in individualist cultures not only expect to contribute less to others but also tend not to expect others to help or support them, thus reducing their own expectations of entitlement. A study of 36 countries showed that collectivism is associated with trust, but only regarding a relatively limited group of people associated with a certain cultural group. Individualism, on the other hand, was associated commonly with trust related to a larger selection of people (Van Hoorn, 2014).

"Independence" and "interdependence" have also become frequently used terms in cross–cultural psychology. In some cultures, most people seek to maintain their independence from others by attending to their individual selves and by expressing their unique inner

attributes. In other cultures, people are interdependent and accentuate attention to others, while fitting in and maintaining harmonious relationships with people of higher-, lower-, or equal-status levels (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Studies demonstrate that, compared with Asians, Western Europeans such as the British and the Germans tend to be more independent in their relationships and decisions. Compared with Western Europeans, European Americans are even more independent (Kitayama et al., 2009).

One important application to our discussion of collectivism and individualism is the phenomenon of *embeddedness*. Cultures measuring high on embeddedness regard the family or extended in-group – rather than the autonomous individual – as the key social unit. So-called "embedded cultures" focus on the welfare of the in-group while limiting their concern for outsiders' well-being. This means that the more embedded the culture in a country, the less people are likely to help strangers. Embedded cultures emphasize restraint of actions that might disrupt in-group solidarity or the traditional order. Researchers have identified several countries that score high on embeddedness: Singapore, Malaysia, Bulgaria, and Thailand. Low embeddedness is found in Austria, Spain, Denmark, Sweden, and the Netherlands. Countries falling in between these polarities are the United States, China, and Brazil (Knafo et al., 2009).

We now turn to an examination of six basic approaches involved in the study of cross-cultural psychology: natural sciences, social sciences, humanities, ecological, cultural mixtures, and integrative.

THE NATURAL SCIENCES APPROACH

Natural science is a branch of science concerned with the description, prediction, and understanding of natural phenomena. This discipline encompasses many branches of biology including anatomy, physiology, the evolutionary sciences, genetics, and neuroscience.

Cross-cultural psychology relies on genetics – the field of biology involving multidisciplinary studies of heredity through genetic transmission and genetic variations. The term genetics itself stems from the ancient Greek term meaning "origin." An individual's features, including enduring behaviors and experiences, are influenced by genetic factors. Genetic information activates particular physiological "mechanisms" in the individual's body thus affecting their physical, as well as behavioral, cognitive, and emotional development. The way we act, feel, and experience is an outgrowth of our genetic makeup transmitted through generations. Such features, however, develop in a complex, ongoing interaction between genetic and environmental factors. Genes do not directly build individual traits or features. Rather, they result in "building materials" that, together with active interaction with environment influences, yield the development of certain behaviors and psychological features. Evidence suggests that social groups differ not just because of their culture – in terms of what they learn from birth from parents and teachers – but also because of variations in the social behavior of their members which are passed down in their genes (Wade, 2015). Did you know, for

example, that Tibetans have evolved a genetic variant in their genes that allows them to live at high altitudes?

Neuroscience, a scientific study of the nervous system, is another important source of knowledge in cross-cultural psychology. Cognitive neuroscience has special importance for cross-cultural psychology. It examines the brain mechanisms supporting the individual's mental functions. Studying brain pathology, experimental research in neurophysiology, and the rapidly developing methods of brain imaging provide cognitive neuroscientists with remarkable new information (Jabr, 2015).

The evolutionary approach is a theoretical model that explores the ways in which evolutionary factors affect human behavior and experience, and thereby lay a natural foundation to influence culture. According to this theory, the ultimate goal of all living beings is survival. As proposed by Charles Darwin (1809–82) in his principle of natural selection, some organisms – due to various, primarily biological, reasons – are more likely to survive than others. Typically, healthy, strong, and adaptive human beings have better chances of survival than weak, unhealthy, and slow-adapting individuals. If members of a particular group are better fit to live in an environment than members of other groups, the former group has a greater chance to survive, and consequently, develop a social infrastructure. Therefore, its members have a greater likelihood of living in improved social conditions that support competition. Over time, the process of natural selection also gradually eliminates cultural practices, norms, and beliefs that have outlived their adaptive and evolutionary usefulness.

Competition steadily advances society by favoring its best-fit members. Survivors pass on their advantageous genes to their offspring. Over generations, genetic patterns that usually affect behavior and promote survival – such as aggressiveness, initiative, curiosity, or cooperation – become dominant and then form foundations for a culture. Evolutionary psychology assumes that many major patterns of human behavior are biologically useful or adaptive. Cooperation and altruism, for example, did not appear only in people living in modern civilization. In ancient times, an altruistic gesture, such as self-sacrifice on behalf of one's family or community, was evolutionarily useful. In this way, the ultimate goal can be seen as survival of the gene pool, rather than of the individual organism. In this way, even human kindness could be a product of natural selection. Thus, humans are evolutionarily designed to be more altruistic toward their family members or ethnic groups than they are to strangers. This is mainly because our ancestors for centuries lived in small, more vulnerable, groups; today, large cities and nations are evolutionarily novel and thus can engender caution and even mistrust (Kanazawa, 2010).

According to evolutionary theorist Geoffrey Miller (2000, 2019), the brain, like the peacock's tail, is designed through evolution to attract the opposite sex. Both sexes have a reason to "show off" to attract a mate, but men and women have different criteria for making their choices. The difference between men and women, according to Miller, is that women tend to seek material support in a partner, while men seek out nurturance and self-sacrifice from women.

One of the most substantial ideas put forth by evolutionary scientists is that the process of natural selection values not just fitness and the ability to compete, but also variety or *genetic diversity*. Evolutionary biologists have come to believe that, in practice, a genetically diverse population is likely to be more resilient than a homogeneous one because it is better able to respond to changing environments (Chaistan et al., 2014).

THE SOCIAL SCIENCES APPROACH

Cross-cultural psychology relies on the broader field of social science, which is concerned with society and the relationships among individuals within it. Social science is a general view of human behavior that focuses on a wide range of social structures that influence society as a whole and subsequently its individuals. Several prominent theories have had a profound impact on the scientific and comparative understanding of human behavior in cultural contexts. On the whole, these theories suggest that social forces shape the behavior of large groups, and human beings develop and adjust their individual responses in accordance with the demands and pressures of larger social groups and institutions. Thus, in a bidirectional manner (see our discussion of bidirectional causation in Chapter 2), culture is both a product of human activity as well as its major forming factor. Within the social sciences, cross-cultural psychology draws from such fields as anthropology, economics, and sociology.

Anthropology is, at its core, the study of humankind. It is a vast field that is comprised of many smaller and overlapping subfields and specializations. Anthropologists, as a group, may be interested in such dissimilar topics as the biological roots of humans, the common grammars of languages, or gender biases in religious rituals (Nanda & Warms, 2010). For example, Kitayama and co-authors (2006) studied the origins of individualism in the United States, hypothesizing that it is, in part, due to the history of the "frontier spirit." They found that people in Hokkaido, the northern and remote island of Japan also with a history of frontier spirit, showed a greater degree of American-style individualism than did mainland Japanese people lacking in such a history.

Economics analyzes and describes the production, distribution, and consumption of resources. Cross-cultural psychologists are especially interested in microeconomics, where the unit of analysis is, as economists say, the "individual agent" or a person making decisions. One of the most intriguing fields is behavioral economics, which often collaborates with psychologists, some of whom are Nobel Prize winners such as Israeli–American Daniel Kahneman (2021, 2013). Economics studies the effects of individual factors (such as reasoning, emotional stability, or habit) and group factors (such as traditions, group pressure, or competition) on individual economic decisions based on an individual's knowledge – or lack thereof. Kahneman is perhaps best known for his research on decision making under various conditions of uncertainty, involving the use of mental shortcuts which he calls *heuristics* (which we examine in Chapter 2).

Sociology is a social science that studies society and the social action of humans. The field is generally concerned with associations, groups, organizations, communities, and

institutions, both large and small. With its multiple subfields, sociology utilizes scientific methods to examine and understand social development, social organization, and social change. Cross-cultural psychologists draw from sociology's research on a wide variety of topics, such as: the impact of urban communities on the individual's lifestyle; the patterns of people's life choices based on their sex, gender, or sexual orientation; and how people's social status, education, or beliefs affect individual conservation efforts.

Compared to the natural sciences, such as biology or physiology, social sciences are relatively young, turning to the scientific method only in the nineteenth century. Starting approximately at that time, anthropologists traveled to faraway places to provide carefully documented observations of indigenous groups. Economists applied calculus to the basic mechanisms of economic behavior, such as consumption and distribution of resources. And sociologists turned to the use of statistical analyses to examine societal trends.

THE HUMANITIES APPROACH

Cross-cultural psychology also draws from the humanities. In very broad terms, the humanities study human culture. Unlike sociology and anthropology, the humanities use methods that are primarily critical, or at times speculative, and which also have a significant historical and creative element. This also distinguishes the humanities from the mainly empirical approaches of the natural sciences. Yet the humanities incorporate research in ancient and modern languages, literature, philosophy, religion, and visual and performing arts. Historically, the disciplines within the humanities are associated with the humanist tradition (or "humanism"), which emphasizes the subjective side of the individual, such as our sense of freedom, beauty, creativity, and moral responsibility (see our discussion in Chapter 7 for a more detailed description of the humanistic approach). Humanism encourages self-understanding and improvement, openness, and sharing of skills and experience (Dilthey, 2002[1910]). A typical humanist is a person who embraces the importance of human values, altruism, dignity, and personal growth.

The expression of human experience and imagination through creativity is called *art*. This typically includes, among many forms, visual arts (such as painting and sculpture) and performing arts (such as music, theater, film, and dance). Although artists certainly can be scientists, most of them typically are not. Their intent generally is not to impart scientific knowledge through their artistic expression; instead, artists create works that are intended to be beautiful, transcendent, prompt self-reflection, carry emotional power, or provide a sense of belonging and community. Art also requires some act of judgment from the listener or viewer. In other words, art involves at least two individuals: an artist and a perceiver of art. Both acts – artistic creation and reflection – are important processes helping in understanding individuals and groups across cultures (Kandel, 2012).

Art gives personality psychologists a treasure trove of materials with which to enrich their scientific outlook on human beings, their behavior, and their inner world. *Ramayana*, the ancient Indian epic, or *Dream of the Read Chamber*, an eighteenth-century Chinese classic, provide great accounts of the complexities of human behavior and individual

choices. Writers, such as Shakespeare in England and Dostoyevsky in Russia, have created a long line of literary characters that millions of people continue to examine to this day. Scores of artistic works originating in the Middle East, Iran, and central Asia also concern themselves with the individual's personality. The poetry of Firdawsi, Dante, Omar Hayyam, and Nizami teach us about passion, romantic love, anger, jealousy, betrayal, sacrifice, pride, and generosity.

THE ECOCULTURAL APPROACH

Individuals are not just passive recipients of outside influences but rather active participants in the process of their interaction with nature. People constantly interact with the environment, thus transforming the world around them and themselves (Goodnow, 1990). As early cross-cultural researchers emphasized, the individual is not a static entity solely influenced by the environment, but a dynamic human being who interacts with and changes the environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Harkness, 1992). For example, as parents educate their children, they also (hopefully) learn themselves. People work hard to create wealth, yet the abundance of products often leads to complacency and people's diminished initiative (Cowen, 2017). At the turn of the twentieth century, the American sociologist Fredrick Turner (1920) argued that, while facing the challenges of the frontier, immigrant-settlers coming to the United States developed both individualistic and egalitarian culture as conquerors and builders. Today's American culture is a mixture of features that are both uniquely American and global in nature (Schwartz et al., 2010).

Among several environmental factors influencing individual psychology are (1) ecological and (2) sociopolitical (Berry, 1971; Berry et al., 1992). The natural setting in which human organisms and the environment interact is called the **ecological context**, which includes the economic activity of the population. Factors such as the presence or absence of food, quality of nutrition, heat or cold, and population density have a tremendous impact on the individual. **Sociopolitical context** is the extent to which people participate in both global and local decisions. This context includes various ideological values, organization of the government, and the presence (or lack of) political freedoms. Through genetic transmission and cultural transmission, as well as the process of acculturation, people adjust to the existing realities and acquire roles as members of a specific culture. When ecological, biological, cultural, and acculturation factors are identified and taken into consideration, the cross-cultural psychologist should be in a position to explain how, why, and to what extent cultural conditions differ from one another.

Even small cross-cultural differences can be associated with both environmental and social conditions. In Brazil, for example, one study found that "pretend play" was more developed in urban children of higher socioeconomic status than in other youth groups growing up in more difficult conditions. It is likely that the lives of poor children are preoccupied with material survival issues that require immediate and concrete solutions. In contrast, children in wealthier areas have greater opportunity to engage in symbolic and abstract thought associated with pretend play (Gosso et al., 2007).

Take climate, as another example. Harsher climates involve a wide variety of risks and challenges, including food shortages, stricter diets, and health problems. People living in harsher climates persistently face greater risks and require tough adjustments, compared to people living in milder climates. In the former case, people must provide for themselves with special clothing, housing, and working arrangements, and special organizations for the production, transportation, trade, and storage of food, and special care and cure facilities. People living in colder areas, on average, are wealthier than those in hotter areas. Certainly, climate is not the only factor affecting the way human groups and societies produce goods and services; unequal access to resources also is essential to consider (Van de Vliert, 2013, 2006). (In this regard, see our examination of climate change in Chapter 12.)

Economic and political stability is an important factor affecting long-term customs and beliefs. Persistently, over many decades, some countries are relatively stable, while others remain very unstable. Among the most stable countries are Sweden, the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, the Netherlands, and the Irish Republic. At this point in time, the most unstable ones are Sudan, Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, Haiti, Zimbabwe, Chad, Ivory Coast, and Central African Republic. Further, most stable countries tend to be democratic and free (Abramowitz, 2018; Jane's Information Group, 2008). How do you view the relationships between long-term social and economic stability, respect for human rights, and freedom? How might these factors affect certain cultural characteristics, like power distance?

A CASE IN POINT

THE ECOCULTURAL APPROACH: CULTURE AND AVAILABILITY OF SPACE

Crowding has become one of the most significant elements of Japanese society. People are squeezed and squashed on trains, elbowed on crowded streets, and kicked in swimming pools, sometimes with ten other people in the same lap lane. Most of Japan's 125 million people live in huge urban conglomerates, where space is extremely tight and expensive. Many apartments are extremely small, yet they still have to find ways to accommodate a washing machine, a refrigerator, a sofa, and a work desk. Younger people with an average salary less than $20,000 a year are especially inclined to lease such apartments, according to government data (Hida, 2022). Most Japanese houses have only one bathroom, they do not have basements, and front doors in many dwellings open directly onto the street because many have no sidewalks. Numerous large companies own guesthouses for entertaining their top executives, who often don't have a home large enough to accommodate dinner guests. A third of Japanese people reported that they have never had friends over in their homes. Space – or the shortage of it – can be a factor affecting cultural customs (Martin, 2017).

THE CULTURAL MIXTURES APPROACH

More than two decades ago, Dutch psychologists Hubert Hermans and Harry Kempen (1998) suggested that in a dynamic world of international communications, cultures constantly evolve. The authors argued that the "old" traditional cross-cultural psychology assumed that cultures are generally static, unchangeable, and confined within particular geographic locations. However, many social, economic, technological, and political realities have already transformed contemporary cultures, making them more heterogeneous and extremely complex (Faiola, 2003). Cultures are moving and mingling. The term *cultural mixtures* emphasizes the dynamic nature of our world. Consider the case of bicultural or multicultural individuals, having their cultural roots in several cultural or ethnic groups and living in changing cultural environments. The behavior and inner world of these individuals is likely to be influenced by a host of influences coming from different cultural environments (Ng & Lai, 2009). Think of a person who was born in Mexico, grew up in the United States, and settled to live and work in Canada.

People today have more freedom to choose which cultural messages they wish to adopt. Phenomena such as cultural identity (to be examined in Chapter 11) are becoming increasingly dynamic, absorbing the co-mingling of different backgrounds, interests, ideas, and choices in one individual self. Immigration creates a distinctive new culture, one that is different from both the old and the new context (Raghavan et al., 2010). For example, many immigrants from Latin America in the United States are likely to be fluent in two languages, support individualistic values in some situations (such as business), while collectivistic values in other contexts (such as community), and to identify with both the United States and their country of origin (Fresquez, 2021; Chen et al., 2008). Because of travel and technology, the psychological values of tolerance and openness, as psychologists predicted years ago, are likely to become essential in people's lives (Friedman, 2000; Giddens, 2000).

Psychologists have developed at least three views on how local cultures will respond to globalization. The first view predicts that globalization will inevitably lead to the weakening of local cultures and the development of a new international culture. Individualism, competition, and pursuit of efficiency will become global trends. Improving living standards and the proliferation of the Internet will eventually create similar lifestyles (Ho-Ying Fu & Chi-Yue, 2007). The wide range of interacting cultures is a global trend (Rozin, 2010).

The second view assumes that today's globalization patterns will eventually pull cultures further apart. The importance of local traditions and ethnic customs will be maintained by most people's fear of globalization. This tendency will result in strengthening of nationalism (discussed at some length in Chapter 12), as well as traditional views and religious affiliations, which will inevitably spark myriad ethnic and religious conflicts. The war in Ukraine that began in 2022 is just one of many examples of how nationalism affects human behavior and politics in the twenty-first century. As a result, this second

view predicts that globalization will affect mostly the lives of a small proportion of the world population, living mostly in wealthier areas (Huntington, 2011).

According to the third view, globalization will probably make a difference for roughly only half of the world's population. These people will have access to modern technologies, education, and travel. The other half of the planet population will remain in relative isolation due to either rampant poverty, ethnic conflicts, restrictive government policies, or all of the above. At the same time, large groups of people will remain in a state of cultural transition marked by psychological uncertainty and elevated anxiety trying to adjust to global transitions (Kaplan, 2012; Arnett, 2002).

You can discuss in class which of these approaches you believe is likely to be a better reflection of what is happening in the world today.

THE INTEGRATIVE APPROACH: A SUMMARY

To combine and critically apply these and possibly other approaches to cross-cultural psychology, let us introduce two useful concepts: **activity** and **availability of resources**.

For the cross-cultural psychologist, human behavior is not inevitably determined by cultural influences, but people are also free, active, and rational individuals who are capable of exerting their own will. Activity is a process of the individual's goal-directed interaction with the environment. Human motivation, emotion, thought, and reactions cannot be separated from human activity, which is both determined by – and also in turn determines – individual, socioeconomic, environmental, political, and cultural conditions (see our discussion of bidirectional causation in Chapter 2). In fact, our individual experience develops "within" our activity and manifests through it, as it has been suggested by the Russian psychologist Vladimir Vygotsky, whose research sparked significant interest in many countries in the twenty-first century (Shiraev, 2015; Vygotsky, 1978). Imagine, for example, a child who grows up in a zone of ethnic or religious conflict (for instance, Syria) and for whom survival becomes a primary activity. Such a child develops emotions, motivation, and cognitive processes quite different from those children who grow up in relatively safe conditions (such as Singapore). At the same time, because this child can also engage in activities similar for children in most environments – such as playing, helping parents, learning arithmetic, and thinking about the future, to name a few – this young individual will likely share many common psychological characteristics with other counterparts around the world. Cultures may thus be both somewhat similar and somewhat different in terms of the most common activities of their members (refer to the critical principle of the similarity-uniqueness paradox, to be discussed in Chapter 2).

The presence of resources essential for the individual's well-being largely determines the type, scope, and direction of human activities. There are societies with plenty of resources available, whereas there are regions in which resources are extremely scarce. Geographic location, climate, natural disasters, or the absence of such, may determine how both the quantity and quality of resources are available to individuals.

For instance, poverty is clearly and consistently linked to a shorter life span and poorer health (Riumallo-Herl et al., 2018). The poor tend to live in more harmful environments and are more likely to be exposed to diseases and other risks than those who are not poor. Malnutrition in childhood, particularly during the first year of life, childhood infections, and exposure to accidents and injuries all make chronic and sometimes disabling diseases more likely in adult life, causing substantial changes in individual activities (Duflo, 2016; Fowers & Richardson, 1996). Overall, does poverty affect the way people tend to make important economic decisions and judge themselves, other people, and their environment? It definitely does. Yet how? And in what ways? Such questions will be addressed throughout the text.

The mere presence of resources does not equate to equal availability to all members of that society. **Access to resources** is another important factor that either unifies or separates people and cultures from one another. People's access to resources affects many aspects of culture and individual behavior. Many studies that examine ethnic and religious groups point to inequality and oppression as major causes of behavioral psychological differences between more politically powerful versus less powerful cultural groups (see, for example, Duflo, 2016; Jenkins, 1995). Every year, researchers from the United Nations measure standards of living in most countries in the world. Average levels of people's education and income, combined with expected length of lifetime, are used as the criteria for determining standards of living. For many decades, countries such as Norway, Sweden, Australia, Canada, France, Japan, South Korea, and the United States have occupied positions in the top ten. Unfortunately, other countries chronically finish last on the list. For 25 years, the bottom 20 countries on the list have been mostly in the African continent.

However, more than material resources and access to them determine major characteristics of culture and culture-linked behavior. Ideas and practices that implement these ideas are inseparable from the individual's psychology. Take, for example, the role that people assign to their families and ancestors. Since ancient times in Chinese society, the family – not the individual – has reigned supreme as the basic social unit. The human being, therefore, was valued primarily as part of a larger community, and not necessarily as a completely independent social unit. However, China is changing today: The large family is disappearing (close to a half of families have only one child), and the fertility rates in China are only around 1.7, which is lower than in the United States and United Kingdom. These changes are already having a profound impact on China's culture and its people. We will discuss this phenomenon later in the book.

OTHER KEY CONCEPTS IN CROSS-CULTURAL PSYCHOLOGY

MULTICULTURALISM

Seeking equality in treatment for all social and cultural groups has become a standard in psychology, at least since the 1990s (Fowers & Richardson, 1996; Sears, 1996).

Multiculturalism is a view that not only encourages recognition of equality for all ethnic, racial, and religious groups in one geographic area, but also promotes the idea that the various cultural groups also have the right to follow their own values, practices, identities, and paths of development. Multiculturalism seeks inclusion of the opinions and contributions of diverse members of society, while also maintaining respect for their differences and not demanding that they assimilate into the larger culture. Multiculturalism can also facilitate valuable interactions among mixed ethnic and religious communities even within a single city. Think of the heterogeneity of cultures in New York City, Los Angeles, London, Paris, or Singapore, to name a few.

Biculturalism (a subset of multiculturalism) involves combining features of two cultures into one unique blend. Immigrants may willingly embrace dual ethnic identities, speak two languages fluently, and raise their children bilingual as well (Ng & Lai, 2011). Biculturalism can appear in simple customs. For example, many Cuban Americans, in both the past and present, celebrate the Thanksgiving holiday with a combination of traditional Thanksgiving food and Cuban cuisine (Chen et al., 2008).

Some definitions of multiculturalism include the belief that many cultural (particularly minority) groups deserve special acknowledgement of their differences within a dominant political culture. When viewed through this lens, multiculturalism may be seen as a reaction against the concept of cultural pluralism in modern democracies, and also as a way to compensate certain groups for past exclusion, discrimination, and oppression. One way this has been addressed is by modifying academic curricula and the content of various media broadcasts to include the contributions of minority and neglected cultural groups.

Multiculturalism and its implications have not gone uncriticized. Among the many objections, here are four: (1) multiculturalism elevates the needs of certain groups over other groups and at the expense of the broader common good; (2) multiculturalism undermines the notion of equal individual rights; (3) the emphasis on multiculturalism degrades the democratic ideal of cultural pluralism; (4) multiculturalism's close alignment with identity politics fosters a sense of competition, conflict, and antipathy between cultural groups. In sum, multiculturalism raises important questions about balancing recognition for specific groups with the interests of the society at large.

ETHNOCENTRISM

A classic study in psychology involved college students in several countries who were asked to draw a map of the world in ten minutes, incorporating as much detail as possible. In almost all cases, the students drew their own country as disproportionately large (Whittaker & Whittaker, 1972). Perhaps this shouldn't be surprising: we tend to overestimate or overemphasize what is most familiar or relevant to us. (We will discuss this error in critical thinking, called the *availability bias*, in Chapter 2.) **Ethnocentrism** refers to the tendency (often unintentional) to view other ethnic or cultural groups according to the preconceptions originating in the standards and customs of one's own culture. In other words, it involves the evaluation of other cultures primarily through

one's own cultural lens. Ethnocentrism can also refer to the belief in the inherent superiority of one's own ethnic group or culture. As such, this form may be seen psychologically as a kind of cultural narcissism.

In cross-cultural research, investigators may be prone to rely on concepts and theories that are not necessarily a suitable match for the culture under study. As such, they are subject to the pitfalls of ethnocentrism. Let's illustrate. Imagine that you live in the United States and you develop a new method to assess "online shyness" – the inclination to feel awkward, self-conscious, and nervous while interacting on Zoom or other social platforms. Next, you utilize your new method to study online shyness in a large sample of college students in the U.S. But can you be sure that your method would also measure this same type of shyness in individuals living in, let's say, China, India, Mexico, or South Africa? We know that social and cultural factors impact the way people think and feel. If a study is devised and conducted within just one ethnic or national context, the results of this study cannot necessarily be extrapolated to the entire global population.

For those who grew up in only one place and have never been exposed to different countries or cultures, any actual differences between two other groups might appear insignificant or even nonexistent. Consider, for instance, how such individuals might compare Mexicans and Puerto Ricans, Koreans and Japanese, Iranians and Arabs, African blacks and Caribbean blacks, and Sephardic Jews and Ashkenazi Jews. As such, ethnocentrism entails a masking or distortion of reality.

In most cases, being ethnocentric also involves judging from a somewhat invalid reference point, specifically the position of a cultural majority. Values and norms accepted by any majority have great power because of the sheer size of the majority and because its members hold most positions of power.

INDIGENOUS PSYCHOLOGY

Cross-cultural psychologists are increasingly paying special attention to indigenous cultures. **Indigenous groups**, such as Native Americans, Aboriginal Australians, and certain populations in Latin America (to name just a few) are protected by international or national laws, retaining specific rights based on their historical ties to a particular territory and their cultural and historical uniqueness. Kim and Berry (1993) first defined indigenous psychologies (the plural form is suitable here because any group of people can develop its own psychology) as the scientific study of human behavior and experience, common for indigenous groups. An important characteristic of an indigenous group is its preserved traditional ways of living, such as its care for nature, its reliance upon hunting and gathering, and other subsistence-based forms of production. By and large, most indigenous groups live in non–urbanized areas.

One of the assumptions in contemporary cross–cultural psychology is that it is not possible to fully understand the psychology of the people in a particular culture without a deep understanding of the social, historic, economic, political, ideological, and religious

foundations that have shaped that group's behavior and experience. Hence, indigenous theories, including those from indigenous psychology, are characterized by the use of conceptualizations and methodologies associated almost exclusively with the cultural group under study (Ho, 1998). For psychologists, it is also important to understand that, for centuries, indigenous groups have suffered colonization and conquest by others (see discussion of the naturalistic fallacy in Chapter 2), yet survived with their distinct sovereign identities, customs, belief systems, and a deep sense of pride for who they are (Anaya, 2009).

EXERCISE 1.1 **YOUR NAME AND YOUR CULTURE**

We seldom select our own names. Somebody else – usually our parents – decides what to name us. But have you ever considered how our names reflect our culture? Let's analyze this question in three steps.

Step 1. Do you have a first and a second (middle) name? Explain how and why your names were given to you based on your cultural background. What do your names mean? By what name do people call you? Do you have a preference and why?

Step 2. Describe how names are generally given in your culture. For example, in the Southern United States, it is common to give two (or even more) first names, (such as Billy Bob, Linda Lee, or Peggy Sue). In Russia, Ethiopia, and many other countries, your middle name is commonly the first name of your father. Do you feel that your name represents the culture with which you identify yourself? If you had to live for some time in a different country, would you consider changing your name so that it sounds culturally more suitable or "appropriate"?

Step 3. How do you feel about your name? Do you like it? If you could have chosen your own name, what would it have been? Do you think your name reflects who you are, your origin, your religion, if any? If so, in which ways?

CHAPTER SUMMARY

1. Cross-cultural psychology is the critical and comparative study of cultural effects on human psychology. As a comparative field, cross-cultural psychology draws its conclusions from at least two samples that represent at least two cultural groups. The act of comparison requires a particular set of critical thinking skills.

2. Cross-cultural psychology examines psychological diversity and the underlying reasons for such diversity. Using a comparative approach, cross-cultural psychology examines the links between cultural norms and behavior and the ways in which particular human activities are influenced by various cultural forces. Cross-cultural psychology establishes psychological universals, that is, phenomena common for people in several, many, or perhaps all cultures.

3. Cultural psychology seeks to discover meaningful links between culture and psychology of individuals living in this culture.

4. At least four types of knowledge about psychology can be recognized: scientific, popular (folk), ideological (value-based), and legal. It is critical for cross-cultural psychologists to treat all types of knowledge with sensitivity, understanding, and respect.

5. No society is culturally homogeneous. There are no cultures that are either entirely similar or completely different. Within the same cultural cluster there can be significant variations, inconsistencies, and dissimilarities.

6. Cross-cultural psychologists establish and conceptualize the main culture's features in terms of cultural dichotomies (or polarities). Among such dichotomies are high- versus low-power distance, high- versus low-uncertainly avoidance, masculinity versus femininity, and collectivism versus individualism.

7. Cross-cultural psychology relies on science, social sciences, and the humanities. Natural scientists are concerned with the description, prediction, and understanding of natural phenomena. For cross-cultural psychology, cognitive neuroscience has special importance. It examines the brain mechanisms supporting the individual's mental functions. Evolutionary scientists explore the ways in which biological factors affect human behavior and thus lay a natural foundation for human culture. Sociologists focus on broad social structures that influence society as a whole and, subsequently, its individuals. There are particular social forces that shape the behavior of large social groups, and human beings develop and adjust their individual responses in accordance with the demands and pressures of society.

8. According to an ecocultural approach to cross-cultural psychology, the individual cannot be separated from his or her environmental context. People constantly interact with the environment, thus both transforming it and themselves.

9. According to a cultural mixtures approach, researchers should switch their attention from traditional views on culture to new cultural mixtures, contact zones, interconnected systems, and multiple cultural identities.

10. An integrative approach to cross-cultural psychology emphasizes human activity, a process of the individual's goal-directed interaction with the environment. Human motivation, emotion, thought, and reactions cannot be separated from human activity, which (1) is determined by individual, socioeconomic, environmental, political, and cultural conditions and also (2) changes these conditions. Two factors – presence of and access to resources – largely determine the type, scope, and direction of human activities.

11. Indigenous theories are characterized by the use of conceptions and methodologies associated exclusively with the cultural group under investigation. Indigenous psychology is the scientific study of human behavior or the mind and is designed for a native people, and not transported from other regions.

12. Ethnocentrism is the view that involves judgment about other ethnic, national, and cultural groups and events from the observer's own ethnic, national, or cultural group's outlook. Multiculturalism is a view that encourages recognition of equality for all cultural and national groups and promotes the idea that various cultural groups have the right to follow their own unique paths of development and have their own unique activities, values, and norms.

KEY TERMS

Access to resources The indicator of availability of material resources to a population.

Activity A process of the individual's goal–directed interaction with the environment.

Availability of resources A measure indicating the presence of and access to resources essential for the individual's well-being.

Collectivism Behavior and experience based on interdependence, collective responsibility, concerns for others, and care for collective traditions and group values.

Cross-cultural psychology The critical and comparative study of cultural effects on human psychology.

Cultural psychology The study that seeks to discover systematic relationships between culture and psychological variables.

Culture A set of attitudes, behaviors, and symbols shared by a group of people and usually communicated from one generation to the next.

Ecological context The natural setting in which human organisms and the environment interact.

Ethnicity A cultural heritage shared by a category of people who also share a common ancestral origin, language, and religion.

Ethnocentrism The tendency (often unintentional) to view other ethnic or cultural groups according to the preconceptions originating in the standards and customs of one's own culture.

Ideological (value-based) knowledge A stable set of beliefs about the world, the nature of good and evil, right and wrong, and the purpose of human life—all based on a certain organizing principal or central idea.

Indigenous groups People who identify as part of a distinct group or are descended from those originating in areas that were their traditional lands, which existed prior to the establishment of modern-day borders.

Individualism Complex behavior and experience based on personal independence, self–reliance, and concern for oneself and one's immediate family or primary group.

Legal knowledge A type of knowledge encapsulated in the law and detailed in official rules and principles related to psychological functioning of individuals.

Multiculturalism The view that encourages recognition of equality for all cultural groups and promotes the idea that the various cultural groups have the right to follow their own paths of development.

Nation A large group of people who constitute a legitimate, independent state and share a common geographic origin, history, and, frequently, language.

Nontraditional culture The term used to describe cultures based largely on modern beliefs, rules, symbols, and principles, relatively open to other cultures,

absorbing and dynamic, science based and technology driven, and relatively tolerant to social innovations.

Popular (or folk) knowledge Everyday assumptions ranging from commonly held beliefs to individual opinions about psychological phenomena.

Power distance The extent to which the members of a society accept that power in institutions and organizations is distributed unequally.

Race A large group of people distinguished by certain similar and genetically transmitted physical characteristics.

Religious identity A term indicating an individual's acceptance of knowledge, beliefs, and practices related to a particular faith.

Scientific knowledge A type of knowledge accumulated as a result of

scientific research on a wide range of psychological phenomena.

Sociopolitical context The setting in which people participate in both global and local decisions; it includes various ideological issues, political structures, and presence or absence of political and social freedoms.

Traditional culture The term used to describe cultures based largely on beliefs, rules, symbols, and principles established predominantly in the past, confined in local or regional boundaries, restricting and mostly intolerant to social innovations.

Uncertainty avoidance The degree to which the members of a society feel uncomfortable with uncertainty and ambiguity.

Uncertainty orientation Common ways in which people handle uncertainty in their daily situations and lives in general.

REFERENCES

Abramowitz, M. (2018). Democracy in crisis. Freedom House. https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/freedom-world-2018

Anaya, J. (2009). *International human rights and indigenous peoples.* Frederick, MD: Aspen.

Anemone, R. L. (2011). *Race and human diversity: A biocultural approach.* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Arnett, J. J. (2002). The psychology of globalization. *American Psychologist,* 57(*10*), 774–783.

Arnett, J. J. (2008). The neglected 95%: Why American psychology needs to become less American. *American Psychologist,* 63, 602–614.

Arnett, J. J. (2020). *Human development: A cultural approach* (2nd ed.). New York: Pearson.

Babb, L. A. (1975). *The divine hierarchy: Popular Hinduism in Central India.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Barnlund, D. (1975). *Public and private self in Japan and the United States.* Tokyo: Simul Press.

Barnlund, D. C. (1989). *Communicative styles of Japanese and Americans: Images and realities.* Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Bemak, F., & Chung, R. C.-Y. (2008). Counseling disaster survivors: Implications for cross-cultural counseling. In P. B. Pedersen, J. Draguns, W. Lonner, & J. Trimble (Eds.), *Counseling across cultures* (6th ed., pp. 325–340). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Berry, J. W. (1971). Ecological and cultural factors in spatial perceptual development. *Canadian Journal of Behavioral Science*, 3, 324–336.

Berry, J. W., Poortinga, Y. H., Segall, M. H., & Dasen, P. R. (1992). *Cross-cultural psychology: Research and applications*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Brace, C. (2005). *Race is a four letter word*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Brislin, R. (2000). *Understanding culture's influence on behavior* (2nd ed.). Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development: Experiments by nature and design*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Chaistan, E., Livnat, A., Papadimitriou, C., & Vazirani, U. (2014). Algorithms, games, and evolution. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the USA*, *111*(29), 10620–10623.

Chen, S. X., Benet-Martínez, V., & Bond, M. H. (2008). Bicultural identity, bilingualism, and psychological adjustment in multicultural societies: Immigration-based and globalization-based acculturation. *Journal of Personality*, 76, 803–838.

Cheung, F. M., & Halpern, D. F. (2010). Women at the top: Powerful leaders define success as work + family in a culture of gender. *American Psychologist*, *65*(*3*), 182–193.

Chung, R. C.-Y., & Bemak, F. (2012). *Social justice counseling: The next steps beyond multiculturalism*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Comas-Díaz, L. (2001). Hispanics, Latinos, or Americanos: The evolution of identity. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, *7*(2), 115–120.

Costa, P. T., & McCrae, R. M. (1997, May). Personality trait structure as a human universal. *American Psychologist*, *52*(*5*), 509–516.

Cowen, T. (2017). *The complacent class: The self-defeating quest for the American dream*. New York: St. Martin's.

Dalal, Tarla (2010). *Faraal foods for fasting days*. Mumbai: Sanjay & Co.

Dilthey, W. (2002). *The formation of the historical world in the human sciences*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. (Originally published in 1910.)

Dole, A. (1995). Why not drop race as a term? *American Psychologist*, *50*(1), 40.

Duflo, E. (2016). *Poverty and shared prosperity 2016: Taking on inequality*. Washington, DC: World Bank Publications.

Faiola, A. (2003, December 27). Japan's empire of cool: Country's culture becomes its biggest export. *Washington Post*, p. A01.

Fijeman, Y. A., Willemsen, M. E., & Poortinga, Y. H. (1996). Individualism–collectivism: An empirical study of a conceptual issue. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *27*, 381–402.

Fowers, B. J., & Richardson, F. C. (1996).Why is multiculturalism good? *American Psychologist*, 51, 609–621.

Fresquez, G. (2021). Bicultural Latinos embrace dual identities, shun pressure to assimilate. *NBC News*. September 23. www.nbcnews.com/news/latino/bicultural-latinos-embrace-dual-identities-shun-pressure-assimilate-rcna2149

Friedman, T. L. (2000). *The Lexus and the olive tree: Understanding globalization*. New York: Anchor.

Gannon, M. (2016). Race is a social construct, scientist argue. *Scientific American*. February 5. www.scientificamerican.com/article/race-is-a-social-construct-scientists-argue/

Giddens, A. (2000). *Runaway world: How globalization is reshaping our lives*. New York: Routledge.

Glenn, S., & Sokoloff, N. (2010). *Boundaries of Jewish identity*. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press.

Goodnow, J. J. (1990). The socialization of cognition: What's involved? In J. W. Stigler, R. A. Shweder, & G. Herdt (Eds.), *Cultural psychology: Essays on comparative human behavior* (pp. 259–286). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Gosso, Y., Morais, M., & Otta, E. (2007). Pretend play of Brazilian children: A window into different cultural worlds. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *38*(5), 539–558.

Gould, S. J. (1994, November 15). The geometer of race. *Discover*, *15*(11), 65–69.

Gould, S. J. (1997). This view of life: Unusual unity. *Natural History*, *106*, 20–23, 69–71.

Granovetter, M. (1973). The strength of weak ties. *American Journal of Sociology*, *78*(6), 1360–1380.

Gudykunst, W., & Bond, M. H. (1997). Intergroup relations across cultures. In J. W. Berry, M. H. Segall, & Ç. Kağıtçıbaşı (Eds.), *Handbook of cross-cultural psychology: Social behavior and applications* (Vol. 3, pp. 119–161). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Harkness, S. (1992). Human development in psychological anthropology. In T. Schwartz, G. M. White, & C. A. Lutz (Eds.), *New directions in psychological anthropology* (pp. 102–121). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Haslam, N. (2005, March). Dimensions of folk psychiatry. *Review of General Psychology*, *9*(1), 35–47.

Henrich, J., Heine, S., & Norenzayan, A. (2010). The weirdest people in the world? *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, *33*(2/3), 123.

Hermans, J. M., & Kempen, J. G. (1998). Moving cultures: The perilous problems of cultural dichotomies in a globalizing society. *American Psychologist*, *53*(10), 1111–1120.

Hida, H. (2022). A 95-square-foot Tokyo apartment: "I wouldn't live anywhere else." Updated October 4. *The New York Times*. www.nytimes.com/2022/10/03/business/tiny-apartments-tokyo.html

Ho, D. (1998). Indigenous psychologies: Asian perspectives. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *29*(1), 88–103.

Hofstede, G. (1980). *Culture's consequences: International differences in work-related values*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Horenczyk, G., & Munayer, S. J. (2007). Acculturation orientations toward two majority groups: The case of Palestinian Arab Christian adolescents in Israel. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *38*, 76–86.

Ho-Ying Fu, J., & Chiu, C.-Y. (2007). Local culture's responses to globalization: Exemplary persons and their attendant values. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *38*(5), 636–653.

Huntington, S. (2011). *The clash of civilizations and the remaking of world order*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Jabr, F. (2015). Life's big leaps: Critical moments in evolution. *Quanta Magazine*. www.quantamagazine.org/tag/lifes-big-leaps-critical-moments-in-evolution/

Jane's Information Group (2008). *A one-year investigation and analysis of 235 countries*. https://bit.ly/2Vdk8lM

Jenkins, A. (1995). *Psychology and African Americans* (2nd ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Jenkins, C. (2018). The American Academy of Pediatrics on spanking children: Don't do it, ever. NPR. www.npr.org/2018/11/11/666646403/the-american-academy-of-pediatrics-on-spanking-children-dont-do-it-ever

Johnson, K. A., White, A. E., Boyd, B. M., & Cohen, A. B. (2011). Matzoh, meat, milk, and mana: Psychological influences on religio-cultural food practices. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *42*, 1421–1436.

Kahneman, D. (2013). *Thinking, fast and slow*. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

Kahneman, D. (2021). *Thinking fast and slow*. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

Kanazawa, S. (2010). Evolutionary psychology and intelligence research. *American Psychologist*, *65*(4), 279–289.

Kandel, E. (2012). *The age of insight*. New York: Random House.

Kaplan, R. (2012). *The revenge of geography: What the map tells us about coming conflicts and the battle against fate*. New York: Random House.

Keith, (Ed.) (2013). *The encyclopedia of cross-cultural psychology*. New York: Wiley.

Keysar, A., & Navarro-Rivera, J. (2013). A world of atheism: Global demographics. In S. Bullivant & M. Ruse (Eds.), *An Oxford Handbook on Atheism* (pp. 553–586). New York: Oxford University Press.

Kim, U., & Berry, J. W. (1993). *Indigenous psychologies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Kitayama, S., Conway, L. G., III, Pietromonaco, P. R., Park, H., & Plaut, V. C. (2010). *American Psychologist*, *65*(6), 559–574.

Kitayama, S., Ishii, K., Imada, T., Takemura, K., & Ramaswamy, J. (2006). Voluntary settlement and the spirit of independence: Evidence from Japan's "Northern Frontier." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *91*, 369–384.

Kitayama, S., Park, H., Sevincer, A. T., Karasawa, M., & Uskul, A. K. (2009). A cultural task analysis of implicit independence: Comparing North America, Western Europe, and East Asia. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *97*, 236–255.

Knafo, A., Schwartz, S. H., & Levine, R. V. (2009). Helping strangers is lower in embedded cultures. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *40*(5), 875–879.

Kurman, J., & Sriram, N. (2002). Interrelationships among vertical and horizontal collectivism, modesty, and self-enhancement. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *33*(1), 71–87.

Langaney, A. (1988). *Les hommes, passe, present, conditionnel [The men, past, present, conditional]*. Paris: Armand Colin.

Lee, I.-C., Pratto, F., & Li, M.-C. (2007). Social relationships and sexism in the United States and Taiwan. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *38*, 595–612.

Levin, M. (1995). Does race matter? *American Psychologist*, *50*(1), 45–46.

Lipka, M. (2019). 10 facts about atheists. *Pew Research Center*. December 6. www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/12/06/10-facts-about-atheists/

Lonner, W. J. (1980). The search for psychological universals. In H. C. Triandis & W. W. Lambert (Eds.), *Handbook of cross-cultural psychology: Perspectives* (Vol. 1, pp. 143–204). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Lonner, W. J. (2019). A golden anniversary editorial. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 50(2), 151–163.

Maaravi Y., Levy, A., Gur T., Confino, Dan., & Segal, S. (2021). "The tragedy of the commons": How individualism and collectivism affected the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. *Frontiers in Public Health*, *9*. www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpubh.2021.627559

Markus, H. R., & Kitayama, S. (1991). Culture and self: Implications for cognition, emotion, and motivation. *Psychological Review*, *98*, 224–253.

Martin, A. (2017). Press Release. *GFK*. https://cdn2.hubspot.net/hubfs/2405078/cms-pdfs/fileadmin/user_upload/dyna_content/global/documents/press_releases/2017/20170727_pr-study_entertaining-guests_press_release_vfinal.pdf

Matsumoto, D. (2007). Individual and cultural differences on status differentiation: The status differentiation scale. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *38*(4), 413–431.

McCornack, S., & Ortiz, J. (2017). *Choices and connections: An introduction to communication* (2nd ed.). New York: Bedford/St. Martin's.

Meigs, A. S. (1988). *Food, sex, and pollution: A New Guinea religion.* New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Miller, G. (2000). *The mating mind: How sexual choice shaped the evolution of human nature.* London: Heineman.

Miller, G. (2019). Virtue signaling: Essays in Darwinian politics and free speech. https://gumroad.com/l/nhFKP

Monroe, K., & Kreidie, L. (1997). The perspective of Islamic fundamentalists and the limits of Rational Choice Theory. *Political Psychology*, *18*(1), 19–44.

Munroe, R. L., Munroe, R. H., & Whiting, B. B. (Eds.). (1981). *Handbook of cross-cultural human development.* New York: Garland.

Nanda, S., & Warms, R. (2010). *Culture counts.* Boston, MA: Cengage.

Ng, S. H., & Lai, J. C. L. (2009). Effects of culture priming on the social connectedness of the bicultural self. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *40*, 170–186.

Ng, S. H., & Lai, J. C. L. (2011). Bicultural self, multiple social identities, and dual patriotisms among ethnic Chinese in Hong Kong. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *42*(1), 89–103.

O'Neal, A. (2019, August 23). Why Bernie Sanders is wrong about Sweden. *Wall Street Journal.* www.wsj.com/articles/why-bernie-sanders-is-wrong-about-sweden-11566596536

Pew (2021). About three-in-ten US adults are now religiously unaffiliated. December 14. www.pewresearch.org/religion/2021/12/14/about-three-in-ten-u-s-adults-are-now-religiously-unaffiliated/

Pew (2022). How U.S. religious composition has changed in recent decades. September 13. www.pewresearch.org/religion/2022/09/13/how-u-s-religious-composition-has-changed-in-recent-decades/

Raghavan, C., Harkness, S., & Super, C. (2010). Parental ethnotheories in the context of immigration: Asian Indian immigrant and Euro-American mothers and daughters in an American town. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *41*(4), 617–632.

Riumallo-Herl, C., Canning, D., & Salomon, J. A. (2018). Measuring health and economic wellbeing in the Sustainable Development Goals era: Development of a poverty-free life expectancy metric and estimates for 90 countries. *Lancet Global Health*, *6*, 843–858.

Rozin, P. (2010). The weirdest people in the world are a harbinger of the future of the world. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, *33*(2/3), 48–49.

Rushton, J. P. (1995). *Race, evolution, and behavior.* New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction.

Rushton, J. P., & Jensen, A. R. (2005). Thirty years of research on race differences in cognitive ability. *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law*, *11*, 235–294.

Saad, L. & Hrynowski, Z. (2022). How many Americans believe in God? *Gallup.* https://news.gallup.com/poll/268205/americans-believe-god.aspx

Sarfati, L. (2010). *Objects of worship: Material culture in the production of shamanic rituals in South Korea.* Dissertation Abstracts International Section A: Humanities and Social Sciences, p. 610.

Schaller, M. (2006). Parasites, behavioral defenses, and the social psychological mechanisms through which cultures are evolved. *Psychological Inquiry*, *17*, 96–137.

Schmitt. D., Allik, J., McCrae, R., & Benet-Martínez. V. (2007). The geographic distribution of Big Five personality traits: Patterns and profiles of human self-description across 56 nations. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *38*(2), 173–212.

Schwartz, B. (2004). *The paradox of choice: Why more is less*. New York: Ecco.

Schwartz, B. (2015). *Why we work*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Schwartz, S. J., Unger, J. B., Zamboanga, B. L., & Szapocznik, J. (2010). Rethinking the concept of acculturation: Implications for theory and research. *American Psychologist*, *65*(4), 237–251.

Sears, D. (1996). Presidential address: Reflections on the politics of multiculturalism in American society. *Political Psychology*, *17*(3), 409–420.

Segall, M. H., Campbell, D. T., & Herskovits, M. J. (1966). *The influence of culture on visual perception*. Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill.

Segall, M. H., Dasen, P. R., Berry, J. W., & Poortinga, Y. H. (1990). *Human behavior in global perspective: An introduction to cross-cultural psychology*. New York: Pergamon.

Segall, M., Dasen, P., Berry, J., & Poortinga, Y. (1999). *Human behavior in global perspective*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Shiraev, E. (2011). *A history of psychology: A global perspective*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Shiraev, E. (2015). *A history of psychology* (2nd ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Shiraev, E., & Boyd, G. (2008). *The accent of success*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Shiraev, E., & Zubok, V. (2020). *International relations* (3rd ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.

Sidanius, J., & Pratto, F. (2001). *Social dominance: An intergroup theory of social hierarchy and oppression*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.

Smith, P. (2015). To lend helping hands: In-group favoritism, uncertainty avoidance, and the national frequency of pro-social behaviors. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *46*(6), 759–771.

Song, J. (2016). Manshin: Ten thousand spirits (review). *Asian Theatre Journal*, *33*(1), 203–206.

Sorrentino, R. M., Nezlek, J. B., Yasunaga, S., Kouhara, S., Otsubo, Y., & Shuper, P. (2008). Uncertainty orientation and affective experiences: Individual differences within and across cultures. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *39*(2), 129–146.

Summereder, S., Streicher, B., & Batinic, B. (2013). Voice or consistency? What you perceive as procedurally fair depends on your level of power distance. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *45*(2), 192–212.

Talhelm, T., Zhang, X., Oishi, S., Shimin, C., Duan, D., Lan, X., & Kitayama, S. (2014). Large-scale psychological differences within China explained by rice versus wheat agriculture. *Science*, *344*(6184), 603–608.

Terracciano, A., & McCrae, R. (2007). Perceptions of Americans and the Iraq invasion: Implications for understanding national character stereotypes. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *38*(6), 695–710.

Triandis, H. (1989). The self and social behavior in different social contexts. *Psychological Review*, *96*, 506–520.

Triandis, H. C. (1996). The psychological measurement of cultural syndromes. *American Psychologist*, *51*(4), 407–415.

Triandis, H. C., Lambert, W. W., Berry, J. W., Lonner, W. T., Heron, A., Brislin, R., et al. (Eds.). (1980). *Handbook of cross-cultural psychology* (Vols. 1–6). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Turner, J. F. (1920). *The frontier in American history*. New York: Henry Holt.

U.S. Census Bureau. (2010). United States Census 2010. www.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial-census/data/datasets.2010.html

U.S. Census Bureau. (2020). Race. www.census.gov/topics/population/race.html

Van de Vliert, E. (2006). Autocratic leadership around the globe: Do climate and wealth drive leadership culture? *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *37*, 42–59.

Van de Vliert, E. (2013). Climato-economic habitats support patterns of human needs, stresses, and freedoms. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, *36*, 465–480.

Van Hoorn, A. (2014). Individualist–collectivist culture and trust radius: A multilevel approach. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *46*(2), 269–276.

Vygotsky, L. (1978). *Mind and society*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. (Originally published in 1932.)

Wade, N. (2015) *A troublesome inheritance: Genes, race, and human history*. New York: Penguin Books.

Whittaker, J., & Whittaker, S. (1972). A cross-cultural study of geocentrism. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *3*(4), 417–421.

Xu, A. (2021). Consciously collectivistic: The beauty of East Asian culture. *Honi Soit*, May 25. http://honisoit.com/2021/05/consciously-collectivistic-the-beauty-of-east-asian-culture/

2

CHAPTER 2
CRITICAL THINKING IN CROSS-CULTURAL PSYCHOLOGY

It's good to be open-minded, but not so open that your brains fall out.
Jacob Needleman (1934–2022) American philosopher

This story could have been told in Haiti. Or maybe in New York. Or perhaps in Tokyo, Glasgow, Cape Town, or Buenos Aires. A woman walks into a doctor's office complaining that she's a zombie. The doctor, trying his best to convince her otherwise, says, "You're walking and talking, aren't you?"

"Zombies walk and talk," replies the patient.

"Well, you're breathing, too."

"Yes, but zombies breathe."

"Okay, what *don't* zombies do? Do they bleed?"

"No, *of course not*," says the patient.

The doctor replies, "Good. Then I'm going to stick this needle into your arm and we'll see if your idea is right or wrong."

So, he plunges the needle deep into the woman's arm, and, sure enough, blood starts to gush out of the wound. The woman is aghast. In utter dismay, she turns to the doctor and says, "My God, I was wrong . . . Zombies *do* bleed."

What is the moral of this story? Compelling facts are quite often not compelling enough. What matters more is our interpretation of these facts. One of the most significant characteristics of our thinking is the way in which we become personally invested in – and then tightly cling to – our opinions, beliefs, and interpretations. This tendency, called the belief perseverance effect (discussed below), can frequently lead us to distort, minimize, or even ignore any facts that run contrary to our individually perceived reality (or, in the vernacular of today, "my truth").

―――――

Thinking is one of the most essential of all human characteristics. It is intrinsic to almost everything we do. But do we ever pause and think about thinking? How often do we subject our thinking process to critical analysis?

Educators rightfully profess that learning how to think critically is one of the most vital and indispensable components of learning; yet specific tools for **critical thinking** are rarely, if ever, provided to us. Thus, although we may be convinced of the value of critical thinking, we are left not knowing quite what to do about it.

Herein lies the explicit theme of this chapter, the express purpose of which is to improve your thinking skills, to teach you to think critically, to help you think about thinking – in a word, to promote **metathinking** in cross-cultural psychology. Metathinking is not a magical, mystical, or mysterious abstraction. It is not an unattainable gift that is miraculously bestowed on the intellectual elite. Rather, it is a skill (or, more accurately, a series of skills) that can be successfully taught and learned (Levy, 2010). The thought principles or **metathoughts** (literally, "thoughts about thought") contained in this chapter are cognitive tools that provide you with specific strategies for inquiry and problem solving in cross-cultural psychology. In this way, they serve as potent **antidotes** to thinking, which is often prone to be biased, simplistic, rigid, lazy, or simply sloppy.

For the purposes of this book (portions of which were adapted from Levy, 2010), each metathought is illustrated primarily from the theory and application of contemporary cross-cultural psychology. Despite worldwide sociocultural variability, the essential universality of these critical thinking principles transcends the confines of any specific cultural group. Further, they can be utilized in a diverse array of fields, ranging from philosophy and theology to law, political science, history, sociology, anthropology, journalism, business, medicine, sports, and even the arts – in fact, in all areas of education and learning.

THE EVALUATIVE BIAS OF LANGUAGE: TO DESCRIBE IS TO PRESCRIBE

Language serves many functions. Certainly, one of its most common and most important purposes is to help us describe various phenomena, such as events, situations, and people: "What is it?" Another purpose is to evaluate these same phenomena: "Is it good or bad?" Typically, we consider descriptions to be objective, whereas we consider evaluations to be subjective.

However, is the distinction between objective description and subjective evaluation a clear one? The answer, in the vast majority of cases, is no. Why? Because words both describe *and* evaluate. Whenever we attempt to describe something or someone, the words we use are almost invariably value laden, in that they reflect our own personal likes and dislikes. Thus, our use of any particular term serves not only to describe but also to *prescribe* what is desirable or undesirable to us.

This problem is not so prevalent in describing objects as compared to people. Let us take, as an illustration, the terms "cold" and "hot." For material substances, both words refer literally to temperature: "That liquid is very cold," or "That liquid is very hot." When

we use these same terms to describe an individual, however, they take on a distinctly evaluative connotation: "That person is very cold," or "That person is very hot."

Our best attempts to remain neutral are constrained by the limits of language. When it comes to describing people (e.g., in conducting psychological assessments), it is nearly impossible to find words that are devoid of evaluative connotation. Incredible as it may seem, we simply do not have neutral adjectives to describe personality characteristics, whether those of an individual or an entire group. And even if such words did exist, we still would be very likely to utilize the ones that reflect our own personal preferences.

The evaluative bias of language is illustrated in Table 2.1 and the accompanying exercise. Let us say that two different observers ("Butch" and "Pollyanna"), each with a different set of values, are asked to describe the same person, event, or group. For instance, suppose they share their impressions of the 2020 American presidential candidates. Notice how the words they use reveal their own subjective points of view.

Butch: Donald Trump is a narcissistic bully.
Pollyanna: Donald Trump is a self-confident leader.

Butch: Joe Biden is weak and overly accommodating.
Pollyanna: Joe Biden is flexible and listens to others.

Table 2.1 The Same Person as Described from Two Perspectives

From Butch's Value System	From Pollyanna's Value System
Old	Mature
Naïve	Idealistic
Reckless	Brave
Manipulative	Persuasive
Spineless	Cooperative
Childish	Childlike
Weird	Interesting
Obsessed	Committed
Anal retentive	Tidy
Dependent	Loyal
Codependent	Empathic
Narcissistic	High self-esteem
Lunatic	Visionary
Psychotic	Creative
Slave	Involuntarily relocated
Sociopath	Morally challenged
Dead	Ontologically impaired

EXERCISE 2.1 THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF VALUES, PERCEPTIONS, AND LANGUAGE

Ready to try some on your own? Remember that you are to select words that reveal Pollyanna's personal attitudes/values, which are consistently more "positive" than Butch's.

Butch	Pollyanna	Butch	Pollyanna
Problem	_____	Abnormal	_____
Failure	_____	Ethnocentrism	_____
Terrorist	_____	Chauvinism	_____
Snowflake	_____	Deadnaming	_____
Murder	_____	Discrimination	_____
Genocide	_____	Reverse discrimination	_____
Brainwashed	_____	Child abuse	_____
Handicapped	_____	Child neglect	_____
Disabled	_____	Handout	_____
Cultural appropriation	_____	"Karen"	_____

This metathought also underscores the reciprocal influence of attitudes and language. That is, not only do our beliefs, values, and perceptions affect our use of language, but our use of language in turn influences our beliefs, values, and perceptions (see the sub-section "bidirectional causation" in this chapter). For example, by referring to a person or group as "sick," we are more inclined to perceive them as sick, which in turn leads us to label them sick, which prompts us to assume that they are sick, and so forth.

The bidirectional relationship between attitudes and language has direct relevance to the use (and misuse) of "politically correct" terminology. (For a satirical perspective on politically correct language in academia, see Table 2.2, "The Emperor's Postmodern Clothes.") Consider the ways in which names applied to various social and cultural groups have changed as a function of different social and historical contexts. What values might be related to, for example, the use of "Indian" versus "Native American"? "Oriental" versus "Asian"? "Illegal alien" versus "undocumented worker"? "Colored" versus "Black" versus "Negro" versus "Afro-American" versus "African American"? "Hispanic" versus "Latin" versus "Latino/a" versus "Latinx"? "Homosexual" versus "gay" versus "LGB" versus "LGBT" versus "LGBTQ+" versus "LGBTQIA" versus "LGBTTQQ" versus any new variations cropping up between the time this was published and the time you are reading it? Why is "person of color" acceptable, while "colored person" is unacceptable? Similarly, what do the terms "pro-choice" and "pro-life" not so subtly imply about the moral stance of anybody who happens to have a different point of view? In these cases and countless more, we see how values both shape and are shaped by our use of language.

Table 2.2 The Emperor's Postmodern Clothes: A Brief Guide to Deconstructing Academically Fashionable Phrases for the Uninitiated

Phrase	Translation
All points of view are equally valid.	I am willing to abandon all logic and evidence just to maintain the illusion that I am being open-minded and fair.
We need to neutralize the effects of power, status and privilege.	I wish that I had more power, status and privilege.
There is no objective reality.	. . . except for what I'm saying right now.
In our culture, empiricism is over- privileged.	I don't have any facts to back up my argument.
Permit me to educate you.	Permit me to invalidate your opinion.
Permit me to deconstruct this sociocultural myth.	Watch me demonstrate how superior I am.
Permit me to share a personal narrative with you.	. . . and I dare you not to display an empathic response.
I am very passionate about these ideas.	The more strongly I feel, the more right I must be.
I'm not saying "better," I'm saying "different."	I'm saying "better."
Let us start a dialogue.	Let me start a monologue.
This warrants more conversation.	I can't believe that you have the temerity not to agree with me.
This warrants *much* more conversation.	I can't believe that you *still* have the temerity not to agree with me.
Don't you think that sounds kind of racist?	Good luck trying to disagree with me *now*.
These are the types of issues we don't talk about enough around here.	You're not feeling guilty enough yet.
Your conclusion is open to contestation.	You are wrong.
One can prove anything with statistics.	I should have paid more attention in stats class.
The interreferential nature of our phenomenological field can be neither deconstructed nor decontextualized from our ontological meta-narrative.	Don't I sound really intellectual and hip?
It's not about race.	It's about race.
It's about race.	It's not about race.
Discussions about cultural diversity are emotionally threatening.	It can't be *my* fault that students don't like my classes.
It is unfortunate that discrimination will always be with us.	. . . which is actually fortunate, because my entire identity would evaporate if I didn't have an enemy to fight against.
Science is merely one more opinion.	My Uncle Bill told me so.

Source: Levy, D. A. (2008, November/December). The emperor's postmodern clothes: A brief guide to deconstructing academically fashionable phrases for the uninitiated. *Skeptical Inquirer, 32*(6), 17. Used by permission of the *Skeptical Inquirer*: www.skepticalinquirer.org

ANTIDOTES

1. Remember that descriptions, especially concerning personality characteristics, can never be entirely objective, impartial, or neutral.
2. Become aware of your own personal values and biases and how these influence the language that you use.
3. Avoid presenting your value judgments as objective reflections of truth.
4. Recognize how other people's use of language reveals their own values and biases.

DIFFERENTIATING DICHOTOMOUS VARIABLES AND CONTINUOUS VARIABLES: BLACK AND WHITE, OR SHADES OF GRAY?

Some phenomena may be divided (or *bifurcated*) into two mutually exclusive categories. These types of phenomena are **dichotomous variables**. For example, when you flip a coin, it must turn up either heads or tails – there is no middle ground. Similarly, a woman cannot be "a little bit," "somewhat," or "moderately" pregnant – she is either pregnant or not pregnant. Here are some other examples:

*   A light switch is either on or off.
*   A basketball either goes through the hoop or it doesn't.
*   Barak Obama was either born in Kenya or he wasn't.

Other phenomena, by contrast, consist of a theoretically infinite number of points lying between two polar opposites. These types of phenomena are **continuous variables**. For example, between the extremes of black and white there exists a middle ground that is comprised of innumerable shades of gray (see Figure 2.1).

DICHOTOMOUS VARIABLE

CONTINUOUS VARIABLE
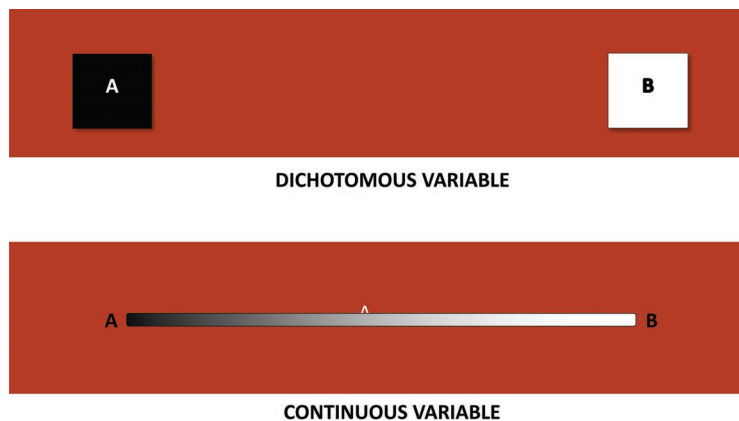
Figure 2.1 Dichotomous Variables versus Continuous Variables

The problem is that people often confuse these two types of variables. Specifically, we have a natural tendency to dichotomize variables that, more accurately, should be conceptualized as continuous. In particular, most person-related phenomena are frequently presumed to fit into one of two discrete types (either category A or category B), rather than as lying along a continuum (somewhere between end point A and end point B). In the vast majority of cases, however, continuous variables are more accurate and therefore more valid representations of the phenomena we are attempting to describe and explain.

With particular respect to cross-cultural psychology, the potential pitfalls of false dichotomization are illustrated by the concepts of "individualism" versus "collectivism," "absolutism" versus "relativism," and "Western" versus "Eastern" (see continuum figures, such as Figure 2.1, which are throughout the book). What are some examples of continuous variables that frequently are assumed to be, or treated as if they were, dichotomous?

normal–abnormal
mental health–mental illness
introverted–extraverted
biased–unbiased
conscious–unconscious
functional–dysfunctional
adaptive–maladaptive
Type A personality–Type B personality

EXERCISE 2.2 IDENTIFYING DICHOTOMOUS VERSUS CONTINUOUS VARIABLES

The following exercise will give you some practice at differentiating dichotomous and continuous phenomena. For each of the terms below, indicate those that refer to dichotomous phenomena (D) and those that refer to continuous phenomena (C).

competitive – cooperative: _____
autonomous – dependent: _____
heterosexual – homosexual: _____
power on – power off: _____
acculturated – unacculturated: _____
racist – nonracist: _____
married – single: _____
young – old: _____
perfect – imperfect: _____
"pro-choice" – "pro-life": _____
creationist – evolutionist: _____
addicted – not addicted: _____
feminine – masculine: _____
rich – poor: _____

liberal – conservative: _____
atheist – theist: _____
prejudiced – unprejudiced: _____
alcoholic beverage – nonalcoholic beverage: _____
positive COVID test – negative COVID test: _____
integrated – segregated: _____
licensed – unlicensed: _____
sexist – nonsexist: _____
airborne – grounded: _____
tolerant – intolerant: _____
responsible – not responsible: _____
mailed – unmailed: _____
democracy – dictatorship: _____
guilty verdict – not guilty verdict: _____
pro-gun control – anti gun control: _____
traditional – modern: _____
politically correct – politically incorrect: _____
materialistic – spiritualistic: _____
"woke" – "non-woke": _____
slavery – freedom: _____
dead – alive: _____
heterogeneous – homogeneous: _____
subjective – objective: _____
similar – different: _____

ANTIDOTES

1. Learn to differentiate between variables that are dichotomous and those that are continuous.
2. Remember that most person-related phenomena – such as traits, attitudes, and beliefs – lie along a continuum.
3. When making cross-cultural comparisons, try to avoid artificial or false dichotomies (Hermans & Kempen, 1998).

THE SIMILARITY–UNIQUENESS PARADOX: ALL PHENOMENA ARE BOTH SIMILAR AND DIFFERENT

By way of introducing this metathought, let us examine the following problem: Which of the following four words does not belong with the other three?

A. Canadian *B.* Italian *C.* Cuban *D.* Hindu

The correct answer to this question is *D*, because "Hindu" is the only term that represents a religion rather than a nationality. But wait, the correct answer is *B*, because none of the

others is European. Then again, the correct answer is *C*, because this is the only group with a communist government. Is that it? Not quite. The correct answer is *A*, because Canadian is the only word on the list that contains an even number of letters.

So, which is it? Can it be that all four answers are correct? If so, how can every term be both similar to and different from the others? The solution to this apparent paradox lies in the mindset or cognitive schema with which one initially approaches the problem. More specifically, it is a function of the particular dimensions or variables on which one has evaluated the response options.

As you can see, determining the similarities and differences between any set of events – two cultures, for example – is dependent on the perspectives from which you choose to view them. In this way, phenomena can be seen at the same time as *both unique from and similar* to other phenomena.

Let's examine briefly the interlocking processes of comparing and contrasting phenomena. First, how do we determine the degree to which phenomena are similar? To begin with, any two phenomena in the cosmos share at least one fundamental commonality: They are both phenomena. With this as a starting point, they may subsequently be compared along a virtually infinite array of dimensions, ranging from the broadest of universal properties to the minutest of mundane details.

For instance, when you compare two groups of people, you can focus on demographic characteristics (age, nationality, religion, occupation), physical features (skin and hair color, height, weight, strength), social context (competitive, cooperative, restrictive, permissive), personality attributes (intelligence, humor, creativity, psychopathology, values), personal tastes (in art, music, food, clothing, linoleum), and so on.

Two examples of these relationships are depicted in the Venn diagrams in Figure 2.2. In interpreting these figures, note that overlapping areas indicate commonality between two
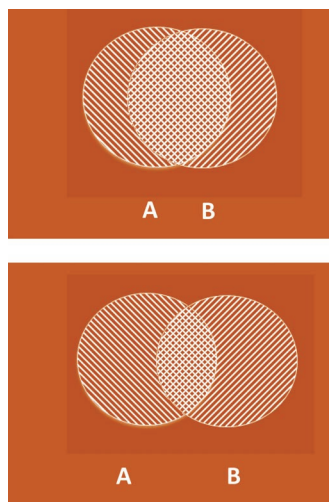
Figure 2.2 Relationships between Two Phenomena

phenomena. A relatively large area of overlap indicates more similarities than differences, whereas a relatively small area of overlap indicates more differences than similarities.

EXERCISE 2.3 EXPLORING SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

The following exercise will give you some practice at comparing, contrasting, and identifying points of distinction from a diverse array of sociocultural phenomena. First, browse through the list below and select three word pairs that, for whatever reason, capture your interest. Then, utilizing any dimensions or sorting variables that might be helpful, for each pair, answer the following questions: (1) "How are they similar?" and (2) "How are they different?"

God and Satan
heaven and hell
religion and psychotherapy
religion and cult indoctrination
religion and freedom
the Bible and the Koran
the Bible and the Constitution
Jews and Christians
Catholics and Protestants
Sunni Muslims and Shiite Muslims
Buddhism and Hinduism
Easter and Ramadan
religious leaders and political leaders
television evangelists and infomercial salespersons
men and woman
homosexuals and heterosexuals
sex and power
men's fashions and women's fashions
Western philosophy and Eastern philosophy
collectivism and individualism
Jewish Americans and African Americans
Native American tribes and African tribes
Spanish culture and Mexican culture
Japanese art and Chinese art
Israeli music and Arabic music
Italian food and French food
cultural appropriation and cultural influence
racism and sexism
ignorance-based racism and hostility-based racism
prejudice against women and prejudice against teenagers
white supremacists and black nationalists
affirmative action and discrimination
racial inequality in 1954 and racial inequality in 2024

customs and laws
Democrats and Republicans
government and parents
nations and families
patriotism and nationalism
the Olympics and war
Antifa and QAnon
infancy and old age
your cultural background and the President's cultural background
your cultural background and your best friend's cultural background
your cultural background and your adversary's cultural background

What is the purpose of this exercise? First, it illustrates that any two phenomena, no matter how seemingly disparate at first glance, always share at least some similarities. Second, phenomena invariably are differentiated by various points of critical distinction, which define the boundaries delineating one phenomenon from another. Third, by utilizing this method of comparing and contrasting phenomena, you probably gained new insights and discovered some fresh perspectives into relationships that you previously might not have considered. Fourth, given the fact that any two events are similar and different, it is crucial to take them *both* into account in your assessment of the phenomena.

Keep these principles in mind whenever you face the task of comparing and contrasting sociocultural phenomena, such as different cultural groups. You are likely to be more than just a little surprised each time you realize that the dimensions or variables you select for purposes of evaluation ultimately will determine just how "similar" or "unique" they turn out to be.

ANTIDOTES

1. When comparing and contrasting any two phenomena ask yourself, "In what ways are they similar?" *and* "In what ways are they different?"
2. Before beginning your evaluation, ask yourself, "What is the purpose of this analysis?" This question will help you to choose the most appropriate and relevant dimensions and sorting variables.
3. Carefully select the dimensions on which you will evaluate various phenomena, such as sociocultural groups. Recognize that the dimensions you select will ultimately determine the degree of "similarity" or "uniqueness" displayed between them.
4. Despite what may appear to be an overwhelming number of similarities between two events, always search for and take into account their differences; conversely, regardless of what may seem to be a total absence of commonalities between two events, search for and take into account their similarities.
5. Don't allow yourself to be swayed by individuals who maintain that "These things are exactly the same," or "You can't compare these things because they have absolutely nothing in common."

THE BARNUM EFFECT: "ONE-SIZE-FITS-ALL" DESCRIPTIONS

A **Barnum statement** is a personality description of a particular individual or group that is true of practically all human beings; in other words, it is a general statement that has "a little something for everybody." The **Barnum effect** refers to people's willingness to accept the validity of such overly inclusive and generic appraisals.

Barnum statements pervade the popular media, from broadcast to print, in the form of self-help online postings, astrological forecasts, psychic hotlines, biorhythm and numerology readings, and interpretations of dreams, palms, or favorite colors. A few studies of the Barnum effect showed its presence in several national groups including Chinese and Western respondents (Rogers & Soule, 2009). To find them, you need look no further than the contents of your most recent fortune cookie. (See Levy, 1993, for a satirical essay on this topic, "Psychometric infallibility realized: The One-Size-Fits-All Psychological Profile.")

These statements are frequently used in our everyday descriptions of both individuals and specific social or cultural groups with whom we interact. For instance, we may

A CASE IN POINT

"YOUR PERSONALITY"

In a number of experiments, researchers have presented participants with Barnum-like personality descriptions, such as those below (Forer, 1949).

You have a strong need for other people to like and admire you. You have a tendency to be critical of yourself . . . At times you have serious doubts as to whether you have made the right decision or done the right thing. You prefer a certain amount of change and variety and become dissatisfied when hemmed in by restrictions and limitations. You pride yourself on being an independent thinker and do not accept other opinions without satisfactory proof. You have found it unwise to be too frank in revealing yourself to others. At times you are extraverted, affable, sociable; at other times you are introverted, wary, and reserved. Some of your aspirations tend to be pretty unrealistic.

When subjects in these experiments were led to believe that the bogus personality description was prepared especially for them, and when it was generally favorable, they nearly always rated the description as either "good" or "excellent" (Dickson & Kelly, 1985). In fact, when given a choice between a fake Barnum description and an authentic personality description based on an established test, people tended to choose the phony description as being more accurate (see Snyder et al., 1977).

confidently announce, "Immigrants have self-esteem issues." (Who *doesn't*?) Or "Chinese people are sensitive to criticism." (Who *isn't*?) Or "Women do not want to be rejected." (Who *does*?)

The variations on this theme are virtually infinite. To list but a few: "He has a streak of prejudice in him." "I'm opposed to government over-regulation." "She has some sensitive spots about her cultural background." "Hindus search for the meaning of life." "Caucasians favor members of their own group." "Italians enjoy food." "Minorities just want their rights." "Republicans care about family values." "Gays are concerned with sex."

EXERCISE 2.4 "DE-BARNUMIZING" BARNUM STATEMENTS

Begin this exercise by selecting a few Barnum descriptions, either from above or on your own. Then, "de-Barnumize" each statement by incorporating any potentially useful qualifiers, modifiers, or adverbs. To get you started, here are two examples:

Barnum statement: *Roberto is sensitive to criticism.*
De-Barnumized statement: *Roberto is particularly sensitive to criticism.*
Barnum statement: *Native Americans have an appreciation for nature.*
De-Barnumized statement: *Compared to people living in modern, industrialized societies, Native Americans display a greater appreciation for nature.*
Now try a few of them on your own using the following format:
Barnum statement:_____
De-Barnumized statement: _____
_____

ANTIDOTES

1. Learn to differentiate Barnum statements from person- and group-specific descriptions and interpretations.
2. Be aware of the limited utility inherent in Barnum statements. Remember that although Barnum statements have validity about people in general, they fail to reveal anything distinctive about any given individual or sociocultural group.
3. Whenever feasible and appropriate, make a point of reducing the Barnum effect by qualifying descriptions and interpretations in terms of their magnitude or degree.

THE ASSIMILATION BIAS: VIEWING THE WORLD THROUGH SCHEMA-COLORED GLASSES

One of the most fundamental and pervasive of all human psychological activities is the propensity to categorize. People appear to possess an innate drive to classify, organize, systematize, group, subgroup, and otherwise structure the world around them.

We categorize everything from persons, objects, places, and events to concepts, experiences, feelings, and memories. The phenomenon is omnipresent, the breadth is enormous, and almost nothing is immune: gender and race, religions and occupations, cultures and nations, subatomic particles and celestial constellations, and time and space.

We can conceptualize all such categories as mental representations, or **schemas**. A schema is a cognitive structure that organizes our knowledge, beliefs, and past experiences, thereby providing a framework for understanding new events and future experiences (see Cantor & Mischel, 1979; Fiske & Taylor, 1991; Levy et al., 1988; Piaget, 1952; Taylor et al., 1994). Put another way, schemas (or schemata) are general expectations or preconceptions about a wide range of phenomena. In the cross-cultural domain, these include perceptual sets about people based on their age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, nationality, religion, vocation, socioeconomic status, political affiliation, social role, or any other characteristic. In fact, we may view stereotypes as equivalent to group schemas (Hamilton, 1979, 1981). (See Chapter 10.)

What function do schemas serve? First and foremost, they enable us to process the plethora of stimuli we continually encounter in a relatively rapid, efficient, and effortless manner. In other words, schemas reduce our cognitive processing load. Whenever we are faced with new information, we quickly and automatically compare it to our pre-existing schemas, which greatly simplifies the task of organizing and understanding our experiences.

What happens when we come across information that is discrepant from our preconceptions? Put another way, what do we do when there is a clash between the data and our schemas? The Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget (1954, 1970) identified two complementary processes that we utilize in such situations: *accommodation* and *assimilation*. According to Piaget, both of these responses are integral components of cognitive development and constitute the means by which we adapt to our environment and construct our reality (see Chapter 8).

Accommodation refers to the process wherein we modify our schema to fit the data. In other words, we change our pre-existing beliefs so that they make room for (i.e., "accommodate") new information. Assimilation, by contrast, means to modify the data to fit our schema. Here, we incorporate new information into our pre-existing beliefs – even if it means distorting the information itself.

Do people, in general, make appropriate use of assimilation and accommodation? The answer, by and large, is no. Time and again the discrepancies between data and schemas typically are resolved more in the direction of assimilation than accommodation. In other words, we are inclined to make the data fit the schema, rather than the other way around.

Because schematic processing occurs automatically and relatively unconsciously, it is very resistant to change – even when it is fraught with errors. We tend to overlook, misconstrue, or outright reject valid information when it is not consistent with our schemas. In a word, a fundamental and pervasive liability of schematic processing can be seen as a problem of assimilation.

This **bias** manifests itself in a wide variety of forms and contexts. Specifically, it leads us to rely excessively on vivid, but not necessarily appropriate, information to fill in gaps in our knowledge with schema-consistent, but erroneous, information, to conduct biased searches for evidence, to recall or misinterpret information about past events so that it validates our schemas, to unwittingly elicit the very events that we expect to find, and to engage in and perpetuate sociocultural stereotyping.

In sum, schemas bias our perceptions of reality to make them consistent with what we already believe. As such, the **assimilation bias** represents a significant obstacle to clear thinking and effective problem solving. In viewing the world through "schema-colored glasses," we subject virtually all the incoming information to varying degrees of distortion, misinterpretation, and invalidation.

A vivid case in point is provided by American psychologist Robyn Dawes (1994), who tells of an incident involving flagrant gender bias in decision making. The dean of a major medical school, perplexed as to why his institution was unsuccessful in its attempts to recruit female students, asked a colleague of Dawes to investigate the problem. What emerged was striking. One of the interviewers had been rating applicants with respect to their "emotional maturity," "seriousness of interest in medicine," and "neuroticism." As it turned out, the vast majority of females did not receive positive evaluations on any of his criteria. Specifically, whenever the woman applicant was not married, he judged her to be "immature." When she was married, he concluded that she was "not sufficiently interested in medicine." And when she was divorced? "Neurotic," of course. No win. No escape. No admittance. Over 30 years later, how much have these and similar biases changed?

EXERCISE 2.5 CHANGING THE VIEW WITH DIFFERENT LENSES

The following exercise will give you some practice at viewing the same phenomenon through different sociocultural lenses. Select one of the perspectives from the list below (or one of your own choosing) and write a few statements as to how that individual might perceive, explain, or react to a teenager from Oregon who engages in body piercing. Then, "switch lenses" by viewing the same individual from a different perspective.

parental figure • Fulani tribal chief • Midwestern farmer • Hollywood casting agent • Marine drill sergeant • member of the Amish community • inner-city gang member • psychiatrist • cultural anthropologist • Gen Z • fashion designer • hip-hop artist • priest • shaman • amateur photographer • pimp • TikTok influencer • sexual sadomasochist

ANTIDOTES

1. Do not underestimate the extent to which your prior beliefs, knowledge, and expectancies (schemas) can affect your current experience, impressions, and perceptions.

2. Try to become as aware as possible of schemas that are important to you; awareness of schemas increases your ability to modify them.
3. Experiment with temporarily lowering or altering your perceptual filters (or "schema-colored glasses") by attempting to understand someone else's subjective perceptions and experience.
4. Learn to differentiate your use of assimilation versus accommodation, particularly when you are faced with a discrepancy between your beliefs (schemas) and the information (data). Beware of the general tendency to assimilate rather than to accommodate.
5. Prod yourself to accommodate when, out of habit, stubbornness, or just sheer laziness, you would typically be inclined to automatically assimilate.

THE REPRESENTATIVENESS BIAS: FITS AND MISFITS OF CATEGORIZATION

In everyday life, we are frequently called on to make rapid judgments in circumstances that do not lend themselves to thoroughness or accuracy. Consider the following scenarios:

- At a job interview, you have a limited amount of time to figure out how to create the right impression.
- In a counseling setting, you might be assigned the task of quickly evaluating an individual from a cultural group about which you know very little.
- While traveling in a foreign country, you are approached by a group of strangers, and you need to quickly determine their intentions.

An ideal strategy for making decisions in these situations (and countless others like them) would involve conducting a comprehensive and systematic analysis of the problem, collecting relevant data, testing various hypotheses, drawing appropriate inferences, thoroughly evaluating the costs and benefits of all possible outcomes, and arriving at the optimum conclusions before having to take final action.

Well, so much for the ideal. For obvious reasons, such a strategy is impractical in most real-life circumstances. We simply do not have the time, information, or resources (not to mention incentive) that would enable us to solve most problems in this manner. Nevertheless, we need to proceed with making decisions and giving answers in the face of varying degrees of uncertainty.

Cognitive psychologists Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman (1974) proposed that people use a variety of mental shortcuts, or **heuristics**, that reduce complex and time-consuming tasks to more simple, manageable, practical, and efficient problem-solving strategies. We all have a repertoire of such shortcuts that we tend to use automatically, without necessarily considering their accuracy or validity in each situation.

Unfortunately, these shortcuts are like double-edged swords. On the one hand, they permit highly efficient information processing and rapid solutions to the problem. In other

words, they help us to make quick "seat-of-the-pants" decisions. On the other hand, they do so at the expense of thoroughness and precision. In essence, we trade accuracy for speed. As such, the price we pay for their efficiency can be bad judgments.

Tversky and Kahneman (1973, 1982) identified a number of such shortcuts, the most basic of which they termed the **representativeness heuristic**. This involves judging the likelihood that something belongs to (i.e., "represents") a particular category. Stated slightly more formally, representativeness is a method of estimating the probability that Instance *A* is a member of Category *B*. In 2002, Kahneman won the Nobel Prize in economics, explaining how people make right and wrong economic and business decisions.

We use the representativeness heuristic to identify phenomena in our environment by intuitively comparing the phenomenon to our mental representation, prototype, or schema of the relevant category. In so doing, we are attempting to ascertain if there is a "match" on the basis of the phenomenon's features being similar to the essential features of the category. If there is a match, we conclude that we have successfully identified the phenomenon; if not, we continue our cognitive search.

One of the most common uses of the representativeness heuristic involves judging whether a person belongs to a specific group based on how similar he or she is to the "typical" member of that group. In this way, we may conclude, for example, that Ted (*A*) is Jewish because he looks like your prototype of a Jewish person (*B*). Or that Jane (*A*) is a lesbian because she behaves like your stereotype of a lesbian (*B*). In like manner, we use the representativeness heuristic for identifying everything from ideological categories (religious, philosophical, political) to causal explanations (random, unintentional, malevolent). As you can readily see, this simple act is fundamental to all subsequent inferences and behaviors: before any other cognitive task can be addressed, we first must answer the question, "What is it?"

Although in most instances the representativeness heuristic yields quick and reasonably accurate results, it sometimes produces systematic errors in information processing. This effect, which we refer to as the **representativeness bias**, can occur as a result of numerous factors. Some of these factors include our reliance on inaccurate or faulty prototypes, our failure to take into account pertinent statistical data (such as base rates, sample size, and chance probability), and our inclination to allow our motivational needs to bias our cognitive search and subsequent evaluations (see Levy, 2010).

EXERCISE 2.6 EXAMINING SOCIOCULTURAL SCHEMAS AND STEREOTYPES

As an exercise in identifying and exploring the nature and content of your own schemas, select three specific instances drawn from various sociocultural categories (such as ethnic background, occupation, religion, socioeconomic status, or political affiliation). You can

choose from the following list or come up with any other examples that might be more relevant to your own life experience.

> Russian • German • Mexican • Chinese • Saudi Arabian • Native American • New Yorker • lawyer • soldier • actor • therapist • rock musician • police officer • taxicab driver • CEO • professional athlete • politician • nurse • nun • insurance salesperson • truck driver • convenience store clerk • engineer • mortician • Buddhist • Jehovah's Witness • Mormon • Muslim • Scientologist • Republican • Democrat • environmentalist • welfare recipient • millennial • senior citizen • bisexual • transsexual • alcoholic • heroin addict • vegetarian • AIDS patient • MAGA demonstrator

First, note the initial thoughts, impressions, or images that come to mind regarding the category. Next, rate (on a scale from 1 to 5) the degree to which your schema for that category is *specific* (well defined, vivid, clear) versus *broad* (diverse, loose, vague). Then describe in detail the particular content (i.e., your personal perceptions) of each schema. Now try to determine and describe the schema's origin and development. Last, try to recall (or imagine) an occasion where you came across an instance that clearly was inconsistent with (i.e., did not "fit") your schema. How did (or might) you respond? What happened (or might happen) to the schema itself?

Social Schema #1: _____

Distinctness of Schema: *Specific*   1   2   3   4   5   *Broad*

Content:_____

_____

Origin and development: _____

_____

Your response to schema-inconsistent event: _____

_____

Before concluding this metathought, two final points deserve mention. Despite the problems, pitfalls, and liabilities associated with the use of cognitive heuristics, we persist in relying on them as an integral component of our decision-making processes. Why? One of the main reasons is that, on the whole, they provide us with more right answers than wrong ones. Moreover, even in those circumstances in which they are incorrect, the results typically are inconsequential.

One significant exception, however, can occur in relation to our use of prototype categories about particular groups of people, based on, for example, their skin color, gender, nationality, religion, sexual orientation, and even psychological diagnosis. When viewed in this context, such group-related schemas are equivalent to stereotypes. Thus, when heuristics such as representativeness are utilized with respect to these categories, extreme caution is advised. As history has repeatedly demonstrated, stereotyping can have far-reaching and potentially harmful social consequences, not the least of which include prejudice, bigotry, and discrimination – outcomes that are far from inconsequential.

ANTIDOTES

1. In situations in which you are likely to utilize the representativeness heuristic, make a conscious effort to consider the possibility that the prototype in question might be inaccurate, biased, or incomplete.
2. Take into account relevant statistical information, such as base rates, sample sizes, and chance probability.
3. Beware of the natural tendency to overestimate the degree of similarity between phenomena and categories.
4. Recognize that your personal attitudes about people and group prototypes can bias your comparisons and subsequent judgments.

THE AVAILABILITY BIAS: THE PERSUASIVE POWER OF VIVID EVENTS

As a means of introducing this metathought, let us begin with a brief quiz. Give your best estimates for the following questions:

1. Which racial group comprises the largest proportion of U.S. citizens living in poverty: blacks, whites, or Hispanics?
2. Which age group is at highest risk for committing suicide: teens, middle aged, or elderly?
3. Which country has a higher suicide rate: South Korea or the United States?

Setting aside for the moment the actual answers to these questions, spend a few moments considering the cognitive processes you utilized in reaching your conclusions. How specifically did you go about arriving at your estimates for each question? Did you notice any similarities in the mental strategies you employed?

If you are like most people in this way, your estimates probably would have been determined primarily on the basis of how easily or quickly specific instances of the scenario raised by each question came to mind. And what types of instances are likely to stand out in memory? In general, the most powerful impressions are created by events that are particularly vivid, important, personally relevant, or otherwise salient to us. We are also prone to think more quickly of instances that are simply easy to imagine.

Unfortunately, however, the problem in relying on the ease with which events can be retrieved from memory for determining their likelihood is that our perceptions cannot necessarily be counted on as an accurate reflection of reality. Specifically, this strategy leads us to overestimate their actual occurrence, frequency, or distribution in the world.

Did you inadvertently succumb to this bias in answering any of the questions posed above? Let us examine each one in turn.

1. Over 40% of all poor individuals in the United States are white, nearly one-quarter are black, and just over one-quarter are Hispanic. Why might people be inclined to overestimate the proportions of racial minorities? In addition to the salience of their skin color, these groups do, in fact, display disproportionally higher rates of economic hardship. Specifically, about 20% of blacks and 17% of Hispanics (combining for 37%) living in the United States are living below the poverty level, whereas less than 10% of whites are poor (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020).

2. Although the overall national suicide rate among the elderly has declined to some degree, this group still displays the highest proportion of self-inflicted deaths in the United States (CDC, 2020). This fact is likely to come as a surprise to many people who would identify teens as the age group at greatest risk. What might account for this misperception? There are at least three possible factors. First, whenever a teenager takes his or her own life, the event is particularly salient to us. We find it shocking, disturbing, and especially tragic that a young person, full of potential, would choose irrevocably to end it all. Second, when it comes to suicide *attempts*, at least two-thirds of individuals who try (but fail) to kill themselves are under the age of 35 (Berman et al., 2005). Here again, the salience even of "unsuccessful" suicide attempts by younger people can exert a disproportionate impact on our impressions and distort our perceptions. Third, the actual rate of "successful" suicides among teenagers (and even children) has, in fact, risen dramatically over the past several decades (Berman & Jobes, 1992; Brenton, 2004). Looking across cultures, the increase in adolescent suicide is not unique to the United States but appears in 23 out of 29 countries that have been studied. This trend may also lead us to overestimate the occurrence of suicide in younger age groups. Now consider suicides committed by the elderly. In general, they do not draw as much attention. They do not capture our focus. They do not startle us as particularly newsworthy. The net effect? "Out of sight, out of mind."

3. The suicide rate in the United States is approximately 16 cases per 100,000 people. The suicide rate in South Korea (Republic of Korea) is about 29 per 100,000 – nearly double the U.S. rate (World Health Organization, 2022). Still, many people believe that suicide rates are substantially higher in the United States than in other countries. What is the reason for this misperception? Among several reasons is the attention paid by the U.S. media to various stories involving suicide, especially among celebrities. It is also assumed by some people that Western industrial countries "should" have higher suicide rates than the rest of the world because of factors such as high stress and lack of emotional support systems. Although these assumptions may be correct, they are only assumptions. They cannot explain the complicated picture of suicide and its causes across the world.

The specific cognitive strategy demonstrated in the above examples has been termed the **availability heuristic** (Tversky & Kahneman, 1973) because it refers to the process of drawing on instances that are easily accessible or "available" from our memory. This heuristic helps us to answer questions concerning the number ("How many are there?"), incidence ("How often does something happen?"), or likelihood ("What are the odds that something will occur?") of particular events.

If examples are readily available in memory, we tend to assume that such events occur rather frequently. For instance, if you have no trouble bringing to mind examples of

X (Southern hospitality, for instance), you are likely to judge that it is common. By contrast, if it takes you a while to think of illustrations of *Y* (Germans' sense of humor, for example), you are prone to conclude that it is uncommon. In sum, when an event has easily retrieved instances, it will seem more prevalent than an equally frequent category that has less easily retrieved instances.

As is the case with the representativeness heuristic, very little cognitive work is needed to utilize the availability heuristic. Further, under many circumstances, the availability heuristic provides us with accurate and dependable estimates. After all, if examples easily come to mind, it is usually because there are many of them.

Unfortunately, however, there are many biasing factors that can affect the availability of events in our memory without reflecting their actual occurrence. Problems arise when this strategy is used, for instance, to estimate the frequency or likelihood of rare, though highly vivid, events as compared with those that are more typical, commonplace, or mundane in nature. When our use of the availability heuristic results in systematic errors in making such judgments, we may refer to this as the **availability bias**.

Perhaps the single most important factor underlying the availability bias is our propensity to underuse, discount, or even ignore relevant base-rate information (i.e., data about the actual frequency of events in a particular group) and other abstract statistical facts in favor of more salient and concrete, but usually less reliable, anecdotal evidence. As a consequence, personal testimonials, graphic case studies, dramatic stories, saturated media coverage, extraordinary occurrences, and bizarre events are all liable to slant, skew, or otherwise distort our judgments. As an example, consider the controversy regarding the safety of the measles–mumps–rubella (MMR) vaccine (see Kolodziejski, 2014). The emotional assertions – made by a few high-profile celebrities and based on one fraudulent, but widely publicized, journal article – were sufficient to persuade many people to withhold immunizations from their children out of fear that the vaccine could cause autism, despite overwhelming evidence that no such link had ever been proven.

With respect to sociocultural issues, a significant problem resulting from the availability bias concerns our proclivity to overgeneralize from a few vivid examples, or sometimes even just a single vivid instance. This error is responsible, at least in part, for the phenomenon of stereotyping (see Chapter 10).

In general, how do we formulate our beliefs about particular groups of people? We typically base our impressions on observations of specific members of the group. But which members? By and large, our attention is drawn to the most conspicuous, prominent, or salient individuals. We then are prone to overgeneralize from these few extreme examples to the group as a whole, the result of which is a role schema or stereotype. In this way, the availability bias leads us to perpetuate vivid but false beliefs about the characteristics of a wide variety of groups in our society.

The moral? We tend to be more persuaded by an ounce of anecdotal evidence than by a pound of reliable statistics. Although vivid and dramatic events can make for appetizing fiction, they are ultimately unsatisfying to those with a taste for reality.

CRITICAL THINKING

THE TWITTIFICATION EFFECT

> *Defund the police!*
> *Replace "Latino" and "Latina" with "Latinx!"*
> *Keep critical race theory out of our schools!*

How widespread are these sentiments? If we were to judge their frequency based solely on how conspicuous they are to us, we are likely to be misguided. That's because we tend to overestimate the prevalence of events when relying exclusively on how easily they come to mind. In this way, the most extreme – or sometimes merely the loudest – voices can easily be mistaken as representing the feelings of a larger group. One prominent context in which this occurs is via the mass media as a means of amplifying the opinions of a relatively limited collection of individuals. We shall call this the **twittification effect**. This term is meant to denote all mass media, including everything from online and print news outlets to social media platforms such as Twitter (rebranded as X), Facebook, and YouTube. It is due to twittification that the most extreme and loudest voices enjoy disproportionate influence in society. With this in mind, let us examine each of the three opening statements one at a time.

Defund the police

The motto "defund the police" gained notoriety and became a rallying cry during the George Floyd protests of 2020. Despite its seemingly straightforward message, the slogan itself can be subject to numerous interpretations. Some activists use it to convey their goal of totally abolishing contemporary police services. Others employ it to mean reallocating funds from police departments to non-policing forms of public safety and community support. Nevertheless, this simple and catchy phrase quickly became a highly charged mantra, reflected in extensive and sometimes emotionally intense media exposure. It would, therefore, be understandable to assume that the sentiment enjoys rather widespread support, particularly among Black Americans. Yet, according to polling, only 18% of Blacks support "defund the police" (Elbeshbishi & Quarshie, 2021). Further, over 80% of Blacks desire the same or increased levels of police presence in their neighborhoods (Saad, 2020).

Latinx

Latinx is a proposed gender-neutral term for members of the Hispanic or Latin American communities, and was intended to replace the gendered terms *Latino* (masculine) or *Latina* (feminine). Although it has been in use since the early 2010s, it became more prominent in 2016 after the mass shooting at the LGBTQ nightclub Pulse in Orlando, Florida. The term has been promoted predominantly by academics, activists, and members of the LGBTQ community. Yet, despite the

publicity from these highly vocal (but relatively small) groups, only 4% of Hispanic people favor the term "Latinx," far less than "Latino" (15%) or "Hispanic" (23%) (Asmelash, 2021). But, according to the poll, most don't even have a preference at all, with 57% reporting it "does not matter."

Critical race theory

The term *critical race theory* (CRT) rocketed to political and sociological prominence in 2020, but was first introduced nearly half a century earlier. CRT scholars and activists maintain that racism is an inherent and inescapable component of American society. Proponents of CRT challenge power hierarchies, rationalism, and legal reasoning (such as the idea of color-blindness). They assert that "race" is a subjective social construct (rather than an objective biological entity) that is utilized to oppress and exploit persons of color. Value is placed on one's own personal storytelling and narratives over logic and empirical evidence. Fanned by media attention and weaponized by politicians, CRT began making national and international headlines in 2020, prompting culture wars and turning school board meetings into battlegrounds. Yet, media coverage notwithstanding, most Americans appear not to be all that worked up about CRT (Ipsos, 2021). Further, although an overwhelming majority support teaching high school students about the impact of slavery and racism, polling shows that a preponderance of Americans – seven out of ten in all – don't know what critical race theory is (Ramjug, 2021). In short, CRT does not play a large role in the American psyche.

ANTIDOTES

1. When estimating the frequency or probability of an event, remind yourself not to reach a conclusion based solely on the ease or speed with which relevant instances can be retrieved from your memory.
2. Take anecdotal evidence not with a grain but with several large shakers of salt. Although personal testimonies and vivid cases may be very persuasive, they are not inherently trustworthy indicators of fact.
3. Make a conscious effort, whenever feasible, to seek out and utilize base-rate information and other pertinent statistical data.
4. Remember that the best basis for drawing valid generalizations is from a representative sample of relevant cases.

THE FUNDAMENTAL ATTRIBUTION ERROR: UNDERESTIMATING THE IMPACT OF EXTERNAL INFLUENCES

How do we explain the causes of people's behavior? We typically attribute their actions either to their personality or to their circumstances. Put another way, we make

dispositional attributions or *situational attributions*. Dispositional attributions involve assigning the causes of behavior to people's personality traits, characteristics, or attitudes; that is, to "internal" influences. Situational attributions, in contrast, involve assigning the causes of behavior to people's circumstances, surroundings, or environment; that is, to "external" influences (see Chapter 10).

In reality, of course, behavior is due to combinations of many factors, both internal and external, that vary in the degree to which they are responsible for causing a person's actions. However, in arriving at causal attributions, we have a tendency to *overestimate* people's dispositions and to *underestimate* their situations. In other words, we are prone to weigh internal determinants too heavily and external determinants too lightly. We are thus likely to explain the behavior of others as resulting predominantly from their personality, whereas we often minimize (or even ignore) the importance of the particular context or situation. This mistake is so prevalent, in fact, that social psychologist Ross (1977) termed it the **fundamental attribution error**.

What are some illustrations of this attributional bias? If a person does not make eye contact when talking to you, you might presume that the individual is likely to be "untrustworthy," "shy," or "sneaky." If someone brings you a gift for no apparent reason, you might conclude that the person is "thoughtful," "generous," or perhaps even "manipulative." Notice how these attributions essentially disregard any external or situational factors that might be responsible for producing these behaviors.

To take another example, consider the dilemma of the homeless. We may be prone to explain a homeless person's condition in terms of personality factors, such as laziness, moral weakness, drug abuse, or mental illness. These attributions, however, fail to take into account the situational factors that perpetuate homelessness, such as a lack of affordable housing, job scarcity, discrimination, and a weak economy.

This same principle applies to our attributions about a diverse array of other specific subgroups within our society. How do we explain differences between, for instance, men and women? We explain them, by and large, in terms of inherent dispositions. We may thus conclude that men are "innately" more competitive or that women are more prone to be cooperative because "it's in their nature," while overlooking societal expectations, constraints, and sanctions that shape gender-role behavior. Along these same lines, can you think of situational factors that might have led one particular group toward athletic achievement and another toward academic achievement? Toward small business ownership? Street crime? Overrepresentation in positions of corporate management? Underrepresentation in the military? Having many children? Poor test performance? Eating disorders? Domestic violence? All told, we are liable to minimize such sources of external influence that could account for intergroup differences in behavior.

EXERCISE 2.7 **EXPLORING THE EFFECTS OF SOCIAL CONTEXT**

This exercise serves to underscore the enormous, yet typically unnoticed, power of the social situation in influencing our feelings, attitudes, and behavior. Imagine yourself in the following scenarios and how you might respond to the simple question, "So, how are you doing?" For each situation, indicate not only what you might say, but also provide a brief description of your probable thoughts, demeanor, and the emotional tone of your response.

At a job interview: _____

At a high school class reunion: _____

At a funeral: _____

On your Tinder app: _____

In a foreign country where you do not speak the language: _____

With your parents: _____

With your best friend: _____

With someone who is hearing impaired: _____

With someone who is wheelchair bound: _____

With someone who is physically very attractive: _____

With someone who is physically very unattractive: _____

When approached by a homeless child: _____

When approached by a homeless adult: _____

When approached by a police officer: _____

When approached by a prostitute: _____

When approached by a group of Hispanic tourists: _____

When approached by a group of Asian tourists: _____

When approached by a group of people wearing MAGA hats: _____

When approached by a group of Scientologists: _____

In looking over your answers, observe that *all* the variability in your responses is attributable to the situations themselves, since both you and the initial question were fixed and held constant. One final point deserves mention. Can you determine which of these responses reflects the "real" you? Notice that this question is, in itself, virtually unanswerable without also taking into account the context of the situation.

What is responsible for the fundamental attribution error? Social psychologists have identified two principal sources: **cognitive biases** and **motivational biases**.

Cognitive biases refer to systematic mistakes which derive from limits that are inherent in our capacity to process information. Because we are not capable of perceiving everything in our environment, our focus is automatically drawn to the most prominent or "eye-catching" stimuli. This can lead us to formulate biased and inaccurate causal attributions

(Taylor & Fiske, 1975). Specifically, we are prone to equate the most perceptually salient stimuli with the most causally influential stimuli.

In contrast, motivational biases refer to systematic mistakes that derive from our efforts to satisfy our own personal needs, such as the desire for self-esteem, power, or control. Simply put, motivational biases serve the function of making us feel better, even if they do so at the expense of distorting, obscuring, or falsifying reality.

Are we motivated to prefer one type of causal attribution over another? It would appear so. In the case of Western cultures in particular, we are told from early childhood to believe that people can control their destiny and are the masters of their fate. As such, society generally condones dispositional attributions, while it discourages situational attributions. In this way, we can fool ourselves into overestimating the degree of control that we actually do have, while underestimating the impact of external factors that lie beyond our control. We are prone, therefore, to exaggerate our perceptions of controllability.

One very unfortunate consequence of this motivational bias is that people who are harmed by forces that are truly out of their control may be held more responsible for their circumstances than they should be. In other words, our illusion of control may lead us to blame people for the bad things that happen to them.

Why does this occur? Melvin Lerner (1970) theorized that we have great difficulty accepting the unfairness and injustices of life. Further, we have a strong need to believe that we live in a "just world" in which good is rewarded and bad is punished. This belief leads us to conclude that people get what they deserve and deserve what they get: "What goes around, comes around."

Instances of such attributions abound:

- "Rape victims must have behaved seductively."
- "Gays must have brought AIDS on themselves."
- "People with uncontrollable diseases must have done something wrong."
- "People who are poor must be responsible for their own plight."
- "Victims of persecution must be guilty or they wouldn't be persecuted."

What compels us to make such attributions? Once again, in all likelihood we do it to preserve our illusion of control. It is psychologically more comforting to blame others for the disasters that befall them, rather than face the cold reality that we live in an unjust world in which such events can happen at random. After all, if negative events are uncontrollable, they could just as easily happen to *us*. In other words, by assigning dispositional attributions, we hope to experience a greater sense of control over our destiny. Further, it provides a justification for our indifference to (or even oppression of) society's victims: if people themselves are responsible for their own plight, there is no need for the rest of us to help them. (In fact, they probably "*deserve* it.")

ANTIDOTES

1. Do not underestimate the power of external, situational determinants of behavior.
2. Remember that at any given time how people behave depends both on what they bring to the situation ("who" they are) as well as on the situation itself ("where" they are).
3. Keep in mind that this attributional error can become reversed, depending on the perceiver's point of view. Specifically, although people are prone to underestimate the impact of others' situations, they tend to overestimate the impact of their own situations.
4. Be sure to take into account both cognitive and motivational biases that are responsible for producing these attributional errors.

THE SELF-FULFILLING PROPHECY: WHEN EXPECTATIONS CREATE REALITY

The attitudes and beliefs that we hold toward other people can – with or without our intent – actually produce the very behaviors that we expect to find. In other words, a perceiver's assumptions about another person may lead that person to adopt those expected attributes. This phenomenon is known as the **self-fulfilling prophecy**.

In what is probably the most famous – and still controversial – study of the self-fulfilling prophecy, Robert Rosenthal and Lenore Jacobson (1968) informed teachers at a San Francisco elementary school that on the basis of a reliable psychological test, some of the pupils in their classroom would show dramatic spurts in academic performance during the upcoming school year. In reality, there was no such test, and the children designated as "intellectual bloomers" were chosen at random. Nevertheless, when the children's performance was assessed several months later, those students who had been earmarked as "bloomers" did, indeed, show an improvement in their schoolwork; even more remarkably, their IQ scores had increased. The teachers thus unwittingly created the very behaviors that they expected.

The self-fulfilling prophecy has been demonstrated with a diverse array of both positive and negative perceiver expectancies, including aging (Wurm et al., 2013), violence (King et al., 2008), public opinion polls (Rothschild & Malhotra, 2014), extraversion (Snyder, 1984), gender stereotypes (Skrypnek & Snyder, 1982), and even stereotypes concerning physical attractiveness (Snyder et al., 1977). These studies underscore how prejudice of any kind can set in motion a self-perpetuating and ever-escalating vicious cycle of adverse repercussions (see the sub-section "bidirectional causation" in this chapter) in which the self-fulfilling prophecy serves to influence not only how the prejudiced person behaves toward the victim, but also how the victim may then behave in a way that confirms the person's initial prejudices.

Not only are we seldom aware of the extent to which our expectations can influence the behavior of others, but we probably are even less aware of how the expectations of others are capable of influencing *our* behavior. It is therefore important to remember that our actions are shaped not only by our own attitudes but also by the expectations of those with whom we interact. Put another way, we are continually cultivating the constructions of each other's social realities.

Given the ubiquity of the self-fulfilling prophecy, we would do well to consider its potential impact in all of our social interactions. In an ethnic minority community, for instance, what do you suppose might occur if a police officer were to expect neighborhood residents to be hostile and dishonest? Or resistant? Helpless? Paranoid? Violent?

In like manner, what if a resident from that community expects police officers to be hostile and dishonest? Or unfair? Callous? Abusive? Violent? The police and community members can ultimately end up creating a reciprocally reinforcing projection system that supports their respective initial expectations, much of which may be occurring outside of their direct awareness.

EXERCISE 2.8 EXPLORING MANIFESTATIONS OF THE SELF-FULFILLING PROPHECY

As an exercise, select two scenarios – either hypothetical or factual – involving the self-fulfilling prophecy. In making your selections, consider a variety of topics (e.g., stereotyping, prejudice, child rearing, competition), settings (e.g., research, classroom, workplace, religious), and societal or governmental policies, programs, and laws (e.g., welfare, unemployment, affirmative action, immigration, sexual harassment, mandatory retirement). Then for each scenario, present your thoughts as to how Person *A*'s expectations might influence his or her behavior toward Person *B*. Last, discuss how Person *A*'s actions could cause Person *B* to behave in accordance with Person *A*'s prior expectations. In other words, identify some of the specific factors or events that you believe are capable of transforming Person *A*'s initial expectations into the reality of Person *B*'s subsequent attitudes and behavior.

Scenario:_____
Effects of Person *A*'s expectations on behavior toward Person *B*:
_____
_____

Effects of Person *A*'s behavior on Person *B*'s subsequent actions:
_____
_____

ANTIDOTES

1. In all of your social interactions, remember that expectations can, in themselves, create their own reality.
2. Make a conscious effort to become aware of your own expectancies and the ways in which they may lead you to induce those very behaviors in others.
3. Do not forget that your own behavior is not immune to the influence of the self-fulfilling prophecy. Specifically, keep in mind that your behavior can be shaped by the expectations other people have of you.
4. In conducting research, initiate safeguards to reduce the potential impact of expectancy effects. This may be accomplished by, for example, keeping both the experimenters and participants unaware of (i.e., "blind" to) the specific purpose, goals, or hypotheses of the study.

CORRELATION DOES NOT PROVE CAUSATION: CONFUSING "WHAT" WITH "WHY"

A correlation is a statement about the relationship or association between two (or more) variables. Correlations thus enable us to make predictions from one variable to another. That is, if two events are correlated, then the presence of one event provides us with information about the other event. A correlation does not, however, necessarily establish a *causal* relationship between the variables. In other words, causation cannot be proven simply by virtue of a correlation or coappearance.

As an example, let us consider the correlation between creativity and psychological disorders (see, e.g., Andreason & Canter, 1974; Andreason & Powers, 1975; Jamison, 1993). Great painter Vincent van Gogh, Russian novelist Fyodor Dostoyevsky, American writer Ernest Hemingway, and American comedian Robin Williams all suffered from emotional disorders that seriously disrupted their lives. American rock stars Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin, Jim Morrison, and Kurt Cobain, popular comedians John Belushi and Chris Farley, English singer Amy Winehouse, and American actor Philip Seymour Hoffman all developed serious (and ultimately fatal) drug addictions. Based on these observations, what may we conclude? That psychological disorders cause creativity? Perhaps. But maybe creativity causes psychological disorders? Then again, isn't it possible that creativity and psychological disorders reciprocally affect each other? To complicate matters further, what about the possibility that some other variable, such as a genetic predisposition, causes both creativity and psychological disorders?

Put another way, given a correlation between *A* and *B*: does *A* cause *B*? Does *B* cause *A*? Do *A* and *B* cause each other? Does *C* cause *A* and *B*? Could there be some combination of these causal relationships? (See Figure 2.3.)
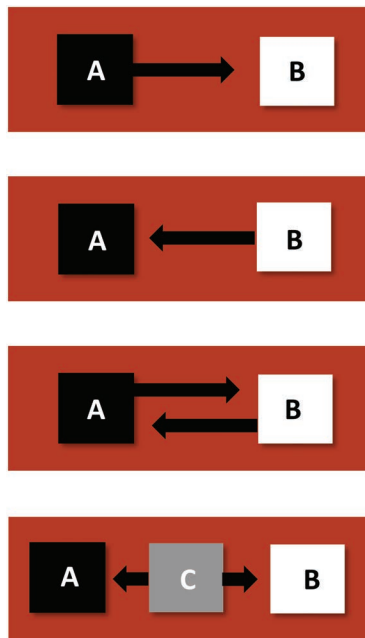
Figure 2.3 A Correlation between Event *A* and Event *B* with Four Possible Causal Relationships

Unfortunately, a correlation alone does not (in fact, cannot) provide us with the definitive answers to these questions. The following are some examples of correlated variables about which people frequently (but erroneously) may infer causality.

Example 1: Research indicates that exposure to violent media (TV, movies, video games, music) appears to be mildly but positively correlated with aggressive behavior (Bushman & Huesmann, 2006). This correlation does not, however, prove that media violence causes aggressiveness. Perhaps aggressive people are drawn toward violent media. Maybe aggressiveness and media violence, in a "vicious cycle" (see next section on bidirectional causation) feed off each other. There is also the possibility that factors like peer influence or family conflict cause both aggressiveness and seeking out violent media.

Example 2: Suppose that certain ethnic minority groups display disproportionately higher rates of delinquency, academic failure, teenage pregnancy, drug abuse, criminality, or psychopathology. In other words, let us assume a relationship exists between group membership (e.g., Black Americans) and the incidence and severity of these problems. What could account for this trend? One of the most commonly overlooked but critical factors is socioeconomic status. Specifically, poverty appears to be a much stronger predictor for such behaviors than is ethnicity itself. Now, what if (as happens to be the case) such groups are, on average, located at a lower rung on the socioeconomic ladder? We could be erroneously inclined to focus on skin color and ethnic identity, while underestimating the effect of economic circumstances.

Example 3: Similarly, let us examine the debate regarding racial (specifically black versus white) differences in IQ scores. In their controversial book, *The Bell Curve* (1994), Herrnstein and Murray propose that such correlations can be explained primarily in terms of differential genetic inheritance (see also Jensen, 1973; Rushton, 1994, 1995). Needless to say, this conclusion cannot be accepted without taking into account factors such as socioeconomic status, access to quality schooling, parental role modeling, family structure, peer influence, cultural norms, as well as both personal and societal expectations (see self-fulfilling prophecy, below).

Consider also correlations between the incidence of homelessness and mental illness, teen pregnancy and welfare benefits, poor grades in school and legal troubles, ethnicity and alcohol consumption, and gender roles and mass media. In all these instances (and countless more), beware of concluding causation based solely on correlation. Further, when a correlation is observed, be sure to examine all plausible pathways and directions of causation.

One particular type of faulty reasoning, the **post hoc error**, refers to the mistaken logic that because Event B follows Event A, then B must have been caused by A. This error, also known as **parataxic reasoning** (Sullivan, 1954), may be seen as a kind of "magical thinking," because events that occur close together in time are construed as causally linked (Hutson, 2013). As it turns out, most superstitions are based on parataxic reasoning. For example, if a football coach does not shave before a game, and his team then wins, he might assume that not shaving somehow caused the success. As a result, he may adopt this superstitious behavior for future games.

EXERCISE 2.9 EXPLORING CORRELATION AND CAUSATION

To give you some practice at applying these principles, try to identify some of the possible causal relationships, pathways, and explanations that could account for each of the correlations presented below.

EXAMPLE

"Eveningness" and optimism appear to be negatively correlated (Levy, 1985); that is, people who are "evening types" tend to be more pessimistic than "morning types." Why might this be true?

1. Optimism may cause "morningness."
2. Morningness may cause optimism.
3. Optimism and morningness may affect each other.
4. A satisfying job may cause both optimism and morningness.

EXERCISE A

Many societies believe the most effective way to control or deter aggression is through the use of punishment, including the death penalty. The preponderance of research

evidence, however, shows a positive correlation between murder rates and the number of executions, rather than the negative relationship predicted by deterrence theories (see Segall et al., 1997). In the United States, states without the death penalty have had consistently lower murder rates than states with the death penalty (DPIC, 2019). Assuming this correlation is valid, how might it be explained?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

EXERCISE B

Suppose you read an article reporting a negative correlation between religiosity and depression (i.e., the less religious, the more depressed). What factors could account for this relationship?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

As these examples illustrate, although correlations may provide us with accurate – and frequently very useful – information regarding "what" relationships exist, they cannot be counted on to answer the question "why?" Even in those circumstances in which a correlation strongly *implies* causation, it does not *prove* causation.

ANTIDOTES

1. Remember that a correlation or co-appearance is not, in itself, proof of causation.
2. Keep in mind that correlations enable us to make predictions from one event to another; they do not, however, provide explanations as to why the events are related.
3. When a correlation is observed, consider all possible pathways and directions of causation. For example, if Event *A* and Event *B* are correlated, does *A* cause *B*? Does *B* cause *A*? Do *A* and *B* cause each other? Does *C* cause *A* and *B*?

BIDIRECTIONAL CAUSATION AND MULTIPLE CAUSATION: CAUSAL LOOPS AND COMPOUND PATHWAYS

BIDIRECTIONAL CAUSATION

Although we typically tend to think of causal relationships as being **unidirectional** (Event *A* causes Event *B*), frequently they are **bidirectional** (Event *A* causes Event *B* and Event
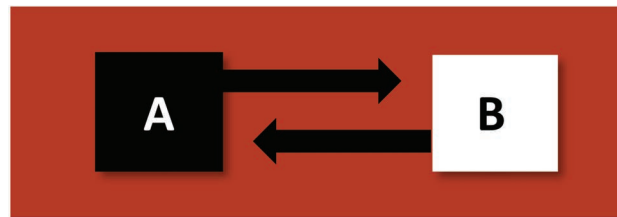
Figure 2.4 Bidirectional Causation

B causes Event *A*). In other words, variables can, and frequently do, affect each other (see Figure 2.4). This relationship may also be referred to as a causal loop or, depending on our particular subjective evaluation, either a "healthy spiral" (if we happen to like it) or a "vicious cycle" (if we do not).

As an illustration of this principle, let us look at the classical psychological question, "Does thought cause emotion, or does emotion cause thought? Which comes first? Which is the cause and which is the effect?" (see Berscheid, 1982; Mandler, 1975; Weiner, 1980; Zajonc, 1980). When viewed as a bidirectional relationship, however, the argument may be moot: clearly, thoughts and feelings affect each other.

Consider also the bidirectional relationship between psychological disturbance and one's family environment. Specifically, it is probable that cold, rejecting, and hostile parents can cause emotional and behavioral problems in their children. At the same time, do not ignore the possibility (even the likelihood) that children with emotional and behavioral problems also might cause their parents to become cold, rejecting, and hostile.

Bidirectional relationships are as interesting as they are plentiful:

- self-esteem and popularity
- poverty and failure
- mass shootings and gun sales
- motivation and encouragement
- respect and responsibility
- criticism and defensiveness
- curiosity and knowledge
- racism and antiracism
- money and power
- frustration and helplessness
- apathy and powerlessness
- paranoia and secrecy
- restriction and disobedience
- opportunity and success
- violence and discrimination
- digital media and social isolation

EXERCISE 2.10 IDENTIFYING AND DISENTANGLING CAUSAL LOOPS

As an exercise, consider the bidirectional relationship between unemployment (Event *A*) and delinquency (Event *B*).

- First, describe some ways that unemployment (*A*) might result in delinquency (*B*).
- Next, describe some ways that delinquency (*B*) can lead to unemployment (*A*).
- Is it possible to determine which is (or was) the "initial" cause? If so, how?
- Under what circumstances might it be important to identify which was the initial cause?
- Under what circumstances might it be *unimportant* to identify which was the initial cause?

For some more practice, select another bidirectional relationship, either from the list above or an original from your own experience.

As you can see, "cause" and "effect" are relative terms: a cause in one instance becomes an effect in another. From this perspective, asking the question, "Which comes first?" although interesting, may be unnecessary, irrelevant, or even unanswerable. Thus, when faced with such chicken–and–egg questions, remember that your answer may depend entirely on where you happen to enter the causal loop.

MULTIPLE CAUSATION

Research on immigrants has shown that the longer they live in the United States, the worse their rates of heart disease, high blood pressure, and diabetes (Tavernise, 2013). What is the cause of these medical problems? Actually, the form of this question is somewhat misleading in its implication that there is a *single* cause. In point of fact, any effect may be – and usually is – the result of not just one but several causes, which are operating concurrently (see Figure 2.5). Virtually every significant behavior has many determinants, and any single explanation is inevitably an oversimplification. Thus, in this case, we would need to consider a wide range of possible factors (e.g., genetic susceptibility, diet, stress, family norms, and cultural traditions), all of which could to varying degrees be contributory.

To take another example, what causes depression? Is it caused by early childhood trauma? Or a vital loss? Or perceived failure? Or unrealistic expectations? Or a faulty belief system? Or learned helplessness? Or a biochemical predisposition? Or lack of opportunity? Now, try replacing each "or" with "and." In this way, depression may be seen as caused by a variety of factors, including early childhood trauma, *and* a vital loss, *and* perceived failure, *and* unrealistic expectations, *and* a faulty belief system, *and* learned helplessness, *and* a biological predisposition, *and* a lack of opportunity.
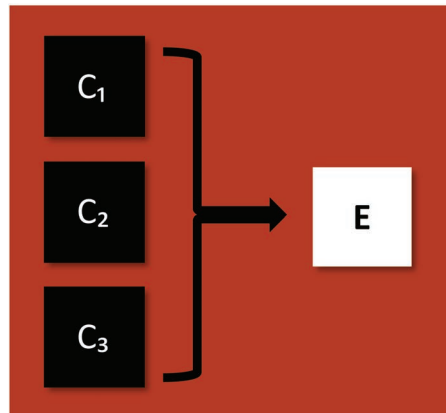
Figure 2.5 Multiple Causation
Note: C = cause, E = effect.

As a third example, why do you think people use Facebook, Instagram, and other social media? The answer, again, is neither simple nor singular. To varying degrees there are multiple reasons: *social* (reconnect with old friends, maintain contact with current friends, expand one's social network, conform with peer norms); *emotional* (to relieve boredom, stress, or loneliness, to experience a pleasurable or relaxing diversion, anonymously keep tabs on one's "ex"); *practical* (discover things to do around town, rally support for political causes, advertise one's business); *narcissistic* (create a false persona to the outside world, boast about one's achievements, mock or bully others, keep score on number of "Likes" and "Friends"); *existential* (to feel a part of something bigger than oneself – "I share, therefore I am"). These factors, and no doubt many more, are all variables in this multiple-cause equation.

As a final example of multiple causation, Dutch professor Ruut Veenhoven (2008) has shown that, despite common assumptions, happiness is not based essentially on economic factors (such as jobs or prices). In Scandinavian countries such as Iceland, Denmark, or Finland, citizens typically score as among the happiest nations on earth. Further, people in Iceland are happier than those in Sweden, but the Icelandic government spends only half as much on social welfare. Despite the economic slowdown from 2008 and subsequent recovery, Americans report being neither unhappier nor happier (World Happiness Report, 2015). Research shows that while the average income of people around the world can affect their sense of satisfaction with life, other personal and social factors are also very important in determining one's general sense of happiness. Studies also show that in individualistic cultures, people rely on their emotions when they assess their own happiness. In predominantly collectivist cultures, people tend to seek social cues or other people's responses to make a judgment (Suh et al., 2008).

EXERCISE 2.11 **EXPLORING COMPOUND PATHWAYS**

Applying the same principle, consider the multiple determinants of homophobia. List as many possible factors as you can think of. Do the same with some other topic related to cross-cultural psychology. (You might browse through the index of this book for some ideas.)

In sum, every time you are faced with a question, issue, or problem that is presented in terms of *either/or*, pause for a moment. Now, try replacing *either/or* with *both/and*. For example, the statement, "Prejudice is caused by either ignorance or hatred," becomes "Prejudice is caused by both ignorance and hatred" (and probably many other factors as well). Then ask yourself, "Is this new formulation useful?" In a great number of situations, you are very likely to find that it is.

ANTIDOTES

1. Do not assume that the causal link between two variables is a unidirectional "one-way street."
2. When investigating directions of causation, consider the possibility that the variables are linked in a causal loop; that is, each might be both a cause and an effect of the other.
3. Remember that in a case of bidirectional causation, which variable appears to be the "cause" and which variable appears to be the "effect" may depend entirely on the point at which you happen to enter the causal loop.
4. In attempting to explain why an event occurred, do not limit your search to one cause. Instead, explore multiple plausible causes, all of which may be responsible for producing the effect.
5. When faced with an *either/or* question, always consider the possibility that the answer might be *both/and.*

THE NATURALISTIC FALLACY: BLURRING THE LINE BETWEEN "IS" AND "SHOULD"

One critical way in which our personal values can bias our thinking is when we equate our description of what *is* with our prescription of what *ought* to be. This occurs, for instance, whenever we define what is good in terms of what is observable. This error in thinking is called the **naturalistic fallacy**.

Examine the following statements: "What's typical is normal; what's normal is good. What's not typical is abnormal; what's abnormal is bad." Notice how, in each case, a description of what exists becomes converted into a prescription of what we like or dislike.

As Scottish philosopher David Hume pointed out more than 250 years ago, values, ethics, and morality are based not on logic or reason but on the sentiments and public opinions

of a particular society. Thus, no description of human behavior, however accurate, can ever ordain what is "right" or "wrong" behavior. It makes no difference whether we are studying cultural customs, religious convictions, political beliefs, educational practices, recreational activities, sexual proclivities, or table manners. If most people do something, that does not make it right; if most people do not, that does not make it wrong.

Of course, the converse is also true. If most people do something, that does not inherently make it wrong; if most people do not do something, that does not make it right. In other words, there is no need to idealize someone just because he or she is different from the crowd. Likewise, we need not condemn someone solely for doing what others do. The point is that, in any case, we must be careful not to confuse objective description with subjective value judgment.

Let us briefly elaborate on these four variants of the naturalistic fallacy.

1. **common = good**: the error here is to equate what is average, conventional, or popular with what is right. What are some of the assumptions underlying this perspective? "Everybody does it, so it must be okay." "The majority knows best." "All those people just can't be wrong." To take some specific examples: "Nearly everybody defines marriage as between a man and a woman; therefore, it's not right that people of the same sex can get married." "Because the vast majority of people in a particular country approve of physical punishment of children, this opinion must be the right one." "The iPhone must be the best device because so many people own one."

2. **uncommon = bad**: on the flip side of the same coin, that which departs from the norm is presumed to be wrong. Whether judging deviant behavior, unpopular beliefs, unusual customs, or unconventional appearances, the verdict is inevitable – if it's different, it's condemned. Examples: "Since only a small minority of the world's population is homosexual, homosexuality must be wrong." "Atheists clearly are in the minority, so they've got to be mistaken." "Social media is everywhere, so if you're not on it then you must be a weirdo."

3. **common = bad**: in this scenario, an individual rejects something solely because the majority accepts it, separate and apart from its own merits or drawbacks. On what basis? "The masses are always wrong." "If most people do it, it can't be good." "Since society is a flock of mindless sheep, anything they stand for is bound to be immoral." Examples: "The establishment believes in marriage, therefore I certainly do not." "Everyone uses social media, so I refuse to." "If it's popular music, it can't be any good."

4. **uncommon = good**: along the same lines, any deviation from what is normal is deemed, *per se*, to be desirable, irrespective of its inherent value. Why? "Anything that's different is better than what's average." "If it's unusual, it's good." "Anybody who has the courage to rebel against conventional thinking must have something important to contribute." Examples: "I would rather have people look at me as strange than not notice me at all." "Anyone who speaks up for the #MeToo movement must be right and justified." "Since society at large is so corrupt, and there are so few anarchists, anarchy must be a better alternative."

To view this phenomenon from a cross-cultural perspective, consider some of the practices that, in the past, have been widely accepted as correct: human sacrifice, slavery, child labor, spousal abuse, public execution, denial of religious freedom, involuntary medical treatment, and the burning of books, heretics, and witches. By today's standards, it may seem painfully clear to most of us that these practices were morally wrong. Yet, what are the chances that future generations will dismiss – perhaps even mock – much of what we currently take for granted as right? Can you foresee any particular examples?

EXERCISE 2.12 EXPLORING MANIFESTATIONS OF THE NATURALISTIC FALLACY

As an exercise, try to think of specific examples that represent each of the categories below. (To help you get started, look through the following list of topics: gender roles, racial segregation, civil disobedience, affirmative action, birth control, child rearing, vaccinations, war, psychopathology, artistic expression, fashion, music, advertising, illegal immigration, personal hygiene.)

Common, therefore good: _____
Uncommon, therefore bad: _____
Common, therefore bad: _____
Uncommon, therefore good: _____

History is replete with instances of one culture attempting to impose control over another culture, frequently by occupying and ruling over the inhabitants of other lands. This practice, called *colonization*, has been perpetrated by a vast array of global powers, including the Roman Empire, the Vikings of Scandinavia, Spain, Portugal, Great Britain, France, the United States, Japan, and the Soviet Union. No doubt, numerous factors contribute to such endeavors, including economic, religious, political, strategic, and so forth. Not incidentally, colonialism is characteristically predicated (and rationalized) on the assumption that other people's ways of living are *different*, therefore they are *wrong* – in other words, the naturalistic fallacy. As such, the practice of colonization provides a seemingly satisfying justification for imposing one's beliefs and customs on others. To take one example, Spanish explorers considered Native Americans to be inferior beings and, therefore, believed they had the "right" to subjugate these indigenous populations by forcibly converting them to Christianity, compelling them into servitude, and appropriating their land. And why not? This so-called right was only "natural."

T. H. Huxley once noted that "the cosmic process has no sort of relation to moral ends" (cited in Miner & Rawson, 1994). His assertion notwithstanding, our view of nature itself is subject to the naturalistic fallacy. This happens when we equate what is "natural" with what is "right." Or when we proclaim that "things are as they should be." Or we presume that whatever occurs in nature is good because nature is, in itself, good. How could it not be good? After all, just consider snow-capped mountains, golden sunsets, fragrant flowers, the miracle of birth, the instinct to survive, indeed life itself. From herbal remedies to organic pesticides, if it is from nature, then it is inherently good.

There is only one small wrinkle. Perhaps, not surprisingly, we are less inclined to cite examples from nature that we do not happen to like. What about birth defects and leprosy? Or drought and famine? Earthquakes and monsoons? Strychnine and oleander? Are these phenomena any less a part of nature? Are they somehow "unnatural"?

In essence, nature is held to a double standard: we embrace the "good" parts and ignore, dismiss, or rationalize away the "bad" parts. But we cannot have it both ways. Nature is, morally speaking, just nature. The values we impart to it are a different matter.

Social scientists are not immune to committing this error. A case in point is the field of evolutionary psychology. Proponents of this approach, basing their theories on the Darwinian principles of natural selection and adaptation for reproductive success, offer evolutionary explanations for a diverse array of human behaviors, including aggression, intelligence, morality, prejudice, territoriality, xenophobia, mating, sexual preference, and infidelity (see Barkow et al., 1992; Futuyma, 1979; Symons, 1979; Wright, 1994).

For instance, according to these theorists, men are genetically predisposed to seek out numerous young, nubile young females as sex partners. Women, by contrast, naturally prefer fewer, monogamous relationships with wealthy and powerful men. Further, evolution determines that men, compared with women, inherit a greater proclivity to kill their spouses over sexual infidelity.

For the sake of argument, let us set aside the numerous criticisms of evolutionary psychology (e.g., Holcomb, 1996; Schlinger, 1996) and assume that these theories are valid. Where does that leave us and what are the implications? That sexual double standards are "natural" and therefore acceptable? Would this justify promiscuity, adultery, deceit, and betrayal? Are greed, materialism, racial segregation, and war to be sanctioned? Could we really criticize or condemn someone for infidelity? How can we hold people accountable for spousal abuse, statutory rape, or murder? After all, it's "in their nature."

CROSS-CULTURAL SENSITIVITY

CULTURAL RELATIVISM

Cultural relativism refers to the concept that the norms and values of one culture should not be evaluated using the norms and values of another (see the discussion in Chapter 3 and Figure 3.1). But does this suggest that we should automatically accept anything and everything that happens in other cultures – whether in different countries or even within our own country? Does it mean, for instance, that we should not condemn the beliefs of certain religions for their use of violence against other religions? Must we set aside their own values and accept the sexism and discrimination against women that are widely practiced, to varying degrees, around the globe? Are we obliged to approve of homophobic aggression in Russia

out of respect for their own unique culture? Are we expected to remain silent about "female circumcision" (i.e., forcibly cutting away a young girl's external genitalia) in areas of Africa – a practice which, in Europe and the United States, is considered to be an act of barbaric body mutilation? And what about the fact that, from the perspective of other cultures, some of *our own* practices (apparel, diet, religious observance) are judged as wrong or immoral?

More broadly, what do you personally think about the idea of cultural relativism? Are there limits to this perspective? Do you believe that there are some universal standards by which to evaluate different cultural practices? For instance, is it appropriate to accept the premise that it is never permissible to inflict pain on another without their consent? Is it possible to reconcile the dilemma between respecting the beliefs of others without sacrificing one's own? At what point does "cultural sensitivity" become tantamount to the tacit approval of – or even inherent collusion with – something you believe to be morally repugnant? There are no easy or clear answers here. But that should not dissuade us from attempting to grapple with them.

Clearly, even if evolution does influence what we do, this does not inherently make it morally good, desirable, or correct. Put another way, what is "true" isn't necessarily "right." It would be erroneous, for example, to condone acts of violence solely on the grounds that aggression is an intrinsic product of our genetic inheritance. It is one thing to *explain* human conduct; it is quite another to *excuse* it. Maybe our behavior is, in part, attributable to the process of natural selection. Then again, perhaps, to borrow a line from the movie *The African Queen*, "nature is what we were put in this world to rise above."

ANTIDOTES

1. Do not make the mistake of equating statistical frequency with moral value. If most people do something, that does not intrinsically make it right; if most people do not, that does not therefore make it wrong. In like manner, if most people do something, that does not make it wrong; if they do not, that does not make it right.
2. Learn to differentiate objective descriptions from subjective prescriptions. Specifically, do not confuse one's description of what "is" or "isn't" with one's prescription of what "should" or "shouldn't" be.

THE BELIEF PERSEVERANCE EFFECT: "DON'T CONFUSE ME WITH THE FACTS!"

In our attempts to understand the world around us and to navigate our way through life, we adopt a wide variety of beliefs, the content of which ranges from the mundane (the best brand of detergent, the most flattering hairstyle) to the profound (the meaning of life, the

existence of God). One of the most significant characteristics of our beliefs is the degree to which we become personally invested in them. The attachment may be so strong that our beliefs feel as if they are a vital and indispensable component of our very identity.

What happens, then, when our beliefs are challenged by new facts? Particularly those beliefs that we happen to like? Or those that we regard as important? Or those that we have come to accept as truths?

If we were to respond to such challenges in a purely rational manner, we would simply detach our personal feelings from the dispute, evaluate the substance of the challenge as objectively and dispassionately as possible, and then, if appropriate, modify our beliefs accordingly. We would, in other words, accommodate the new information by modifying our pre-existing schemas (see section on the assimilation bias earlier in this chapter).

But we are not always so rational. In fact, sometimes we are not rational at all. Specifically, when our beliefs are being challenged, we are prone to feel that we are being personally challenged. When our beliefs are criticized, we feel criticized. When our beliefs are attacked, we feel attacked. Our first impulse, therefore, typically is to protect our beliefs, as if to protect ourselves. As such, we tend to cling to our beliefs, sometimes even in the face of contrary evidence. This bias in thinking is called the **belief perseverance effect** (see Lord et al., 1979).

When we engage in belief perseverance, we frequently respond by discounting, denying, or ignoring any arguments that run counter to our beliefs. That is, we treat potential challenges as if they didn't exist simply by perseverating on the belief itself. Here are some examples:

"Marriage is between a man and a woman."

"Why?"

"Because . . . marriage is between a man and a woman."

"I'm against same-sex marriage because it harms the children."

"Actually, research shows that children of married gay couples are just as well-adjusted, if not better adjusted, than children of heterosexual couples."

"Well, it still harms the children."

"Rape is an act of violence, not sex."

"It isn't an either/or question. The particular means of the assault differentiates rape from other violent acts. We would not call it 'rape' if, for instance, a person were knifed in the back. Rape, in contrast, is a violent act specifically involving the sex organs. As such, it need not necessarily even entail the assailant's sexual pleasure or sexual gratification to be considered a sexual act. In other words, rape is an act of sexual violence."

"Oh, I see what you mean. That makes a lot of sense. But I *still* think that rape is an act of violence, not of sex."

Our beliefs can, in fact, be so intractable that they stubbornly persevere even when we acknowledge that the evidence supporting them is erroneous. This was evidenced in a research study in which subjects underwent a personality test that purportedly showed them to be especially "socially sensitive" (Ross et al., 1975). Subjects were subsequently informed that the test actually was fake and therefore provided invalid results. Even with this knowledge, however, subjects still persisted in believing that they were socially sensitive. Other studies have corroborated the general conclusion that it requires much more compelling evidence to change our beliefs than it did to create them in the first place (Ross & Lepper, 1980).

Can we engage in belief perseverance without entirely rejecting contradictory information? What if we are not able, or even choose not, to discount, deny, or ignore potentially disconfirming evidence? Is there any way that we can continue to cling to our cherished beliefs and still emerge victorious? The answer, as you probably have already anticipated, is yes. Like the martial arts expert who masterfully redirects and transforms his opponent's force to his own advantage, in a brilliant feat of logical contortionism, we simply find a way to bend, twist, or reframe the information so that it actually *supports* our original belief.

Table 2.3 Illustrations of the Belief Perseverance Effect

Louie (Employer): New Yorkers always do a better job. I've known that since my youth.

Marilee (Employee): But this year our new sales rep from Los Angeles outsold every New Yorker in the department.

Louie: Yeah, but if we had given the same region to a New Yorker, we would have made twice the profit.

Jasmeet (Activist): I am absolutely certain that the government is plotting against me.

Maria (Interviewer): Now hold on. Do you have any evidence that there's a plot against you?

Maria: No, but do you have any evidence that there isn't?

Jordan (Religious Person): All atheists are depressed people due to a lack of belief in God.

Xiao (Atheist): I don't believe in God and I am not depressed.

Jordan: Then you might not realize it, but you actually do believe in God. Or you are depressed but just aren't aware of it.

Trent (Sociopolitical Theorist): Jews control the media.

Nicole (Reporter): But the vast majority of people who head the networks and newspapers aren't Jewish.

Trent: Exactly my point. All that proves is how clever they are in creating the appearance that they do not have any power. They have so much control that they've been able to dupe you into believing that they do not have any control.

Table 2.3 continued

Cindy (Female Group Therapy Member): All men really want is sex and nothing else.

Richard (Male Group Therapy Member): I'm a man, and that's not all *I* want.

Cindy: Well, then either you're lying to me, or you're lying to yourself, or you're not *really* a man.

Rudy (President's Lawyer): There was widespread voter fraud in your state during the Presidential election.

Russell (State House Speaker): Do you have any proof?

Rudy: We've got lots of theories. We just don't have the evidence.

Let us now turn to a sampling of variations on this very robust theme (Table 2.3). Of particular interest, note how the participants in these brief scenarios are able to support their positions by employing a creative assortment of flaws in thinking, including circular reasoning, denial, invalidation, deflection by attacking the source, confusing feelings with truth, and other errors in deductive and inductive reasoning. (These examples were drawn directly from the authors' own experiences in a variety of settings, including media interviews, therapy sessions, political debates, and overhearing conversations in line at a movie theater.)

EXERCISE 2.13 THE PERSEVERANCE OF SOCIOCULTURAL BELIEFS

As an exercise in further examining the various manifestations of belief perseverance, try completing the following scenarios on your own:

Person A: Aryans are the master race.
Person B: Then how come they lost World War II? Especially to "inferior" races?
Person A: _____

Person A: These are the facts.
Person B: But I'm presenting you with "alternative facts."
Person A: _____

Person A: The mass shooter is insane.
Person B: But he claims to be completely responsible for his actions.
Person A: _____

Person A: Deep down, all white people are racist, whether they know it or not.
Person B: _____
Person A: _____

Person A: The only reason she got the job is because she's an ethnic minority.
Person B: _____
Person A: _____

Person A: The only reason she didn't get the job is because she's an ethnic minority.
Person B: _____
Person A: _____

Person A: Vaccinations really don't work.
Person B: _____
Person A: _____

Person A: Transsexualism is a mental illness, just like any other mental illness.
Person B: _____
Person A: _____

Person A: Racial discrimination is worse today than it was 50 years ago.
Person B: _____
Person A: _____

Person A: Wearing a mask gave me COVID.
Person B: _____
Person A: _____

Person A: The Holocaust didn't really happen.
Person B: _____
Person A: _____

Person A: God is on our side.
Person B: _____
Person A: _____

ANTIDOTES

1. Keep an open mind to different, and especially challenging, points of view.
2. Remind yourself (and others as well) to think carefully about how you evaluate evidence and to closely monitor your biases as you formulate your conclusions.
3. Make a point of actively counter-arguing your pre-existing beliefs. That is, ask yourself directly in what ways your beliefs might be wrong. One specific method of doing so is to *consider the opposite.*
4. When faced with a discrepancy between your beliefs and the facts, resist the natural tendency to assume that your beliefs are right and the facts must somehow be wrong.

CONCLUSIONS: "TO METATHINK OR NOT TO METATHINK?"

Finally, let us turn to an evaluation of this chapter's principal content: the metathoughts themselves. In a sense, metathoughts may be seen as cognitive schemas. As such, they provide the same benefits – and, of course, are subject to the same liabilities – inherent in all schematic processing (see section on the assimilation bias earlier in this chapter). More specifically, in terms of advantages, they can

- significantly reduce or eliminate a wide variety of systematic biases, errors, and mistakes in thinking related to cultural and cross-cultural phenomena
- improve the clarity of thinking and the accuracy of solutions
- open pathways to new perspectives and alternative points of view
- promote and facilitate innovative and creative approaches to problem solving
- serve as a foundation for identifying other as-yet-unidentified cognitive errors (i.e., new metathoughts), as well as their antidotes

As for disadvantages, their use

- requires more time and effort (particularly at first) to analyze theories and facts
- involves greater complexity at the cost of simplicity
- is likely to result in increased ambiguity
- can sometimes leave you feeling frustrated or confused
- may be impractical or inappropriate in some situations

In sum, like all other choices, the acceptance or rejection of these ideas entails costs as well as benefits. Thus, once you have made the effort to study, understand, and apply these metathought principles in cross-cultural psychology and your own life, take stock of their pluses and minuses. By weighing them out in this manner, you will be able to make much more informed choices as to your particular course of action. Either way, the decisions ultimately are yours.

Hungarian psychiatrist Thomas Szasz once remarked, "I do not have the answer to every one of life's problems. I only know a stupid answer when I see one" (quoted in J. Miller, 1983). In like manner, the metathoughts will not necessarily provide you with the best solutions to all of the questions that you will ask, or that will be asked of you. Nevertheless, cultivating your skills of critical thinking in cross-cultural psychology certainly will, at the very least, enable you more easily and consistently to identify and discard "the stupid ones," thereby freeing your time, energy, and resources for more productive endeavors.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

1. Critical thinking is one of the most vital and indispensable components of learning. The thought principles or metathoughts (literally, "thoughts about thought")

presented in this chapter are cognitive tools that provide the user with specific strategies for inquiry and problem solving. In this way, they serve as potent antidotes to thinking that is often prone to be biased, simplistic, rigid, lazy, or just plain sloppy.

2. In describing phenomena, particularly social phenomena, the language that people use invariably reflects their own personal values, biases, likes, and dislikes. In this way, their words can reveal at least as much about themselves as the events, individuals, and groups they are attempting to describe.

3. Dichotomous variables are a matter of classification (*quality*), whereas continuous variables are a matter of degree (*quantity*). The problem is that people have a tendency to dichotomize variables that, more accurately, should be conceptualized as continuous.

4. All phenomena are both similar to and different from each other, depending on the dimensions or sorting variables that have been selected for purposes of evaluation, comparison, and contrast. No phenomenon is totally identical or totally unique in relation to other phenomena.

5. Barnum statements are "one-size-fits-all" descriptions that are true of practically all human beings, but that do not provide distinctive information about a particular person or group. Thus, the problem with Barnum statements is not that they are wrong; rather, because they are so generic, universal, and elastic, they are of limited value.

6. The assimilation bias represents a significant obstacle to clear thinking and effective problem solving. In viewing the world through "schema-colored glasses," we subject virtually all the incoming information to varying degrees of distortion, misinterpretation, and invalidation.

7. To identify any given phenomenon, we automatically and intuitively compare it with our mental representation, prototype, or schema of the relevant category. Errors due to the representativeness bias can occur as a result of faulty prototypes, failure to consider relevant statistical data, or motivational biases.

8. We utilize the availability heuristic whenever we attempt to assess the frequency or likelihood of an event on the basis of how quickly or easily instances come to mind. Thus, vivid examples, dramatic events, graphic case studies, and personal testimonies, in contrast to statistical information, are likely to exert a disproportionate impact on our judgments. In this way, anecdotes may be more persuasive than factual data.

9. In arriving at causal attributions to explain people's behavior, we have a tendency to overestimate the impact of their internal personality traits (dispositions) and to underestimate the impact of their environmental circumstances (situations). This *fundamental attribution error* appears to be due to cognitive biases and motivational biases.

10. The assumptions, attitudes, and beliefs that we hold toward other people can, with or without our intent, actually produce the very behaviors that we expect to find. Similarly, our own behavior may inadvertently be shaped by other people's expectations of us. In sum, due to the self-fulfilling prophecy, expectations can generate their own reality.

11. Correlations may provide us with accurate and useful information regarding "what" relationships exist, but they cannot be counted on to answer the "why?" question. Even in those circumstances in which a correlation strongly implies causation, it does not prove causation.

12. In contrast to unidirectional causation, when Event *A* causes Event *B*, in bidirectional causation, Event *A* and Event *B* are linked in a circular or causal loop, in which each is both a cause and an effect of the other. In such instances, the pathway of causation is a "two-way street." Further, any given event can be, and typically is, the result of numerous causes.

13. The frequency of an event does not inherently determine its moral value or worth. What is common, typical, or normal is not necessarily good; what is uncommon, atypical, or abnormal is not necessarily bad. Conversely, what is common is not necessarily bad, and what is uncommon is not necessarily good.

14. We have a tendency to stubbornly cling to our beliefs, sometimes even in the face of disconfirming evidence. Thus, when these beliefs are challenged, we feel impelled to protect them, almost as if we were protecting ourselves. One consequence of this belief perseverance effect is that it generally requires much more compelling evidence to change our beliefs than it did to create them in the first place.

KEY TERMS

Antidote A remedy to prevent or counteract an adverse effect.

Assimilation bias The propensity to resolve discrepancies between pre-existing schemas and new information in the direction of assimilation rather than accommodation, even at the expense of distorting the information itself.

Availability bias Any condition in which the availability heuristic produces systematic errors in thinking or information processing, typically due to highly vivid although rare events.

Availability heuristic A cognitive strategy for quickly estimating the frequency, incidence, or probability of a given event based on the ease with which such instances are retrievable from memory.

Barnum effect A phenomenon that refers to people's willingness to accept uncritically the validity of Barnum statements.

Barnum statement Any generic "one-size-fits-all" description of or interpretation about a particular individual that is true of practically all human beings.

Belief perseverance effect The tendency to cling stubbornly to one's beliefs, even in the face of contradictory or disconfirming evidence.

Bias A prejudicial inclination or predisposition that inhibits, deters, or prevents impartial judgment.

Bidirectional causation A mutual, reciprocal relationship between two variables wherein each is both a cause and an effect of the other.

Cognitive bias Any systematic error in attribution that derives from limits that are

inherent in people's cognitive abilities to process information.

Continuous variable Any variable that lies along a dimension, range, or spectrum, rather than in a discrete category, that can theoretically take on an infinite number of values and is expressed in terms of quantity, magnitude, or degree.

Critical thinking An active and systematic cognitive strategy to examine, evaluate, and understand events, solve problems, and make decisions on the basis of sound reasoning and valid evidence. More specifically, critical thinking involves maintaining an attitude that is both open-minded and skeptical; recognizing the distinction between facts and theories; striving for factual accuracy and logical consistency; objectively gathering, weighing, and synthesizing information; forming reasonable inferences, judgments, and conclusions; identifying and questioning underlying assumptions and beliefs; discerning hidden or implicit values; perceiving similarities and differences between phenomena; understanding causal relationships; reducing logical flaws and personal biases, such as avoiding oversimplifications and overgeneralizations; developing a tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity; exploring alternative perspectives and explanations; and searching for creative solutions.

Dichotomous variable Any variable that can be placed into either of two discrete and mutually exclusive categories.

Fundamental attribution error A bias in attempting to determine the causes of people's behavior that involves overestimating the influence of their

personality traits, while underestimating the influence of their particular situations; that is, overutilizing internal attributions and underutilizing external attributions.

Heuristic A mental shortcut or rule-of-thumb strategy for problem solving that reduces complex information and time-consuming tasks to more simple, rapid, and efficient judgmental operations, particularly in reaching decisions under conditions of uncertainty.

Metathinking The act of thinking about thinking; engaging in a critical analysis and evaluation of the thinking process.

Metathoughts Thoughts about thought, which involve principles of critical thinking.

Motivational bias Any systematic error in attribution that derives from people's efforts to satisfy their own personal needs, such as the desire for self-esteem, power, or prestige.

Naturalistic fallacy An error in thinking whereby the individual confuses or equates objective descriptions with subjective value judgments, in particular, by defining what is morally good or bad solely in terms of what is statistically frequent or infrequent.

Parataxic reasoning A kind of "magical thinking," frequently responsible for superstitious behaviors, in which events that occur close together in time are erroneously construed to be causally linked.

Post hoc error A shortened form of *post hoc, ergo propter hoc* ("after this, therefore because of this"), referring to the logical error that because Event *B*

follows Event *A*, then *B* must have been caused by *A*.

Representativeness bias Any condition in which the representativeness heuristic produces systematic errors in thinking or information processing.

Representativeness heuristic A cognitive strategy for quickly estimating the probability that a given instance is a member of a particular category.

Schema A cognitive structure or representation that organizes one's knowledge, beliefs, and past experiences, thereby providing a framework for understanding new events and future experiences; a general expectation or preconception about a wide range of phenomena.

Self-fulfilling prophecy A phenomenon wherein people's attitudes, beliefs, or assumptions about another person (or persons) can, with or without their intent, actually produce the very behaviors that they had initially expected to find.

Twittification effect The amplification and disproportionate influence of a limited number of voices via the use of mass media platforms.

Unidirectional causation A relationship between two variables wherein one is the cause and the other is the effect.

REFERENCES

Andreason, N. J. C., & Canter, A. (1974). The creative writer: Psychiatric symptoms and family history. *Comprehensive Psychiatry*, *15*(2), 123–131.

Andreason, N. J. C., & Powers, P. S. (1975). Creativity and psychosis: An examination of conceptual style. *Archives of General Psychiatry*, *32*, 70–73.

Asmelash, L. (2021, August 5). *Just 4% of Hispanic or Latino people prefer the term 'Latinx,' new Gallup poll finds.* CNN. www.cnn.com/2021/08/05/us/latinx-gallup-poll-preference-trnd/index.html

Barkow, J. H., Cosmides, L., & Tooby, J. (Eds.). (1992). *The adapted mind: Evolutionary psychology and the generation of culture.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Berman, A. L., & Jobes, D. A. (1992). Suicidal behavior of adolescents. In B. Bongar (Ed.), *Suicide: Guidelines for assessment, management and treatment.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Berman, A., Jobes, D., & Silverman, M. (2005). *Adolescent suicide: Assessment and intervention.* Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Berscheid, E. (1982). Attraction and emotions in interpersonal relationships. In M. S. Clark & S. T. Fiske (Eds.), *Affect and cognition: The 17th Annual Carnegie Symposium on Cognition.* Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Brenton, D. (2004, March). The anthropology of adolescent risk-taking behaviors. *Body & Society*, *10*, 1–15.

Bushman B. J., & Huesmann L. R. (2006). Short-term and long-term effects of violent media on aggression in children and adults. *Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine*, *160*(4), 348–352. https://doi.org/10.1001/archpedi.160.4.348. PMID: 16585478.

Cantor, N., & Mischel, W. (1979). Prototypes in person perception. In L. Berkowitz (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 12, pp. 3–52). New York: Academic Press.

Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2020). *Facts about suicide*. www.cdc.gov/suicide/suicide-data-statistics.html

Dawes, R. M. (1994). *House of cards: Psychology and psychotherapy built on myth*. New York: Free Press.

Dickson, D. H., & Kelly, I. W. (1985). The "Barnum Effect" in personality assessment: A review of the literature. *Psychological Reports*, *57*, 367–382.

DPIC (Death Penalty Information Center). (2019). *Average murder rate among states with death penalty and states without death penalty*. deathpenaltyinfo.org/facts-and-research/murder-rates/murder-rates-by-state

Elbeshbishi, S., & Quarshie, M. (2021, March 8). Fewer than 1 in 5 support 'defund the police' movement, USA TODAY/Ipsos poll finds. *USA Today*. www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2021/03/07/usa-today-ipsos-poll-just-18-support-defund-police-movement/4599232001/

Fiske, S. T., & Taylor, S. E. (1991). *Social cognition* (2nd ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Forer, B. R. (1949). The fallacy of personal validation: A classroom demonstration of gullibility. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, *44*, 118–123.

Futuyma, D. J. (1979). *Evolutionary biology*. Sunderland, MA: Sinauer.

Hamilton, D. L. (1979). A cognitive-attributional analysis of stereotyping. In L. Berkowitz (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 12, pp. 53–81). New York: Academic Press.

Hamilton, D. L. (1981). *Cognitive processes in stereotyping and intergroup behavior*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Hermans, J. M., & Kempen, J. G. (1998). Moving cultures: The perilous problems of cultural dichotomies in a globalizing society. *American Psychologist*, *53*(10), 1111–1120.

Herrnstein, R. J., & Murray, C. A. (1994). *The bell curve: Intelligence and class structure in American life.* Free Press.

Holcomb, H. R. (1996). Moving beyond just-so stories: Evolutionary psychology as protoscience. *Skeptic*, *4*(1), 60–66.

Hutson, M. (2013). *The 7 laws of magical thinking: How irrational beliefs keep us happy, healthy, and sane*. New York: Plume.

Ipsos (2021, July 15). *Reuters/Ipsos poll: Critical race theory*. www.ipsos.com/en-us/news-polls/reuters-ipsos-poll-critical-race-theory-07152021

Jamison, K. R. (1993). *Touched with fire: Manic-depressive illness and the artistic temperament*. New York: Free Press.

Jensen, A. R. (1973). *Educability and group differences*. London: Methuen.

Kahneman, D., & Tversky, A. (1982). The psychology of preferences. *Scientific American*, *246*(1), 160–173.

King, K., Steiner, B., & Breach, S. (2008). Violence in the supermax: A self-fulfilling prophecy. *The Prison Journal*, *88*, 144–168.

Kolodziejski, L. R. (2014). Harms of hedging in scientific discourse: Andrew Wakefield and the origins of the autism vaccine controversy. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, *23*(3), 165–183. https://doi.org/10.1080/10572252.2013.816487

Lerner, M. J. (1970). The desire for justice and reactions to victims. In J. McCauley & L. Berkowitz (Eds.), *Altruism and helping behavior* (pp. 205–229). New York: Academic Press.

Levy, D. A. (1985). Optimism and pessimism: Relationships to circadian rhythms. *Psychological Reports*, *57*(3), 1123–1126.

Levy, D. A. (1993). Psychometric infallibility realized: The One-Size-Fits-All. *Psychological Profile*, *10*(1), 3–6.

Levy, D. A. (2008). The emperor's postmodern clothes: A brief guide to deconstructing academically fashionable phrases for the uninitiated. *Skeptical Inquirer, 32*(6), 17.

Levy, D. A. (2010). *Tools of critical thinking: Metathoughts for psychology* (2nd ed.). Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press.

Levy, D. A., Kaler, S. R., & Schall, M. (1988). An empirical investigation of role schemata: Occupations and personality characteristics. *Psychological Reports*, *63*, 3–14.

Lord, C. G., Ross, L., & Lepper, M. (1979). Biased assimilation and attitude polarization: The effects of prior theories on subsequently considered evidence. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *37*, 2098–2109.

Mandler, G. (1975). *Mind and emotion.* New York: Wiley.

Miner, M., & Rawson, H. (1994). *The new international dictionary of quotations* (2nd ed.). New York: Signet.

Piaget, J. (1952). *The origins of intelligence in children.* New York: International Universities Press.

Piaget, J. (1954). *The construction of reality in the child.* New York: Basic Books.

Piaget, J. (1970). Piaget's theory. In P. H. Mussen (Ed.), *Carmichael's manual of child psychology* (3rd ed., Vol. 1, pp. 773–847). New York: Wiley.

Ramjug, P. (2021, December 23). *Seven out of 10 people don't know what critical race theory is, poll finds.* News@Northeastern. https://news.northeastern.edu/2021/12/23/critical-race-theory-survey/

Rogers, P., & Soule, J. (2009). Cross-cultural differences in the acceptance of Barnum profiles supposedly derived from Western versus Chinese astrology. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *40*(3), 381–399.

Rosenthal, R., & Jacobson, L. (1968). *Pygmalion in the classroom: Teacher expectation and pupils' intellectual development.* New York: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston.

Ross, L. (1977). The intuitive psychologist and his shortcomings: Distortions in the attribution process. In L. Berkowitz (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 10). New York: Academic Press.

Ross, L. D., & Lepper, M. R. (1980). The perseverance of beliefs: Empirical and normative considerations. In R. A. Shweder (Ed.), *New directions for methodology of behavioral science: Fallible judgment in behavioral research.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Ross, L., Lepper, M. R., & Hubbard, M. (1975). Perseverance in self-perception and social perception: Biased attribution processes in the debriefing paradigm. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *32*, 880–892.

Rothschild, D., & Malhotra, N. (2014). Are public opinion polls self-fulfilling prophecies? *Research & Politics*, *1*(2). https://doi.org/10.1177/2053168014547667

Rushton, J. P. (1994). Sex and race differences in cranial capacity from International Labour Office data. *Intelligence*, *19*, 281–294.

Rushton, J. P. (1995). *Race, evolution, and behavior.* New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction.

Saad, L. (2020, August 5). *Black Americans want police to retain local presence.* Gallup. https://news.gallup.com/poll/316571/black-americans-police-retain-local-presence.aspx?utm_source=tagrss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=syndication

Schlinger, H. D., Jr. (1996). How the human got its spots: A critical analysis of the just so stories of evolutionary psychology. *Skeptic*, *4*(1), 68–76.

Segall, M. H., Ember, C. R., & Ember, M. (1997). Aggression, crime, and warfare. In J. W. Berry, M. H. Segall, & Ç. Kağıtçıbaşı (Eds.), *Handbook of cross-cultural psychology* (Vol. 3, 3rd ed., pp. 213–254). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Skrypnek, B. J., & Snyder, M. (1982). On the selfperpetuating nature of stereotypes about women and men. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *18*, 277–291.

Snyder, C. R., Shenkel, R. J., & Lowery, C. R. (1977). Acceptance of personality interpretations: The "Barnum Effect" and beyond. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, *45*(1), 104–114.

Snyder, M. (1984). When belief becomes reality. In L. Berkowitz (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 18). New York: Academic Press.

Suh, E. M., Diener, E. D., & Updegraff, J. A. (2008). From culture to priming conditions: Self-construal influences on life satisfaction judgments. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 39(*1*), 3–15.

Sullivan, H. S. (1954). *The psychiatric interview*. New York: Norton.

Symons, D. (1979). *The evolution of human sexuality*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Tavernise, S. (2013, May 18). The health toll of immigration. *The New York Times*. www.nytimes.com/2013/05/19/health/the-health-toll-of-immigration.html

Taylor, S. E., & Fiske, S. T. (1975). Point of view and perceptions of causality. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *32*, 439–445.

Taylor, S. E., Peplau, L. A., & Sears, D. O. (1994). *Social psychology* (8th ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Tversky, A., & Kahneman, D. (1973). Availability: A heuristic for judging frequency and probability. *Cognitive Psychology*, *5*(2), 207–232.

Tversky, A., & Kahneman, D. (1974). Judgment under uncertainty: Heuristics and biases. *Science*, *185*(4157), 1124–1131.

Tversky, A., & Kahneman, D. (1982). Judgments of and by representativeness. In D. Kahneman, P. Slovic, & A. Tversky (Eds.), *Judgment under uncertainty: Heuristics and biases* (pp. 84–100). New York: Cambridge University Press.

U.S. Census Bureau. (2020). *Current population reports*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Commerce. www.census.gov/library/publications/2021/demo/p60-273.html

Veenhoven, R. (2008). Sociological theories of subjective well-being. In M. Eid & R. Larsen (Eds.), *The science of subjective well-being: A tribute to Ed Diener* (pp. 44–61). New York, NY: Guilford Publications.

Weiner, B. (1980). A cognitive (attribution)-emotion-action model of motivated behavior: An analysis of judgment of help-giving. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *39*, 186–200.

World Happiness Report.(2015). https://worldhappiness.report/ed/2015/

World Health Organization (WHO). (2022). *Suicide rates: Data by country*. Geneva, Switzerland: WHO.

Wright, R. (1994). *The moral animal: The new science of evolutionary psychology*. New York: Vintage.

Wurm, S., Warner, L. M., Ziegelmann, J. P., Wolff, J. K., & Schüz, B. (2013). How do negative self-perceptions of aging become a self-fulfilling prophecy? *Psychology and Aging*, *28*(4), 1088–1097. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0032845

Zajonc, R. (1980). Feeling and thinking: Preferences need no inferences. *American Psychologist*, *35*, 151–175.

Taylor & Francis
Taylor & Francis Group
http://taylorandfrancis.com

3

CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY OF CROSS-CULTURAL RESEARCH

Years ago, early in our careers, we were conducting a comparative Russian–American study on the perception of obedience to authority. After we translated the survey questions from English to Russian, videotaped our testing materials, and made a thousand copies of the questionnaire, we flew to Russia to gather our research data. We studied a wide variety of samples, from schoolchildren to construction workers, and engineers to psychology majors. There was only one challenge left to surmount: we needed to get access to a representative sample of Russian police officers. But we couldn't get permission from the county police chief. To our elation, however, after a few days of delays, we finally were allowed to interview 100 police officers after they had finished their day shifts. We rushed to the police station, met with a local police chief, and handed him cash as compensation for "using" his officers as research subjects.

The procedure went well and when the last police officer had filled out the questionnaire, we went back to the chief's office to thank him for his assistance. "Oh, you are very welcome," he replied with a proud smile. "I really wanted to help you get the best results. I told my lads" – as he referred to the officers – "to be serious and give you their best, most decent, and most appropriate answers."

We couldn't believe what he was saying to us! Did he really instruct his officers to give us only "decent" and "appropriate" – that is, socially desirable – answers? If that were the case, we could not use the results of the study because none of the other U.S. and Russian subjects received any such instructions from their supervisors about how to answer the questionnaire. Yet this official had tried to create a better image of Russian police officers in psychology research by instructing his subordinates on how to answer the questions.

This is perhaps one of the most common methodological challenges of any comparative psychological research: the subjects' attempts to present themselves as morally "better" than they think they are, under the assumption that their results will be compared with their counterparts' results in other countries or cultural groups. How could we have prevented such a situation? Perhaps we should have better obscured the fact that we were conducting a comparative research study. However, the next day one of our colleagues clarified the situation for us. He asked if we had figured out why it took the police chief several days to give us the "green light" to conduct this research. When we said we didn't, he enlightened us. "The chief was making phone calls and gathering information about you as individuals and your research project. You did not have a chance to hide that this was a comparative study. Please don't blame yourself. That's the

Russian political environment: you have to second-guess your foreign guests' intentions and verify everything related to their research. The police chief did everything by the rules and any other cop in his place would have done the same. So, in a way, you did get a representative sample . . . a sample of how the chief wanted to 'represent' his officers to you!"

———

To better understand and critically analyze the cultural diversity of human behavior, motivation, and experience, psychologists have to gather reliable evidence – verifiable facts and replicable data interpreted in the most unbiased way. This chapter deals with research methodology in cross-cultural psychological studies. It gives an overview of the most popular methods used by cross-cultural psychologists and offers critical suggestions about the process of gathering facts and interpreting data in their comparative studies.

GOALS OF CROSS-CULTURAL RESEARCH

Suppose a group of researchers wants to investigate psychological and behavioral similarities and differences between arranged (by relatives) marriages and non-arranged marriages in the United States in a sample of individuals of Indian descent (Regan et al., 2012). What goals might the psychologists pursue in this particular or similar projects?

First, researchers typically would *describe* the facts, namely the findings of their work. In this study of marriages, no significant statistical differences were found between couples' most valued features in arranged versus non-arranged marriages; high ratings of love, satisfaction, and commitment were found in both marriage types.

Then, researchers need to *explain* the differences or similarities they found. In this study, the researchers explained why the differences between the two types of marital patterns were relatively insignificant. The authors believed that a key reason is that the participants in this study (as we know) were Americans of Indian descent who, prior to their marriage, had some interpersonal power to disagree with their parents' choices and to reject an arranged marriage if they disapproved of their prospective bride or groom. Under other cultural conditions where participants, especially women, have less power to reject their choices, the results very well could have been different.

Researchers commonly present their work at local, national, and international professional conferences, in printed and online outlets, in books, or on social networks. The practical value of the study can be more meaningful if it not only describes and explains but also *predicts*. For example, what are the key factors that determine successful marital relationships? To illustrate, in the context of studying marriages, the psychologist might suggest that the spouses' initial strong commitments to each other – based either on love or consent – should be an important factor affecting the success of the marriage. When this is the case in a cross-cultural study, practitioners can use such research data in therapy and counseling to help clients of various cultural backgrounds better understand and manage – or effectively *control* – family relationships through therapy and counseling.

By and large, research methodology in cross-cultural psychology can be divided into two categories: *quantitative* and *qualitative*.

QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH IN CROSS-CULTURAL PSYCHOLOGY

Quantitative research concerns the systematic investigation of psychological phenomena by means of statistical or mathematical data and various computational techniques. This type of research involves the recording, measurement, classification, assessment, and interpretation of data. Using quantitative methods, the researcher could, for instance: measure the emotional stability of two groups of startup managers, one in Japan and the other in France; compare the strength of organizational skills of male and female applicants for an interior designer job in a diverse cultural environment; or compare and contrast collectivist or individualist habits of the medical personnel in several hospitals in different countries. In this way, certain psychological features are selected, quantified, and then compared in different cultural groups. For example, in a well-known study (mentioned in Chapter 1), published in *Science* (Talhelm et al., 2014), the researchers tested more than a thousand Han Chinese individuals and found, based on quantitative data, that rice-growing agricultural groups in southern China are more collectivist, interdependent, and holistic-thinking than the wheat-growing, more individualistic groups in the north.

Because cross-cultural psychologists are interested in establishing similarities, differences, and other statistical relationships that occur between two or among several variables, the most common data are **measures of central tendency**. The measure of central tendency indicates where most of the distribution is located. There are three measures of central tendency: the mode, the median, and the mean. When you measure distance, weight, volume, motion, or temperature, the results represent quantity, magnitude, or degree. Human activities can be measured along these dimensions too. Choosing a correct measurement scale, which is used to categorize and quantify variables, becomes a crucial factor for the overall success of quantitative psychological research. There are four types of measurement scales: nominal, ordinal, interval, and ratio. Please see a more detailed description of the measures of central tendency and the measurement scales on our companion website.

A specialist or student conducting research in cross-cultural psychology often needs to establish *correlations*, or the relationships between two or among several variables. This is expressed numerically in the form of a **correlation coefficient**. If in one set of data, when variable X is low and variable Y is also low, or when variable X is high and variable Y is also high, this is called a direct or positive correlation between the variables. If, on the other hand, based on a different data set, when variable A is low and variable B is high, or when variable A is high and variable B is low, this is an inverse or negative correlation. From Chapter 2, you should remember, of course, that when two variables are related, this does not automatically mean that one necessarily affects the other. For example, global studies show that women's education is negatively correlated with women's fertility rates (Roser,

2017). That is, the more years of formal schooling women acquire, the fewer children they have. Yet the increasing schooling for women cannot be the only factor affecting the decrease in fertility rates. General social conditions, the spread of information technology, changing cultural norms, women's better access to contraceptives, women's acquisition of political rights, and many other developments play a substantial role as well. Consider another study, conducted in Finland, which found that Finnish women who had cosmetic breast implants were three times more likely to commit suicide than the general population (Kaufman, 2003). These results were similar to the results from a comparable study of Swedish and U.S. women conducted by the National Cancer Institute. In the United States, six recent studies show the following result: The suicide rate for women who have undergone breast augmentation is approximately twice the expected rate based on estimates of the general population (Sarver et al., 2007). The question is, why? A common response of the media after the publication of the Finnish study was that breast implants caused a high risk of suicidal behavior. This is indeed a possibility: the high suicide rate might be a function of the problems, discomfort, pain, or serious regrets that occur in some women months or years after their surgery. It is also possible, however, that the high suicide rate reflects the psychological makeup of women who seek implants. In other words, women who want to have breast implants, as a group, might be more likely than all other women to have specific psychological problems than the general population (For a more detailed critical analysis of correlation and causation, see again Chapter 2 on critical thinking.)

QUALITATIVE APPROACH IN CROSS-CULTURAL PSYCHOLOGY

Qualitative research does not involve direct numerical measurement or statistical procedures. Qualitative procedures usually apply when cross-cultural psychologists study variables that are difficult to measure, such as examining a patient's subjective traumatic experiences, dreams, pictures, drawings, and songs (Chakkarath, 2012; Tutty et al., 1996). There are also situations in which standardized measures are not suitable or are unavailable: imagine you're working with subjects who are illiterate and cannot read or answer written scales. Qualitative methods also become necessary when variables are not completely conceptualized or operationally definable in a certain language (e.g., in many cultures, terms such as *sexual harassment*, *privacy*, or *mental illness* are not easily defined or are understood differently than in the United States or Canada). Qualitative research can often be conducted in a natural setting, where the research participants carry out their daily activities in a non-research atmosphere. In some cases, psychologists try to detect and describe some covert aspects of culture, unspoken rules, or innuendo – the so-called cultural contexts that are often difficult to measure by standard quantitative procedures (Marsella, 1998).

One form of qualitative research is **psychobiographical research**, or an in-depth analysis of individuals – usually outstanding persons, celebrities, and leaders – representing different countries or cultures. Most of the time, specialists try to collect empirical evidence to compose a personal profile of the individuals under study. To collect such evidence, diaries, speeches, letters, memoirs, interviews, and witnesses' accounts are examined.

Qualitative and quantitative methods are not mutually exclusive: in many cases, psychologists choose both in their research. For example, in one study of immigrant groups, the researchers first used a qualitative method to gain a greater understanding of the study samples, and only then designed and applied quantitative procedures (Roer–Strier & Kurman, 2009).

It's true the use of qualitative methods introduces an element of subjectivity into cross-cultural research, but this is precisely why it is so valuable: Qualitative methods enable psychologists to examine individuals' day-to-day thoughts, creations, and decision making under their natural cultural conditions (Demuth & Fatigante, 2012; Rai & Fiske, 2010).

MAJOR STEPS FOR PREPARATION OF A CROSS-CULTURAL STUDY

A professional cross-cultural study should address all basic requirements applied to an empirical study in general psychology (see A Case in Point, below).

A CASE IN POINT

A SAMPLE OF A MULTISTEP APPROACH TO CROSS-CULTURAL RESEARCH DESIGN

Step 1. Describe a problem (an issue) you decide to study. Review the scholarly literature on the topic. Use reputable online sources for additional references.

Step 2. Identify your research goal. Then, introduce one or several hypotheses for your study. You can use at least two strategies: (1) inductive: you collect data first, and then draw a conclusion about the studied samples; (2) deductive: you select a theoretical concept first, and then collect data to demonstrate or reject the selected hypothesis.

Step 3. Identify and describe the research sample of your study: groups of people, children's drawings, posts, videos, and so on.

Step 4. Choose or design a methodology for your project. Make sure that your research does not violate research ethics. Refer to your local Human Subjects Review Board for approval. Put together a schedule or timetable for your project.

Step 5. Conduct a pilot study – a preliminary exploration of the method to see how your methodology works or does not work.

Step 6. Collect research data.

Step 7. Interpret your data using statistical or other procedures.

Step 8. Critically analyze the results in a report.

Step 9. Suggest where and how your data should be or could be used (e.g., in education, therapy, parenting, business, conflict-resolution, etc.).

Ultimately, the researcher attempts to explore both the meaning of cross–cultural differences and the similarities. These explorations are likely to pursue at least two goals.

Choosing an **application-oriented strategy**, researchers attempt to establish the applicability of research findings obtained in one country or culture to other countries or cultural groups. In this type of research, a methodology or procedure (for example, a memory test) examined in a particular cultural context (e.g., in Indonesian predominantly collectivist groups from small villages) is tested in a different cultural setting (e.g., in Australian predominantly individualist urban groups). In another example, an Argentinean psychologist who created a unique form of behavioral therapy to treat emotional problems conducts an examination of the therapy's effectiveness in neighboring Chile or Brazil.

Comparativist strategy focuses primarily on similarities and differences of certain statistical measures in a sample of cultures. For example, let's say a Canadian researcher establishes on the national level that educational level of family members and the size of the family are negatively correlated. Then the researcher would use a comparativist strategy to identify similarities or differences in the relationships between education and family size in a sample of other countries.

A crucial element for a successful comparative study is the selection of methodology. Often, the same method can be used in different countries without any significant modifications other than translation. One example of such direct application of the same method is one of the most frequently cited studies conducted by the Dutch psychologist Geert Hofstede (1928–2020), when his original questionnaire to measure cultural similarities and differences was translated into ten languages in 53 countries (Hofstede, 1980). In other cases, an adaptation of the original method is necessary, which usually includes the rephrasing of questions or statements, adding or deleting some words to clarify meaning, breaking up sentences, and so on. Some authors believe that many psychological tests from one culture can be effectively applied – after adaptation, of course – to other countries (Butcher et al., 1998). Others suggest that, on some occasions, an entirely new method should be designed for a comparative study. As an example, Cheung and colleagues (1996) argued that most Western personality inventories designed in the twentieth century were inadequate to measure the essentials of Chinese personality. The researchers consequently created a new personality

questionnaire specifically for Chinese people (we will examine cross-cultural aspects of the individual's personality later in this text).

One of the major concerns of any cross-cultural study is **equivalence**. This term refers to the evidence that the methods selected for the study measure the same phenomenon across other countries or cultures chosen for this study. For example, if an investigator tries to make cross-cultural comparisons of successful managerial and leadership skills of men and women, the investigator should be aware that the methods of this study should address specific political and cultural contexts within which the leadership skills were studied (Ayman & Korabik, 2010). Many mistakes were made by Western entrepreneurs, for example, who believed that their successful methods of negotiations and making deals – the methods supported by empirical research in the West – should be equally successful in other countries and regions, such as in Japan, South Korea, or other Asian countries (Zartman, 2018).

SAMPLE SELECTION

There are at least three strategies for sample selection (van de Vijver & Leung, 1997). One strategy is called availability or convenience sampling, in which the researcher chooses a culture by chance or, most likely, because of the researcher's professional or personal contacts in the country in which samples can be selected. For instance, if you have a former classmate who is working now as a professional psychologist in India, would you hesitate to collaborate with your friend in a new comparative study? Convenience sampling is very popular (and not to mention relatively easy) but has certain and not insignificant limitations because some cultural or ethnic groups are likely to receive more attention than others. Which groups, in your view, might have an advantage here compared to others?

A second type is called systematic sampling. Here, the psychologist selects national, cultural, or ethnic samples according to a theory or some theoretical assumption. For instance, the samples may be selected because they represent people who practice different customs. A psychologist who studies marital satisfaction in arranged families may choose countries with, versus without, the arranged-marriage tradition. The first category might include countries such as India, Pakistan, and Somalia. In the second category, Germany, Spain, Chile, and Australia could be selected.

A third strategy, random sampling, is when a large sample of countries or groups is randomly chosen; that is, any country or group has an equal chance of being selected in the research sample. As an illustration, this method was used by Schwartz (1994), who, in one of the earliest comparative projects in psychology, examined human values in 36 randomly selected countries. This method was also used by David Schmitt and his colleagues in a very influential global study to measure the personality traits of 17,837 individuals from 56 nations (Schmitt et al., 2007).

In a **representative sample**, the characteristics of a sample accurately reflect the characteristics of the given population. The determination of the size of a representative

sample is the chief problem of practically all studies in cross–cultural psychology. There are some statistical methods that can help determine the size and type of the sample (Heiman, 1996). In general, the smaller the sample, the greater the sampling error, and therefore the greater the result of chance factors. (The sampling error indicates the extent to which the sample is different from the population it is intended to represent.) As we have discussed in Chapter 1, cross–cultural psychology these days is increasingly turning to more representative samples, because of overrepresentation in earlier research of individuals from Western, more educated, industrialized, and democratic countries (Veillard, 2017).

One of the most reliable methods of designing a representative sample is random sampling. A random sample is, by its very nature, expected to be representative. The mean score received for a random sample is likely to be a good estimation of the entire population. However, this is just a general assumption. Even random sampling may produce an unrepresentative sample, such as the one that was referenced in this chapter's opening vignette.

Research has shown, time and again, that estimates derived from large samples are more reliable than those derived from small samples. Therefore, even though data collected from small samples cannot be counted on as trustworthy predictors of a larger population's characteristics, many people tend to think uncritically and are prone to commit the error of overgeneralizing from too small a sample size.

CRITICAL THINKING

SAMPLING AND THE INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

Buda and Elsayed-Elkhouly (1998) paired samples from the United States, Egypt, and Persian Gulf states (namely, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates). The U.S. sample displayed significantly higher scores on individualism than the Arab samples did. In addition, a difference was detected between the Egyptian and Gulf samples: Egyptians scored lower on collectivism than their Gulf Arab counterparts. The authors attributed these differences to Egyptians' relatively greater exposure to Western influence. Many Egyptian citizens had traveled to other countries and were influenced by Western culture, especially in the capital city of Cairo.

However, after thinking critically about the samples selected, a point of concern emerges. The overall sample of this study was 400 subjects, of which approximately 130 were women. The Egyptian sample included 224 men and 75 women. Of the 102 American subjects, 55 were women. However, the Gulf sample contained exclusively men – there were no Gulf female participants at all. Overall, therefore, a question should be asked: did this study measure actual differences among three national groups? Or, instead, did it display differences essentially between exclusively male subjects from the Gulf countries, primarily men from Egypt, and a mixed gender sample from the United States? Feel free to discuss your opinion in class.

One's research sample should be representative of a larger ethnic, national, religious, gender, or other social group. Two national samples cannot be claimed as truly representative if they comprise, for example, French suburban middle-class professionals and Uruguayan college students from Montevideo. In this case, it would be unclear what differences are measured: either between two national groups, between students and suburban residents, or some combination thereof. Even the results of the prominent Hofstede study (1980) that were based on a large sample of 88,000 IBM employees in more than 60 countries should be accepted with caution. Since all the studied individuals were employees of a large international corporation, the sample only conditionally represents the diverse populations of respective countries: most people of that sample were educated and relatively affluent. Another substantial weaknesses of cross-cultural research (and psychological research, in general) has been its overwhelming reliance on samples comprising students. In various ways, students are not necessarily a representative sample of their nations. For example, students are better educated, have better access to information technology, tend to be younger, are more socially progressive, and are more economically affluent than the general population (Grohol, 2018; Oyserman et al., 2002).

All in all, when selecting and analyzing samples for cross-cultural research, one should beware of substantial differences in the demographic and social characteristics of the chosen subjects.

OBSERVATION IN CROSS-CULTURAL PSYCHOLOGY

During World War II, between 1940 and 1945, the British and American intelligence "bugged" several thousand German and Italian prisoners of war (those who had fought against Britain and the United States) to gather secret recordings of their conversations with one another, in the hopes of discovering important military secrets including the whereabouts of those who had committed war crimes. These recordings of uncensored conversations also revealed many stunning facts about the former soldiers' war experiences. Historians and psychologists who studied the recordings observed how often the prisoners spoke of killing and torturing others without regret or remorse and freely boasted about the extreme violence they had inflicted on others during the war (Neitzel & Welzer, 2012). The psychologists in this case used the research method of **observation** – the acquisition of information about identifiable variables from a primary source. This observation of facts revealed the authentic communications among individuals who most likely were unaware of the recordings.

If you are observing and recording people's behavior in their natural environments (e.g., on the busy streets of Madrid or Beijing) with little or no personal intervention, this procedure is called **naturalistic observation**. In contrast, utilizing **laboratory observation**, the subjects are brought in, and you – as a psychologist – design specific research conditions or ask the participants to respond to a set of tasks. A scientific, cross-cultural observation is particularly challenging to design because it should use identifiable and measurable variables related to each culture (LeVine, 2010).

Observations can be unstructured and structured. In an unstructured observation, a detailed plan is not usually necessary. The researcher identifies and describes various reactions involving the individuals or groups under observation. Structured observations, in contrast, typically rely on a specific plan to identify behaviors or other features to observe. This method often requires observer ratings or assessment, which are scores given for a variable, using units of measurement that have been defined by the researcher. Studies show that observer rating of other people from the same culture, by and large, produces quite reliable assessments. One study examining data from more than forty thousand people showed that personality ratings (evaluations) by friends, family members, or unrelated observers could accurately predict behavior of the rated individuals based on their observed personality features (Connelly & Ones, 2010). Observer ratings can be very useful in diverse contexts including clinical settings when relatives and friends use certain criteria to assess behavioral and psychological features of individuals undergoing treatment – for example, patients recovering after stroke, or individuals with different forms of dementia.

Difficulties, however, can occur when we observe people from different cultural settings. The observer's expectations can have an impact on the results of observation. For a Chinese observer, for example, most U.S. elementary schoolchildren may seem "unrestrained" and "hyperactive." By contrast, to a psychologist from the United States, Chinese pupils in the classroom may appear "restrained" and "hesitant." Other studies show that Americans and Chinese tend to perceive Americans to be individualistic and independent, and Chinese to be family oriented and collectivistic (Zhu, 2016).

The use of observation requires the researcher to have patience, curiosity, and a measure of skepticism. One question should be insistently asked: "Have I observed nearly everything about the studied issue, or is there anything else hidden from me?" An interesting illustration of observation is a classic study of the Utku Inuit culture (Briggs, 1970). The researcher initially found – based on direct observation – a virtual absence of anger reactions among members of this ethnic group. Does this observation mean that these individuals do not experience anger? Not at all. A more patient – and nuanced – observation provided a new set of data. Even though there were no explicit displays of anger in interpersonal relationships of the Utku Inuit, anger could still be vented in at least three other ways: against dogs, against things, and against those persons who had been expelled from the community.

One of the remedies is to use not a few, but multiple observers who are likely to produce a more balanced record of observations of some enduring characteristics of individuals. Another remedy is to utilize, when possible, other research methods in addition to observation. One such method is the use of surveys.

SURVEY METHODS

Surveys are the most common technique of data collection in cross–cultural psychology. In a typical survey, the researcher asks the subject to express an opinion regarding

particular topics, issues, or questions. There could be open-ended and, more commonly, multiple-choice items. Open-ended questions give subjects some freedom to express themselves, to explain many nuances of their thoughts and feelings. However, such answers are often difficult to code or interpret quantitatively. Moreover, some subjects – such as small children, people with little language proficiency, or those who are reluctant to give away information about themselves – have difficulty articulating their ideas. Multiple-choice questions, although easier to analyze, also restrict the answer choices for the respondent. Moreover, in Chapter 5 we will argue that, in some instances, lack of familiarity with formal response scales may affect individual test scores. In many communities, for example, the use of imported questionnaire techniques is constrained by the impact of illiteracy. The global literacy rates for males aged 15 and older have been 86 percent. For women the number was a bit lower: 83 percent. Although the gender gap is narrowing, the impact of COVID-19 – the global pandemic that so far has lasted for over three years since 2020 – is likely to decrease the global rates of literacy due to the lack of schooling for children, especially in poor world's regions (World Population Review, 2022). Engaging people from regions with low literacy levels in cross-cultural research is a very important task.

There are direct and indirect surveys. In **direct surveys**, the interviewer maintains a direct communication with the respondent and is able to provide feedback, repeat a question, or ask for additional information. In **indirect surveys**, the researcher's personal impact is negligible because there is no direct communication between the respondent and the interviewer. The questions are typically written and handed in, mailed, or sent electronically to respondents in their homes, classrooms, or places of work.

Direct surveys are conducted in several ways, the most common of which are face-to-face and telephone. In face-to-face surveys, the interviewer can see the respondents who are usually at their residences or work places. Telephone surveys – although there is no visual contact between the respondent and the researcher – are also based on direct interaction. However, the restrictions that many countries today place on unsolicited phone calls create an obvious problem for research psychologists conducting surveys on large samples.

CROSS-CULTURAL SENSITIVITY

What kind of obstacles should a Western researcher anticipate when deciding to conduct a survey in a country located thousands of miles away from home? Can people be asked at random and in person? Imagine a foreign researcher in a small town who is asking people to write their answers down on a piece of paper. Do we expect people to be open with the researcher? Perhaps some more effective survey methods should be used in such situations. For example, Ho (1998) described a procedure that was used in psychological research in the Philippines. This is a special, unobtrusive survey procedure called *pagtatanung-tanong* that can be used in relatively small and homogeneous communities.

One of the advantages of this method is that the researcher avoids making the interviewees feel as though they are "subjects," with their answers being used as research information. Using this method, the researcher asks questions in natural contexts. The researcher is simply conversing with people, "asking around." The questions may be asked in sequence, which may lead to the formulation of new questions and further clarifications, if needed. Inconsistency in the answers could indicate that there is a diversity of opinions among interviewees. If the answers are consistent, this might indicate a particular trend in people's opinions. Conducting this type of research allows researchers to study many important and sensitive issues that a "standard" survey does not cast light on. Conducting this type of research does not alert or frustrate people, and it allows some personal or other sensitive issues to be discussed. The method, in fact, has been judged to be a reliable tool for creating an atmosphere of trust between the interviewer and the respondent. The method can also be adjusted to specific conditions or combined with several indigenous research methods to study individuals in unique cultural communities (Wilson, 2017).

SELF-REPORTS

In the past, and globally, the written paper–and–pencil type questionnaire was the most common method of psychological self-assessment. Today, these methods are increasingly computerized. Questionnaires typically consist of several statements for a person to evaluate or a list of questions to answer. Respondents, for example, assess whether each statement applies to them, or they express the degree to which they agree or disagree with certain assertions related to their daily habits, mood, and views of self or other people.

For example, self-assessment studies show cross–cultural differences between European Americans and Hong Kong Chinese. The Americans displayed higher levels of well-being and a more positively biased view of themselves, compared to Chinese participants. Living conditions, wealth, education, and certain political factors could have contributed to the differences between two groups. Another possible factor is that North American culture fosters positive evaluations of the self to enhance self-esteem and to experience positive emotions, compared to East Asians (Kim et al., 2016).

Self–reports are not free of what we call a *self-serving bias*: people's tendencies to assess their own features and qualities as better or more advanced than those of the "average" person. For example, research shows that people tend to see themselves as "smarter" and more "honest" and "reasonable" than most others around them. (You might recall that we discussed this phenomenon, in part, in Chapter 2.) One of the most common difficulties with the self-serving bias manifests with subjects wanting to present themselves in socially appropriate ways. In psychology, this phenomenon is also called the *social desirability bias*. For instance, studies show that parents tend to be reluctant to admit that they use socially inappropriate child-rearing practices, such as spanking or other forms of violence (Iusitini et al., 2011).

To the contrary, some people tend to diminish their qualities, abilities, or achievements. This is sometimes called the *modesty bias*. For instance, respondents from Chinese, Korean, and Japanese samples commonly evaluate themselves among the least hardworking in the world. To illustrate these phenomena, consider that in surveys regarding sexual practices, men tend to report engaging in sex at earlier ages, more often, and with more sexual partners than do women. These reported gender differences may be due to women being unwilling to give straightforward responses about their sexual behavior, as they are more likely to consider such topics inappropriate or shameful.

In using self-reports, research has shown that people from Western cultures (Australians, Americans, Canadians, or Germans) were far more likely to describe their individual traits in terms of internal psychological characteristics and were less likely to describe themselves in terms of roles and relationships when compared to people from non-Western populations (Heine, 2008; Schmitt et al., 2007).

Studies also reveal that people's concerns about privacy affect their answers (Mills & Singh, 2007). With the spread of Telemental Health Therapy (TMHT), especially as a consequence of the COVID pandemic, the advantages of this method have been noticeable and widespread. However, despite the benefits from these services, many clients express concerns about their confidentiality when answering from a psychologist online. In like manner, digital is becoming an increasingly important concern in modern psychological research (Lustgarten et al., 2020).

Acquiring reliable survey information in countries under authoritarian regimes, such as North Korea or Iran, is extremely difficult. Several obvious reasons have been described in detail (Mills & Singh, 2007). First, these governments discourage individuals from providing any information (e.g., reports about corruption or violence) that could damage the government's "reputation." Second, people tend to be dubious about the privacy of information they share, especially if the information concerns their private lives. (A written statement provided by a psychologist "guaranteeing privacy" provides little comfort to them.) Third, some individuals are willing to provide socially desirable information to avoid potential problems with authorities, as described in the opening vignette of this chapter. Fourth, and perhaps most importantly, authoritarian governments are likely to refuse to give permission to foreign specialists to visit and conduct research in their countries.

CRITICAL THINKING

AN EXAMPLE OF SURVEY METHODOLOGY: MORALITY WITHOUT RELIGION?

What is the foundation of right and wrong? On what basis do cultures determine good from bad? Are ethical principles universal or relativistic? Questions such as these reflect ancient debates about the origin and nature of morality.

In their quest for answers, countless generations have turned to religion. For thousands of years, the teachings from various holy books – the Bible, the Talmud, the Koran, the Vedas and more – have been embraced as beacons of objective moral truth. Whether seeking guidance about justice, marriage, parenting, adultery, homosexuality, blasphemy, masturbation, or even diet, people scour sacred texts for divine direction in human affairs.

But can morality exist and thrive without a foundation in religion? Evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins (2006) firmly believes so. He asserts that religious texts embody an array of abhorrent values – such as genocide, the subservience of women, human and animal sacrifice – that are entirely at odds with modern morality. He argues that morality is the product of social evolution, as manifested in shifting values and ethical standards across time and cultures. As such, everything from women's rights, the abolition of slavery, and euthanasia to animal rights, representative democracy, and freedom of speech comes not from religion, but from our own reflections on humanity and what we consider to be a just life. In short, we have evolved a moral architecture that generates intuitions about right and wrong.

Given these competing views, would atheists possess a different moral compass than those from a religious background? Peter Singer and Marc Hauser (2009) sought to put this question to an empirical test. In their web-based survey, 1,500 research participants from across the globe were asked to evaluate three hypothetical vignettes (involving, respectively, obstructing a runaway trolley, rescuing a drowning child, and a non-consensual organ transplant). For each of these moral dilemmas, subjects were asked to judge a proposed course of action as either "obligatory," "permissible," or "forbidden."

The research hypothesis was that if morality is based on God's word, then atheists would evaluate the cases differently from people with religious backgrounds and beliefs. Yet the results showed virtually no statistical differences at all between the two groups. Further, both groups were unable to explain specifically the moral basis of their verdicts. The researchers concluded that, like other psychological attributes, we possess a moral faculty that guides our intuitive judgments of right and wrong, based on our collective social evolution. In other words, the source of our morality is not to be found in God, but in the nature of our ever-evolving brains.

Critical thinking questions:

- Do you generally agree or disagree with the researchers' conclusions?
- What else would you want to know about their study before evaluating their findings?
- Do you see any problems with their research methodology? If so, what would you to do improve it?

- Would you hypothesize that the results would be different for various cultures?
- Suppose the methodology is sound and the results valid. What inferences or conclusions might you draw?
- Where do you think you derived your own sense of morality? Feel free to discuss this in class, with your professor, or amongst your friends, if you so choose.

EXPERIMENTAL STUDIES

Experimental methods allow psychologists to determine how an individual's behavior and experience vary across different situations. Most important methodologically, they provide the researcher with the opportunity to evaluate cause-and-effect relationships. Experiments should in most cases give the researcher transparent and verifiable procedures. Not only do they ask individuals about, for example, how fast they make decisions, but they also test the actual (not just self-perceived) speed of such decisions in various experimental conditions.

Suppose, as a psychological researcher, you wish to conduct an **experiment**. This would involve you randomly assigning subjects to particular experimental conditions. By varying these conditions, you try to detect specific changes in the subjects' behavior, attitudes, emotions, and so on. In an experiment, the condition that is modified, controlled, or changed by you is called the **independent variable**. The aspect of human activity that is studied and expected to change under influence of (that is, as a result of) the independent variable is called the **dependent variable**. As an experimenter, you control the independent variable; the participant's response is the dependent variable.

A simple illustration of an experimental procedure can be drawn from a classic study of flag preference in schoolchildren of two groups: Arabs and Jews. The researcher measured how often children of the two groups, both living in Israel, would choose symbols representing their national identity: either Israeli or Palestinian flags. In this study, the groups were the independent variable; the decision to choose a picture with a particular flag on it was the dependent variable. Pictures containing depictions of various flags were the independent variable – that is, the variable that was manipulated by the experimenter. In this experiment, after responses of the participating children were recorded, it was found (perhaps not too surprisingly) that the Arab and Jewish schoolchildren in Israel were significantly different in their flag preferences, clearly divided along their Arab–Jewish origins (Lawson, 1975). In another experiment, two groups of people selected randomly – one in Westchester County, New York, the other in Bern, Switzerland – were contacted via telephone by a caller (actually a researcher) who informed these people (the research participants) that her car had broken down and she was out of change at a pay phone booth. (Yes, back on those days, people commonly had to use public pay phones on the street back, long before the advent of personal cell phones.) She asked the participants to call her friend. The response rate showed that the Swiss participants displayed significantly more helpful behavior (the dependent variable in this study) than people from the U.S. sample (Gabriel et al., 2001). Plenty of examples of contemporary experimental cross-cultural research will be presented in the following chapters.

As described in the above two examples, some independent variables are not necessarily manipulated but, instead, relate to how participants are categorized into different groups. In a typical cross-cultural research study, two or more groups are selected to "block" into two different categories. Ethnicity, nationality, or other cultural identification of the members of studied groups will typically represent the independent variable. If the study is designed properly, differences in subjects' responses measured by the researcher can be explained primarily in relation to the subjects' cultural background.

CONTENT ANALYSIS

Researcher Elker Weber from Princeton University – who is a leading world specialist on decision making under risk and uncertainty – compared several thousand American and Chinese proverbs and popular expressions to study how they reflected risky behavior as well as risk aversion. The researcher's assumption was that in Chinese culture, the number of expressions related to the individual's cautious behavior would be significantly greater than in the West (i.e., in the English language). In fact, she found that in the Chinese language, proverbs and sayings related to risk-taking behavior (such as "Seize an opportunity and make good use of it" or "If someone has never left his home, he cannot be a great person") are more prevalent than in English (Weber, 1998). This method of analysis of texts is known as content analysis.

Content analysis is a research method that systematically organizes and summarizes both the manifest (what was actually said or written) and latent (the meaning of what was said and written) content of a text, a message, or any other type of communication. The researcher usually examines transcripts of conversations or interviews, television or radio programs, texts, postings, letters, articles, and other forms of communication. The main investigative procedure in content analysis consists of two steps. Initially, the researcher identifies coding categories. These can be nouns, concepts, names, or topics. First-level coding is predominantly concrete and involves identifying properties of data that are clear in the text. Second-level coding involves interpreting what the first-level categories mean and requires critical thinking.

Thinking critically, one may assume that content analysis provides clear and definite results in cross-cultural research. This, however, is not the case. The study by Weber, mentioned earlier, does not suggest that risky decisions are more common in Chinese individuals compared to Americans simply because an analysis of proverbs suggests so. Weber's research was incorporated in an influential study of cross-cultural perceptions of financial and environmental gains and risks among Chinese and American entrepreneurs based on other psychological methods (Gong et al., 2014). This study showed that Chinese entrepreneurs were in fact more cautious and concerned about future financial end environmental losses compared to Americans.

Content analysis of responses is especially valuable when researchers – for various reasons – cannot use standard questionnaires. For example, a study of undocumented aliens in the United States (Shiraev & Sobel, 2006) revealed that most of the subjects selected for this

research did not want to give any written answers because of their fear of being detained by immigration authorities. The participants preferred verbal communication with the interviewer. For this reason, a quantitative version of the basic interview that contained numerical scales could not have been used. Instead, a special qualitative version of the interview was prepared to fit the new requirements of a "live" interview.

Using the method of content analysis, the researcher must make sure to verify the sources of the received information, especially when analyzing stories or autobiographies. Of course, it would be great if we could trust that people are sharing accurate accounts of their narratives. However, we can all make honest mistakes recollecting, or in remembering only those events or facts that support our point of view. There are quite a few so-called "impersonator autobiographies" written by Western authors on behalf of some ethnic, economic, or other minority groups. Good historians should always be aware of such spurious sources of disinformation (Browder, 2000).

FOCUS GROUP METHODOLOGY

A group of scientists in South Africa studied unsafe sexual practices associated with AIDS. The researchers could not use surveys because most people around them did not want to give written answers and some were embarrassed by the topic. Others were afraid that their names, as respondents, would be revealed. To avoid such obstacles, the scientists turned to focus group discussions that involved small groups of young women, men, and community members of various ages. During such discussions, several risky behaviors were identified and carefully discussed in an atmosphere of trust and respect (Zembe et al., 2013).

Focus group methodology is used frequently in health studies and marketing research. The principal advantage of this method is the opportunity to analyze social, gender, age, and ethnic discourse on some issues in depth: for example, whether a particular fashion product would have any success among a certain age group or whether a psychotherapeutic procedure would be appropriate for specific religious groups (Puchta & Potter, 2004).

The most common use of this method is a procedure in which a group responds to specific social, cultural, or marketing questions or messages. Questions are asked usually in an open, interactive manner; the participants are free to talk with other group members. The researcher mostly listens (but of course collects and records responses). The typical focus group contains 7–10 participants. Based on the goal of specific research, the group could be either *homogeneous* (for example, people from the same ethnic group) or *heterogeneous* (diverse in terms of their ethnicity, nationality, religion, profession, and so forth), which is important when we want to collect varied opinions. The use of focus group methodology presents several problems for cross-cultural psychologists because these groups do not usually represent randomly selected samples (discussed above). Specialists suggested that the validity of the focus group method in general – and in cross-cultural psychology in particular – rests on the repetition or replication of findings across similar or different groups (Kern & Just, 1995).

MIXED AND HOLISTIC METHODS

In cross-cultural psychological research, most professionals are likely to use several methods of data collection simultaneously: these can consist of, for instance, self-reports, observations, experiments, and biographical data, among others. Take, for example, studies of happiness. Happiness is typically described as a complex construct that contains several interconnected states, such as stable subjective experiences and decisions involving other people (we discuss happiness in some detail in Chapter 6). Therefore, to study happiness, researchers commonly use self-reports (to evaluate individual experiences), observers' ratings (to assess a person's impact on other people), and the subjects' actual impact on other people – which can be studied by biographical methods (Csikszentmihalyi, 2014).

Psychologists increasingly often implement holistic methods of research to study cross-cultural issues. **Holistic** refers to the study of systems with multiple interconnected elements. Holistic methods are based on the principle that scientific knowledge of individuals and cultures cannot best be obtained by focusing just on the separate, specific parts or features of an individual, such as traits, behaviors, or experiences; rather, they should be viewed and studied together – as a "whole" – in terms of their systemic interdependence. Holistic methods should not necessarily be seen as an "alternative" (i.e., non-scientific) type of research in psychology. Granted, some individuals may misuse the term holistic in referring to things such as superstition, folk knowledge, rituals, or intuition in studying cross-cultural psychology (see Chapter 1). In contrast, in medicine, this term generally refers to social and cultural considerations in the assessment, treatment, and prevention of an individual's illness. In scientific research, holistic methods refer to an attempt to combine different quantitative and qualitative methods and, thus, produce a comprehensive set of data that can be analyzed on different levels and utilized with greater effectiveness.

META-ANALYSIS: RESEARCH OF RESEARCH

Imagine that you are studying the relationship between family relationships and mood disorders in various countries. In your search, you find that there are more than 50 studies available on this subject and they were all published between 1992 and 2022. How can a scientific generalization be made from all these studies? Is it possible to analyze these data and draw a reasonable conclusion about the links – or absence thereof – between the individual's family climate and the person's symptoms of depression? You would likely realize that a standard comparative review is not a viable solution. These studies are extremely difficult to compare because they appear to be enormously diverse. Some of them are based on focus-group interviews with a few dozen people, whereas others included hundreds of participants from different countries at different times (Ng et al., 2009).

A statistical method that allows cross-cultural psychologists to do quantitative analysis of a large collection of scientific results and integrate the findings is called **meta-analysis**. In brief, meta-analysis refers to the analysis of analyses – sometimes called "combined

tests" – of a large collection of individual results, with the goal of making sense of a diverse selection of data. One of the appealing features of this method is the reliance on statistical methods, and an imperative to include a large selection of studies – not only those that appear to be "convenient," "good," or "interesting." This method often shows results that are difficult to see by examining individual studies. For instance, a massive meta-analysis utilizing 660 samples across 36 cultural groups supported the hypothesis that cross-cultural proximity, equality, and interaction with other cultural groups is associated with less prejudice about these groups (Kende et al., 2017).

However, meta-analysis has some weaknesses. First, the method attempts to compare studies that deal with variables that may be defined differently. For example, if two researchers identify collectivism in dissimilar ways, any comparisons of the two would produce rather ambiguous and unreliable results. Second, many studies use dissimilar measuring techniques and are often based on results obtained from dissimilar cultural samples. And finally, meta-analysis pays attention to largely published studies that represent significant findings. Therefore, "nonsignificant" findings are either overlooked or ignored, and this may contribute to bias in the process of sample selection.

A HIDDEN OBSTACLE OF CROSS-CULTURAL STUDIES: TEST TRANSLATION

Most cross-cultural projects – especially of the survey or self-report type – require translation from the researcher's own language to other languages. In such cases, one of the most difficult tasks facing the investigator is to ensure that the translated version of the method is as close as possible in meaning to the original version. However, even a well-translated version of a test is always going to be inherently different from the original one. Languages have dissimilar grammar rules and sentence structures. Even some identical words may have different meanings in other languages, such as the words "friend" in English and *amigo or amiga* in Spanish. Some words require additional clarifications. Take, for example, the word "cousin." In Arabic and Russian languages this word is translated in a particular way so that it always indicates the cousin's sex. An English version, however, does not typically specify who this person is: "he" or "she." Researchers notice that metaphors (such as "pie in the sky" or "butterflies in the stomach") and somewhat vague words (such as "probably" or "frequently") should also be routinely avoided because they are difficult to translate with any real degree of precision (Brislin, 1970). "Craving" as a term commonly used by English-speaking psychologists to describe some aspects of addictive behavior, does not translate well in more than a half of the most spoken languages (Hormes & Rozin, 2010). (Along these lines, please refer to our discussion of language bias in Chapter 2.)

Some words and phrases, common in the vocabulary of the average person in the United States, may have no equivalents in other languages. As an example, the term "privacy" requires additional detailed explanations when it is translated in many other languages. If you have trouble believing that this is possible, ask anyone – a Spanish, Arabic, Urdu, Vietnamese, or Hebrew-speaking person – to translate "privacy" into their language.

They will likely be able to come up with an equivalent word or phrase in their native tongue. Then ask another person from the same country to translate this term back into English. You will likely receive something other than "privacy," based on this translation. As an exercise, try to identify and discuss some other words that are likely to pose difficulty with direct translation into another language. This activity is likely to be even more useful with someone whose native tongue is different to your own.

All in all, there are some basic rules that can be utilized for successful translation in cross–cultural studies.

- First, if possible, the translation process from the very beginning ought to be conducted by bilinguals, that is, by people proficient in both languages. They should also conduct a *back translation*, which consists of an initial translation into the second language, and then a reverse translation into the initial language (see above). Then both versions are compared and corrected if necessary (Mayer & Trommsdorff, 2010).
- Second, it is extremely beneficial to have several people conduct the translation so that there will be several versions of it. These versions can then be compared, critically analyzed, and then converted into one (Heine et al., 2002).
- Third, both versions of a questionnaire can be administered to the same bilingual individuals. If the investigator receives relatively similar results on both versions, this is a good indicator that the translation has been conducted successfully.

A CASE IN POINT

TEST TRANSLATION

As an illustration, we will describe a classic cross-cultural procedure conducted by H. Kassinove et al. (1997) involving a translated version of the State–Trait Anger Expression Inventory ("STAXI"). To evaluate the potential universality of a theoretical model of anger created by Spielberger (1980), a special Russian State–Trait Anger Expression Inventory was created. In this questionnaire, subjects are asked to indicate their agreement with several statements that represent different manifestations and experiences of anger. The statements – taken from the original U.S. version of the inventory – were translated from the English language to Russian by a native Russian-speaking psychologist with the assistance of a Russian psychiatrist. The newly translated items were then back-translated by an advanced clinical psychology doctoral candidate at Hofstra University, New York. This person and an assistant were both born and educated in Russia. Because of the presence of some unique idioms used in English to describe anger – for example, "harboring grudges," "keeping cool," or "feeling burned up" – several items did not achieve an exact Russian translation. To overcome this obstacle, adjustments were made to re-create several items in the Russian version. Another Russian-speaking U.S. assistant then back-translated these items from Russian to English. The complete

research team then held special discussion sessions to reach a consensus about the most disputed translations. Such careful translation and back-translation procedures, with the help of several researchers, served to create an internally consistent and theoretically sound assessment device for the psychometric measurement of anger in Russian-speaking individuals. Similar procedures were used in the creation of the Chinese version of this scale (Maxwell et al., 2009). A similar technique was used by Denis Sukhodolsky, Eric Reynes, and their colleagues to validate their internationally acclaimed Anger Rumination Scale, used during these past 20 years to study anger management in several countries and in various cultural groups (Reynes et al., 2013; Sukhodolsky et al., 2001).

COMPARING TWO PHENOMENA: SOME IMPORTANT PRINCIPLES

How similar are people in Tokyo and New York in terms of their thoughts, emotions, and motivation? Theoretically, there are two answers to this question, each one reflecting a classic approach to cross-cultural psychology (Berry et al., 1992). Psychologists supporting the **absolutist approach** (often called the *universalist approach*) argue that psychological phenomena are basically the same in all cultures: Honesty is honesty, depression is depression, and sexual abuse is sexual abuse, no matter where, when, or how the researcher studies these and other psychological phenomena. Within this approach, there is a tendency to use the standards of one group as the norms for viewing other groups. From the absolutist approach, psychological processes are expected to be fairly consistent across cultures. However, the occurrences of certain processes and behaviors may vary from culture to culture. A scientist, therefore, can study human activity from an "outside" position, comparing different cultures and using similar criteria for such comparisons (Segall et al., 1999). Assessments of such characteristics are likely to be made using standard – for one country – psychological instruments and their translated versions. Evaluative comparisons are frequently made from these assessments.

The other, the **relativist approach**, suggests that human behavior and experience in their full complexity can really only be understood within the context of the culture in which it occurs. Anthropologists were among the first to encourage psychologists not to use moral standards of one culture to judge others (Benedict, 2006[1934]). Therefore, scientists should study an individual's psychology from within their own culture. Since there are no context-free or culture-free psychological processes or behaviors, valid comparisons between cultures should be made with extreme caution. In other words, from the relativist view, most cross-cultural comparison is inclined to be biased.

In cross-cultural psychology literature, the reader will often encounter the terms "etic" and "emic." *Etic* refers to the absolutist position, whereas *emic* stands for the relativist approach. As you might expect, it is difficult to find a cross-cultural psychologist who

is an uncompromising absolutist or relativist. In fact, absolutism and relativism are two ends of a theoretical continuum. Most of us today accept a view (which is typically called the *integrative* perspective) that critically combines these two approaches. Many elements of human behavior and experience appear similar for all social and cultural groups, which we will examine in the book. However, there are psychological phenomena that appear unique for only particular social and cultural conditions. Therefore, psychological findings should be understood in culturally meaningful terms, and comparisons and interpretations of findings must be made with caution. To summarize, psychologists today do not separate the etic and emic concepts, but rather use them analytically and creatively. One of the tasks of cross–cultural psychology then is to find the balance between universal and culturally specific characteristics of human behavior, emotion, motivation, and thought.

Even though the absolutist and relativist approaches seem to be dissimilar, they both make sense under particular conditions. Take, for example, the relativist standpoint on greeting rituals – an exchange of formal or informal verbal expressions, emotional reactions, gestures, and so forth. For anyone examining human communication across countries, it is obvious that the rules of contact are quite different. In some cultures, such as the United States, Western Europe, and Canada, a handshake is generally appropriate for both men and women. Yet the types of handshakes are different if we compare different age groups. In traditional Islamic communities, most women do not normally shake hands when they meet or see another person. In the United States or Canada most men rarely kiss each other when they meet up, whereas in the Middle East this type of greeting is more common, even appropriate. Direct eye contact is considered acceptable in many countries, except for some East Asian cultures, where people, in many cases, tend to greet each other with a bow, almost avoiding eye contact. Even the appropriate physical distance between two individuals while conversing varies substantially across countries and regions (see Chapter 10 for more detail on this issue).

The absolutist (universalist) approach is defendable too. Imagine yourself for a minute as a professional psychologist studying physical and sexual abuse against women in a country outside North America or Western Europe. By examining cases, and conducting individual interviews, you establish facts that women in this country are physically and psychologically abused to a significantly greater extent than North American or European

INTEGRATIVE
(continuum between the two conceptual polarities)

ABSOLUTIST		RELATIVIST
universal		*unique*
objective reference		*subjective reference*
cross-cultural similarities		*cross-cultural differences*
etic		*emic*
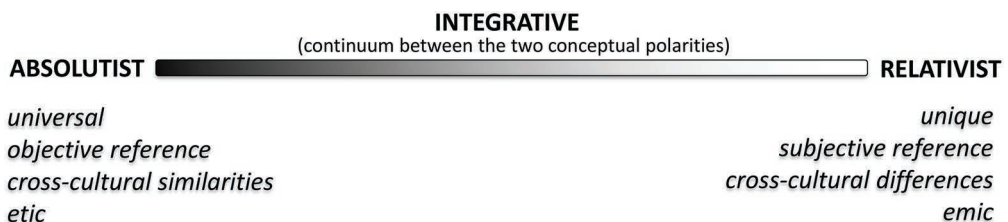
Figure 3.1 Research Methodology: Absolutist vs. Relativist Attributes

women are. Some critics, that is, supporters of the relativist view, might suggest that your data are questionable because "American," "French," or "Canadian" views of abuse and gender discrimination should not always be applied to other national samples. You, however, can argue that there is no such thing as "cultural" justification for abuse, as there should not be a "cultural" justification for harassment and violence. (In this regard, please review the naturalistic fallacy, which we discussed in Chapter 2.)

ON SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES: SOME CRITICAL THINKING APPLICATIONS

Without comparisons, there is no cross–cultural psychology. When we compare – take, for example, emotional expressions in two countries or test scores in two national or ethnic groups – we look for similarities and differences between two variables. When comparing any two phenomena, initially they may "match" with respect to their mutual similarities. But no matter how many features they might share, there is no escaping the inevitable fact that at some point there will be a "conceptual fork" in the road, where the phenomena will differ. We may refer to this juncture as the point of critical distinction (PCD) before which the phenomena are similar and after which they are different. When we are attempting to define, compare, and contrast any two phenomena, it is imperative that we identify and examine the PCDs that are relevant to the particular events under examination. If, for instance, we are interested in exploring the similarities between the events, we should examine the variables that appear before the PCD; if, by contrast, we wish to analyze the differences between the same two events, we should focus on the variables that appear at and after the PCD. Of course, to gain a full and comprehensive understanding of their relationship, we should examine the variables that appear both before and after the PCD, with particular attention to the PCD itself. (See Levy, 2010, for a more detailed explanation.)

When a difference is found, we often contrast the samples and the larger populations they represent. However, when we contrast individualism and collectivism, for example, we should realize that these two opposites depend on each other for their very conceptual existence. Without one, its opposite ceases to exist. How can we possibly define the concept of "collectivism," without also addressing what we mean by "individualism"? How can we define "biased" in the absence of defining "unbiased"? Can we ever truly understand "conformity" without also understanding "dissent"? This same principle holds true for scores of other opposites: feminine and masculine, subjective and objective, low-power distance and high-power distance, altruism and selfishness, high context and low context, coercion and consent, a person's ability and disability, hunting culture and gathering culture, adaptive and maladaptive, and functional and dysfunctional. Remember, to define or understand any phenomenon or issue, its theoretical opposite should also, whenever possible, be addressed and explored. As these examples illustrate, to contrast a phenomenon with its opposite is to give definition to both terms. (This critical thinking principle, "consider the opposite," is presented in Levy, 2010.)

We have discussed some studies that involve self-evaluation. Peng et al. (1997) and other psychologists noted that people from different cultural groups pay attention first to their own culture when they describe their beliefs and values. Therefore, in a culture with predominantly collectivist values, collectivism may not be rated particularly high because it is part of everyday life. Moreover, as you might recall, people in countries such as Japan and South Korea tend to evaluate themselves critically, considering themselves as not necessarily hardworking. Yet the facts and observations suggest otherwise. Both Japan and Korea are economically successful nations. In the Japanese language, there is a special word referring to death from overwork, usually due to a stroke or heart attack – *karoshi* (Hiyama & Yoshihara, 2008). Similarly, in Korea, unexpected natural death has been the leading work-related cause of death (Park et al., 1999). To understand why people in these countries give themselves such low evaluations, we should realize that hard work and conscientiousness are usually evaluated with respect to larger cultural norms. If everyone is expected to be hardworking, punctual, and reliable, many people may see themselves as not meeting the standards of "perfection" set by cultural norms. As a result, most people report in surveys that they are less organized and less determined than they ought to be. These could be examples of *cultural response bias* (Schmitt et al., 2007).

CULTURAL DICHOTOMIES

THERE ARE FEWER DIFFERENCES THAN ONE MIGHT THINK

As was mentioned previously, mainstream cross-cultural psychology for some time operated in a tradition of cultural dichotomies reflecting a classificatory approach to culture. Typically, these dichotomies have been formulated as contrasts between Western versus non-Western cultures. The Westerners (mostly citizens of the wealthiest European and American nations, including some other countries who share major Judeo-Christian values) were commonly associated with individualism, independence, and individual freedom. The non-Westerners were associated with collectivism, interdependence, and group values. However, such generalizations have been suggested to be simplistic and thus inaccurate (Hermans & Kempen, 1998). Cultural dichotomies do not and cannot meet challenges raised by the process of global, technological, and demographic changes. But most importantly, such stereotypical distinctions between the "West" and "non-West" often turn labels and symbols into "things," a common critical thinking error. As a result, entire nations that tend to be diverse and heterogeneous may be ascribed and labeled with the qualities of homogeneous and distinctive objects. Using such assumptions, some people might not only *think* that U.S. citizens are individualists, but also *communicate* with them as if all people in the United States were selfish. Likewise, these individuals might not only think that Japanese are collectivists, but also interact with them as if they all were unselfish. Studies (like the one, for example, based on responses from six Asian and six Western samples) showed that despite popular assumptions about the existence of profound differences in the way people of different cultures perceive history and major world events, the similarities among them were both prominent and overwhelming (Liu et al., 2005).

Any given group (or individual) can be studied somewhere between the two hypothetical extremes. Moreover, these orientations are relative to different social contexts. For instance, a person may be individualistic within his or her own culture, yet much more collectivistic compared with other cultural groups. Similarly, some people might strongly favor collectivism, but the culture in which they live can be somewhat more individualistic than other cultures.

THERE ARE MORE DIFFERENCES THAN ONE MIGHT EXPECT

When researchers work with samples in Western, technologically developed nations, these scientists should understand that most of these countries enjoy considerable cultural and social diversity. For example, imagine a psychologist conducting a three-country study of first-year students' attitudes toward verbal abuse. The research samples are carefully selected. They contain students of the same age, with an equal proportion of men and women. However, what can remain undetected in the study are (1) national differences in higher education and (2) the ways in which people in the studied countries become students. In this hypothetical case, the researchers should be aware of a highly competitive system of higher education in Germany and Japan: to become a student, it is necessary to take and pass difficult qualifying exams on different subjects. Many young men and women fail in the process. Critical evaluation of the subject pool of this hypothetical study, therefore, could reveal the fact that this project does not measure the difference among three compatible representative samples. Instead, it actually uncovers differences between (1) highly educated, motivated, and relatively successful Japanese and German men and women and (2) a randomly selected "average" group of U.S. college students who did not go through as difficult a process of precollege selection as did their counterparts overseas.

AVOIDING GENERALIZATION BIAS

Imagine a test that suggests people in group A have a higher score on a curiosity measure compared to people in group B. What does this difference in scores mean? Does it suggest that all people in group A are more curious than all people in group B? We should not make simple generalizations and judgments about individuals or groups. Psychological tests scores can be important indicators of how an individual thinks, decides, and acts. However, tests can be biased, and we must understand the contexts in which they have been created and interpreted. Issues such as a test-taker's language proficiency and motivation, test structure, and other factors significantly contribute to people's test performance (Sternberg, 2007). Many tests created in one social and cultural environment (e.g., upper middle class) tend to be biased against other groups (e.g., middle and lower class). Later in the book, we will examine cross-cultural studies revealing many children have advanced practical skills that are not recognized on academic tests.

People also tend to form inaccurate assumptions about others. We may base our impressions on certain cross-cultural comparisons. But what kinds of comparisons are we looking for? By and large, our attention is drawn to the studies that demonstrate the

most prominent or salient differences. We then are prone to overgeneralize from these few outstanding examples to the group as a whole, the result of which is an inaccurate generalization (see the representativeness bias, discussed in Chapter 2).

Consider an interesting research finding. It was established that in Chinese twentieth-century romantic love songs, topics of negative or pessimistic expectations are more prevalent than they are in U.S. love songs from the past century. This conclusion was made after an analysis of 80 Chinese and U.S. songs was conducted (Rothbaum & Tsang, 1998). Do these findings indicate that people in China were more pessimistic than those in the United States? Maybe they were. Maybe they were not. Pessimism in songs does not necessarily and accurately reflect people's pessimistic attitudes in real life.

To avoid making quick generalizations from research findings, we offer the following questions and recommendations for critical evaluation of cross-cultural research data.

- What were the size and representation of the chosen samples in this project? If the study included only 50 subjects from two countries who answered a few questions on surveys regarding attitudes toward religion, it is not possible to draw reliable conclusions about religious differences between the studied nations.
- Was the method chosen for the study appropriate in different cultural settings? Was it translated properly? When it can be demonstrated that the instrument, produced in one setting, was nonetheless applicable in many other settings, differences obtained with that instrument could be taken as reflections of some actual cultural variables.
- Are the data convincing? To make sure that the results of the study reflect a particular trend and are not due to chance alone, the researcher should repeat (or *replicate*) the same study to accept the data with confidence or investigate other similar studies.

When comparing large groups such as U.S. whites, blacks, Latinos, Asians, or any other ethnic or religious groups, do not forget that these groups are not homogeneous. Among them are individuals who are educated and those who are not, who are wealthy and poor, and who live in cities and small towns. In cross-cultural research, it is always useful to request additional information about the countries in which you do research. For example, the diversity or homogeneity of the population and people's experience of such diversity may affect observation procedures. According to the American scholar David Matsumoto (1992), individuals from homogeneous societies (Japan, for example) tended to detect and identify other people's emotions less accurately than people from heterogeneous societies (the United States, for example).

Furthermore, people may have either strong or weak psychological attachment to their cultural heritage, norms, customs, and values compared to other people who belong to the same group. Every social group has individuals with very high scores on measures of intellectual skills as well as individuals with very low scores. Among immigrants, there are scientists and engineers who emigrated from their home countries for economic reasons and political refugees who escaped political persecution. Taiwan and China, North and South Korea, may represent one culture in someone's view; however, these nations are

different ideologically, politically, and even philosophically. The citizens of these political entities may have quite different lifestyles and opinions on various issues.

LEARN MORE ABOUT CULTURES THAT YOU EXAMINE

If an experimental study shows that the Chinese subjects, compared to Western and Japanese subjects, are more likely to disregard or ignore a "stranger" who appears to be irrelevant to their affiliations and involvements, does this mean that people in China are selfish? Not at all. We must understand that any experiment results should be interpreted carefully, and individual scores should not refer to the entire society (Tafarodi et al., 2009). To be proficient in cross-cultural research, you should do your best to deeply understand the cultural groups you study.

Therefore, you should also make yourself familiar with the fields of geography, sociology, anthropology, linguistics, political science, and global studies. You will find that the global poverty rates have been falling during the past 20 years, but not everywhere. The rates have been affected by the global COVID pandemic. You will also find that the global life expectancy rates are rising in most countries, but, again, not everywhere. The world is dynamic, yet its dynamism is different in different places. People of one ethnic or racial group represent different nationalities. People of one nationality are very diverse as well. If you conducted research in Brazil, you could find remarkable differences between the Northeast with its Afro-Brazilian roots and the North with its native Indian roots (Hofstede et al., 2010). If you study immigrant populations in the United States or United Kingdom, you will certainly be aware of the different "waves" or generations of immigrants who are likely to be different in many ways, from their linguistic proficiency to their reasons for immigration (Schwartz et al., 2010). Think about the wars in Syria and in Ukraine as the causes of massive influx of refugees to Europe since 2015.

In the process of designing interviews, psychologists should also be mindful of the traditional practices, values, and beliefs of the cultures they are attempting to study. For example, creating an assessment about suicidal ideation is expected to be difficult with Muslim clients, especially with those who have not been exposed to Western culture. Islam strictly forbids suicide and considers it a criminal act. Therefore, direct questions such as "Have you ever thought about taking your own life?" are likely to yield little valid information as most respondents would deny such thoughts. However, a therapist could instead ask, "Do you think that God would let you die?" to circumvent the stigma of suicide and thus engender more detailed responses (Ali & Maharajh, 2005; Hedayat-Diba, 2000).

Overall, watch, analyze, doubt, think critically, and observe again! It is quite possible – even likely – that the differences among examined samples in a comparative study may be explained in multiple ways. One classic study compared the dreams of 562 individuals from Mexico, Spain, and Venezuela who were asked to make assessments of their dreams. These data then were compared with the data obtained from a non-Hispanic American

sample. The results revealed some cultural differences. For example, the number of recalled dreams reported by non–Hispanic respondents was significantly higher than in all three Hispanic groups. Moreover, both Mexican and Venezuelan participants had greater negative emotions associated with their dreams than Spanish and U.S. participants. The author explained the difference in the number of reported dreams by suggesting that Hispanic groups are more passive in their coping styles. Moreover, they consider unpleasant dreams a bad omen and, therefore, simply do not want to reveal them as often as non–Hispanics do (Domino, 1986).

However, these differences may be attributed to other features – if one looks carefully at some subtle factors. Even though the subjects of this study were people of the same occupational status, they could be significantly different in terms of their living conditions and sleeping arrangements. Non–Hispanic American and European families typically have fewer children and more individual privacy in their homes and apartments than do families in many other countries. Sleep patterns may affect how well dreams are retrieved from memory. Do the experiences of people change today as compared to what was studied decades ago? Only new studies can give an answer.

You should also anticipate that research participants from mostly collectivist countries might present themselves as more collectivist than they usually are because of the social desirability of collected behavior in the society under examination. In other words, people might reply and act in a certain way, not necessarily because this is their typical behavior, but because they want to "impress" or not to "challenge" the researcher and give a socially desirable answer. Some studies of the mental health in East Asian countries (China, Japan, and Korea, for instance) revealed that people were providing different information when they wrote about their feelings on a piece of paper and when they revealed their experiences in the presence of a professional psychologist (Park, 1988). This does not mean that the verbal answers are "better" or "worse" than the written ones. It means that they are different, as research in other countries, such as the United States, shows (Johnson & Sanford, 2005).

A CASE IN POINT

A SAMPLE STUDY OF COLLECTIVISM–INDIVIDUALISM

Marshall (1997) examined two samples in New Zealand and Indonesia. Both samples included garbage collectors, bus drivers, and senior college professors. Each social category contained 25 respondents, for a total sample of 150 people. Each group was given a questionnaire that contained 14 statements: seven characteristics of an individualistic orientation and seven representing a collectivist orientation. The respondents had to report their agreement with the statements on a 5-point scale.

Collectivist statements: I cannot be happy if any of my friends are unhappy. I feel good to work as a part of a large organization. I like to share my problems with my

friends. It is wiser to choose your friends from people with similar social and family backgrounds as yourself. The people at work depend on me, so I should not let them down no matter how badly the organization cheats me. Most of my decisions are made together with relatives and friends. My first duty is to ensure the well-being of my relatives.

Individualistic statements: If the organization I work for suffered financial difficulties and asked me to accept a substantial drop in pay, then I would look for another job. I usually do what I feel is best for me, no matter what others say. Happiness lies in maximizing my personal pleasure. Ideally, I would like to work for myself or own my own company. I deeply resent any invasion of my personal privacy. My happiness depends on my state of mind, regardless of how those around me feel.

The results revealed a trend: Indonesian participants were more collectivistic and less individualistic than their counterparts from New Zealand. Because this study examined the same professional groups, the differences between samples may be explained, from the author's point of view, by cultural differences, that is, collectivism and individualism.

Question: What other explanations can you offer for the differences found in this project? Please consider that New Zealand is more advanced economically than Indonesia and there is – contrary to Indonesia – a large middle class in New Zealand.

EXERCISE 3.1

1. Please identify several potential sampling errors in the cases given below:

    Case 1. A professor studies students' ethnic stereotypes. There are 50 people in his class. On Monday morning, 25 show up for class. The professor asks these students to fill out questionnaires, assuming that this group of 25 is a representative sample for this particular class.

    Case 2. A student organization conducts a poll among students by collecting 200 responses from 150 self-identified men and 50 self-identified women. The interviews take place in the college library over the holiday weekend where patrons are approached at random and asked to answer a few questions.

    Case 3. A satellite radio talk show host decides to study people's opinions about intercultural dating and asks listeners to send their tweets to the station.

    Case 4. A graduate student conducts survey research at an international airport, claiming that the sample must be truly random because it involves people from many countries, ethnic and racial groups, as well as all social categories.

2. It is crucial to know that your question is understood correctly by participants. People typically do not answer exactly what you are asking, but rather what they think you mean (Zaller, 1992). Here are some rules that might be useful in any survey research:

- Don't ask persuasive or leading questions ("Most people condemn this ballot initiative. Do you?").
- Don't blend two or more questions into one ("Do you think that Lady Gaga, Joe Biden, and your friends influence politics?").
- Don't ask questions that are difficult to comprehend ("Which intersectional paradigm can become the explanatory model for these phenomena given the current sociopolitical zeitgeist?").
- Don't ask rhetorical questions ("When will the world finally start living without violence?").
- Don't ask questions that already have obvious answers ("Do you think that people discriminate against each other?").

Using these tips, can you spot what is wrong or potentially problematic with each of the survey questions below? See if you can correct and improve them.

1. Don't you think that people migrate from place to place looking for a free handout or for better lives?
2. Why is hip hop music so much better than pop music?
3. Why is modern technology so complicated?
4. How do you know that you aren't a racist?
5. Why do Canadians like food so much?
6. How often do you discuss politics, sports, sex, and the stock market with your family?
7. How often do you feel depressed or happy?
8. Why don't your friends pay more attention to you?
9. If prejudice is caused by unconscious factors, to what extent do these variables overlap with the previously established contextual conditions?
10. When did you stop being ashamed of your culture?

CHAPTER SUMMARY

1. There are four basic goals of research in cross-cultural psychology: description, interpretation, prediction, and management. After identifying the goals, the researcher has to choose a methodological approach that is most appropriate for the implementation of these goals. In general, research methodology in cross-cultural psychology may be divided into two categories: quantitative and qualitative.
2. Quantitative research in cross-cultural psychology involves the measurement of certain aspects of human activity from a comparative perspective. The variables chosen for examination must be studied empirically, primarily through observation, as opposed to other forms of reflection, such as intuition, beliefs, or superstitions. The

most common data are measures of central tendency: the mode, the median, and the mean. There are four types of measurement scales: nominal, ordinal, interval, and ratio.

3. Among the most important statistical methods used in cross-cultural psychology are correlational methods that establish relationships between two variables and the *t*-test for independent samples, which aims to estimate whether the difference between two samples occurred by chance.

4. Qualitative research is conducted primarily in the natural setting, where the research participants carry out their daily activities in a non-research atmosphere. Qualitative studies are also conducted when there are difficulties in measuring variables, in situations when the subjects cannot read or use answer scales or when there are no standardized measurement instruments available. Qualitative research is also useful in situations in which variables are not completely conceptualized or operationally defined. The qualitative method can be useful when the experiences and priorities of the research participants heavily influence the research.

5. Choosing an application-oriented strategy, researchers attempt to establish the applicability of research findings obtained in one country or culture to other countries or cultures. The comparativist strategy, on the contrary, focuses primarily on similarities and differences in certain statistical measures in a sample of cultures.

6. There are several strategies for sample selection. One strategy is availability or convenience sampling. Another type of sampling, called systematic, involves the psychologist's selecting national or ethnic samples according to a theory or some theoretical assumption. A third sampling strategy is random sampling. In this case, a large sample of countries or groups is randomly chosen; that is, any country or group has an equal chance of being selected in the research sample.

7. Cross-cultural psychologists use all the typical psychological methods of investigation: observation, survey, experiment, content analysis, psychobiography, meta-analysis, focus group, and other procedures. Holistic methods are based on the principle that scientific knowledge of individuals and cultures cannot be obtained only from studying various features of an individual taken separately from one another.

8. Self-reports are not free of bias. There is a self-serving bias. On the one hand, people assess their own features as better or more advanced than the ones of the "average" person. On the other hand, in other cases and cultural settings, people tend to diminish their own qualities.

9. The majority of cross-cultural projects – especially of the survey type – require translation from the researcher's language to other language or languages. In such cases, one of the most difficult tasks that appears before the investigator is to make sure that the translated version of the method is as close to the original version as possible.

10. There are at least two approaches to the analysis of cross-cultural data. Psychologists supporting the absolutist approach argue that psychological phenomena are basically the same across cultures. However, the occurrences of certain processes and behaviors may vary from culture to culture. The relativist approach implies that human behavior in its full complexity can be understood only within the context of the culture in which it occurs.

11. Cross-cultural psychologists should see similarities in different phenomena; likewise, similarities should not overshadow potential differences between samples. The

specialist should be aware that to contrast a phenomenon with its polar opposite is to give definition to both terms. All polar opposites are dependent on each other for their very conceptual existence.

12. Cross-cultural psychologists should avoid biases of generalization. At the same time, it should be understood that cross-cultural psychology requires a great deal of imagination and abstraction. Concrete human activities take place in diverse and unique contexts with a huge variety of underlying factors. To understand and compare psychological phenomena the researcher should assume that the number of such factors is relatively limited.

KEY TERMS

Absolutist approach A view in cross-cultural psychology that psychological phenomena are basically the same in all cultures.

Application-oriented strategy An attempt to establish the applicability of research findings obtained in one country or culture to other countries or cultures.

Comparativist strategy An attempt to find similarities and differences in certain statistical measures in a sample of cultures.

Content analysis A research method that systematically organizes and summarizes both the manifest and latent content of communication.

Correlation coefficient A number that summarizes and describes the type of relationship that is present and the strength of the relationship between variables X and Y.

Dependent variable The aspect of human activity that is studied and expected to change under the influence of (an) independent variable(s).

Direct surveys The type of surveys in which the interviewer maintains or can maintain a direct communication with the respondent and is able to provide feedback, repeat a question, or ask for additional information.

Equivalence Evidence that the methods selected for the study measure the same phenomenon across other countries chosen for the study.

Experiment The investigative method in which researchers alter some variables to detect specific changes in the subjects' behaviors, attitudes, or emotions.

Focus-group methodology A survey method used intensively in both academic and marketing research. The most common use of this method is a procedure in which a group responds to specific social, political, or marketing messages. The typical focus group contains 7–10 participants, who are either experts or represent potential buyers, viewers, or other types of customers.

Holistic The study of systems with multiple interconnected elements.

Independent variable The condition(s) that is (are) controlled by the researcher.

Indirect surveys The type of surveys in which the researcher's personal impact is very small because there is no direct

communication between the respondent and the interviewer. The questions are typically written and handed in, mailed, or e-mailed to the respondents in their homes, classrooms, or work places.

Laboratory observation Recording people's behavior in an environment created by the researcher.

Measure of central tendency The measure that indicates the location of a score distribution on a variable, that is, describes where most of the distribution is located.

Meta-analysis The quantitative analysis of a large collection of scientific results in an attempt to make sense of a diverse selection of data.

Naturalistic observation Recording people's behavior in their natural environments with little or no personal intervention.

Psychobiographical research A longitudinal analysis of particular individuals, usually outstanding persons, celebrities, and leaders, representing different countries or cultures.

Relativist approach A view in cross-cultural psychology that psychological phenomena should be studied mostly from "within" a culture where these phenomena occur.

Representative sample A sample having characteristics that accurately reflect the characteristics of the population.

Survey The investigative method in which groups of people answer questions about their opinions or their behavior.

REFERENCES

Ali, A., & Maharajh, H. D. (2005). Social predictors of suicidal behaviour in adolescents in Trinidad and Tobago. *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology, 40,* 186–191. https://doi.org/10.1007/s00127-005-0846-9

Ayman, R., & Korabik, K. (2010). Leadership: Why gender and culture matter. *American Psychologist*, *65*(3), 157–170.

Benedict, R. (2006). *Patterns of culture.* Boston, MA: Mariner Books. (Originally published in 1934.)

Berry, J. W., Poortinga, Y. H., Segall, M. H., & Dasen, P. R. (1992). *Cross-cultural psychology: Research and applications.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Briggs, J. L. (1970). *Never in anger: Portrait of an Eskimo family.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Brislin, R. (1970). Back-translation for cross-cultural research. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *1*(3), 185–216.

Browder, L. (2000). *Slippery characters: Ethnic impersonators and American identities.* Durham, NC: The UNC Press.

Buda, R., & Elsayed-Elkhouly, S. (1998). Cultural differences between Arabs and Americans: Individualism and collectivism revisited. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *29*, 487–492.

Butcher, J., Jeeyoung, L., & Nezami, E. (1998). Objective study of abnormal personality in cross-cultural settings. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *29*(1), 189–211.

Chakkarath, P. (2012). The role of indigenous psychologies in the building of basic cultural psychology. In J. Valsiner (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of culture and psychology* (pp. 71–95). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Cheung, F. M., Leung, K., Fan, R. M., Song, W. Z., Zhang, J. X., & Chang, J. P. (1996). Development of the Chinese personality assessment inventory (CPAI). *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 27, 181–199.

Connelly, B., & Ones, D. (2010). An other perspective on personality: Meta-analytic integration of observers' accuracy and predictive validity. *Psychological Bulletin*, *136* (6), 1092–1122.

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2014). *Flow and the foundations of positive psychology: The collected works of Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi.* Springer.

Dawkins, R. (2006). *The God delusion.* Bantam Press.

Demuth, C., & Fatigante, M. (2012). Comparative qualitative research in cultural psychology. *ZQF Heft*, *13*(1–2), 13–37.

Domino, G. (1986). Sleep in advanced age: A comparison of Mexican American and Anglo American elderly. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, *8*, 259–273.

Gabriel, U., Beyeler, G., Daniker, N., Fey, W., Gutweniger, K., Lienhart, M., et al. (2001). Perceived sexual orientation and helping behavior: The wrong number technique, a Swiss replication. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *32*(6), 743–749.

Gong, M., Krantz, D. H., & Weber, E. U. (2014). Why Chinese discount future financial and environmental gains but not losses more than Americans. *Journal of Risk and Uncertainty*, *49*, 103–124.

Grohol, J. (2018). Psychology secrets: Most psychology studies are college student biased. PsychCentral. https://psychcentral.com/blog/psychology-secrets-most-psychology-studies-are-college-student-biased/

Hedayat-Diba, Z. (2000). Psychotherapy with Muslims. In P. S. Richards & A. E. Bergin (Eds.), *Handbook of psychotherapy and religious diversity* (pp. 289–314). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Heiman, G. (1996). *Basic statistics for the behavioral sciences.* Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.

Heine, S. J. (2008). *Cultural psychology.* New York: W. W. Norton.

Heine, S., Lehman, D., Peng, K., & Greenholtz, J. (2002). What's wrong with cross-cultural comparisons of subjective Likert scales? The reference-group effect. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *82*(6), 903–918.

Hermans, J. M., & Kempen, J. G. (1998). Moving cultures: The perilous problems of cultural dichotomies in a globalizing society. *American Psychologist*, *53*(10), 1111–1120.

Hiyama, T., & Yoshihara, M. (2008). New occupational threats to Japanese physicians: karoshi (death due to overwork) and karojisatsu (suicide due to overwork). *Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, *65*(6), 428.

Ho, D. (1998). Indigenous psychologies: Asian perspectives. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *29*(1), 88–103.

Hofstede, G. (1980). *Culture's consequences: International differences in work-related values.* Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Hofstede, G., de Hilal, A. V. G., Malvezzi, S., Tanure, B., & Vinken, H. (2010). Comparing regional cultures within a country: Lessons from Brazil. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *41*(3), 336–352.

Hormes, J., & Rozin, P. (2010). Does "craving" carve nature at the joints? Absence of a synonym for craving in many languages. *Addictive Behaviors*, *35*, 459–463.

Iusitini, L., Gao, W., Sundborn, G., & Paterson, J. (2011). Parenting practices among fathers of a cohort of Pacific infants in New Zealand. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *42*(1), 39–55.

Johnson, A., & Sanford, J. (2005). Written and verbal information versus verbal information only for patients being discharged from acute hospital settings to home: Systematic review. *Health Education Research*, *20*(4), 423–429.

Kassinove, H., Sukhodolsky, D., Eckhardt, C., & Tsytsarev, S. (1997). Development of a Russian State-Trait Anger Expression Inventory. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, *53*(6), 543–557.

Kaufman, M. (2003, October 3). Breast implants linked to suicide. *Washington Post*.

Kende, J., Phalet, K., Van den Noortgate, W., & Kara, A. (2017). Equality revisited: A cultural meta-analysis of intergroup contact and prejudice. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, *9*(8), 887–895.

Kern, M., & Just, M. (1995). The focus group method, political advertising, campaign news, and the construction of candidate images. *Political Communication*, *12*, 127–145.

Kim, H., Schimmack, U., Cheng, C., Webster, G., & Spectre, A. (2016). The role of positive self-evaluation on cross-cultural differences in well-being. *Cross-Cultural Research*, *50*(1), 85–99.

Lawson, E. (1975). Flag preference as an indicator of patriotism in Israeli children. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *6*, 490–499.

LeVine, R. (2010). The six cultures study: Prologue to a history of a landmark project. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *41*(4), 513–521.

Levy, D. A. (2010). *Tools of critical thinking: Metathoughts for psychology* (2nd ed.). Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press.

Liu, J. H., Goldstein-Hawes, R., Hilton, D. J., Huang, L. L., Gastardo-Conaco, C., Dresler-Hawke, E., et al. (2005). Social representations of events and people in world history across twelve cultures. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *36*(2), 171–191.

Lustgarten, S., Garrison, Y., Sinnard, M., & Flynn, A. (2020). Digital privacy in mental healthcare: Current issues and recommendations for technology use. *Current Opinions in Psychology*. April 6. www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7195295/

Marsella, T. (1998). Toward a "global-community psychology": Meeting the needs of a changing world. *American Psychologist*, *53*(12), 1282–1291.

Marshall, R. (1997). Variances in values of individualism and collectivism across two cultures and three social classes. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *28*(4), 490–495.

Matsumoto, D. (1992). American-Japanese cultural differences in the recognition of universal expressions. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *23*(1), 72–85.

Maxwell, J. P., Sukhodolsky, D. G., & Sit, C. H. P. (2009). Preliminary validation of a Chinese version of the State-Trait Anger Expression Inventory-2. *Asian Journal of Social Psychology*, *12*, 1–11.

Mayer, B., & Trommsdorff, G. (2010). Adolescents' value of children and their intentions to have children: A cross-cultural and multilevel analysis. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *41*(5–6), 671–689.

Mills, E., & Singh, S. (2007). Health, human rights, and the conduct of clinical research within oppressed populations. *Globalization and Health*, 3(10). www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2174446/

Ng, T. W. H., Sorensen, K. L., & Yim, F. H. K. (2009). Does the job satisfaction–job performance relationship vary across cultures? *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *40*(5), 761–796.

Neitzel, S., & Welzer, H. (2012). *Soldiers: On fighting, killing and dying: The secret Second World War tapes of German POWs*. New York: Vintage.

Oyserman, D., Coon, H. M., & Kemmelmeier, M. (2002). Rethinking individualism and collectivism: Evaluation of theoretical assumptions and meta-analyses. *Psychological Bulletin*, *128*(1), 3–72.

Park, J., Cho, Y.-S., Yi, K.-H., Rhee, K.-Y., Kim, Y., & Moon, Y.-H. (1999). Unexpected natural death among Korean workers. *Journal of Occupational Health*, *41*, 238–243.

Park, K. (1988). East Asians' responses to western health items. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *19*(1), 51–64.

Peng, K., Nisbett, R. E., & Wong, N. Y. C. (1997). Validity problems comparing values across cultures and possible solutions. *Psychological Methods*, *2*, 329–344.

Puchta, C., & Potter, J. (2004). *Focus group practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Rai, T., & Fiske, A. (2010). ODD (observation- and description-deprived) psychological research. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 33(2/3), 46–47.

Regan, P., Lakhanpal, S., & Anguiano, C. (2012). Relationship outcomes in Indian-American love-based and arranged marriages. *Psychological* Reports, *110*(*3*), 915–924.

Reynes, E., Berthouze-Aranda, S.E., Guillet-Descas, E., Chabaud, P., & Deflandre, A. (2013). Validation française de l'échelle de rumination de colère (ARS) [French validation of the Anger Rumination Scale]. *Encephale, 39*(5), 339–346. French. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.encep.2012.11.006

Roer-Strier, D., & Kurman, J. (2009). Combining qualitative and quantitative methods to study perceptions of immigrant youth. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *40*(*6*), 988–995.

Rothbaum, F., & Tsang, B. Y.-P. (1998). Love songs in the United States and China. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*,*29* (*2*), 306–319.

Sarver, D., Brown, G., & Evans, D. (2007). Cosmetic breast augmentation and suicide. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, *164*, 1006–1013.

Schmitt. D., Allik, J., McCrae, R., & Benet-Martínez. V. (2007). The geographic distribution of Big Five personality traits: Patterns and profiles of human self-description across 56 nations. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *38*(2), 173–212.

Schwartz, S. (1994). Are there universal aspects in the structure and content of human values? *Journal of Social Issues*, *50*, 19–45.

Schwartz, S. J., Unger, J. B., Zamboanga, B. L., & Szapocznik, J. (2010). Rethinking the concept of acculturation: Implications for theory and research. *American Psychologist*, *65*(4), 237–251.

Segall, M., Dasen, P., Berry, J., & Poortinga, Y. (1999). *Human behavior in global perspective*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Shiraev, E., & Sobel, R. (2006). *People and their opinions*. New York: Longman.

Singer, P., & Hauser, M. (2009). Why morality doesn't need religion. In R. Blackford and U. Schüklenk (Eds.), *50 Voices of Disbelief* https://doi.org/10.1002/9781444307986.ch46

Spielberger, C. (1980). *Test Anxiety Inventory: Preliminary professional manual*. Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologist Press.

Sternberg, R. (2007). *Wisdom, intelligence, and creativity synthesized*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Sukhodolsky, D. G., Golub, A., & Cromwell, E. N. (2001). Development and validation of the Anger Rumination Scale. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *31*, 689–700.

Tafarodi, R. W., Shaughnessy, S. C., Lee, W. W. S., Leung, D. Y. P., Ozaki, Y., Morio, H., & Yamaguchi, S. (2009). Disregard for outsiders: A cultural comparison. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *40*(4), 567–583.

Talhelm, T., Zhang, X., Oishi, S., Shimin, C., Duan, D., Lan, X., & Kitayama, S. (2014). Large-scale psychological differences within China explained by rice versus wheat agriculture. *Science, 344*(6184), 603–608.

Tutty, L., Rothery, M., & Grinnell, R. (1996). *Qualitative research for social work*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

van de Vijver, F. J. R., & Leung, K. (1997). *Methods and data analysis for cross-cultural research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Veillard, N. (2017). WEIRD sampling in cross-cultural psychology, should it not be less WEIRD and more representative? Master's Thesis in Psychology, Leiden University. https://openaccess.leidenuniv.nl/bitstream/handle/1887/56361/Veillard%2C%20 Nathalie-s1975218-MA%20Thesis%20SOP-2017.pdf?sequence=1

Weber, E. (1998). What folklore tells us about risk and risk taking: Cross-cultural comparisons of American, German, and Chinese proverbs. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, *75*(2), 170–186.

Wilson, D. (2017). Supervision of Indigenous research students: Considerations for cross-cultural supervisors. *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples, 13*(4), 256–265.

World Population Survey (2022). *Literacy Rate by Country*. Online at: https:// worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/literacy-rate-by-country

Zaller, J. (1992). *The nature and origins of mass opinion*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.

Zartman, I. W. (2018, June 24). Kim Jong Un and the art of the Asian deal. *Wall Street Journal*. www.wsj.com/articles/kim-jong-un-and-the-art-of-the-asian-deal-1529862421

Zembe, Y., Townsend, L., Thorson, A., & Ekström, A. M. (2013). "Money talks, bullshit walks", interrogating notions of consumption and survival sex among young women engaging in transactional sex in post-apartheid South Africa: A qualitative enquiry. *Globalization and Health*, *9*(28). www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3721991/

Zhu, L. (2016, November). A comparative look at Chinese and American stereotypes. *Journal of Intercultural Communication*, *42*. http://immi.se/intercultural/nr42/zhu.html

4

CHAPTER 4
COGNITION: SENSATION, PERCEPTION, AND STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Are cultural groups generally different in the ways they see objects and people, hear sounds, or smell aromas just because of the different geographical conditions under which their ancestors used to live? Are people living in the desert, for example, more likely to develop color vision than those who live in the tropics? In this regard, we recalled a query we received from a former student, who is now a research professor. His name was . . . let's call him Albert. "Do psychologists acknowledge important sensory differences between Europeans and non-Europeans in America?" Albert then asserted that, for centuries, the ancestors of the former group relied mostly on visual perception. Europeans, he said, must have seen, measured, and then rationalized their impressions in visual and performing arts. It might also have been reflected in science. They do not feel or believe something *a priori*; they must first experience, test, and verify everything right before their own eyes. Referring to his own ancestors, he said Africans, on the other hand, are different because of environmental conditions in Africa that required them to rely mostly on hearing and touch. They felt objects and vibrations through their skin, without visual verification by the eyes; they could express themselves very effectively through their voices. Albert then suggested, due to such cultural perceptual differences between European and African ancestors, that European Americans are more likely to succeed in engineering, science, and writing, whereas African Americans tend to excel at playing music, singing, and other nonvisual activities. "Do you have any evidence to support your idea? How can you verify this?" his fellow student asked. "I can't. I simply feel this way!" responded Albert, bemused by his own answer. (Please recall the critical thinking principle of the belief perseverance effect in Chapter 2.)

———

Was Albert justified in daringly suggesting that there are sensory differences between Europeans and Africans, and then attributing them to each group's original environmental conditions? Are there, in fact, any significant sensory differences among people of various cultural groups across the globe? Or do people see, hear, and feel the physical world in, for the most part, the same way? If not, which characteristics of vision, hearing, smell, touch, or taste have the strongest cultural roots? Do pilots tend to scan their control board based on their native language, such as French (left to right) or Hebrew (right to left)? Should fashion designers shun or promote certain colors due to cultural traditions related to color? How do cultures affect one's ability to be self-aware? How do people of different cultural backgrounds interpret their dreams? We will address these and many other questions

throughout this chapter, as we explore sensation, perception, consciousness and more through the examination of cross-cultural aspects of human cognition.

SENSATION AND PERCEPTION: BASIC PRINCIPLES

The process by which receptor cells are stimulated and transmit their information to various brain centers is called **sensation**. You see a moving bright light in the evening sky. You taste a spicy pickle. All sensations begin from a signal or stimulus, either external or internal, in the form of energy capable of activating the nervous system. Sensation converts external energy into an internal neurophysiological process, which results in a particular psychological experience: We see the moving light and taste the spicy dish. The process that organizes various sensations into meaningful patterns is called **perception**. Three colored vertical stripes – blue, white, and red – displayed in sequence on a piece of material will have probably little meaning for a little boy from Bangladesh or Northern Ireland. However, for a French adult, this sequence of colors would be associated with the French national flag. When one of us takes a guitar and plays the first chords of the song *Stairway to Heaven*, many U.S., Canadian, Dutch, or British students almost immediately identify it as a classic rock ballad written by Led Zeppelin. However, those who grew up outside the Western tradition of rock music interpret these notes as little more than a nice "melody."

Sensation and perception are two basic processes first studied in psychological laboratories more than 130 years ago in several countries, including Germany, France, Russia, Great Britain, and the United States. Comparative analysis of the data obtained by these laboratories showed remarkable quantitative and qualitative similarities – despite individual differences – in both sensory and perceptual processes in people of different countries (Yaroshevski, 1996). However, in most experiments, psychologists studied sensation using a "standard" (that is, for psychological research in the 1800s) sample of subjects: the researchers themselves, their academic assistants, and, of course, their students. Therefore, the data in such studies were obtained mainly from highly educated, white male participants. Cross-cultural investigation of sensation is surmised to have been sparked by the research conducted by Rivers (1901) and associates, who selected their subjects in Europe and the Torres Strait Islands, a territory near Australia. Rivers examined a popular assumption about the extraordinary visual sharpness of non-Europeans. The assumption was disproved: The vision of the Torres Strait Islanders was not found to be particularly outstanding from a comparative perspective. Nevertheless, cross-cultural studies of sensation and perception have steadily proliferated since that study.

HOW CULTURE INFLUENCES WHAT WE PERCEIVE

Our experience with the environment and other people shapes our perception by creating perceptual expectations. These expectations, known as a **perceptual set**, make certain

interpretations more likely to occur and increase both the speed and efficiency of the perceptual process. Perceptual sets that are common in people of a particular culture can be different from other cultural groups. Personal experience influences an individual's sensation and perception. If most individuals from a cultural group share such experiences, there should be some common cultural (group-related) sensory or perceptual patterns. For example, we are usually aware of the wonderful aroma outside a restaurant when we are hungry, yet we are much less sensitive to it when our stomach is full. In general, if we need something, we tend to pay attention to the stimuli that are linked to the gratification of the need. But what if a person is constantly deprived of food or water, like the millions of people on earth? According to the United Nations, nearly 700 million people live in absolute poverty at the beginning of the second decade of the twenty-first century.

Years ago, researchers examined the effects of food and water deprivation on a person's word identification (Wispe & Drambarean, 1953). The deprived participants perceived the need-related words (words related to food and drinks) at shorter exposure times than the non-deprived subjects. In another classic study, researchers compared the perceptual experiences of children from poor and wealthy families (Bruner & Goodman, 1947). They asked children to adjust the size of a circle of light to match the sizes of various coins: a penny, a nickel, a dime, and a quarter. Children from wealthier families tended to see the coins as smaller than they were, whereas children from poor families overestimated the size of the coins. The investigators argued that the need for money among children from poor homes influenced their perceptions of the coins. This interesting finding has been reproduced in Hong Kong with similar results (Dawson, 1974). More recent research suggests that poverty negatively affects eye health, including vision disability from vision impairment and blindness (Jaggernath et al., 2014).

Environmental conditions affect sensation and perception in many ways. Studies have shown that traditional hunter and gatherer cultures have a lower rate of color blindness among their members than traditional societies practicing agriculture. This makes sense from an evolutionary standpoint: Color-blind hunters could not survive without the ability to distinguish details, colors, and contours, which is critical in hunting or gathering activities (Pollack, 1963). The level of noise in the surrounding environments is yet another example of how environment can affect sensory processes. One study showed that people who live in deserts did not suffer hearing loss to the extent that city dwellers did (Reuning & Wortley, 1973). The average difference in hearing problems between the two groups could be explained by the significantly lower level of noise in a desert in comparison with urban, metropolitan areas.

The lack or even absence of experience can become an important factor that affects perception. Interesting data comes to us from the field of biology. For example, in a well-known experiment, researchers raised kittens in complete darkness except for several hours each day. During these brief periods, the kittens were placed in a cylinder with either horizontal or vertical stripes (Blakemore & Cooper, 1970). The animals could not observe their own bodies, and the only object they saw were the stripes. Five months after the beginning of the experiment, the kittens reared in "horizontal" environments were unable for some time to perceive vertical lines. Their brains lacked detectors responsive

to vertical lines. Similarly, the kittens reared in "vertical" environments were unable to perceive horizontal lines. The animals' brains adapted to either "horizontal" or "vertical" worlds by developing specialized neuronal pathways. (Not incidentally, do you believe there are any ethical problems involved with research such as this?)

Interesting results were obtained in studies of individuals who were born blind but obtained sight after a surgical procedure later in life (Ostrovsky et al., 2006; Gregory, 1978). Many of these individuals were proficient on many visual tasks. They could differentiate figures from the ground, detect colors, and human motion (Shlomit et al., 2022). However, many other visual functions were compromised. There were problems in judging the size of moving objects and people. In addition, many individuals could not recognize objects they previously knew by touch. The absence of a visual experience affected these people's cognition after sight was gained. We will turn to another example about individuals who were born deaf in the section on visual perception later in this chapter.

Overall, environmental conditions, as well as activities and experiences, determine culture-related differences and similarities in sensation and perception. As members of cultural groups, we as humans learn to pay attention to certain stimuli, ignore others, and develop cognitive preferences for many culture-related images, smells, tastes, and sounds. Prominent examples are certain types of food and music that we, as groups, tend to like (Shiraev & Boyd, 2001).

CRITICAL THINKING

GEOGRAPHIC ORIGIN AND SENSORY PREFERENCES

This chapter opened with an episode in which Albert raised a question about basic differences between African Americans and European Americans in terms of their perception. His home-grown theory resembles the so-called "compensation hypothesis" in psychology: Some groups excel in one type of task to compensate for others in which they are not as competent. For instance, Africans typically excel in auditory (hearing) tasks and communicate most effectively as a group through the auditory modality, whereas Europeans are more adept with visual (seeing) stimuli, excelling best at written communication (Shade, 1991). Some experts suggested that Africans, on the average, should have a heightened capacity for learning languages, not to mention a good sense of rhythm and music (McLuhan, 1971). According to this line of thinking, this would incline African Americans toward "concentrating" on people and relationships rather than abstract ideas and nonhuman objects. Then there are those who propose the existence of *verve*, a special and unique feature of African psychology. This is an energetic, intense mental set or preference for being simultaneously attuned to several sensory stimuli, rather than singular events or a linear set of signals (Boykin, & Cunningham, 2001; Boykin, 1994).

However intriguing, there is very little empirical data to support any of these hypotheses' assumptions about substantial sensory differences between Africans and Europeans. Empirical studies have also come up short in validating the hypothesis of physiological differences between visual and auditory transmission of information among different cultures. No evidence was found, for example, to support a hypothesis about the superiority of black students in auditory judgments and white students in visual judgments. Empirical evidence on the prominence of auditory, tactile, or kinesthetic cues for Africans also remains very limited.

Can you think of other cultural or ethnic groups that appear to excel in some perceptual tasks and not in others? Why do you think such perceptions occur? How might vivid, extraordinary events affect people's beliefs about certain cultural differences in perception?

HOW PEOPLE PERCEIVE PICTURES

The perception of pictures is a popular subject of study in psychology. Research shows that this type of perception is linked to a person's educational and socialization experience (or lack thereof). In a classic study conducted among the Mekan – an ethnic minority group inhabiting southwestern Ethiopia with (at that time) limited access to formal schooling and little exposure to pictures – scientists utilized detailed drawings of animals. With few exceptions, the participants identified the animals, but only after some time and with obvious mental effort (Deregowski et al., 1972). In another earlier study, Hudson (1960), who researched how South Africans perceived and interpreted safety posters and signs, provided a demonstration of the links between educational experience and perception. The number of misinterpretations of the posters was much lower for urban and more educated subjects than for rural and less educated individuals. Numerous experiments have demonstrated that people generally have more difficulty in judging pictures of faces of other, relatively unfamiliar to the subject, ethnic groups compared to faces of their own group (Meissner & Brigham, 2001). In one such study, two samples of Turkish-born and Austrian children living in Europe were asked to look at the photographs of Turkish and German faces and match photographs of faces in frontal and angled views. Turkish children were faster in matching Turkish faces than were Austrian children. However, there was no difference in the perception of German faces: Both groups matched them equally fast. Most likely, as this research suggests, the Turkish-born children have had more frequent interpersonal contact with Germans than the Austrian kids had with groups of Turkish descent (Sporer et al., 2007).

There are fascinating differences in the way language, or some grammatical aspects of it, affects people's perception of pictures. To illustrate, there are languages with a gender system, such as Spanish, Italian, German, Hindi, or Russian. In these languages, common gender divisions include masculine, feminine, and neuter (neutral) categories. In other

languages, such as English, Chinese, or Farsi, such categories generally do not exist. Studies show that people who grew up speaking "gendered" languages tend to assign certain gendered and stereotypical characteristics to particular objects shown to them on pictures, whereas people who grew up in gender-neutral linguistic cultures tend not to do so (Flaherty, 2001). Gendered language is likely to produce a perception of gender, according to which the members of each gender (male, female) viewed as sharing deep and inherent characteristics. Overall, the way we learn our languages and the way we learn about gender can, to some degree, affect the way we tend to judge objects and people (Bigler & Leaper, 2015).

There is evidence that scanning (or mental image scanning) of pictures, faces, or texts is also subject to some cultural variations. Mental image scanning is a process allowing people to shift attention across visualized objects. There are cross-cultural differences in the way people scan human faces. For example, British participants tend to focus first on mouth scanning, whereas Japanese individuals show a higher degree of nose scanning (Haensel et al., 2020). The most significant finding in early studies was that the direction we examine pictures – from left to right, from right to left, or from top to bottom – is linked to our reading habits (Abed, 1991; Goodnow & Levine, 1973). This tendency was supported in more recent studies showing that people in the United Kingdom, Argentina, or Canada, who read from left to right, also have a left–right scanning pattern of pictures and objects; Arab and Hebrew readers, who read from right to left, would demonstrate a right–left scanning pattern; and Japanese readers, who read from top to bottom, would have a top-bottom pattern of picture scanning (Van der Henst, & Schaeken, 2005).

However, there are exceptions to this rule. For example, in a test on the copying of geometric figures, Hebrew subjects showed a left–right preference. How did the researchers explain this finding? Both Hebrew and English scripts require mainly left-to-right strokes for single letters. In comparison, in the Arab language, the right-to-left direction is required for the writing of individual letters. Therefore, from a practical standpoint, it is always useful to examine not only reading but also writing patterns of a particular culture. These findings can raise interesting assumptions about how some professionals (i.e., pilots, train and boat operators, etc.) of different cultural backgrounds scan signals from monitors and other visual indicators. Other cross-cultural studies supported the assumption that the acquired language affects cultural differences in scanning texts and pictures and in overall spatial reasoning and orientation (Castelain & Van der Henst, 2021).

A CASE IN POINT

PICTURE INTERPRETATION AND ACCESS TO MEDIA

Studies by Liddell (1997) suggested that children in South Africa were less skilled at interpreting pictures than were their European counterparts. This tendency was first noticed as early as the 1960s. The differences between the European and African

samples were even larger for African children from rural areas. The errors in picture interpretation included making mistakes in depth perception, identification of face blemishes, and the interpretation of motion markers. Also, South African children had more difficulties than children in the European sample in creating narrative (i.e., short descriptive) interpretations of the pictures. These results suggested that pictures may be a relatively poor source of organizing South African children's knowledge and that the authors of school textbooks should limit their usage.

We want you to think about the results from a different perspective. The children in the examined samples, despite recent progress in communications, still face a tremendous lack of opportunities compared with their European, Asian, or North American peers. Limited access to the Internet and to social networks, reduced ability to use tablets or personal computers at home, inadequate access to computers at school, lack of pictorial materials at home, and many other poverty-related problems can contribute to the limitations in such children's use of pictures. What is your opinion? Would you suggest reducing the number of pictures in South African textbooks or, rather, providing children better access to pictorial materials outside and inside the classroom? What are some costs and benefits for each decision?

Visual scanning is related to writing and drawing. Take, for instance, the drawing of circles. The differences between cultural groups could be based on the way people learn to write in their native language. If writing requires more clockwise movement, then the child is more likely to make his or her circles in the same manner. In a comparative Japanese–U.S. study, researchers compared the direction of circle drawing for students in both countries. Results showed that with advancing grade, U.S. students increasingly drew circles in a counterclockwise direction, whereas the Japanese increasingly drew them in a clockwise direction (Amenomouri et al., 1997). Children who spoke Hebrew since childhood tended to draw circles in a clockwise direction more often than the other two groups that were studied, whose language was French or English (Zendal et al., 1987). A 2017 cross-national study of tens of thousands of online drawings supported the earlier findings: The way people drew circles reveals their language background and their reading patterns. More than 80 percent of people raised in the US drew circles counterclockwise, while in Japan 80 percent of people used a clockwise motion. The data from participants in 66 countries (including the U.K., the Czech Republic, Australia, Finland, Germany, the Philippines, and Vietnam), drew circles counterclockwise; exceptions were Taiwan and Japan (Ha & Sonnad, 2017).

Studies also show that people, including residents of big cities, are substantially faster and more accurate at visually detecting animals than nonliving objects, such as moving cars (New et al., 2007). Ian Spence and his colleagues (Spence et al., 2006) found differences in men's and women's abilities to distinguish objects that appear in their field of vision. Such differences were not overwhelming; yet it was found that men were generally better at remembering and locating general landmarks in pictures, while women were better

at remembering and locating food. These facts suggest the importance of people's daily environmental and cultural experiences in determining perceptions of everyday things.

Some intriguing perceptual differences were found in comparative studies of subjects living in the West versus East Asia. According to research, East Asians – as well as people in Central Asia – tend to be more holistic, whereas Westerners tend to be more analytic and detail-oriented. For example, subjects from the U.S., compared to their Indian counterparts, saw more segmented activities (i.e., were more detail-oriented) in several recordings of ordinary events, like making coffee. Indian and U.S. viewers identified events in everyday activities (e.g., making coffee) recorded in Indian and U.S. settings. Consistent with their cultural preference for analytical processing, U.S. viewers segmented the activities into a greater number of events than did Indian viewers (Swallow & Wang, 2020). Numerous studies show that people from Asian cultures, including China, Japan, and Korea, tend to pay more attention to contexts and backgrounds of pictures than people from Western cultures, who tend to focus on the center or on the central figure of these pictures (Ko et al., 2011). East Asians were also slower than Americans at detecting changes in the center of the screen but allocated their attention more broadly than Americans did (Boduroglu et al., 2009).

What are the sources of these differences? One possibility is that they reflect different cultural styles that determine what is considered informative and worthy of report about observed scenes (Masuda & Nisbett, 2006). We will return to these differences again in Chapter 5.

PERCEPTUAL VISUAL ILLUSIONS

Take a look at the drawing of the famous "Devil's tuning fork." This drawing refers to **depth perception**, or the organization of sensations in three dimensions, even though the image on the eye's retina is two dimensional. Research at the dawn of cross-cultural psychology revealed that many people, most of them extremely poor and without formal schooling or exposure to three-dimensional pictures, did not find this particular picture confusing, as studies have shown (Deregowski, 1974; Hudson, 1960).

Education and training could expeditiously improve depth perception (Leach, 1975; Nicholson et al., 1977). Overall, the opinion that African children were less efficient in perceiving pictorial depth because of their natural environment was incorrect (McGurk & Jahoda, 1975). Children's lower socioeconomic level and their lack of schooling played a huge role in these children's depth perceptions (Dawson et al., 1974). Studies also showed that even the way scientists asked a question on a depth test (such as "which objects appears nearer" instead of "which object appears farther?" affects cultural groups' judgments of what they saw in a picture (Omari & Cook, 1972).

Now check out the three figures below. They represent famous visual illusions. In the Müller–Lyer illusion (far left), the line on the top appears shorter than the line on the bottom. In the Ponzo illusion (middle), the upper line appears larger than the one at the bottom. In the horizontal–vertical illusion (far right), the vertical line appears to be larger than the horizontal one. Are most people across the world susceptible to these illusions?
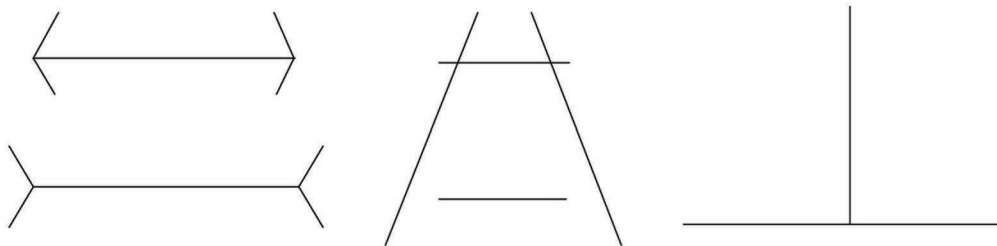
In fact, there are cultural variations in how people perceive them. For example, a study of receptiveness to the Ponzo illusion in the United States and Guam suggested that non-Western and rural subjects showed less susceptibility to the illusion than the individuals from either Western or urban areas (Brislin, 1993). Likewise, on both the Müller–Lyer and horizontal–vertical illusions, the Western samples, living primarily in industrial urban and suburban environments, were more prone to the illusion than any of the non-Western samples living mostly in relatively poorer areas. Researchers found that Americans tended to perceive the line with the ends feathered outward as being longer than the line with the arrow tips. Sand foragers of the Kalahari region in Southern Africa, on the other hand, were more likely to see the lines as they are – equal in length. Overall, for years, subjects from regions with open landscapes were more susceptible to the horizontal–vertical illusion than subjects from regions in which there are few open landscapes (Henrich et al., 2010; Segall et al., 1966).

According to an influential *carpentered world* hypothesis (Segall et al., 1966), people who grow up in an environment shaped by carpenters or other builders (most of us live in rectangular houses with rectangular furniture and similar street patterns) tend to interpret nonrectangular figures as representations of rectangular figures seen in a different perspective. They also tend to interpret the lines in the horizontal plane that look as if they are moving away from an observer as appearing to be shorter than the lines that cross the viewer's line of vision (the horizontal–vertical illusion).

Most people who studied at school or were home-schooled, which is the case for the United States, Canada, India, and most other countries, get used to converting two-dimensional pictures into three-dimensional images, even though pictures on computer screens and photographs in magazines are displayed on a flat surface. This is how our brain works: Certain perceptual sets (see the beginning of the chapter) transform from "flat" objects to three-dimensional objects (Segall et al., 1990).

CULTURAL PATTERNS IN DRAWINGS

Individuals with no formal schooling, young children, and early folk artists thousands of years ago did not have the technical ability to convert three-dimensional perceptions into two-dimensional paintings or sketches. Their paintings often display objects, details, and surroundings that are independent of one another. For instance, Australian Aborigines usually depicted the trunk of a crocodile as seen from above, while the head and the tail are drawn as being seen from the side (Dziurawiec & Deregowski, 1992). Beveridge (1940) and Thouless (1932) found that African drawings available to them in their studies were probably less affected by visual cues than were European drawings from the same period. With the lack of perspective in African pictures, objects were depicted as they were in physical reality rather than how they actually appeared to the observer.

Perceptual distortions are easily found in many other forms of drawings. For instance, in the history of art traditions in various regions a linear perspective – a system of creating an illusion of depth on a flat surface – does not occur for quite some time. Numerous perceptual distortions are found in modern art, as well as in ancient Egyptian and medieval Spanish art (Parker & Deregowski, 1990). What about the polydimensional representation of space – when objects are present in more than three dimensions? Some may suggest that polydimensional depictions are typical only in modern art. Indeed, cubism, as a school of art, aimed to give the viewer the time experience of moving around static forms in order to examine their volume and structure. With cubist pictures, the viewer is specifically encouraged to examine the surfaces of depicted objects from every possible angle. Paul Cezanne (1839–1906), a famous French artist, represented figures in his paintings as if seen from different directions and at varying eye levels. However, this type of depiction had been used at previous periods in many cultures. In much of ancient Egyptian and Cretan painting, for instance, the head and legs of a figure were shown in profile, but the eye and torso of a figure were drawn frontally. In Indian and early European paintings, created before the seventeenth century, figures and other vertical forms were represented as if seen from ground level, whereas the horizontal planes that figures and objects stood on were shown as if viewed from above.

PERCEPTION OF COLOR

Color has three universal psychological dimensions: hue, brightness, and saturation. Hue is what people mean by color; brightness refers to a color's intensity; and saturation

indicates a color's purity. If there are similar underlying physiological mechanisms of color perception in humans, does this mean that perception of color has very little cultural variation? Do cultural practices influence color perception? If so, how?

According to language-related theories of color perception that emphasize the role of language in the identification and labeling of colors, some words are linked to various units of the visible spectrum (Berry et al., 1992). Throughout child development, language yields increasing influence on how children across cultures categorize and remember colors (Bowern, 2008; Adelson, 2005). The developing child learns words and starts to use them to identify colors. Even though most healthy individuals are able to detect the same range of colors, there are languages that lack certain words for particular colors. In contrast, some languages have several names for particular colors. For example, in the Russian language there are two distinct words to cover hues (one for "light blue" and one for "dark blue"), but in English there is only one word – "blue." In addition, red is always represented by a separate word in all languages, whereas the colors green and blue are sometimes not distinguished linguistically. Perhaps due to environmental conditions, the less vivid colors were less salient to people in certain linguistic groups and for that reason were less likely to be identified and labeled with a separate word (Ray, 1952).

Several theories tried to explain a perceptual confusion between the colors green and blue. Some studies stressed genetic differences between groups. For instance, Pollack (1963) demonstrated that certain visual perceptual skills might be related to factors such as retinal pigmentation. He found that persons born with denser retinal pigmentation had more difficulty detecting contours and showed relative difficulties in perceiving blue. Studies of color preferences showed that women across countries tend to choose and like reddish hues, such as pink. On the other hand, men preferred greenish-blue colors. The researchers speculated that the differences in color preferences may be connected to the evolutionary ability of the female brain to adapt to the needs of gathering of food products such as fruits, while men's brains tend to be "wired" to be better hunters in green and lush environments (Hurlbert & Ling, 2007). However, physiological and evolutionary explanations of cultural differences in the detection of color have not gained as much recognition or support as the theories that emphasize the importance of learning experiences and linguistic norms of perception.

The subjective social and individual psychological meaning of color can be crucial to our understanding of color perception. There are strong culture-specific and cross-cultural trends in people's feelings related to colors. In classic and more contemporary studies, the concept "red" was perceived as being quite salient and active, standing for love, luck, as well as action. In China, red is the color of the New Year. "Black" was associated with power as well as a symbol of mourning in many cultures. "White" stands for purity in numerous cultures; however, white tends to also represent death, mourning, and humility in many Asian cultures. "Gray" was associated with something hidden or depressing. "Green" was commonly linked to peace, health, fertility, and life. In some cultures, "yellow," "white," and "gray" were seen as more passive, compared to other colors (Mukamal, 2017; Adams & Osgood, 1973).

The history of human civilization gives many examples about other trends in color interpretation. Take, for example, the color red. In many nations it became a political symbol of violence, revolution, and revolt. In communist China and the Soviet Union, government officials made red banners the official flags of their countries. The official flag of Nazi Germany in the 1930s and 1940s was also red. Rebellious students in Europe waved red flags during antiestablishment demonstrations in the 1960s. Guerrilla fighters in South and Central America, Southeast Asia, and Africa chose red as the color of their armed struggle. In the 1970s, one of the most notorious terrorist groups in Italy carried the name Red Brigades. Yet in Japan, the red color stood for philanthropy and vitality and the red circle on the national flag represents the sun. Red is also used on banners or ribbons to symbolize workers' solidarity. In more recent times, the red ribbon is the universal symbol of awareness and support for people living with HIV.

In classical Druze culture, a religious community living primarily in Lebanon, Syria, and Israel, colors are associated with five cosmic principles. These principles are represented by the five-colored Druze star: reason (green), soul (red), word (yellow), precedent (blue), and immanence (white).

Early cross-cultural psychologists found that preschool children in the United States from various racial groups tend to prefer light- to dark-skinned people on pictures and photographs and to favor the color white over black. European children also displayed a tendency toward the positive evaluation of light-skinned figures relative to dark-skinned ones (Best et al., 1975). Moreover, cross-cultural research has established that people tend to associate the color white with more positive feelings than black, and this bias seems to emerge by the preschool years. Perhaps surprisingly, subsequent research has shown that native African children shared the same color bias (Williams & Best, 1990). The association of the color white with something "good," "pure," and "familiar," and black as primarily "negative," "unclean," and "unknown" was common in many cultures across the globe. The investigators speculated that the pan-cultural preference for light over dark may reflect a generalization from light and dark cycles of the day. Light is generally associated with certainty and safety, whereas darkness is more likely to represent danger and uncertainty. Through the process of evolution, nature may have endowed humans with a tendency to dislike the dark, just as it has predisposed them with a susceptibility to a fear of snakes and spiders. Sea pirates raised black banners over their ships as a symbol of intimidation. In Christianity, angels are white, whereas demons are black. In Islam, the color white is symbolic of purity and equality of all people. As in many places on the earth, a typical Bulgarian bride would be dressed in white on her wedding. However, the bride's bouquet would never consist of white roses, as the white rose is indicative of death, according to Bulgarian folk beliefs. In addition, people from various religious backgrounds wear black clothing when they are in mourning. In the English language, definitions of the word "black" include "without any moral light or goodness," "evil," "wicked," "indicating disgrace," and "sinful." Definitions of "white" include "morally pure," "spotless," "innocent," and "free from evil intent." In 1993, during a period of economic recession in Russia, when a newspaper asked Russians what color they associated with their lives, 42 percent said "gray" and 21 percent said "black." Most of them felt as though they entered "darkness" when things were extremely difficult (Kelley, 1994).

A CASE IN POINT

A FEW COLOR-RELATED IDIOMS IN SEVERAL LANGUAGES

In English and Serbian, people may say that they "feel blue," which stands for sadness. In Portuguese, "everything is blue" stands for "everything is well." However, if a German is "blue," this person is intoxicated. In contrast, in Arabic, having a "blue day" may stand for having a bad day. In Russian, if you call a man "blue," you may have implied that he is gay. However, "blue" in Russian can also be associated with a cherished dream. In German, to "see red" means the same that it does in English – anger or rage. The "white lie" denotes the same in Arabic and in English. In German, distant and indefinite future is gray. The expression "rose-colored glasses" (i.e., optimistic viewpoint) has the same meaning in Russian, German, and English. The expressions "pink elephants" (drug or alcohol induced hallucinations) and "yellow press" (shoddy journalism) have the same meaning for people in New York, London, and Belgrade. People can turn "green," which indicates being "jealous" or "extremely angry" in many languages. "Green grapes" often means envy in Brazil. Similarly, "blue blood" stands for aristocracy in dozens of tongues. "Yellow eye" stands for envy in Arabic, and "yellow smile" stands for embarrassment in Brazil. "Brown" in Russian may indicate one's fascist beliefs, and "gray" stands for boredom.

Recall and share with others a color-related idiom or two from your own personal experience. Why do you think those colors are used in such idioms?

Information for this case was provided by Vanessa Bastos, Mirjana Simic, Walid Abdul-Jawad, Manal Alafrangi, Pedro DeAraujo, Fahad Malik, Makoto Tanaka, and Denitza Mantcheva.

In summary, it appears that there is some degree of similarity in the way color terms are used in different cultures. Verbal labels, if they are not available in the lexicon of a language, can be readily learned. Systematic formal schooling and the availability of various informational sources – such as books, videos, or podcasts – can play a significant role in such learning.

OTHER SENSES

So far in this chapter, our attention has been directed at vision, the most systematically studied sensory–perceptual modality in cross–cultural psychology. There is significantly less information concerning other types of sensation or perceptual cross–cultural processes. Nevertheless, let us consider some relevant data.

HEARING

Psychology textbooks tend to emphasize the universal nature of human auditory sensation and perception processes. Most variations in hearing are based on individual neurophysiological differences, which are related to age, education, professional training, environmental conditions, and general experience. Of course, cultural differences also exist. Children, for example, learn how to synchronize their movements to sound during social interactions, according to the surrounding cultural practices (Kirschner & Ilari, 2014). The most important differences are related to the meanings attached to particular sounds in different cultures. During childhood, individuals get used to particular voices, sounds, and even noises, and subsequently interpret them according to the norms established in their culture. For example, people who speak Cantonese are likely to have an excellent aptitude for musical pitch perception. In Hong Kong Cantonese, for example, the sound "*si*" means "teacher," as well as "to try," when spoken in a higher pitch pattern. One study showed that residents of Hong Kong, on average, had more enhanced pitch abilities compared to their counterparts living in Europe and North America (Wong et al., 2012). Studies show that English speakers tend to misinterpret an Arab speaker's steep continuous drop in pitch as an expression of negative affect, which is not, in fact, correct (Ward & Bayyari, 2010). For more discussion on speech perception, see Chapter 10.

TASTE

It has been shown that different ethnic groups vary only slightly in their ability to detect these four primary tastes: sweet, sour, bitter, and salty. There are many cross-cultural similarities related to taste. Across the globe, for example, human beings have learned to avoid rotten or spoiled foods; tastes associated with such products are typically described as very unpleasant. However, because of certain customary food practices passed on from one generation to the next, people in various parts of the world eat and enjoy a wide range of decayed or fermented foods (Rozin & Fallon, 1987).

However, as might be expected, there are cross-cultural variations in taste preferences and beliefs about basic flavors (Laing et al., 1993). For example, people in the regions closer to the equator generally prefer spicier foods, compared with their counterparts living in colder climates farther to the north or south. Therefore, Italians, in theory, might consider Scandinavian cuisine as bland and boring, whereas many people in Sweden or Denmark might refer to Lebanese or Thai food as too spicy. Of course, modern trade and travel continue to make people more familiar with other countries' cuisines. The smell and taste of some products tend to be extremely unpleasant to individuals unfamiliar with them. However, for those people who have eaten and enjoyed these foods since childhood, the tastes and smells are likely to be enjoyable. As an example, cheese is enjoyed in many parts of the world. Nevertheless, people who primarily eat cheese produced from cow milk may not like cheese made from goat milk. Yogurt as a fermented milk product is widely consumed in some parts of the world. Don't ask people who are not familiar with yogurt to try it: only a few would

dare. Many people in Russia and some other countries enjoy eating beef tongue. People in different regions do not mind eating cooked snails and bugs. Or in others, maggot cheese, roasted guinea pig, bull testicles, fish semen, and warthog anus are gladly consumed. Would you care to try any of these? Can you come up with other examples of food products that are enjoyed in some countries and regions but rejected in others? We will revisit the topic of taste perception in Chapter 7, when we analyze hunger in the context of motivation.

SMELL

We recognize odors based on the experiences we have had with them. Most people in the Sherpa ethnic group in Nepal years ago did not encounter fish and, therefore, did not group various fish odors together. Japanese fishermen, on the other hand, distinguished many smells of fish (Ueno, 1993).

Across time and cultures, people associated pleasant orders with high moral values. In history, sensory pleasure was associated with moral teachings. Not surprisingly, the earliest attempts to produce pleasant smells came from religious practices. In addition, the presence of pleasant odors was associated with high class and power. In Buddhism, the pleasant smoke emanating from a censer (a container in which incense is burned) purifies the place of worship. In Christianity, prayers are often accompanied by the enjoyable smoke of frankincense and myrrh (Friedlander, 2013).

Although researchers better understand the physiology of the olfactory sense today than ever before, our knowledge about how smell affects behavior is limited. Some studies have shown that women, on average, tended to rate odors as more intense and to identify them more accurately than men in a cross-national sample involving Switzerland, United Kingdom, and Singapore (Sivam et al., 2013). Studies consistently show that having a pleasant odor in the car has a positive impact on safe driving (Dmitrenko et al., 2020; Baron & Kalsher, 1996). However, many stories on cross-cultural variations in olfactory perception are mostly anecdotal and focus mainly on cross-cultural differences in odor preferences and prevailing odors.

TOUCH AND PAIN

The sense of touch consists of a combination of at least three qualities: pressure, temperature, and pain. The last one has received the most attention from cross-cultural psychologists. Many individual and situational characteristics (e.g., skin texture, age, social status, presence or absence of other people, and knowledge of one's current condition) can determine a person's perception of pain. Anxiety can increase pain. Anger can inhibit it. Love, pride, or fear of embarrassment can cause some people to conceal even the most excruciating pain.

Cultural norms and religious beliefs influence people's experience of pain as well as their coping with pain and traumatic symptoms (Zheng & Gray, 2015; Morse & Park, 1988). For example, in many ways Western clinical tradition has shown a tendency to

dichotomize mind and body and refer to pain within these two spheres. Other traditions, such as Chinese traditional medicine, place a stronger emphasis on holistic methods (see Chapter 3) and holistic thinking, thus treating both physical and emotional pain as integral parts of human functioning. In practical terms, these traditions may result in the fact that Chinese patients who have serious emotional problems are more likely than Europeans to refer to their physical (rather than psychological) symptoms and tend to underemphasize the psychological components of emotional distress, relative to their Western counterparts (Zheng & Gray, 2015). We will return to this subject later in Chapter 9 when we discuss psychological disorders.

Subjective reports of labor pain are lower in societies where childbirth is not considered to be a defiling event and where little comfort is offered to women in labor. Differences in the ability to endure pain are often a function of the circumstances in which the perception of pain is occurring. People exposed to harsh living and working conditions often become less susceptible to pain than those who live and work in more comfortable conditions (Clark & Clark, 1980). People without adequate access to health care tend to use a higher threshold to define "unbearable pain," compared with those with guaranteed medical care (Halonen & Santrock, 1995).

However, other studies produced different results, which suggest that many other factors are involved in how people experience and report pain. In studies conducted in the United States, African Americans reported, on average, greater pain and suffering with medical conditions such as glaucoma, AIDS, migraine headache, jaw pain, joint pain, and arthritis, compared to whites (Campbell & Roberts, 2012). Native Americans and Alaska Natives reported a higher prevalence of pain symptoms and painful conditions when compared with the general population of the United States (Jimenez et al., 2011).

Still, little is known regarding the underlying mechanisms that influence cultural disparities in pain perception. Several studies have focused on neurobiological processes that could contribute to such differences. Social and psychological factors, such as traditions, contribute as well. African Americans, for example, have been found to have a stronger link between emotions and pain behaviors than non-Hispanic whites and report increased levels of depression associated with various chronic pain conditions. Socioeconomic factors play a significant role too. Studies show significantly lower rates of participation in health-promoting behaviors (such as regular health checkups) among African Americans. Not surprisingly, people who tend to be poor also tend overall to receive inadequate health care, compared to other groups. For example, they were less likely to receive pain medications, receive lower doses of pain medications, and have longer wait times in the emergency room (Campbell & Roberts, 2012). Researchers continue to provide useful knowledge to medical professionals about cultural similarities and differences in the experience of pain, and how best to treat both acute and chronic pain, such as in palliative care contexts (Kolmar & Kamal, 2018).

CROSS-CULTURAL SENSITIVITY

Years ago, in an interview with a local newspaper, the *Cambridge Chronicle*, a Massachusetts training police officer suggested that members of several ethnic groups accustomed to eating spicy foods, such as cayenne peppers, were less susceptible (as suspects in dangerous situations) to the use of pepper spray against them. Among these allegedly "high-resistance-to-pepper-spray" groups were Mexican Americans, Pakistanis, and members of Louisiana's Cajun population. Fortunately, the Cambridge police commissioner corrected his subordinate, noting that there is no scientific evidence to support any beliefs about the pepper spray insusceptibility of certain ethnic groups (see Police Apologize for Spice Remark. *Reuters*, August 16, 1999). One might comment that this incident took place years ago, so it may be outdated. However, as you have probably noticed, such stereotypical statements related to people's sensory and perceptual experiences are common in our daily conversations. We notice that some people say, "Indian immigrants in Europe should be tolerant of humidity," or that "You Russian–Americans (or Norwegian–Americans, or any other Nordic–Americans) shouldn't be bothered by cold weather." (In fact, one of the authors of this book – *not* the one from Los Angeles – is subjected to constantly hearing this statement every cold winter.) Have you overheard or read similar statements? Recall and discuss them. Think critically and understand that the scope of individual perceptual differences within a group is often significantly greater than differences between groups.

PROPRIOCEPTIVE SENSES

Proprioceptive sense helps people register body position and movement. Individual variations in our ability to detect and then coordinate body position can be substantial. Cultural differences, based on averages, do exist. For instance, members of non–Western cultures tend to exhibit higher levels of awareness about their bodies, but lower levels of *interoceptive* accuracy (the ability to consciously perceive the physical condition of the body). Moreover, cultural practices involving meditation, yoga, and exercises in mindfulness, tend to facilitate bodily awareness, but do not improve actual accuracy of the body's symptoms (Ma–Kellams, 2014). In a broader sense, there are cultural differences in locating one's body in relation to other objects and natural landmarks. Indo–European languages tend to use an ego–centric system of directions that is relative to the self. For example: "A woman is standing on the left side of the BBQ grill." Other languages use a geo–centric system, for example: "A woman is on the ocean side of her village." However, in today's world of communications, people easily acquire and utilize both systems of location and direction (Haun et al., 2006). Cultural stereotypes about body control remain popular. We frequently hear judgments that Romanians and Chinese are

great in gymnastics, Russians are superb in ballet, Australians are fantastic in swimming, or East Asians are excellent in martial arts. And there may in fact be some truth in these judgments. However, such stereotypes should not encourage anyone to accept any valid generalizations about the relationship between culture and proprioceptive senses.

PERCEPTION OF TIME

Talk to several people who have traveled or lived abroad. They can tell you what they noticed about how people in different cultures perceive and treat time guidelines. One of our colleagues from the Caribbean once jokingly said that on his island, people are generally not counting every minute compared with her colleagues from the United States. True, on the average, people in the West tend to define punctuality using precise measures of time: 1 minute, 15 minutes, two hours, and so forth. In other, more traditional, cultures, time is typically measured by significantly longer intervals (Hall, 1959). Akbar (1991), who compared perceptions of time in European American and African cultures, also acknowledged Westerners' emphasis on precise measurements of time. He suggested that time in the West is treated mostly as a commodity or product that can be bought and sold like any other item for consumption, whereas in the African system, time historically was not viewed as a commodity. Studies also showed that perception of time is associated with people's achievement motivation: Ambitious people compared to those who are less ambitious considered wasted time as more unpleasant and seeming to last longer (Shannon, 1976). Take punctuality – the personal quality of being "on time". Studies have shown that definitions of punctuality or being on time varied substantially among individuals. But they also varied across countries and cultural features, such as collectivism, power distance (discussed in Chapter 1), and beliefs in people's ability to control or change things in life (to be addressed in Chapter 10) (White et al., 2010).

In general, in so-called *monochronic cultures*, time is a key tool and method of organizing life and business. People in such cultures value a precise linear schedule. People in so-called *polychronic cultures* tend to have a more flexible approach to time. Polychronic cultures appear to value more spontaneity (and less precision) in business and in daily life (Meyer, 2014).

Affluence may have something to do with the way people treat time. Hamermesh (2003) conducted a cross-cultural analysis of affluent people in the United States, Germany, Australia, Canada, and South Korea. The study showed that across cultures, as people's incomes rise, they express more dissatisfaction about the lack of time they experience. Of course, as people's wealth increases, so do the number of opportunities available to them. However, as this demand increases, the "supply" of time does not grow. Therefore, time becomes more valuable, and people become increasingly frustrated about the lack of it.

In studies published over an extended period (Abou-Hatab, 1997; Meleis, 1982), researchers paid attention to an interesting aspect of Arab culture: Time orientation is less-structured in individuals in Arab cultures than in Western cultures. For example, individuals of Arab descent in traditional settings may display a tendency to be more

interested in and focused on events or circumstances that are present or occurring "now," and may pay less attention to those expected or scheduled to happen sometime in the future. Some studies suggest that this tendency in perception of time may have an impact on how psychotherapy clients of Arab descent perceive their tasks during therapy. Some of them may need extra effort from the therapist to accept a particular timetable for behavioral or cognitive changes (Erickson & Al-Timimi, 2001). It is also important to be cautious not to overgeneralize: Being Arab or Arab American does not mean one has a certain predetermined pattern of perception of time that is significantly different from other people's perception. Keep in mind that many of these studies were conducted some time ago. Today, however, information technology and global travel are making time perception increasingly uniform across the world.

There are different methods or systems of organizing and representing time in a specific order. Most people on earth use the Gregorian calendar, which has religious origin and, since its adoption in the sixteenth century, counts years since the incarnation of Jesus. Other major religions also have their own calendars. The first year of the Islamic calendar, for example, is the year when Mohammed moved from Mecca to Medina. In North Korea, the official calendar starts in 1912, on the birthday of the late communist leader Kim Il-sung. The official calendar of Taiwan also starts in 1912, the year of the founding of the Republic of China.

While, in the Judeo-Christian tradition, life is represented linearly and its end is death, in Hinduism, life is represented circularly. People live and die many times. The African time concept is very diverse, but can be seen as very elastic and includes events that have already taken place, those that are taking place right now, and even those that will happen. Time can be experienced through one's own individual life and through the life of the tribe to which each individual belongs (Nobles, 1991). In Swahili – the language widely used in Eastern and Central Africa – two words indicate time: *sasa* and *zamani*. The first word stands for the present and generates a sense of immediacy. The second one indicates the past, but not merely as a "warehouse" of time. It is also a connector of individual souls. Most African peoples perceive human history in the natural rhythm of moving from *sasa* to *zamani*. The life cycle is renewable. After physical death, if a person is remembered by relatives and friends, this person would continue to exist in the *sasa* dimension. When the last person who knew the deceased finally dies, that means the end for that individual.

People of the Bun group in Papua New Guinea do not see their past as a series of interconnected events in a cause-and-effect chain. For them, change is always dramatic and complete, and discontinuity is a requirement of change. This concept of time affects social behavior. People have deep-seated expectations about how social change will take place, so they expect dramatic reolutions when everything should change (McDowell, 1988).

Various authors have reported about another apparently cross-cultural tendency: People notice an apparent acceleration of self-reflected time flow experienced with age. In diaries, self-observations, personal recollections, and other sources, many older people notice that time seems to run quicker for them now than it did when they were

younger. However, these observations are subjective and have not yet been verified experimentally. Laboratory studies that measured the impact of age on perception of time intervals have been somewhat inconsistent in their results (Jain et al., 2022; Wearden et al., 1997).

PERCEPTION OF THE BEAUTIFUL

The song "Let It Be" performed by the Beatles, a Mexican folk ballad, a dress designed by Vera Wang, a Peruvian picturesque poncho, a Persian rug, a Nigerian ivory statuette, the Taj Mahal mausoleum, or a Chinese porcelain vase – these creations all can be enjoyed by anyone and everyone on the planet. The term **aesthetic experience**, or perception of the beautiful, is used to identify the feeling of pleasure evoked by stimuli that are perceived as nice, attractive, or rewarding. There is a field of science called *neuroesthetics* that studies the neurophysiological bases of art (Huston et al., 2015). Researchers suggest that aesthetic preferences and responses are generally guided by a set of physiological laws or principles (Huston et al., 2015; Berlyne, 1960, 1974). People seek certain stimuli because the activity of dealing with them is pleasant. Others consider aesthetic appreciation as curiosity and stimulus-seeking activities (see Chapter 7 on intrinsic motivation). Berlyne (1971) found that the characteristics of a stimulus that generally evoke curiosity, joy, and appreciation are those such as novelty, ambiguity, incongruity, and complexity (Zeki & Nash, 1999; Berlyne, 1971).

Several common perceptual mechanisms are correlated with similarities across cultures in regard to aesthetic appreciation. For example, empirical studies have shown that participants from different cultures displayed similarities in their evaluations of various works of art, primarily paintings (Child, 1969). Many similarities in perception and appreciation of beauty were found in different cultural groups despite socioeconomic differences among them (Berlyne, 1974; Ross, 1977). For instance, in a survey conducted by Nasar (1984), both Japanese and U.S. subjects were asked to evaluate videotapes and slides of urban street scenes in each country. An examination of preference scores revealed that both groups preferred foreign scenes to native ones, as well as the scenes of orderly and clean streets with very few vehicles on them.

Beware though. There are tremendous inconsistencies in how people see and interpret both "beautiful" and "ugly" creations. For instance, in the history of Western painting, impressionism as a new artistic genre initially was publicly ridiculed and rejected (Kandel, 2012). Many years later it became an internationally acclaimed style, and collectors began to pay huge sums of money for impressionist paintings. When the Eiffel tower was first built in Paris, many people condemned this grandiose landmark and considered it ugly. Today, who can imagine Paris without the Eiffel tower?

What is considered tasteful and beautiful is not confined within geographic regions or among particular ethnic groups. Many national patterns become international, captivating the minds and influencing the behaviors of millions of people. To illustrate, consider

kawaii, a Japanese artistic style of design. Rooted in the celebration of youthfulness and cuteness and conveyed by neat stories and playful designs of bright colors, *kawaii* has become popular outside of Japan and can even be seen influencing street fashion in Europe, the United States, and many other countries. A Japanese school of flower arrangement called *ikebana* has received wide international acclaim and found multitudes of followers around the world, including psychotherapists (Fortuna, 2021).

CRITICAL THINKING

AS BEAUTIFUL AS . . . YOUR MONEY CAN BUY

Beautiful things sell. Art collectors and art dealers around the world know this well. Today many classical paintings change hands, not for thousands, but for many millions of dollars. However, does the price tag on a painting or sculpture determine how beautiful the creation is? Why are the smallest paintings by Cezanne or pencil sketches by da Vinci almost priceless, whereas a beautiful original colorful landscape could be purchased for €20 from a street artist in Rome? Very often, people first assign and attach monetary value to particular pieces of art and, only then, do they begin evaluating this art from the standpoint of aesthetic perception. If a sculpture is considered "famous" or a song "popular" by the media, are most of us likely to consider the sculpture "beautiful" and the song "cool"? Similarly, consider how the fashion industry promotes and sells its products to the public. Try to think of some other examples of how things become "beautiful," simply because the media promote these images. Do you think that we need to find new ways of explaining what is beautiful and what is not, or do you think that we can rely on the free market to influence how we define beauty?

Cultural aesthetic standards generally are widely defined; however, they can also be limited in appearance and narrowly defined. For example, in the countries in which governments, for religious and/or political reasons, restrain the free flow of information, standards of beauty and ugliness are typically precisely defined. As a consequence of such ideological pressures, people's choices are limited and certain items – make-up, clothing (or lack of it), music, or even hairstyles, for example – quickly become dominant, especially among the young.

As we have learned, most psychologists these days share the belief that sensory differences among cultures are insignificant and their impact on human behavior is minimal. In general, the universal similarity in the anatomy and physiology of human sensory organs and the nervous system clearly suggests that sensory impressions and their transmission through the perceptual system are basically the same across cultures. Despite these similarities, however, people often define beautiful and ugly things very differently, with the bulk of that effect due to cultural factors in our aesthetic perceptions.

PERCEPTION OF MUSIC

The traditional music of different cultures may fluctuate in notion and harmony. For instance, conventional Western harmony is different from Japanese and Indian styles (Sadie, 1980). In many non-Western traditions, the idea of the note as a stable, sustained pitch is rather unusual. Some Indian and Japanese musical intervals – or tonal dyads differing only slightly in frequency ratio – are perceived as extreme dissonance for the listener in the West and are usually avoided by composers and musicians. However, these intervals appear to be beautiful and are used freely in the classic music of Japan and India (Maher, 1976).

Contemporary Western music notation reflects the underlying general perception of beauty developed in Western culture. Perceptual problems that can cause displeasure in the Western listener – such as those who are born and raised in Sweden, Italy, or Ukraine – may occur because of the different scales, intervals, and rhythmic patterns used in Western and non-Western music. In non-Western cultures – for example, in Middle Eastern Islamic countries – classical music for the most part is not written down in advance, as is the practice in Europe and America. Notwithstanding the fact that written notations are found in many cultures around the world, in many non-Western countries, classical music is usually improvised on framework-like patterns. In fact, in these societies many types of music exist mostly in performance. Nevertheless, one should not exaggerate cultural differences in musical perception. Contemporary mass media, social networks, global trade, and interpersonal contacts provide unique opportunities for many people to learn, understand, and appreciate different musical styles. Take, for example, K-pop (Korean pop music) that is influenced by multiple styles and genres from around the world including pop, R&B, hip hop, electronic, disco, rock, jazz, as well as its traditional Koran music roots.

CONSCIOUSNESS AND CULTURE

Culture is an inseparable attribute of human **consciousness** – the subjective awareness of one's own sensations, perceptions, and other experiences. It is a process that comprises several states or stages. The "normal" flow of consciousness may consist of periods of full attention and concentration or relative detachment from the outside events. Periods of wakefulness are transformed by periods of sleep. Under various circumstances, meditation, psychoactive substances, trance, or hypnotic suggestion can alter the normal flow of consciousness. However, the very concept of consciousness is elusive, thus making its cross-cultural examination particularly difficult.

From the dawn of scientific exploration of mental life, ancient thinkers were aware of the various states of consciousness. Major ideas about human consciousness were developed within the Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Hindu, Buddhist, and other theological schools of thought (Smith, 1991). They presented fundamental ideas about the soul as immortal,

divine, and either separable or inseparable from the body. With further development
of philosophy and science, two types of fundamental views on consciousness were
established. One view was held by the monists, who believed in the inseparability of the
body and soul. The second view was held by the dualists, who recognized an independent
existence of body and soul. Both philosophical platforms still affect many people's (and
many cultures') views on consciousness.

The idea of individual consciousness as dependent on socialization experiences and
other cultural factors was developed throughout the twentieth century by several
psychologists, such as Wundt (1913), Vygotsky (1978[1932]), and Piaget (1963).
According to the psychological anthropologist Hallowell (1955), people live within a
behavioral environment – a mental representation of time, space, and the interpersonal
world. Specific cultural beliefs and practices shape the individual's consciousness.
For example, among the Ojibwa Indians (who are historically from the territories
of today's southern Canada and the northern Midwestern United States), studied by
Hallowell, their behavioral environment included the self, other people, their gods,
existing relatives, and deceased ancestors. Thus, when considering an action with moral
consequences, the Ojibwa consider possible impacts of the action on spirits and relatives
(Hallowell, 2010; 1976).

Consciousness directs human behavior in ways that are adaptive to physical and
social environments. People tend to focus on things that are important for survival,
development, or the accomplishment of a specific goal. An Uber driver in New York
City, for instance, would definitely pay attention to traffic updates on the smartphone,
whereas a tourist from South Africa may not attend to them at all while strolling down
7th Avenue. Consciousness devotes extra cognitive resources to information that may
be particularly meaningful for individual adaptation. For instance, the contents of the
consciousness of Ifaluk, a people of Micronesia in the Pacific Ocean, reflect the way their
culture structures reality: People are always aware of their immediate location because life
depends on successful navigation of the surrounding ocean (Lutz, 1982).

Popular opinion has held that consciousness patterns of people living in the West are
essentially linear, pragmatic, and rational (Jackson, 1991). If this is the case, one might

INTEGRATIVE
(continuum between the two conceptual polarities)

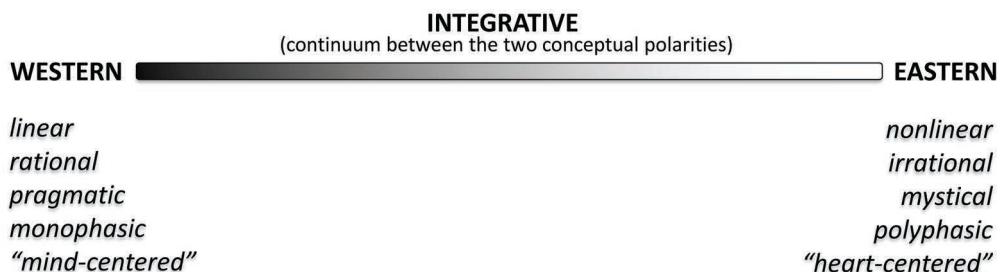| WESTERN		EASTERN
linear		nonlinear
rational		irrational
pragmatic		mystical
monophasic		polyphasic
"mind-centered"		"heart-centered"

Figure 4.1 Consciousness: Common Perceptions of Western versus Eastern Attributes

hypothesize that such linear elements of consciousness should be prevalent in various forms of Western art. That is, if consciousness is rational, it should be reflected in very "rational" forms of artistic expression. However, the history of Western art (literature and painting, for example) is much more complicated, exhibiting numerous examples of nonlinear, mystical, multidimensional, and irrational views reflected by the writer's pen or the artist's paintbrush. Existentialism and symbolism in literature, cubism, expressionism, and primitivism in painting, and modernism in music are all examples of irrational and nonlinear perception and reflection of reality by Western artists, many of whom have multi-cultural roots and experiences.

Perhaps one of the best illustrations of a nonlinear perception of life is the literary world of Gabriel García Marquez, one of the most influential writers of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. A Colombian native, he spent most of his life in Mexico and Europe as a journalist and writer. Take, in particular, his most famous novel, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. The main characters in the book live within several time dimensions. It seems that they are not concerned with time at all. Occasionally, the past is diminished into a single moment, and then the future becomes present and twisted in a mysterious way. The dead return home, and those who are alive disappear into the skies without a trace. Consciousness becomes circular and brings back memories and transfers individuals in time and space. Analyzing Marquez's work, one can find elements of Catholic religious doctrine, Spanish cultural tradition, and Native Indian beliefs. Such a mixture of different influences reflected in the author's mind and in his literary works seems to reveal many fascinating aspects of human consciousness. Please, read *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Marquez. See if you find it challenging to confine human consciousness within the simplistic boundaries of Western or non-Western labels.

SLEEP AND THE CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE OF DREAMS

At this moment, about a third of the world population is sleeping. **Sleep** is a non-waking state of consciousness characterized by general unresponsiveness to the environment and general physical immobility.

During sleep, responsiveness to external, and particularly visual, stimulation is diminished, but it is not entirely absent (Antrobus, 1991). There are tremendous individual variations in sleep patterns and experiences. Cultural practices, sleeping arrangements, and general environmental conditions can influence people's responsiveness to external stimulation during sleep. There are also individual variations in terms of duration of sleep. In every country around the world, some individuals sleep for five or six hours, whereas others need up to nine or ten hours.

Since the dawn of their existence, humans have wondered about both the nature and significance of **dreams**, story-like sequences of images occurring during sleep. McManus and coauthors (1993) make a distinction between two types of cultures in terms of

their interpretation of dreams. *Monophasic* cultures value cognitive experiences that take place only during normal waking phases and do not incorporate dreams into the process of social perception and cognition. Dreams are regarded as indirect indications of the dreamer's concerns, fears, and desires (Bourguignon, 1954). *Polyphasic* cultures value dreams and treat them as part of reality. The first type of culture is typically associated with a materialistic worldview on psychological experience, whereas the second type of culture is associated with the spiritual or traditional view.

For centuries, people considered dreams as experiences accumulated by the dreamer's traveling soul or revelations conveyed to the dreaming individual from the spiritual world. This polyphasic view on dreams can also be found in contemporary cultural groups. Moss (1996) described several core elements in the traditional dream practice of the Iroquois, a Native American tribe. Dreams are perceived as flights of the soul, which leaves the body and travels in space and time. Therefore, dreams are real events and should be taken literally. Dreams often demand action because they indicate something that the person has failed to perform or must reconsider while awake. For the Iroquois, dreams also yield information about future events. Similarly, Araucanos in Chile believe that dreams help to communicate with other people and are related to future events (Krippner, 1996). Among many native peoples in Australia, it is believed that people can travel in their dreams for particular purposes. Among some African tribes there is a conviction that both the living and deceased relatives can communicate with the dreamer. Dreams can be transmitted from one person to another, and some people can do so with malicious purposes. Zambian shamans tended to believe they could diagnose a patient's illness through information contained in that patient's dreams (Bynum, 1993).

Traditional psychological theories of dream interpretation – including Freudian and Jungian psychoanalysis in the first half of the twentieth century – pay most attention to the latent, hidden parts from the regular person's content of dreams. Usually, therapists would try to interpret the meaning of the dream, something that is not obvious to the dream-teller, who is the person receiving psychoanalysis. Less attention in most Western therapies is given to the manifest content, that is, to the literal sequence of events reported by the dream-teller. In polyphasic cultures, people typically consider dreams as a source of individual guidance; dreams are readily shared and their meaning is discussed with others (Murray, 1999). Studies of dream interpretations in traditional societies show that the actual content of the dream – the story told by the person – is often interpreted literally and may serve as an important process that initiates adaptive behaviors (Pratt, 2000).

Contemporary science has developed several views on the nature of dreams. Some neuroscientists, for example, suggest that dreams are pure (and largely random) biological phenomena with no veiled psychological meaning (Eagleman & Vaughn, 2020). Other theories (Hobson, 2002) suggest that during this altered state of consciousness, the brain stem is activating itself internally. This activation does not contain any ideas, emotions, wishes, or fears per se. The forebrain produces dream imagery from "noisy" signals sent to it from the brain stem. As this activation is transmitted through the thalamus to the visual and association zones of the cerebral cortex, the individual tries to make sense of it.

Because the initial signals are essentially random in nature, the interpretations proposed by the cortex rarely make complete logical sense. However, as studies have shown, the issues that are most relevant to the individual find a way to enter dreams in some way because the incoming signals are compared with the dreamer's existing knowledge and attitudes (Cartwright, 1992; Foulkes, 1985). In other words, real-life experiences influence our dreams (Kern & Roll, 2001).

What can we infer from the scientific view about cultural differences in the content of people's dreams? Dream researchers have developed standardized dream questionnaires in which common thematic elements are grouped together. These questionnaires, which have been translated into various languages, provide fascinating insight into the dream world of large groups of people and identify commonalities and differences in the thematic content of dreams across cultures. Despite substantial differences in the manifest content of dreams (i.e., the actual content of the recalled dream), the latent content (the dream's "meaning") is believed to be cross-culturally comparable. The similarities in the way people describe the content of their dreams were demonstrated in an early Japanese–U.S. study (Griffith et al., 1958). Students in both groups reported having dreams about falling, eating, swimming, death, snakes, finding money, examinations, being unable to move, and various sexual experiences. (Do these dream images and themes seem familiar to you?)

Researchers have compared hundreds of dream reports collected relatively recently in Canada and compared them with a sample of hundreds of dream reports gathered back in the 1960s in the United States and Canada. The similarities between the older and newer American and Canadian samples were significant (Dale et al., 2016). In another study, two groups of subjects in Hong Kong and Germany also showed a substantial overlap in the list of topics of most frequent dreams. Dreams about college activities and scary dreams about being chased by somebody have been the two most prevalent themes for both groups. (Again, are these common for you?) Dreams about sexual experiences were recalled more commonly among the German students, but the difference was small. Comparing these data to the study of Canadian students, researchers found out that college experiences were mentioned considerably less in the dreams of North Americans. Is this because of the differences in educational cultures and the types of psychological pressure students encounter in these countries? For example, dreams about failing an exam were common among Chinese and German students, but not necessarily among Canadian students (Rehman, 2015; Yu, 2008).

A study of a sample of Zulu South Africans (aged 25–92 years) showed substantial differences between urban and rural subjects. Less educated and less affluent individuals from the rural areas tended to consult with dream interpreters and act in response to dreams much more often than the urban participants. Moreover, subjects with less education were more likely than others to report the specific impact of dreams on their lives. Older respondents were more likely to experience dreams as a direct communication with ancestors and were more likely than others to respond to dreams with prayer and other rituals (Thwala et al., 2000).

Dream scenarios are, by definition, subjective and personal, but they are enacted within the stage set by the dreamer's social, economic, and cultural reality (Roll et al., 1976). A series of dream studies over several years involved hundreds of Palestinian, Kurdish, and Finnish children (Valli et al., 2006; Punamaki & Joustie, 1998). Some subjects were selected from working-class and middle-class Finnish suburbia and others were taken from several areas in the Middle East with reported high and low levels of political confrontation and violence within them. The severely traumatized children reported a significantly greater number of dreams, and, not surprisingly, their dreams included a higher number of threatening dream events. The Kurdish and Palestinian children (compared to the other children in the study) – especially those who lived in a violent social environment – reported having highly intense and vivid dreams, which incorporated aggression and persecution as main themes. In Finnish children, dreams contained anxiety scenes that involved mostly guilt and shame. The authors interpreted the results by referring to social and cultural conditions in the samples under study. The Finnish society tends to be more individualistic than the Palestinian society and therefore more oriented toward the experiences directed into individuals themselves. The Finnish children, on average, are less interdependent than Arab children. Also, according to cultural traditions, the Finnish understanding of dreaming is based predominantly on the importance of individual psychological reality. In contrast, according to the Arab tradition, dreaming is mainly understood as a message from external forces to guide the dreamer.

Specialists in Turkish folklore identified a typical theme in dreams reported by males: the quest, both physical and spiritual, for the most gorgeous and beautiful woman in the world. Researchers speculated that this preoccupation was likely to be linked to the old tradition of arranged marriage (Walker, 1993). According to this traditional practice, many Turkish men were not permitted to see their brides before the time of the wedding. This emotional deprivation creates a state of secret admiration and fascination of the future wife. Another explanation, however, can be offered: Because the relatives of the bride and groom commonly arranged many Turkish marriages, most men's relationships with women lack the important elements of romanticism and adventure. As a result, men "compensate" in their dreams for this missing romantic activity and experience. With passage of time and the changing of cultural norms, we can assume that the contents of dreams are changing as well.

Now, imagine somebody from a different country is sharing with you his or her recent dream and asks you to explain it. Could you do that? Some people claim that they can accurately interpret any dream upon hearing it. Of course, one must doubt the validity of such propositions. Besides little-known psychological factors, there are numerous contextual influences that affect not only the dream but also the way it is recalled, shared, and interpreted. Here are some questions that you would probably want to ask when you listen to someone's dream. What has motivated the person to recall and tell you the dream in the first place? (Is it a teacher's assignment, your request, or a spontaneous conversation?) Under what circumstances or social context is the dream recalled? Who else is present during the dream recollection? What is the relationship between the dream-teller and the listener? How is dreaming understood in the dreamer's culture? Conversely,

how is dreaming understood in the listener's culture? What meaning do certain dream symbols carry in the studied cultures? As you can see, there is a lot to consider before proffering an "accurate" interpretation.

CRITICAL THINKING

CAN DREAMS REALLY PREDICT ANYTHING?

Popular stories recount celebrated discoveries that have taken place during sleep. The famous benzene ring and the periodic system of chemical elements were allegedly "discovered" by their creators in their dreams. In many famous fairy tales, literary works, and film creations, heroes and heroines read important life forecasts in their sleep. We all know that across the planet, many people believe that dreams can predict the future or may be considered an omen of something to come. It was a belief in Turkey that if one discloses a dream about receiving a favor before the favor is offered, then the event foretold in the dream may end in disaster (Walker & Uysal, 1990). A popular Russian calendar of dreams predicts, year after year, that a tooth lost in one's dream means misfortune for this person in the future. Around the world, books are written, and manuals published on how to interpret dreams. Why do so many people maintain such attitudes toward dreams and their meaning?

First, with respect to predictions, some neuroscientists and psychologists (Bugalho et al., 2020) do analyze dreams' content, but for a different purpose: to predict possible symptoms of psychological disorders, such as depression, cognitive disorders, or Parkinson's disease.

Second, we need to take into consideration that superstition can be a powerful regulator of behavior. Some people follow superstitions blindly, without any conscious attempt to think critically. Meanwhile, the meaning of some dreams can be rationalized. Imagine a person has a dream about a car accident. When the dream content does not coincide with an actual car accident the day after the dream, the content of the dream can be easily forgotten. However, if an accident really does happen, he or she is likely to cite the dream: "I *knew* this was going to happen because I saw it in my dream!"

Third, utilizing critical thinking skills can minimize (or even eliminate) our dependence on dream interpretation as reliable or valid predictors of the future. Although dreams can certainly affect our emotions, and perhaps even our thoughts as well, that's not the same thing as actually forecasting real-world events. We all may have had the experience of having a dream that turns out to come true. But as a good critical thinker, ask yourself this simple question: How many total dreams have you had – throughout the span of your entire life – that actually turn out to be true? And approximately how many have *not*?

No matter how psychologists explain dreams, researchers can provide plenty of interesting facts about the interaction between culture and the psychological experiences of dreams (Roll, 1987). Dreams not only reflect our individual physiological characteristics, our private world of hopes, fears, and concerns, but they also mirror the cultural environment in which people live.

BEYOND ALTERED STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Altered states of consciousness (ASC) is the general name for phenomena that are different from normal waking consciousness and include mystic perceptual and sensory experiences, such as meditation, hypnosis, trance, and possession (Wittmann, 2018; Ward, 1994). Like Cinderella in the famous fairy tale – the neglected outcast daughter in her stepmother's family – ASC for many years was not highly regarded by Western academic psychologists. The rapid development of empirical research, based on the pragmatism and positivism of European science and coupled with the skepticism encouraged by the Enlightenment era, contributed to the lack of scholarly attention to ASC. In most research universities in the West, until as recently as two decades ago, ASC was considered mostly as abnormal phenomena, even linked in some cases to mental illness (Warner, 1994).

Meanwhile, ASC is a widely reported phenomenon across the globe. The different forms of ASC are identified in most cultural groups and may be viewed as special forms of human experience (Wittmann, 2018; Laughlin et al., 1992; Ward, 1994). Let us consider several kinds of alternative states of consciousness.

Trance is a sleeplike state marked by reduced sensitivity to stimuli, loss or alteration of knowledge, and automatic motor activity. Trance can be induced by external sources, such as music, singing, and direct suggestion from another person. Trances may provide a sense of protection, wisdom, and greatness. For the group, it can provide an experience of togetherness and unity. Mass religious ceremonies, communal prayers, musical concerts, political gatherings, and other collective actions can also induce trance in the participants.

Psychologists may recognize a "possession trance," for example, when individuals report that their bodies and minds are invaded by a spirit or several spirits (Verginer & Juen, 2018). The possession experience is usually, but not always, recalled with fear and hesitation because of its traumatic significance. Trancelike experiences are described as parts of religious practices in many cultures (Bourguignon, 1994; 1976; Rosen, 1968). Contemporary Korean shamanism called *musok* continues to flourish in a modern-day society of electronic devices and instant communication. In South Korea, such direct communication also extends to multitudes of gods and spirits. Several hundred thousand professional mediators, mostly women called *manshin*, help with these contacts and perform possession trance techniques (Schlottmann, 2019; Sarfati, 2010). Quite a few religious groups consider trances as part of their regular religious experience (Taves, 1999).

Trance is more common in hunter–gatherer societies and among men than in women. Possession trance was more typical among women and those who were not from hunter–gatherer cultures (Bourguignon, 1976; Gussler, 1973; Lee & Ackerman, 1980). Some psychologists maintain a view that many shamanic practices involving ritualistic trance influence the brain's serotonin and opioid neurotransmitter systems – all affecting an individual's emotional states, behavioral responses, and even long-lasting belief systems (Winkelman, 2000). The same way as Prozac or Xanax can alter a person's mood and anxiety symptoms, many shamanic practices produce similar results. However, many of these devotees are not aware of this effect and continue to believe that shamans are capable of supernatural or magic healing. Numerous cultural groups today continue to practice self-induced trance as a form of "purification" from evil and emotional healing. For example, some Jewish groups in Israel practice *stambali* – an originally Tunisian trance–dance performed as a psychological crisis-intervention procedure and a healing ritual by Jewish–Tunisian immigrants (Jankowsky, 2010; Somer & Saadon, 2000).

There have been attempts to evoke trance states and similar experiences in laboratory settings. Neurophysiologist Michael Persinger (1945–2018) conducted one of the most intriguing and controversial studies on this topic. The participants in this study reported trance experiences when the temporal lobes in their brains were stimulated artificially with a weak magnetic field. Specifically, they reported feelings of great and "eternal" presence, omnipotence, serenity, and wisdom. According to one theory, trance is associated with the release of opiates in the body, which induces a temporary state of elation, euphoria, and excitement (Persinger, 2003). Such experiences were interpreted in a variety of ways, ranging from "divine" to "weird." These interpretations were contingent on the context in which the trance takes place, as well as the cultural background of those experiencing it: Religious subjects would talk about spiritual experiences, while skeptics would mention sensory disturbances.

Possession is probably best explained when it is evaluated simultaneously from the viewpoint of the observer, the "victim," and the community at large (Lee & Ackerman, 1980; Verginer & Juen, 2018). In this context, there are several scientific explanations related to cases of "demonic possession." One explanation concerns the stress accumulated by victims from job dissatisfaction, work conflicts, and economic hardship. Individuals who profess possession are, in this way, provided with culturally acceptable outlets for their previously restrained frustration (Halperin, 1996).

Beliefs about possession are also documented in many Slavic, German, Scandinavian, and other European folk tales. In Islamic countries, folk beliefs about possession include the concept of demons or *jinni*. Because these demons supposedly like wetness, they prefer to live near water, under old trees, in washrooms, in old ruins, as well as in cemeteries and waste dumps. If disturbed, these creatures get enraged, possess someone's body, and take revenge on the person's psyche. Many individuals who have experienced symptoms of possession report that they can identify the time and the place in which the possession

took place. Some claim, for instance, to have stepped on a demon while walking in the garden at night. Others believe they disturbed a demon who was living in the bathroom pipes or in nearby bushes. These beliefs today still are common in some traditional cultural communities and reflect, and even predict, many people's emotions and behavior (Johnson, 2021).

A CASE IN POINT

MASS HYSTERIA AND POSSESSION AS ALTERED STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Lee and Ackerman (1980) documented and analyzed a classic case of mass possession at a small college in West Malaysia. The incident involved several, mostly female, students who manifested various physical symptoms and bizarre behaviors, such as difficulty breathing, convulsive muscular contractions, and screaming. The victims were oblivious of their surroundings, went through dance frenzies, reported demonic possessions, and complained about seeing strange creatures. The "possessed" claimed that they became other beings because of the spirits that had taken over their body. *Bomohs*, traditional Malai healers, were summoned to help. They treated the possessed individuals by sprinkling them with holy water, sacrificing a small animal in an attempt to pacify the offended spirits, and furnishing talismans to the victims to protect them from evil spirits. Notably, when the healers confirmed the existence of spirits in the victims' bodies, it provoked further incidents of possession. Moreover, most people in the area believed that the symptoms of this altered state of consciousness were contagious.

Similar beliefs in demonic possession as the cause of particular mental disorders are found among people in many cultural and religious groups. The best-selling novel by William Peter Blatty (known to most people in the form of the 1973 Hollywood movie, *The Exorcist*) is a literary case of a wealthy mother in the United States who, unable to find effective medical treatment for a child who suffers from severe and disturbing psychological symptoms including possession trance, turns to religious healers, in this instance, Catholic priests (see Exercise 4.1).

Exorcism is a spiritual practice of removing demons or any other evil spiritual entities from an individual or a place that is believed to be possessed or invaded by these evil entities. Exorcism is a centuries-old practice and known in most world religions. Some experts claimed that the number of exorcisms in the end of the twentieth century was on the rise despite the growing educational level of global population (Martin, 1992). For example, in 2005, a Romanian monk and four other people were charged in the

death of a 23-year-old nun during an apparent exorcism. The woman was allegedly left without food for three days and died due to dehydration, exhaustion, and lack of oxygen. The monk, who belongs to the Orthodox branch of the church, reportedly explained that his actions were an attempt to rid the woman of the devil inside her. Although some professionals pay serious attention to exorcism and encourage its studies (Jones, 2008), most psychologists today consider it as a variant of age-old folk beliefs and associated rituals.

Meditation is a quiet and relaxed state of tranquility in which the individual aspires to integrate thoughts, perceptions, and attitudes. People who meditate often describe their experience as leading to a sense of liberation from the self or an expansion of conscious awareness. In Buddhism, for example, it is believed that meditation leads to a deepened and clearer understanding of reality (Ornstein, 1977). During meditation, a special state of consciousness can be achieved in which obstacles of private desire are completely dissolved. In *transcendental meditation*, the individual recites a *mantra* (a word, phrase, or sound repeated to aid concentration), practicing for 15–20 minutes once or twice per day while relaxing with the eyes closed. Transcendental meditation is utilized in both religious and non-religious contexts. Research has shown many positive short-term and long-term outcomes using this type of meditation (Bushell, 2009).

Meditation can be highly therapeutic because it is linked to reduced stress and anxiety (Collings, 1989). Contrary to contemporary scientific principles of psychotherapy – which emphasize control over the outcome of one's actions – in many types of meditation principles, detachment from others is valued. A meditating person seeks to withdraw the senses from objects of both pleasure and hardship. If the complete state of detachment is reached, then the individual is in a position to experience deep tranquility, serenity, and love. Those trained in detachment are far less subject to the stresses and strains of life, compared with people who do not practice meditation. Meditation techniques have also been used in modern counseling and psychotherapy, helping clients achieve mental and physical relaxation and reducing daily stresses (Hoge et al., 2022).

The contemporary psychological evidence suggests that the most fundamental mechanisms of sensation, perception, and the main states of consciousness – including both the normal flow of consciousness and its altered states – are likely to be universal across cultures. The important differences are primarily concerned with the specific content of these experiences and the ways by which people process information according to both overt rules and covert practices of their countries and communities. With the development of technologies, different human experiences are rapidly shared and learned by various cultural groups through digital and social media, television, movies, art, interpersonal contacts, and many other forms of communication. Still, there is a great deal that we still do not know about our diverse cognitive world and the cultural backgrounds underlying it. Hence, our studies continue . . .

EXERCISE 4.1

Watch the classic movie *The Exorcist*, which you can borrow from a friend or get online. Then, answer the following questions.

1. What kind of altered states of consciousness can you recognize in the main character of the movie: sleep and dreams, visionary trance, or possession trance?
2. There is a tradition known in many tribes around the world, such as in Mission Indians in California, to assign special duties of communicating with the spirit world to a medicine man or a shaman (Caprio, 1943). In the movie, who is given the duty to negotiate with and eventually expel the spirit from the girl's body?
3. How was the girl diagnosed in this film? Summarize and discuss the diagnoses given to the girl by various doctors. Why did they think she was ill? Do you agree?
4. What other cultures, besides Catholicism, were alluded to in the film?
5. Ask a few of your friends or family members (who have seen this film) whether or not they believe in demonic possession. Give your opinion of why the theme of possession (or being captured by evil spirits) could still be accepted among educated people.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

1. Our experience with the environment shapes our perception by creating perceptual expectations. These expectations, known as a perceptual set, make particular interpretations more likely to occur. They allow people to anticipate what they will encounter and, therefore, increase both the speed and efficiency of the perceptual process.
2. Several factors may contribute to differences in people's sensation and perception. These include physical and environmental conditions, genetic factors, socialization norms, and acculturation practices.
3. Studies on cross-cultural differences in the perception of simple patterns showed only small variations. Cross-cultural similarities in the drawing of visual patterns suggest the presence of a common mechanism for perceptual processes. Shape constancy of perception is significantly influenced by learning experiences. Culturally specific conditions determine which skills will improve in individuals in a particular culture and which skills will remain underdeveloped.
4. Psychologists offer several hypotheses that explain cultural differences in illusion susceptibility. The carpentered world hypothesis postulates a learned tendency among people, raised in an environment shaped by carpenters, to interpret nonrectangular figures as representations of rectangular figures seen in perspective.

5. There is a strong degree of similarity in the way color terms are used in different cultures. Moreover, verbal labels, if they are not available in the lexicon of a language, can be readily learned. Education, travel, interpersonal contacts, and the media can play a significant role in the development of color recognition and labeling.

6. There are perhaps common perceptual mechanisms that lead to similarities across cultures in the perception of time and in aesthetic appreciation. Many similarities in the perception of the beautiful were found in different cultural groups despite apparent socioeconomic differences among them. Because the traditional music of different cultures may differ in notion and harmony, there are some cultural differences in the perception of musical harmony.

7. The universal similarity in the anatomy and physiology of human sensory organs and the nervous system seems to make it likely that sensory impressions and their transmission through the perceptual system are comparable across cultures.

8. Consciousness is a process that has several stages or states. The "normal" flow of consciousness may consist of periods of full attention and concentration or relative detachment from the outside events. Periods of wakefulness are altered by periods of sleep. Under various circumstances, meditation, psychoactive substances, trances, or hypnotic suggestion can alter consciousness. The understanding of consciousness is based on general cultural views of mental life and the relationship between body and soul.

9. From a cultural standpoint, the normal flow of consciousness directs our behavior in ways that are adaptive in particular physical and social environments. Individual consciousness is dependent on socialization experiences, which, in turn are based on cultural factors, collective forms of existence, or shared collective experiences. Human consciousness develops together with the development of both physical and social environments. Increasing knowledge of the world at the same time broadens consciousness.

10. Both duration and patterns of sleep may vary individually and from culture to culture. Despite significant differences in the manifest content of dreams, the latent dream content is believed to be generally similar in people living in different cultures. Dreams not only reflect our private world but also mirror the environment in which we live. The dreaming individual's brain organizes and retrieves various images in a "culturally ascribed" manner.

11. Phenomena such as meditation, trance, hypnosis, and near-death experiences during coma are very common in practically every culture. While analyzing them a specialist should take into consideration personal characteristics of the studied individuals, their educational level, and position within the society. Specialists should also notice that certain life circumstances can influence individual experiences. Another set of conditions is a predominant cultural attitude toward altered states of consciousness expressed in the media, people's everyday conversations, or public opinion (if data are available).

KEY TERMS

Absolute threshold The minimum amount of physical energy needed for the observer to notice a stimulus.

Aesthetic experience A term used to identify the feeling of pleasure evoked by stimuli that are perceived as beautiful,

attractive, and rewarding. The term also refers to displeasure evoked by stimuli that are perceived as ugly, unattractive, and unrewarding.

Altered states of consciousness (ASC) The general name for phenomena that are different to normal waking consciousness and include mystic experiences, meditation, hypnosis, trance, and possession.

Behavioral environment A mental representation that orients people to dimensions such as time, space, and the interpersonal world.

Consciousness The subjective awareness of one's own sensations, perceptions, and other mental events.

Depth perception The organization of sensations in three dimensions, even though the image on the eye's retina is two–dimensional.

Difference threshold The lowest level of stimulation required to sense that a change in the stimulation has occurred.

Dreams Story-like sequences of images occurring during sleep.

Exorcism The spiritual practice of removing demons or any other evil

spiritual entities from an individual, or a place, believed to be possessed or invaded by these evil entities.

Meditation A quiet and relaxed state of tranquility in which the individual aspires to integrate emotions, attitudes, and thoughts.

Perception The process that organizes various sensations into meaningful patterns.

Perceptual set Perceptual expectations based on experience.

Sensation The process by which receptor cells are stimulated and transmit their information to higher brain centers.

Sensory adaptation The tendency of the sensory system to respond less to stimuli that continue without change.

Sleep A non–waking state of consciousness characterized by general unresponsiveness to the environment and general physical immobility.

Trance A sleeplike state marked by reduced sensitivity to stimuli, loss or alteration of knowledge, rapturous experiences, and the substitution of automatic for voluntary motor activity.

REFERENCES

Abed, F. (1991). Cultural influences on visual scanning patterns. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *22*(4), 525–534.

Abou-Hatab, F. (1997). Psychology from Egyptian, Arab, and Islamic perspectives: Unfulfilled hopes and hopeful fulfillment. *European Psychologist*, *2*(4), 356–365.

Adams, F., & Osgood, C. (1973). A cross-cultural study of the affective meaning of color. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *4*(*2*), 135–156.

Adelson, R. (2005). A cross-cultural study reveals how language shapes color perception. *Monitor of Psychology*, *36*(2), 26.

Akbar, N. (1991). The evolution of human psychology for African Americans. In R. Jones (Ed.), *Black psychology* (3rd ed., pp. 99–123). Berkeley, CA: Cobb & Henry.

Amenomouri, M., Kono, A., Fournier, J., & Winer, G. (1997). A cross-cultural developmental study of directional asymmetries in circle drawing. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *28*(6), 730–742.

Antrobus, J. (1991). Dreaming: Cognitive processes during cortical activation and high afferent thresholds. *Psychological Review*, *98*, 96–121.

Baron, R., & Kalsher, M. (1996). The sweet smell of . . . safety? *Proceedings of the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society*, *40*, 1282.

Berlyne, D. E. (1960). *Conflict, arousal, and curiosity*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Berlyne, D. E. (1971). *Aesthetics and psychobiology*. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts.

Berlyne, D. E. (1974). *Studies in the new experimental aesthetics*. New York: Wiley.

Berry, J. W., Poortinga, Y. H., Segall, M. H., & Dasen, P. R. (1992). *Cross-cultural psychology: Research and applications*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Best, D., Naylor, C., & Williams, J. (1975). Extension of color bias research to young French and Italian children. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *6*(4), 391–400.

Beveridge, W. M. (1940). Some differences in racial perception. *British Journal of Psychology*, *30*, 57–64.

Bigler, R., & Leaper, C. (2015). Gendered language: Psychological principles, evolving practices, and inclusive policies. *Policy Insights from the Behavioral and Brian Sciences*, *2*(1). https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/2372732215600452

Blakemore, C., & Cooper, G. F. (1970). Development of the brain depends on the visual environment. *Nature*, *228*, 477–478.

Boduroglu, A., Shah, P., & Nisbett, R. E. (2009). Cultural differences in allocation of attention in visual information processing. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *40*(3), 349–360.

Bourguignon, E. E. (1954). Dreams and dream interpretation. *American Anthropologist*, *56*(2), 262–268.

Bourguignon, E. E. (1976). *Possession*. San Francisco, CA: Chandler & Sharp.

Bourguignon, E. E. (1994). Trance and meditation. In P. K. Bock (Ed.), *Psychological anthropology* (pp. 297–314). Westport, CT: Praeger.

Bowern, C. (2008). *Linguistic fieldwork: A practical guide*. New York: Palgrave.

Boykin, A. (1994). Harvesting talent and culture: African-American children and educational reform. In R. Rossi (Ed.), *Schools and students at risk* (pp. 116–138). New York: Teachers College Press.

Boykin, A. W., & Cunningham, R. T. (2001). The effects of movement expressiveness in story content and learning context on the cognitive performance of African American children. *Journal of Negro Education*, *32*, 256–263.

Brislin, R. (1993). *Understanding culture's influence on behavior*. Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Bruner, J., & Goodman, C. (1947). Value and need as organizing factors in perception. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, *42*, 33–44.

Bugalho, P., Ladeira, F., Barbosa, R., Marto, J. P., Borbinha, C., Salavisa, M., Conceição, L., Saraiva, M., Fernandes, M., & Meira, B. (2020). Do dreams tell the future? Dream content as a predictor of cognitive deterioration in Parkinson's disease. *Journal of Sleep Research*, *30*(3), 131–163.

Bushell, W. (2009). Longevity: Potential life span and health span enhancement through practice of the basic yoga meditation regimen. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences1172*, 46.

Bynum, E. B. (1993). *Families and the interpretation of dreams: Awakening the intimate web.* New York: Harrington Park Press/Haworth Press.

Campbell, C., & Roberts, R. (2012). Ethnic differences in pain and pain management. *Pain Management, 2*(3), 219–230.

Caprio, F. (1943). A psycho-social study of primitive conceptions of death. *Criminal Psychotherapy, 5,* 303–317.

Cartwright, R. D. (1992). "Masochism" in dreaming and its relationship to depression. *Dreaming, 1,* 147–159.

Castelain, T., & Van der Henst J. B. (2021).The influence of language on spatial reasoning: Reading habits modulate the formulation of conclusions and the integration of premises. *Frontiers in Psychology, 12.* www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.654266

Child, I. E. (1969). Esthetic. In G. Lindsey & E. Aronson (Eds.), *The handbook of social psychology* (Vol. 3, pp. 853–916). Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Clark, H., & Clark, E. (1980). Pain response in Nepalese porters. *Science, 209,* 410–412.

Collings, G. (1989). Stress containment through meditation. *Prevention in Human Services, 6,* 141–150.

Dale, A., Lortie-Lussier, M., Wong, C., & De Koninck, J. (2016). Dreams of Canadian students: Norms, gender differences, and comparison with American norms. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 47*(7), 941–955.

Dawson, J., Yung, B., & Choi, P. (1974). Developmental influences in pictorial depth perception among Hong Kong Chinese children. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 5*(1), 3–22.

Deregowski, J. B. (1974). Teaching African children pictorial depth perception: In search of a method. *Perception, 3,* 309–312.

Deregowski, J. B., Muldrow, E. S., & Muldrow, W. F. (1972). Perceptual recognition in a remote Ethiopian population. *Perception, 1,* 417–425.

Dmitrenko, D., Maggioni, E., Brianza, G., Holthausen, B. E., Walker, B. N. & Obrist, M. (2020). Aroma therapy: Pleasant scents promote safer driving, better mood, and improved well-being in angry drivers. *Proceedings of the 2020 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computer Systems,* 1–13. https://doi.org/10.1145/3313831.3376176

Dziurawiec, S., & Deregowski, J. (1992). "Twisted perspective" in young children's drawings. *British Journal of Developmental Psychology, 10,* 35–49.

Eagleman, D., & Vaughn. D. (2020). The Defensive Activation theory: Dreaming as a mechanism to prevent takeover of the visual cortex. *Frontiers in Neuroscience, 15.* https://doi.org/10.3389/fnins.2021.632853

Erickson, C., & Al-Timimi, N. (2001). Providing mental health services to Arab Americans: Recommendations and considerations. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, 7*(4), 308–327.

Flaherty, M. (2001). How a language gender system creeps into perception. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 32*(1), 18–31.

Fortuna, J. K. (2021). Ikebana: An ancient tradition of contemporary healing and artful practice. *The Open Journal of Occupational Therapy, 9*(3), 1–5. https://doi.org/10.15453/2168-6408.1918

Foulkes, D. (1985). *Dreaming: A cognitive-psychological analysis.* Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Friedlander, B. (2013, Summer). A brief history of scent. *Harper's Magazine.* http://harpers.org/archive/2013/08/a-brief-history-of-scent/?%3E

Goodnow, J. J., & Levine, R. A. (1973). The grammar of action: Direction and sequence in children's copying. *Cognitive Psychology, 4,* 82–98.

Gregory, R. (1978). *Eye and brain: The psychology of seeing*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Griffith, R. C., Miyagi, O., & Tago, A. (1958). The universality of typical dreams: Japanese Americans. *American Anthropologist*, *60*, 1173–1179.

Gussler, J. (1973). Social change, ecology, and spirit possession among the South African Nguni. In E. Bourguignon (Ed.), *Religion, altered states of consciousness, and social change* (pp. 88–126). Columbus: Ohio State University Press.

Ha, T.-H., & Sonnad, N. (2017). The way you draw a circle indicates where you're from. *52-Insights*. www.52-insights.com/news/the-way-you-draw-a-circle-can-dictate-where-youre-from/

Haensel, J. X, Ishikawa M., Itakura S., Smith T. J., & Senju A. (2020). Cultural influences on face scanning are consistent across infancy and adulthood. *Infant Behavior & Development*, *61*. www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7768814/

Hall, E. T. (1959). *The silent language*. Greenwich, CT: Fawcett.

Hallowell, A. (1955). *Culture and experience*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Hallowell, A. I. (2010) Rocks and stones. In A. I. Hallowell (Ed.), *Contributions to Ojibwe studies: Essays, 1934–1972* (pp. 44–50). Lincoln, NE, London: University of Nebraska Press.

Hallowell, I. (1976). *Contributions to anthropology*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Halonen, D., & Santrock, J. (1995). *Psychology: Contexts of behavior*. Madison, WI: Brown & Benchmark.

Halperin, D. (1996, January). Trance and possession: Are they the same? *Transcultural Psychiatry*, *33*, 3–41.

Hamermesh, D. (2003). *Economics is everywhere*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Haun, D. B. M., Call, J., Janzen, G., & Levinson, S. (2006). Evolutionary psychology of special representations in the hominade. *Current Biology*, *16*(17), 1736–1740.

Henrich, J., Heine, S., & Norenzayan, A. (2010). The weirdest people in the world? *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, *33*(2/3), 123.

Hobson, J. A. (2002). *Dreaming: An introduction to the science of sleep*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hoge, E. A., Bui, E., Mete, M., Dutton, M. A., Baker, A. W., & Simon, N. M. (2022). Mindfulness-based stress reduction vs escitalopram for the treatment of adults with anxiety disorders: A randomized clinical trial. *JAMA Psychiatry*. https://doi.org/10.1001/jamapsychiatry.2022.3679

Hudson, W. (1960). Pictorial depth perception in sub-cultural groups in Africa. *Journal of Social Psychology*, *2*, 89–107.

Hurlbert, A., & Ling, Y. (2007, August). Biological components of sex differences in color preference. *Current Biology*, *17*, 623–625.

Huston, J. P., Nadal, M., Mora, F., Agnati, L. F., & Cela-Conde, C. J. (Eds.). (2015). *Art, aesthetics and the brain*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Jackson, G. (1991). The African genesis of the black perspective in helping. In R. Jones (Ed.), *Black psychology* (3rd ed., pp. 533–558). Berkeley, CA: Cobb & Henry.

Jaggernath, J., Øverland, L., Ramson, P., Kovai, V., Chan, V. & Naidoo, K. (2014). Poverty and Eye Health. *Health*, *6*, 1849–1860. https://doi.org/10.4236/health.2014.614217

Jain P., Binder A.M., & Chen B. (2022). Analysis of epigenetic age acceleration and healthy longevity among us older women. *JAMA Network*, *5*(7). https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2794706

Jankowsky, R. (2010). *Stambeli: Music, trance and alterity in Tunisia*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Jimenez, N., Garroutte, E., Kundu, A., Morales, L., & Buchwald, D. (2011). A review of the experience, epidemiology, and management of pain among American Indian, Alaska Native, and Aboriginal Canadian peoples. *Journal of Pain*, *12*(5), 511–522.

Johnson, K. (2021). God . . . Karma, Jinn, spirits, and other metaphysical forces. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, *40*, 10–14.

Jones, A. (2008). *The road he traveled: The revealing biography of M. Scott Peck*. New York: Rider.

Kandel, E. (2012). *The age of insight*. New York: Random House.

Kern, C., & Roll, S. (2001). Object representations in dreams of Chicanos and Anglos. *Dreaming: Journal of the Association for the Study of Dreams*, *11*(3), 149–166.

Kirschner, S., & Ilari, B. (2014). Joint drumming in Brazilian and German preschool children: Cultural differences in rhythmic entrainment, but no prosocial effects. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *45*(1), 137–166.

Ko, S.-G., Lee, T.-H., Yoon, H.-Y., Kwon, J.-H., & Mather, M. (2011) How does context affect assessments of facial emotion? The role of culture and age. *Psychology and Aging*, *26*(1), 48–59.

Kolmar, A., & Kamal, A. (2018). Developing a path to improve cultural competency in Islam among palliative care professionals. *Journal of Pain and Symptom Management*, 55(3), E1–E3. www.jpsmjournal.com/article/S0885-3924(17)30639-5/fulltext

Krippner, S. (1996). The dream models of the Mapuches in Chile. *Dream Time*, *13*(*2*), 14–15.

Laing, D. G., Preskott, J., Bell, G. A., & Gillmore, A. (1993). A cross-cultural study of taste discrimination with Australians and Japanese. *Chemical Senses*, *18*, 161–168.

Laughlin, C., McManus, J., & d'Aquili, E. (1992). *Brain, symbol, and experience*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Leach, M. L. (1975). The effect of training in the pictorial depth perception of Shona children. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *6*, 457–470.

Lee, R., & Ackerman, S. (1980). The sociocultural dynamics of mass hysteria: A case study of social conflict in West Malaysia. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychiatry*, *43*, 78–88.

Liddell, C. (1997). Every picture tells a story – or does not? Young South African children interpreting pictures. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *28*(3), 266–283.

Lutz, C. (1982). The domain of emotion words on Ifaluk. *American Ethnologist*, *9*, 113–128.

Maher, T. (1976). "Need for resolution" ratings for harmonic musical intervals. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *7*, 259–276.

Ma-Kellams C. (2014). Cross-cultural differences in somatic awareness and interoceptive accuracy: A review of the literature and directions for future research. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *5*(1379). https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2014.01379

Martin, M. (1992). *Hostage to the devil: The possession and exorcism of five contemporary Americans*. San Francisco, CA: Harper.

Masuda, T., & Nisbett, R. E. (2006). Culture and change blindness. *Cognitive Sciences*, *30*, 381–399.

McDowell, N. (1988). A note on cargo cults and cultural construction of change. *Pacific Studies*, *11*(2), 121–134.

McGurk, H., & Jahoda, G. (1975). Pictorial depth perception by children in Scotland and Ghana. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *6*(3), 279–296.

McLuhan, M. (1971). *The Gutenberg galaxy: The making of typographic man*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

McManus, J., Laughlin, C. D., & Shearer, J. S. (1993). The function of dreaming in the cycles of cognition: A biogenic structural account. In A. Moffit, M. Kramer, & R. Hoffmann (Eds.), *The function of dreaming* (pp. 21–50). Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

Meissner, C. A., & Brigham, J. C. (2001). Thirty years of investigating the own-race bias in face memory: A meta-analytic review. *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law*, *7*, 3–35.

Meleis, A. I. (1982). Arab students in Western universities. *Journal of Higher Education*, *53*, 439–447.

Meyer, E. (2014). *The culture map: Breaking through the invisible boundaries of global business*. New York: Public Affairs.

Morse, J. M., & Park, C. (1988). Differences in cultural expectations of the perceived painfulness of childbirth. In K. Michaelson (Ed.), *Childbirth in America: Anthropological perspectives*. South Hadley, MA: Bergin & Garvey.

Moss, R. (1996). Dreaming with the Iroquois. *Dream Time*, *13*(2), 6–7.

Mukamal, R. (2017). How humans see in color. *American Academy of Opthalmology*, June 8. www.aao.org/eye-health/tips-prevention/how-humans-see-in-color

Murray, W. (1999). The angel of dreams: Toward an ethnology of dream interpreting. *Journal of the American Academy of Psychoanalysis*, *27*(3), 417–429.

Nasar, J. L. (1984). Visual preferences in urban street scenes. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *15*, 79–93.

New, J., Cosmides, L., & John, T. (2007). Category-specific attention for animals reflects ancestral priorities, not expertise. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the USA*. www.pnas.org/cgi/content/abstract/104/42/16598

Nicholson, J., Seddon, G., & Worsnop, J. (1977). Teaching understanding of pictorial special relationships to Nigerian secondary school students. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *8*, 401–414.

Nobles, W. (1991). African philosophy: Foundations for black psychology. In R. Jones (Ed.), *Black psychology* (3rd ed., pp. 47–63). Berkeley, CA: Cobb & Henry.

Omari, I., & Cook, H. (1972). Differential cognitive cues in pictorial depth perception. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *3*(3), 331–335.

Ornstein, R. E. (1977). *The psychology of consciousness*. New York: Penguin Books.

Ostrovsky, Y., Andalman, A., & Sinha, P. (2006). Vision following extended congenital blindness. *Psychological Science*, *17*(2), 1009–1004.

Parker, D., & Deregowski, J. (1990). *Perception and artistic style*. Amsterdam: North-Holland.

Persinger, M. (2003). The temporal lobe: The biological basis of the God experience. In R. Joseph (Ed.), *Neuro-theology: Brain, science, spirituality, religious experience*. San Jose, CA: University Press.

Piaget, J. (1963). *The child's conception of the world*. Paterson, NJ: Littlefield, Adams.

Pollack, R. (1963). Contour detectability thresholds as a function of chronological age. *Perceptual and Motor Skills*, *17*, 411–417.

Pratt, K. (2000). Dream as symptom, dream as myth: A cross-cultural perspective on dream narratives. *Sleep & Hypnosis*, *2*(4), 152–159.

Punamaki, R. L., & Joustie, M. (1998). The role of culture, violence, and personal factors affecting dream content. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *29*(2), 320–342.

Rehman, J. (2015). Typical dreams: A comparison of dreams across cultures. Working paper. www.researchgate.net/publication/303838009_Typical_Dreams_A_Comparison_of_Dreams_Across_Cultures

Reuning, H., & Wortley, W. (1973). Psychological studies of the Bushmen. *Psychologia Africana* (Monograph Supplement, No. 7).

Rivers, W. H. R. (1901). Vision. In A. Haddon (Ed.), *Psychology and physiology: Reports of the Cambridge anthropological exhibition to Torres straits* (Vol. 2, Pt. 1). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Roll, S. (1987). Dreams. In T. M. Abel, R. Metraux, & S. Roll (Eds.), *Psychotherapy and culture* (pp. 176–195). Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.

Roll, S. (1987). Dreams. In T. M. Abel, R. Metraux, & S. Roll (Eds.), *Psychotherapy and culture* (pp. 176–195). Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press.

Roll, S., Rabold, K., & McArdle, L. (1976). Disclaimed activity in dreams of Chicanos and Anglos. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *7*(3), 335–342.

Rosen, G. (1968). *Madness in society*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Ross, L. (1977). The intuitive psychologist and his shortcomings: Distortions in the attribution process. In L. Berkowitz (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 10). New York: Academic Press.

Rozin, P., & Fallon, A. (1987). A perspective on disgust. *Psychological Review*, *94*(1), 23–41.

Sadie, S. (1980). *The new Grove dictionary of music and musicians* (Vol. 9). London: Macmillan.

Sarfati, L. (2010). *Objects of worship: Material culture in the production of shamanic rituals in South Korea.* Dissertation Abstracts International Section A: Humanities and Social Sciences, p. 610.

Schlottmann, D. (2019). Dealing with uncertainty: "Hell Joseon" and the Korean Shaman rituals for happiness and against misfortune. *Shaman – Journal of the International Society for Academic Research on Shamanism*, *27*(1–2), 65–95. Budapest: Molnar & Kelemen Oriental Publishers.

Segall, M. H., Campbell, D. T., & Herskovits, M. J. (1966). *The influence of culture on visual perception*. Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill.

Segall, M. H., Dasen, P. R., Berry, J. W., & Poortinga, Y. H. (1990). *Human behavior in global perspective: An introduction to cross-cultural psychology*. New York: Pergamon.

Shade, B. (1991). African American patterns of cognition. In R. Jones (Ed.), *Black psychology* (3rd ed., pp. 47–63). Berkeley, CA: Cobb & Henry.

Shannon, L. (1976). Age change in time perception in Native Americans, Mexican Americans, and Anglo-Americans. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *7*(1), 117–122.

Shiraev, E., & Boyd, J. (2001). *The accent of success*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Shlomit B.-A., Gupta, P., Yadav, M., Shah, P., Talwar, G., Paswan, S., Ganesh, S., Troje, N. F., & Sinha, P. (2022). Human (but not animal) motion can be recognized at first sight – After treatment for congenital blindness. *Neuropsychologia*, *174*. www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S002839322200166X

Sivam, A., Wroblewski, K., Alkorta-Aranburu, G., Barnes, L., Wilson, R., Bennett, D., & Pino, J. (2013). Variability of affective responses to odors: Culture, gender, and olfactory knowledge. *Chemical Senses*, *3*(2), 175–186.

Smith, H. (1991). *The world's religions*. San Francisco, CA: Harper.

Somer, E., & Saadon, M. (2000, December). Stambali: Dissociative possession and trance in a Tunisian healing dance. *Transcultural Psychiatry*, *37*, 580–600.

Spence, I., Wong, P., Rusan, M., & Rastegar, N. (2006). How color enhances visual memory for natural scenes. *Psychological Science*, *17*, 1–6.

Swallow, K., & Wang, Q. (2020). Culture influences how people divide continuous sensory experience into events, *Cognition*, *205*. www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0010027720302699

Taves, A. (1999). *Fits, trances, and visions: Experiencing religion and explaining experience from Wesley to James.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Thouless, R. H. (1932). A racial difference in perception. *Journal of Social Psychology*, *4*, 330–339.

Thwala, A., Pillay, A., & Sargent, C. (2000). The influence of urban/rural background, gender, age and education on the perception of and response to dreams among Zulu South Africans. *South African Journal of Psychology*, *30*(4), 1–5.

Ueno, Y. (1993). Cross-cultural study of odor perception in Sherpa and Japanese people. *Chemical Senses*, *18*, 352–353.

Valli, K., Revonsuo, A., Pälkäs, O., & Punamäki, R.-L. (2006). The effect of trauma on dream content: A field study of Palestinian children. *Dreaming*, *16*(2), 63–87.

Van der Henst, J. B., & Schaeken, W. (2005). The wording of conclusions in relational reasoning. *Cognition*, *97*, 1–22. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cognition.2004.06.008

Verginer, L., & Juen, B. (2018). Spiritual explanatory models of mental illness in West Nile, Uganda. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *50*(2), 233–253.

Vygotsky, L. (1978). *Mind and society*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. (Originally published in 1932.)

Walker, B. (1993). *The art of the Turkish tale*. Lubbock, TX: Texas Tech University Press.

Ward, C. (1994). Culture and altered states of consciousness. In W. Lonner & R. Malpass (Eds.), *Psychology and culture* (pp. 59–64). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Ward, N. G., & Al Bayyari, Y. (2010). American and Arab perceptions of an Arabic turn-taking cue. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *41*(2), 270–275.

Wearden, J., Wearden, A., & Rabbitt, P. (1997). Age and IQ effects on stimulus and response timing. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Perception and Performance*, *23*(40), 962–979.

White, L., Valk, R., & Dialmy, A. (2010). What is the meaning of "on time"? The sociocultural nature of punctuality. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *42*(3), 482–493.

Williams, J. E., & Best, D. (1990). *Sex and psyche: Gender and self viewed cross-culturally*. London: Sage.

Winkelman, M. (2000). *Shamanism: The neural ecology of consciousness and healing*. Westport, CT: Bergin & Carvey.

Wispe, L. G., & Drambarean, N. C. (1953). Physiological need, word frequency, and visual duration threshold. *Journal of Experimental Physiology*, *46*, 25–31.

Wittmann, M. (2018). *Altered states of consciousness: Experiences out of time and self*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Wong, P. C. M., Ciocca, V., Chan, A. H. D., Ha, L. Y. Y., Tan, L.-H., & Peretz, I. (2012). Effects of culture on musical pitch perception. *PLoS ONE*, *7*(4). http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0033424#abstract0

Wundt, W. (1913). *Elemente de Völkerpsychologie*. Leipzig, Germany: Alfred Kroner Verlag.

Yaroshevski, V. (1996). *Istoriya psychologii [A history of psychology]*. Moscow: Prosveshenie.

Yu, C. K.-C. (2008). Typical dreams experienced by Chinese people. *Dreaming*, *18*(1), 1–10.

Zeki, S., & Nash, J. (1999). *Inner vision: An exploration of art and the brain*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Zendal, I., Pihl, R., & Seidman, B. (1987). The effects of learning sets on torque. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, *43*, 272–275.

Zheng, P., & Gray, M. (2015). Posttraumatic coping and distress: An evaluation of Western conceptualization of trauma and its applicability to Chinese culture. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *46*(5), 723–736.

5

CHAPTER 5
INTELLIGENCE

Our dear late friend Charles Wiley – a veteran journalist who had visited almost every country in the world – showed us a photo that he took in the People's Republic of China. We were at Charles's house, and all his guests took turns staring at the photo. On the picture, there was an entrance to Jinan University in Guangzhou. The large sign at the entrance read (as Charles translated to us): "Be loyal to the country, be faithful to your friends, persevere with your mission, be respectful to your parents and teachers." "You see," said one of the guests, "This is why the Chinese have such great test scores. They learn about discipline and hard work from early childhood. Look at their IQ numbers. They are ahead of everybody and it's no wonder. I wish I could send my grandchildren to China. Maybe there they would learn something useful." Everybody laughed, and the conversation quickly switched to weather, politics, and other topics. Two months later, one of us obtained a copy of the photo and showed it to a colleague who was born and raised in Beijing. "You know," the colleague replied, "you are asking me whether loyalty and respect are prime educational and cultural values in China. I do not want to disappoint you. Sure, that looks fine on paper. But in reality, things are different. Do you think that *all* people there are just obedient followers who do whatever the authorities tell them to do? Do you think that *all* people there are loyal to their friends?" "No," we replied, "but we're talking about the overall relationship between self-discipline and high test scores." "Oh, self-discipline . . . That's just family pressure," the friend replied with a mysterious smile. "You have to understand the traditional Chinese family. Intelligence is a result of family influence."

———

DEFINING INTELLIGENCE

When we asked students in an undergraduate psychology class, "If you had the ability to change your intellectual skills now, would you prefer to increase, decrease, or keep them the same?" More than 90 percent of the students chose to increase them. Across the globe, people tend to see high intellectual skills as a very important individual asset. In ethnic folklore as well as in scientific tractates of the past, our ancestors praised individuals' high intellectual skills.

Contemporary data link intelligence to positive behavioral, emotional, and health outcomes (Stanovich, 2016; Plomin & Deary, 2015). Did you know, for example, that people with higher intelligence scores are more likely to be healthy than those with lower scores? There is a link between (a) how people manage their diseases and (b) their intelligence: If you have higher intellectual skills, you are likely to manage your body more effectively than a person with lower intellectual skills. There are significant

negative correlations between people's verbal and numerical reasoning skills and their likelihood of developing Alzheimer's disease (a chronic neurogenerative condition that affects an aging individual's memory, judgments, and overall behavior) during a later stage of life. Further, people with high intellectual abilities are less likely to be overweight, they experience fewer illnesses throughout their lifespan, and they are likely to live longer compared to people with lower intelligence scores. Such higher scores are also associated with a lower risk of developing type II diabetes, coronary artery disease, and strokes.

It probably is not surprising to learn that people with higher intellectual skills tend to earn higher educational degrees and occupational positions than others. Moreover, they are less likely to experience negative life events such as bankruptcy (Hambrick & Marquardt, 2017). In contrast, lower intelligence scores are associated with early drop-out and incompletion of school or college. Although higher intelligence scores appear to be correlated with a greater incidence of mood and anxiety-related disorders (compared to the general population) (Hambrick & Marquardt, 2017), in general, high intelligence across cultures is commonly associated with success, achievement, wisdom, and what seem to be other socially desirable behavioral and cognitive outcomes. What connections can be established between intelligence and behavior cross-culturally?

First, what is **intelligence**? Intelligence in psychology textbooks is defined in myriad ways, such as a set of mental abilities involving the capacity to acquire and use knowledge, acquire and utilize problem-solving skills and expertise about the world, the ability to excel at a variety of tasks, or as a skill that allows us to understand, adapt, learn, reason, and overcome obstacles. More generally stated, intelligence refers to the knowledge and skills necessary to pursue goals and adapt to specific environments and specific cultural settings. Intelligence is also inseparable from **cognition**, a diverse process by which the individual acquires and applies knowledge (see in-depth discussion in Chapter 4). It usually includes processes such as recognition, categorization, thinking, and memory.

Scores of psychologists in the past and in various countries have approached intelligence from the position of science. Let us briefly consider the several scientific approaches to intelligence, as a launching point for discussion.

Some researchers, especially during the earlier stages of intelligence testing at the beginning of the twentieth century, suggested the existence of a *g factor* – a general level of intelligence – that summarizes positive correlations among a variety of cognitive tasks (Spearman, 1927), including performances on verbal, spatial, numerical, and other assessment problems. People with good grades on verbal tasks also typically scored well on measures such as general knowledge and arithmetic ability. On the contrary, people with low scores on verbal tasks were likely to have low scores on other tests. This approach led to incorrect assumptions about just "one factor" that determines intellectual functioning of every individual. Critics proposed the existence of several other factors. One such critic, Thurstone (1938), for instance proposed and experimentally examined three intellectual domains and skills: verbal, mathematical, and spatial.

Sternberg (1985, 1997) studied three different fundamental aspects of intelligence: analytic, creative, and practical. According to his arguments, most intelligence tests measured only analytic skills. Analytic problems in such tests are usually clearly defined, have a single correct answer, and come with all the information needed for a solution. In contrast, practical problems that all of us face on a daily basis are not necessarily clearly defined, often requiring the individual to seek additional information and evaluate the specific context of the problems under consideration. To solve these problems successfully, the person generally needs to have accumulated not just everyday experiences, but also special knowledge in an academic field, cultural competency, and be motivated enough to find the solution.

Studying the diversity of human behavior and achievement, Gardner (2007) argued that along with logical, linguistic, and spatial intelligence measured by psychometric tests, there are other special kinds of musical, bodily kinesthetic, and personal or social intelligence (i.e., people's ability to understand themselves or other people). However, although the ability to evaluate and make useful decisions about a particular situation is essential for human survival, educational performance, professional success, and general well-being, skills such as musical and body kinesthetic – in most cases – are not.

From the beginning of the empirical studies of intelligence, culture was professed to be the most important "contributor" to intelligence. For example, the Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget (1972), one of the most influential researchers of child cognition (to be discussed in Chapter 8), argued that a person's intelligence should have similar cross-cultural developmental mechanisms. On one hand, children in all countries assimilate new information into existing cognitive brain mechanisms. On the other hand, these cognitive structures accommodate themselves to the changing environment, which is culture-specific. Lev Vygotsky, a Russian psychologist (1978[1932]), whose views have also gained global recognition, believed that human consciousness and intelligence are inseparable from the cultural environment in which the person lives.

In psychology, most attention has been given to the **psychometric approach to intelligence**. This view is based on a model that conceptualizes intelligence as a composite of quantifiable abilities measured by mental tests, and represented with a numerical value (Wechsler, 1958). While intriguing, this approach is also one of the most controversial ones, due to the ongoing debate about how accurately these values can be measured, evaluated, and interpreted.

As you might remember from your introductory psychology class, intelligence tests typically consist of a series of tasks; each test contains several subtests that measure various cognitive skills. When taking the test, you are asked to solve verbal and nonverbal problems, make perceptual judgments, solve puzzles, explain pictures in your own words, memorize sequences of words or numbers, and so on. After your answers are scored, you receive a test score. Then your score is compared with the average score of your peers – presumably, and in most cases, this includes people of the same nationality and age group as you. This comparison will yield your actual intelligence quotient, or IQ. The numerically average IQ is a score of 100. Approximately 95 percent of the population

have scores on IQ tests within two standard deviations of 15. That means the IQs of most people – 95 out of 100 – will fall somewhere between 70 and 130.

Again, there has long been intense controversy about the validity of intelligence test scores and their interpretation. There are at least two major issues with respect to intelligence testing that need to be addressed:

1. What do intelligence tests actually measure?
2. How can we assess if the test scores were – or were not – influenced by factors such as level of motivation, test-taking attitudes, emotional states of both the test takers and test givers?

Critically important for those who attempt to interpret cultural differences on intelligence scores are the distinctions between (1) the distinction between cognitive potential, (2) cognitive skills developed through interaction with the cultural environment, and (3) scores on a particular test. The problem is that the standard tests may not provide for the direct assessment of cognitive skills shaped by a particular cultural environment. Unless intelligence tests accommodate the activities that people perform in their day-to-day life, the tests created in one culture will likely continue to be biased against other cultural groups. This means that the test performance is unlikely to represent the individual's actual cognitive potential (Vernon, 1969). Studies show that factors such as language, test content, and motivation reportedly contribute to an individual's performance on tests (Sternberg, 2007). Further, there are many aspects of human intelligence, such as wisdom and creativity, that many tests are simply not designed to measure.

Interpretation of the numerical value of intelligence has been yet another major point of contention among psychologists. More than one hundred and fifteen years ago in France, Alfred Binet and Theodore Simon proposed a method of measuring intelligence, based on recording and evaluating specially designed questions directed toward schoolchildren and their performance on specified tasks. Binet and Simon (1913) assumed children develop specific knowledge and can fulfill certain tasks, such as comparing shapes or doing multiplication problems, only at a certain age. Hence, it is inappropriate to expect a 4-year-old girl to execute a task easily performed by an 11-year-old. A child who is able to answer questions and perform tasks at the level of peers of the same age was concluded to have "average" mental skills; if the child had the capacity to answer questions designed for older children, this child would have "higher" mental skills than his or her peers. Moreover, if the child persistently scored below the standard level, the child required placement in a special education group. Binet and Simon developed their test to determine which children were in need of special education, believing that they were not prepared for a "mainstream" one. The most heated debates arose when intelligence value was assigned to large social groups, including ethnic or national groups. Even differences among people in body height, shape, and skin color do not evoke such debate. When it comes to the topic of intelligence scores, people's emotions often overshadow a fair scientific discussion of group differences.

Before we continue our analysis, let us express one concern. As noted above, few issues in psychology have become as divisive as the concept of intelligence. Around the world, debates about intelligence are often motivated by a variety of political, ideological, and group interests (Helms, 2006). In some cases, a particular personal agenda – or even a certain assumption – takes precedence, scientific arguments are put aside, and psychological knowledge just functions as data in support of the advancement of particular (not necessarily valid) views. Cross-cultural psychology's interests are best served if these views are not rejected outright but, rather, critically analyzed.

ETHNIC DIFFERENCES IN IQ SCORES

Most of the questions that cross-cultural psychology attempts to address are concerned with a set of measurable similarities and differences among different cultural, ethnic, and national groups. Are ethnic groups characterized by a particular and distinct pattern of intellectual ability? For example, can one prove that Italians, in general, are more creative than Germans, but that the German mode of thinking is more "precise" and "disciplined" than the Brazilian mode? Do Korean Americans have a "better" memory than their counterparts living in South Korea today? Is intelligence inherited and, if so, to what degree? Do poverty and other chronic social problems influence intelligence? Is systematic formal schooling the key to human intellectual equality? Is such intellectual equality achievable in principle? In Chapter 4, we have already mentioned some cognitive differences between Western and East Asian subjects. There are international studies showing differences in educational test scores among high school students. For example, the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) studies individual scores on reading, science, and math across the globe and finds that Asian students in countries such as China and Singapore do better than their counterparts in countries such as South Korea and the United States (Hobbes, 2019). We now turn to IQ scores.

In the United States, early attempts to measure IQs began more than 100 years ago. These studies examined schoolchildren, army recruits, and immigrants arriving in this country. For example, in 1921, the National Academy of Sciences published the results of one of the first massive national studies on intelligence. The results allowed the organizers of this study to rank newly arrived immigrants according to their IQ scores. This is how the "intellectual" order of the immigrants was reported: England, Holland, Denmark, Scotland, Germany, Canada, Belgium, Norway, Austria, Ireland, Turkey, Greece, Russia, Italy, and Poland. In addition, the data showed the first evidence that blacks arriving from Africa generally scored lower than whites on those tests. Note that it was also reported that the Polish migrants in this study did not score significantly higher than the immigrants from Africa did (Kamin, 1976).

Today, various tests show differences in intelligence scores among large cultural groups. For example, in the United States, Asian Americans (of East Asian origins) score the highest, followed by European Americans, Hispanics, and lastly African Americans. Thus, on average, African American schoolchildren score 10–15 percent lower on a

standardized intelligence test than white schoolchildren do. Similar results were reported for adults (Hambrick & Marquardt, 2017; Rushton & Jensen, 2005; Suzuki & Valencia, 1997). For better comprehension of the differences between some of the groups, just imagine that the average white person tests higher than about 80 percent of the population of blacks; and an average black person tests lower than about 20 percent of the population of whites. According to studies, some racial-group differences in IQ appear in early childhood. For example, on the Differential Aptitude Battery, by age six, the average IQ of East Asian children was 107, compared with 103 for white children and 89 for black children (Lynn & Vanhanen, 2012; Lynn, 1996). The size of the average black–white difference does not change significantly over the developmental period from three years of age and beyond.

The mean intelligence test scores for Latino groups usually falls between those of blacks and whites. If we divide U.S. citizens along their religions, we will find that Jews as a group (based on their self-reported religious identity), and specifically Jews of European origin, tested higher than any other religious group in the United States. Studies of Korean and Vietnamese children adopted into white homes in the United States show that they tended to have IQs 10 or more points higher than their adoptive national norms (Rushton & Jensen, 2005). Even though it is evidenced that Americans of Japanese, Chinese, and Korean ancestry have higher scores than American whites, there is insufficient consistency in research findings. The average difference between black and white IQ scores is evidenced at every level of the socioeconomic ladder. In other words, upper-class blacks tend to have, on average, lower test scores than upper-class whites, and lower-class whites tend to have higher test scores than lower-class blacks. Note, it is essential to underscore that racial groups studied in the United States are not necessarily representative samples for populations in other countries and continents. In addition, the differences in scores that do occur are usually in the low single digits (Niu & Brass, 2011).

Group differences in cognitive performance are not only found between cultural groups within the U.S. but also between different cultural groups (social, racial, and ethnic) around the world. In India, for example, members of the higher castes (the cast-based distinction is officially illegal in India) obtain higher mean scores and examination marks than do those of the so-called lower castes. In Malaysia, members of the Chinese and East Indian minority communities have higher mean scores than those of the majority native Malay population. In South Africa, members of the white, East Indian, and "colored" population groups (the official label for the non-whites) obtain higher mean scores than members of the indigenous black African majority (Brainstats, 2019; Lynn & Vanhanen, 2002).

Some groups are found to have higher scores on certain scales and lower scores on others. For instance, the verbal intelligence scores of Native Americans were found to be lower than the scores for other ethnic groups. However, other studies showed the existence of higher visual–spatial skills in Native American groups (Ardila & Moreno, 2001; McShane & Berry, 1988). East Asians scored slightly higher than whites on nonverbal intelligence and equal or slightly lower on verbal intelligence. Moreover, studies in the past suggested that

the visual and spatial abilities of East Asians are superior to their verbal abilities, despite substantial political and socioeconomic differences among East Asian countries (Herrnstein & Murray, 1994).

How do we account for many of these discrepancies among ethnic groups presented above? Most psychologists refer to such factors as income gaps, community and family values, historic injustices (including colonialism and segregation), and specific cultural practices deeply rooted in tradition. We will discuss some of these views on the following pages.

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN IQ SCORES

Ever since intelligence testing began more than a century ago, women as a group have typically scored approximately five points lower than men. These data have been obtained in a relatively wide range of countries selected for the studies. However, this gap has been narrowing in recent years, and the tendency appears global. True, the scores of the men have been rising consistently since the beginning of measurements, yet women's scores have accelerated even faster (Flynn, 2012). Research data from countries in Western Europe and from the United States, Canada, New Zealand, Argentina, and Estonia showed that the gap in scores between men and women has become minimal. Moreover, in Argentina and Estonia women's scores are higher. What contributes to these changes?

At least two views exist. The first hypothesis is that women have been genetically predisposed to have more advanced intellectual skills, compared to men. Yet, due to various social and cultural factors, they haven't been permitted to demonstrate their advantage during test procedures. The other hypothesis is that women have actually increased their IQ by engaging in greater and more complex "multitasking" compared to men: unlike many men, women tend to be engaged in activities at work, at school, and in the family simultaneously.

EXPLAINING GROUP DIFFERENCES IN TEST SCORES: INTELLIGENCE AND INTELLIGENT BEHAVIOR

To explain some group differences on intelligence test scores, Robert Sternberg (1997), one of the leading world experts in the field of cognition, suggested distinguishing between intelligence and intelligent behavior. Intelligence, from this standpoint, is a mental phenomenon that may or may not result in particular behaviors or behavioral responses. The actual behavioral responses can vary from culture to culture. Something considered intelligent among members of one culture may not be viewed as such in other cultures. As an example, if a Washingtonian develops a good skill at negotiating with the car dealer the conditions of a three-year lease on a new electric automobile (hashing out, for example, the mileage, maintenance, fees, and other details), this skill may not

be – and likely will not be – very useful at a farm market in Istanbul or Helsinki. Dealing with different environmental and cultural contexts, people develop different behavioral skills and acquire dissimilar ways of thinking and learning that are useful in their particular cultural environment. Take, for instance, the way people use categories to describe their experience. Examples from the past provide plenty of information for us. Traditionally, among maritime navigators in Southeast Asia, the word "south" is often used to refer only to "seaward," which can be any side of the horizon (Frake, 1980). This centuries-old understanding of directions was confusing for some time to visiting foreigners. The use of GPS and modern navigation devices, however, brings our experiences closer so that they become more universally cross-cultural.

CROSS-CULTURAL SENSITIVITY

Because of stereotyping (see Chapter 2), some people tend to believe or anticipate that all members of a group – or at least most of them – have either high or low IQ scores. This view is incorrect and may have an indirect impact on school performance and perhaps other activities. How? Imagine, for instance, an inexperienced teacher knows there are five Hispanic and three Black children in her class. Making a stereotypical judgment, the teacher would assume – without even knowing these kids very well – that these children will have lower intelligence test scores and, therefore, are less capable of intelligent behavior, such as learning in class. Despite the teacher's good intentions, this stereotype may create an expectation and attitude that result in the teacher giving "easier" assignments to the Black and Hispanic children and not challenging them in their educational efforts. In fact, research supports this assumption. Educators' expectations that "this kid" or "that kid" is unlikely to succeed because they are living in some "difficult" circumstances often lead to the students being "under-challenged" and, ultimately, to these children's actual underachievement (Sewell & Goings, 2020; Fryer, 2014; Fryer et al., 2011). (In this regard, see discussion of the self-fulfilling prophecy in Chapter 2.)

Studies show that underlying psychological mechanisms or processes of intelligence in humans are far more similar than different. The processes (or steps) include the ability to (a) identify a problem, (b) recognize its type, (c) understand the problem, (d) plan a solution, (e) locate resources to solve the problem, (f) manage the implementation of the solution, (g) evaluate the outcome, and, if necessary, (h) seek alternative solutions. This list, with only few minor differences, has been used to describe successful behavior in a wide range of circumstances, such as business management (Dalio, 2017). Nevertheless – and this is a key element in understanding the relationships between intelligence and intelligent behavior – the specific content of such behavior in each of these stages is also determined by the specific environment in which the individual lives (Farhi, 2007). A chess grandmaster in India uses these strategies to make particular moves on

a chessboard to win a tournament, whereas a farmer in Bosnia – based on similar psychological strategies – secures a good business deal buying a set of solar panels for the new farmhouse.

Throughout history, intelligent reasoning that is presumed to be causal, scientific, and based on empirical facts was not necessarily used in all cultures to make practical decisions (Shea, 1985). A ritualistic dance by members of a Brazilian indigenous tribe may be considered "unintelligent" behavior by many people in, let's say, London or Tokyo: "Look at them! They're actually dancing to stop the rain!" Meanwhile, these same mocking individuals go to their churches and temples now and then to engage in similar seemingly "unintelligent" ritualistic acts, like offering prayers to heal those with terminal diseases. The moral here is that people tend to use their cognitive skills selectively: We choose those that are either culturally common, appropriate, or best adapted to the needs of our lifestyle in particular circumstances (Dasen et al., 1979).

DO BIOLOGICAL FACTORS CONTRIBUTE TO INTELLIGENCE?

According to the **nativist view**, most cognitive phenomena are inborn, and they unfold because of biological "programming." Cognitive processes require only a measure of active construction by the organism interacting with specific environmental and cultural conditions. Hypothetically, according to this view, a boy in Nepal and a girl in Venezuela are both – if they are healthy and do not face catastrophic events in their lives – expected to develop some elements of conceptual (abstract) thinking by approximately the age of seven. No one can force these children to think conceptually, or to understand sarcasm, irony, and so forth, when they are four years old. In other words, for the most part, hereditary factors determine both the depth and scope of our intellectual skills.

These are not just the assumptions of a handful of researchers. In the 1980s, in the early stage of cross-cultural psychology, more than one thousand scholars provided their opinion about IQ, in particular about the differences in IQ scores among ethnic groups. Even though only 1 percent suggested that the differences are mostly caused by genetic factors, almost 45 percent of the professionals suggested that the differences are the product of both genetic and environmental variations (many could not or did not want to give a definitive answer). Remarkably, of all the scholars interviewed, only one in seven said that the difference is entirely due to environmental factors (Snyderman & Rothman, 1988). In fact, some skills can be more biologically "wired" than others. The French neuroscientist Stanislas Dehaene (2002) indicated that the mathematical ability of humans is imbedded in the brain and generally independent of memory and reasoning. Moreover, an individual's learning experience, school programs, and even spoken language may even suppress the development of certain inborn mathematical skills. Dehaene also suggested that some languages, like Chinese, could be more conducive to a person's development of basic mathematical abilities than other skills.

There have been studies showing that an individual's ability to be successful on cognitive tests is more biologically "programmed" than dependent on educational effort (Briggs, 2001). For instance, young people who take preparation courses for college admission tests (such as the SAT in the United States, the Unified State Exam in Russia, or the Higher Education Admission Test in Iran) show only a small improvement in their scores. In other words, whether people put forth a great deal of effort to study for the exam, or "just studied," the results of these two groups are likely not to be much different. Some reviewers reasoned that the conclusions of this study simply pointed out the general ineffectiveness of such preparation courses. Other commentators suggested that certain cognitive skills cannot be improved over a short period. Yet others emphasized students' motivation as a major factor in preparation tests (Razavipour, et al., 2020).

Studies of twins and other genetic studies demonstrated that heredity plays an important role in human intelligence (Van Soelen et al., 2012). For example, as a number of famous studies show, the intelligence scores of identical twins raised either together or apart were highly correlated – nearly +0.90 (Bouchard et al., 1990). One study of 543 pairs of identical twins and 134 pairs of non-identical twins in Japan reported a substantial heritability of 0.58 for IQ (Lynn & Hattori, 1990). About two dozen studies conducted using magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) to measure the volume of the human brain have found an overall positive correlation with IQ (Vernon et al., 2000). There are identifiable genetic causes of several kinds of intellectual disabilities in children (Daily et al., 2000; Grossman, 1983). Moreover, the intelligence scores of adopted children strongly correlate with the scores of their biological parents, whereas there is only a weak correlation between scores of adoptive parents and the adopted children (Munsinger, 1978). The correlation between the IQ scores of two biologically unrelated individuals raised together was also relatively low: +0.20 (Bouchard & McGue, 1981). It is also known that vocabulary size (i.e., the number of words a person remembers and uses in his or her communications) also may depend on genetic predispositions.

However, even though various data suggest high correlations between parents and children and brothers and sisters in terms of their intellectual skills, these data tell us little about what would happen to people's IQ scores if they lived in a different social context than the one in which they actually grew up. Moreover, genetic links for individual differences and similarities do not show that group differences – on the national level, for example – are also based on genetic factors (Sternberg, 2004). Also, the fact that the heritability of IQ is high does not mean that individual differences in intellectual functioning are permanent. It indicates some individuals are more genetically predisposed to be teachable, trainable, creative, and capable of learning skills than others. These and many similar findings had relatively limited cross-cultural significance; most facts were obtained in studies of people living in specific social conditions and within specific cultural contexts (Lynn & Hattori, 1990).

Besides genetic factors, cross-cultural psychologists learn from biologists who examine how environmental conditions affect human physiology and whether such biological changes influence cognitive skills. For instance, it was found that the presence or absence of a particular chemical in a specific geographic region might have affected the overall

cognitive performance of the population living in that territory. To illustrate, iodine-deficient areas were found in some regions of Indonesia as well as in Spain. Research reports showed that substantial iodine deficiency in the human body could cause severe mental and neurological abnormalities (see Bleichrodt et al., 1980). In accordance with predictions, cognitive test scores obtained from children living in iodine-deficient areas of Spain and Indonesia were much lower than the scores obtained from children residing in neighboring areas where the water contained sufficient amounts of iodine.

We now turn to a discussion of classic as well as more recent studies related to cognitive processes in order to illustrate how and to what extent they are shaped by cultural and social factors.

INCOMPATIBILITY OF TESTS: CULTURAL BIASES

In Chapter 3, we learned about the concept of equivalency, one of the most important requirements of any comparative research. If a test were designed for a particular ethnic group, the test questions or tasks may not have similar meaning for other cultural groups. Many specialists (Trimble, 2010; Berry, 1988; Mishra, 1997; Poortinga & Van der Flier, 1988) emphasized the importance of such issues as culture *fairness* and *test transfer*.

Theoretically, basic mechanisms of cognitive processes are believed to be somewhat similar in virtually all healthy individuals of different social groups. However, as we emphasize throughout this book, these processes should be interpreted within the context of various person-specific, environmental, social, psychological, and cultural circumstances (Cole et al., 1971). People develop dissimilar cognitive skills because, among other factors, these skills are shaped by different contexts. Consider a girl who goes to a private school in Paris, lives with her 45-year-old single mother, has her own bedroom, a new personal laptop, several mobile devices, communicates with her friends via social media. This individual lives in an environment that is quite different from that of a North Korean boy who shares his room with two siblings, attends public school, does not have a personal computer, has no access to Instagram or Twitter (currently rebranded as X), and has very young parents who work in a bicycle factory. A test may adequately measure some elementary cognitive skills in these two children (such as comparing the size of objects or sorting colors), but at the same time it can be of a little use in terms of measuring other, culture-specific cognitive skills (such as resolving a small emotional dispute with a friend).

There has been a legitimate concern that intelligence tests, despite their careful design, could unfairly benefit some ethnic or social groups because of the test vocabulary – words and items used in the test questions. For instance, some tests may contain internal bias because they employ words that are familiar only to some groups. As a result, members of these groups receive higher scores than those who do not belong to these groups. For example, try to solve the following problem:

Which term does not belong with the other three, and why? *rose tulip orchid basil*

Keeping in mind the principle of the similarity–uniqueness paradox (discussed in Chapter 2), the most common correct answer is "basil," because all the other words are types of flowers. The critics of this type of question argue that unless the subject knows something about different flowers and plants, it would be very difficult for this person to give the right answer. Those of us having access to flowers or studying them online will certainly benefit in this situation. Moreover, one may also assume more girls than boys should be familiar with the names of flowers (due to gender-specific bias in early education and games) and, henceforth, girls would give more correct answers than boys.

Cultural experience affects test scores, and some test designs demonstrate this. For example, a culturally oriented vocabulary test unique to the African American community was given to kids of different ethnic groups. Black kids scored around a mean of 87 out of a possible 100; however, white children's mean score was only 51 (Williams & Mitchell, 1991). In general, as studies showed, black youths tended to perform better than white young people on free-word recall tasks when the categories (words) were closely related to African American daily experience (Benuto & Leany, 2015; Hayles, 1991).

A WORD ABOUT "CULTURAL LITERACY"

Most verbal intelligence tests contain sections on general knowledge. Obviously, our "general knowledge" is based on events that took place in a particular cultural environment. Most U.S. elementary schoolchildren are expected to have knowledge about who George Washington was. Later comes information about Benjamin Franklin, the Declaration of Independence, the Civil War, the Great Depression, World War II, Martin Luther King, Watergate, Ruth Bader Ginsberg, Barak Obama, Lady Gaga, Donald Trump, Kobe Bryant, and digital media. In Italy, cultural knowledge is based on a different set of facts, events, and developments to those one typically experiences in the United States. For example, words and names such as Fiat, Brigate Rosse, Juventus, AC Milan, Andrea Bocelli, or Fred De Palma would be identified in Italy by many people with almost no difficulty. Could you identify all these names? Surely the answer is "no" – that is, unless you have lived in Italy or possess some knowledge of Italian history, politics, soccer, and music.

Our knowledge is culturally based. There is no doubt that 2 + 2 = 4 in all countries and neighborhoods (unless we move into the realm of quantum physics). An antonym for "death" is "life" in virtually every literate community regardless of its cultural heritage or nationality. However, beyond these and other universal categories (at least they sound universal for most of us), there is always culture-specific knowledge. Try coming up with your own examples of culture-specific knowledge in the United States or any other country with which you are familiar. Consider areas such as religion, music, sports, food, fashion, and social media.

Those who see only little bias in intelligence testing argue that IQ scores can more or less accurately predict future success at school – high school scores are positively correlated with high scores on intelligence tests. These specialists suggest that such tests should, in theory, predict the academic performance of any ethnic group in the same way that they predict performance of white children and adults: High IQs predict academic success

and low IQs predict low school grades (Kell et al., 2013; Pennock-Roman, 1992). This means that any student of any ethnic group who scores high on an IQ test is likely to have better-than-average grades in college. Of course, the word "likely" does not guarantee that they will actually earn good grades, regardless of their effort.

ENVIRONMENT AND INTELLIGENCE

Compare yourself with any person in the classroom. You may find someone of the same age, height, weight, gender, nationality, income, and even lifestyle as yours. However, we all do not live in identical environments. Our diversity is determined by natural factors, such as individual, professional, educational, social, and cultural circumstances. This is an accepted view in psychology – shared by cross-cultural psychologists – that human intellectual skills can be and in fact are influenced by external environmental factors (Black et al., 2010; Carroll, 1983; Sternberg, 1985). In general, these factors include the overall availability of and access to resources, variety of perceptual experiences, predominant type of family climate, educational opportunities, access to information, travel, presence or absence of culturally based magical beliefs, general attitudes toward life, and cultural practices. These and other conditions have been found to influence performance on intelligence tests (Vernon, 1969). Settings such as educational incentives, quality of teaching, and teacher–student communications also influence test scores (Irvine, 1983; Mackie, 1983). Special training programs (Keats, 1985) and additional instructional efforts (Mishra, 1997) can determine how well a person scores on an intelligence test as well. For example, as Ogbu (1994) established, negative attitudes about testing in general, feelings of hopelessness, and exposure to stereotypes lower intelligence scores of African Americans in the United States. Research data suggest that some black students do not perform well on cognitive tests because they are inhibited by a concern they will be evaluated according to the negative attitude of "you are not that smart," which then leads to a fear that their poor performance will then inadvertently confirm that precise stereotype (Steele, 1999). There is evidence that training can increase scores on IQ tests (Skuy et al., 2002). Raven (2000) showed that students who were encouraged to engage in complex cognitive tasks improved substantially in self-direction, understanding, and competence in other tasks.

Cultural studies have shown that the acquisition of many mental functions affecting intelligent behavior depends on interaction with the environment (Macdonald & Rogan, 1990). Take, for instance, West African traders, who spend most of their adult life traveling and negotiating. One well-known study found that the merchants are better on cognitive tasks – including problem-solving – than West African tailors, who spend most of their life in one place and do not have such diverse contacts as the merchants (Petitto & Ginsburg, 1982). In another example, Brazilian and Colombian street children who were earning money by selling fruit and vegetables on the street – often at age ten and younger – were able to conduct financial calculations in their "heads" without making mistakes. Similar math operations, performed by these kids with paper and pencil at the request of investigators, were not that successful. The children did not receive formal schooling, and, as a result, they did not learn the algorithms of adding and subtracting on paper (Aptekar, 1989).

In another early cross-cultural study, after viewing a series of pictures, European children tended to describe the pictures as a sequence of events – as if they were a comic strip that appears in children's magazines. African children who were not exposed to comics tended to report that the pictures portrayed a single instant in time, not a sequence of events (Deregowski & Munro, 1974). In the past, Aboriginal children obtained lower verbal scores than urban Australian children did, and one important cause of the differences was a lack of verbal interaction with peers. If Aboriginal children had a chance to live side by side with white children, it was argued, their test scores on verbal classification tests would have been relatively similar (Lacey, 1971). In general, serious deprivation of stimulation results in the disorganization of a number of cognitive processes (Sinha & Shukla, 1974). Results of preliminary studies across the globe showed a decline in children's cognitive performance since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The causes of such a decline will be debated for years, but many early hypotheses refer to the children's social isolation due to lockdowns and the lack of social interaction during the pandemic (Moyer, 2022).

Certain types of environmental influences determine the individual's experience with these influences; however, people's experiences in turn determine their adaptive reactions. As a result, cognitive skills that play a crucial role in an individual's survival could develop earlier than other skills (Ferguson, 1956). For example, studies showed that children in hunting and gathering societies develop spatial reasoning skills earlier than their peers in agricultural communities. In contrast, children in agricultural cultures achieve understanding of concepts such as conservation of quantity, weight, and volume – knowledge necessary in agricultural activities – more rapidly than children from nomadic (traveling) groups (Dasen, 1975).

Environmental factors affect higher mental operations, such as planning abilities. One such factor is stability of the environment in which the individual lives. In a stable environment most changes are predictable. People are certain about their lives and feel that they are in control of their future. When conditions are unpredictable, people tend to lack planning strategies because of their assumption that it is impossible to control the outcome of whatever you plan. All in all, in societies and communities that are stable, people as a group have better chances of developing their planning skills than people from unstable social environments (Strohschneider & Guss, 1998).

Lack of systematic schooling also contributes to the slow development of planning strategies. Certainly, the complexity of everyday life can provide conditions for the development of planning skills even if a person has little formal education. However, if there is no or very little access to education and if environmental conditions require simple responses, the individual would tend not to develop complex planning strategies.

SOCIOECONOMIC FACTORS

Intelligence scores are, in general, positively correlated with the socioeconomic status of the individual (Neiser et al., 1996). The link between socioeconomic conditions and

test performance can be revealed at an early age. It was found that a child's IQ and the socioeconomic status of the child's parents are positively correlated. The higher the child's IQ, the higher the parents' socioeconomic rank (White, 1982). Children who grow up in a privileged environment tend to show higher scores than their peers from a deprived environment (Masters, 1997). For example, early cultural studies revealed that Yoruba children, living in upper-class, educated families, demonstrated superior mental age scores when compared to Yoruba children from non-literate families (Lloyd & Easton, 1977). A similar trend was found among four-year-old Maori and Pakeha Aboriginal children living in New Zealand (Brooks, 1976). In like fashion, no substantial differences were found in the cognitive abilities of socially disadvantaged children from both Australian Aboriginal and European decent (Taylor & deLacey, 1974).

According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2022), approximately 17 percent of U.S. children under age 18 lived in families below the official poverty level. Although the number declined during the past decade, the change is slow. Poverty contributes to a child's lower scores on tests of intelligence and lower levels of school achievement (Fryer, 2014; McLoyd, 1998). Studies in the past showed links between breast-feeding, nutrition, and cognitive performance of the child. Breastfeeding reduces the infants' exposure to metal pollutants, while providing infants the long chains of proteins necessary for brain development. Mothers from low socioeconomic groups often do not choose to breastfeed their infants. For instance, in the past, black mothers in the United States were only one-third as likely to breastfeed their infants as white mothers (Jensen, 1998). We must emphasize, however, that the mother's IQ was shown to be more highly predictive of breastfeeding status than were her race, education, age, poverty status, smoking, the home environment, or the child's birth weight or birth order (Der et al., 2006).

A 40-year study showed that students from lower-income families making $37,000 or less are less likely to be proficient in both math and reading (Strauss, 2008). The individual's socioeconomic status may have both direct and indirect impact on test performance. For instance, social environments with limited amounts of resources tend to stimulate the development of particular cognitive traits that are useful only for those environments. If we compare large clusters of countries – for example, Western developed and traditional societies – we find that people in Western countries generally outscore members of traditional societies on intelligence tests (including tests that do not include culture-specific tasks, questions, and problems). Leading scholars on cognitive and intelligence tests showed that advancement of schooling ought to be a major determinant of successful performance on such tests (Jukes & Grigorenko, 2010).

Socioeconomic factors have a more pronounced effect on intelligence test scores in developing countries than in economically advanced ones. One explanation of this phenomenon is that in developed countries the gap between the rich and the poor is not as profound as it is in developing countries. The official poverty level in the United States, which is slightly more than $26,500 per family of four per year, exceeds the average annual income of families in many other countries (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2020).

Some researchers have suggested that high IQ scores tend to predict people's higher social status and income (Herrnstein & Murray, 1994). The middle-class population generally has higher IQ scores than the lower-class population. Does this mean that individual socioeconomic success is possible only when an individual has high intellectual skills? Not necessarily. Sure, higher IQ scores have something to do with the academic and social success of the individual. Nevertheless, availability and access to resources – or the lack thereof – may also affect the person's intellectual potential, which results in higher or lower IQ scores. One should not forget that the individual's social status determines position in the society and access to resources and power. Both middle-class and well-to-do parents establish connections and develop personal and professional relationships with people from the same social stratum, thus paving the way for their own children to reach higher levels on the social ladder. In other words, psychometric intelligence alone cannot decide social outcome; there are many other variables in this equation. For example, individuals who have the same IQ scores may be quite different from one another in their income and social and professional status.

Those who study the crucial role of socioeconomic factors in our intellectual functioning consider them the most salient influences contributing to the difference between intelligence test scores of blacks and whites in the United States. Generally, blacks as a group have lower incomes, occupy less prestigious positions, and receive less adequate care than other groups. Poverty is also linked to inconsistent parenting and persistent families' exposure to stress that can and does affect cognitive functioning of these families' members.

THE FAMILY FACTOR

An affluent and educated family is likely to provide a better material environment for a child and also has more resources to develop a child's intellectual potential than a poorer family. It was shown long ago that middle-class parents typically have enough resources to stimulate the child's learning experience at home (Gottfried, 1984). Such parents are likely to be educated and subsequently have general understanding of the importance of education. They are able to purchase developmentally beneficial toys, including tablets, game consoles, and computer software. Most such parents do not have problems that would prevent them from talking to their children about various science-related topics, exposing them to interesting events, and stimulating their creative imagination. On the contrary, poor families have fewer resources and fewer opportunities to stimulate a child's academic and intellectual development (Banerjee & Duflo, 2019). If the parents' primary activity is to secure food and safety for the family members, then collective survival – not necessarily the intellectual development of the child – is the prime goal of the parents' daily activities.

For instance, research has shown that children of parents of Indian origin, living in England and Scotland, outperformed all other students at school. Similar data were received regarding students of Chinese and mixed backgrounds. One of the factors proposed by researchers is that, in most cases, immigrant parents start their lives with

low-paying jobs and see in their children's education the key to their sons' and daughters' success in life. As a result, these parents pay special attention to their children's school performance (Sonwalkar, 2004). A similar conclusion was drawn in a study involving 6,000 U.S. middle-school students. Across ethnic groups, students whose parents were concerned about their children's academic performance and who were able to boost the educational aspirations of their children showed significantly higher academic scores than other students (Hong & Ho, 2005).

Studies show that parents from Southeast Asian immigrant groups – such as Chinese, Koreans, and Vietnamese – tend to be successful at promoting academic success in their children. It has also been shown that parents from many Hispanic ethnic backgrounds are less successful in this regard (Naumann et al., 2012). This does not necessarily mean that Hispanic parents are less invested in their children's future than are Asian parents. These differences are likely based on the social backgrounds of the immigrant families and the specific reasons the families migrated: Some of them moved to escape violence and injustice, others to improve their economic conditions, yet others to achieve professional and educational success (Schwartz et al., 2011). These reasons may be interconnected, and further research is clearly needed.

It has been found that intelligence scores decline as a function of birth order: younger siblings tend to have lower scores compared to their older brothers and sisters. According to one theory, this trend has little to do with biological factors (Munroe & Munroe, 1983). Every immature member of a family develops intelligence linked to the intellectual level of the older family members. The firstborn in the family has the initial advantage of an immediate environment consisting of only himself or herself and the adult parents, who have a particular set of cognitive skills. When a second child is born, this child enters an environment consisting of themselves, the parents, and the firstborn, whose cognitive skills are only developing. Thus, in general, the intellectual environment encountered by the firstborn is "superior" to that of the second born, and so on.

Although controversial, this suggestion found additional support in some earlier studies. For example, during a 20-year period, a continuous increase in IQ scores in the African American population was correlated with the increasingly smaller family size since the 1970s. Children from smaller families tended to achieve higher IQ scores than their counterparts from larger families (Vincent, 1991). However, extra caution is needed when it comes to interpreting these findings. First, the relationship here could follow a different causal chain: Higher scores on IQ tests may indicate higher cognitive abilities, which, in turn, affect individual attitudes about pregnancy and family planning. Another explanation for the change in IQ scores is a more significant increase in the educational level of parents in black families in the United States in the 1980s and 1990s.

Parental influence can be one of the factors contributing to the difference in IQ scores between whites and some other ethnic groups (predominantly minorities) that represent the middle class. Minority parents – especially those who arrived in the United States before the 1960s – are likely to be less educated than the white population. As it was mentioned earlier, parents' cognitive skills and their positive view of education

contribute to the development of the child's cognitive skills. Chinese, South Korean, and Japanese Americans (among others) tend to emphasize the importance of education and good grades in school for their children and see it as the key opportunity for future advancement. Partly because of the impact of family values and partly because of their academic success, Asian Americans tend to seek and get appointments in professional, managerial, or technical occupations to a greater extent than any other ethnic group (Flynn, 2013; Flynn, 1991; Schwartz et al., 2011).

"NATURAL SELECTION" AND IQ SCORES

According to the bell curve principle, a normal distribution of IQ scores in any given population can be roughly divided into three large categories: people with lower, average, and higher IQ scores. This same principle can also be applied in the distribution of peoples' heights. However, although a bell curve of IQ scores and a bell curve of peoples' heights may produce a similar geometrical pattern, the meanings people assign to these patterns are quite different. For instance, we find people of all different heights in various social circles, with various occupations, and of varying intelligence. An individual's location on the bell curve of height may place her next to numerous types of people that she may never interact with in everyday life and have almost no shared interests with. Think of a 6-foot-tall fashion model and a manager of a technology company, who is of the same height – but their professional and social paths might never cross.

The bell curve of IQ scores is another story. In the United States, for example, people with high IQ scores are disproportionally represented among doctors, scientists, lawyers, and business executives. Researchers consider IQ as one of the most important factors predicting success in business (Antonakis, 2017). Individuals with low IQ scores are disproportionally represented among people on welfare, prison inmates, single mothers, drug abusers, and high-school dropouts (see, e.g., Strenze, 2007; Rushton & Jensen, 2005).

Perhaps there is nothing unusual about people with similar interests and occupations tending to communicate with one another significantly more often than with people of other occupations and interests. For example, a high IQ score indicates that you will more likely (1) attend college, (2) attend graduate school, (3) gain employment in a setting conducive to meeting and making friends with people of similar educational levels and, perhaps, intelligence, and (4) marry someone with an educational background similar to yours. Likewise, people with lower scores will likely seek love and friendship among people of the same cognitive level. Therefore, two polls of people have been "assembled" over the years: one with relatively high and the other with relatively low intelligence scores. The former is placed, based on how society operates, in an advantageous social niche with prestigious jobs, good income, good health care, and fine living conditions. The latter group finds itself in the disadvantaged stratum of low-paying jobs, unstable social environment, less adequate health care, and lower-quality living conditions.

Unfortunately, for a variety of reasons, many representatives of ethnic minorities remain in the disadvantaged group. Low IQ scores, as was mentioned earlier, predict low academic grades and fewer opportunities for individuals to get high-income jobs. Lack of resources would contribute greatly to keeping many of these individuals in low-income communities. Low salaries and low cost of property produce significantly fewer local taxes than in more affluent districts. Therefore, these types of public schools – most of which depend on local property taxes – tend to struggle in providing high-quality education that could be considered to the quality of education in affluent communities. Poor schooling conditions, lack of qualified teachers and modern educational technologies negatively affect the developing child's cognitive skills. In addition, as we saw earlier, poverty is responsible for a variety of indirect impacts on the intellectual development of children and adults.

CULTURAL VALUES OF COGNITION

Judging from an ethnocentric perspective, one might suggest that the most "valuable" individual features for any problem-solving process are the person's efficient analytic skills, well-organized algorithms, and quick critical reasoning. However, such a view – although popular – does not apply well cross-culturally. Some societies value critical reasoning and cognitive abilities that differ from the ones highly regarded by Western culture (Berry, 1988). In some societies, holistic (i.e., emphasizing the importance of the whole) rather than analytic decision-making is especially valued (Dasen, 1984; Serpell, 1993). In such cases, careful reflection rather than promptness or precision is considered the most appropriate course of thought process. In these primarily agricultural societies, collective discussion rather than individual consideration is generally the preferred cognitive style. Therefore, in such cultures, individuals tested with a standard Western psychological instrument will likely display a low level of cognitive development according to criteria that measure only independence or speed of judgment.

Nisbett (2003) empirically demonstrated the differences in cognitive styles between Western and East Asian students. Using experimental data, he showed that students from China, South Korea, and Japan tended to be more holistic in their perceptions than students of Western descent, as we saw in Chapter 4. In other words, East Asian students as a group tended to see and remember objects as being interconnected, while Western students as a group paid more attention to details and objects that clearly stood out (Masuda & Nisbett, 2006). Studies also show that Western infants learn nouns faster than verbs, while East Asian infants tend to learn verbs (indicating connections between objects) more rapidly. Differences in reasoning styles between Chinese and European Americans were observed during a comparative study that revealed Chinese students, both bilingual and those not speaking English, organized objects in pictures in a more relational and less categorical way than European Americans (Ji et al., 2004).

CRITICAL THINKING

CONFUCIUS VS. SOCRATES

Have you ever heard that there is a unique "Chinese" way of thinking? Or, conversely, there is a distinctive "Western" style? Do you believe that any of what you've heard along these lines is true? According to one popular view, there must be two special "cultural" ways of thinking, rooted in early Chinese and European customs and philosophical systems. Supporters of this argument use an example of the teachings of two prominent philosophers of China and Greece – Confucius (*c.*551–*c.*479 BCE) and Socrates (*c.*470–399 BCE) – and their impact on the general learning principles cultivated in Chinese and Western (European) cultures. It is argued that Socrates, a major contributor to the Western scholarly thought, valued critical thinking and skepticism by encouraging the questioning of common knowledge. He taught his students and, subsequently, millions of followers of other generations, to be independent thinkers and generate their own ideas. Confucius, to the contrary, is viewed as valuing the effortful, respectful, and pragmatic acquisition of essential knowledge based on respect toward educators and the constant search for patterns of useful behavior to follow (Tweed & Lehman, 2002; Yang & Sternberg, 1997). While Confucius urged his followers to respect teachers, Socrates urged his followers to challenge them.

If you accept these dichotomous arguments, you are likely to agree with the idea that there are culture-based patterns of learning and thinking. Thus, Socrates impacted the cultural characteristics of the "typical" European student who is primarily a teacher's challenger and critical thinker, while Confucius impacted the characteristics of the "typical" Chinese student who is a teacher's follower and efficient problem solver.

If you disagree, you are likely to believe that respect toward authority, acceptance of teachers, and the search for practical applications of knowledge are, in fact, common features of any educational system, whether it is Chinese, Greek, or anywhere else. Therefore, to attribute them exclusively to a particular culture or any other philosophy is inaccurate (Li, 2003). Moreover, critical, not "obedient" thinking is widely practiced in the Chinese educational system, contrary to stereotypical perceptions of some outsiders (Rooney, 2022).

Which side of this argument do you find easier to support and why? If there are differences between Chinese and non-Chinese ways of thinking, what are the practical, "real life" outcomes of such differences? Can some commonalities be found that might offer an opportunity for mutual understanding and, perhaps, mutual benefit?

According to another approach to the interpretation of test scores on intelligence, the problem is in the way people across cultures value and construe intelligence. For instance, as you might recall, the conceptualization of high intelligence as quick and analytic is not shared in all cultures. If one group's concept includes being detailed and precise in responding, and the other group does not mention these features (and instead accentuates improvisation, intuition, or goodwill as important features of intelligence), then precision cannot be used as a criterion according to which the two groups are compared (Sternberg, 2020; Berry, 1969) (see Figure 5.1).

Sternberg's (2020) position is that our society's emphasis on formal mental abilities does not give a fair chance to many individuals with high creative and practical mental abilities. For example, on measures of creativity, flexibility, and originality, black children and other ethnic or racial groups typically do as well, and frequently better, compared to white children (Hayles, 1991).

We understand better now that intellectual skills are judged according to a group's standards. For example, if a culture places an emphasis on hunting, a person's exceptional vision and ability to make quick visual judgments should be considered extremely adaptive. In contrast, in predominantly gathering cultures, the speed of one's response would not be as essential as a critical evaluation of a task or problem at hand, which requires long-term planning and perseverance. In other words, the people themselves – as representatives of a particular culture – define intelligence. If we support this contention, we inevitably move into the muddy waters of cultural relativism (see discussion in Chapter 2) because we would challenge the existence of universal criteria for the assessment of human intellectual activities. However, cultural relativism can be easy to challenge. For example, in an era of today's social networks, instant communications, and travel, many people tend to develop relatively

INTEGRATIVE
(continuum between the two conceptual polarities)

WESTERN   **EASTERN**

analytical/reductionistic	*holistic/synthesized*
calculation	*intuition*
value critical thinking	*value wisdom*
categorical organization	*relational organization*
field-independent	*field-dependent*
pursuit of one truth	*acceptance of many truths*
speed	*reflection*
nouns learned faster	*verbs learned faster*

Figure 5.1 Intelligence: Western vs. Eastern Attributes

similar understandings of specific cognitive and intellectual abilities that are universally successful or adaptive.

Cognitive style is the way in which individuals organize and comprehend the world (Farmaki et al., 2019). It has been shown in experimental studies that students of non-European origin tend to use different cognitive styles of information processing compared to Europeans: They were more field dependent than their European counterparts in the classroom (Kush, 1996). To explain, **field-dependent** learners are more attentive to external references, contexts, and instructions in their learning tasks. In contrast, **field-independent** learners tend to be less attentive to external references and tend to be autonomous in learning, solving problems, and making decisions. It was found that in U.S. academic settings, field-independent students are more successful than field-dependent students. Although an individual's cognitive style is determined by many factors, cross-cultural studies also show that people in predominantly individualist cultures, such as Germany and the United States, tend to be more field independent than people in more collectivist cultures, such as South Africa or Malaysia (Kuhnen et al., 2001).

Ideology also affects what people of a certain country value most in cognitive skills. Consider this example. If authorities, whoever they are – the central government or a local village boss – make the most important decisions in your life, then apparently the number of choices you have may be restricted. Given these limited choices, the number of activities available to you based on your own decisions will also be limited, which is likely to affect your creativity and problem-solving ability. For example, creative thinking and self-expression are highly regarded in Western democratic societies. On the contrary, creative thinking is not considered to be a necessary individual asset in authoritarian societies. This type of thinking may put the individual "above the crowd," and could encourage the individual to question and even challenge the established rules, which is neither appreciated nor tolerated by authorities. The same logic can be applied to those governments that promote dogmatic thinking and punish individuals for free exchange of ideas (Shiraev & Sobel, 2006).

GENERAL COGNITION: WHAT IS "UNDERNEATH" INTELLIGENCE?

Empirical evidence about cultural diversity as well as universal principles of cognition (see "Defining Intelligence" at the beginning of this chapter) have contributed to the foundations of several theories exploring the links between culture and intelligence. Researchers have identified a number of cognitive processes, such as recognition, categorization, memory, and thinking. Analysis of these processes can shed some light on the similarities and differences in intellectual functioning among various ethnic groups. We now examine five such processes: classification, sorting, memory, reasoning, and creativity.

CLASSIFICATION

Are there any differences in how people categorize their environment? We have already briefly discussed field-dependent and field-independent cognitive styles based, to various degrees, on contexts (Varnum et al., 2010). Humans, as groups, tend to see many categories in similar fashions. Schoolchildren from all corners of the planet know that a flower is not an animal, but a dog is.

One of the most universal classifications is the cognitive distinction made between plants and animals (Berlin, 1992). Those plants and animals that are essential for the survival of individuals become most carefully distinguished and named. In general, the importance of objects and animals as well as a person's familiarity with them are the most significant factors that influence categorization. Studies have shown that groups that are relatively distant from each other tend to have differences in object classifications (Schwanenflugel & Rey, 1986). These differences can be a source of potential bias in the testing of cognitive skills. (In this regard, see our discussion of the representativeness bias in Chapter 2.)

SORTING

If you ask a seven-year-old child of any nationality to sort 100 colored cards on a computer screen into color categories, the child can be expected to perform this operation effortlessly. Why? Children across cultures constantly deal with colors. Now ask an elderly resident of a small Ethiopian or Albanian village to sort 100 YouTube videos according to the musical genres they represent – rock, classical, jazz, pop, and hip-hop – and this person will likely experience serious difficulties (unless, for some unlikely reason, this person happens to be familiar with musical genres).

We can sort various objects even when no instructions are provided on how to do it. Generally, we start by choosing a dimension (i.e., concept or characteristic) of categorization. Linguists assert that many categories used in sorting are generally universal across cultures. We use synonyms (such as "quick" and "fast"), antonyms (such as "clean" versus "dirty"), subcategories, (such as "skunk" and "animal"), and parts (such as "heart" and "body") (Raybeck & Herrmann, 1990).

Researchers have shown that cultural groups tended to categorize objects based on their specific cultural experiences associated with these objects (Okonji, 1971; Wassmann, 1993; Wassmann & Dasen, 1994). In other words, based on experience, people know what the objects are used for and then base their categorization on this knowledge (Mishra, 1997). The person's degree of familiarity with the environment influences classificatory behavior. For example, according to a well-known study, rural Liberians performed at a lower level in a card-sorting task, compared with students from New Mexico; however, the Liberians were superior at sorting bowls of rice (Irwin et al., 1974). In several studies, Middle Eastern immigrants to North America were found to have better integrative thinking than other immigrants who performed similar object-sorting tasks in laboratory experiments. These differences are likely a reflection of variations

(e.g., teacher training, school programs, etc.) in different national educational systems (Zebian & Denny, 2001).

MEMORY

Many comparative tests on memory contain tasks that require the subject to remember information from a story and then recall it. Are there any cultural differences in memory? In early studies, Mandler and colleagues (1980) found relatively few differences in the recollection of stories between U.S. and Liberian children and adults. Similarly, common patterns in immediate recall of information were found among such diverse cultural groups as English, Polish, and Shona in Zimbabwe (Whethrick & Deregowski, 1982).

However, more recent studies have revealed some cultural differences in memorization. In particular, the preference for analytical versus holistic processing has been demonstrated to differ across cultures. As groups, subjects from Western cultures preferred an object-based feature analysis involved in memorization; in contrast, samples from Eastern cultures, as groups, preferred a context-based holistic analysis (Millar et al., 2013).

Common patterns in how people recall stories does not mean there are common patterns in exactly what people recall or how fast they process this information. Cultural, social, and educational experiences affect what we remember. Two groups of students, Australians and Asians (including Chinese, Japanese, and South Korean), were asked to provide information about so-called self-defining memories. These memories were to be autobiographical recollections of events they believed shaped them as individuals. Australians provided more elaborate self-focused memories, and Asians produced more elaborate memories involving other people and relationships (Jobson & O'Kearney, 2008).

Children of higher socioeconomic status received better scores on various memorization tests compared with other students (Ciborski & Choi, 1974). Steffensen and Calker (1982) tested U.S. and Australian Aboriginal women by asking them to recall two stories about a child getting sick. The child was treated by Western medicine in one story (a situation familiar to U.S. women) and by native medicine in the other (a situation familiar to Australian women). The stories were recalled better when they were consistent with the subjects' knowledge. Similar results have been reported by other psychologists working with different cultural populations (Harris et al., 1992). Deregowski (1974) showed that urban children in Zambia recalled more test information than did rural residents. Perhaps better educational opportunities of urban boys and girls and the emphasis on memorization in school activities enhanced children's test performance.

REASONING: FORMAL AND EMPIRICAL

Formal reasoning is a fundamental cognitive operation that is based on an analysis of given premises and then deriving a specific conclusion from them. Formal reasoning rests essentially on principles and rules of logic. Certain logical axioms regulate formal reasoning. Here is one example: (1) All of the people in a particular town speak a

rare Spanish dialect; (2) An individual, Maria, lives in this town; therefore (3) Maria speaks in this specific dialect. Formal reasoning frequently involves (a) identifying and understanding a problem, (b) considering ways to solve it, (c) weighing the alternatives, and then (d) selecting the best available option. Formal reasoning is utilized not only within the realm of science, but almost everywhere in our daily lives. For instance, a mother in a village needs to make a logical decision about buying medication for her ill child: She must decide between walking several kilometers to purchase a more expensive medicine, or paying for a ride to purchase a less expensive one (see Tieg & Scherer, 2016). In this case, the mother would need to make an assessment of whether the time and money she invests in her travel is worth the money she saves. However, formal reasoning may not necessarily take into account a number of factors that are less easily measurable, such as, in our case, the compassion the mother feels toward her child, the urgency she experiences in getting the medication to her child, or what she might have to trade off with respect to other purchases for her family.

Formal reasoning is different from **empirical reasoning**, which is drawn from everyday experience. A person may develop skills of empirical reasoning but do poorly on a test that measures formal reasoning skills. Russian psychologist Alexander Luria (1976) demonstrated in one of his studies that illiterate peasants in Uzbekistan, a republic of the former Soviet Union, were able to successfully use empirical reasoning – when objects involved in reasoning were observable – but often failed to comprehend abstract formal reasoning that required assumptions and imagination.

Many cross-cultural studies have specifically focused on their subjects solving mathematical problems. This was the case not only because these studies provided a good test of reasoning ability but also because math symbols appear to be culturally neutral. One of the important findings was that Eastern cultures – such as China and Japan – are often thought to be advanced in the development of numerical abilities in their children. Indeed, Chinese participants performed significantly better on many mathematical measures than did U.S. students (Geary et al., 1992; Stevenson et al., 1990). Asian American students admitted to Harvard scored higher on the SAT than did their peers from other groups (Avi-Yonah, & McCafferty, 2018). Davis and Ginsburg (1993) compared Beninese (African), North American, and Korean children and found little difference in performance on informal life-related numerical problems. However, on formal problems, the Korean children performed best. Why did this tendency exist? The most common explanation assumes that there is a particular set of cultural norms developed in East Asian countries. Specifically, parents and teachers in those countries spend more time on and dedicate more effort to the development of formal mathematical skills in their children than their overseas counterparts typically do. The differences in educational norms and attitudes most likely cause the differences in test performance between American and East Asian children (van de Vijver & Willemsen, 1993).

CREATIVITY

If you were to write a verse in English in which you rhyme "moon" and "June," "you" and "true," or "together" and "forever," this would almost never be considered

to be "creative." Why not? Because **creativity** is defined as the process of bringing into existence something new, unique, or original – such as an invention, a solution, a procedure, or artistic expression. Put a different way, creativity involves doing, saying, designing, or generating something that is not readily predicted or expected – anything from writing music and lyrics to conceiving new architecture or developing novel culinary recipes. Since the rhymes mentioned above have been used in countless poems and songs, they lack one of the key features of creativity: originality. What is viewed as "original" or not is, of course, defined by one's cultural norms.

In studies involving Western subjects who were asked to name characteristics of a creative individual, some of the most commonly identified adjectives were "curious," "imaginative," "independent," "inventive," "original," "nonconformist," "assertive," "daring," "artistic," "open-minded," and "intelligent" (Lueschter et al., 2019). Chinese participants, on the other hand, were more likely to use terms such as "originality," "innovativeness," "observational skills," "flexibility," "willingness to try," "self-confidence," and "imagination" as core characteristics of a creative person (Yong et al., 2019).

Creativity is linked to two kinds of cognitive processes – generative processes and exploratory processes. First, people actively retrieve or seek out relevant information that might have creative potential. Next, they examine these ideas to determine which ones should receive further processing, such as modification, elaboration, and transformation (Leung et al., 2008).

Consistent parental support and positive stimulation appear as good predictors of creativity (Simonton, 1987). In a comparative Mexican American study, children from economically advantaged families showed higher creativity scores than did disadvantaged children (Langgulung & Torrance, 1972). It was also found that Arab subjects tended to score higher on verbal creativity than on spatial creativity, which is probably due to the emphasis that Islamic cultures place on achieving verbal proficiency and the religious restrictions placed on pictorial reflections of reality (Abou-Hatab, 1997; Mari & Karayanni, 1982). The same study showed that in Arab cultures, males scored higher than females on creativity tests. However, for those subjects who were equally exposed to the media, Western education, and travel showed little evidence of sex differences in their scores of creativity.

A CASE IN POINT

Multicultural experience is linked to and can foster the creative expansion of ideas. The stories of many expatriate artists and writers whose brilliant insights emerged when they left their homeland and settled in a foreign country are illuminating. Explore the biographies of several writers, composers, and artists. Many of them created their major masterpieces when living away from their birthplaces. The

writers Gabriel G. Marquez (born in Colombia) and Vladimir Nabokov (born in Russia), the composer Sergei Rachmaninoff (born in Russia), the artist Paul Gauguin (born in France), the poets Nâzım Hikmet (born in Turkey) and Rabindranath Tagore (born in India) all lived and worked far away from their homelands. How can living in a different culture inspire a writer's imagination or stimulate an artist's creative work? Can you think of other artists (painters, directors, writers, performers) who created their masterpieces while living away from their homeland? There are exceptions, of course. Many writers and artists have not traveled much and, yet, no one doubts their creativity and talent. Take, for example, the great Persian poet Nezami, or the American popular songwriter Irving Berlin, both of whom basically stayed in one place for their entire lives. Do you think that foreign travel would affect your creativity?

Cultural experiences can either help or hinder creativity. Our learned routines often help us to coordinate our social behaviors (Chiu & Hong, 2006). However, when an individual is immersed in and exposed to only one culture, the learned routines and conventional knowledge of that culture may limit his or her creative responses and growth. Studies have shown that multicultural experience is positively correlated with a preference for sampling ideas from unfamiliar cultures. However, foreign living (but not necessarily short–term foreign traveling) positively correlated with creative thinking. When living abroad, we encounter many opportunities for our own cognitive and behavioral adaptation and change. On the other hand, more creative people are more likely than noncreative people to choose spending some time overseas, in a different culture. Yet travel and multicultural experience do not improve an individual's performance in a creativity task unless the individual is open to new experiences (Leung et al., 2008).

CROSS-CULTURAL SENSITIVITY

CULTURAL APPROPRIATION OR CULTURAL APPRECIATION?

Instances of cross-cultural influence abound across the globe and are virtually infinite in number. Consider popular music, mixed martial arts, fusion cuisine, musical theater, hiplet dance, art deco design, emojis, cornrow hairstyles, and even advancements in philosophy and science. As such, cross-cultural influence serves as the very life blood of innovation, creativity, and societal evolution.

But can adopting and incorporating the ideas and customs of other cultures for one's own use result in a harmful downside? What if it entails disrespect, denigration, or even exploitation? Such instances are termed *cultural appropriation*. This problem becomes particularly acute when the culture being appropriated is an historically oppressed or marginalized group. Think about costumes that

reduce other cultures to stereotypes (Native Americans), forms of theater (minstrel shows), ethnic team names (Redskins), language (use of the "*n-word*" by non-African Americans), and certain styles of makeup and fashion. And clearly, in cases of blatant creative theft – such as copyright infringement, unauthorized music sampling, or even when white pop musicians have imitated black genres for financial gain – some kind of harm is virtually inevitable.

In contrast, when cultural influence occurs within a context of respect or honor, we may refer to this as *cultural appreciation*. (You probably know the adage, "imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.") In the arts, for example, cross-fertilization is essential for creative interpretation and inspiration. Unfortunately, however, the distinction between appropriation and appreciation can be blurry, and therefore frequently controversial or contentious.

Some would argue that, since no culture is completely original and uninfluenced by any other, the distinction between the two concepts is essentially based on personal values (see the evaluative bias of language, Chapter 2); in other words, one person's appreciation may be another's appropriation. Consider the fact that many people view Notre Dame's "Fighting Irish" as a badge of honor, whereas others might see Atlanta's "Braves" as an offensive slur. Moreover, can anybody justly claim the right to protect – or even to own – cultural symbols, language (the "*n-word*"), or customs? Do you think cultural appropriation merits definable boundaries or limits? Should it be permissible, for instance, for an actor of one ethnicity to be cast in a role portraying a member of a different ethnicity without being condemned as a "cultural appropriator"?

Here are some steps you can take to try to avoid even well-intended, but nevertheless potentially pernicious, effects of cross-cultural appropriation:

- Strive for empathy toward other groups that might be affected.
- Attempt to understand the culture from which you're borrowing, which includes acknowledging its possible history of oppression and marginalization.
- Be particularly careful if the choice you are considering might promote a cultural stereotype or is considered sacred to another group.
- Consider consulting with and supporting creators from that culture.
- Try to credit the source of your inspiration, and if profit is involved, be fair in your handling of compensation.

COGNITIVE SKILLS, SCHOOL GRADES, AND EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS

As has been shown in numerous studies, IQ scores correlate with school grades. In other words, if Ali has a higher IQ than John, we can anticipate that Ali's grades in math,

science, literature, and social studies are also likely to exceed those of John. Could we then conclude that higher intelligence scores in essence define higher school grades? This could be an accurate assumption, but it contains a potential logical error because the high grades one earns at school may also be determined by one's effort, motivation, interest in learning, and individual discipline (refer to the critical thinking principle of multiple causation examined in Chapter 2). These features, in turn, may be largely influenced by this person's family, the quality of books and online educational sources, and the underlying socioeconomic conditions. Add peers' influence, teachers' effort and commitment, and the availability of educational resources at school – all can be causal factors in determining a particular individual's grades and test scores.

We should not forget that around the globe, national school systems are organized differently. In the United States, public education is primarily based on the guidelines determined by local communities and school boards. The federal government provides funds for many schools but, in most cases, cannot dictate to states or districts more than general educational markers with regard to what students are required to study in kindergarten, middle school, or high school. In most other countries, however, schools use standard national curricula, and students nationwide have similar textbooks on every subject. Educational experts and government officials set particular standards that children are supposed to achieve by a certain age or school grade. To illustrate, children in Japan are generally more advanced than their U.S. counterparts in math. This is probably not the effect of a difference in IQ scores per se – average scores between Japanese and American children are, in fact, somewhat similar – but, rather, the consequence of Japan's national school curriculum (which is more centralized than in the United States), placing a very high premium on mathematics.

CRITICAL THINKING

IS AMERICA "LOSING?"

Are U.S. children behind the rest of the world in math and other academic disciplines? The media notion that "America is losing" in education is not a new phenomenon. A 1957 cover story in a March issue of *Life* magazine reads as follows: "Crisis in Education." The article suggested that hard-working and disciplined students in the communist Soviet Union were surpassing languid and carefree Americans in educational achievement. Back in the 1980s, numerous reports about the achievements of Japanese students compared to their American counterparts predicted a rapid and inevitable economic decline vis-à-vis the growing might of the Japanese economy, rising on the shoulders of highly educated and intelligent Japanese workers.

These days, compared with students from the world's other industrialized countries, U.S. students earn equivalent scores in every subject. Moreover, Americans

commonly outperform everyone in particular disciplines such as civics (i.e., public affairs and the rights and duties of citizens). Of course, being on the same level with others does not mean that everything is outstanding with the U.S. educational system. Educational challenges of the United States are related to institutional and cultural factors. First, with a few exceptions, U.S. public schools are locally funded and are not run by the federal government – unlike in most countries in the world including Russia, South Korea, China, and India. Second, college education is widely available to a majority of U.S. students (through a huge network of state universities and two-year colleges), which does not require the high school student to have perfect grades and highest academic scores. Third, the U.S. educational system has historically placed a special emphasis on individual development, freedom of choice, creativity, and unconventional problem solving. This cultural focus subsequently diffuses attention of many (but of course, not all) students and their parents away from relentless test-taking preparations (Farhi, 2007).

Please consider this question: To boost test scores and improve cognitive skills, what are the three most important changes you would like to see implemented in America's (or any other country's) educational system, and why?

Studies for years have shown a high correlation between IQ scores and total years of education. In other words, people with a higher IQ were likely to continue their education at college, and people with a college degree are likely to have a higher IQ than individuals with only a high school diploma (Neiser et al., 1996). A higher IQ predicts higher grades; that, in turn, may increase a person's motivation to stay in school and advance his or her education. (Always keep in mind, however, the critical thinking principle that correlation does not prove causation, discussed in Chapter 2.)

CULTURE, TESTS, AND MOTIVATION

IQ test scores may be determined not only by one's intellectual skills but also by the individual's personal motivation, anxiety, and attitudes toward testing. For example, why is there a gap in intelligence test scores between whites and African and Mexican Americans, whereas no such gap exists for other immigrant groups, such as Arabs, Chinese, or Iranians? Explaining the difference, some scholars have turned to the so-called **low-effort syndrome** (Dweck, 2006; Ogbu, 1991). The low-effort syndrome is a form of an individual's coping or adjustment strategy: "No matter how hard I try, I will be held back." Some members of groups that experience discrimination against them often view positive feedback from a dominant group member more negatively than do members of a dominant cultural group. In one experiment, a white evaluator praised or did not praise either black or white students for a good academic performance. Praised black students rated the evaluator as less polite than did non–praised black students, whereas praise

did not affect the white students' evaluations of the evaluator's courtesy. Black students tended to attribute praise to the evaluator's low expectations, whereas the white students tended to attribute praise to high expectations (Lawrence et al., 2011).

Why does this syndrome occur? In the United States, and perhaps in some other countries, there are at least two kinds of groups that can experience the consequences of discrimination. The first is immigrant groups, most of whom arrive voluntarily in search of better conditions and opportunities. These groups often make use of high academic achievement as a condition of success. Other groups were brought to the United States through slavery or forceful colonization. They developed a different attitude that was based on an assumption that academic success does not lead to advancements because society does not want them to advance educationally.

It is hard to disagree with the idea that people ought to expect successful results for their hard work. Otherwise, pessimism may discourage many of us from studying, learning, and striving for a better future (Raspberry, 2000). Those who argue that some ethnic groups display less motivation on intelligence tests typically suggest that such individuals do not try to excel on these tests because they believe that they are not going to college anyway or that the tests are biased against them; therefore, test results are unimportant. Perceiving themselves as minority groups and understanding that power and resources do not belong to them, some individuals believe that there is no reason for them to try to succeed because success is not achievable and their effort will not be rewarded by society just because of their minority status or for other reasons (Fryer et al., 2011; Dweck, 2006). Such negative attitudes could be passed on to younger generations and become part of value systems, which encourage people to seek alternative ways to survive that do not necessarily include education (Ogbu, 1986).

IQ, CULTURE, AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Is the power of the few based on their intellectual skills? Exceptions notwithstanding, in most contemporary societies the amount of education received by people should predict, in general, their social status and their socioeconomic position. Indeed, the higher your educational degree, the more prestigious and well paid the profession you can apply for and eventually obtain. As discussed earlier, individuals with a higher educational degree typically earn more than those with fewer years of completed education. For example, in most societies, occupations such as doctors, lawyers, dentists, college professors, and some other professions require up to 20 years of formal schooling. In other words, a high IQ score indicates higher grades in school and ought to eventually lead toward a higher social status – the value of which is measured by generated income and occupational prestige.

Can you find any examples showing that certain prestigious, well-paid, and admired professions do not require a person to pass a plethora of tests or achieve an advanced academic credential? In such cases, the relationship between IQ and earning potential would not be so evident and, therefore, IQ would probably lose its discriminatory power

over people's lives. Is it safe therefore to extrapolate that, in contemporary societies, people are divided into "upper" and "lower" social categories according to their . . . test scores?

Many might argue that in contemporary free and democratic societies people are born to be equal and laws are supposed to protect their equal rights. Therefore, it is fundamentally wrong to continue to divide people socially and economically based on their test scores. Why should the contemporary system have to be accepted as fair if it discriminates against certain groups essentially based on their scores? For instance, some groups, primarily blacks, Hispanics, and Native Americans, have less opportunity to go to college and thus fewer chances of getting better paying jobs than those individuals from other ethnic groups who show higher IQ scores. Looking at this situation from a slightly different perspective, one could ask: "How can we call this a fair society if we have only one educational system, which links societal success largely to test scores and indicates what jobs people should pursue based on their scores and eventually how much money they can make?"

Others' reply might sound as follows: "So what is the problem? We are all different. Some people are tall and some other people are short. We have different skills. We tend to strive for different goals. We are not entitled to perform in the same way and all the time. We have to accept diversity. Diversity assumes some sort of inequality." As previously mentioned, intelligence test scores can predict which professions an individual is likely to obtain. In the United States and many other countries, certain occupations require an applicant to earn a particular college degree and pass special qualification tests. No doubt, these professions require individuals to apply their intellectual skills.

For example, imagine yourself as a physician. What do you have to do daily? Most likely, you will have to examine different patients with different symptoms and problems. You need to apply your research skills and observational proficiency to arrive at an accurate diagnosis. You have to know how to talk to patients and their relatives. You must be able to communicate with insurance companies, your colleagues, and your supervisors. You are required to understand how to write prescriptions. You must follow online medical news and read scientific and other professional journals. Need we continue . . .? This multifaceted job requires a high academic degree and strong intellectual skills. In contrast, people with lower degrees or without formal schooling would be expected to perform different types of activities.

Perhaps people will always compete with and discriminate against one another in certain walks of life. Maybe there is no way to achieve equal performance and, therefore, equal scores on school tests. However, wherever it is possible, people living in a free and democratic society can reduce the impact of discrimination, whether intentional or not. For the sake of argument, suppose that two children are born in the year 2015. Should we expect that they are both entitled to have an equal opportunity to compete for a better future? That would certainly be fair. However, in reality, from the beginning of their lives they may join the race for happiness at different "speeds." One child may have experienced better conditions for intellectual growth and had better opportunities for

home schooling during the COVID pandemic that began in 2020, whereas the other might not face such favorable circumstances.

Will these two children have equal chances to develop equal cognitive skills, given their unequal environments, even though they had relatively equal potential at birth? This is a difficult and honest question. Some perhaps would agree that the government should create special conditions under which every person gets an equal share of resources regardless of their educational and intellectual scores. Should a brain surgeon, for instance, receive the same compensation as a high school drop-out – if they both do their best as employees? Why would you agree or disagree with this policy?

Very few of us would expect or demand that people be totally equal and receive the same benefits regardless of their achievement, effort, skills, and moral behavior. However, we believe that a wealthy democratic society is capable of creating better access to opportunities and better conditions for its citizens by helping the disadvantaged to compete for and pursue stability in their lives and happiness. Does equal opportunity equate to equal outcomes? This debate, however, brings about not only psychological but also many moral and political questions that are beyond the scope of the present analysis. But that doesn't mean we should avoid such important questions.

IQ testing and IQ scores are likely to be changing, however. Flynn (2012; 2007) has shown an interesting tendency of a continuous and steady worldwide rise in intelligence test performance. Detected primarily in developed countries, this effect appears to be marked by a three-point increase in IQ scores every ten years. Overall, IQ scores have increased over the last half century by an average of 18 points across all industrialized nations for which there are adequate data. From a broader perspective, one can suggest that every new generation is expected to be scoring higher than their parents and others, and the difference will be from 6 to 9 points. Such a difference might have been caused by an increase in the technological advancement of the population. As an example, in the 1980s most video games were simple, monochromatic, and two-dimensional with just a few, primitive slow-moving objects. Today's video games – mostly three-dimensional, in high-resolution, and multicolored – require significant preparation and training before one can successfully play any of them (especially if you are playing online). Increased access to social networks also adds to the complexity of the surrounding world and perhaps stimulates the development of individual emotional and cognitive skills. Technology and other resources make a difference in people's lives. In rural and remote areas across the world, children have greater access to various sources of information, such as television and the Internet, compared to the situation 20 or 40 years ago.

High test scores and overall academic success involve knowledge and skill acquisition, as well as motivation for learning. As many specialists propose, although academic learning is a primary goal of education, ideas about how best to achieve this goal need to be broadened to include children's participation in learning, their self-confidence as students, and their capacity to work effectively with other children and with adults (Bemak et al., 2005).

AND IN THE END . . . MORAL VALUES

All in all, the contemporary view supported by most psychologists is that the most essential elements of intelligence consist of the so-called "higher-level abilities," namely, reasoning, problem solving, and decision making. Intelligence is not just a reaction to changes in environmental conditions. It is also one's global capacity to learn about and change our environment. Persons with higher intelligence are, by definition, more capable of noticing, understanding, and explaining surrounding phenomena – in various situations and forms of activities – than are persons with lower-level intelligence. Do you personally believe that people who have higher IQs have a better chance of changing our social and physical environment compared to most other people (Sternberg, 2004)?

However, just because a person with a high IQ has a better potential for changing the environment, that does not mean this individual is in a position to improve the lives of others: Such an individual may also possess little or no moral values and lack compassion, empathy, or goodwill.

Back in the 1970s, Noam Chomsky (1976), one of the most renowned specialists in linguistics and cognitive development, criticized the mainstream approach to success. This approach was based on an assumption that the individual's achievement is based on the amount of money that person makes and how well known she or he is. In fact, income and prestige are not – and should not be – the only measure of social success. In many countries, social accomplishment is largely determined, not necessarily by the person's ability to make a fortune or score high on IQ tests but also, and most important, by survival skills. This includes the ability to (1) manage with a limited supply of food and resources, (2) adapt to the environment, and (3) change the environment despite the overwhelming pressure of lawlessness, violence, environmental degradation, and disease. Moreover, many people do not base their individual happiness, reason for working, or success only on extrinsic rewards and material factors. There is also moral satisfaction, love, friendship, passion, spirituality, and many other elements of human experience that may not be measured by even the best-designed IQ test.

EXERCISE 5.1 MEMORY AND EXPERIENCE

Our familiarity with a subject or topic can affect how precisely we memorize and retrieve information. Different cultural experiences, therefore, could affect the quality of our memory in particular circumstances. Consider the following sentence: *The quarterback threw an incomplete pass and his mistake forced the team to punt the ball right before the two-minute warning*. Select five people who are familiar with U.S. football and five people who know very little or nothing about this game. Read the sentence to people in both groups. Then ask them to write down what they remembered. What kind of results would you expect to receive? Here is one hypothesis: Even though it is difficult to recall all 22 words in this sentence, people from the first group (those who know football) will be more likely to correctly remember most of the words. In contrast, those who are not familiar with football

will make several mistakes trying to convey the meaning of the sentence. Do the results of your sample study support the hypothesis?

A CASE IN POINT

RATIONAL CALCULATIONS AND MORAL VALUES

What would you do in the following situation? Imagine you are captain of a spaceship that landed with a crew of ten people on a remote planet to conduct scientific research. There are five men and five women. One of these people is 65 and another is 25. There are nine people with advanced college degrees and one without a degree. Eight people have spouses and children on earth, and two do not. You learn, however, that due to some catastrophic problems, the ship cannot be launched from the planet with all the crew members aboard: It is 170 pounds over the carrying capacity. Now the oxygen tank is almost drained. What would you do? In a famous classic episode of *Star Trek*, Mr. Spock, a character with superior intellectual skills – far exceeding those of other crew members – offered a very "logical" solution: Leave the least valuable crew member on the planet (where this person would die and, by this sacrifice, save the lives of the other crew members). So, here are three questions to ponder:

Who is less and who is more valuable under these circumstances? How would you define a human being's value? What would be your solution to this hypothetical task?

CHAPTER SUMMARY

1. Most definitions of intelligence include phrases such as knowing and understanding the reality around us. Intelligence is also defined as a set of mental skills that helps individuals reach a goal. Intelligence is also seen as the ability to use knowledge and skills to overcome obstacles. And finally, intelligence is defined as helping one to adapt to a changing environment.
2. Intelligence is inseparable from cognition, which comprises diversified processes by which the individual acquires and applies knowledge. It usually includes processes such as recognition, categorization, thinking, and memory. Altogether, cognitive development is neither totally culturally relative nor completely uniform everywhere.
3. In psychology, most attention has been given to the so-called psychometric approach to intelligence. This view is based on the assumption that our intelligence can "receive" a numerical value.
4. Today various tests show differences in intelligence scores among large cultural groups. For example, in the United States, Asian Americans (of East Asian origins)

score the highest, followed by European Americans, Hispanics, and, lastly, African Americans. Thus, on the average, African American schoolchildren score 10–15 percent lower on a standardized intelligence test than white schoolchildren.

5. In an attempt to explain some group differences on intelligence test scores, Sternberg suggested distinguishing between intelligence and intelligent behavior. Intelligence, from his standpoint, is a mental process that may or may not result in particular behavioral patterns. These patterns of intelligent behavior may vary from culture to culture. Something considered to be intelligent among members of one culture may not be viewed as such in other cultures.

6. According to the nativist approach to intelligence, human cognitive phenomena are inborn. They unravel as a result of biological "programming," and environmental perception requires little active construction by the organism. There is evidence that heredity plays an important role in human intelligence. However, genetic links for individual differences and similarities do not imply that group differences – on the national level, for example – are also based on genetic factors.

7. Some specialists imply that most intelligence tests benefit specific ethnic groups because of the test vocabulary – words and items used in the test questions. Tests may contain internal bias because they use words that are familiar to only some groups. As a result, members of these groups receive higher scores than those who do not belong to these groups.

8. Many environmental conditions have been found to influence performance on intelligence tests. Among them are availability of and access to resources, variety of perceptual experiences, predominant type of family climate, educational opportunities, access to books and travel, presence or absence of cultural magical beliefs, general attitudes, and cultural practices.

9. Intelligence scores are, in general, positively correlated with the socioeconomic status of the individual, and the link between socioeconomic conditions and test performance shows at an early age. A child's IQ and the socioeconomic status of the child's parents are also positively correlated. An affluent and educated family is likely to provide a better material environment for a child and also has more resources to develop the child's intellectual potential than a poorer family. Poverty is responsible for a variety of indirect impacts on the intellectual development of children and adults.

10. In the United States, people with high IQ scores are disproportionally represented among doctors, scientists, lawyers, and business executives. Individuals with low intelligence scores are disproportionally represented among people on welfare, prison inmates, single mothers, drug abusers, and high school dropouts.

11. There is a difference in the way people across cultures value and construe intelligence. For instance, the conceptualization of intelligence as quick and analytic is not shared in all cultures. If one group's concept includes being detailed and precise in responding, but the other group does not mention these features (and mentions improvisation as an element of intelligence), then precision cannot be used as a criterion to compare the two groups.

12. According to a theory, there are differences in cognitive styles revealed by Western and East Asian students: Students from China, Korea, and Japan tend to be more holistic in their perceptions than do students of Western descent.

13. Cognitive processes have cross-cultural similarity but may also develop in different ways according to specific cultural norms and societal demands. People develop cognitive characteristics best adapted to the needs of their lifestyle. Cross-cultural findings suggest that differences in categorization, memorization, labeling, creativity, and formal reasoning may be rooted in cultural factors. Various cultural groups categorize stimuli differently in terms of their specific cultural experiences associated with these objects. Many cognitive processes can develop either in similar or in different ways according to specific cultural norms and societal demands.

14. U.S. children, generally, are allowed more freedom in choosing school activities than their overseas counterparts. The emphasis is typically placed on individual development, enjoyable activities, and respect for the child's personality. In Asian countries, on the contrary, the active promotion of the mathematical development of children is crucial. From the beginning the child learns rules of discipline, perseverance, and sacrifice for the sake of educational goals.

15. Some ethnic minorities may display the so-called low-effort syndrome, or low level of motivation on intelligence tests. This typically suggests that such individuals do not try to excel on these tests because they believe that they will not go to college anyway, the tests are biased against them, and test results are unimportant.

16. Overall, in developed Western societies, high IQ scores are correlated with social success. The situation with IQ testing and scores may be changing, however. There is an interesting tendency of a continuous and steady worldwide rise in intelligence test performance. Detected primarily in developed countries, this effect stands for a three-point increase in IQ scores every ten years and may be attributed to educational efforts and technological developments.

KEY TERMS

Cognition A general term that stands for a series of processes by which the individual acquires and applies knowledge.

Cognitive style A way in which individuals organize and comprehend the world.

Creativity Originality or the ability to produce valued outcomes in a novel way.

Empirical reasoning Experience and cognitive operations drawn from everyday activities.

Field-dependent style A general cognitive ability of an individual to rely more on external visual cues and to be primarily socially oriented.

Field-independent style A general cognitive ability of an individual to rely primarily on bodily cues within themselves and to be less oriented toward social engagement with others.

Formal reasoning Basic cognitive operations based on abstract analysis of given premises and deriving a conclusion from them.

Intelligence Global capacity to think rationally, act purposefully, overcome obstacles, and adapt to a changing environment.

Low-effort syndrome Low level of motivation on intelligence tests based on

the belief that the tests are biased and test results are unimportant for success in life.

Nativist view The view that all cognitive phenomena are inborn, that they unravel as a result of biological "programming," and that environmental perception requires little active construction by the organism.

Psychometric approach to intelligence A view based on a model that conceptualizes intelligence as a composite of quantifiable abilities measured by mental tests and represented with a numerical value.

REFERENCES

Abou-Hatab, F. (1997). Psychology from Egyptian, Arab, and Islamic perspectives: Unfulfilled hopes and hopeful fulfillment. *European Psychologist*, *2*(4), 356–365.

Antonakis, J. (2017). *The nature of leadership*. 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Aptekar, L. (1989). Colombian street children: Gamines and chupagruesos. *Adolescence*, *24*, 783–794.

Avi-Yonah, S., & McCafferty, M. (2018). Asian-American Harvard admits earned highest average sat score of any racial group from 1995 to 2013. *Harvard Crimson*, October 22. www.thecrimson.com/article/2018/10/22/asian-american-admit-sat-scores/

Ardila, A., & Moreno, S. (2001). Neuropsychological test performance on Aruaco Indians: An exploratory study. *Journal of the International Neuropsychological Society*, *7*(4), 510–515. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1355617701004076

Banerjee, A., & Duflo, E. (2019). *Good economics for hard times*. New York: Public Affairs.

Bemak, F., Chung, R. C.-Y., & Sirosky-Sabado, L. A. (2005). Empowerment groups for academic success (EGAS): An innovative approach to prevent high school failure for at-risk urban African American girls. *Professional School Counseling*, *8*, 377–389.

Benuto, L., & Leany, B. (2015). *Guide to psychological assessment with African Americans*. New York: Springer.

Berlin, B. (1992). *Ethnobiological classification: Principles of categorization of plants and animals in traditional societies*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Berry, J. W. (1969). On cross-cultural comparability. *International Journal of Psychology*, *4*, 119–128.

Berry, J. W. (1988). Cognitive values and cognitive competence among the bricoleurs. In J. W. Berry, S. H. Irvine, & E. B. Hunt (Eds.), *Indigenous cognition: Functioning in cultural context* (pp. 9–20). Dordrecht, the Netherlands: Nijhoff.

Binet, A., & Simon, T. (1913). *A method of measuring the development of the intelligence of young children* (C. H. Town, Trans.). Chicago, IL: Chicago Medical Book (Original work published 1911).

Black, S. E., Devereux, P. J., & Salvanes, K. G. (2010). Small family, smart family: Family size and the IQ scores of young men? *Journal of Human Resources*, *45*, 33–58.

Bleichrodt, N., Drenth, P. J., & Querido, A. (1980). Effects of iodine deficiency on mental and psychomotor abilities. *American Journal of Physical Anthropology*, *53*, 55–67.

Bouchard, T., Lykken, D., McGue, M., Segal, N. L., & Tellegen, A. (1990). Sources of human psychological differences: The Minnesota study of twins reared apart. *Science*, *250*, 223–228.

Bouchard, T., & McGue, M. (1981). Familial studies of intelligence: A review. *Science*, *212*, 1055–1059.

Brainstats. (2019). What is the average IQ in South Africa? https://brainstats.com/average-iq-in-south-africa.html

Briggs, D. (2001). The effect of admissions test preparation: Evidence from NELS: 88. *Chance*, *14*(1), 10–21.

Brooks, I. (1976). Cognitive ability assessment with two New Zealand ethnic groups. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *7*(3), 347–355.

Carroll, J. B. (1983). Studying individual differences in cognitive abilities: Implications for cross-cultural studies. In S. H. Irvine & J. W. Berry (Eds.), *Human assessment and cultural factors* (pp. 213–235). New York: Plenum.

Chiu, C.-Y., & Hong, Y. (2006). *The social psychology of culture*. New York: Psychology Press.

Chomsky, N. (1976). The fallacy of Richard Herrnstein's IQ. In N. J. Block & G. Dworkin (Eds.), *The IQ controversy* (pp. 285–298). New York: Pantheon Books.

Ciborski, T., & Choi, S. (1974). Nonstandard English and free recall: An exploratory study. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *5*(3), 271–279.

Cole, M., Gay, J., Glick, J. A., & Sharp, D. W. (Eds.). (1971). *The cultural context of learning and thinking*. New York: Basic Books.

Daily, D. K., Ardinger, H. H., & Holmes, G. E. (2000). Identification and evaluation of mental retardation. *American Family Physician*, *61*(4), 1059–1067.

Dalio, R. (2017). *Principles*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Dasen, P. (1975). Concrete operational development in three cultures. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *6*(2), 156–163.

Dasen, P. R. (1984). The cross-cultural study of intelligence: Piaget and the Baoule. *International Journal of Psychology*, *19*, 407–434.

Dasen, P., Berry, J., & Witkin, H. (1979). The use of developmental theories cross-culturally. In L. Eckenberg, Y. Poortinga, & W. Lonner (Eds.), *Cross-cultural contributions to psychology* (pp. 69–82). Amsterdam: Swets & Zeitlinger.

Davis, J., & Ginsburg, H. (1993). Similarities and differences in the formal and informal mathematical cognition of African, American and Asian children: The role of schooling and social class. In J. Altarriba (Ed.), *Cognition and culture: A cross-cultural approach to cognitive psychology* (pp. 343–360). Amsterdam, the Netherlands: Elsevier Science.

Dehaene, S. (2002). *The cognitive neuroscience of consciousness*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Der, G., Batty, G. D., & Deary, I. J. (2006). Effect of breast feeding on intelligence in children: Prospective study, sibling pairs analysis, and meta-analysis. *British Medical Journal*, *333*(7575), 945.

Deregowski, J. B. (1974). Teaching African children pictorial depth perception: In search of a method. *Perception*, *3*, 309–312.

Deregowski, J., & Munro, D. (1974). An analysis of "polyphasic pictorial perception." *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *5*(3), 329–339.

Dweck, C. (2006). *Mindset: The new psychology of success*. New York: Random House.

Farhi, P. (2007, January 21). Five myths about U.S. kids outclassed by the rest of the world. *Washington Post*, p. B02.

Farmaki, C., Sakkalis V., Loesche F., & Nisiforou E.A. (2019). Assessing field dependence–independence cognitive abilities through EEG-based bistable perception processing. *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience*, 13 www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fnhum.2019.00345

Ferguson, G. A. (1956). On transfer and abilities of man. *Canadian Journal of Psychology*, *10*, 121–131.

Flynn, J. (1991). *Asian-Americans: Achievement beyond IQ*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Flynn, J. (2012). *Are we getting smarter? Rising IQ in the twenty-first century*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.

Flynn, J. R. (2007). *What Is Intelligence? Beyond the Flynn effect*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Flynn, J. R. (2013). *Intelligence and human progress: The story of what was hidden in our genes*. Cambridge, MA: Academic Press.

Frake, C. (1980). The ethnographic study of cognitive systems. In C. Frake (Ed.), *Language and cultural descriptions* (pp. 1–17). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Fryer, R., Curto, V., & Howard, M. (2011). *It may not take a village: Increasing achievement among the poor: Social inequality and educational disadvantage*. Washington, DC: Brookings Press.

Fryer, R. G., Jr. (2014). Injecting charter school best practices into traditional public schools: Evidence from field experiments. *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, *129*(3), 1355–1407.

Gardner, H. (2007). *Five minds for the future*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Business School Press.

Geary, D., Fan, L., & Bow-Thomas, C. (1992). Numerical cognition: Loci of ability differences comparing children from China and the United States. *Psychological Science*, *3*, 180–185.

Gottfried, A. W. (Ed.). (1984). *Home environment and early cognitive development: Longitudinal research*. New York: Academic Press.

Grossman, H. J. (1983). *Classification in mental retardation*. Washington, DC: American Association on Mental Deficiency.

Hambrick, D., & Marquardt, M. (2017, December 5). Bad news for the highly intelligent. *Scientific American*. www.scientificamerican.com/article/bad-news-for-the-highly-intelligent/

Harris, R. J., Schoen, L. M., & Hensley, D. L. (1992). A cross-cultural study of story memory. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *23*, 133–147.

Hayles, R. V. (1991). African-American strength: A survey of empirical findings. In R. Jones (Ed.), *Black psychology* (3rd ed., pp. 379–400). Berkeley, CA: Cobb & Henry.

Helms, J. (2006). Fairness is not validity or cultural bias in racial-group assessment: A quantitative perspective. *American Psychologist*, *61*(8), 845–859.

Herrnstein, R. J., & Murray, C. (1994). *The bell curve: Intelligence and class structure in American life*. New York: Free Press.

Hobbes, T. (2019, December 4). US students fail to gain ground in international test. *The Wall Street Journal*, p. A4.

Irvine, S. H. (1983). Testing in Africa and America: The search for routes. In S. H. Irvine & J. W. Berry (Eds.), *Human assessment and cultural factors* (pp. 45–58). New York: Plenum.

Irwin, M., Schafer, G., & Feiden, C. (1974). Emic and unfamiliar category sorting of Mano farmers and U.S. undergraduates. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *5*, 407–423.

Jensen, A. R. (1998). *The G factor*. Westport, CT: Praeger.

Ji, L.-J., Zhang, Z., & Nisbett, R. (2004, July). Is it culture or is it language? Examination of language effects in cross-cultural research on categorization. *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology*, *87*(1), 57–65.

Jobson, L., & O'Kearney, R. (2008). Cultural differences in retrieval of self-defining memories. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *39*(1), 75–80.

Jukes, M. C. H., & Grigorenko, E. L. (2010). Assessment of cognitive abilities in multiethnic countries: The case of the Wolof and Mandinka in the Gambia. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, *80*, 77–97.

Kamin, L. (1976). Heredity, intelligence, politics, and psychology. In N. J. Block & G. Dworkin (Eds.), *The IQ controversy* (pp. 374–382). New York: Pantheon Books.

Keats, D. M. (1985). Strategies in formal operational thinking: Malaysia and Australia. In I. R. Lagunes & Y. H. Poortinga (Eds.), *From a different perspective: Studies of behavior across cultures* (pp. 306–318). Liss, the Netherlands: Swets & Zeitlinger.

Kell, H., Lubinski, D. & Benbow, C. (2013). Who rises to the top? Early indicators. *Psychological Science*, *24*(5), 648–659.

Kuhnen, U., Hannover, B., Roeder, U., Ali Shah, A., Schubert, B., Upmeyer, A., et al. (2001). Crosscultural variations in identifying embedded figures: Comparisons from the United States, Germany, Russia, and Malaysia. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *32*(3), 365–374.

Kush, J. (1996). Field-dependence, cognitive ability, and academic achievement in Anglo American and Mexican American students. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *27*(5), 561–575.

Lacey, P. (1971). Classificatory ability and verbal intelligence among high-contact Aboriginal and low socioeconomic white Australian children. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *2*(1), 39–49.

Langgulung, H., & Torrance, E. (1972). The development of causal thinking of children in Mexico and the United States. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *3*, 315–320.

Lawrence, J. S., Crocker, J., & Blanton, H. (2011). Stigmatized and dominant cultural groups differentially interpret positive feedback. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *42*(1), 165–169.

Leung, A. K., Maddux, W. W., & Galinsky, A. D. (2008). Multicultural experience enhances creativity: The when and how. *American Psychologist*, *63* (3), 169–181.

Li, J. (2003). The core of Confucian learning. *American Psychologist*, *58*(2), 146–147.

Lloyd, B., & Easton, B. (1977). The intellectual development of Yoruba children. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *8*(1), 3–11.

Luescher, R., Barthelmess, P. Y. Z., Kim, S. Y., Richter, U. H., & Mittag, M. (2019). Conceptualizing creativity: general and cultural biases in Gough's creative personality scale. *Journal of Creative Behavior*, *53*, 30–43.

Luria, A. R. (1976). *Cognitive development: Its cultural and social foundations*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Lynn, R. (1996). Racial and ethnic differences in intelligence in the United States on the differential ability scale. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *20*, 271–273.

Lynn, R., & Hattori, K. (1990). The heritability of intelligence in Japan. *Behavior Genetics*, *20*, 545–546.

Lynn, R., & Vanhanen, T. (2002). *IQ and the wealth of nations*. Westport, CT: Praeger.

Lynn, R., & Vanhanen, T. (2012). *Intelligence: A unifying construct for the social sciences*. Ulster: Ulster Institute for Social Research.

Macdonald, M., & Rogan, J. (1990). Innovation in South African science education (Part II): Factors influencing the introduction of instructional change. *Science Education*, *74*(1), 119–131.

Mackie, D. (1983). The effect of social instruction on conservation of spatial relations. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *14*(2), 131–151.

Mandler, J. M., Scribner, S., Cole, M., & DeForest, M. (1980). Cross-cultural invariance in story recall. *Child Development*, *51*, 19–26.

Mari, S., & Karayanni, M. (1982). Creativity in Arab culture: Two decades of research. *Journal of Creative Behaviour*, *16*, 227–238.

Masters, R. (1997). Brain biochemistry and social status: The neurotoxity hypothesis. In E. White (Ed.), *Intelligence, political inequality, and public policy* (pp. 141–183). Westport, CT: Praeger.

Masuda, T., & Nisbett, R. E. (2006). Culture and change blindness. *Cognitive Sciences*, *30*, 381–399.

McLoyd, V. (1998). Socioeconomic disadvantage and child development. *American Psychologist*, *53*(2), 185–204.

McShane, D., & Berry, J. (1988). Native North Americans: Indian and Inuit abilities. In S. H. Irvine & J. W. Berry (Eds.), *Human abilities in cultural context* (pp. 385–426). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Millar, P. R., Serbun, S. J., & Vadalia, A. (2013). Cross-cultural differences in memory specificity. *Culture and Brain*, *1*, 138–157.

Mishra, R. C. (1997). Cognition and cognitive development. In J. W. Berry, P. R. Dasen, & T. S. Saraswathi (Eds.), *Handbook of cross-cultural psychology: Basic processes and human development* (Vol. 2, pp. 143–176). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Moyer, M. (2022). The COVID generation: How is the pandemic affecting kids' brains? *Nature*, January 12. www.nature.com/articles/d41586-022-00027-4

Munroe, R. L., & Munroe, R. H. (1983). Birth order and intellectual performance in East Africa. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *14*(1), 3–16.

Munsinger, H. A. (1978). The adopted child's IQ: A critical review. *Psychological Bulletin*, *82*, 623–659.

Naumann, L. P., Guillaume, E. M., & Funder, D. C. (2012). The correlates of high parental academic expectations: An Asian-Latino comparison. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *43*(4), 515–520.

Neiser, U., Boodoo, G., Bouchard, T., Boykin, W., Brody, N., Ceci, S., et al. (1996). Intelligence: Knowns and unknowns. *American Psychologist*, *51*(2), 77–101.

Nisbett, R. (2003). *The geography of thought: How Asians and Westerners think differently and why*. London: Nicholas Brealey Publishing.

Niu, W., & Brass, J. (2011). Intelligence in worldwide perspective. In R. J. Sternberg & S. B. Kaufmann (Eds.), *The Cambridge handbook of intelligence* (pp. 623–647). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Ogbu, J. (1986). The consequences of the American caste system. In U. Neisser (Ed.), *The school achievement of minority children: New perspectives* (pp. 19–56). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Ogbu, J. (1991). Minority coping responses and school experience. *Journal of Psychohistory*, *18*, 434–456.

Ogbu, J. (1994). From cultural differences to differences in cultural frames of reference. In P. M. Greenfield & R. R. Cocking (Eds.), *Cross-cultural roots of minority child development* (pp. 365–391). Hillside, NJ: Erlbaum.

Okonji, O. M. (1971). A cross-cultural study of the effects of familiarity on classificatory behavior. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *2*(1), 3–49.

Pennock-Roman, M. (1992). Interpreting test performance in selective admissions for Hispanic students. In K. F. Geisinger (Ed.), *Psychological testing of Hispanics* (pp. 95–135). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Petitto, A., & Ginsburg, H. (1982). Mental arithmetic in Africa and America: Strategies, principles, and explanations. *International Journal of Psychology*, *17*, 81–102.

Piaget, J. (1972). *The psychology of intelligence.* Totowa, NJ: Littlefield Adams.

Plomin, R., & Deary, I. (2015). Genetics and intelligence differences: Five special findings. *Molecular Psychiatry*, *20*, 98–108.

Raspberry, W. (2000, June 2). Testing stereotype. *Washington Post*, p. A33.

Raven, J. (2000). The Raven's progressive matrices: Change and stability over culture and time. *Cognitive Psychology*, *41*, 1–48.

Raybeck, D., & Herrmann, D. (1990). A cross-cultural examination of semantic relations. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *21*(4), 452–473.

Razavipour, K., Habibollahi, P., & Vahdat, S. (2020). Preparing for the higher education admission test: Preparation practices and test takers' achievement goal orientations. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, *46*(2). www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/02602938.2020.1773392

Rooney, J. (2022). *Material objects in Confucian and Aristotelian metaphysics*. New York: Bloomsbury Academic.

Rushton, J. P., & Jensen, A. R. (2005). Thirty years of research on race differences in cognitive ability. *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law*, *11*, 235–294.

Schwanenflugel, P. J., & Rey, M. (1986). The relationship between category typicality and concept familiarity: Evidence from Spanish- and English-speaking monolinguals. *Memory & Cognition*, *14*, 150–163.

Schwartz, S. J., Unger, J. B., Zamboanga, B. L., & Szapocznik, J. (2011). How selective is acculturation? Broadening our perspective. *American Psychologist*, *66*(*2*), 155–157.

Serpell, R. (1993). *The significance of schooling: Life journeys in an African society*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.

Sewell, C. J. P., & Goings, R. B. (2020). "I struggled but I made it": Black gifted underachievers on transitioning to college. *Journal of Advanced Academics*, *31*(2), 111–128. https://doi.org/10.1177/1932202X20901506

Shea, J. D. (1985). Studies of cognitive development in Papua New Guinea. *International Journal of Psychology*, *20*, 33–61.

Shiraev, E., & Sobel, R. (2006). *People and their opinions*. New York: Longman.

Simonton, D. (1987). Developmental antecedents of achieved eminence. *Annals of Child Development*, *5*, 131–169.

Sinha, D., & Shukla, P. (1974). Deprivation and development of skill for pictorial depth perception. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *5*(4), 434–445.

Skuy, M., Gewer, A., Osrin, Y., Khunou, D., Fridjhon, P., & Rushton, J. P. (2002). Effects of mediated learning experience on Raven's matrices scores of African and non-African university students in South Africa. *Intelligence*, *30*, 221–232.

Snyderman, M., & Rothman, S. (1988). *The IQ controversy: The media and public policy*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books.

Sonwalkar, P. (2004, April 2). Children of Indian origin outshine others in Scotland. *The Hindustan Times*. www.hindustantimes.com

Spearman, C. E. (1927). *The abilities of man*. London: Macmillan.

Stanovich, K. (2016). *The rationality quotient: Toward a test of rational thinking*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Steele, C. M. (1999, August). Thin ice: "Stereotype threat" and black college students. *The Atlantic Monthly*, *284*(2), 44–47, 50–54.

Steffensen, M., & Calker, L. (1982). Intercultural misunderstandings about health care: Recall of descriptions of illness and treatments. *Social Science and Medicine*, *16*, 1949–1954.

Sternberg, R. (1985). *Beyond IQ: A triarchic theory of human intelligence*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Sternberg, R. (1997). The concept of intelligence and its role in lifelong learning and success. *American Psychologist*, *52*(10), 1030–1037.

Sternberg, R. (2007). *Wisdom, intelligence, and creativity synthesized.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Sternberg, R. (2020). Culture and intelligence. *Psychology: Oxford research encyclopedias.* https://bit.ly/3GuoDz0

Sternberg, R. (2004, July–August). Culture and intelligence. *American Psychologist*, *59*(5), 325–338.

Stevenson, H., Lee, S. Y., Chen, C., Lummis, M., Stigler, J., Fan, L., et al. (1990). Mathematical achievement of children in China and the United States. *Child Development*, *61*, 1053–1066.

Strauss, V. (2008, May 20). No crisis for boys in schools, study says. *Washington Post*, p. A1.

Strenze, T. (2007). Intelligence and socioeconomic success: A meta-analytic review of longitudinal research. *Intelligence*, *35*(5), 401–426.

Strohschneider, S., & Guss, D. (1998). Planning and problem solving: Differences between Brazilian and German students. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *29*(6), 695–716.

Suzuki, L., & Valencia, R. (1997). Race-ethnicity and measured intelligence: Educational implications. *American Psychologist*, *52*(10), 1103–1114.

Taylor, L., & deLacey, P. R. (1974). Three dimensions of intellectual functioning in Australian Aboriginal and disadvantaged European children. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *5*(1), 49–55.

Thurstone, E. L. (1938). *Primary mental abilities.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Tieg, N., & Scherer, R. (2016) Bringing formal and informal reasoning together – A new era of assessment? *Frontiers of Psychology*, *7*. July 19. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2016.01097

Tweed, R. G., & Lehman, D. R. (2002). Learning considered within a cultural context: Confucian and Socratic approaches. *American Psychologist*, *57*, 89–99.

U.S. Census Bureau (2022). Poverty in the United States: 2021. www.census.gov/library/publications/2022/demo/p60-277.html

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2020). HSS poverty guidelines. https://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty-guidelines

van de Vijver, F., & Willemsen, M. E. (1993). Abstract thinking. In J. Altarriba (Ed.), *Cognition and culture: A cross-cultural approach to cognitive psychology* (pp. 317–342). Amsterdam: Elsevier Science.

Van Soelen, I., Brouwer, R., Leeuwen, M., Kahn, R., Hulshoff, P., Hilleke E., & Boomsma, D. I. (2012). Heritability of verbal and performance intelligence in a pediatric longitudinal sample. *Twin Research and Human Genetics*, *14*(2), 119–128.

Varnum, M. E., Grossmann, I., Kitayama, S., & Nisbett, R. E. (2010). The origin of cultural differences in cognition: Evidence for the social orientation hypothesis. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, *19*(1), 9–13.

Vernon, P. (1969). *Intelligence and cultural environment.* London: Methuen.

Vernon, P. A., Wickett, J. A., Bazana, G., & Stelmack, R. M. (2000). The neuropsychology and psychophysiology of human intelligence. In R. J. Sternberg (Ed.), *Handbook of intelligence* (pp. 245–264). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Vincent, K. (1991). Black/white IQ differences: Does age make the difference? *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, *47*, 266–270.

Vincent, K. (1991). Black/white IQ differences: Does age make the difference? *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, *47*, 266–270.

Vygotsky, L. (1978). *Mind and society*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. (Originally published in 1932.)

Wassmann, J. (1993). When actions speak louder than words: The classification of food among the Yupno of Papua-New Guinea. *Newsletter of the Laboratory of Comparative Human Cognition*, *15*, 30–40.

Wassmann, J., & Dasen, R. R. (1994). "Hot" and "cold": Classification and sorting among the Yupno of Papua-New Guinea. *International Journal of Psychology*, *29*, 19–38.

Wechsler, D. (1958). *The measurement and appraisal of adult intelligence*. Baltimore, MD: Williams & Wilkins.

Whethrick, N. E., & Deregowski, J. B. (1982). Immediate recall: Its structure in three different language communities. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *13*(2), 210–216.

White, K. (1982). The relation between socioeconomic status and academic achievement. *Psychological Bulletin*, *91*, 461–481.

Williams, R., & Mitchell, H. (1991). The testing game. In R. Jones (Ed.), *Black psychology* (3rd ed., pp. 193–206). Berkeley, CA: Cobb & Henry.

Yang, S., & Sternberg, R. J. (1997). Conceptions of intelligence in ancient Chinese philosophy. *Journal of Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology*, *17*, 101–119.

Yong, S., Chenchen, Z., Jing, Z., Ting, G., Yuan, Y. (2019). How does culture shape creativity? A mini-review. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *10*. www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.01219

Zebian, S., & Denny, P. (2001). Integrative cognitive style in Middle Eastern and Western groups. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *32*(1), 58–75.

6

CHAPTER 6
EMOTION

How many times have you laughed today? What or who made you laugh? What made other people around you laugh? And just what is laugher? Technically speaking, laughter consists of a series of rhythmic and usually audible contractions of the diaphragm and other parts of the respiratory system. Does this definition fully suffice? Probably not. Laughter can also be seen as a behavioral phenomenon. For example, most of us tend to giggle when we are tickled. Laughter is also a cultural construct: We laugh in response to other people's actions, funny jokes, or to comedic scenes in movies and television shows. Would people living in other countries understand your apparently funny (at least to you and your friends) Instagram postings and YouTube shorts? And what are we to make of *katagelasticism*, a psychological condition in which a person excessively enjoys laughing at others? People who are prone to katagelasticism actively seek out and create situations in which they can laugh by making fools of others, their actions, appearance, and thoughts. Do we, as human beings, laugh for similar reasons and under similar circumstances? The answer is that it all depends on at least three factors: your individual traits, your cultural background, and your current circumstances. In the famous ancient story, *The Golden Ass*, the main character Lucius is mistakenly transformed into a donkey and encounters numerous adventures as a human trapped inside an animal's body. Historians and linguists find this two-thousand-year-old story cross-culturally significant because it reflects a set of seemingly universal sources of humor – the conditions that cause laughter. Humor, according to some theories, is associated with at least three interconnected features: it is about encountering something surprising, unexpected, or confusing; it can involve mockery (which is a form of expressing superiority over others or self); and, finally, humor involves tension relief (Beard, 2014). But how do we know that *The Golden Ass* will make you personally laugh? Of course, that would depend on many factors already described. It is very likely that we, as humans, appreciate humor – and experience emotions in general – in many similar, basic, universal ways. On the other hand, there are numerous cultural, individual, and situational factors that make our sense of humor uniquely culture-specific. (Tickling, for example, has almost no impact if you tickle yourself.) Jokes popular in one country appear unfunny in another. Perhaps surprisingly, smiling at strangers as a socially acceptable means of communication first appeared just a few centuries ago. Parents teach their children not to laugh in certain circumstances. It is acceptable, for instance, to chuckle when you are watching a comedy and the main character spills a coffee on herself, but it is not acceptable to laugh when your professor suffers the same fate in front of the class . . . or is it? ☺

———

Did you know that public kissing is frowned upon in Japan? We are not talking about the Land of the Rising Sun centuries ago, but rather modern Japan. While in many countries

formal laws prohibit "indecent behavior" in public and strict religious prescriptions propound modesty between individuals in public, in Japan neither applies. Japan has no law or religious edict against kissing one's spouse or friend in public. People simply follow a tradition, an old and informal rule of conduct, of keeping these matters private. While rare in Japan, on a visit to New York or Istanbul, you will inevitably see people hugging or kissing goodbye at a train station or airport. So, what seems to be so unacceptable about public kissing to the Japanese? People from Japan will tell you, from the beginning of their lives, they learned to restrain their emotions in public. It is considered a sign of personal weakness or an inappropriate act of drawing attention to self in the presence of others. The question arises, in countries such as Japan where the public expression of feelings is somewhat restricted by cultural rules: Do people from certain cultures experience emotions in a different way than people from other cultures?

Right now, at this very moment, someone in Montreal is jumping for joy because he got a job promotion. At the other end of the planet, in Jerusalem, an adolescent girl is anxiously anticipating her Bat Mitzvah. Stuck in traffic, an Uber driver in Moscow is frustrated with gridlock during rush hour. An army conscript in South Korea feels unusually calm before his first parachute jump. **Emotion**, or *affect*, is an evaluative response that typically includes some combination of physiological arousal, subjective experience (positive, negative, or ambivalent), and behavioral expression. Joy and disappointment, sadness and surprise, envy and pride, and many other emotions accompany our daily lives, regardless of where we live or what language we speak. We display emotions through our voices and gestures from the day we are born. We learn how to express what we feel from the people around us, the books we read, and the videos we watch. Masterfully captured in words, images, and sounds, human emotions always draw significant interest from artists. For centuries, poets, musicians, and painters have illustrated, reflected, and portrayed in their creations love, grief, guilt, anger, and the excitement of human existence.

A brief survey of scholarly books reveals that the task of understanding human emotions has always occupied philosophical minds. Sophisticated and fascinating observations can be found in the works of the Chinese educator and philosopher Confucius (fifth century B.C.E.), Epicureans and Sophists in Greece (third to fifth centuries B.C.E.), the Persian physician and scholar Ibn Sina (eleventh century), Europeans Descartes and Spinoza (seventeenth century), and many others. However, the scientific study of emotion began only recently – just over a century ago.

One of the pioneers in this field, American psychologist William James (1884), believed that emotion is embedded into bodily experience. The physical experience leads the person to feel aroused, and the arousal stimulates the subjective experience of anxiety, joy, and so forth. Although this notion might seem counterintuitive to you, according to James, people do not jump and clap their hands because they are happy; rather, they become happy because they jump and clap their hands. James even gave advice about how to feel emotions:

> The voluntary path to cheerfulness, if our spontaneous cheerfulness be lost, is to sit up cheerfully, and act and speak as if cheerfulness were already there. To feel brave, act as if we were brave, use all our will to that end, and courage will very likely replace fear.
>
> (quoted by Wallis, 1965, p. 156)

At around the same time that James was developing his ideas in the United States, a Danish physiologist, Carl Lange (1922[1885]), proposed somewhat similar views on emotions. This view is now called the James–Lange theory.

Forty years later, Americans Walter Cannon and Philip Bard published an alternative outlook, known today as the Cannon–Bard theory of emotion. According to their approach, various life situations – such as a hairy spider crawling on your shoulder – can simultaneously elicit both an emotional experience (such as disgust or fear) and bodily responses (such as increased blood pressure or sweaty palms) (Cannon, 1927). In the 1960s, another theory of emotion gained credence among psychologists. According to the theory's authors, Stanley Schachter and Jerome Singer (1962), there are two crucial elements or factors of emotional experience: physiological arousal and the cognitive interpretation of this arousal. In every emotion, we first experience a state of physiological arousal. Then we try to explain to ourselves what the arousal means. If the situation suggests that we should experience pleasure, we call it joy. If somebody is threatening us, we call this fear.

These theories were initially tested on students studying in North America and Europe. However, how well do these theories apply cross-culturally? From one vantage point, all human emotions tend to be universal. They have a similar underlying physiological mechanism, and the specific cultural environment only applies superficial "make-up" onto fundamentally universal human affect (Ekman, 2016). For example, in the United States, a group of happy friends will "high-five" each other when their favorite team scores a goal in soccer or hits a homerun in baseball, whereas in Eastern Europe friends are more likely to shake hands in a similar circumstance. However, both groups of friends will experience joy as an emotion regardless of the differences in its expression. The speed of people's ability to communicate these days powered by technology makes it increasingly likely for sports fans across the globe to express their delight in similar ways. In short, joy is joy – no matter where you live: Mexico, Bosnia, Nigeria, or Vietnam.

A second vantage point focuses on both the cultural origin and cultural specificity of emotion (Mesquita, 2022). According to this view, all human emotions develop in specific cultural conditions and are, therefore, best understood primarily within a particular cultural context. For example, an observer may identify a sarcastic smile on the face of a Polish worker if the observer understands both the nature of sarcasm – a form of expression in which meanings are conveyed obliquely – and the surrounding circumstances in which the sarcastic reaction was displayed.

The question of whether individuals are more accurate at recognizing the emotional displays of members of their own culture versus those of other cultures has been an important issue in psychological research (Soto & Levenson, 2009). Which one of these perspectives has received stronger empirical support? Let's consider evidence from both sides of the argument.

SIMILARITIES IN EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCE: WHEN WE LAUGH, WE ARE HAPPY

People can generally identify other people's emotions. Even when we do not speak someone's language, we intuit whether this person is happy or sad by looking at their

facial expressions. If you understand what other people feel by assessing their emotional expressions, and if they, in turn, can assess your emotions correctly, this could mean human feelings should be similar, even universal. Cross–cultural research shows that emotional expressions serve to facilitate social interaction between any two individuals by providing information to observers about an expresser's feelings. Our future reactions and thoughts are rooted in the assumption that emotional expression and emotion perception somehow align (Fang et al., 2017).

This is, in fact, what Charles Darwin (1872) suggested in his famous work, *Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*. Darwin collected interviews from around the world and concluded that basic human emotional expressions are similar because they serve an adaptive evolutionary purpose. Both animals and humans signal their readiness or willingness to help, fight, play, or run away – all through gestures, postures, and facial expressions. Imagine, for example, you see your friend's eyes wide open, you hear his scream, and you observe him throwing away a cup of soda. This combination of reactions might alert you to the fact that it is likely your friend is scared or disgusted by something he found in the cup. Almost immediately, you will check to see if anything (maybe a bug?) is in your cup too.

Many emotions regulate social behavior and serve to protect people from danger. For example, fear and anger generally produce greater acceleration of heart rate than joy. This makes sense if one thinks in evolutionary terms. Anger and fear are related to fight–or–flight responses that require the heart to pump more blood to the muscles: You have to either defend yourself or run away from a threat. In men and women of all cultures, fear causes a similar defensive reaction in dangerous situations. Likewise, disgust averts us from trying potentially toxic substances such as rotten food or spoiled water (Izard, 1977). From the evolutionary standpoint, therefore, disgust is an adaptive emotion to motivate disease–avoidance behavior and to facilitate the recognition of objects and situations associated with risk of infection (Curtis, 2011).

CRITICAL THINKING

Although survey-based studies are often used to study emotions, they are prone to entail at least two methodological problems. First, emotions need to be explained in survey questions and verbalized by subjects. This is problematic because some people can neither remember exactly how they express emotions, nor describe with precision the specific reactions displayed by others. Second, people have a tendency to give socially desirable answers, operating on assumptions that certain emotional expressions are "good" or "bad," "right" or "wrong," or "acceptable" or "unacceptable" (such as laughing aloud in a place of worship or openly expressing anger in public). This leads subjects to answer in terms of how they think they should react (Oishi et al., 2004; Wang et al., 2006; Park et al., 2018). What other limitations do you see with studies of emotions across cultures?

Empirical studies demonstrate many similarities in the ways people display their feelings (Ekman, 2016). A comparison of emotional facial expressions of people from Western industrialized countries and non-Western settings showed significant resemblance (Ekman, 1980; Engelmann & Pogosyan, 2013). Researchers in the past found somewhat universal patterns in the vocal expression of emotion (Van Bezooijen et al., 1983) and cross-cultural similarities in the behavioral expression of complex emotions such as jealousy and envy (Hupka et al., 1985).

Another strong argument about similarities in human emotion derives from numerous studies about the process of identification, description, and explanation of emotional expression, termed **emotion recognition** (Engelmann & Pogosyan, 2013; Ekman, 1980; Izard, 1971). For instance, in one of the earliest studies, subjects in five countries (the United States, Brazil, Chile, Argentina, and Japan) were shown photographs of people, each of whom displayed one of six emotions: happiness, sadness, anger, fear, surprise, or disgust. Most subjects correctly identified these emotions (Ekman & Friesen, 1969). More specifically, people showed remarkable accuracy in the interpretation of eyebrow positioning and smiling (Keating et al., 1981): lowered eyebrows as a sign of anger or domination, and smiling as a universal sign of happiness. In another study (which included subjects from Estonia, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, Italy, Japan, Scotland, Sumatra, Turkey, and the United States), Ekman and colleagues (1987) demonstrated that mixed emotional expressions, such as shame and frustration, are also easily recognizable across countries: People commonly touch their faces, smirk, turn around, and look down.

Research on cross-cultural recognition of emotional intonation in subject's voices has yielded somewhat similar results. People accurately identified the emotion in a recording of a speaker using a foreign tongue (Albas et al., 1976; Van Bezooijen et al., 1983). In another study, subjects from Western and non-Western cultures were asked to demonstrate the face they would show when they were happy to see somebody, angry with someone, sad about bad news, and so on. These facial expressions were recorded and later analyzed. The findings suggested the existence of similar facial muscular patterns in both groups of subjects (Ekman & Friesen, 1978). In other words, people across cultures can not only easily recognize basic emotions, but also use the same muscle groups to express their feelings.

Most people across the world are relatively accurate in inferring emotion only from vocal cues. A study was conducted in nine countries (in Europe, the United States, and Asia) on vocal emotion portrayals of anger, sadness, fear, joy, and neutral voice as produced by professional German actors. Data showed an overall accuracy of more than 60 percent across all emotions and countries (Scherer et al., 2001). Of course, emotions are rooted in many physiological and cognitive factors examined by neuroscience on the one hand, and psychology, on the other (Scherer, 2004).

There is remarkable similarity in the way people name emotions across different cultures and languages (Russell, 1991). In other languages, there are equivalent words for many English terms for emotions (Scherer & Wallbott, 1994; Scherer et al., 1988). All languages make distinctions between positive affect and negative affect, and this distinction is

imparted (both directly and through social modeling) to young children, who begin to use words and phrases such as "nice," "mean," "good," "bad," "I like," and "I don't like" at a very early age.

There are also similarities in the way in which different languages define so-called "basic emotions." Although theorists generate somewhat different lists, most classifications include five to nine different emotions. Anger, fear, happiness, sadness, and disgust are present in almost every national classification. Surprise, contempt, interest, jealousy, shame, joy, love, hate, honor, anticipation, and guilt are present in others (Lynch, 1990; Russell, 1991; Vekker, 1978). For example, words that convey anger are appraised similarly by Japanese, Indonesian, and Dutch subjects as indicating the experience of something unpleasant, such as the prevention of reaching one's goals, or something that is unfair and for which somebody is responsible (Frijda et al., 1995; Roseman, 1991).

A CASE IN POINT

HOW MANY EMOTIONS ARE THERE?

One of the most common questions psychology students ask is, "Okay, so just how many emotions are there?" Open up any one of the major psychology textbooks in the United States or Canada and you will almost certainly find this list: happiness, sadness, anger, fear, and disgust. However, in other books, you might also run across envy, jealousy, guilt, shame, love, lust, surprise, contempt, curiosity, pride, and so on. The lists of emotions seem endless.

Yet, as a leading specialist on culture and emotions, the Dutch-born social psychologist Batja Mesquita (2002) argues that the very concept of viewing emotions as "fixed" and "countable" entities within human beings is misguided. Mesquita asserts that we should view and understand emotions not as mental states or inner constructs, but rather as interpersonal and cultural constructs – a dynamic process that takes place between two or more individuals who act and feel based on their particular cultural norms, as well as the languages they use to label and describe their interactions. Simply put, emotions are not so much innate, but rather made as we live our lives together. To emphasize this point, she calls her model of emotions "*OURS*" – OUtside the person, Relational, and Situated."

Let's consider a few examples to better understand Mesquita's concept of the relationship between emotions and language. In Japanese, the word *haji* does not distinguish between the English words "embarrassment" and "shame." (In fact, in the United States, we teach in psychology classes about such distinctions based on

experimental research.) The Arab Bedouins' word *hasham* covers not only shame and embarrassment, but also shyness and respectability. In the Philippines, *bētang* is likely to be translated in English as shame, but also includes awe and obedience. People fluent in Luganda, which is spoken in the African Great Lakes region, use the word *okusunguwala* to refer to anger and sadness. There appears to be no good translation for self-esteem in Chinese. In the English language, we can't easily find an identifiable equivalent to the Japanese emotion *amae* (which roughly translates as a complete dependence on the nurturance of one's caregiver). Studies have shown that people speaking fluent Turkish or Surinamese language are inclined, when describing key emotions, to refer to behaviors, rather than inner states. Words for "laughing" appear more often than "joy," and "crying" more often than "sadness" (Krishnan, 2022).

Given that Mesquita views emotions as cultural constructs within the confines of a specific language, what if a person is bilingual or multilingual? Does this mean that the "multilinguals" are emotionally richer or more advanced than the "monolinguals"? Can a person who is alone – regardless of their nationality, ethnicity, or language proficiency – wake up in the morning feeling low, gloomy, miserable, and drained? In other words, in a state that in English we call "sad"? Sure, someone who is feeling sad can describe this state of the mind and body using idioms, verbs, nouns, and adjectives in different languages – but we all know what emotional misery is. Perhaps there are a few "basic" emotions. But maybe the exact number of them is not important. What is important for a psychology professional is to learn more about other cultural norms, values, and expectations, and be able to efficiently communicate with others, assist them, encourage them, and, of course, learn from their experiences.

People living in distant parts of the world can develop relatively similar linguistic labels for certain complex emotions, which is indicative of common roots of human emotional experiences and their interpretations. For example, in the Japanese and Middle English dialects, there are two words – *amae* and *mardiness* – both apparently indicating an individual's need for affection (Lewis & Ozaki, 2009).

All in all, supporters of the idea of the universality of human emotion argue that we, as humans, share a great deal in common with others, regardless of our cultural origins. Of course, there should be some cross-cultural variations (Elfenbein & Ambady, 2002); yet, people tend to react to external events and bodily signals with essentially similar facial expressions, physiological changes, and subjective experiences of pleasure or displeasure. Cross-culturally, individuals are emotionally sensitive to the loss of relatives and friends, the birth of their children, the victories of their favorite sports team, or criticism from other people. Across cultures, sadness evokes crying, anger tends to provoke aggression, and joy helps people embrace and forgive others.

DIFFERENCES IN EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCE: YOU CANNOT EXPLAIN PAIN IF YOU HAVE NEVER BEEN HURT

Despite similarities in emotional experiences across cultures, there are, of course, differences in the way people perceive and describe basic emotions (Park et al. 2018; Fang et al., 2017). In Buddhist texts (some of them appear in Chinese), the seven basic emotions are described as happiness, anger, sorrow, joy, love, hate, and desire; disgust does not appear. Also, Russell and Yik's (1996) review of studies of ancient Chinese texts – reflecting the dominant teachings of Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism – found various sets of noted emotions, ranging from five to seven. Again, their English translation of a total of 12 labels of emotion did not include disgust. Studies of emotion recognition revealed subjects in China had more problems with recognition of disgust on photographed faces than subjects from other groups. Then again, other studies involving physiological measurements indicate Chinese subjects tended to identify six basic emotions in the same way that people of other nationalities did (Wang et al., 2006).

Cultures also vary in linguistic descriptions of emotion. The Tahitian language, for example, has 46 different words for anger but no word for sadness. In some African languages, the same word can represent both sadness and anger. In some local Russian dialects, the phrase, "I pity you" can indicate, "I love you," one's condolence, or even one's contempt. Research has shown that members of cultural groups were more accurate in recognizing the emotions displayed by a member of their own cultural group than by a member of a different cultural group (Paulmann & Uskul, 2014).

Differences in the expression of emotional experience, linguistic variety in the labeling of emotions, and socialization practices all suggest many culture-specific origins of human emotions. In short, according to this view, people's emotions are "constructed" from different culture-specific experiences.

CROSS-CULTURAL SENSITIVITY

COLLECTIVISM, INDIVIDUALISM, AND EMOTIONS

A study of samples in 32 countries (including India, China, Turkey, Israel, Russia, Zimbabwe, the United States, Germany, and Mexico) showed that individualism was positively correlated with higher expressivity of emotions, especially happiness and surprise. Individualism was negatively correlated with expression of sadness. These findings suggest that cultural individualism, in general, is associated with endorsement of positive emotions (Matsumoto et al., 2008). Contempt, disgust, and fear were the least endorsed emotions in all samples. Negative emotions, particularly contempt and disgust, are probably perceived as disruptive to social

relationships, particularly in collectivist cultures (Butler et al., 2009). Sadness also signals distress (Izard, 2004) which is interpreted as a clear sign of a person's weakness in these cultures. However, the research findings do not necessarily support an assumption that individuals from predominantly collectivist cultures are reserved in their emotional expressions, while people from mainly individualist cultures are not. When judging other people's emotional expressions, think about these people's culture, their unique personality features, and the circumstances of the situation, to avoid a self-fulfilling prophecy (see Chapter 2).

Consider how people use and interpret emoticons and emojis. These symbols are extremely popular as communication tools to express feelings in online communication. An *emoticon* (short for "emotional icon") is a text-based representation of a face or object consisting of punction marks, letters, and numbers – items found directly on your keyboard – which are arranged to resemble a human face (or object) expressing an emotion or sentiment. (Because of the limits of the standard keyboard, emoticons typically need to be "read" sideways.) In this way, we have **:-)** happy face, **:-(** sad face, **:-O** surprised face, **<3** heart/love, or even **</3** broken heart.

In contrast, *emoji* (from the Japanese *e*, "picture" and *moji*, "character") are actual pictographs of faces, objects, or symbols. You certainly are familiar with the seemingly infinite – and still ever-expanding – universe of emojis that are but a finger stroke away. A brief glance at any smart phone will reveal a dizzying array of such symbols, ranging from glaringly blatant to ambiguously subtle. (And to think, it all began with a tiny yellow cartoonish "smiley face" . . .) 🙂

Without a doubt, the way we perceive these little characters is rooted in our experience. A cross-cultural experimental study between a sample in Cameroon and Tanzania (consisting of hunter–gatherers, farmers, pastoralists, and city dwellers who rarely dealt with emoticons) and a sample in Japan (where emoticons are very popular) showed that whereas the Japanese subjects were very sensitive to the particular emotion displayed, the Cameroonian and Tanzanian subjects were barely able to interpret emotion. In other words, without a person's cultural experience associated with attaching geometrical faces to written messages, ☺ does not necessarily denote happiness (Takahashi et al., 2017).

With the rapid expansion of social networks, people's use of emoticons and emoji have become increasingly common. Indeed, they are regularly used by more than 90% of Internet users. Yet, based on relatively recent research, some cultural differences have already begun to emerge: Subjects from East Asia, for example, tended to use more emoji than Americans, especially in experimental situations that appeared anxiety–provoking (Togans et al., 2021).

Emotions can be mixed (for example, you may experience both fear and elation at the same time) or ambivalent (you can vacillate between joy and sadness – just remember

your high school graduation). Studies found that people who grew up in East Asia tend to be more sensitive in responding to multiple different emotions (and their complex interrelations) compared with people from the West, who tend to be attuned primarily to the most salient, or dominant emotion (Fang et al., 2017). If you recall, in Chapter 5 we discussed the importance of context in the cognitive styles of people from Eastern versus Western cultures. Cultural groups also differ with respect to the frequency and significance of common emotional reactions (Matsumoto et al., 1988). For example, earlier comparative studies have pointed to cultural differences in the degree to which some groups experience joy (Markus & Kitayama, 1994b) or anger (Solomon, 1978). Shigehiro Oishi, a Japanese American psychologist, and his colleagues surveyed more than 350 college students in Japan, Korea, and the United States. They found that on average, European Americans report being happier than Asian Americans, Koreans, or Japanese. However, European Americans also tend to become more emotionally distracted by negative events (e.g., getting a parking ticket or receiving a bad grade) and recover from these setbacks more slowly than their counterparts of Asian ancestry. Alternatively, Koreans, Japanese, and, to a lesser extent, Asian Americans reported that they were less happy in general but able to "recover" to their normal emotional state quicker than European Americans. The researchers found that European Americans needed nearly two positive events to return to their normal level of happiness (e.g., getting an encouraging call or receiving a course grade of A). The Koreans, Japanese, and Asian Americans, on average, needed only one positive event to recover emotionally (Oishi et al., 2004).

A study of nearly 400 university students from Germany, Russia, and the United States showed that participants in Germany and in the United States reported stronger emotions in response to the negative feedback from their professors than the participants in Russia indicated (Hansen & Mendzheritskaya, 2017).

Despite obvious similarities in the facial recognition of emotions outlined earlier in this chapter, subjects from various cultures also varied in their degree of agreement concerning specific emotions. In an earlier study, for example, happiness was correctly identified by 68 percent of African participants but by 97 percent of their European counterparts (Izard, 1969). In another study, U.S. and European groups correctly identified from 75 to 83 percent of emotions in the facial photographs, whereas the Japanese group scored 65 percent and the African group only 50 percent. The recognition rate of facial expressions on photographs was lower when subjects had little previous contact with other cultures (Izard, 1971). Schimmack (1996), after conducting a meta-analysis (see Chapter 3) of the existing studies of emotion, showed that white participants were better than non-white participants at recognizing happiness, fear, anger, and disgust, but not surprise and sadness. Other research has demonstrated multiple but small cultural differences with regard to the accuracy and speed with which other emotions were judged (Elfenbein & Ambady, 2003).

It was also found in several studies that Japanese participants used descriptions such as "afraid" less often and used "surprised" more often, when compared with participants from Indian and North American groups. On the other hand, in comparison to

other groups, Americans more often endorsed expressions as "afraid" and less often as "surprised" or "disgusted" (Elfenbein et al., 2002).

Differences in emotion recognition between representatives of any two cultures probably tend to exist because some emotional expressions are cultivated in children during the socialization process and some are not. In our earlier example about the Japanese and Middle English idioms referring to the need for affection, the English *mardiness* is considered childish in most cases and thus avoided more than the Japanese *amae*, which is treated kindly and supportively (Lewis & Ozaki, 2009). On the other hand, the public display of emotions may be seen as socially disruptive and thus inappropriate. This may affect the Japanese perception of people from other cultures who do freely display their emotions in public. For instance, a Japanese observer may see such individuals as being impolite and disorderly.

Differences in the perception of emotions have been in many other examples. When Greek and British individuals observed other people in embarrassing situations, the Greeks usually overestimated the intensity of the observed emotion of embarrassment, whereas the British observers usually underestimated the intensity (Edelman et al., 1989). Such a difference may be caused by more developed norms of collectivism in Greece compared with the United Kingdom at the time of the study. In this way, people in Greece felt more interconnected and group-oriented, which made their embarrassment more intense than it was for the British.

Now that we have examined two distinct approaches to understanding the relationships between culture and emotion, how do we know which is more strongly supported by science? The first approach advocates cross-cultural universality, whereas the second suggests cultural origin and specificity of human emotion (Ekman, 1994; Mead, 1975; Russell, 1994). Before we provide an answer, consider the following discussion on how individuals experience pain.

EMOTIONS: DIFFERENT OR UNIVERSAL?

Is severe pain after a major stumble likely to cause a negative emotion in any individual? Probably. And what if one is born and raised in Puerto Rico and the other came from Iran? There supposedly would be no difference: A stumble causes physical pain which, in turn, should cause a negative emotion. Does saying goodbye to a loved one make you sad? Likely. If you are thirsty and then get a glass of cold water, will you experience joy? Most likely, yes. But will you inevitably feel and express your emotions in exactly the same manner as others under similar circumstances? Not necessarily. How we feel and how we express our feelings are based on a number of factors (see our discussion of multiple causation in Chapter 2), such as our personality, experiences, immediate circumstances, presence or absence of people, and many other variables. For example, you may bury your frustration and fake a smile after a clumsy fall in a public place, but scream like a banshee if such a fall happens in your home where no one can see you.

Cultural differences in emotions tend to increase as the description becomes more specific and detailed. For instance, we typically consider jealousy as a general negative emotion; however, by donning a pair of "magnifying psychological glasses" for a more detailed analysis, jealousy may be interpreted as a unique blend of fear, anger, and sadness. High levels of abstraction cause us to see people from different cultures or social groups as similar in the way they express their emotions. Here we can all recall common (but erroneous) stereotypes about "emotionless" Finns and Swedes, "hot-blooded" Spaniards and Brazilians, and "sensuous" Arabs and French. What other stereotypical but false assumptions about emotional expressiveness can you suggest here?

For a more comprehensive cross-cultural analysis of emotions, we need to look "inside" the emotion. Referring again to the definition, we view emotion as a multi-componental process (Frijda, 1986; Scherer, 1984). First, an emotion is initiated, and there is an underlying physiological process behind it. Second, the emotion is experienced, and it is displayed behaviorally or remains concealed. Third, it somehow affects our decisions, and the emotion may cause other emotions. Finally, it eventually fades away.

Are there any cross-cultural findings that shed some light on what role culture may play in these stages? In the beginning of the chapter, we indicated that emotion involves physiological arousal. Let us describe that process now in greater detail.

PHYSIOLOGICAL AROUSAL

There are significant cross-cultural similarities in the physiological mechanisms underlying emotions. Universally, the process begins with the detection of stimuli from either our environment and/or our body. This signal then travels to the brain. The amygdala serves as the brain's "emotional computer": It serves the function of assessing the affective (i.e., emotional) significance of the stimulus. Some stimuli may cause little or no emotion; conversely, others may trigger a high degree of affective response. Then, the hypothalamus, as a part of the limbic system, activates sympathetic and endocrine responses related to the stimulus. The brain's cerebral cortex (i.e., "grey matter") also plays a large role with respect to emotion, particularly regarding appraisal of stimuli. The cortex's temporal lobe is associated with an individual's imagination (Kandel, 2012). The brain's right hemisphere is believed to be generally responsible for the facial displays of emotion (Borod, 1992). Research suggests that pleasant emotions are associated with the activation of the left frontal lobe, whereas unpleasant emotions are mostly associated with the activation of the right frontal lobe (Davidson, 1992).

Experimental studies demonstrate that when people – irrespective of culture – express emotions, their blood pressure changes as well. Embarrassment too has common physiological responses cross-culturally, one of which is increased body temperature (Edelman et al., 1989). In a different, now-classic study, researchers gave participants specific directions to contract their facial muscles in particular ways that were characteristic of various emotions: anger, sadness, happiness, surprise, or disgust (Ekman

et al., 1983). Subjects held these expressions for 10 seconds, during which time their physiological reactions were measured. The researchers found a connection between the simple act of changing facial expressions and patterns of physiological response. Different emotions produce differences in such measures as acceleration of heart rate, finger temperature, and a measure of sweat on the palms (also known as galvanic skin response) related to arousal or anxiety. A comparison between the physiological changes reported by subjects from Southern and Northern European regions also yielded interesting results: The "hot-blooded" southerners (stereotypically speaking, of course) displayed significantly more blood pressure changes while experiencing joy, sadness, and anger, compared to their "cold-blooded" northern neighbors (Rime & Giovannini, 1986). In a different study, Asian Americans, compared to European Americans, expressed larger increases in blood pressure when they were expressing negative emotions (Butler et al., 2009).

But what may cause such diverse physiological reactions?

THE MEANING OF PRECEDING EVENTS

There is always something that causes or initiates an emotion. A pain in your body, a lost softball game, a coffee shared with a person you love, a rainy day outside your window, or annoying music streaming from a satellite radio at a hair salon – many **preceding events** in our everyday lives bear emotional significance for us. However, do people across cultures agree that certain situations should elicit similar emotions? Do all people concur that the loss of a friend is a sad event, and that the birth of a child is a happy one? There is more than ample research data to support this assumption: Cross-culturally, basic emotions are generally marked or caused by relatively similar types of events. Let us illustrate this statement with the results of several cross-cultural studies.

Let's return to some classic studies first.

- Subjects from the United States, South Korea, and Samoa were asked to write stories about an event causing one of six emotions: anger, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness, or surprise (Brandt & Boucher, 1985). These stories were then presented to other subjects for evaluation. Substantial similarities were found in the assignment of emotions related to stories between the examined cultures as well as within cultures.
- In another study, Wallbott and Scherer (1986) examined situations in which people experienced joy, fear, anger, sadness, disgust, shame, and guilt. Data collected in 27 countries suggested that although there were some differences between the countries, these differences were much lower than the ones within the countries.
- Evidence for similarities in preceding events is also shown in a study conducted by Scherer and his colleagues (1988), in which subjects were asked to describe a situation that had caused them to feel happy, sad, angry, or scared. After the task was complete, these situations were grouped into several categories. In essentially all cultural groups, the most important event categories were birth and death,

good and bad news, acceptance or rejection in relationships, meetings with friends, dates, temporary and permanent separation, listening to music, sexual experiences, interaction with strangers, and success or failure.

- In another study, both U.S. and Malay subjects were equally accurate in their identification of emotions caused by 96 different types of events (Boucher & Brandt, 1981).
- Matsumoto and colleagues (1988) found a large degree of cultural agreement in how people in Japan and the United States evaluate specific situations that evoke particular emotions.
- Cross-cultural similarities have also been found in the perception of events that cause people to experience jealousy and envy (Hupka et al., 1985).

CRITICAL THINKING

EXAMPLE 1: EMOTIONAL "NO-SHOW"

If we limit our analysis of human emotion only to the question of whether an emotion is expected to occur, we will find many cross-cultural similarities among human feelings. Indeed, any starving person presumably will be happy to obtain a meal. However, if we focus on how emotion is experienced and displayed in human activities, we are more likely to see cultural differences. Consider, for example, Japanese sumo wrestlers. Sumo wrestling is an ancient Japanese sport that requires immense physical strength, agility, and endurance. Unfortunately, sumo wrestlers can face serious injuries (Juagdan, 2023). If you have a chance to watch a sumo tournament (they are often streamed or available on YouTube), you will discover that the wrestlers virtually never show their emotions. Whether a wrestler experiences a serious injury, excruciating pain, a tough loss, a spectacular victory, the spectators' loud ovation or jeering, he remains emotionless. Not a single muscle moves on his face. After witnessing such events, an observer might be tempted to conclude that sumo wrestlers simply do not experience emotions. However, it is more plausible to assume that the wrestlers do feel the emotions – but they do not display them. It takes many years of practice, education, and dedication to become a professional sumo wrestler. During this time, the candidates patiently learn how to successfully hide the obvious expressions of their joy, frustration, and other feelings during the competition. In contrast to sumo wrestlers' training, modern soccer players from every corner of the world are not trained to hide their emotions on the field. Instead, they may find it beneficial to exaggerate their expression, for example, of pain after a collision with an opponent because referees – observing the player's display of pain (real or fake?) – might feel obliged to penalize the opposing team. What other examples of the cultural impact on emotional displays can you think of?

OTHER EXAMPLES

We have to pay special attention to the particular level of abstraction at which emotions are described. The very same emotion of joy, for example, may be culturally similar or cross-culturally different, depending on the level of generalization chosen for description. Many similarities in emotions are likely to be found when they are described at a high level of generality or abstraction. In contrast, an emphasis on one's observations of specific emotional characteristics would be more likely to highlight cultural differences. Many authors, for example, have written about a specific fear that exists in people living under a dictatorship: These individuals fear punishment (such as arrest, imprisonment, torture, etc.) for criticizing their countries' dictators (Serebryany, 2019; Gozman & Edkind, 1992). However, a more abstract analysis could yield an interpretation of a different kind: These individuals are experiencing a typical fear based on an appropriate evaluation of a threat. As soon as the threat of persecution is eliminated, the fear is likely to disappear as well. Likewise, millions of undocumented aliens may experience fear of deportation from the United States. This fear is unfamiliar to U.S. citizens if we view it as a special type of fear. Described in a more general way, however, this emotion loses its specificity, and the fear of deportation becomes little more than a state of reluctant anticipation of an unpleasant event.

All of that notwithstanding, however, there is both scientific and anecdotal evidence for cultural differences in emotion–eliciting events: Seemingly similar situations can be interpreted differently across cultures and, therefore, lead to different emotions. For instance, most Europeans as well as North and South Americans consider the number 13 to be unlucky. Some would become emotionally distraught simply to consider living in apartment #13 or to take up residence on the 13th floor. (In fact, depending on where you live, have you ever noticed that in an elevator, the number 13 doesn't even appear at all? The display oddly jumps from the 12th floor directly to the 14th floor. Clearly, logic is irrelevant here: The "14th" floor is, in actuality, the 13th floor. But that doesn't seem to assuage many peoples' anxiety.) People of many other ethnic groups, on the contrary, would pay little attention to this particular number. Before passing judgment on any particular culture, however, keep in mind that people in Russia are afraid to keep an even number of flowers in a vase. Why? An even number of flowers is typically brought to a funeral. A Canadian or Mexican student, in contrast, is likely to be unaware of this foreign superstition and would be thrilled to receive six (twelve is even better!) flowers from a friend or romantic interest.

Consistent with other studies, Chinese students were found to experience higher levels of anxiety and shame during mathematics tests compared to students from Germany. At the same time, they also experienced more enjoyment, pride and less anger than Germans (Frenzel et al., 2007). Liem (1997) analyzed the emotions of shame and guilt in first- and

second-generation Asian Americans and European Americans. All participants were asked to describe situations in which they felt guilty or embarrassed. Some differences were found between the first-generation immigrants. For instance, Europeans were more likely to have experienced guilt as an anticipated moral transgression: Guilt indicates that a person has violated an internal standard of ethical behavior, even when there is no public display of such a violation. In the stories reported by first-generation Asian Americans, however, the typical guilt-related situation is based more on the feeling of failed or unfulfilled duty. For European Americans, shame centers on the presence of other people: It is shameful that other people discover your inappropriate actions. For first-generation Asian Americans, shame also involves the presence of outsiders. However, another element is present that is not typical in the context of shame among European Americans. For the Asian Americans, there is a personally significant group to which the person belongs, usually his or her family. Therefore, shame is also felt as regret for letting some important people down. It is interesting to note that differences in experiencing shame and guilt were insignificant between the second generation of Japanese Americans and European Americans.

To summarize, a variety of preceding events can produce similar emotional responses in most human beings, regardless of their cultural origin or current identity. These studies suggest a high degree of similarity in human emotional sensitivity to life events or specific conditions. There is also evidence that emotions can be elicited by culture-specific events. People who are not familiar with various cultural norms and traditions may not recognize such emotions and may commit mistakes in communications. What kinds of mistakes? Imagine, for one example, a host who unwittingly offers a roast beef sandwich to a Hindu guest at a party, a ham sandwich to an Orthodox Jewish guest, or a fried fish sandwich to a vegan.

EVALUATION OF EMOTIONS

People tend to be aware of their emotions and to make evaluations of them. Despite tremendous individual variations, there are cultural norms and rules that regulate our individual **evaluations of emotions**. There is evidence that people carry cultural beliefs about which emotions are most significant or suitable in particular social settings (Markus & Kitayama, 1994a). Shame (or fear of an experience that can be referred to as "loss of face") occurs when other people are present (Lin & Yamaguchi, 2011). Some emotions are commonly considered inappropriate and are therefore suppressed, such as feeling envious of your friend's or sibling's success. Other emotions can be seen as legitimate and even desirable, such as feeling pride after getting a perfect grade on your final exam. These evaluations are linked to the specific situation in which an emotional response is anticipated. Pay attention, for example, to how people tend to react to so-called "ethnic jokes." Some may laugh at a joke that ridicules members of a particular ethnic group, but particularly when the joke-teller is a representative of that group – like a Russian deriding Russian people. However, if there is no ethnic "match" between the teller and the joke, or the teller is not your good friend, you may feel disappointed, offended, or even angry. Why do you think this is the case?

CRITICAL THINKING

"ALONE" OR "LONELY?"

Have you ever had some time on your own when nobody else was around? When you weren't expecting anybody to stop by and see you? When your phone was turned off, so there was no chance for calls, texts, or emails to get through? How did you feel? Did you enjoy the time of being alone? Or did you long for someone or something to break the social isolation around you? People give different answers to these questions. Most of us would say something along the lines of, "the way one feels about being alone depends on the circumstances." True enough. But researchers have provided more specific answers. In Western cultures, for example, being alone was more likely to be regarded as an occasion of privacy that causes feelings of gratification or happiness (Mesquita et al., 1997, p. 271). On the contrary, for some Eskimo groups, the state of being alone was interpreted as a source of sadness. Tahitians perceived loneliness as causing peculiar feelings and fear. For some Aboriginals of Australia, "sitting alone" prevented one from experiencing happiness (see Briggs, 1970; Levy, 1973; Myers, 1979). Do you find such a distinction between Western and non-Western experiences of being alone as overly simplistic? Do you think that most human beings should consider a long stretch of isolation as unpleasant? Some studies have suggested that cross-culturally, loneliness is viewed negatively (Bowlby, 1982). Yet, can you think of examples (maybe personal ones) connecting a person's relatively long periods of "being alone" with this person's positive emotions? It might help here to distinguish between conditions such as "being alone" as a temporary situation versus "loneliness" as a permanent state of isolation in one's life.

A comparative Chinese–U.S. study (Stipek, 1998) examined how people evaluated some hypothetical situations. Half the situations involved the participants themselves as a person who is (a) caught cheating, (b) expecting admittance to a prestigious university, and (c) participating in a sporting competition. The other half of the cases indicated the involvement of significant others in the participant's life. The study showed that, in general, U.S. students tended to attribute pride to the cases involving personal accomplishment. In contrast, the Chinese students were more likely to experience pride for outcomes that benefited others. Moreover, compared with Americans, Chinese respondents reported stronger positive emotional reactions to other people's achievements. For example, Chinese participants asserted that they would feel more pride if their child was accepted into a prestigious university than if they themselves were accepted into that same university. U.S. respondents maintained that they would feel equally proud in both circumstances.

The study's author (Stipek) proposed that these differences might best be explained by the emphasis on the collective nature of emotional experiences in China. The Chinese

social orientation is based on the Confucian ideal that individuals should be mainly concerned about their place in the network of human relations. As many scholars point out, throughout history Chinese people have tended to identify themselves in the context of significant others (Triandis, 1990). The findings of other studies are also consistent with the demands of prevailing communist ideology of the People's Republic of China. This ideology – as all other types of Communist ideologies – demands the primacy of the group and government officials over individual freedom to choose. Considering the fact that Stipek's study was conducted back in the late 1990s, the pressure of authoritarian ideology has almost certainly increased in China in the past 25 years. Further, most studies conducted in China and intended for publication globally – especially those related to the expression of individual opinions about China and its people's lifestyle and habits – have been heavily censored by the government in Beijing (Varadarajan, 2021).

The results of this study can be critically evaluated, in part, from another point of view. The Chinese system of higher education is quite different from the U.S. system because college admission is based on highly competitive formal examinations (some other countries have the same system of college entrance exams). Every year, a substantial number of students are not accepted, and many must wait another year to try again. In contrast, in the United States, a person who is not accepted to one school can apply to another school that accepts students with lower SAT scores and grade point averages. Therefore, it is to be expected that Chinese participants would rate these "acceptance to college" situations as more stressful than their U.S. counterparts.

WE ARE EXPECTED TO FEEL IN A PARTICULAR WAY

Emotional experiences can be influenced by social norms or popular expectations. **Feeling rules** refer to cultural standards about how to feel in particular situations. We often consider whether our laughter (an expression of joy in most cultures) or head shaking (an expression of disappointment in most cultures) might evoke either positive or negative reactions from others. Emotional experiences that contradict some basic social norms are likely to be quite different from those emotions that are in line with the existing customs. Moreover, an emotion can be experienced differently considering the context in which it is displayed or observed. A father in India, for example, might be deeply saddened by the fact that his only son is leaving home for college. However, this emotion may be suppressed by his unwillingness (due to the traditional gender rules requiring a father to appear "strong") to show his apparent emotional "weakness" in front of other family members and neighbors. (See Figure 6.1 for a comparison of Western versus Eastern attributes.)

Emotional complexity, or the co-occurrence of pleasant and unpleasant emotions simultaneously, has been found to be more prevalent in East Asian than Western cultures (Fang et al., 2017; Spencer-Rodgers et al., 2010). In the West, pleasant and unpleasant emotions are typically conceptualized as discrete, short-lived, and oppositional phenomena
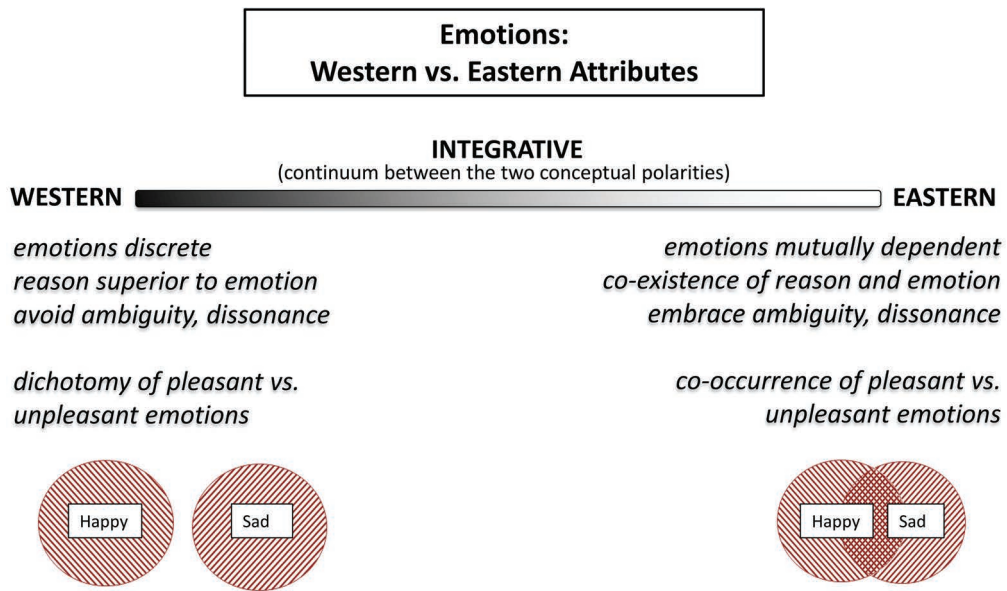
Figure 6.1 Western versus Eastern Attributes

that do not co-occur. In East Asia, by contrast, constructs such as "happy–sad" are viewed as mutually dependent in a state of balance. (It bears repeating here that, of course, we are describing general tendencies, which might or might not apply to specific individuals.)

Our anticipation of what people should or should not feel can lead to errors in judgment. In one study, Tsai and Levenson (1997) compared 22 Chinese American and 20 European American dating couples, all of whom were attending college. The participants were asked about the emotion they experienced when they tried to resolve interpersonal conflicts. The study also included physiological measurements of the participating couples. Common expectations might predict that the Chinese Americans would place a greater emphasis on emotional moderation (see Chapter 1 and earlier in this chapter) than European Americans. However, the results of the study drew a different picture: There was neither disparity in feelings nor differences in most physiological measures of the Chinese Americans' responses. Perhaps the college campus environment of engagement and inclusion reinforced certain similar types of feelings in the two ethnic groups, which could have affected the results of this study. What are your thoughts about this?

The emotion of disgust is directly associated with the perception of food contamination. If a person believes, for instance, that a glass of juice is contaminated, this individual is not likely to drink out of the glass unless something is done to "cleanse" the contaminated juice. People vary in their perceptions of which food products or drinks are contaminated. Some cultural differences exist as well. A study of 125 Hindu Indian and 106 U.S. children between the ages of four and eight showed that most participants rejected food that was contaminated by contact with a cockroach, a human hair, or if the juice was

sampled by a stranger. Indian children, however, were more sensitive than U.S. children to contaminants. Specifically, the Indian children responded significantly more strongly to stranger or cockroach contamination; further, they did not accept acts of "purification" (such as boiling or a mother's touch). Specialists suggest that interpersonal disgust and contagion are a more substantial aspect of Hindu Indian culture than of most Western cultures. Any contact with the mouth, either direct (through biting or sipping) or indirect (through the hand or saliva), can make the food unacceptable. In particular, in this study, for Indian children no purification was accepted in removing stranger contamination; in contrast, boiling of the juice was effective for most Americans (Hejmadi et al., 2004).

Disgust can also be associated with cultural requirements to reject certain foods or to avoid particular situations related to eating. Once accepted, these requirements are infused with a powerful emotion and thus become less subject to temptation or modification. The classic cross-cultural study of disgust emphasized that people develop expectations about how children should react to particular foods and food consumption (Rozin & Fallon, 1987). For example, most of us would feel disgust and refuse to eat food that we just chewed and spat out. In like fashion, most of us wouldn't mind sucking our own blood from a cut finger, but a vast majority would be repulsed by the idea of ingesting our own blood after it had been accumulated onto a spoon. There is a worldwide aversion to eating animals that are physically similar to humans (e.g., monkeys) or have close interactive relations with humans (e.g., cats and dogs). In fact, most criticize people from cultures that deviate from these rules. The tendency to avoid disgust-inducing situations is usually learned early in our lives. This behavioral avoidance then happens almost automatically, without significant conscious effort from us.

A CASE IN POINT

A UNITED NATIONS DINNER PARTY

Imagine you are invited to attend a New Year reception at the UN headquarters in New York City. When you arrive, you feel impelled to sample the stunning variety of ethnic dishes lovingly prepared by the ambassadors' chefs. As you make your way down the buffet table, your eyes fall upon an assortment of cold fish eggs, pickled beetles, steamed beef tongue, broiled dog meat, roasted lamb brains, deep-fried guinea pig, and a bowl of fermented horse milk. The hosts implore you: *"Don't be shy, dig in!"* How enthusiastic would you be to try these unfamiliar foods? Or might you feel utter disgust at their very sight? Perhaps "yes," if your taste for food has been developed at utterly predictable, standardized, or bland fast-food outlets. However, is it fair to assume that your disgust, as an emotion, would be experienced only by you but not by others in the buffet line, or even the people who cooked these foods? The answer is: Other people can experience disgust like you too – but they feel it in different contexts. Does this suggest that we all have similar emotions "within" us, but that they are "activated" only in particular

situations? Does this mean that our understanding of human emotions must include the situations in which they occur? Now think of a time when you changed your opinion about a certain food, and then began to like something you previously disliked. What caused you to change your mind? If you became a vegetarian, for example, describe (and if possible, share with others in class) why and how this transition has affected your preferences.

One important application of the study of feeling rules is a growing understanding that people can, to some degree, manage their emotional states. There is cross-cultural evidence, for example, that people are able to influence their level of happiness by actually learning how to feel positive. We will return to this subject later in this chapter when we discuss research on happiness.

HOW PEOPLE ASSESS EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCE

When people try to evaluate their emotional experience, they make assessments about the experience of the emotion not only along the primary dimension of pleasant–unpleasant, but also with respect to several other continuous variables as well. Research has shown, for example, that people try to assess whether their emotions (1) are caused by a familiar or unfamiliar event, (2) suggest the existence of an obstacle, (3) create a sense of being in charge or being out of control of the situation, (4) increase or decrease self-esteem, and (5) cause praise, reproach, or mockery by other people (Ellsworth, 1994; Frijda, 1986; Matsumoto et al., 1988; Wallbott & Scherer, 1986). Expectedly, the frequency with which these dimensions are used in emotional assessment can vary. For example, those events that can have an impact on the individual's family or ethnic group have greater importance in collectivist than in individualistic cultures. On the contrary, the events that affect one's self-esteem, material success, and professional achievement have been the primary emotional concerns of most people in individualistic cultures (Markus & Kitayama, 1994b).

Research also shows that some of our emotions are evoked by political and cultural beliefs (Abu-Lughod, 1986; Rosaldo, 1980). For instance, a simple phrase such as "an independent Palestinian state" may have little significance to a welder in Michigan. The same phrase, however, can bear tremendous emotional meaning for millions of people living in the Middle East. For some it will indicate pride and honor; for others it will evoke frustration and resentment.

Appraisal of emotions may be linked to more complex psychological assessments such as guessing a person's cultural identity. For example, have you ever attempted to guess a stranger's nationality simply by looking at this person's photograph? An individual's smiling face, apparently, contains some potentially useful information that helps other

people make judgments about that person's ethnic group or nationality. Comparing pictures of Japanese research participants to those of Japanese Americans, and of Australian faces with American faces, people tend to guess nationality from photographs that display emotions rather than neutral facial expressions. In other words, if a person is smiling, people have a better chance of correctly guessing this individual's nationality (Marsh et al., 2007).

Socialization practices also affect the process of appraisal (Williams et al., 2002). Markham and Wang (1996) studied samples of Chinese children in Beijing and Australian children in Sydney. The children were compared in terms of their ability to evaluate faces – both Chinese and Australian – and in their ability to express their opinions about the emotions they identified. An initial hypothesis was that the wide range of resources available to Australian children plus a diversity of social experiences that a child has in contemporary Australian society – including television and the Internet – would improve the child's ability to evaluate emotional expressions. However, the authors did not find any substantial differences in responses between the studied groups. Moreover, some Chinese children received better scores than their Australian counterparts. Why was this difference found? The authors explain this phenomenon by referring to the family norms in both societies. Typically, Chinese parents tend to demand a higher degree of discipline from children than do Australian parents. The more consistent Chinese socialization might reduce the range of evaluations applicable to emotional interpretations compared with the range of such interpretations in Australia. The authors also indicate that children from smaller families have been found to be more advanced in recognizing emotions. As you might know, China's official demographic policy for many years has been "one family, one child." Therefore, in this study, the sample included people from smaller nuclear families.

EXPRESSION OF EMOTION

Eight-year-old Tom is gazing at the scene of a car wreck with his eyes opened wide in a fixed stare. He is not hiding his fear. Anybody would be able to read it on Tom's face. His parents, who came from Taiwan, did not need to instruct him how to express fear by turning his lips down. Similarly, his American schoolteachers did not have to train him to lower his eyebrows when confronted with a threat. Tom expresses his fear in the same way that billions of people across the globe might display it: through their facial expression, posture, and gestures.

The rules of emotional expression – called **display rules** – are acquired primarily during socialization (Birdwhistell, 1970). Every culture has unwritten expectations about an individual's patterns of emotional expression considered appropriate within that culture (Matsumoto & Hwang, 2011). Throughout the history of human civilization, one way of managing an emotion has been to learn how to control its manifestation. It is worth emphasizing that such display rules were primarily concerned with the restraining of emotional expressions (Ekman, 1982).

Beginning presumably with the Chinese thinker Confucius (fifth century B.C.E.) and the Greek philosopher Plato (fourth century B.C.E.), emotion has been viewed as a disruptive force in human affairs. Plato asserted that reason must restrain the passions, which otherwise distort rational thinking. Aristotle and Democritus (fourth century B.C.E.) had a similar view, suggesting that emotions were in the "lower," more "primitive" level of the soul, whereas thinking is located on the "higher," more advanced layers. Stoicism, an ancient school of philosophy, held that human beings should be free from the power of passion in order to accept both the fortunes and misfortunes of life. Researchers have shown that most major world religions – Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, and Christianity – introduced the rules by which human beings could resist many "destructive" emotional states, such as envy, pride, vanity, and jealousy (Smith, 1991).

There are at least two criteria for assessment of emotional expressions: frequency and intensity. For example, in the United States, many parents commonly say "I love you" to their children, and vice versa. In stark contrast, in Ukraine, Russia, and Belarus, such verbal expressions of affection between parents and siblings is considered too dramatic and, therefore, expressed in only limited life situations. Cross-cultural studies have shown that the use of "I love you" fluctuates greatly across cultures: It is used exclusively for romantic statements of love in some cultures, but has a much wider meaning in others. People whose English is their second language tended use the locution "I love you" more frequently in English than their native tongue. Across cultures, females tend to use the expression more often than males (Wilkins & Gareis, 2006).

If emotions are cultural and social products, cultural norms and environmental factors should regulate the ways people express their emotions (Kitayama & Markus, 1995; Margalit & Mauger, 1985). Expectedly, global surveys reveal that a country's social stability and economic security (such as a stable employment, affordable housing, etc.) are commonly correlated with people's positive assessment of their subjective well-being (Oishi et al., 2013; World Happiness Report, 2019).

There are also notable cultural variations in the display of sadness. Early studies showed that Tahitians reported feeling tired in response to losses (Levy, 1973). Crying among the Bedouins in the Egyptian desert (Abu-Lughod, 1986) was considered a sign of weakness, whereas in other Islamic cultures, such as the Turkish, it was considered an acceptable social response – but only in certain circumstances.

Display rules change with time and differ not only by culture but also by gender. Some evidence suggests that women probably express emotions more "intensely" and openly than men do. This is supported by research evidence for all basic emotions – with the exception of anger. Women, on average, tend to feel more comfortable in displaying emotions such as love, happiness, shame, guilt, and sympathy, which foster affiliation and caretaking. Men, however, tend to avoid these "soft" emotions that display (perhaps from their perspective), male vulnerabilities (Gong et al., 2018; Brody & Hall, 1993). For men raised in traditional cultures, the complex emotion of honor consists of being in control of their own family and of outperforming or impressing other men. Women's honor in these

cultures consists of conforming to the rules of modesty and faithfulness. This is consistent with what we think of regarding culture gender stereotypes (to be addressed later in the book). Likewise, shameful events have been reported to elicit different reactions in men and women: Men frequently try to restore their honor by showing off through aggression or by retaliation; women are more likely to react to shameful events with submissive behavior and avoidance (Abu-Lughod, 1986; Blok, 1981). During the process of socialization (see Chapter 8), boys and girls tend to receive somewhat different sets of informal instructions about the display rules for various emotions.

The presence or absence of other people may also have various impacts on emotional expressions. Ekman and Friesen in their early study (1975) asked Japanese and U.S. students to watch stressful films either in isolation or in the presence of an experimenter. Without the subjects' awareness, the emotional expressions on their faces were recorded in both conditions. For the two samples, similar expressions were found in reaction to the same movie episodes when the subjects were alone. However, in the presence of the experimenter, the Japanese subjects showed far fewer negative expressions than did the Americans. Does this experiment partially explain why some people in the past tended to mistakenly see the Japanese as unemotional individuals?

In another study, researchers asked U.S. and Japanese students living in the United States to report on the frequency with which they experienced certain emotions in daily life (Markus & Kitayama, 1994b). The Americans reported an overwhelmingly greater frequency of experiencing positive rather than negative self-relevant feelings, but there was virtually no such effect among the Japanese. One might hypothesize that such differences could be caused by the Japanese subjects' unwillingness to reveal their emotions to strangers. There are also data suggesting that, in Japan, the happiest people are those who experience primarily the "socially engaged emotions" involving interdependence (such as friendly feelings). In the United States, on the contrary, the happiest people are generally those who experience the socially "disengaged" emotions of independence, such as pride (Matsumoto, 1994). More recent studies of immigrants in the United States show that values, such as collectivism and individualism, affect the immigrant parents' endorsement of collectivistic or individualistic values (Chen & Zhou, 2018). Researchers also suggest that in the West, high levels of expressiveness are often seen as signs of competence and likeability, in contrast to Asian cultures. Educators report that Asian American college students are less expressive than European Americans, which is probably based on Asian cultural traditions valuing emotional self-restraint and attentiveness to others (Butler et al., 2009; Kim & Markus, 2002).

However, these trends in expressive behavior have not been supported in other research. In one study, the participants from both countries were asked to rate their anticipated degree of comfort in the expression of independent and interdependent emotions (Stephan et al., 1998). The results did not reveal substantial differences between the samples. In another study, Aune and Aune (1994) studied three groups of subjects: Japanese Americans, Filipino Americans, and European Americans. Each group completed self-report questionnaires in which they evaluated both positive and negative

emotions – both experienced and expressed – in romantic relationships. The participating students were asked to think about the relationship they have with their partner and the emotions they felt and expressed. The participants were also asked to rank their emotions. On the whole, the researchers did not find substantial cultural differences in how negative emotions are experienced and expressed in romantic relationships.

How are we to interpret the results of these studies? Can we say then that collectivism and individualism have little impact on how people feel and communicate their emotions? We must be careful not to rush to such a categorical judgment. Don't forget that the participants in these particular studies were people of "mixed" cultural backgrounds: They were born in the Philippines or in Japan, and were studying in the United States. Perhaps in the contemporary world, people are increasingly learning from other cultures and are developing a deeper understanding of the many issues and behaviors that had not been available to them prior to the era of satellite television and the Internet. Japanese and American society are more interconnected today than they were 10 years ago. For instance, if a Japanese woman from a traditional family is shown a photograph of a nude beach, this is likely to cause a reaction of extreme embarrassment or shame. However, this woman can now travel abroad (to Europe, for example) and learn more about other cultures and their practices related to nudity. Her experience may not change her negative opinion about public nudity; however, perhaps her emotional responses will change.

EXERCISE 6.1 YOUR OWN RESEARCH STUDY ON THE EXPRESSION OF EMBARRASSMENT

Embarrassment is regarded as a form of social anxiety, an unpleasant emotion triggered by the realization of impropriety in one's behavior. A study of five European cultures (Greece, Great Britain, Italy, Spain, and Germany) showed that blushing and increased temperature plus smiling and grinning were reported consistently across cultures (Edelman et al., 1989). There are some other observations of embarrassment, such as sticking out one's tongue, as people in the Indian Orissa culture do (Menon & Shweder, 1994).

As an exercise, ask at least ten people – preferably from various cultural backgrounds – to imagine encountering a very embarrassing situation. How would they react in terms of their facial expression and body language? Ask your "research participants" to describe this situation. Then ask him or her to "play" the role of the embarrassed person, using facial expressions, gestures, and so on. Take detailed notes of your observations, or record a video on your phone (with the person's consent, of course). What did you observe? For instance, did the person touch his or her face? Did they scratch their head, wrinkle their nose, or stick out their tongue? Or did they smile and turn away? Repeat this procedure with a few other people. Which reactions were the most frequent in your observations? Were there similarities and/or differences you noticed in these individuals' reactions? Summarize your observations and any conclusions. If someone you know also engaged in this exercise, compare your notes. Was there any overlap between the sets of observations?

EMOTION AND INCLINATION TO ACT

Cross-culturally, the influence of emotions can cause us to avoid and reject some people, help and accept others, dominate or submit to some, and respect or despise others (Frijda, 1986; Frijda et al., 1995).

Some cross-cultural studies show similarities regarding action readiness evoked by certain emotions. In the extensive cross-national study cited earlier (Scherer & Wallbott, 1994), participants were asked whether their emotional experience had led them to move toward, move away from, or move against the object of emotion. Significant cross-cultural similarities were found. Joy caused more approaching behaviors; anger elicited more aggressive behaviors; and withdrawal was the most common reaction to sadness, disgust, shame, and guilt.

Some cultural differences are found in how emotions affect a person's behavioral readiness. In a comparative study of Japanese, Dutch, and Indonesian subjects, an impulse toward a hostile behavior, as a response to anger, was more common for the Dutch group. A more "internal" impulse was common in the Indonesian and Japanese groups. The Japanese group more often reported feelings of helplessness and urges to protect themselves. They also expressed a wish to depend on someone else and a feeling of apathy at a higher level than participating Dutch and Indonesian subjects (Frijda et al., 1995). These results partly support findings obtained in other studies which suggested that personal dependence on intimate others as well as acceptance by others are significant components of emotional experience in Japan or in East Asia in general (Sundararajan, 2015; Lebra, 1983; Markus & Kitayama, 1994b).

An emphasis on the mastery of one's environment is more typical of highly technologically developed societies. Other cultures emphasize harmony and natural order. Therefore, active coping styles can be preferable in some cultures but not in others (Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961). One of the key lessons we can learn is that coping with stress is relative to its cultural context. As such, some stress-coping therapeutic strategies that have been proven successful in one culture may not work well in a different culture.

EMOTION AND JUDGMENT

In the classic American TV series *Star Trek* (which you can stream these days), one of the main characters, Mr. Spock, is a half-human, half-alien who is innately free from any emotions. He simply does not experience them. Instead, his behavior is directed by pure logic. He is, of course, a fictional character, a product of creative imagination. Yet, his character and his interactions with other members of the Starship Enterprise crew are illustrative of the relationships between emotion, thought, and judgment.

Emotions and thought are closely linked. Emotions can influence the way people make judgments and predictions (Mayer et al., 1992). Conversely, people's thoughts and

beliefs influence their emotions (refer to the critical thinking principle of bidirectional causation in Chapter 2). There is ample evidence that emotional states may shape cognitive processing in different ways. People who are depressed, for example, tend to underestimate the probability of their own success and overestimate the probability of bad events occurring in the future (Beck, 1991). People who experience positive affect differ from those who experience negative affect. The former have better memory and use different strategies for problem solving and categorization (Clore et al., 1994).

Anger has been found to lead to more personal accusations, whereas sadness leads to a tendency to believe that negative circumstances are determined by fate, chance, or unluckiness (Keltner et al., 1993). There was a significant difference found between Japanese and U.S. subjects in their attribution of anger. Apparently, the Japanese or other Asian subjects were comparatively more reluctant to identify anger as being caused by other people than the Americans (Matsumoto et al., 1988; Scherer et al., 1988). Other studies show a similar trend (Sundararajan, 2015). Japan is a collectivist culture, and perhaps societal interdependency is a factor that makes the inclusion of anger in a person's responses difficult.

Emotions can lead to belief changes: Certain emotional appraisals can cause perceptual generalizations and stereotypes. For example, an individual's negative experience with, and emotional feeling toward, a representative of a particular ethnic group can cause prejudice toward all members of that group.

A CASE IN POINT

EMOTIONS AND PROPAGANDA

It was the early spring of 2022. When bombs from Russian miliary planes were falling on Kiev, the capital of Ukraine . . . When the landscape of Ukraine was being scorched by the battle tanks of Russian troops . . . When Ukrainian cities were under an unrelenting barrage of deadly rocket attacks . . . When the streets, offices, restaurants, and cafés in Moscow . . . were oddly "normal." Several amateur interviews posted on YouTube showed smiling or nonchalant faces of young people answering questions about the war in similar fashion: "*Oh well, shit happens.*" "*Ukraine had it coming.*" "*Isn't the President of Ukraine a Jew, after all?*" "*Whatever our government does, we must support.*"

Twelve agonizing months passed. After suffering shockingly heavy – and humiliating – losses on the battlefield, Russian leader Vladimir Putin drafted hundreds of thousands of young men to fight and die in the protracted bloody war. But as far as YouTube Shorties, nothing had really changed at all. Many young adults, glancing down or away from the camera, justified the violence using standard lines of defense: "*I'm not interested in politics.*" "*War is war.*" "*If we don't fight, they will occupy us.*" "*My life is just fine.*"

In our classes we often discuss politics. We encourage critical thinking. We even frequently agree to disagree on certain issues. No opinions are "cancelled," so long as they are explained. Yet, when we presented these YouTube Shorties in class, what we heard from our students was virtually uniform in its outrage: How could *any* 20-something-year-old person today support an unprovoked and violent war waged simply to destroy an entire nation, murder innocent civilians, and steal another country's territory? To search for some answers, we turned to research into the use of psychological warfare on people's emotions.

For centuries, traditional warfare has been fought against the enemy by means of swords and arrows, bullets and bombs, missiles and mayhem. But those weren't the only tools of war. Leaders have also fought for the hearts and minds of its citizens – as well as its foes – by appealing to their emotions. Historically, this took the form of the official town crier, pamphlets, newspapers, posters, billboards, radio, motion pictures, and television. More recently, modern educated warriors have turned to the Internet.

Today, governments in authoritarian countries, such as Russia, Iran, or China, frequently and systematically use social networks – including TikTok, Twitter (rebranded as X), Facebook, and Instagram – deploying the contemporary weapons of fake news, bots, and artificial intelligence (AI) to achieve their political goals. They stoke and leverage people's fear to create an image of "The Enemy," such as a Jew, an American (regardless of their race), or a member of a neighboring ethnic or religious group (like the Uighurs in China). These techniques are used both to gather popular support for war, but also domestically and internationally to meddle in democratic elections.

Propaganda, as a specific tool of psychological warfare, involves the deliberate dissemination of biased or misleading information to manipulate public opinion for the purpose of influencing emotions, judgment, and subsequent behavior, rather than rational responses. It is essentially an appeal to passion over reason. Propaganda is at least as old as the Roman civil wars. It was utilized by, among many others, Genghis Kahn and his Mongol Empire in the thirteenth century, the British Empire in India in the nineteenth century, and Nazi Minister of Propaganda Joseph Goebbels in the mid-twentieth century.

Modern techniques of propaganda do not rely on pseudo-scientific notions like "subliminal coercion," "mental telepathy," or similar bogus ideas from dubious websites, science fiction, or even horror movies. Rather, today's psychological warfare is likely to be based on cold, hard science. Modern computational propaganda, for example, utilizes algorithms, automation, and big data to impact people's emotions and judgments. Psychological "warriors" from authoritarian governments today try to influence emotions and, ultimately, the behavior of targeted groups – like the young people in Moscow we quoted above.

Such warriors pursue at least three goals: to create uncertainty, to generate fear, and to provoke irrational responses (Shiraev & Mölder, 2020).

- **Uncertainty** is a prevailing psychological state of ambiguity, confusion, and doubt. It can lead to helplessness and irritability. When being uncertain, people tend to turn to random media narratives – often false ones – or to the convenient echo chambers of social networks, disseminating mantras like, "*Your life is going to change for the worse because of these people.*" Or, "*If you don't support us, you will be on your own.*" Or even, "*The dreams of your ancestors are ruined because of your actions.*"
- **Fear** begets more fear. If fear becomes part of an individual's daily life, this gives birth to a broader "culture of fear." And frightened individuals become even more vulnerable to manipulation. Adversarial foreign governments – as well as local politicians today – are turning to social networks to cultivate a culture of fear in all who consume media products. In this climate, some national populist leaders thrive and win elections claiming that "*[Ethnic group X] is our enemy!*", "*[Religious group Y] must be restricted!*", or "*[Sexual orientation group Z] will destroy our country if we don't* act!" Ignorance, of course, contributes to fear. In the sage words of Franklin D. Roosevelt, the 32nd President of the United States, "The only thing we have to fear, is fear itself."
- **Irrational responses** are virtually inevitable consequences of long-lasting uncertainty and fear. On this basis, public officials make policy decisions which can lead to further irrational responses from the populace. Even seemingly baseless, preposterous, or frankly crazy ideas often find support with emotionally charged audiences. You can provide your own examples. We have already offered a sampling of cases from the streets of Moscow.

WHEN EMOTIONS SIGNAL A CHALLENGE: CROSS-CULTURAL RESEARCH ON STRESS AND ANXIETY

The realization of a challenge to a person's capacity to adapt to inner and outer demands is called **stress**. This definition points to two important aspects of stress: (1) it is a psychobiological process; and (2) it entails a transaction between people and their environments (Lazarus, 1993). If the challenge does not decrease, the organism remains constantly aroused, and the body continues to divert its resources to respond to the demands (Cannon, 1932). One of the most stressful events any individual can experience is the death of a family member or close friend. Daily stressors – from the absence of food to a lack of free time – can also be sources of stress. Catastrophes and disasters such as earthquakes, floods, violence, and other traumatic events affect millions of people around the world. Cross–culturally, many survivors of such traumatic events continue to experience recurrent nightmares and difficulties in relationships and are prone to anxiety

and depression (Bemak and Chung, 2008; Allodi, 1991; Herman, 1992; Koopman, 1997; Nadler & Ben-Shushan, 1989).

The actual amount of stress and anxiety is difficult to measure because people evaluate stress using dissimilar criteria and have different coping strategies in dealing with stress. The ways people evaluate stress, as well as the situations they consider stressful, are culturally determined, but they also may depend on individual traits (Lin & Peterson, 1990). Poor living conditions, political instability, violence, and many other factors can also contribute to people's evaluations. Even educational systems may have an impact on how students experience stress. For example, test anxiety has repeatedly been shown to be lower in the United States than in other countries, such as Brazil, South Africa, and Egypt (Bodas & Ollendick, 2005; El Zahhar & Hocevar, 1991; Guida & Ludlow, 1989).

Studying stress in African Americans, Jenkins (1995) suggested that blacks have developed a special emotional style of behavioral response that reflects the cultural value placed on the individual's ability to manage stressful life events. From the author's point of view, in African American culture, emphasis is placed on the active managing of difficult situations without displaying nervous tension. Thus, a difference between European Americans and African Americans may be found in the ability of the latter to use flexibility, creativity, and innovation to adapt to changing and difficult situations, and gain control over the conditions and qualities of life (Jones & Campbell, 2011).

A primarily self-critical, pessimistic evaluation of one's own life may be viewed as a cultural norm within some ethnic groups. For instance, higher levels of negative emotions, including anxiety and sadness, were measured in elderly Russian immigrants living in the United States in comparison to other groups (Consedine & Magai, 2002). Although most immigrant groups experience stress and a variety of negative emotions caused by the difficult process of adjustment to a new culture, Russian immigrants as a group typically report more anxiety and pessimism. This difference may be explained by a variety of reasons, including the fact that the majority of Russian immigrants are highly educated and most of them have had to lower their aspirations and hopes for quick and seemingly effortless success in the United States (Drob, Tasso, & Grippo, 2016; Kliger, 2002).

Researchers also found that Asians consistently score higher than European Americans on measures of emotional distress including anxiety, sadness, and fear of negative evaluation (Norasakkunkit & Kalick, 2002). The difference may be explained by cultural norms as well. From the Western perspective, the lack of anxiety in most social situations is seen as a desirable characteristic associated with positive mental health and healthy interpersonal functioning. However, from an Asian perspective, a certain level of anxiety about social situations is expected and can even be desirable (Okazaki et al., 2002). While following this social expectation, many individuals develop a particular sensitivity to their own behavior and to other people's negative appraisals.

WHEN EMOTION HURTS: CROSS-CULTURAL STUDIES OF ANGER

Cross-culturally, **anger** – an emotion of displeasure aroused by one's perception of being threatened, interfered with, and/or overt or covert activities involving wrongdoing, attack, or offense – is seen by certain theorists as an interpersonal emotion because its experience usually involves some norm violation committed by other people. There are several universal anger-evoking events. They include problems in relationships, injustice, interaction with strangers, inconvenience, achievement, bad news, death, and several separation-related issues (Averill, 1982; Mauro et al., 1992; Wallbott & Scherer, 1986).

However, when a person speaking in a foreign language says, "I am angry," one should be careful not to rush to judgment regarding its exact meaning, because most human languages have several labels for anger (Klineberg, 1938; Tanaka-Matsumi, 1995). As an example, it is interesting to compare *anger*, as an English word, and *song* in the Ifaluk (Pacific region) language. Both of these words refer to emotions involving an appraisal of potential harm from another person. However, they can differ with respect to the kinds of action they may bring about. *Anger* often leads to the tendency to retaliate; that is, to return harm to the other person. *Song*, in contrast, produces action that aims to alter the behavior of the offending person, in a more general sense. Such action may include, of course, aggressive behaviors. But it also may consist of avoidant behavioral reactions, such as refusing to eat or attempted suicide (Lutz, 1988).

When people get angry, they interpret this emotion according to the norms of the culture in which they live. For instance, Japanese cultural traditions (as exemplified by the opening vignette in this chapter), strongly inhibit public display of private emotions, particularly negative ones. Japanese culture emphasizes homogeneity and conformity as necessary conditions for the maintenance of their society's network of interdependence (Johnson, 1993). In collectivist cultures, anger is often seen as an emotion of disengagement from society, a threat to its integrity (Markus & Kitayama, 1994b); as such, it is generally discouraged. In contrast, individualistic societies, such as the United States, tend to be more open to displays of anger, since people's right to independence and self-expression are given greater value.

BUILDING POSITIVE EMOTIONS: CROSS-CULTURAL STUDIES OF HAPPINESS

Cross-cultural psychology critically examines numerous views of happiness, which have existed in different cultures and in different academic traditions for centuries (Shiraev, 2015). We now turn to a discussion of eight such views: materialist, progressive, situational, perception–comparative, expectation, biological–genetic, spiritual, and humanistic.

First, according to the *materialist* view, an individual can become happy through the accumulation of material wealth, such as money. From this perspective, happiness can also involve the possession of power and high social status. Things that make an individual's life more comfortable – a cozy home, an abundant savings account, a new car, or the latest version of a smartphone – are important sources of happiness. The higher the social status of an individual, the more power she or he has; thus, status and power translate into happiness. Most of us are aware that, although material possessions certainly can make people happy, this emotional state does not usually last for very long. Studies show that happiness and wealth (i.e., economic success) are not necessarily correlated (Harari, 2014). In the United Kingdom, for instance, various indicators of happiness haven't changed much over the past four decades, even through tough economic periods. Further, overall, people in Britain score higher on measures of happiness than people in most other countries (Suh et al., 2008).

Second, the *progressive* view adds an important element to the recipe for happiness: social care. Supporters of this view argue that if every individual is guaranteed and provided basic social services – such as health care, affordable housing, a decent salary, vacation leave, and free tuition – then there will be practically no external factors that contribute to this individual's unnecessary suffering. In other words, if one's basic needs are secured, the individual is more likely to be happy. Indeed, people in Denmark and Finland, the Scandinavian countries with the most developed social welfare systems, receive very high scores on the measures of happiness. At this same time, other studies indicate the amount of social welfare does not necessarily predict people's happiness. For example, although Iceland spends significantly less on social welfare than does Sweden, research participants had higher ratings of happiness in Iceland than in Sweden (Suh et al., 2008). Many well-known psychologists in the past, such as Freud, expressed skepticism in relation to the idea that social reforms alone make people happy (Menand, 2014).

Third, the *situational* view maintains that happiness is not necessarily about material possessions or social services. Rather, the cumulative life situation in which individuals find themselves determines how happy they are (Lyubomirsky, 2014). The presence or absence of major tragedies in one's life, the quality of the individual's relationships, especially within the family, and access to educational and work opportunities are the major factors that contribute to happiness.

Fourth, the *perception–comparative* view suggests that happiness is a state of mind based on appraisals and comparisons. If an individual is doing better than others, he or she tends to feel better about life. Yet what if others are doing better than us? Such comparisons often lead to envy: We might feel toward others who have more than us, "I wish you didn't have it" (Fiske, 2010). Envy can lead to scorn and contributes to unhappiness. Studies also show that in individualistic cultures, people rely on their own emotions (rather than social cues) when they assess their own happiness. In contrast, in predominantly collectivist cultures, people rely more on social cues or other people's responses in making this judgment (Suh et al., 2008). In any event, in both individualistic and collectivistic cultures alike, other people can greatly influence our evaluation of personal happiness.

Fifth, the *expectation* view refers to the goals that the individual held in the past and the degree to which that has accomplished these goals. Happiness depends less on material conditions or other's feedback, and more on what we expect from our lives. If your experiences today match or exceed your expectations yesterday, then you feel happy. Of course, our expectations can change. When life is getting better, expectations may also tend to increase, thus increasing our dissatisfaction. In this scenario, the better the outcomes we expect, the less happy we become, if these expectations are not met. On the other hand, if we lower our expectations, the happier we are likely to become.

Sixth, the *biological–genetic* view suggests that the degree of happiness that people feel (or don't feel) depends to some extent on their genetic and biological makeup. The brain and the body are responsible for pleasant sensations, and some people are predisposed to have more of such sensations than others. Evolutionary psychology maintains that happiness is a temporary state that organisms try to achieve. Accordingly, it is quite normal for individuals to remain mostly dissatisfied, since in the process of survival they are always striving to achieve more (Harari, 2014). In sum, although unhappiness is somewhat biologically predetermined, some individuals could be happier than others due to their genetic makeup.

Seventh, the *spiritual* view emphasizes the importance of inner factors and the search for the higher power which resides within the individual. Philosophers, religious scholars, pundits, and social scientists in numerous cultures and regions have pondered, discussed, and debated the ephemeral nature of our sensations and emotions. For example, Buddhist and Hindu teachings, as well as many philosophers of ancient Greece, Rome, Central Asia, and China, consistently make references to an individual becoming happy and sustaining that happiness only after turning to their inner resources. Unpleasant sensations in the body can unpredictably come and go. Yesterday's source of happiness may become today's source of pain. People we love may depart. Therefore, the path to true and sustainable happiness lies in circumscribing the influence of the external world and instead cultivating inner wisdom and the introspective mind (Harari, 2014).

Eighth, psychologists working within the *humanistic* perspective embrace other views on happiness and suggest their own version of how people become and remain happy. Although there are differences within the humanist tradition, the most significant similarities can be summarized as follows:

- It is quite possible that we are born with a biological propensity or temperament to experience certain emotional states, from depression and anxiety to happiness and contentment. It is also possible that variables such as material possessions, social protection, life circumstances, and comparisons to other people can bring either distress or joy to us. Yet joy, a passing emotion, is not necessarily the same thing as a *state* of happiness. Happiness is a condition of mind individuals can control. Stated differently, happiness can be learned and achieved.
- A second core idea of the humanistic perspective refers to social and interpersonal engagement. Contrary to some religious teachings – namely, those that encourage

self-reflection coupled with detachment and self-isolation – the humanistic perspective encourages interpersonal action (*help*!), critical thinking (*think*!), and participation in social affairs (*engage*!). The humanist perspective is rooted in the modern view that scientific knowledge, reasoning, rationality, empiricism, and skepticism, have profoundly changed the way individuals perceive morality, justice, and happiness (Shermer, 2015; Lyubomirsky, 2007). Findings indicate, for example, that happy, productive individuals are more often involved in complex activities, which, in turn, make them feel better about themselves and increase their self-esteem (Csíkszentmihályi, 1997).

• A third core idea uniting humanists concerns positive feedback. We, as individuals, seek positive feedback about ourselves. This feedback should be consistent. There is nothing wrong with encouragement and praise. People often turn to Barnum-like horoscopes (see discussion in Chapter 2) for this reason: to receive validation. Like in a well-wishing tarot reading, the happier the assessment, the more likely we are to believe it, and the more likely we are to be happy (Konnikova, 2014). Serving as a chain reaction, positive assessments encourage optimism, optimism stimulates joy, and joy contributes to more happiness.

Self-growth (to be discussed in Chapter 7) is one of the key features of the humanistic perspective's approach to personality. Self-growth is difficult to achieve without dedication and perseverance to work toward the goals we have set for ourselves. From this theoretical perspective, individuals can achieve happiness through self-growth.

Cross-cultural psychology research supports the beliefs of ancient philosophies, that happiness is often based on our own ability to maintain a positive attitude. Studies also corroborate the Buddhist view that many people feel unhappy because they choose the wrong goals in life; specifically, they may mistakenly assume that a desirable job, gobs of money, and material possessions will, inevitably, make them happy (Wallace & Shapiro, 2006). Of course, happiness may be enhanced by these material items – but it is unlikely to last long. Enduring happiness is an emotional state initiated and sustained by the individual. For example, Davidson and colleagues (2003) found that some meditation practices were associated with significantly greater activity in the left prefrontal cortex of the brain – which is associated with positive emotion.

Happiness is also a useful predictor for longevity and health. Angela Bryan experimentally demonstrated that optimism is an important factor contributing to healthy habits (Bryan et al., 2004). People who believe they will become healthier tend to achieve more positive results, compared to dour pessimists. David Myers has also found empirical evidence in support of the positive impact of our spiritual beliefs on good health (Myers, 2008). Moreover, Sonja Lyubomirsky (2007, 2014) has demonstrated that, in addition to biological factors and lucky circumstances affecting our well-being, people also have the capacity to enhance and manage their happiness themselves. In short, both Western psychology and Buddhism exemplify that lasting happiness can be obtained through psychological training and determination, as opposed to stimulus-driven pleasures (Wallace & Shapiro, 2006).

EXERCISE 6.2

Tietelbaum and Geiselman (1997) examined cross–race emotion recognition for white and black faces with participants from four racial and ethnic groups: Whites, Blacks, Latinos, and Asians. The researchers found that same–race identifications tend to be more accurate than cross–race assessments. In other words, people from the same ethnic or racial groups had a tendency to evaluate pictorial emotions and moods more accurately than people from other social groups. It was also shown that a pleasant mood increased accuracy of facial recognition within same ethnic groups participants. The study also found Latino and Asian participants had less difficulty recognizing emotions on white faces than on black faces.

Question: The authors believe that these results could have implications for everyday life situations. Can you think of some?

CHAPTER SUMMARY

1. Classic theories of emotion provide little empirical evidence of cultural influences on emotional experiences. Trying to clarify the impact of the cultural factor on human emotions, cross-cultural psychologists have pursued at least two theoretical models. According to one, human emotions are universal, and culture has a limited impact on them. The other view represents an assumption about the cultural origin and cultural specificity of emotion. Supporters of the universality of human emotion argue that similar emotions exist in all cultures, and all emotions have a similar underlying physiological mechanism.

2. Compelling arguments about similarities in human emotion arrive from numerous studies on consistent cross-cultural similarities in emotion recognition and in the way people name emotions across different cultures and languages. Supporters of cultural specificity of emotion suggest that concrete emotional realities vary significantly from culture to culture. Differences in the expression of emotional behavior, linguistic variety in the labeling of emotions, and distinct socialization practices are all taken as evidence for the culture-specific origin of human emotions. According to this view, people learn how to feel and interpret other people's affects. This learning of emotional experience is related to the culture from which it originates.

3. Emotions can be seen as similar or different because we often perceive, analyze, and think about them from different points of view. If we limit our analysis of human emotion to the question of whether or not an emotion is expected to occur, we will find many cross-cultural similarities among human feelings. We have to pay special attention to the particular level of abstraction on which emotions are described. Moreover, any emotion may be culturally similar or cross-culturally different, depending on the level of generalization chosen for description.

4. Perhaps many similarities in emotions are likely to be found when they are described at a high level of generality or abstraction. An emphasis in one's observations on specific emotional characteristics would perhaps highlight cultural differences.

5. It is useful to understand emotion as a multi-componential process. It generally includes the following components: preceding event, physiological response, assessment, expressive behavior, and change in some element of cognitive functioning. Cross-culturally, specific types of elicitors mark basic emotions. Despite tremendous individual variations, there are some cultural norms and conditions that regulate emotional experience. Some cultural differences may still be found in the different degrees to which certain emotional responses are tolerated or valued. Human emotional expression is generally acquired in the process of socialization. Cultural differences may result in differences in emotion-related cognitive processes. The prevalence of one particular emotion or of certain ways of experiencing an emotion can affect people's specific attitudes, beliefs, and even views on life. For example, disgust is associated with cultural requirements to reject certain foods or avoid particular situations related to eating. Once accepted, these requirements are supported by a powerful emotion and thus become less subject to temptation or modification.

6. Human beings have the potential to experience the same basic emotions. However, our cultural differences and subsequent socialization practices encourage us to experience particular emotions and suppress others and be emotionally involved in particular issues to which other people remain indifferent. Therefore, psychologists should gain knowledge about cultural norms, display rules, and specific and universal antecedents of various emotions and examine them within particular cultural contexts.

KEY TERMS

Anger Emotion of displeasure aroused by one's perception of being threatened, interfered with, and/or overt (explicit) or covert (hidden) activities involving wrongdoing, attack, or offense.

Display rules Patterns of emotional expression considered appropriate within a particular culture, age, or social group.

Emotion An evaluative response (positive or negative feeling) that includes some combination of physiological arousal, subjective experience, and behavioral or emotional expression.

Emotion recognition The process of identification, description, and explanation of an emotional expression.

Evaluations of emotions An individual assessment of emotions according to certain criteria or principles.

Feeling rules Particular cultural rules about how to feel in particular situations.

Preceding events The environmental circumstances and individual reactions that have a strong impact on particular emotional experiences.

Stress Perception of a continuous challenge to a person's capacity to adapt to inner and outer demands.

REFERENCES

Abu-Lughod, L. (1986). *Veiled sentiments*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Albas, D. C., McCluskey, K. W., & Albas, C. A. (1976). Perception of the emotional content of speech. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *7*, 481–490.

Allodi, F. A. (1991). Assessment and treatment of torture victims. *The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disorders*, *179*, 4–11.

Aune, R., & Aune, K. (1994). The influence of culture, gender, and relational status on appearance management. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *25*(*2*), 258–272.

Averill, J. (1982). *Anger and aggression: An essay on emotion*. New York: Springer-Verlag.

Beard, M. (2014). *Laughter in ancient Rome: On joking, tickling, and cracking up (Sather Classical Lectures)*. Los Angeles, CA: UCLA Press.

Beck, A. (1991). Cognitive therapy: A 30-year retrospective. *American Psychologist*, *46*, 368–375.

Bemak, F., & Chung, R. C.-Y. (2008). Counseling disaster survivors: Implications for cross-cultural counseling. In P. B. Pedersen, J. Draguns, W. Lonner, & J. Trimble (Eds.), *Counseling across cultures* (6th ed., pp. 325–340). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Birdwhistell, R. L. (1970). *Kinesics and context*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Philadelphia Press.

Blok, A. (1981). Rams and billy-goats: A key to the Mediterranean code of honor. *Man*, *16*, 427–440.

Bodas, J., & Ollendick, T. (2005). Test anxiety: A cross-cultural perspective. *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review*, *8*(1), 65–88.

Borod, J. (1992). Interhemispheric and intrahemispheric control of emotion: A focus on unilateral brain damage. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, *60*, 339–348.

Boucher, J., & Brandt, M. (1981). Judgment of emotion: American and Malay antecedents. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *12*(3), 272–283.

Bowlby, J. (1982). *Attachment* (Vol. I). New York: Basic Books.

Brandt, M. E., & Boucher, J. D. (1985). Judgment of emotions from antecedent situations in three cultures. In I. R. Lagunes & Y. H. Poortinga (Eds.), *From a different perspective: Studies of behavior across cultures* (pp. 348–362). Lisse, the Netherlands: Swets & Zeitlinger.

Briggs, J. L. (1970). *Never in anger: Portrait of an Eskimo family*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Brody, L., & Hall, J. A. (1993). Gender and emotion. In M. Lewis & J. Haviland (Eds.), *Handbook of emotions* (pp. 447–460). New York: Guilford Press.

Bryan, A., Aiken, L. S., & West, S. G. (2004). HIV/STD risk among incarcerated adolescents: Optimism about the future and self-esteem as predictors of condom use self efficacy. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, *34*, 912–936.

Butler, E. A., Lee, T. L., & Gross, J. J. (2009). Does expressing your emotions raise or lower your blood pressure? The answer depends on cultural context. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *40*(3), 510–517.

Cannon, W. B. (1927). The James-Lange theory of emotions: A critical examination and an alternative theory. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, *39*, 106–124.

Cannon, W. B. (1932). *The wisdom of the body*. New York: W.W. Norton.

Chen, S., & Zhou, Q. (2018). Cultural values, social status, and Chinese American immigrant parents' emotional expressivity. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *50*(3), 381–395.

Clore, G. L., Schwarz, N., & Conway, M. (1994). Affective causes and consequences of social information processing. In R. S. Wyer & T. K. Strull (Eds.), *Handbook of social cognition* (Vol. 1, pp. 323–417). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Consedine, N., & Magai, C. (2002). The uncharted waters of emotion: Ethnicity, trait emotion and emotion expression in older adults. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Gerontology*, *17*(1), 71–100.

Csíkszentmihályi, M. (1997). *Finding flow: The psychology of engagement with everyday life*. New York: Basic Books.

Curtis, V. (2011). Why disgust matters. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London*, *366*(1583), 3478–3490.

Darwin, C. (1979). *The expression of the emotions in man and animals*. New York: Philosophical Library. (Originally published in 1872.)

Davidson, R. (1992). Emotion and affective style: Hemispheric substances. *Psychological Science*, *3*, 39–43.

Davidson, R. J., Kabat-Zinn, J., Schumacher, J., Rosenkranz, M., Muller, D., Santorelli, S. F., et al. (2003). Alterations in brain and immune function produced by mindfulness meditation. *Psychosomatic Medicine*, *65*, 564–570.

Drob, V., Tasso, A., & Grippo, R. (2016). Attitudes toward psychotherapy among immigrant Russian-speaking Jews from the former Soviet Union. *The Counseling Psychologist*, *44*(6), 921–941.

Edelman, R., Asendroff, J., Contarello, A., Zammuner, V., Georgas, J., & Villanueva, C. (1989). Self-reported expression of embarrassment in five European cultures. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *20*(4), 357–371.

Ekman, P. (1980). *The face of man*. New York: Garland Press.

Ekman, P. (1982). *Emotion in the human face*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Ekman, P. (1994). Strong evidence of universals in facial expression: A reply to Russell's mistaken critique. *Psychological Bulletin*, *115*, 268–278.

Ekman, P., & Friesen, W. V. (1969). The repertoire of nonverbal behavior: Categories, origins, usage and coding. *Semiotica*, *1*, 49–98.

Ekman, P., & Friesen, W. V. (1975). *Unmasking the face*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Ekman, P., & Friesen, W. V. (1978). *The facial action coding system*. Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press.

Ekman, P., Friesen, W. V., O'Sullivan, M., Diacoanni-Tarlatris, I., Krause, R., Pitcarin, T., et al. (1987). Universals and cultural differences in the judgments of facial expressions of emotion. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *17*, 124–129.

Ekman, P. (2016). What scientists who study emotion agree about. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, *11*(1), 31–34.

Ekman, P., Levenson, R., & Friesen, W. (1983). Autonomic nervous system activity distinguishes between emotions. *Science*, *221*, 1208–1210.

El Zahhar, N., & Hocevar, D. (1991). Cultural and sexual differences in test anxiety, trait anxiety, and arousability: Egypt, Brazil, and the United States. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *22*(2), 238–249.

Elfenbein, H., & Ambady, N. (2002). Is there an in-group advantage in emotion recognition? *Psychological Bulletin*, *128*(2), 243–249.

Elfenbein, H., Mandal, M., Ambady, N., Harizuka, S., & Kumar, S. (2002). Cross-cultural patterns in emotion recognition: Highlighting design and analytical techniques. *Emotion*, *2*(1), 75–84.

Elfenbein, H. A., & Ambady, N. (2003). When familiarity breeds accuracy: Cultural exposure and facial emotion recognition. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *85*, 276–290.

Ellsworth, P. (1994). Senses, culture, and sensibility. In S. Kitayama & H. Markus (Eds.), *Emotion and culture: Empirical studies of mutual influence* (pp. 23–50). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Engelmann, J. B., & Pogosyan, M. (2013). Emotion perception across cultures: The role of cognitive mechanisms. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *4*, 118. www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2013.00118/full

Fang, X., Sauter, D., & Van Kleef, G. (2017). Seeing mixed emotions: The specificity of emotion perception from static and dynamic facial expressions across cultures. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *49*(1), 130–148.

Fiske, S. (2010). Envy up, scorn down: How comparison divides us. *American Psychologist*, *65*(8), 688–706.

Frenzel, A., Thrash, T., Pekrun, R., & Goetz, T. (2007). Achievement emotions in Germany and China: A cross-cultural validation of the academic emotions questionnaire—mathematics. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *38*(3), 302–309.

Frijda, N. H. (1986). *The emotions*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.

Frijda, N. H., Markam, S., Sato, K., & Wiers, R. (1995). Emotions and emotion words. In J. A. Russell, A. S. R. Manstead, J. C. Wellenkamp, & J. M. Fernandez-Dols (Eds.), *Everyday conceptions of emotion: An introduction to the psychology, anthropology and linguistics of emotion* (pp. 121–143). Dordrecht: Kluwer.

Gong, X., Wong, N., & Wang. D. (2018). Are gender differences in emotion culturally universal? Comparison of emotional intensity between Chinese and German samples. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *49*(6), 993–1005.

Gozman, L., & Edkind, A. (1992). *The psychology of post-totalitarianism in Russia*. London: Centre for Research into Communist Economies.

Guida, F., & Ludlow, L. (1989). A cross-cultural study of test anxiety. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *20*(2), 178–190.

Hansen, M., & Mendzheritskaya, J. (2017). How university lecturers' display of emotion affects students' emotions, failure attributions, and behavioral tendencies in Germany, Russia, and the United States. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *48*(5), 734–753.

Harari, Y. N. (2014, September 5). Were we happier in the stone age? *The Guardian*.

Hejmadi, A., Rozin, P., & Siegal, M. (2004). Once in contact, always in contact: Contagious essence and conceptions of purification in American and Hindu Indian children. *Developmental Psychology*, 40(4), 467–476.

Herman, J. L. (1992). *Trauma and recovery: The aftermath of violence. From domestic violence to political terror*. New York: Basic Books.

Hupka, R., Buunk, B., Falus, G., Fulgosi, A., Ortega, E., Swain, R., et al. (1985). Romantic jealousy and romantic envy: A seven-nation study. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *16*(4), 423–446.

Izard, C. E. (1969). The emotions and emotional constructs in personality and culture research. In R. B. Catell (Ed.), *Handbook of modern personality theory* (pp. 496–510). Chicago, IL: Aldine.

Izard, C. E. (1971). *The face of emotion*. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts.

Izard, C. E. (1977). *Human emotions*. New York: Plenum.

Izard, C. E. (2004). *The psychology of emotions*. New York: Springer.

James, W. (1884). What is emotion? *Mind*, *19*, 188–205.

Jenkins, A. (1995). *Psychology and African Americans* (2nd ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Johnson, F. (1993). *Dependency in Japanese socialization*. New York: New York University Press.

Jones, J. M., & Campbell, S. (2011). Cultural psychology of African Americans. *Online Readings in Psychology and Culture*, *3*(1). https://doi.org/10.9707/2307-0919.1023

Juagdan, A (2023). Unveiling the biggest medical issues facing sumo wrestlers today. *Asian Journal USA*, January 11. https://asianjournalusa.com/unveiling-the-biggest-medical-issues-facing-sumo-wrestlers-today/

Kandel, E. (2012). *The age of insight*. New York: Random House.

Keating, C. F., Mazur, A., Segall, M., Cysneiros, P. G., Divale, W. T., Kilbride, J. E., et al. (1981). Culture and perception of social dominance from facial expressions. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *40*, 615–626.

Keltner, D., Ellsworth, P. C., & Edwards, K. (1993). Beyond simple pessimism: Effects of sadness and anger on social perception. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *64*, 740–752.

Kim, H. S., & Markus, H. R. (2002). Freedom of speech and freedom of silence: An analysis of talking as a cultural practice. In R. Shweder, M. Minow, & H. R. Markus (Eds.), *Engaging cultural differences: The multicultural challenge in liberal democracies* (pp. 432–452). New York: Russell Sage.

Kitayama, S., & Markus, H. R. (1995). Culture and self: Implications for internationalizing psychology. In N. R. Goldberg & J. B. Veroff (Eds.), *The culture and psychology reader* (pp. 366–383). New York: New York University Press.

Kliger, S. (2002). Russian immigrants in America: Fears and hopes. In V. Shlapentokh & E. Shiraev (Eds.), *Fears in post-communist societies* (pp. 111–120). New York: Palgrave.

Klineberg, O. (1938). Emotional expression in Chinese literature. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, *33*, 517–520.

Kluckhohn, F., & Strodtbeck, F. (1961). *Variations in value orientation*. Evanston, IL: Row & Peterson.

Konnikova, M. (2014, April 30). I want you to know that I'm Tyrion Lannister. *The New Yorker*. www.newyorker.com/science/maria-konnikova/i-want-you-to-know-that-im-tyrion-lannister

Koopman, C. (1997). Political psychology as a lens for viewing traumatic events. *Political Psychology*, *18*(4), 831–847.

Krishnan, N. (2022). How universal are our emotions? *The New Yorker*. August 8. www.newyorker.com/magazine/2022/08/08/how-universal-are-our-emotions

Lange, C. G. (1922). The emotions: A psychophysiological study. In C. G. Lange & W. James (Eds.), *Psychology classics* (Vol. 1). Baltimore, MD: Williams & Wilkins. (Originally published in 1885.)

Lazarus, R. S. (1993). From psychological stress to the emotions: A history of changing outlooks. *Annual Review of Psychology*, *44*, 1–21.

Lebra, T. S. (1983). Shame and guilt: A psychocultural view of the Japanese self. *Ethos, 11*, 192–209.

Levy, R. I. (1973). *Tahitians: Mind and experience in the Society Islands*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Lewis, J. R., & Ozaki, R. (2009). Amae and Mardy: A comparison of two emotion terms. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *40*(6), 917–934.

Liem, R. (1997). Shame and guilt among first-and-second generation Asian Americans and European Americans. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *28*(4), 365–392.

Lin, C.-C., & Yamaguchi, S. (2011). Under what conditions do people feel face-loss? Effects of the presence of others and social roles on the perception of losing face in Japanese culture. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *42*(1), 120–124.

Lin, E., & Peterson, C. (1990). Pessimistic explanatory style and response to illness. *Behavioral Therapy and Research*, 28, 243–248.

Lutz, C. (1988). *Unnatural emotions: Everyday sentiments on a Micronesian atoll and their challenge to western theory*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Lynch, O. M. (1990). The social construction of emotion in India. In O. M. Lynch (Ed.), *Divine passions: The social construct of emotion in India* (pp. 3–34). Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Lyubomirsky, S. (2007). *The how of happiness: A scientific approach to getting the life you want*. New York: Penguin Press.

Lyubomirsky, Sonja (2014). *The myths of happiness: What should make you happy, but doesn't, what shouldn't make you happy, but does*. New York: Penguin.

Margalit, B., & Mauger, P. (1985). Aggressiveness and assertiveness. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *16*(4), 497–511.

Markham, R., & Wang, L. (1996). Recognition of emotion by Chinese and Australian children. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *27*(5), 616–643.

Markus, H. R., & Kitayama, S. (1994a). The cultural construction of self and emotion: Implications for social behavior. In S. Kitayama & H. Markus (Eds.), *Emotion and culture: Empirical studies of mutual influence* (pp. 89–130).Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Markus, H. R., & Kitayama, S. (1994b). The cultural shaping of emotion: A conceptual framework. In S. Kitayama & H. Markus (Eds.), *Emotion and culture: Empirical studies of mutual influence* (pp. 339–351).Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Marsh, A., Elfenbein, H., & Ambady, N. (2007). Separated by a common language: Nonverbal accents and cultural stereotypes about Americans and Australians. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *38*(3), 284–301.

Matsumoto, D. (1994). *People: Psychology from a cultural perspective*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Matsumoto, D., & Hwang, H. S. (2011). *Cultural display rules*. Wiley online library. https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/9781118339893.wbeccp126

Matsumoto, D., Hee Yoo, S., & Fontaine, J. (2008). Mapping expressive differences around the world: The relationship between emotional display rules and individualism versus collectivism. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *39*(1), 55–74.

Matsumoto, D., Kudoh, T., Scherer, K., & Wallbott, H. (1988). Antecedents of and reactions to emotions in the United States and Japan. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *19*(3), 267–286.

Mauro, R., Sato, K., & Tucker, J. (1992). The role of appraisal in human emotions: A cross-cultural study. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *62*, 301–317.

Mayer, J., Gasche, Y., Braverman, D., & Evans, T. (1992). Mood-congruent judgment is a general effect. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *63*, 119–132.

Mead, M. (1975). Review of Darwin and facial expression. *Journal of Communication*, *25*, 209–213.

Menand, L. (2014, January 27). The prisoner of stress. *The New Yorker*, pp. 64–68.

Menon, U., & Shweder, R. (1994). Kali's tongue: Cultural psychology and the power of shame in Orissa, India. In S. Kitayama & H. Markus (Eds.), *Emotion and culture* (pp. 241–284). Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Association.

Mesquita, B. (2022). *Between us: How cultures create emotions*. New York: Norton.

Mesquita, B., Frijda, N., & Scherer, K. (1997). Culture and emotion. In J. W. Berry, P. R. Dasen, & T. S. Saraswathi (Eds.), *Handbook of cross-cultural psychology: Basic processes and human development* (Vol. 2, pp. 255–297). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Myers, D. (2008). *A friendly letter to skeptics and atheists: Musings on why God is good and faith isn't evil*. New York: Jossey-Bass/Wiley.

Myers, F. (1979). Emotions and the self. *Ethos*, *7*, 343–370.

Nadler, A., & Ben-Shushan, D. (1989). Forty years later: Long-term consequences of massive traumatization as manifested by Holocaust survivors from the city and the kibbutz. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, *57*, 287–293.

Norasakkunkit, V., & Kalick, S. M. (2002). Culture, ethnicity, and emotional distress measures: The role of self-construal and self-enhancement. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *33*(1), 56–71.

Oishi, S., Diener, E., Scollon, C. N., & Biswas-Diener, R. (2004). Cross-situational consistency of affective experiences across cultures. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *86*, 460–472.

Oishi, S., Graham, J., Kesebir, S., & Galinha, I. C. (2013). Concepts of happiness across time and cultures. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *39*(5), 559–577. https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167213480042

Okazaki, S., Liu, J., Longworth, S., & Minn, J. (2002). Asian American-White American differences in expressions of social anxiety: A replication and extension. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, *8*(3), 234–247.

Park, E.-J., Kikutani, M., Yogo, M., Suzuki, N., & Lee, J.-H. (2018). Influence of culture on categorical structure of emotional words: Comparison between Japanese and Korean. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *49*(9), 1340–1357.

Paulmann, S., & Uskul, A. (2014). Cross-cultural emotional prosody recognition: Evidence from Chinese and British listeners, *Cognition and Emotion*, *28*(2), 230–244.

Rime, B., & Giovannini, D. (1986). The psychological patterns of reported emotional states. In K. R. Scherer, H. G. Wallbott, & A. B. Summerfield (Eds.), *Experiencing emotion: A cross-cultural study* (pp. 84–97). Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.

Rosaldo, M. Z. (1980). *Knowledge and passion: Ilongot notions of self and social life*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.

Roseman, I. J. (1991). Appraisal determinants of discrete emotions. *Cognition and Emotion*, *5*, 161–200.

Rozin, P., & Fallon, A. (1987). A perspective on disgust. *Psychological Review*, *94*(1), 23–41.

Russell, J. (1994). Is there universal recognition of emotion from facial expression? A review of cross-cultural studies. *Psychological Bulletin*, *115*, 102–141.

Russell, J. A. (1991). Culture and the categorization of emotions. *Psychological Bulletin*, *110*, 426–450.

Russell, J. A., & Yik, M. S. M. (1996). Emotion among the Chinese. In M. H. Bond (Ed.), *The handbook of Chinese psychology* (pp. 166–188). Hong Kong: Oxford University Press.

Schachter, S., & Singer, J. (1962). Cognitive, social, and psychological determinants of emotional state. *Psychological Review*, *69*, 379–399.

Scherer, K., Banse, R., & Wallbott, H. (2001). Emotion interferences from vocal expression correlate across languages and cultures. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *32*(1), 76–92.

Scherer, K. R. (1984). Toward a concept of "modal emotions." In P. Ekman & R. J. Davidson (Eds.), *The nature of emotion: Fundamental questions* (pp. 25–31). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Scherer, K. R. (2004) Ways to study the nature and frequency of our daily emotions: Reply to the commentaries on emotions in everyday life. *Social Science Information*, *43*(4), 667–689.

Scherer, K. R., & Wallbott, H. G. (1994). Evidence for universality and cultural variation of different emotional response patterning. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *66*, 310–328.

Scherer, K. R., Wallbott, H. G., Matsumoto, D., & Kudoh, T. (1988). Emotional experience in cultural context: A comparison between Europe, Japan, and the United States. In K. R. Scherer (Ed.), *Faces of emotions* (pp. 5–30). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Schimmack, U. (1996). Cultural influences on the recognition of emotion by facial expressions: Individualistic or Caucasian cultures? *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *27*(*2*), 37–50.

Serebryany, I. (2019). Russians are in fear and social anxiety, a new study reveals. *Read, Debate: Engage*. August 28. www.fairplanet.org/editors-pick/russians-in-fear-and-trembling/

Shermer, M. (2015). *The moral arc: How science and reason lead humanity toward truth, justice, and freedom*. New York: Holt.

Shiraev, E. (2015). *A history of psychology* (2nd ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Shiraev, E., & Mölder, H. (2020). Global knowledge warfare: Using strategic imagination to harness uncertainty and fear. *The Cypher Brief.* August 2020. https://bit.ly/2IfHQdp

Smith, H. (1991). *The world's religions.* San Francisco, CA: Harper.

Solomon, R. S. (1978). Emotions and anthropology: The logic of emotional world views. *Inquiry*, *21*, 181–199.

Soto, J., & Levenson, R. (2009). Emotion recognition across cultures: The influence of ethnicity on empathic accuracy and physiological linkage. *Emotion*, *9*(6), 874–884.

Spencer-Rodgers, J., Peng, K., & Wang, L. (2010). Dialecticism and the co-occurrence of positive and negative emotions across cultures. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *41*(1), 109–115.

Stephan, C. W., Stephan, W., Saito, I., & Barnett, S. (1998). Emotional expression in Japan and the United States: The nonmonolithic nature of individualism and collectivism. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *29*(6), 728–748.

Stipek, D. (1998). Differences between Americans and Chinese in the circumstances evoking pride, shame, and guilt. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *29*(5), 616–629.

Suh, E. M., Diener, E. D., & Updegraff, J. A. (2008). From culture to priming conditions: Self-construal influences on life satisfaction judgments. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *39*(1), 3–15.

Sundararajan, L. (2015). *Understanding emotion in Chinese culture: Thinking through psychology (international and cultural psychology)*. Berlin, Germany: Springer.

Takahashi, K., Oishi, T., & Shimada, M. (2017). Is ☺ smiling? Cross-cultural study on recognition of emoticon's emotion. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *48*(10), 1578–1586.

Tanaka-Matsumi, J. (1995). Cross-cultural perspectives on anger. In H. Kassinove (Ed.), *Anger disorders: Definition, diagnosis, and treatment*. Washington, DC: Taylor & Francis.

Togans, L. J., Holtgraves, T., Kwon, G., & Zelaya, T. (2021). Digitally saving face: An experimental investigation of cross-cultural differences in the use of emoticons and emoji. *Journal of Pragmatics*, *186*, 277–288.

Triandis, H. (1990). Cross-cultural studies of individualism-collectivism. In J. Berman (Ed.), *Nebraska Symposium on Motivation 1989*. Lincoln: Nebraska University Press.

Tsai, J., & Levenson, R. (1997). Cultural influences on emotional responding: Chinese American and European American dating couples during interpersonal conflict. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *28*(5), 600–625.

Van Bezooijen, C., Otto, S., & Heenan, T. (1983). Recognition of vocal expression of emotion: A three-nation study to identify universal characteristics. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *14*(4), 387–406.

Varadarajan, T. (2021). How science lost the public's trust. *The Wall Street Journal.* July 23. www.wsj.com/articles/covid-china-media-lab-leak-climate-ridley-biden-censorship-coronavirus-11627049477

Vekker, L. (1978). *Psikhicheskie protsessy [Psychological processes]* (Vol. 2). Leningrad: Leningrad State University Press.

Wallace, B. A., & Shapiro, S. L. (2006). Mental balance and well-being: Building bridges between Buddhism and Western psychology. *American Psychologist*, *61*(7), 690–701.

Wallbott, H. G., & Scherer, K. R. (1986). How universal and specific is emotional experience? Evidence from 27 countries on five continents. *Social Science Information*, *25*, 763–795.

Wallis, C. (1965). *The treasure chest*. New York: Harper & Row.

Wang, K., Hoosain, R., Lee, T. M. C., Meng, Y., Fu, J., & Yang, R. (2006). Perception of six basic emotional facial expressions by the Chinese. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *37*, 623–629.

Wilkins, R., & Gareis, E. (2006). Emotion expression and the locution "I love you": A cross-cultural study. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, *30*, 51–75.

Williams, Y., Kino, J., Goebert, D., Hishinuma, E., Miyamoto, R., Anzai, N., et al. (2002). A conceptual model of cultural predictors of anxiety among Japanese American and part-Japanese American adolescents. *Cultural Diversity & Ethnic Minority Psychology*, *8*(4), 320–333.

World Happiness Report. (2019). http://worldhappiness.report/ed/2019/ (accessed March 31, 2019).

7

CHAPTER 7
MOTIVATION AND BEHAVIOR

The Irish poet and playwright Oscar Wilde (1854–1900) once quipped, "I can resist everything except temptation." If you were really thirsty, would you choose to receive a half-glass of water *now*, or get as much water as you want after *waiting* for 30 minutes? Would you opt to receive an inexpensive smartphone as a gift today, or obtain the newest and most expensive iPhone a year from today? Would you prefer a $1,000 prize right now, or a $7,000 prize the year after you graduate? Put more broadly, are you the type of person who is more likely to succumb to your immediate impulses, or to exercise patience when faced with such choices?

———

IMPULSE GRATIFICATION

Impulse gratification (IG) is a well-known psychological phenomenon. Philosophers and religious scholars have discussed and debated impulse gratification for centuries. Which is more important: immediate small gains or future big returns? Most mature thinkers would recommend patience. Poets masterfully expressed the virtues of will and waiting. About 3,000 years ago, the Greek author Homer immortalized Odysseus, the famous traveler, who overcame the powerful lure of the beautiful yet deadly sirens; 2,000 years ago, Chinese scholars and European philosophers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries wrote about restraint and moderation, and denounced impulsivity and the immediate gratification of desires. Being a "moral person" was almost always meant to include self-controlling.

Science has provided significant empirical data on IG. In the now-famous "marshmallow experiment" at Stanford University conducted some 50 years ago, researchers asked children, individually, if they wanted to eat a marshmallow now or wait 15 minutes and then eat two. Some children chose to wait; others gobbled down the marshmallow immediately. Many years later, the study revealed that those who waited typically achieved better grades and higher SAT scores, made more money, had a lower body–mass index, were less likely to abuse drugs, had fewer behavioral problems, and showed greater psychological well-being (Mischel et al., 1972). Another study showed that prison inmates with low IG control were more likely to commit new crimes and return to prison than inmates with high IG control (Malouf et al., 2012). In Sweden, children with lower IG control were 32 percent more likely to be convicted of a crime as adults than the group with higher IG control (Akerlund et al., 2014). These and many other cross-cultural studies show that the ability to control one's own impulses is an important personality feature correlated with a host of other individual qualities and useful behaviors.

How does impulse gratification develop? Is it rooted mostly in our biology or in our cultural experiences? Certainly, biological factors are important. For example, high and low levels of IG control are associated with the prefrontal cortex, which is responsible for logic and patience, and the ventral striatum, a brain structure that is likely to regulate reward mechanisms (Casey et al., 2011).

Yet impulse control is not a person's destiny determined by genetic factors alone. Nature only sets the general course – not a predetermined outcome. Cross-cultural studies show, for example, that economic uncertainty can significantly affect IG. People who are not sure about their income tend to be more impulsive than those who grow up knowing they are financially secure (Chiraag & Griskevicius, 2014). Poverty is a factor too. Poor children, in particular, showed a tendency for immediate rewards compared to other children (Mischel, 2014). Education is another factor contributing to impulse control: Being in school leads people to value their future more and develop patience (Perez-Arce, 2011). Family cultural practices also play a role. Asian immigrants in North America tend to emphasize impulse control in their children more than other families who were studied (Baumeister & Tierney, 2012, p. 195).

We may be born with certain psychological predispositions for stronger willpower and impulse control, but our social and cultural experiences contribute as well. We learn from parents and teachers. We learn from cultural customs. We absorb from our own unique experiences. Our lives are often a long journey of discovering the value of waiting versus getting what we want immediately.

Where do people find resources to patiently pursue their goals and wait for the best opportunities in the process? Is it their family? Religion? Rational calculations? Individual desires or collective goals of their communities? (In this regard, please see our discussion of multiple causation in Chapter 2.) To survive and thrive, we all need to breathe, eat, and avoid unnecessary pain and discomfort. But how do we learn about compassion, greed, aggression, and love – such seemingly dissimilar inner mechanisms of our behavior? How does culture influence our motivation?

Motivation is a condition – usually an internal one – that initiates, activates, or maintains the individual's behavior. The nature of human motivation is the subject of endless discussions and continuous attempts to find a universal theory that explains it. Evolutionary psychologists, for example, generally believe that natural factors best explain many aspects of human behavior. The social sciences claim the nature of human motivation is mostly social or economic. Psychologists have contributed to various theories of motivation by proposing explanations for its major psychological mechanisms. A critical examination of these approaches provides cross-cultural psychologists with valuable ideas that can be used to analyze specific kinds of human motivation.

A GLANCE INTO EVOLUTION

According to the evolutionary view, due to genetic variations, some organisms are more likely to survive than others under specific conditions. Those who survive pass on

their "advantageous" genes, and thus some individual features and adaptive habits are transmitted to their offspring. Over many generations, genetic patterns that promote survival become dominant. For instance, hunters become successful seekers and killers of animals, and gatherers become excellent finders and growers of berries, roots, and fruit. The struggle for survival within the human species motivates people to compete for scarce resources. Individuals who are skillful competitors and fit for the struggle will succeed and prosper. The unfit – or those who lack the motivation to compete – will fail. Life is unjust; but who says it should be so, as some claim? (Summer, 1970). Survival skills can be individual and collective. For example, Baldwin (1991) suggested that the principle of collective survival has been part of the psychology of African people facing Western policies of colonialism. Yet a good critical thinker would be likely to suggest this explanatory principle can be applied not only to African culture, but also to many other ethnic groups or social groups that have been oppressed or continue living under oppression.

Today's evolutionary psychologists explain a diverse array of cultural features – including people's tendencies for curiosity and shyness, friendship and aggression, propensity to lie and suspiciousness of strangers, openness or guardedness to new experiences, and many other behaviors – mostly by means of underlying evolutionary mechanisms. The primary assumption of evolutionary psychology is that most patterns of human behavior have an evolutionary function.

The logic of evolutionary theory can be illustrated with several examples. Let's turn, for instance, to a comparison of the similarities and differences between men and women as large cultural groups. Throughout history, especially during the early stages of human civilization, the *alpha males* – as the strongest and most aggressive individuals – were more successful at reproduction than weaker males. To survive, men in the past had to develop habits of aggressive and dominant behaviors to successfully compete against one another. Thus, strong, dominant men created a particular culture to benefit the most competitive. As a direct consequence, today men dominate the upper echelons of business and politics. Yet men, as a group, also suffer because of evolutionary factors: Far more men than women die in on-the-job accidents, are detained for crime, and are killed as combatants on the battlefield. For these and other reasons, men's life expectancy is consistently lower than women's: specifically, between five and seven years, depending on a country's conditions and several other social factors (Thornton, 2019).

The evolutionary approach to human motivation raises some interesting ideas, yet it generally fails to explain the diversity of human motivation in different contexts. It also overlooks the influence of individual choice and reason. In contrast to evolutionary theories, most social sciences emphasize the crucial role of social factors in determining individual motivation.

SOCIAL SCIENCES APPROACHES

Consider the views of the sociologist Max Weber (1968/1922). Weber drew a distinction between two types of societies: preindustrial (older, traditional) and industrial

(newer, nontraditional). People in preindustrial societies are inseparable from traditions and customs. In these societies, people's desires and actions are viewed as appropriate and inappropriate on the basis of their links – or lack thereof – to the existing customs and rules. For example, married couples in traditional societies are unlikely to pursue divorce because it destroys the traditional family. Modern societies, on the contrary, endorse rationality as a pillar of human motivation. People deliberately assess the most efficient ways of accomplishing a particular goal. If two spouses decide that they cannot live together any longer, then they break up their marriage. Why? Because this act serves their best interests. In such cases, reason tends to overcome emotion; critical thinking often replaces gut instinct and intuition; and assessments of gains and losses tend to replace customs.

Other social scientists pay attention to economic factors and social inequality, or view consumerism as the main driving force behind human behavior (Stearns, 2006; Marcuse, 1964). Economic factors, however, cannot explain many aspects of human motivation. For example, social equality, unfortunately, does not invariably end aggression and violence. Similarly, economic inequality does not necessarily cause conflict among people. People often find ways to cope with societal challenges and new professional roles. A study of women in power in China and the United States showed that although they both faced significant obstacles in the workplace and in their homes, they integrated their work and family roles in ways that enabled them to harmonize both (Cheung & Halpern, 2010).

Abundance or scarcity of resources profoundly affects human behavior across cultures and times. Research shows that poverty, for instance, is distinctly linked to a shorter life span and poorer health compared to people living in better economic conditions (Canudas-Romo, 2018). The poor across the globe tend to live in more dangerous environments and are more likely to be exposed to diseases and other risks than those who are not poor (Wairaven, 2013). Malnutrition in early childhood (particularly during the first year of life), childhood infections, social instability, and exposure to physical injuries – all make chronic and disabling diseases more likely in adult life, causing substantial changes in individual behavior (Banerjee & Duflo, 2019). Climate and environmental changes both have a tremendous impact on the individual. Harsher climates, compared to mild ones, involve a wide variety of risks and challenges, including severe food shortages, limited diets, air pollution, unclean water, and resulting health problems. People living in regions exposed to harsh climatic conditions persistently face greater risks compared to people living in safer environmental conditions (Van de Vliert, 2006).

The next section addresses four major psychological theories of motivation: drive and arousal, psychodynamic, humanistic, and learning.

TWO UNIVERSAL MECHANISMS OF MOTIVATION: DRIVE AND AROUSAL THEORY

An internal aroused condition that directs an organism to satisfy some physiological need is called a drive. One of the central concepts of motivational theories is **need**, which is a

motivated state caused by physiological or psychological deprivation (such as lack of food, water, or safety). According to drive theories, people around the world come to value what they do not have; for example, those who are hungry are especially likely to value food (Peng et al., 1997). The goal of the individual's behavior is to attain a state of stability or balance within him or herself. Stimuli, such as hunger or pain, energize and initiate our behavior. Needs are divided into two categories: *biological* and *social*. Biological needs direct human behavior toward self-preservation, such as the need to eat to survive. Social needs direct people toward establishing and maintaining relationships with other people. The organism motivated by a need is said to be in a *drive state*. Once in a drive state, humans – as well as other living creatures – exhibit goal-directed behavior to seek food, fight against enemies, build shelters, develop useful skills, and so on (Wagner, 2018; Murray, 1938). The pressure of poverty can generate a need for financial security, causing a person to work harder, go to school, or learn valuable skills (Van de Vliert, 2007). Influenced by a different set of circumstances, another individual chooses a violent confrontation with the society that the person believes is responsible for his or her poverty.

Arousal theories of motivation suggest that people seek to maintain optimal levels of arousal by actively changing their exposure to arousing stimuli (Yerkes, 1911). Unlike hunger and thirst, the lack of sensory or other experience does not result in physiological imbalance. Yet, both human beings and animals regularly seek sensory stimulation: A man from St. Petersburg stops by a local park to play a game of chess, an Uzbek woman spends time at a local teahouse for a chat, a student from Boston spends his money on a ticket to attend a Red Sox game. Each culture offers its own repertoire of activities which people are motivated to seek to maintain optimal levels of arousal (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Studies have lent support for arousal theories. To take one example, consider procrastination: putting off impending tasks to a later time. People procrastinate for various reasons; further, perhaps not surprisingly, they tend to be aware of the consequences of their procrastination. Academic procrastination is very common among college students: nearly half of all students regularly procrastinate (Hailikari et al., 2021). In one study, more than 1,000 men and women from six nations (Spain, Peru, Venezuela, the United Kingdom, Australia, and the United States) completed questionnaires about their procrastination. Results indicated no significant sex or nationality differences either within or between nations. Overall, almost 30 percent of the respondents reported about their tendency to procrastinate. Half of them procrastinate for arousal reasons: They believe that they achieve better results when working under pressure. The other half are avoidant procrastinators, in that they do not perform well under the pressure of deadlines. These findings suggest that there are some common, cross-cultural psychological mechanisms of procrastination (Ferrari et al., 2007).

THE POWER OF THE UNCONSCIOUS: PSYCHODYNAMIC THEORY

The central concept underlying all psychodynamic theories is the unconscious mind. This is the level of the psyche that contains the thoughts, feelings, and memories that exert

an influence on us without our awareness, but which nevertheless significantly drive our behavior. In its original form, Sigmund Freud (1938) created the theory of *psychoanalysis*, which encompasses many of the terms and concepts with which you might already be familiar, in particular the *id*, *ego*, and *superego*. The id is initially free of cultural influences and consists of our inborn biological drives toward immediate gratification and hedonism in accordance with the pleasure principle (i.e., the need to seek pleasure and avoid pain). As the child develops, these instincts toward life (sexual drives) as well as death (aggressive drives) become increasingly restrained with the emergence of the superego, which consists of our moral sense of right and wrong: Put simply, our conscience is rooted in personal and cultural experiences. The superego is formed by interactions primarily with our family caregivers, but also with broader society as well. Whereas the id is inborn and essentially the same across cultures, the superego is transmitted through direct experience with the environment, and therefore varies from culture to culture. It is the role of the ego to navigate between the demands of the id, the restrictions of the superego, and the realities of the world.

There is no doubt that Freud's psychoanalytic theory has exerted tremendous influence on the fields of psychology, philosophy, literature, and the arts. However, it has suffered from the absence of any substantive body of empirical evidence to support its contentions. It has also been criticized for lacking sufficient consideration of the social and cultural factors that shape personality. Psychoanalysis was developed primarily within the Western cultural environment, which is oriented toward individualism, rational thinking, and relatively low power distance (see Chapter 1). Psychologists have made many attempts to apply this theory to cultural and cross-cultural studies focusing on non-Western societies. For instance, back in 1929, Girindrasekhar Bose, the founder and first president of the Indian Psychoanalytical Society, wrote to Freud to emphasize some differences related to gender identity in India and Europe. He believed that Indian culture, in general, was not prone to completely separate feminine and masculine features within the individual (Kakar, 1989). Subsequently, there have been psychoanalytic studies of African witchcraft, social customs among Australian Aboriginal natives, the impact of white society on African Americans, and the power of self-restraint in Buddhist cultural communities of Burma, Cambodia, Laos, and Thailand (Tori & Bilmes, 2002). These studies gave rise to a very important observation: In traditional cultures, the structure of family ties and gender relations historically are substantially different from Western models, and thus the assumptions of psychoanalysis do not necessarily generalize to our understanding of traditional families.

A number of theorists who were influenced by Freud's original model of psychoanalysis each developed their own unique variations of his approach. These include Carl Jung (discussed below), Erik Erikson (to be examined in Chapter 8), Alfred Adler, Karen Horney, and many others. As a group, these approaches are referred to as *psychodynamic* theories, and they all still stress the centrality of unconscious motivation. The most recent variant, *object relations theory*, maintains that the most fundamental motive in life is our need to seek and maintain satisfying interpersonal relationships – which stands in stark contrast to Freud's conceptualization of the hedonistic id.

The Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung (1875–1961), an early devotee of psychoanalysis, was among the first to criticize Freud's ethnocentric worldview of Western psychology. Jung directly challenged the widespread opinion that European perspectives and values were "superior" to Asian or African types of thinking and experience. Jung wryly pointed out that Europe could be viewed as just a peninsula on the Asian continent. According to Jung, Europeans were in some ways actually behind other worldwide ethnic and cultural groups, whose psychological world was much richer and more complex than Europeans had supposed. Jung maintained that the Western world's almost exclusive reliance on rationality and logic precluded a much deeper and transcendent view of oneself and other cultures. As a result, he believed that psychology had much to learn by studying such areas as folklore, myths, dreams, fairy tales, and cultural artifacts. While not embracing many concepts in Jung's theory, contemporary cross-cultural psychology has largely accepted his exhortation to develop an inclusive, cross-cultural approach to psychological knowledge (Nakomuro & Kara, 2022; Shiraev, 2011).

INTRINSIC STRIVING TOWARD GROWTH: HUMANISTIC THEORY

Humanistic psychology focuses on human dignity, individual choice, and self-worth. American psychologist Abraham Maslow (1908–70), a pioneer of humanistic psychology, proposed that humans have a number of innate needs that are arranged in a hierarchy in terms of their potency (Table 7.1).

Maslow grouped these needs into five categorical levels: physiological, safety, love, esteem, and self-actualization. Once an individual has satisfied the cluster of needs at a particular level, he or she is able to progress to the next hierarchical level. In this way, people typically are not in a position to seek belonging and esteem needs until they have met their more basic needs for food, water, and shelter.

Maslow noted that as one ascends the hierarchy of needs, one becomes less animal-like and more humanistic. Once the person has adequately satisfied needs in the first four levels, this person then is able to fulfill the highest-order needs, namely, to actualize his or her unique potential. According to Maslow (1970), once people enter the realm of

Table 7.1 Abraham Maslow Hierarchy of Needs

Level 5:	*Self-Actualization Needs*
Level 4:	*Esteem Needs*
Level 3:	*Belonging and Love Needs*
Level 2:	*Safety Needs*
Level 1:	*Physiological Needs*

Source: based on A. Maslow, *Motivation and Personality*, 1970.

self-actualization, they become qualitatively different from those who are still attempting to meet their more basic needs. The self-actualizing person's life is governed by the search for "being-values" (*B-values*), such as truth, goodness, beauty, wholeness, justice, and meaningfulness. Along similar lines, Carol Rogers (1959), another American pioneer in the field of humanistic psychology, proposed that human beings are born with a universal drive to grow, flourish, and string toward reaching their full potential. Rogers termed this innate drive the *actualizing tendency*, which he believed acts as the motivation force for all behavior.

In contrast to most personality theorists preceding him, Maslow created his theory by studying healthy and successful people, rather than clinical cases of psychopathology. His interest in self-actualizing people began with his great admiration for Max Wertheimer, one of the founders of Gestalt psychology, and Ruth Benedict, the renowned cultural anthropologist. After discovering that these two individuals had many characteristics in common, Maslow began to search for others with the same qualities. The group that he finally isolated for more detailed study included Abraham Lincoln, Thomas Jefferson, Albert Einstein, Eleanor Roosevelt, Albert Schweitzer, Benedict Spinoza, Adlai Stevenson, and Martin Buber.

Based on his informal research, Maslow developed a composite, impressionistic profile of an optimally functioning, mature, and healthy human being. Maslow concluded that self-actualizing persons exhibit a number of similar characteristics, including an accurate perception of reality, openness to experience, strong ethical awareness, creativeness, and a philosophical (rather than hostile) sense of humor (see critical thinking box below for more detailed description).

One of the distinct features of a self-actualizing individual is the occurrence of *peak experiences* – periodic and profound episodes of happiness, optimism, inner harmony, and creativity. These are remarkably happy moments of discovery, understanding, accomplishment, or intimacy (Maslow, 1962). While it is possible for non–self-actualizing people to have peak experiences, such experiences are likely to be infrequent for them. While different traditions of meditation – common for instance in Hindu or Buddhist traditions – also prepare the practicing individual to reach these pure moments of joy, such meditation techniques generally encourage self-focus and individual detachment from the outside world. Although peak experiences similarly involve internal activation, they typically involve other people and consistent social interactions. Peak experiences are self-reinforcing: They afford people better self-understanding and, once people having achieved better self-understanding, they become motivated to seek more peak experiences again (see discussion of the critical thinking principle of bidirectional causation in Chapter 2).

Years after Maslow described peak experiences, his ideas found support in the work of Hungarian–American psychologist Mihaly Csíkszentmihályi (1934–2001) in his studies of **flow** – a state of complete concentration and joyful immersion in a situation or activity. Flow is also associated with a person's ability to find enjoyment in everyday activities

that other people may find tedious (Csíkszentmihályi, 1990). Evolutionary psychologists suggest that flow appears to be a useful evolutionary phenomenon, and people need to find pleasure or comfort in some amount of such activities (even cleaning or folding laundry). If there are some genetic mechanisms that allow particular individuals to experience joy by performing certain kinds of work, then these mechanisms are retained and passed on from one generation to the next (Csíkszentmihályi & Asakawa, 2016).

The phenomenon of flow has been recognized within many cultural and religious traditions, including those in India, Africa, the United States, Korea, China, South America, and other regions. In Japan, for example, a subjective psychological state is recognized, called *Jujitsu-kan*, which refers to a sense of fulfillment. People in Japan often use this word to describe an experience of fully and effectively functioning to the limits of their existing capacities. It is a feeling that they attach to some important, often obligatory activities. *Jujitsu-kan* resembles a sense of self-reliance, relatedness to others, and a sense of trust. Research has also shown that, in general terms, while in the West the flow experience has been typically associated mostly with external events, Eastern cultures have developed ways of experiencing flow mostly through inner experiences. In particular, the Japanese experience of flow is associated with an individual's shared standards of social harmony (Csíkszentmihályi & Asakawa, 2016).

Just because somebody has had recurrent and powerful flow experiences does not necessarily mean that the person has reached the level of self-actualization. Some people have flow experiences because they are lucky or simply because they have been able to avoid failure. Perhaps we have all noticed that good things seem to happen to some people more often than they happen to others (Baumann, 2012).

CRITICAL THINKING

MASLOW UNDER THE MICROSCOPE

Do you find Maslow's theory a valid depiction of a fully functioning person, or, rather, a reflection of Maslow's own subjective value system? Are peak experiences possible in other, non-Western cultures? Did Maslow conflate logic with ethical and moral considerations? Consider, for example, his portrayal of self-actualizing people as open, realistic, spontaneous, possessing democratic leadership traits, and accepting of self, others, and nature. Is this a complete and objective description of human fulfillment in all cultures? Or is it a *prescription* (masked as a *description*) of Maslow's own subjective ideals? Did Maslow simply select his personal heroes, mostly men – all of them Europeans or European Americans – and then offer up a composite of them in his paradigm (Smith, 1978)? How do you think cultures affect the peak experiences – periodic and profound episodes of happiness, optimism, inner harmony, and creativity?

Although the structural hierarchy of needs presented by Maslow may be appropriate for individuals of all cultures, the relative strengths of the needs appear to be culture specific. Self-preoccupation could be seen as a Western characteristic that is not so dominant in some other cultures. The Chinese hierarchy of values, for instance, historically included the promotion of interconnectedness, in contrast to the emphasis on self-development in Maslow's version. In one study, Nevis (1983) revised Maslow's hierarchy of needs and argued that one of the most basic needs of people in communist China in the 1980s was the need to belong, rather than physiological needs. Moreover, self-actualization could manifest as a devoted service to community. If a person self-actualizes by means of contributing to the group, this individual is realizing the value of collectivist self-actualization.

The concept of hierarchy of needs has an intriguing analogy in the Indian spiritual tradition. To illustrate, Hinduism introduces *kama* (pleasurable activity), *artha* (activity related to pursuit of a livelihood), and *dharma* (spiritual duty) as a hierarchy of critical guiding principles of life. However, there is no indication that Maslow knew about these ideas before he published his works on motivation (Collins, 1990).

Still, Maslow was aware of cross-cultural applications of his research. During his life, he applied some principles of Daoism – a religion, a philosophy, and lifestyle originating in China in the sixth century B.C.E. – to his research into teaching, counseling, psychotherapy, and parenting. Cross-cultural psychologists today maintain, for example, that Maslow's research into growth-centered mentorship (with an emphasis on individual progress) as a contrast to skill-centered mentorship (with a focus on specific skills only) – echoes many Daoist teachings (Hoffman & Compton, 2022).

Maslow did acknowledge that his theorizing and research on self-actualization lacked the rigor of strict empirical science. He fervently believed, however, that it was imperative to begin the process of rounding out the field of psychology by attending to "the highest capacities of the healthy and strong man as well as with the defensive maneuvers of crippled spirits" (Maslow, 1970, p. 33). Further, Maslow maintained that it would be misleading to believe that science is truly value free, since its methods and procedures are developed and utilized for human purposes.

A similar theory of motivation was formulated and empirically tested within a different cultural environment by the Soviet psychologist Arthur Petrovsky (1978), who emphasized the existence of an inner collectivist orientation in most Soviet people. An individual can fulfill maximum potential when this person accepts and internalizes the goals and values of the society. In both Chinese and Russian examples, environmental demands, socialist ideology, and traditions (like the work ethic in China or a communist moral code of behavior in the Soviet Union) advocated harmony and cooperation but not individualist determination, which is typically emphasized in the West.

SHAPING MOTIVATION: LEARNING THEORY

Learning theories, associated primarily with the behaviorist tradition in psychology, maintain that people are able to become aware of their thought patterns and therefore are

better able to control their motivation, behavior, and the conditions within which their behavior occurs. Within this framework, there are two types of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic. **Intrinsic motivation** engages people in various activities for no outward reward, except the personal pleasure and satisfaction of the activity itself. Deci (1975) suggested that people engage in such behaviors for at least two reasons: to receive cognitive stimulation, and/or to gain a sense of accomplishment, competency, and mastery over the environment. In contrast, **extrinsic motivation** comes from the external environment. Examples of extrinsic rewards include a high grade in class, praise, or acceptance from others, and monetary reward for a job well done (like a tip for good service). Such rewards can strengthen existing behaviors, provide people with information about their performance, and increase feelings of self-worth (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

But we do not learn simply by responding to positive and negative reinforcement. We are not merely automatons, at the mercy of external forces. In fact, most of our learning happens *vicariously*, that is, by observation: We see what goes on around us, we witness the consequences of others' behavior, and we learn by relating those outcomes to ourselves. (See the section later in this chapter on vicarious learning.)

In order for this type of learning to occur, we must make the assumption that some kind of internal, mental process is occurring. In other words, our learning is mediated by thinking or *cognition*. Historically, up until the middle of the twentieth century, the field of psychology was driven primarily by two schools of thought: behaviorism and psychoanalysis. Behaviorism (as embodied in the work of Ivan Pavlov, John B. Watson, and B. F. Skinner) maintained that unobservable mental processes were outside the realm of science, and therefore did not merit serious study. Psychoanalysis, as previously discussed, did take into account the idea of the mind – but mostly in terms of unobservable unconscious dynamics. In the mid-1960s, however, in a major break from both behaviorism and psychoanalysis, a new field emerged: cognitive psychology. This turn of historical events is now referred to as the "cognitive revolution." As a direct result of this paradigm shift, we now have entire bodies of research on mental processes such as memory, reasoning, language, creativity, attitude formation, cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), and much more. (See the original work of Aaron Beck, 1976, and Albert Bandura, 1976.)

For the young field cross-cultural psychology this meant turning to people's inner world and studying cognition empirically, all within the context of one's cultural environment. Cognitive theories concern themselves with many experiences in many cultural settings (Ji & Yap, 2016).

Psychologists working within the behavioral tradition hope to establish some universal scientific principles that explain behavior in terms of various learning principles across cultural settings. One's environment (including schooling, family, cultural norms) as well as internal dynamics (such as level of motivation, self-efficacy, curiosity) all are factors that influence people's adjustment to their circumstances and guide their actions.

Now that we have explored these four psychological theories of motivation – drive and arousal, psychodynamic, humanistic, and learning – let us turn to an examination of some

specific types of human motivation. First, we will analyze hunger, and then move on to achievement motivation, and last, aggressive and sexual motivation.

MAGGOT CHEESE, FISH SEMEN, AND WARTHOG ANUS: HUNGER AND CROSS-CULTURAL FOOD PREFERENCES

This much is obvious: To live, we must eat. There are no cultural exceptions. Hunger is a biological need. The body transforms food into energy for further growth and functioning. Our eagerness to eat is both pushed by a physiological state (i.e., bodily chemistry and hypothalamic activity in the brain) and also pulled by our learned responses to external stimuli. The biological nature of hunger explains many cross-cultural similarities in eating preferences. People in all cultures learn to salivate in anticipation of appealing foods. Our preferences for sweet and salty tastes tend to be genetic and universal. For most children (and many college students, too!), candy or ice cream are extremely desirable food products. However, individual experience creates specific taste preferences. For instance, when people are continuously given highly salted and spicy foods, they develop a liking for excessive salt and spices (Beauchamp, 1987). Thus, a person who grew up in New Orleans or Iran will likely consider many types of Scandinavian or North European cuisine as too "bland."

Cultural norms and traditions regulate our eating habits, determine what we consider tasty versus revolting, and establish social taboos on particular foods and food products. Arab Bedouins can eat the eye of a camel, which most Europeans would find disgusting. In some European and Asian countries, beef tongue is a delicacy, whereas for most North Americans it is grotesque. Similarly, most North Americans and Europeans refuse to eat dog meat. Meanwhile, this food choice is generally acceptable in Vietnam. Muslims eat beef, but devout Hindus wouldn't touch it. Muslims – as well as many Jews – eschew pork; but people from most other ethnic and religious groups would gladly devour it whenever presented with the opportunity. How about you? Would you care to indulge in a nice platter of maggot cheese (Italy), roasted guinea pig (Ecuador), bull testicles (Western America and Canada), fish semen (Japan), or warthog anus (Namibia)? Or how about a steaming dish of fried chicken embryos? Before you judge this last item too hastily, might you feel differently if it were referred to by its colloquial name – "scrambled eggs?" Studies show that people typically are cautious about trying novel meat-based products and foods (Pliner & Pelchat, 1991). However, with repeated exposure, our appreciation for a new taste typically increases. Studies showed that exposure to one novel food product increases our willingness to try another (Pliner, 1982; Pliner et al., 1993). (*Green Eggs and Ham*, anyone?)

WHEN HUNGER CAUSES DISTRESS: EATING DISORDERS

Eating disorders are more common in the West than they are in non–Western countries. Further, they are more common in young females in economically developed societies

(countries such as Canada, the United States, European countries, Japan, and Australia) than they are in the young females of other countries. Exact prevalence rates of these disorders are difficult to produce due to the problem of different diagnostic criteria, which we will examine in Chapter 9 (Hans, 2016; Makino et al., 2004; Castillo, 1997).

Here we will focus on two specific types of eating disorders, *anorexia nervosa* and *bulimia*, both of which can be life-threatening illnesses. Being excessively preoccupied with their body weight, people who suffer from an eating disorder (of which 80 to 90 percent tend to be females) go on starvation diets, engage in persistent food expulsion (i.e., self-induced vomiting, use of laxatives), or punishing exercises to maintain a "desirable" body weight.

Cultural norms play a significant role in whether an individual develops a preoccupation with thin-body ideals and acquires an intense fear of gaining weight (APA, 2013). In most cultures, certain aspects of the female anatomy became signals of how feminine and sexual a woman is (Habermas, 1991). For years, in Western cultures, thinness has been a major feature of the definition of attractiveness, which increases perceived femininity. Along with some psychological factors that may predispose an individual to develop an eating disorder, social factors such as cultural models of beauty, fashion trends, and peer pressure can also contribute to the formation of a self-image of being obese, fat, and unattractive (Smink et al, 2012; Thompson, 2003). In many nontraditional cultural settings, a larger, rounded form is associated with the "wife and mother" stereotype that many younger women desperately try to avoid (McGregor et al., 2022).

Despite popular misconceptions, anorexia is not a "new" disorder associated with modern times, and it does not only occur in Western countries. Although the term "anorexia" was introduced in 1874, several medical sources reveal the presence of its symptoms in people of the eighteenth century and much earlier. While researchers found evidence that both anorexia and bulimia have become more common during the twentieth century, the symptoms of anorexia have been observed in every non-Western region of the world. With the exceptions of Japan and Iran, prevalence estimates of bulimia in non-Western nations were below the range reported for Western nations, and the attempts to find evidence of bulimia in earlier historical periods have been fruitless (Keel & Klump, 2003).

GOALS AND SUCCESS: ACHIEVEMENT MOTIVATION

Throughout history, people have always striven for achievement and excellence. Consider some of the masterpieces of human creativity, like the pyramids in Egypt, ancient Incan temples, or the Eiffel tower in Paris. Turn to a sports site or app and see how athletes of different nationalities, religions, and ethnic backgrounds compete for excellence. Read the poetry of Nizami, the great son of Persia, and the novels written by literary genius Gabriel García Marquez of Colombia. Many people in the past – as well as today – have tried not just to achieve their best, but also to surpass others. **Need for achievement** is a social motivation that directs people to constantly strive for excellence, success, influence, and accomplishment.

Are some of us born with such motivation to achieve, but others are not? One of the leaders in early studies of achievement motivation, American psychologist David McClelland (1958), responded to this question with a categorical "no." He maintained that achievement motivation is essentially learned – mostly during childhood. Specifically, McClelland believed that it is acquired from parents who stress excellence and display affection and emotional rewards to their children for high levels of achievement. During the individual's life, a wide range of social and psychological factors can further influence achievement motivation. According to McClelland, if no such examples are set for the child, such individuals will not likely develop the need for achievement. Critics of McClelland's thinking emphasize that he virtually ignores any potential genetic contribution to this question. For instance, how would his theory account for situations where kids are raised in environments devoid of parental support, encouragement, affection, or role modeling, yet still go on to exhibit a powerful drive for success?

Past research in different countries has suggested the links between sociocultural norms and achievement motivation. For example, industrial managers in Czechoslovakia (when it was a unified Communist country, decades ago) were found to be considerably lower on achievement motivation than their counterparts in the United States (Krus & Rysberg, 1976). Other research found that 11- to 12-year-old children in the United States already displayed more competitive and individualistic motivation than Chinese children (China was only beginning its experimentation with capitalism during those years) of the same age (Domino, 1992). In another study, U.S. mothers repeatedly chose significantly more difficult achievement goals for their children than Mexican mothers (Madsen & Kagan, 1973). In a classic research study on motivation, McClelland (1987) analyzed children's stories in 22 cultures and the degree to which the stories showed themes of achievement motivation. Then he related these motivation levels to measures of economic development in the studied countries. Achievement motivation scores were highly correlated with economic growth of the children's countries. In other words, the greater the emphasis placed on achievement in the stories told to children in various nations, the more rapid the economic development in these nations as the children grew up. (Keep in mind, as always, that correlation does not prove causation! See Chapter 2.) In a cross-national project that involved more than 12,000 participants, Furnham and colleagues (1994) found a strong relationship between individual achievement motivation and economic growth. In particular, economic growth correlated with attitudes toward competitiveness: The stronger these attitudes, the higher the achievement motivation; the higher the achievement motivation, the greater the rate of economic growth.

Many other studies show that the correlations here are likely bidirectional (see Chapter 2), and economic development and cultural change seem to move in consistent patterns (Allen et al., 2007). For example, Japan and Hong Kong, two very economically successful countries, were the strongest long-time followers of the so-called **Confucian work dynamism**: a cultural value and practice manifested in the persistence at achieving economic goals, social stability, encouragement of prudence and savings, and promoting loyalty and trust by emphasizing shame (Hofstede & Bond, 1988). China most probably began promoting similar values in the 1990s. On the other hand, strong empirical data

suggest that individuals who grew up during a time of economic prosperity show an increasingly greater endorsement of values such as egalitarianism, harmony, and autonomy (Allen et al., 2007). Feelings of financial insecurity led people to seek strong leaders, absolute rules, and social order, while feelings of financial security drive people toward self-expression and individual gratification (Inglehart, 1997).

One of the characteristics of high–achievement motivation is *entrepreneurship*. An entrepreneur is an individual who creates a new business, bearing most of the risks and enjoying most of the rewards. In more general terms, the entrepreneur is seen as a "go getter." The trait of entrepreneurship has been shown to give rise to new ideas and initiative (Miller, 1983). Punishment generally does not promote the generation of new ideas. In addition, in families with authoritarian parents, children tended to develop a relatively low level of achievement motivation (Segall et al., 1990). More recent interdisciplinary studies show that relative wealth and individual comfort can lead to *complacency*, which refers to a person's state of self-satisfaction accompanied by the lack of achievement motivation. A paradox seems to be taking place in the lives of people living in relative comfort in developed countries (such as France, South Korea, or the United States): Many people are working harder than ever not to bring about, but rather to *avoid* change in their lives. Social networks add to this individual complacency by presenting convenient – and enticing – algorithms about what to read, watch, and listen to, while avoiding things that might be too "different" from what seems convenient (Cowen, 2017).

It doesn't take much imagination to recognize that any two individuals may develop different levels or types of achievement motivation: high and low. The former strives for excellence and success, whereas the latter may be happy doing what is required and does not need acknowledgment of success or recognition from others. Are there cultural differences with respect to achievement motivation? Do the results of the studies mentioned previously suggest that there are high- versus low–achievement–oriented nations and cultures?

CRITICAL THINKING

ACHIEVEMENT MOTIVATION AND WEALTH

Consider past studies which suggested that achievement motivation is higher in economically advanced countries (Inkeles & Smith, 1974; McClelland, 1961; Steers & Sanchez-Runde, 2002). As we already know, we need to exercise caution when interpreting any correlational data. Correlation does not necessarily prove that high-achievement motivation *causes* economic growth. It's possible that a country's economic prosperity stimulates the development of achievement motivation in its citizens (in this regard, see our discussion of correlation and causation in Chapter 2). The reasoning might be something along the lines of: "If I know that

my effort will be rewarded, I will strive for achievement and excellence. However, if I know that because of poor economic conditions and an intrusive government, my individual effort will not be rewarded, it will be difficult to convince myself to pursue achievement." Psychologists suggest that studying achievement motivation could provide us with insight into why certain countries and communities rise to economic prominence at certain times in their history (Allen et al., 2007). Using your critical thinking skills, what is your opinion concerning the motivation–wealth connection? Think of examples where high achievement motivation did not lead to material success. Suggest examples where wealth and abundance do not stimulate high achievement motivation. What factors, in your view, stimulate achievement motivation in an individual?

The key to the answer is that achievement or success can be understood in several ways. So-called **individualist-success motivation** (the type of motivation measured in most studies cited so far) affects one's attitudes and actions and is directed to the attainment of personal goals. On the contrary, **collectivist-success motivation** directs a person to connect with other people; the individual's contribution is seen as beneficial to the members of a particular group or society in general (Parsons & Goff, 1978).

Each society sets standards for excellence and determines what type of goals – individualist or collectivist – a person is expected to achieve. The individualist type prevails mostly among people in Western cultures, such as the United States, France, and Germany. In contrast, the collectivist type is more common in Eastern cultures, such as South Korea, and Japan, in which there is a distinctive kind of work ethic rooted in future-oriented and harmonious interpersonal networks essential for business success (Cauquelin et al., 2014; Cho & Kim, 1993). It was also found that Australian Aboriginal students placed greater emphasis on collectivist intentions, compared with non-Aboriginal students (Fogarty & White, 1994).

Interesting results were obtained in a study of Chinese and European New Zealanders. Chinese students were found to have stronger motivation toward academic and professional achievement than their European counterparts. However, Chinese students also showed a greater sense of obligation toward fulfilling their parents' expectations, and they were more fearful of parental response to failure than were the Europeans students. According to Chinese cultural norms, parents expect (in fact, demand) high achievement from their children at school. Students are expected to fulfill parental obligations and must appreciate parental sacrifice (Sue & Okazaki, 1990). This might explain the fact that by the late 1990s, Chinese immigrants in New Zealand were consistently achieving great success in educational and occupational areas and acquiring higher-status positions in proportions larger than any other ethnic groups, including Europeans (Chung et al., 1997; Liu et al., 2005).

There is further evidence of culture-related complexity in achievement motivation. Interviews with more than 500 Anglo-Australians and Sri Lankans were conducted

to compare achievement motivation in members of both groups. The individualist orientation was more prevalent in Australians than in Sri Lankans, who were predominantly family and group oriented (Niles, 1998). However, both groups were similar regarding the preferred means of achievement for their goals: They both strongly endorsed individual responsibility and the work ethic. The results did not show that one group was more motivated than the other.

Achievement may be perceived differently based on cultural perceptions of specific behaviors, or key cultural features, such as collectivism and individualism. Achievement can be viewed through the prism of self-esteem and pride or from the sense of interconnectedness with others and avoidance of shame (Ishi et al., 2017). Take indecision, as an example. In some cultures, indecision is denigrated and even the word *indecisive* has negative connotations. In U.S. political and business environments, for instance, being perceived as indecisive is a liability. In other societies, such as in Japan, the very same indecisive behaviors might be evaluated positively (Yates et al., 2010). Cultural norms may encourage different types of achievement motivation.

Research shows that Buddhist and Western societies may encourage two somewhat different types of motivation: "maximizing" and "satisfying." *Maximizers* are almost always in search of the best (which leaves them frequently unhappy because they cannot win all the time), whereas *satisfiers* are generally satisfied with what they have achieved (Iyengar et al., 2006). These finding should be taken with a grain of salt, however. More recent research shows maximizing typically leads individuals to feel regret if they do not win. At the same time, however, maximizing also could lead to high levels of hope for success and optimism about the future (Peng et al., 2018).

CROSS-CULTURAL SENSITIVITY

People often do not realize the extent to which they distort information when they stereotype. Years ago, when Britain's Prince Phillip was visiting a high-tech company near Edinburgh, Scotland, he spotted a poorly wired fuse box and consequently remarked to the company manager, "It looks as though it was put in by an Indian." The royal spokesperson later apologized for the remark, but you can imagine how offensive it was to millions of hardworking and high-achieving Indians and their descendants living around the world.

In similar fashion, former Mexican President Vicente Fox commented that Mexican immigrants in the United States take jobs "that not even blacks want to do." The Mexican president's office immediately issued a statement saying the president had misspoken and people should not interpret his words in the wrong way. Of course, the president did not intend to offend African Americans; but the consequences of his comment surely did.

Have you ever heard other people's stereotypical comments about group motivation and achievement? If so, what were your immediate thoughts? Did you respond to such statements? Discuss these in class, applying principles of critical thinking from Chapter 2 (in particular, the representativeness bias and the availability bias) to your evaluation.

AGGRESSIVE MOTIVATION AND VIOLENCE

"After each game we just wanted to kick somebody's arse. We were always on the prowl to find anyone who tried to challenge us. If no one dared, then we would go and kick somebody else's arse anyway." These words were proudly declared to us in a Berlin bar by B.S., a 30-year-old Englishman, father of two, and a self-described "football hooligan."

The desire to harm or injure others is called **aggressive motivation**. Physical abuse, verbal assault, angry retaliation, open hostility, and many other forms of aggressive behavior are part of our everyday life, no matter where we live. Aggressive motivation has multiple roots and causes and cannot be explained by one theory, no matter how appealing it might be. Cross-cultural psychologists compare, contrast, and integrate the existing data into a comprehensive view that attempts to take into account a wide range of biological, psychological, political, socioeconomic, and cultural factors that are linked to aggressive motivation and behavior (see our discussion in Chapter 2 on multiple causation).

BIOLOGICAL MECHANISMS

Testosterone – a natural primary sex hormone – appears to play a significant role in human aggression and on the development of the muscular system that enables aggression (Batrinos, 2012). An early study found that men with testosterone levels in the top 10 percentile were more likely to belong to lower socioeconomic classes (Dabbis & Morris, 1990). Somewhat similar results were also seen in Uganda (Nansunga et al., 2014). Does this mean that people with higher testosterone levels are more likely to become or remain relatively poor? Yes, that is possible. If an individual tends to be aggressive and violent, the person will not be likely to succeed in a society that requires cooperation and encourages mutual support of its members. However, another explanation is also plausible: Unfavorable social conditions, abuse, and discrimination against a person may cause continuous frustration and stress that is responsible for the release of surplus amounts of testosterone in the body. Modern comparative research also shows that testosterone can fluctuate in response to external challenges in regulating an individual's behavior, including aggressive acts (Geniole et al., 2019).

Neuroscientists have also found that the absence of a specific chemical in the brain – nitric oxide – can transform normal mice into violent and sexually aggressive miscreants. The

same mechanism can be applicable to humans too (Brown, 1995). The neurotransmitters serotonin and dopamine both have been shown to impact aggressive behavior (Narvaes & Martin, 2014). Last, adrenaline – which functions as both a neurotransmitter and a hormone – is directly involved in the "fight-or-flight" response by increasing blood flow to the muscles. While the release of adrenaline doesn't necessarily cause aggression, it can exacerbate one's aggressive inclination – in other words, to fight.

SEX DIFFERENCES

Numerous cross-cultural sources over many years have reported that boys tend to be more aggressive than girls (Segall et al., 1997). Young boys with behavioral problems historically have been referred to social workers more often than girls (Hyde, 2005). Boys also tend to be more disruptive at school (OECD, 2011). Compared to women, twice as many men commit suicide (UNODC, 2015; WHO, 2015).

In virtually all cultures, most men and women are socialized differently: boys as fighters and problem solvers, and girls as moderators and peacekeepers. It is generally assumed that boys receive more inculcation and encouragement for aggression. However, empirical research does not provide convincing evidence that encouragement is the only – or even primary – factor that stimulates aggression. Some psychologists argue that men are more aggressive than women because of higher testosterone levels in males (see above). However, factors such as exposure to violence, child abuse, domestic abuse, poverty, substance abuse, lack of male role models, and the glorification of war and lawlessness all seem to promote deviant destructive behavior in males to a greater extent than they do in females (Eagly, 1997). Cross-cultural studies also show a consistent cross-cultural pattern of bullying behavior that is more common in males than in females (Smith et al., 2018).

Studies of violent behavior across the globe reveal more prevalence in men than in women. Young boys were referred to social workers for psychological help more often than girls (Hyde, 2005). On the whole, men are almost four times more likely to be murder victims than women. In the 21st century, men have committed approximately 90 percent of murders and comprise almost 90 percent of the prison population.

FRUSTRATION AND AGGRESSION

One school of thought is that aggression can be explained by the *frustration–aggression hypothesis* (Berkowitz, 1962; Dollard et al., 1939). This classic theory describes aggression as the dominant response to frustration. Many social scientists have attempted to explain the roots of aggressive behavior as part of a wide range of frustrating circumstances such as poverty, broken families, migration, urbanization, unemployment, and discrimination (Bernard, 1990; Pinto et al., 1991; Weiss, 1992).

In particular, Staub (1996; 2016) investigated multiple factors of aggressive behavior in several cultural groups. Among these factors were a history of discrimination, exposure to violence, attitudes to authority, fulfillment of basic needs, lack of education, harsh treatment, abusive families, and joblessness. Staub argues that in a society that fosters

materialistic values in its members, personal success is primarily predicated on how much money one makes and whether one has access to power and resources. With all possibilities for economic and social success plainly visible, but without the capacity to make use of them, the individual may experience a sense of powerlessness. This mental set may, in turn, induce frustration and aggression. In addition, if individuals embrace traditionally masculine values (see Chapter 1), their frustration can be easily channeled into various violent behaviors. Unfulfilled needs often bring a person closer to a seemingly meaningful connection to other people – a street gang, for instance, in a small Russian town – that promotes a positive identity, promises power, money, patriotism, and offers a sense of connection to peers (Galeotti, 2018).

Because of rapid social changes in the lives of the youth across the world during and after the COVID-19 epidemic (as well as the rapid global decline of the birth rates), the traditional attachment to the family is noticeably shrinking. As a result, many young people are searching for affiliation and attachment elsewhere. Some move into business. Others turn to religion. Yet others end up becoming gang members (Yakhnich et al., 2019). At the same time, however, research also shows that in cultural groups that have suffered victimization in the past, a new form of non-violent behavior often develops, which is a kind of altruism and compassion that is born of suffering (Staub, 2016). In other words, violence does not necessarily beget violence, and injustice does not necessarily beget further injustice.

Considerable experimental work yields evidence that aggression does not always have to be caused by underlying frustration (Kadiangandu et al., 2001). Albert Borowitz (2005) described a special kind of violence caused by a craving for notoriety or self-glorification. American author Albert Borowitz coined the term "*Herostratos syndrome*" to refer to an individual who believes that life has cheated him or her, and the only way to compensate for this sense of injustice is to inflict pain on somebody else. (The term refers to the destruction of the Temple of Ephesus in 356 B.C.E. by a Greek arsonist, Herostratos, who was seeking notoriety and wished to leave his name etched in history. Can you think of any modern-day examples of this syndrome?)

SELF-ESTEEM

There are widespread beliefs that self-esteem is directly linked to aggression. Countless educators, counselors, parents, and the general population alike insist that many forms of aggressiveness – juvenile delinquency, bullying, criminality, and other types of antisocial conduct – are the consequence of low self-esteem (see, for example, Baumeister et al., 2003; Crain & Weissman, 1972; Jenkins, 1995). Yet, despite decades of controlled research, these entrenched convictions simply have not been supported by empirical evidence (Eromo & Levy, 2017; Levy, 2019). This finding appears to be largely consistent across cultures as well. In one example, ethnic groups were evaluated to determine whether individual self-esteem is correlated with delinquent conduct. No evidence of this was found for either black or Hispanic subjects (Leung & Drasgow,

1986). Setting self-esteem aside, aggressiveness could, for instance, be related to the child's poor social competence with peers. Without having such competency, the child does not know how to negotiate conflicts, resolve difficult social situations, or interpret the emotions of others (Asher et al., 1982). Like many myths, this one seems particularly immune to change (see discussion of the belief perseverance effect in Chapter 2). As we have been discussing, there are multiple causes of aggression and violence; it just turns out (perhaps counterintuitively) that poor self-esteem isn't one of them (Jankowiak et al., 2021).

VICARIOUS LEARNING

Violent impulses can develop as learned response patterns. Very often, aggressive behavior is readily acquired through observation of aggressive models (Bandura, 1969). The Canadian-born psychologist Albert Bandura (1925–2021) worked at Stanford University and published the influential *Social Learning and Personality Development* in 1963 (Bandura, 1963).

In the early 1960s, Bandura and his associates conducted a series of experiments, which gained international recognition as the *Bobo doll experiments*. ("Bobo" was a five-foot, inflatable toy – made out of plastic and weighted at the base; when pushed or hit, it would tilt and then return to an upright position.) In these experiments, boys and girls between the ages of three and six, were invited to play with Bobo. In some experimental scenarios, the children were in the room with an adult (a member of the experimental team), who would kick, punch, and verbally attack the doll. In another scenario, children watched the same procedure, but this time on film. The results of the study showed that the children exposed to direct and indirect violence were significantly more likely to express aggression toward the Bobo doll than those boys and girls who did not witness violent acts during the experiment (Bandura et al., 1961; 1963). This experiment has been replicated numerous times and in many countries, all yielding the same results: Children learn violence though imitation – in this case, by observing the behavior of an adult. The Bobo doll study has generated intense attention from a wide range of audiences: psychologists, educators, parents, politicians, the media, and more – all of whom are interested in its implications regarding the potential impact of exposure to violence in movies, television shows, and video games (see Lansford et al., 2010).

SOCIAL NORMS

A great deal of research has been conducted over the years on the relationship between social norms and aggressive behavior. It has been found, for example, that social norms facilitate aggression when aggressive acts help the individual to survive. In such cases, the person can gain power and control, obtain material resources, or resist frustration (Rohier, 1975).

Children within the same country who were raised in different social settings tend to display different patterns of aggressive behavior. For instance, a study of children from two

Mexican regions found that those who lived in the town with a higher level of violence performed twice as many aggressive acts as those from the other town in which the violence level was lower (Fry, 1988).

On the whole, cross-cultural studies show that parents' parenting style affects their children's attitudes toward violence and violent behavior (Slone & Shoshani, 2017). Research has shown that parents who live in high-violence areas tend to encourage their children to be aggressive and to respond to violence against them with retaliatory actions. This provides a vivid example of a bidirectional causation (see Chapters 2 and 3): On one hand, dangerous social conditions induce parental encouragement of violence in "self-defense"; on the other hand, parental encouragement of aggressive behavior creates a particular social climate that provokes new aggressive acts.

Societies maintain different tolerance thresholds toward different acts of violence and aggression. As an illustration, in the past, in some traditional societies killing infants at one point was not considered a crime (Minturin & Shashak, 1982). In other societies, the killing of an enemy was deemed appropriate and even praised if it was committed in the name of God or as an act of retaliation for insulting a family member. Violent acts against women – including so-called "honor killings" – were tolerated in many traditional cultures, including countries such as Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, or Egypt among others. Unfortunately, many such cases were never brought to trial because victims or witnesses – especially uneducated women confined to their husbands' homes – were too intimidated to press charges. In addition, under Islamic legal concepts called *qisas* (retributive justice) and *diyat* (financial restitution), a blood relative of a victim could formally forgive a crime in exchange for payment (Constable, 2000).

In today's world, killing enemies in the context of war is considered legitimate, especially for people serving in the armed forces. But in many countries, such as those in the European Union, the death penalty for convicted criminals is outlawed. Since 2020, across the United States, only a handful of states have executed inmates. Government executions, as reported by Amnesty International, took place in 16 of the world's 195 countries (DPIT, 2021). Still, governments across the globe continue to have a legal monopoly on the sanctioned killing of human beings.

Regrettably (but not surprisingly), there are no violence-free societies. Presidents and prime ministers have been attacked and assassinated in the United States and Israel, India and Sweden, Armenia and Chile. Terrorist groups attack innocent victims in Russia and in Argentina, Egypt and Peru, France and the United Kingdom, Tanzania, and Spain. Violent acts are committed in the subways and streets of many cities. There are countries in which the crime rates are declining, but also ones in which they are growing. These rates, however, vary among different groups. In the United States, boys are four times more likely to be arrested for various offenses than are girls. Adolescents of lower socioeconomic status are almost twice as likely to be arrested than middle-class adolescents. And African American and Latino youths are almost twice as likely to be

arrested than whites. On the other hand, European Americans are more than twice as likely to be arrested than Asian Americans.

Socioeconomic factors, law enforcement practices, and the lack of educational opportunities play a huge role in violent behavior. Wealthier and more educated communities tend to be less violent across cultures. And overall, as some of the world's authorities on human violence insist, from a historical perspective, the global levels of street violence today – in the twenty-first century – are markedly lower than they have ever been throughout history (Pinker, 2012).

Last, it should be pointed out that, even being psychologically inclined to violent behaviors, most individuals are still capable of yielding to existing social restraints and cultural requirements. In cultures in which violent conduct is relatively rare (like in Finland, for example), people become very sensitive to any form of violence and aggression. On the contrary, in communities in which violence is a common problem-solving technique (such as in a zone in which there is extreme ethnic conflict), people, unfortunately, become desensitized to violent behavior (Buckley, 2000). Several cross-cultural studies bring additional support to the argument that the roots of violence are largely linked to inequality and injustice (Frey & Hoppe-Graff, 1994; World Bank, 2018).

A CASE IN POINT

INTERNATIONAL AGGRESSION: PUTIN'S WAR AGAINST UKRAINE

Violence has been a powerful and fearsome tool of international politics for centuries. Historical examples abound. Consider the innumerable instances of invasions, conquests, colonialism, and territorial expansions. Adolf Hitler, leader of Nazi Germany, instigated World War II, urging German soldiers to fight and die on behalf of *das Vaterland* ("the Fatherland"). Estimates of total dead in WWII range between 35,000,000 and 60,000,000 globally. In 1990, Saddam Hussein of Iraq waged an aggressive war against adjacent Kuwait. More recently, Vladimir Putin, President of Russia, ordered in 2022 an unprovoked and aggressive invasion against Ukraine, a neighboring country.

What do these infamous individuals have in common? Yes, they are all male totalitarian leaders who invaded sovereign nations around them. But more generally speaking, what motivates political leaders to turn to violence, wage aggressive wars, and send untold numbers of people – mostly young men – to die in combat? Using your skills of critical thinking (such as multiple causation, discussed in

Chapter 2), it should be evident that there will not turn out to be a singular answer. Numerous political, cultural, and individual psychological factors contribute to a political leader's decision to turn to violence and propagate widespread disaster.

Clinical psychologists have speculated that such leaders exhibit particular forms of psychopathology, such as narcissistic, paranoid, and antisocial personality disorder (see Chapter 9). In addition, they frequently display sadistic personality traits, and are thus motivated by the desire to inflict pain and suffering on others. (Admittedly, such assumptions are difficult to verify by scientific methods.) Other psychologists, utilizing comparative psychobiographical research (see Chapter 3), point out several cross-cultural psychological features of leaders who order the death and destruction of other people, including *vanity* (inflated sense of ego or pride in oneself or one's actions), and *desensitization to violence* (a diminishing emotional responsiveness to violent acts), which we address below.

Let's take Putin, as a vivid example. What motivated his actions? An attempt to splinter the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) coalition? The opportunity for an "easy" (or so he assumed) land-grab? Economic gain by pilfering another nation's resources? To distract citizens of his country from their own problems? To gain attention, increase international clout, and restore the glory of the former Soviet Union? These are all viable explanations. But let us explore vanity and desensitization to violence more fully here.

For many years since gaining power in Russia in 2000, Putin developed, according to numerous observations, an inflated view of himself as a great world leader, who is infallible and incapable of making mistakes or being wrong on any issue. During the more than 20 years of his unchallenged reign, he surrounded himself with close circles of "advisers" who have shielded him from any criticisms or negative feedback. Whenever such critics did emerge, they were swiftly arrested, imprisoned, or murdered in cold blood.

The period during the COVID-19 lockdown only served to exacerbate Putin's self-isolation. He did not permit anyone near him, unless the person would spend two weeks of quarantine in a government bunker. All of this was likely to have profoundly affected Putin's sense of reality and contributed to his pathological beliefs related to the valuelessness of people's lives – except, of course, his own.

Political leaders in such situations tend to see the world as a chess board in which, they, as the decision makers, strategically move – and even sacrifice – chess pieces for the sake of survival and victory. As of the time of this writing, thousands of people are still dying every year around the world in military conflicts waged by governments. Only transparency and democratic control of such leader's actions can begin to save the planet from some individuals' deadly acts of aggression – actions rooted largely in their vanity and desensitization.

CULTURE AND SEXUALITY

The term "sex" can refer to two different concepts. On the one hand, it might denote the anatomical and physiological characteristics of males and females, the two typically assigned sexes. It could also refer to motivation in relation to human sexuality – the drive for erotic experiences and related behavioral responses. In this chapter, we explore the motivational aspects of sexuality. (We will turn to the concepts of gender identity, gender roles, gender fluidity, intersex, non-binary, androgyny, transsexuality, and more in Chapter 11.)

Evolutionary psychologists emphasize the importance of the adaptive role of human sexuality: It is normal because it is useful and important for procreation (Miller, 2000). For example, cross-cultural surveys suggest that men generally prefer to marry younger, physically attractive women who are high in reproductive potential. Women, on the other hand, favor marrying older and wealthier men, who generally excel in providing material resources and social status for the family. Other universal features of mating behavior also can be explained in adaptive terms. For instance, marital stability around the world is associated with fertility: The more children, the less chance of divorce. Further, divorce in most cultural groups can be predicted by infertility and infidelity, both of which may hinder individual fitness (Lucas et al., 2008).

Hormones and other chemicals in our body can determine the dynamics of sexual arousal and related psychological experiences (Byrne, 1982). Thus, **sexual motivation**, or motivation to engage in sexual activity, is certainly regulated, at least in part, by human physiology. However, genes, hormones, and other biological factors only affect the probability of the occurrence of certain types of sexual behavior. In fact, it is societal factors – including laws, customs, and expectations – that determine what specific types of sexual behavior are acceptable, tolerated, or prohibited and under what circumstances.

Every culture has its own set of requirements and beliefs regarding sexuality and its expression. This set of characteristics is called **sex culture**. Sex cultures vary greatly across the world and are influenced by a combination of biological, psychological, and cultural factors. These include traditional and nontraditional customs, legal regulations, as well as religious, ideological, political, and moral values developed by society.

Globally, there used to be widely held beliefs that masturbation is a sin; further, some were convinced that masturbation could cause serious psychological and physical problems such as blindness (Kon, 2001). Gendered cultural scripts about women and men's sexual desire assume that men possess a highly active sex drive, whereas women supposedly have weak desire for sex (Rubin et al., 2019).

Political and legal rules play a role too. In the United States, for example, federal law prohibits "obscene, indecent, and profane" content from being broadcast on the radio or TV via publicly owned broadband. The legal definitions of obscene, indecent, and profane tend to change with the passage of years. Currently, for content to be ruled obscene in the United States, it must appeal to an average person's prurient interest; depict

or describe sexual conduct in a clearly offensive way; and, taken as a whole, to lack serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value (FCC, 2019).

THE "TRADITIONAL VS. NONTRADITIONAL CULTURE" DILEMMA

Keep in mind that labels of "traditionalism" and "nontraditionalism" can sometimes be misleading. Many people who live in traditional sex cultures might express attitudes and behaviors that are more common to nontraditional sex cultures, and vice versa. In the "nontraditional" sex culture of the United States, for example, many individuals – including politicians, religious leaders, and other cultural "influencers" – may raise their voices in support of traditional values, including chastity and abstinence.

On the whole, nontraditional cultural values include viewing sexual pleasure as normal, desirable, and natural, whereas traditional cultural values are more likely to view it as abnormal, "primitive," or even "sinful." Yet, actual cultural differences are more nuanced than reference to the convenient "traditional versus nontraditional" dichotomy. A comparative study of women in Iran and New Zealand, for instance, showed that in both samples, the lack of erotic thoughts or the presence of fear during sexual activity were significant predictors of sexual dissatisfaction. However, for the Iranian sample, the best specific predictors of sexual dissatisfaction were cultural traditionalism, as well as fear of sexual abuse and sexual activity. In contrast, in the New Zealand women, the most significant predictors of sexual dissatisfaction were beliefs that sexual desire and pleasure is a sin, or thoughts that aging and sexual drive are incompatible (Abdolmanafi et al., 2018).

Sexual values that regulate sexual motivation can also be quite different across cultures. Nontraditional sex cultures are generally permissive to different forms of sexual behavior. In nations such as Holland, Sweden, Russia, Australia, Denmark, and some others that represent the nontraditional sex cultures, sex generally does not carry the same mystery, shame, and conflict as it does in traditional cultures (see Table 7.2). Further, chastity (i.e., no history of sexual intercourse) is not regarded as a particularly important value in countries such as Sweden, Denmark, Germany, or Holland. On the contrary, in countries such as China, Iran, India, and many others, chastity has been viewed as essential in many communities for a woman's position in the society (Halonen & Santrock, 1995).

Table 7.2 Type of Sex Culture and General Attitudes toward Sex

Issues/Type of Culture	Traditional Sex Culture	Nontraditional Sex Culture
Expression of sexuality	Heavily regulated	Somewhat regulated
Premarital sex	Prohibited and rejected	Somewhat tolerated
Extramarital sex	Prohibited and rejected	Somewhat tolerated
Homosexuality	Prohibited and rejected	Somewhat tolerated
Chastity	High value	Low value

Cultural beliefs about sex may affect the quality of cross-cultural research on sex. For example, the refusal rate (proportion of people who do not want to participate in a study as subjects) may affect the validity of surveys on sexuality. Why? Most people in one country may be open to talking about sex – because of the existing cultural norms of permissiveness – and agree to participate in surveys. In contrast, people who grew up in more sexually restrictive environments are often very reluctant to give any kind of information about sex. For this reason, it is difficult to compare cultures on criteria such as premarital and teenage sex, extramarital sex, frequency and number of sexual relationships, and sexual abuse. Many women do not report sexual abuse against them because it is considered dishonorable for them even to mention the abuse. The shame of self-disclosure in such cases can be overwhelming (Shiraev & Sobel, 2006).

ANTI-FEMALE VIOLENCE

According to the World Health Organization, violence against women remains pervasive across countries. During their lifetime, close to 30 percent of women (which is more than 730 million) experienced physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner or sexual violence from a non-partner. Close to a quarter of young women globally have already experienced violence by an intimate partner by the time they reach their mid-twenties. As we mentioned earlier, many women do not report sexual abuse against them because it is considered dangerous or dishonorable for them to even mention the abuse. The fear or shame of self-disclosure in such cases can be overwhelming (WHO, 2021).

Traditional sex cultures tend to endorse restrictive rules regarding the display or expression of sexuality. For example, in some parts of Africa and the Middle East, many communities regularly engage in the of practice of so-called "*female circumcision*." This euphemistic term can serve to mask the harsh reality of what this practice actually entails: forced, involuntary mutilation of young girls' genitalia (as characterized by the United Nations). It is believed that it helps keep a girl chaste, clean, and free from "sinful" sexual desires. In some cultures, this procedure is even considered to be religious. According to the World Health Organization, more than 200 million girls and women today have undergone such rites of "circumcision" in 30 countries in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia (WHO, 2022). In the United States too, female circumcision was practiced in some places, but only by very few groups (Robinette, 2010).

SEX CULTURE AND CLOTHING

Even one's style of clothing can represent a particular sex culture. In traditional Islamic communities, many women are typically veiled and cloaked from head to foot. Supporters of this custom insist that covering a woman's body is an expression of her faith and her devotion to God through the expression of modesty and privacy. Critics point out that similar rules are not applied to men; a strict dress code for women is a clear suppression of their sexuality, as well as sexual stimuli in men.

According to Pew Research, a leading global polling organization, Muslim women in at least 56 countries have experienced "social hostilities," such as harassment and violence

from individuals or groups – all due to their clothing that was deemed to violate the perceived dress norms (Villa, 2020). Enforced by the government's "morality police," punishments for such violations can include monetary fines, whipping, or prison sentences.

In contrast, contemporary European and U.S. fashion trends allow (in fact, even encourage) women, in particular circumstances, to expose most parts of their bodies. Those people who visit European countries, like France, Croatia, and Spain know that on many public beaches (but not on the streets, of course) some women appear topless – which rarely occurs in other countries due to cultural and legal restrictions.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Being male, female, or transgender, in terms of gender roles, does not necessarily determine a person's sexuality or sexual orientation. **Sexual orientation** refers to an enduring pattern of romantic and/or sexual attraction to people of a specific sex or gender.

Although the vast majority of children have their sex assigned to them at birth, and many children have a strong sense of their gender identity, studies show that children are not always or necessarily aware of their sexual orientation. Some children develop this orientation relatively early. Others acquire it later in life. Still others may change it at a certain point during their life or consider their sexual orientation as a "work in progress" that continues evolving throughout their lifespan. Although some accept (or even embrace) this uncertainty regarding their sexual orientation, others struggle with, and suffer from, it.

Heterosexuality, bisexuality, and homosexuality lie along the continuum of sexual orientation. *Heterosexuality* is an individual's romantic or sexual attraction to people of the opposite sex or gender. (In Greek, *heteros* stands for "different" or "other".) *Homosexuality* is romantic or sexual attraction between persons of the same sex or gender. *Bisexuality* is romantic or sexual attraction toward both males and females.

Recent research shows that younger people are more sexually diverse compared to their parents and grandparents (Hinsliff, 2022). In the United States in 2022, the percentage of adults who self-identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or something other than heterosexual has reached 7 percent – which is double the percentage from only ten years earlier, when Gallup first measured the data (Jones, 2022). In Britain, the proportion of the population aged 16 years and who identified as heterosexual (or "straight") was about 94 percent in 2020, with men and women in the same proportions (Sexual Orientation, UK, 2020).

Is there a genetic basis for sexual orientation? At this point, it seems clear that there is no single gene responsible for a person being homosexual, heterosexual, or bisexual. Instead, sexuality appears to be *polygenic*, meaning that many genes can contribute to the trait. Further, polygenic traits can also be strongly influenced by sociocultural factors in one's

environment, which means that there is no clear "winner" in the nature-versus-nurture debate. (In this regard, refer to the critical thinking principle of multiple causation, in Chapter 2.)

Historically, some authors have suggested that homosexuality in ancient Greece occurred under certain political socioeconomic conditions. Among them were strong social stratification, a large poverty class, a decentralized political system, and an absence of formal education (Dickerman, 1993).

Several social and psychological conditions that may be linked to homosexuality were identified in a comprehensive ethnographic study of 70 preindustrial cultures (Barber, 1998). Despite initial predictions, homosexuality was not found to be higher in cultures with repressive attitudes toward premarital sex. Societies that practiced polygamy (e.g., multiple wives for one husband) were also low on homosexuality. Moreover, the frequency of homosexuality is also very low in societies in which hunting and gathering are predominant activities. Homosexuality appears to increase in agricultural societies with the growing complexity of modern cultures. Higher population density was also linked to homosexuality. More recent studies show that people's views of homosexuality are linked to their countries' overall political climate as well as historically predominant cultural traditions, which, of course, can change over time (Donaldson et al., 2016).

Sexual drive, per se, also lies on a continuum, with those who feel asexual on one end of the spectrum and those who feel hypersexual on the other end. *Asexuality* refers to diminished interest in sexual activity or the lack of sexual attraction to another person. This lack of interest may be based on several factors involving genetic predispositions, medical conditions, religious beliefs, aging, or other psychological factors. Asexuality may also be viewed as the person's lack of a sexual orientation, although not every specialist agrees. Yet most scholars do agree that pure asexuality is somewhat rare, involving only about 1 percent or less of the population (Etaugh & Bridges, 2017).

SEX AND SEXUALITY: SOME CROSS-CULTURAL SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

What are some cross-cultural similarities with regard to sex and sexuality? Psychologists suggest that both men and women can respond erotically to mild pain. Betzig (1989) showed that in the past, cross-culturally, adultery and sterility (the inability to conceive a child) were the most common reasons for divorce. Many aspects of nonverbal communication appear to be universal too. For instance, courting and flirtation patterns were similar across many cultures and performed for the specific purpose of mate selection and reproduction (Aune & Aune, 1994).

With respect to gender differences, men everywhere tend to react more negatively than women do when their partner shares sexual fantasies about having sex with others. Women everywhere reported more distress than men when their partner kisses someone else (Rathus et al., 1993).

Kissing, although a global phenomenon, is unknown to some cultures in Africa and South America. Touching may be viewed as a normal act of communication between two strangers in Mediterranean countries, but it could be viewed as totally inappropriate in parts of the United States, Canada, or countries of the European Union. Marital fidelity appears to be virtually a cross-cultural requirement as well. However, among some Arctic peoples, it is considered normal – even hospitable – for a host to "offer" (sexually speaking) his wife to a guest.

Around the world, males prefer to marry females younger than themselves, and for females to marry males older than themselves. A study conducted across 33 countries showed similarities in preference for mate characteristics between men and women who ranked "kind and understanding" first, "intelligent" second, "exciting personality" third, "healthy" fourth, and "religious" last. Despite the overall cross-cultural gender similarities, there were some differences in preference. According to the survey, men almost universally prefer "good looks" in women, whereas women choose "good earning capacity" as the most important characteristic of the partner of the opposite sex (Buss, 1994).

Data gathered across a number of countries in Africa, Asia, South America, and Europe (Neto et al., 2000) showed that most people go through similar stages in romantic relationships. According to the groundbreaking Global Study of Sexual Attitudes and Behaviors conducted a couple of decades ago, men and women around the world experience similar sexual problems related to aging. The study, based on in-person and telephone interviews with 27,500 men and women in 30 countries worldwide, found that among men, the most common sexual problem is erectile dysfunction, which increases with age. Among women, the most common problems were lack of interest in sex and inability to experience orgasm (Laumann et al., 2009).

Cultural norms and receptivity to new ideas change with time. Not long ago, masturbation (as we noted earlier) was once widely considered a form of pathological behavior or even a serious chronic affliction that required therapeutic intervention or, sometimes, physical punishment. In publications and public speeches just few a decades ago, doctors, psychologists, and psychiatrists routinely labeled homosexuality as a form of mental illness. Overall, global changes in education, social norms, information technology, and travel have changed many traditional views of human sexuality and sexual practices (Donaldson et al., 2016). One can only assume that such types of social evolution will continue far into the future.

EXERCISE 7.1

Anthropologists have recorded a vast array of human sexual practices that are either uncommon or regarded as taboo in many other cultures (Love, 1992). This assignment demonstrates how sexuality is largely a cultural phenomenon. The way we see ourselves and other people is almost invariably based on our own cultural background. Imagine the following scenario:

"Teak" is 18. "Teal" is 18. Both are college foreign exchange students, both are juniors, and both of them began their studies at the City University of New York one month ago. Tuition has been paid, books have been purchased, and their new lives have just begun.

Teak grew up on a small island in the Atlantic. People on this island know nothing about kissing. Nudity is strongly prohibited. People have DVDs, but movies rated "R" are not available on the island. Premarital sex is punishable. Men and women believe that sexual experiences reduce their energy and are bad for their health. People do not even talk about sex. After a couple marries, the husband and wife are allowed to have sex once a week, at night, and as quickly as possible. Both partners should be dressed in nightclothes and cannot look at each other. Female orgasms are rare and considered to be abnormal. Sex education is prohibited by law.

Teal grew up on a small island in the Pacific. Children on this island, both boys and girls, are taught about sex as early as the age of seven. Nudity is totally acceptable. At the age of 13, boys undergo a special ritual that initiates them into adult sexual life. Girls do the same at the age of 15. Every young man and woman has an adult sexual partner of the opposite sex, who teaches them proficiency in sex. After a year of training, the students are allowed to have sex without supervision. Adults have sex frequently, often in public places. Public masturbation is also acceptable.

After spending a month in the United States, Teak and Teal decide to write emails to some close friends in their home countries about their experiences with sex culture in the United States. Please compose two brief letters on behalf of both young men. Compare the "letters." How could we help these young men adjust better in the U.S. culture? Offer your specific suggestions, then share them in class if this is appropriate.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

1. Motivation is any condition – usually an internal one – that initiates, activates, or maintains the individual's goal-directed behavior. Many interesting and valuable ideas about the nature of human motivation appear in classical works of prominent social scientists. Theories of sociobiology claim that general biological laws of evolution are perfectly suitable as a fundamental explanation of human motivation. Theories of social instincts emphasize the crucial and universal role of basic instincts, similar in both humans and animals, as motivations of behavior. The sociological approach emphasizes the crucial role of social factors, such as values and economic inequality, in determining the individual's behavior.

2. There are several psychological theories of motivation. Drive theories pay attention to needs, which are motivated states caused by physiological or psychological deprivation. Arousal theories of motivation suggest that people seek to maintain optimal levels of arousal by actively changing their exposure to arousing stimuli. Psychodynamic analysis emphasizes the importance of unconscious processes. Humanistic theories focus on human dignity, individual choice, and self-worth.

Cognitive psychologists maintain that we are aware of our thought patterns and therefore can control our motivation and overt behavior.

3. In general, most of the theories emphasize the universal nature of human motivation that is influenced by various environmental factors. These factors, in turn, are products of historic, religious, political, cultural, and socioeconomic developments.

4. Typically, cultural norms and traditions regulate hunger. Cultures establish culture-linked eating habits, determine what is considered tasty and tasteless, and establish social taboos on particular foods and food products. Eating disorders are more common in young white females in industrial societies compared to their peers in non-Western countries.

5. Achievement motivation is acquired by the individual and influenced by his or her culture. On the national level, there is a strong relationship between individual achievement motivation and economic growth. However, there are "individually" oriented and "socially" oriented achievement motives. The first type is common in Western cultures. The latter is more common in Southwest Asian countries, Korea, Japan, and perhaps in other collectivist cultures.

6. There are no aggression-free countries or cultures. Aggressive motivation has many underlying factors, from chemical and physiological, to socioeconomic, psychological, and political. Cultures have different thresholds of tolerance toward various acts of violence and aggression. Poverty, lack of opportunities, socialization experiences, history of violence, and other factors contribute to violence.

7. Sexual motivation is certainly regulated, at least in part, by human physiology, but culture determines various forms of its experience and behavioral manifestation. There are traditional and nontraditional sex cultures that practice either restrictive or permissive norms of sexuality. Sexual orientation, like homosexuality, for instance, as well as various forms of sexual disorders are linked to particular social practices and values.

KEY TERMS

Aggressive motivation The desire to harm or injure others.

Arousal theories Motivational theories based on an assumption that people seek to maintain optimal levels of arousal by actively changing their exposure to arousing stimuli.

Collectivist-success motivation A type of achievement motivation that directs a person to connect with others; the individual's contribution is seen as beneficial to the members of a particular group or society in general.

Confucian work dynamism A cultural value and practice manifested in persistence of achieving economic goals, social stability, encouragement of prudence and savings, and promoting loyalty and trust by emphasizing shame.

Drive An internal aroused condition that directs an organism to satisfy some physiological need.

Extrinsic motivation A type of motivation that engages people in various activities for a particular reward.

Flow A state of complete concentration and joyful immersion in a situation or activity.

Individualist-success motivation A type of achievement motivation that affects one's attitudes and actions and is directed toward the attainment of personal goals.

Intrinsic motivation A type of motivation that engages people in various activities for no apparent reward except the pleasure and satisfaction of the activity itself.

Motivation The psychological process that arouses, directs, and maintains behavior.

Need A motivated state caused by physiological deprivation (such as lack of food or water).

Need for achievement A social need that directs people to strive constantly for excellence and success.

Self-actualization A final level of psychological development in which individuals strive to realize their uniquely human potential to achieve everything they are capable of achieving.

Sex culture A set of requirement, beliefs, symbols, and norms regarding sexuality and its expression.

Sexual motivation A type of motivation that engages a person in sexual activity.

Sexual orientation An enduring pattern of romantic and/or sexual attraction to people of a specific sex or gender.

REFERENCES

Abdolmanafi, A., Nobre, P., Winter S., Tilley P. J. M., & Jahromi, R. G. (2018). Culture and sexuality: Cognitive-emotional determinants of sexual dissatisfaction among Iranian and New Zealand women. *Journal of Sex Medicine*, *15*(5), 687–697.

Akerlund, D., Gronqvist, H., & Lindhal, L. (2014, May). Time preferences in criminal behavior. IZA Discussion Paper Series No. 8168. http://ftp.iza.org/dp8168.pdf

Allen, M., Ng S. H., Ikeda, K., Jawan, J. A., Sufi, A. H., Wilson, M., & Yang K.-S. (2007). Two decades of change in cultural values and economic development in eight East Asian and Pacific Island nations. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *38*(3), 247–269.

APA (American Psychiatric Association). (2013). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (DSM-5)* (5th ed.). Washington, DC: APA.

Asher, S., Renshaw, P., & Hymel, S. (1982). Peer relations and the development of social skills. In S. Moore (Ed.), *The young child: Reviews of research* (pp. 137–158). Washington, DC: NAEYC.

Aune, R., & Aune, K. (1994). The influence of culture, gender, and relational status on appearance management. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *25*(2), 258–272.

Baldwin, J. (1991). African (Black) psychology: Issues and synthesis. In R. Jones (Ed.), *Black psychology* (3rd ed., pp. 125–135). Berkeley, CA: Cobb & Henry.

Bandura, A. (1963). *Social learning and personality development.* New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

Bandura, A. (1969). *Principles of behavioral modification.* New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

Bandura, A. (1976). *Social learning theory.* Hoboken, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Bandura, A., Ross, D., & Ross, S. A. (1961). Transmission of aggression through the imitation of aggressive models. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, *63*(3), 575–582.

Bandura, A., Ross, D., & Ross, S. A. (1963). Imitation of film-mediated aggressive models. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, *66*(1), 3–11.

Banerjee, A., & Duflo, E. (2019). *Good economics for hard times*. New York: Public Affairs.

Barber, N. (1998). Ecological and psychological correlates of male homosexuality: A cross-cultural investigation. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *29*(3), 387–401.

Batrinos, M. (2012). Testosterone and aggressive behavior in man. *International Journal of Endocrinology and Metabolism*, *10*(3), 563–568.

Baumann, N. (2012). Autotelic personality. In S. Engeser (Ed.), *Advances in flow research* (pp. 165–186). Heidelberg: Springer.

Baumeister, R. F., Campbell, J. D., Krueger, J. I., & Vohs, K. D. (2003). Does high self-esteem cause better performance, interpersonal success, happiness, or healthier lifestyles? *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, *4*, 1–44.

Baumeister, R., & Tierney, J. (2012). *Willpower*. New York: Penguin Books.

Beauchamp, G. (1987). The human preference for excess salt. *American Scientist*, *75*, 27–33.

Beck, A. T. (1976). *Cognitive therapies and the emotional disorders*. New York: International Universities Press.

Berkowitz, L. (1962). *Aggression: A social psychological analysis*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Bernard, T. (1990). Angry aggression among the "truly disadvantaged." *Criminology*, *28*, 73–96.

Betzig, L. (1989). Causes of conjugal dissolution: A cross-cultural study. *Current Anthropology*, *30*(5), 654–676.

Borowitz, A. (2005). *Terrorism for self-glorification: The Herostratos syndrome*. Kent, OH: Kent State University Press.

Brown, D. (1995, November 23). Aggression tied to chemical. *Washington Post*, p. A1.

Buckley, S. (2000, June 17). Brazil's brutal economic gap. *Washington Post*, p. A13.

Buss, D. (1994). Sex differences in human mate preferences. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*,*12*, 1–49.

Byrne, D. (1982). Predicting human sexual behavior. In A. G. Kraut (Ed.), *The Stanley Hall lecture series* (Vol. 2, pp. 363–368). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Canudas-Romo, V. (2018). Life expectancy and poverty. *The Lancet Global Health*. www.thelancet.com/journals/langlo/article/PIIS2214-109X(18)30327-9/fulltext

Casey, B., Somerville, L., Gotlib, I., Ayduk, N., Franklin, M., Askren, J., et al. (2011). Behavioral and neural correlates of delay of gratification 40 years later. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, *108*(36), 14998–15003.

Castillo, R. J. (1997). *Culture and mental illness*. Pacific Grove, CA: ITP.

Cauquelin, J., Lim, J. P., & Mayer-Koenig, B. (2014). *Asian values: Encounter with diversity*. New York: Routledge.

Cheung, F. M., & Halpern, D. F. (2010). Women at the top: Powerful leaders define success as work + family in a culture of gender. *American Psychologist*, *65*(3), 182–193.

Chiraag, M., & Griskevicius, V. (2014). Sense of control under uncertainty depends on people's childhood environment: A life history theory approach. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *107*(4), 621–663.

Cho, Y., & Kim, Y. (1993). The cultural roots of entrepreneurial bureaucracy: The case of Korea. *Public Administrative Quarterly*, *16*, 509–524.

Chung, C. R.-Y., Walkey, F., & Bemak, F. (1997). A comparison of achievement and aspirations of New Zealand, Chinese, and European students. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *28*(4), 481–489.

Collins, S. (1990). Selfless persons: Imagery and thought in Theravada Buddhism. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Constable, P. (2000, February 23). Roiling sacred waters: Hindus halt the shooting of a film along the Ganges, calling it defamatory. *Washington Post*, p. A15.

Cowen, T. (2017). *The complacent class: The self-defeating quest for the American dream*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Crain, R., & Weissman, C. (1972). *Discrimination, personality, and achievement: A survey of northern blacks*. New York: Seminar Press.

Csíkszentmihályi, M. (1990). *Flow: The psychology of optimal experience*. New York: Harper & Row.

Csíkszentmihályi, M., & Asakawa, K. (2016). Universal and cultural dimensions of optimal experiences. *Japanese Psychological Research*, *58*(1), 4–13.

Dabbis, J., & Morris, R. (1990). Testosterone, social class, and antisocial behavior in a sample of 4,462 men. *Psychological Science*, *1*, 209–211.

Death Penalty Information Center (DPIT). (2021). Executions around the world. https://deathpenaltyinfo.org/policy-issues/international/executions-around-the-world

Deci, E. L. (1975). *Intrinsic motivation*. New York: Plenum Publishing.

Dickerman, M. (1993). Reproductive strategies and gender construction: An evolutionary view of homosexuals. *Journal of Homosexuality*, *24*, 55–71.

Dollard, J., Doob, L., Miller, N., Mowrer, O., & Sears, R. (1939). *Frustration and aggression*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Domino, G. (1992). Cooperation and competition in Chinese and American children. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *23*(4), 456–467.

Donaldson, C., Handren, L., & Lac, A. (2016). Applying multilevel modeling to understand individual and cross-cultural variations in attitudes toward homosexual people across 28 European countries. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *48*(1), 93–112.

Eagly, A. H. (1997). Sex differences in social behavior: Comparing social role theory and evolutionary psychology. *American Psychologist*, *52*(12*)*, 1380–1383.

Eromo, T. L., & Levy, D. A. (2017). The rise, fall, and resurgence of "self-esteem": A critique, reconceptualization, and recommendations. *North American Journal of Psychology*, *19*(2), 255–302.

Etaugh, C., & Bridges, J. (2017). *Women's lives: A psychological exploration* (4th ed.). New York: Taylor & Francis.

FCC (Federal Communications Commission). (2019). Obscene, indecent and profane broadcasts. www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/obscene-indecent-and-profane-broadcasts (accessed April 4, 2019).

Ferrari, J., Díaz-Morales, J. F., O'Callaghan, J., Díaz, K., & Argumedo, D. (2007). Frequent behavioral delay tendencies by adults: International prevalence rates of chronic procrastination. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *38*, 458–464.

Fogarty, G., & White, C. (1994). Differences between values of Australian Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *25*(3), 394–408.

Freud, S. (1938). *The basic writings of Sigmund Freud*. New York: Random House.

Frey, C., & Hoppe-Graff, S. (1994). Serious and playful aggression in Brazilian boys and girls. *Sex Roles*, *30*, 249–268.

Fry, D. (1988). Intercommunity differences in aggression among Zapotec children. *Child Development*, *59*, 1008–1019.

Furnham, A., Kirkcaldy, B., & Lynn, R. (1994). National attitudes to competitiveness, money, and work among young people: First, second, and third world differences. *Human Relations*, *47*(1), 119–132.

Galeotti, M. (2018). Gangster's paradise: How organised crime took over Russia. *The Guardian*. March 23. www.theguardian.com/news/2018/mar/23/how-organised-crime-took-over-russia-vory-super-mafia

Geniole, S. N., Bird, B. M., McVittie, J. S., Purcell, R. B., Archer, J., & Carré J. M. (2019). Is testosterone linked to human aggression? A meta-analytic examination of the relationship between baseline, dynamic, and manipulated testosterone on human aggression. *Hormones and Behavior*, *123*, 104644. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.yhbeh.2019.104644

Habermas, T. (1991). The role of psychiatric and medical traditions in the discovery and description of anorexia nervosa in France, Germany, and Italy, 1873–1918. *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, *179*, 360–365.

Hailikari, T., Katajavuori, N., & Asikainen, H. (2021). Understanding procrastination: A case of a study skills course. *Social Psychological Education*, *24*, 589–606.

Halonen, D., & Santrock, J. (1995). *Psychology: Contexts of behavior*. Madison, WI: Brown & Benchmark.

Hans, H. (2016). Review of the worldwide epidemiology of eating disorders. *Current Opinion in Psychiatry*, *29*(6), 336–339.

Hinsliff, G. (2022). "It stopped me having sex for a year": Why Generation Z is turning its back on sex-positive feminism. *The Guardian*. February 2. www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2022/feb/02/it-stopped-me-having-sex-for-a-year-why-generation-z-is-turning-its-back-on-sex-positive-feminism

Hoffman E., & Compton W. (2022). The Dao of Maslow: A new direction for mentorship. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*. March. https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/00221678221076574

Hofstede, G., & Bond, M. H. (1988). The Confucius connection: From cultural roots to economic growth. *Organizational Dynamics*, *16*, 4–21.

Hyde, J. (2005). The gender similarities hypothesis. *American Psychologist*, *60*(6), 581–592.

Inglehart, R. (1997). *Modernization and post modernization: Cultural, economic, and political change in 43 societies*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Inkeles, A., & Smith, D. (1974). *Becoming modern: Individual changes in six developing countries*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Ishi, K., Taraneh, M., Kanami, M., & Kim, H. (2017). Cultural differences in motivation for seeking social support and the emotional consequences of receiving support: The role of influence and adjustment goals. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *48*(9), 1442–1456.

Iyengar, S., Wells, R., & Schwartz, B. (2006). Doing better but feeling worse: Looking for the "best" job undermines satisfaction. *Psychological Science*, *17*, 143–150.

Jankowiak, B., Jaskulska, S., Sanz-Barbero, B., Waszyńska, K., Claire, K. D., Bowes, N., Silva, E., Neves, S., Albaladejo-Blázquez, N., Pyżalski, J., Chmura-Rutkowska, I., & Vives-Cases, C. (2021). Will I like myself if you hurt me? Experiences of violence and adolescents' self-esteem. *Sustainability*, *13*, 11620. https://doi.org/10.3390/su132111620

Jenkins, A. (1995). *Psychology and African Americans* (2nd ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Ji, L.-J., & Yap, S. (2016). Culture and cognition. *Current opinion in psychology*, *8*, 105–111.

Jones, J. (2022). LGBT Identification in U.S. ticks up to 7.1%. *Gallup News*. https://news.gallup.com/poll/389792/lgbt-identification-ticks-up.aspx

Kadiangandu, J. K., Mullet, E., & Vinsonneau, G. (2001). Forgiveness: A Congo-France comparison. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *32*(4), 504–514.

Kakar, S. (1989). The maternal-feminine in Indian psychoanalysis. *International Review of Psycho-Analysis*, *16*, 355–362.

Keel, P., & Klump, K. (2003). Are eating disorders culturebound syndromes? Implications for conceptualizing their etiology. *Psychological Bulletin*, *129*(5), 747–769.

Kon, I. (2001). *Adolescent sexuality on the eve of the 21st century* (in Russian). Dubna: Fenix.

Krus, D., & Rysberg, J. (1976). Industrial managers and NACH. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *7*(4), 491–499.

Lansford, J., Malone, P., Dodge, K., Chang, L., Chaudhary, N. T. S., Oburu, P., & Deater-Deckard, K. (2010). Children's perceptions of maternal hostility as a mediator of the link between discipline and children's adjustment in four countries. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, *34*(5), 452–461.

Laumann E., Glasser D., Neves R., & Moreira E. (2009). A population-based survey of sexual activity, sexual problems and associated help-seeking behavior patterns in mature adults in the United States of America. *International Journal of Impotence Research*, *21*(3), 171–178.

Leung, K., & Drasgow, F. (1986). Relation between self-esteem and delinquent behavior. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *17*(2), 151–167.

Levy, D. A. (2019). The "self-esteem" enigma: A critical analysis. North American Journal of Psychology, *21*(2), 305–338.

Liu, J. H., McCreanor, T., McIntosh, T., & Teaiwa, T. (Eds.). (2005). *New Zealand identities: Departures and destinations*. Wellington, NZ: Victoria University Press.

Love, B. (1992). *The encyclopedia of unusual sexual practices*. Houston, TX: Golden Dragon.

Lucas, T., Parkhill, M. R., Wendorf, C. A., Imamoglu, E. O., Weisfeld, C. C., Weisfeld, G. E., et al. (2008). Cultural and evolutionary components of marital satisfaction: A multidimensional assessment of measurement invariance. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *39*, 109–123.

Madsen, M., & Kagan, S. (1973). Mother-directed achievement of children in two cultures. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *4*(2), 221–228.

Makino, M., Tsuboi, K., & Dennerstein, L. (2004). Prevalence of eating disorders: A comparison of Western and non-Western countries. *Medscape General Medicine*, *6*(3). www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1435625/

Malouf, E., Stuewing, J., & Tangney, J. (2012). Self-control and jail inmates' substance misuse post-release: Mediation by friends' substance use and moderation by age. *Addictive Behaviors*, *37*(11*)*, 1198–1204.

Marcuse, H. (1964). *One-dimensional man*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Maslow, A. (1962). *Toward a psychology of being*. Princeton, NJ: Van Nostrand.

Maslow, A. (1970). *Motivation and personality* (2nd ed.). New York: Harper & Row.

McClelland, D. C. (1958). The use of measures of human motivation in the study of society. In J. Atkinson (Ed.), *Motives in fantasy, action, and society* (pp. 518–554). Princeton, NJ: Van Nostrand.

McClelland, D. C. (1961). *The achieving society*. Princeton, NJ: Van Nostrand.

McClelland, D. C. (1987). *Human motivation*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

McGregor, S., Roberts, S. Grant, S. L., & O'Loghlen, E. (2022). Weight-normative versus weight-inclusive narratives in weight-related public health campaigns: Effects on anti-fat attitudes, stigma, motivation, and self-efficacy. *Obesities*, *2*(1), 76–93.

Miller, D. (1983). The correlates of entrepreneurship in three types of firms. *Management Science*, 29, 770–791.

Miller, G. (2000). *The mating mind: How sexual choice shaped the evolution of human nature*. London: Heinemann.

Minturin, L., & Shashak, J. (1982). Infanticide as a terminal abortion procedure. *Behavioral Science Research*, *17*, 70–90.

Mischel, W. (2014). *The marshmallow test: Mastering self-control*. New York: Little, Brown & Company.

Mischel, W., Ebbesen, E., & Raskoff, Z. (1972). Cognitive and attentional mechanisms in delay of gratification. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *21*(2), 204–218.

Murray, H. (1938). *Explorations in personality*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Nakomuro, N., & Kara, S. (2022). *Jungian psychology in the East and West: Cross-cultural perspectives from Japan*. New York: Routledge.

Nansunga, M., Yukari, M., Alele, P., & Kasolo, J. (2014). Association of testosterone levels with socio-demographic characteristics in a sample of Ugandan men. *African Health Sciences*, *14*(2), 348–355.

Narvaes, R., & Martins de Almeida, R. M. (2014). Aggressive behavior and three neurotransmitters: Dopamine, GABA, and serotonin – A review of the last 10 years. *Psychology & Neuroscience*, *7*(4), 601–607.

Neto, F., Mullet, E., Deschamps, J. C., Barros, J., Benvindo, R., Camino, L., et al. (2000). Cross-cultural variations in attitudes toward love. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *31*(5), 626–635.

Nevis, E. C. (1983). Cultural assumptions and productivity: The United States and China. *Sloan Management Review*, *24*, 17–29.

Niles, S. (1998). Achievement goals and means: A cultural comparison. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *29*(5), 656–667.

OECD. (2011). *Against the odds: Disadvantaged students who succeed in school*. OECD Publishing. www.oecd.org/PISA/PISAproducts/PISA-againsttheoddsdisadvantagedstudentswhosucceedinschool.htm

Parsons, J., & Goff, S. (1978). Achievement motivation: A dual modality. *Educational Psychologist*, *13*, 93–96.

Peng, K., Nisbett, R. E., & Wong, N. Y. C. (1997).Validity problems comparing values across cultures and possible solutions. *Psychological Methods*, *2*, 329–344.

Peng, J., Zhang, J., Zhang, Y., Gong, P., Han, B., Sun, H., Cao, F., & Miao, D. (2018). A new look at the impact of maximizing on unhappiness: Two competing mediating effects. *Frontiers of Psychology*, *9*(66). https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.00066

Perez-Arce, F. (2011, March). The effects of education on time preferences. Rand Corporation Working Paper WR-844. https://bit.ly/37Ou4r1

Petrovsky, A. (1978). *The psychological theory of the collective*. Moscow: Academy of Sciences.

Pinker, S. (2012). *The better angels of our nature: Why violence has declined*. New York: Penguin.

Pinto, A., Folkers, E., & Sines, J. (1991). Dimensions of behavior and home environment in school-age children: India and the United States. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *22*, 491–508.

Pliner, P. (1982). The effects of mere exposure on liking for edible substances. *Appetite: Journal for Intake Research*, *3*, 283–290.

Pliner, P., & Pelchat, M. (1991). Neophobia in humans and the special status of foods of animal origin. *Appetite: Journal for Intake Research*,*16*, 205–218.

Pliner, P., Pelchat, M., & Grabski, M. (1993). Reduction of neophobia in humans by exposure to novel foods. *Appetite: Journal for Intake Research*, *20*, 111–123.

Rathus, S., Nevid, J., & Fischer-Rathus, L. (1993). *Human sexuality in a world of diversity.* Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Robinette, P. (2010). *The rape of innocence: Female genital mutilation and circumcision in the USA.* Eugene, OR: Nunzio Press.

Rogers, C. R. (1959). A theory of therapy, personality and interpersonal relationships as developed in the client-centered framework. In S. Koch (Ed.), *Psychology: A study of a science (Vol 3). Formulations of the person and the social context.* New York: McGraw Hill.

Rohier, I. (1975). A social-learning approach to political socialization. In D. Schwartz & S. Schwartz (Eds.), *New directions in political socialization* (pp. 129–162). New York: Free Press.

Rubin, J., Conley, T., Klein, V., Liu, J., Lehane, C., & Dammeyer, J. (2019). A cross-national examination of sexual desire: The roles of "gendered cultural scripts" and "sexual pleasure" in predicting heterosexual women's desire for sex. *Personality and Individual Differences, 15.* www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0191886919304349

Ryan, R., & Deci, E. (2000). Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations: Classic definitions and new directions. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, *25*(1), 54–67.

Segall, M. H., Dasen, P. R., Berry, J. W., & Poortinga, Y. H. (1990). *Human behavior in global perspective: An introduction to cross-cultural psychology.* New York: Pergamon.

Segall, M. H., Ember, C. R., & Ember, M. (1997). Aggression, crime, and warfare. In J. W. Berry, M. H. Segall, & Ç. Kağıtçıbaşı (Eds.), *Handbook of cross-cultural psychology* (Vol. 3, 3rd ed., pp. 213–254). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Sexual Orientation, UK. (2020). *Office for National Statistics.* www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/sexuality/bulletins/sexualidentityuk/2020

Shiraev, E. (2011). *A history of psychology: A global perspective.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Shiraev, E., & Sobel, R. (2006). *People and their opinions.* New York: Longman.

Slone M., & Shoshani, A. (2017). Children affected by war and armed conflict: Parental protective factors and resistance to mental health symptoms. *Frontiers of Psychology, 23*(8), 1397.

Smink, F. E., van Hoeken, D., & Hoek, H. W. (2012). Epidemiology of eating disorders: Incidence, prevalence and mortality rates. *Current Psychiatry Reports*, *14*(4), 406–414.

Smith, M. B. (1978). Psychology and values. *Journal of Social Issues*, *34*, 181–199.

Smith, P. K., López-Castro, L., Robinson, S., & Görzig, A. (2018). Consistency of gender differences in bullying in cross-cultural surveys. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, ISSN 1359–1789.

Staub, E. (1996). Cultural-societal roots of violence: The examples of genocidal violence and of contemporary youth violence in the United States. *American Psychologist*, *51*(2), 117–132.

Staub, E. (2016). *The roots of goodness and resistance to evil.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Stearns, P. (2006). *Consumerism in world history.* Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press.

Steers, R., & Sanchez-Runde, C. (2002). Culture, motivation, and work behavior. In M. Martin & K. Newman (Eds.), *Handbook of cross-cultural management* (pp. 190–216). Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Sue, S., & Okazaki, S. (1990). Asian American educational achievements: A phenomenon in search of an explanation. *American Psychologist*, *45*, 913–920.

Summer, W. (1970). *What social classes owe to each other*. Caldwell, ID: Caxton.

Thompson, K. (2003). *Body image, eating disorders, and obesity*. Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Association.

Thornton, J. (2019). WHO report shows that women outlive men worldwide. *British Medical Journal*. www.bmj.com/content/365/bmj.l1631

Tori, C. D., & Bilmes, M. (2002). Multiculturalism and psychoanalytic psychology: The validation of a defense mechanisms measure in an Asian population. *Psychoanalytic Psychology*, *19*(4), 701–721.

UNODC (The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime).(2015). www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/statistics/index.html

Van de Vliert, E. (2006). Autocratic leadership around the globe: Do climate and wealth drive leadership culture? *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *37*, 42–59.

Van de Vliert, E. (2007). Climatoeconomic roots of survival versus self-expression cultures. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *38*, 156–172.

Villa, V. (2020). Women in many countries face harassment for clothing deemed too religious – or too secular. *Pew Research Center*. December 16. www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/12/16/women-in-many-countries-face-harassment-for-clothing-deemed-too-religious-or-too-secular/

Wagner, G. (2018). *Homology, genes, and evolutionary innovation*. New York: Princeton University Press.

Wairaven, G. (2013). *Health and poverty: Global health problems and solutions*. New York: Routledge.

Weber, M. (1968). *Economy and society: An outline of interpretive sociology*. New York: Bedminster Press. (Originally published in 1922.)

Weiss, B. (1992). Some consequences of early harsh discipline: Child aggression and a maladaptive social information processing style. *Child Development*, *63*, 1321–1335.

WHO (World Health Organization). (2015). *Preventing suicide: A global imperative*. www.who.int/mental_health/suicide-prevention/world_report_2014/en/ (accessed June 23, 2015).

WHO. (2022). Female genital mutilation. *World Health Organization*. www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/female-genital-mutilation

WHO. (2021). *Devastatingly pervasive: 1 in 3 women globally experience violence*. World Health Organization. www.who.int/news/item/09-03-2021-devastatingly-pervasive-1-in-3-women-globally-experience-violence

World Bank. (2018). Why people fight: Inequality, exclusion, and a sense of injustice. https://elibrary.worldbank.org/doi/10.1596/978-1-4648-1162-3_ch4

Yakhnich, L., Pounko, I., & Walsh, S. (2019, February). The hidden matrix: Perspectives of youth and their parents on immigration and youth delinquent behavior. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022119832128 (accessed March 30, 2019).

Yates, J. F., Ji, L.-J., Oka, T., Lee, J.-W., Shinotsuka, H., & Sieck, W. R. (2010). Indecisiveness and culture: Incidence, values, and thoroughness. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *41*(3), 428–444.

Yerkes, R. (1911). *Introduction to psychology*. New York: Holt.

8

CHAPTER 8
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIALIZATION

In the twenty-first century, most of us can change our names, citizenship, religious affiliation, and even our sex. But can we change our age? Not in fantasy but legally, officially? If someone is 22 years old, for example, can she "become" 17 on the basis that she feels younger? The most rational answer, of course, is "no." However, Emile Ratelband, a Dutchman whose official age is now in his mid-seventies has been battling a court case to legally reduce his age by 20 years. He contended that if people in a growing number of countries (including the United States, South Africa, Denmark, India, and many others) are permitted to change their sex, then people should be allowed to change their age as well. On what grounds? He argued that in his case, he had the healthy body of a 45-year-old, according to his doctors. Moreover, he felt at least 20 years younger than his legal age. Psychologically, he grew very uncomfortable realizing how old he was. Ratelband used another argument to justify the need to change his age: There are age-related stereotypes, especially on social networks and dating sites. He simply didn't want to be treated as a 70-year-old man and rejected only because people thought he was "too old."

Critics vehemently rejected his proposal. Some said that the possibility of declaring oneself younger could open the door to the opposite challenge: What if many people, including children, decide to "become" older? Others turn to a hypothetical thought experiment. If one were to essentially "erase" 10 or 20 years from the record, would this also erase all the things that happened to this person – like traffic tickets, college degrees, professional experience, or marriages? Yet others connected age, law, and culture together. Each society is rooted in customs and legal rules. Societies associate age with certain rights and responsibilities: the right to marry, the right to vote, the right to drive a car, the right to receive an education, or, in some countries, the duty to serve in the military. If people can change their age at will, it could create far too much confusion, uncertainty, and chaos.

This case is not as simple as it seems. In some countries, people carry government documents displaying their ethnic or religious identity. In the United States, a driver's license indicates a person's height, hair color, and eye color. Passports commonly show your birthplace. Almost every identification document reveals your age. Age is something we cannot control, like our skin color or birthplace. We fight against all kinds of discrimination based on our race and our national origin, right? So, what if we were to eliminate our age as a factor affecting our prescribed behaviors, rights, and responsibilities?

———

DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIALIZATION

Psychologists distinguish between human development and socialization. **Human development** is viewed as the changes in physical, psychological, and social behavior that are experienced by individuals across the life span – from conception to death. **Socialization** is the process by which the individual becomes a member of a particular culture and incorporates its values and behaviors. Of course, there is some overlap between human development and socialization. Both are lifelong processes replete with surges and delays, changes in direction, sudden transitions, and long-term conversions. Human development involves not only growth but also decline and modification.

Psychology as a scientific discipline began to study human development and socialization more than 120 years ago. Some psychologists, as we will discuss later in this chapter, believed in nearly universal mechanisms of an individual's development and saw cultural influence as an "external" factor affecting behavior and experience. Others believed in cultural relativism and the importance of different socialization practices (Edwards & Bloch, 2010). An early fundamental comparative study called *The Six Cultures Study of Socialization* began in 1954 and involved investigators from three universities (Harvard, Yale, and Cornell). The selected countries were the United States, Mexico, Japan, India, the Philippines, and Uganda (LeVine, 2010; Whiting, 1963). This was just the initiation of a long and comprehensive cross-cultural study into human development, which continues today.

We begin with an overview of the impact of culture on development and socialization and then – before describing specific life span stages in cultural contexts – we turn our attention to several specific psychological theories of development and critically discuss them cross-culturally.

QUALITY OF LIFE AND THE CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT

One's overall quality of life significantly affects the individual's development. Quality of life factors include availability of food and other products, physical and financial security, type of living conditions, quality of education and health care, presence or absence of violence in the family or neighborhood, and so forth. Technological advancements and socioeconomic improvements also affect all aspects of life.

Since 1960, global life expectancy has risen more than 20 years, and currently stands at approximately 72. In the twenty-first century, global *fertility rates* (i.e., the average number of biological children per woman) keep falling. Sixty years ago, the "average" woman had more than five children; these days the number is slightly higher than two (Economist, 2023). Birth rates in many countries including Brazil, Mexico, South Korea, Singapore, Thailand, Japan, Iran, Saudi Arabia, or Russia are the same or even lower than those in the United States, which is around two (Economist, 2022; Roser, 2017). General demographic trends in Europe, North and South America, East Asia, Central Asia, and

the Middle East show steadily declining fertility rates (Winter & Teitelbaum, 2013). Immigration is also an important factor that substantially changes many centuries-old family traditions. In cross-cultural studies, it is extremely important to distinguish between several generations of immigrants because, among other things, they are likely to be different in their socioeconomic status, educational achievement, and occupational choices (Schwartz et al., 2010).

Wealth and the individual's access to resources are significant factors that affect socialization. Trust (i.e., a belief that others have a benign intention in social interactions) as a psychological phenomenon has been positively correlated with economic security of the country (Hamamura, 2011). If people are economically secure and the society generally protects their access to resources and services, they are more likely to feel secure and thus trust the individuals around them.

Access to resources and educational opportunities are likely to provide an advantageous environment for the developing child. In a classic study, the prominent Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky (1932) established that organized, planned, and guided interactions with a more knowledgeable partner (like a sibling, a friend, or a teacher) advances the intellectual development of a child. Middle-class parents answer children's questions with more elaborate explanations than do parents of a lower social class, who are generally less educated than middle-class families (see Chapter 5). One study showed that Mexican mothers from low-socioeconomic-status groups – in contrast to mothers from more affluent families – used physical interaction (such as holding or nudging) with their children more frequently than they used verbal means (Zepeda, 1985). In the past, in many working-class communities in the United States, as well as in preindustrial communities in Africa and the Pacific, parents had somewhat low willingness to verbally instruct their children themselves and tended to assume that children would learn things on their own (Rogoff, 1990).

Poverty may directly affect relationships within the family. In preindustrial and economically underdeveloped societies, partly because of limited access to resources, close cooperation within families becomes an economic necessity (see Chapter 1).

NORMS, CUSTOMS, AND CHILD CARE

Countries vary in overall density of population and number of immediate family members. A unit of one or two adults living with their own children was common for decades in Western societies, such as Canada, Sweden, or the United States, whereas the large extended family in which parents, children, grandparents, cousins, and even some distant relatives live in one household were more common in non-Western countries, such as Pakistan, Rwanda, or Indonesia. A study in Greece, Cyprus, the Netherlands, Great Britain, and Germany examined the relationship of family bonds to family structure but did not find substantial differences among families in the sampled countries in terms of emotional closeness, geographic proximity to relatives, and frequency of telephone contacts (Georgas et al., 1997). However, when the extended families were

analyzed, differences were found between generally wealthy individualist countries in the samples (the Netherlands, Great Britain, and Germany) and predominantly less affluent collectivist countries (Greece and Cyprus). The extended families in the latter samples were emotionally and geographically closer to each other than the families from the individualist sample.

During the past 50 years, many patterns related to the family structure began to change significantly. The ratio of living grandparents to children is steadily rising globally. There were about five hundred million grandparents in the world in 1960; these days, the number has tripled and is close to one and half billion. The ratio of grandparents to their grandchildren younger than age 15 has doubled in the last 65 years. In addition, there are distinct national differences. For instance, the average age of grandparents in Japan is 72, while in Burundi it is 53 (Economist, 2023).

According to recent research, in the United States, about 46 percent of U.S. children younger than 18 years of age are living in a home with two married heterosexual parents in their first marriage (Economist, 2023). This is a substantial change from the 1960s, when fully 73 percent of children lived in such families (Livingston, 2014). Nearly half of Swedish households consist of just one person, the highest level in Europe after the neighboring Finland (Economist, 2023).

The child's development and socialization depend on the people with whom the child interacts, the places where they spend time together, and the roles children play (Whiting & Whiting, 1975). Adults assign children to some roles and disallow others. For example, cross-cultural differences in the behavior of boys and girls may be partially due to different roles assigned to them by adults. That is why studies have shown that girls were more apt to stay close to home and were more involved in child-care activities in comparison with boys (Whiting & Edwards, 1988). Rough-and-tumble play is a common child's activity (usually in boys) across cultures. However, in traditional Muslim communities, girls in the past were seldom encouraged to engage in such games by their parents (Ahmed, 2002). Such traditions can change, of course.

There are similarities in patterns of social support from children, spouses, relatives, and friends. However, comparative studies identify several national and cultural differences. For example, rocking or thumb sucking in children would be considered wrong by white South African mothers. In contrast, for native African mothers, such behavior is normal. U.S. mothers respond more favorably to their babies' requests when the infants are playing with physical objects. Japanese mothers, on the other hand, were more responsive when their babies were engaged in play with them. In the past, Japanese parents, unlike U.S. parents rarely left their children with babysitters. This may explain why Japanese children displayed a higher rate of anxiety than U.S. boys and girls when the parents were not present (Bornstein & Tamis-LeMonda, 1989). Studies on parent–child communication showed that French and Italian parents and children were more interactive than German pairs (Best, 1994). An exaggeration in one's gratitude was considered normal and is even expected in Arab cultures (Triandis, 1994). U.S. boys and girls commonly send "thank you" cards or emails to their birthday guests. This tradition is unknown in Russia,

Ukraine, Armenia, and many other countries. However, as you might anticipate, global travel and learning experience are affecting old traditions and customs.

Cultural traditions of collectivism are positively correlated with the authoritarian style of parenting, which is based on strict demands, behavioral control, and sanctions (Rudy & Grusec, 2001). In other words, in predominantly collectivist cultures, more parents practiced authoritarian methods than they did in predominantly individualist cultures. Of course, we should understand that besides collectivism, many societal factors contribute to authoritarian methods, including political authoritarianism, lack of education, social instability, and educational traditions. For instance, Russian adolescents perceived parents and teachers as more controlling than U.S. students did (Chirkov & Ryan, 2001). Observers for years considered Russian elementary and secondary education as more centralized and controlling than the styles practiced in the West (Potapova & Trines, 2017).

Studies show that Indian mothers, compared to American and German mothers, tend to emphasize responsibility and interrelatedness in their children (Keller et al., 2010; Raghavan et al., 2010). Findings from a comparative study of white parents, Mexican American parents, and Mexican parents revealed that white parents reported less authoritarian (i.e., extremely strict) parenting than Mexican American parents. However, no differences were found in authoritarian parenting style between the United States' white and Mexican parents (Varela et al., 2004). The effect of authoritarian parenting style on children appears to be similarly adverse across cultures (Sahithya, Manohar, & Vijaya, 2019).

CROSS-CULTURAL SENSITIVITY

PARENTAL DISCIPLINE

As Lynn headed out to go shopping, she already knew that her 4-year-old son was going to be trouble. All that day, he had been doing everything within his power to frustrate her. First, he refused to eat breakfast, and then spilled his apple juice all over the carpet. He emphatically rebuffed her attempts to dress him, and continuously tried to unbuckle his seat belt on their journey to the shopping mall. She was already on her last nerve. From the moment they arrived at the mall, he was whining incessantly, demanding that they go immediately to the toy store. Then, when her son ran away from her and started splashing around in the fountain, her patience had finally run out. Lynn yanked him out of the fountain and spanked him a few times on the butt. The son reacted at first with a brief and silent moment of embarrassment . . . and then filled the shopping mall with high-pitched wailing. A woman nearby was mortified, admonishing Lynn, "This is horrible. You cannot treat your child like this!" A man passing by also chimed in, "Shame on you for doing this, ma'am. At least not in a public place." Lynn could not understand why these strangers reacted in this way. She had arrived two years ago as a Cambodian refugee, and up to this point, no one had criticized her parenting.

Traditional Cambodian child-rearing practices permit spanking. Moreover, for years, this type of physical discipline had been a typical component of the child's learning process. Moreover, parental authority in the family is seldom challenged. The extended family, the local community, and the Buddhist religion all condone discipline within the family. A study some years ago found that more than 50 percent of Southeast Asian parents reported having used physical punishment on their children at some point (Tajima & Harachi, 2010). However, the same study found that, among immigrant families, education and experience living in the United States were associated with decreased spanking of children. In the United States, a comprehensive study showed that spanking has an equal negative impact on black and white children (Gershoff & Grogan-Kaylor, 2016).

Globally, affluence and education are presumed to change parental attitudes toward the use of physical force against their children. Perhaps an open competition of ideas associated with greater education leads to more parents viewing spanking as an ineffective method of discipline. Upon traveling and speaking with parents from around the world, one often hears some parents sigh with nostalgia, reminiscing upon more traditional times during which children were more "disciplined," and complaining that parents no longer punish their kids. One parent even suggested that what children these days lack is "fear" and that the fear that physical punishment impresses upon a child's soul is good for the child's character.

Questions: In this story, for whom do you have the greatest amount of empathy? The mother? Her son? The people in the mall? If you had to choose, which do you think is better for a child's character development: mostly permissive parents who allow their children to learn almost everything on their own without parental interference? Or mostly authoritarian parents who exercise tight control over their children? What do you think would be the best "balance"?

Once a norm is established, it can be passed on from one generation to the next. In most traditional African cultures, obedience was for centuries a highly desired pattern of behavior for children, a pattern that was considered crucial for the child's survival in difficult living conditions, particularly during the age of colonialism (Klingelhofer, 1971). In stark contrast, most Western concepts of child rearing view strict obedience negatively and criticize most forms of adult–child coercion. Cross–national studies have shown that focusing on the child's individual independence is more common in nations with greater wealth and more highly educated populations; the focus on obedience was more common in nations with less wealth and education (Park & Lau, 2015).

PARENTAL VALUES AND EXPECTATIONS

Before becoming a parent, many individuals have expectations about when and how many children they would love to have. In the United States, Gallup – a major polling

company – has been asking this question since the 1930s. Back in the 1960s, the average number of desired children was 3.5. After the 1980s, the number was lower yet relatively unchanging: it was 2.5 (Stone, 2018). More than 3,300 adolescents from 12 countries (the United States, Russia, Germany, France, China, India, Indonesia, Poland, South Africa, Turkey, Israel, and Japan) responded to the question about how many children they would love to have in the future. Except for Israel and China, adolescents preferred to have between two and three children. American and French adolescents reported a higher number of desired children than did adolescents from the other European countries. A noteworthy gender difference was established only in the United States, with female adolescents wanting to have more children than males (Mayer & Trommsdorff, 2010). Yet more contemporary survey numbers suggest that in most countries young adults, on the average, prefer to have just two children (Economist, 2022).

Parents typically have their own developmental timetables: They expect their children to acquire certain characteristics (such as sitting straight, walking, talking, or thinking logically) at certain ages. Research showed that, despite large individual variations, there have been some cultural patterns in such expectations (Super & Harkness, 1997). In one study, for example, Israeli mothers of European background expected their children to develop certain cognitive skills earlier than did mothers of non–European origin (Ninio, 1979). U.S. mothers had earlier expectations of their children's assertiveness as compared with Japanese mothers, and Japanese mothers had earlier expectations about their children's ability to control their emotions and express courtesy (Hess et al., 1980). According to Levy (1996), in societies that are small, egalitarian, and with little occupational specialization, children were generally expected to learn "on their own," whereas in industrialized democratic societies there are more exact expectations about what, with whom, when, and how children should learn. In the recent years, with a spread of digital information and social networks, more parents than ever before learn about such developmental tables from online sources.

Parents' particular beliefs are translated into behavior that, in reverse, influences other beliefs. Japanese mothers generally viewed autonomy on their children's part as the ability to interact with other children. For many Israeli mothers, the child's independence was crucial, such as the ability to answer the phone or setting the table (Osterweil & Nagano, 1991). Cross-cultural studies – like one involving Argentina, Colombia, and Spain – showed that parental expectations toward pro-social behavior and empathy in their children seem to have a consistent influence on the adolescents' pro-social behavior (Mesurado et al., 2014).

A CASE IN POINT

MEET THE ORIGINAL "TIGER MOM"

"As I often said to the girls, 'My goal as a parent is to prepare you for the future – not to make you like me'" (Chua, 2011). You have probably heard the expression *tiger*

mom, but you might not know the backstory. The term was invented by Amy Chua, a second-generation Chinese American immigrant whose family raised her with the belief that earning an A- was unthinkable. As an undergraduate, Chua attended Harvard University, then Harvard Law School, and is now a tenured professor at Yale Law School. She never allowed her children to have playdates, watch TV, play computer games, or pick their own extracurricular activities. And they were required to rank at the top of every class – with the exception of gym and drama.

Chua asserts that Western parents are characterized by respecting their children's autonomy, encouraging them to follow their passions, providing positive reinforcement, and creating a nurturing atmosphere. In stark contrast, she claims that her methods of raising her daughters align with the Chinese culture's emphasis on academic achievement and family obligation to contribute to society. In this way, the "tiger mom" parenting style is rigid and exacting, using fear and authority to control children. Tiger parents put high expectations on their children to meet their academic goals, believing that strict measures are needed to make them tough, confident, and prepared for the future.

In 2013, social science researcher Su Yeong Kim studied the effects of tiger mom parenting styles on adolescents in a longitudinal study spanning eight years, from early adolescence through emerging adulthood. Using a sample of 444 Chinese American families, the study examined eight parenting dimensions: parental warmth, democratic parenting, parental monitoring, inductive reasoning, parental hostility, psychological control, punitive parenting, and shaming. Kim's research analyzed six developmental outcomes: academic achievement, educational attainment, academic pressure, depressive symptoms, parent–child alienation, and family obligation. Kim et al.'s (2013) research revealed four parenting styles:

*   *supportive* (authoritative)
*   *harsh* (authoritarian)
*   *easygoing* (permissive, low hostility) and
*   *tiger* (authoritarian, authoritative).

The results of Kim's study showed that the supportive parenting style resulted in the best developmental outcomes. This was followed by, in order, easygoing, tiger, and harsh. Compared to the other groups, supportive parenting was associated with higher GPAs, educational attainment, and a stronger feeling of family obligation. It was also correlated with lower levels of academic pressure, depression, and feelings of alienation. Compared to supportive and easygoing parenting, tiger parenting was associated with higher academic pressure, depression, and feelings of alienation. The only exception is that tiger parenting was associated with higher family obligation than easygoing parenting. Finally, harsh parenting showed higher levels of depressive symptoms and alienation, and lower levels of family obligation than the other parenting styles.

Kim concludes that tiger parenting, which is based on the belief that academic achievement reflects successful parenting, ironically does not result in the best educational attainment or the best academic achievement. Instead, it results in children experiencing a similar level of academic pressure as harsh parenting. It is actually supportive parenting, not tiger parenting, that appears to lead to the best developmental and educational outcomes.

Questions: What are your thoughts about these parenting styles? Which do you find preferable, and with what types of children? In what ways do you think your culture impacted how you were raised? How do you see yourself raising your children?

Parents from different cultural groups can hold different views on the formal education of their children and their role as parents in this process. Two samples of Japanese and American mothers described the behavioral characteristics they found most desirable and undesirable in children and chose one characteristic in each list that they considered most highly positive or negative. In describing desirable characteristics, mothers in both cultures tended to emphasize social cooperativeness and interpersonal sensitivity. Comparisons of negative behaviors revealed cultural contrasts. U.S. mothers were far more likely than Japanese mothers to designate aggressive and disruptive behaviors as negative, whereas Japanese mothers tended to highlight social insensitivity and uncooperativeness (Olson et al., 2001).

In another study, 175 mothers from India, Japan, and England indicated the age at which they expect their child to achieve confidence in 45 different activities, including education, compliance, interaction with other children, emotional control, and environmental awareness (Joshi & MacLean, 1997). It was found that competence was expected at an earlier age in Japan than it was in England. Indian mothers expected competence at a later stage than mothers in both England and Japan. However, the expectations of Indian mothers were considerably different from the expectations of the other two groups on all items except environmental competence, in which they were "later" than Japanese but "earlier" than English mothers.

Why did such differences occur? The subjects from Japan and England were taken from urban areas. Children in those regions live primarily in small families, and the mother – who is likely to have a job – is expected to encourage her child's independence at an early age. In contrast, the Indian mothers may not be under such pressure to encourage their child's independence early. Indian children from the sample lived mainly in large extended families, with many relatives representing two or three generations in one household. Although one might expect that Japanese and Indian societies share similar cultural characteristics such as collectivism and the priority of family values, such similarities may be overshadowed by particular socioeconomic factors such as quality of life, availability of diversified information, and access to computers and advanced technologies.

CRITICAL THINKING

ARE RESEARCH SAMPLES REPRESENTATIVE?

The authors of the study discussed above of mothers conducted in India, Japan, and England (Joshi & MacLean, 1997), suggested that the differences among the samples could not be attributed to socioeconomic factors because all the samples were taken from suburban areas, and the income was approximately the same in terms of its purchasing power. However, such direct comparisons can be misleading. Even though a family in country A can purchase the same amount of food as a family in country B, the quality of purchased food could be dramatically different. If two families in two countries have access to medical care, the quality of care in country B could be significantly higher than the quality in country A. In a case studied previously, the scope and depth of the problems that India faces – overpopulation, infectious diseases, corruption, environmental problems, to name a few – might only remotely resemble the daily problems of average U.S. and Japanese citizens.

In general, cross-cultural psychologists are – or at least should be – aware of a methodological obstacle they frequently face in their research: Even though they study children from different countries and cultures, their samples are typically comprised mostly of educated and economically secure families. Parents with time, resources, and motivation are more likely than poorer families to bring their families in to participate in studies in university laboratories. As a consequence, many hundreds of experiments in recent years exploring basic cognitive capacities of the young have almost all focused on middle-class participants. For example, at the 2010 International Conference on Infant Studies, less than 1 percent of the one thousand research presentations reported including participants from poor, disadvantaged families (Fernald, 2010). This situation is changing today and the samples in psychological studies are becoming more diverse, cross-cultural, as was mentioned in Chapter 1 (Best, 2018).

In sum, always critically evaluate the composition of the sample whenever you examine cross-cultural research.

ERIKSON'S STAGES OF PSYCHOSOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Erik Erikson (1902–94), a German–born immigrant to the United States and one of the most quoted psychologists globally, believed that at each stage the ego faces a developmental conflict or crisis (Erikson, 1950). Based on his early research into childhood and parenting among the Native American Lakota and the Yurok tribes, and

rooted in careful clinical observations of hundreds of his patients, Erikson theorized that every person during his or her lifespan passes through eight developmental stages. Each stage is characterized by a developmental conflict, problem, or crisis. If the crisis has a positive resolution, the person's ego is strengthened by gaining a "virtue" that results in greater adaptation and a healthier personality. But if the crisis has a negative resolution, the ego loses strength, resulting in inhibited adaptation and an unhealthier personality. For instance, if a young girl's conflict between her independent desire to go and play on the street with her friends (initiative) and fear of retribution from her parents (guilt) has a positive resolution, she will emerge with the virtue of purpose; a negative outcome, however, would result in a sense of unworthiness (see Table 8.1).

Erikson thus defined the healthy or psychologically mature personality as one that possesses the eight virtues (namely: hope, will, purpose, competence, fidelity, love, care, and wisdom) that emerge from a positive resolution at each stage of development. It was Erikson's belief that the outcome of every crisis resolution is reversible. The goal in his approach to psychotherapy, therefore, was to encourage the growth of whatever virtues the person was missing to achieve happiness (Erikson, 1968). Not incidentally, it is to Erikson that we owe credit for the widely used term *identity crisis*.

Erikson's views allow us to approach the issue of global applicability of psychological ideas that are established in one culture. Studies have shown that his theory of developmental stages can be applicable to various cultures (Gardiner et al., 1998). Moreover, Erikson's views correspond in many ways with classical Indian philosophical traditions aiming at self-transformation through insight into the nature of self (Paranjpe, 1998). However, as was the case with Maslow's theory (see Chapter 7), Erikson has been criticized by psychologists for mixing objective description with subjective prescription. Specifically, the virtues he uses to define the healthy individual are clearly in accordance with Western, Judeo–Christian ethics, values, and social institutions. In other words, Erikson, like many social theorists, may have been describing what he believes should be, rather than what

Table 8.1 Erik Erikson's Stages of Psychosocial Development

Stage	Ego Crisis	Age	Positive Outcome
1	Basic trust versus mistrust	0–1	Hope
2	Autonomy versus shame and doubt	2–3	Will
3	Initiative versus guilt	3–5	Purpose
4	Industry versus inferiority	5–12	Competence
5	Ego identity versus role confusion	Adolescence	Fidelity
6	Intimacy versus isolation	Young adult	Love
7	Generativity versus stagnation	Adulthood	Care
8	Ego integrity versus despair	Maturity	Wisdom

Source: Based on Erikson (1950).

is. We (the authors) wish to emphasize that it is not our intention to impugn the value judgments implicit in the theory of Erikson; in fact, we find ourselves closely aligned with many of his beliefs. However, values and veracity are not synonymous. Further, we must remember that our perceptions of the world are inescapably colored by our own beliefs (both personal and cultural) and that the distinction between description and prescription frequently is a muddled one.

In Erikson's theory, the stages indicate a very general sequence that cannot always be paralleled in other countries. For most adults in economically developed societies, healthy and financially independent retirement is one of the prime areas of concern. Monetary savings and investments became a source of either comfort or frustration for millions of individuals in the United States, Germany, Japan, and other countries. At the same time, billions of human beings have absolutely no money whatsoever to save in the bank. Hunger, civil and ethnic wars, violence and oppression imposed by authorities, chronic ecological problems, and other cataclysms are the permanent focus of these people's daily concerns. Various unpredictable disturbances present a wide range of unpredictable problems, and the sequence of these problems is not as linear as it appears in Erikson's classification. Therefore, in many cases, more immediate strategies of survival may dominate people's lives. Studies of immigrants to the United States show that identity concerns, for example, can occupy people's minds during adulthood, long after the period Erikson had proposed in his classification (Birman & Trickett, 2001).

In industrialized, wealthy democracies, most people can exercise their freedom of choice. They have available to them the choice of different ideologies, lifestyles, and even religions. Conversely, in other cultures, many people's identities and lifestyles are prescribed at birth. In other words, Erikson's theory could be more applicable to societies with so-called *broad socialization* practices that emphasize independence and free self-expression, than in countries with *narrow socialization* that prescribe an ideology that strictly identifies both right and wrong behaviors.

It is important to note that in some cultures, social maturation is not necessarily associated with increased independence (as Erikson maintained), but rather with increased interdependence. Poverty and social injustice often affect interdependence because people need security and protection from one another. In many religious traditions, self-isolation (at least temporary) can often be rewarding and should not necessarily be avoided. Psychological intimacy may occur at earlier life stages. Moreover, role confusion does not have to be common in individuals from traditional cultures; yet it can become significant in immigrants from these countries who find themselves in new social and cultural environments (Larson et al., 2003).

With increasing global migration, many people undergo significant social transitions during the course of the lifetimes. Erikson maintained that people should have choices in terms of their identity or beliefs. As noted above, however, in many parts of the world, people's identities and lifestyles are essentially set at birth. They have to accept a particular religion, social status, profession, and place to live. In these contexts, people have fewer

actual choices in life, and therefore, their transition from one stage to another may be "smoother" than for people who have more choices.

It is also important to realize that in some cultures, social maturation is not associated with increased independence, as in the West, but rather with increased interdependence. In India, for example, the Hindu concept of self is not essentially focused on one's own autonomy but rather on being an integral part of a larger "whole" or community (Kurtz, 1992). Studies have shown that the sequence and timing of the developmental stages can be at times similar and yet different in diverse ethnic groups such as black and white samples in South Africa. For example, white women there were expected to solve the identity crisis earlier than men (Ochse & Plug, 1986).

In general, when applying Erikson's theory to specific cultural conditions, try to examine how each culture views the values inherent in his concepts and how individuals in that culture are expected to cope with each crisis – if indeed they are seen as a "crisis" at all.

PIAGET'S STAGES OF COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget (1896–1980) was primarily interested in how children develop the process of thinking about themselves and the world around them. According to Piaget, the child's cognitive growth is a stage-by-stage process, consisting of four periods (Piaget, 1963). In the first stage, the *sensorimotor* stage, infants learn about their interaction with their immediate environment. During the second stage, the *preoperational* stage, children develop the foundation for their language acquisition. Here, children do not comprehend that other people may see things differently (*egocentrism*). At the third stage of *concrete operations*, children learn logic and realize that volume, amount, and weight may stay the same despite changes in the object's physical appearance (a process called *conservation*). The final stage, *formal operations*, is when adolescents develop the ability to think abstractly.

Do children from all over the world move through these stages? Summarizing results from a handful of studies, Dasen (1994) suggested that the stage sequence does appear to be universal across cultures. That is, children tend to move from one stage to another as Piaget predicted. Nevertheless, other psychologists were more cautious in their cross-cultural assessments of Piaget's findings (Gardiner et al., 1998). Some assumptions produced by his early experiments and observations have not been supported by later studies. For example, Piaget believed that all children were expected to believe in *animism* (the attribution of a "soul" to toys, plants, and natural phenomena) and proposed a universal sequence in which animism diminishes over time. However, anthropologists found that there are groups (such as certain tribes from the Admiralty Islands) where the young children were not animists but actually developed such views later in life (Shweder, 2010).

Most of the criticisms are related to the methodology and procedures used by Piaget and his colleagues. For instance, researchers who conducted earlier cross-cultural studies of language development using Piaget's theory had only limited knowledge of the language studied. Perhaps because of this, researchers often used standardized tests that did not require the child to have language proficiency. Moreover, accurate birth dates of many children were not commonly available, so the actual age of the child studied was not always known.

On the whole, Piaget's theory appears to do an effective job of explaining how children deal with the conservation of volume, weight, and amount. However, some critics (e.g., Goodnow, 1990) maintain that our everyday thinking and ability to make practical decisions in a maze of daily circumstances are not explained well by this theory. Critics have also pointed out that Piaget may have unintentionally provided a temptation to interpret some developmental stages as more "valuable" than others. In reality, though, social success, satisfaction, adaptation strategies, as well as certain activities and professions, do not require that the individual function on the level of formal operations. It is also questionable whether the formal operational stage is supposed to be achieved by all adolescents in all societies. In both Western and non-Western settings, research has shown that there are some healthy and happy individuals who yet fail on formal operational tasks (Byrnes, 1988).

KOHLBERG'S STAGES OF MORAL DEVELOPMENT

Psychologists and social scientists for over a century have been searching for answers to this fundamental question: How do children acquire their moral values? Is morality based on evolutionary genetics? Lessons from parents or at school? Religious teachings? Role modeling from the culture at large? Some combination of all the above? (In this respect, refer to the critical thinking principle of multiple causation in Chapter 2.)

Morality can be defined as a complex cognitive, emotional, and behavioral construct associated with the person's understanding of right and wrong. It can embody the standards or codes of conduct from a number of sources, including philosophy, religion, or the norms of society.

Children are likely to learn moral values step-by-step in the process of their cognitive and emotional development. For instance, one view today maintains that the developing child must be "ready" psychologically to understand morality and virtue before adults are able to teach them moral values. In other words, one cannot to teach complex moral values to a child who hasn't yet learned to speak.

American psychologist Lawrence Kohlberg (1981) conceptualized and developed six stages of moral development in which children and adults make different types of moral judgments. In brief, people progress from lower stages of reasoning, where they essentially seek to avoid punishment for wrongdoing, to the higher stages, where their morality is regulated by underlying circumstances and universal principles that guide their conduct (see Table 8.2).

Table 8.2 Kohlberg's Stages of Moral Development

Stage 1	Preconventional level: Judgments about what is right and what is wrong are based on fear of punishment.
Stage 2	Preconventional level: Moral conduct produces pleasure, whereas immoral conduct results in unwanted consequences.
Stage 3	Conventional level: Any behavior is good if it is approved by significant others.
Stage 4	Conventional level: The existing laws determine what is moral and immoral.
Stage 5	Postconventional level: Moral behavior is based on individual rights and underlying social circumstances.
Stage 6	Postconventional level: Moral conduct is regulated by universal ethical principles that may rise above government and laws.

Snarey (1985) examined 45 empirical studies of moral judgment development conducted in 27 countries and suggested that the first four stages appear to be generally universal in the subjects of all cultures studied. However, critics noted some weaknesses in this well-known study. What were their arguments?

The methodology used was based on hypothetical stories about moral choices that were related well only to U.S. subjects (Shweder et al., 1990). For example, in one such story, a woman is suffering from an illness. She is prescribed an expensive drug that may save her life; however, the pharmacist in the story charges an excessive amount of money for the prescription. The woman's husband does not have the money. The moral predicament in this vignette is whether it is moral to steal the drug. This appears to be a story that makes sense and the situation described is not unusual. However, in many countries, medicine is under strict government control, and pharmacists simply are not permitted to charge patients high market prices. In addition, some items are in short supply, and bribery in these cases is a common way to get the prescription. Moreover, in some countries, it is the physicians themselves – and not pharmacists – who have access to medication and distribute it to their patients.

Another point of criticism is that the developmental stages are closely linked to values of Western liberalism and individualism. Liberal individualism, however, does not always represent moral principles that are applicable to all cultures and peoples. In many cultures, moral judgment is based mostly on existing traditions, and not necessarily on the individual's free will and choice within the law. For some religious groups, certain types of moral behavior are strictly prescribed in the Bible, Torah, or other religious scriptures. Other studies point out that the individual's moral judgments are dictated by circumstance and not necessarily based on a certain level of the person's moral development (Matsumoto, 1994; Vassiliou & Vassiliou, 1973). Cross-cultural studies also show that exposure to certain events, including extreme violence and war, can negatively affect the individual's propensity to make highly moral judgments because such individuals often experience severe emotional traumas that adversely affect their ability to make unbiased judgment (Haskuka et al., 2008).

Another cross-cultural examination of Kohlberg's theory was conducted by Ma and Cheung (1996), who compared the moral judgments of more than 1,000 Hong Kong Chinese, English, and U.S. college and high school students. The scenario consisted of four stories, each of which contained a description of a moral problem. Results showed that, on average, participants from the Chinese sample were more inclined to make judgements reflective of the more "prosocial" judgments reflective of stages 4 and 5, while English and U.S. subjects leaned more toward "individualist" judgments represented by stages 3 and 4.

The authors argue that moral judgments of the Chinese tended to be reinforced by traditional norms, mostly from a collectivist perspective. A strong orientation to perform altruistic acts for the sake of close relatives and friends was part of Chinese culture. According to the authors, Chinese people are also assumed to be influenced by the Confucian concept of the five cardinal relationships, which emphasizes the harmonious connection between (in contemporary terms) bosses and employees, father and son, husband and wife, brother and brother, and friend and friend. Social order, consensus, and law-abiding behavior are attached to the Chinese collective mindset. On the contrary, Western people tend to be concerned primarily with individual rights and their interests being protected by the law. In the West, people often take others to court because the law provides tools to mediate interpersonal relationship. Chinese people tend not to resolve their conflicts via legal institutions. They prefer instead to resolve their conflicts by using interpersonal contacts.

Critics of this type of explanation (which can appear rather simplistic), offer two arguments. The first one is that Chinese culture is constantly changing and people in China now have more options to choose from: The court system is developing and people increasingly are using it to resolve their disputes. The second argument refers to interpersonal contacts. It may appear that interpersonal orientation is more "humane" or more efficient than the law-based system that may look slow and inefficient. (Indeed, it seems easier to settle a conflict with another person than seek legal help.) On the other hand, an emphasis on an interpersonal system of communications often stimulates nepotism (the practice among those with power of favoring relatives or friends) and corruption – two serious problems that people in China and their government recognize all too well (Pei, 2016).

DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES

According to most scientific and folk theories, human development takes place in stages. Typically, birth and death – the initial and final points of existence – are present in virtually every developmental classification. Beliefs in reincarnation and immortality promote the understanding of the life span as a cycle. Views on the beginning of a child's life (i.e., when does it start, at conception or at a particular later stage?) vary cross-culturally and are based on people's educational background, religion, and other ideological values.

CRITICAL THINKING

WHEN DOES LIFE BEGIN?

The answer to this age-old question depends, at its core, on one's definition of "life." There are numerous definitions rooted in various philosophical, religious, cultural, and scientific schools of thought. As such, psychologists too are unable to provide a definitive answer. To complicate the issue further, we, as individuals also have our own personal views. And, unfortunately, some of us stand ready to vigorously guard them against those who would dare disagree with us (see the belief perseverance effect in Chapter 2).

What does it mean to "have life?" Or to "be alive?" Technically, even a microscopic virus is a life form. Similarly, a leaf attached to a tree is also alive. So is an unfertilized egg. So is a sperm. And so is a zygote (a single-celled fertilized egg). And this same principle holds true as the zygote begins to divide and become a blastocyst, then an embryo, then a fetus, and then is finally born into the world. So, when people refer to the "unborn child," the confusion and uncertainty mounts: At what point does a single-celled zygote become a "child" or "person"? And does such a point even objectively exist?

In our attempt to answer such questions, we may turn to both historical precedent and contemporary lines of thought. Our ancestors' views about life varied. Ancient Egyptian doctors assigned men the privilege and power to create new human life. Early Chinese medicine spoke of two substances together, male and female blood and sperm, that both generate a child who stays within the mother until birth. Traditional Jewish communities considered life beginning with a baby's first breath. As of the time of this writing, more than half of Americans believe that human life begins at conception, while the other half disagrees (Pew, 2022). Clearly, there is no consensus.

Various fields of science today focus on different developmental stages in the attempt to identify so-called "*vital moments*" – whether that is fertilization, embryonic cell differentiation, cardiac function, or brain activity. Yet, as many suggest, the search to identify the demarcation of when particular organic matter becomes a "person" clearly goes beyond the realm of science. Some Hindu theologians believe that personhood begins at 3 months and develops through to 5 months of gestation. Some philosophers view the zygote not as a person but rather as a "potential person." If there is no objective point at which the fertilized egg becomes a child or a person, then what we are left with are a wide range of definitions based on beliefs and values, rather than demonstrable truth.

As such, such questions are linked to our society's values, our sense of self, and a cultural acceptance of what it means to be a human being. Many of our ancestors, including philosophers, doctors, and scientists, and most of our contemporaries who examine and debate life, maintain that answering the question, "when does life begin?" requires moral choice, social position, and an examination of our values and ethics (Dias, 2022). All told, the more challenging question is: At what point (if any) does organic matter become a "person?" A watermelon seed has the inherent potential to become a watermelon; but no one would mistake a watermelon seed for an actual watermelon.

Birthdays, initiation rituals, weddings, graduations, job promotions, the birth of children and grandchildren, retirement, and other significant life events mark the most important points of human transition. Several biological, behavioral, and physiological changes are also recognized cross-culturally as indicators of particular life stages. Natural events include the emergence of permanent teeth, first spoken words, first menstruation and menopause in women, or growth of facial hair in young men. Gray hair is commonly viewed as a sign of maturity, despite tremendous individual variation with regards to hair pigmentation. Changes can be gradual or they may be sudden and abrupt in some cultural groups: In certain tribal groups in the Oceania islands, a boy "officially" becomes a man in the course of one day based on a specified ritual (McDowell, 1988).

There are also developmental categorizations based on folk beliefs or particular life events. Such events may symbolically identify either the beginning or ending of a life stage. One's first sexual intercourse could be seen as a confirmation of one's "manhood" or "womanhood." Reaching the drinking age – which is 21 in the United States and 18 in Ukraine, for example – could also be interpreted as a sign of legal maturity.

Books on human development distinguish several common stages within the life span: prenatal period, infancy, childhood (divided into early and middle childhood), adolescence, and adulthood, which is, in turn, subdivided into three stages: early adulthood, middle adulthood, and late adulthood (see Table 8.3). We will discuss each of these sequentially in the following sections.

However, there can be differing categorizations of the life span. For example, in more than half of the societies studied by Schlegel and Barry (1991), there was no special term for adolescence. According to Hindu tradition, infancy, early childhood, and middle childhood are not separate stages (Valsiner & Lawrence, 1997). In the Judeo–Christian tradition, life is represented linearly, and its end is death. In Hinduism, life is represented circularly: People live and die many times (Fernandez et al., 2010).

Table 8.3 Periods of Human Development

Prenatal period	Infancy	Childhood	Adolescence	Adulthood
From conception to birth: It takes approximately 266 days in every ethnic, racial, or social group.	From birth to 2 years: The child acquires initial motor, cognitive, and social skills.	From 2 to 11–12 years: The child acquires language and learns about the most important social skills.	From 11–12 to 19–20 years: The child has reached sexual maturity but has not yet taken on rights and responsibilities of the adult status.	From 20 years onward: The individual has achieved adult status as prescribed by the norms and laws of a particular society.

PRENATAL PERIOD: DEVELOPMENT BEFORE BIRTH

In London, Beijing, rural Appalachia, the Amazon rain forest, as well as in every other part of the planet, the **prenatal period** – the period of time between conception and birth – is approximately 38 weeks. From the beginning, the developing embryo in a mother's womb can be exposed to both favorable and unfavorable conditions. For instance, the natural environment around the mother could be stable or unstable, safe or dangerous. Across the world, environmental problems and perilous conditions, such as hunger, violence, excessive radiation, exposure to chemicals, and air and water pollution, to name a few, can cause various complications in pregnancy and serious birth defects. The availability or lack of professional prenatal care is also a crucial factor that affects the unborn child's development.

There are also many common cognitive and behavioral trends related to pregnancy. For instance, studies in the past have shown that in most countries, when a family expects a child, boys were desired more than girls (Hortacsu et al., 2001). Cultural norms matter in such cases. More recent studies of immigrants show that those who arrive from traditional cultures, where gender inequality is still significant, continue to express preference for boys compared to girls (Blau et al., 2017). In the United States, however, this trend seems to be disappearing and most parents desire girls and boys equally (Kopf, 2017). Cross-nationally, teen pregnancies are more common in rural than in urban populations, which has been linked to relatively lower incomes of rural residents (Barber, 2001).

The fetus's life can be interrupted by a mother's decision to terminate her pregnancy. Nearly 50 million abortions are performed in the world each year. Almost 60 percent of them take place in developing countries, where close to 90 percent of the over 20 million illegal and unsafe abortions are performed each year. This is despite the fact that

in many cases, abortion in developing countries is restricted by law and condemned by religion. The risk of death from an unsafe, or illegal, abortion in a developing country is many times higher than the risk in developed countries. An estimated 25 million unsafe abortions (45 percent of all abortions) take place every year, mostly in developing countries (WHO, 2019). (We will address the issue of abortion in greater detail in Chapter 12.)

Attitudes toward pregnancy also differ. In traditional collectivist countries, such as Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Philippines, and Thailand, pregnancy has historically been family centered with active participation and guidance from family (Gardiner et al., 1998). In individualist societies, childbirth tends to be a more private affair. However, one should be careful not to make sweeping judgments or generalizations. Many foreign exchange students, for example, have mentioned to us (the authors) how open many Americans are about their pregnancies: People make official pronouncements, enthusiastically inform relatives and friends, and throw celebratory parties to spread the word about their pregnancy. However, in many countries, such as Russia, pregnancy is commonly kept secret until the changes in the woman's body become obvious. Husbands are not only absent when their wives give birth but are also prohibited from entering birth clinics and may even be escorted out by the police if they dare to enter the facility. Tradition and law often go hand in hand.

INFANCY: FIRST STEPS

Infancy is the period from birth to approximately two years when the child acquires initial motor, cognitive, and social skills. A newborn child needs total care. It is obvious that environmental and social conditions, in which the new life begins, have a crucial impact on the child's life, health, and perhaps his or her personality traits as well. Infant mortality, for instance, varies greatly from country to country and depends on the socioeconomic and political conditions of each nation. To take one example, as of 2018, the infant mortality rate in Sierra Leone was 110 (per 1,000 live births) and was among the highest in the world. The lowest rate was around 2 in Monaco, Japan, and Iceland. In the United States, the rate was 5.8, and in China it was 12.0. Although globally, the neonatal mortality rate fell almost by 50 percent from 37 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 18 in 2017, the problem remains. Globally, in 2017 alone, 5.5 million children under five years old died (United Nations Population Division, 2018). The leading causes of infant mortality are infectious diseases, malnutrition, and the extreme lack of medical care.

TEMPERAMENT

Temperament is defined as the combination of mental, physical, and emotional traits that are present in infancy and manifest in mood and behavior. The child's temperamental predisposition presumably has a strong genetic basis (Buss & Plomin, 1985).

Temperament can also be influenced by environmental factors. For instance, parents respond differently when their child is crying. There are adults who habitually

ignore or neglect their children when they cry, whereas there are those who respond immediately with great urgency. A delayed versus immediate response to crying may stimulate or inhibit certain emotions and other behavioral reactions in the infant. There are individual and cultural variations in such responses. For example, in one of the projects on cross-cultural similarities and differences in mother–infant communications, rural Kenyan and middle-class Bostonian mothers were compared. There were many similarities between the samples studied. Mothers in both locations would eagerly touch, hold, or talk to a child if he or she was crying. However, the U.S. mothers communicated more with words and less with physical contact than did Kenyan mothers (Berger, 1995).

Ask a mother who has raised a healthy infant, and she will probably tell you that her son or daughter was able to recognize human faces very early. Indeed, most infants feel calm when they see familiar faces and show signs of worry when they see a stranger's face near them.

ATTACHMENT

Attachment is a strong emotional bond or tie between an individual and an attachment figure (usually a parent, child, spouse, sibling, friend, etc.). These bonds between infant and caregiver are based primarily on the young child's needs for safety, comfort, and protection. The types of attachments we develop early in life are likely to significantly influence our personal relationships as adults. There are several classifications of attachment styles, but among the most common is:

- **secure attachment** – the child feels comfortable being close to others, develops trust in family members and friends, is able to spend time alone, and tends not to worry about being abandoned.
- **anxious-ambivalent attachment** – the child experiences a mixed desire to trust and feel secure, but at the same time, a fear of abandonment, mistrust, jealousy, and impulsive emotional outbursts.
- **anxious-avoidant attachment** – the child feels fearfulness or discomfort in being close to others, prefers to be alone, and remains distrustful especially of outsiders.
- **disorganized attachment** – the child experiences a lack of coherence in emotions and behavior, including an extreme need for closeness, intense fear of abandonment, and contradictory psychological states occurring simultaneously or in sequence (Levine & Heller, 2011).

Cross-cultural studies showed that most infants develop a form of attachment around their seventh month of life (Kagan et al., 1978). Consistent with attachment theories, findings of a comparative U.S.–Japanese study indicated that a clear majority of mothers in both countries perceived children with desirable characteristics as secure and children with undesirable characteristics as insecure (Rothbaum et al., 2007). Comparative studies show that predominantly individualist societies revealed an overrepresentation of anxious–avoidant attachments whereas predominantly collectivist societies manifest an overrepresentation of anxious–ambivalent attachments (Strand et al., 2019).

A CASE IN POINT

SUPERSTITIOUS ISOLATION

It is an East European custom – well-maintained into the twenty-first century – not to show a newborn child to anyone except close relatives during the first month of the baby's life. What are the reasons? This isolation is considered by some Russians as a necessary precaution against a superstitious "evil eye" or some unavoidable misfortune. Others simply accept this superstition for their "peace of mind." As such, the child remains relatively deprived of many other people and new experiences for approximately 30 days of his or her life.

Questions: How do you think that this tradition – which is still practiced by millions of parents – may affect the child's psychological development? What kind of impact does it have? Along these lines, what do you think about the COVID-19 years when children in the United States, China, and many other countries had to wear a face mask for almost three years, and likewise had limited opportunities to see other people's faces and therefore to learn from their facial expressions?

MOTOR SKILLS

A motor skill refers to any function that involves specific movements of the body's muscles to perform a task. Environmental factors, nutrition, the availability of space or toys, and parental training can influence the ways children develop their motor activities. As an example, research shows that motor skills of African infants develop several months before they develop in white children, since parents use different types of knowledge and training strategies when teaching their children to walk (Gardiner et al., 1998). Right–handedness appears prevalent in all cultures, and, as studies show, this function appears to be genetic (Coren, 1992). However, different cultural practices and beliefs related to right-handedness affect motor skills and the behavior of millions of children around the world. In many countries, for example, left-handedness has been – and to some degree still is – resisted, both by teachers and parents in their attempts to correct this "anomaly" (as they would refer to it), by forcing children to unlearn many of their skills that require the use of the left hand.

BREASTFEEDING

Societal changes shape patterns of parental behavior. For example, the frequency of breastfeeding and the level of a nation's industrial development are negatively correlated. In other words, the more the nation becomes industrialized, the more breastfeeding declines. The availability of baby formula and other foods, improvements in women's occupation, wages, and social status, a general change in public attitudes, and other factors

all promote freedom of choice for women to decide whether or not to breastfeed. For example, breastfeeding is almost universal in African, Asian, and most South American regions; however, it is noticeably less so in the UK (where around 81% of mothers practice breastfeeding) and the USA (77% of mothers) (Brown, 2018).

LANGUAGE

Language development (often referred to as language acquisition) is the process by which children acquire the capacity to perceive and comprehend language. Infants are constantly surrounded by a complex system of sounds that represents a particular language (or sometimes multiple languages). Children are able to perceive critical sound distinctions at a very early age, and this may explain some linguistic challenges that people experience when they learn a foreign language. For example, our (the authors) mutual colleague from Japan has difficulties pronouncing the *L* when he speaks English (likewise, many Americans cannot pronounce the typically hard German *R*, the *KH* in Hebrew, or *GH* in the Ukrainian language). Japanese infants typically do not notice the difference between *L* and *R* because there is no *L* sound in the Japanese language, and their parents do not use such sounds in their conversations. English–speaking infants are able to detect this difference, even if they cannot talk themselves. Perhaps our pronunciation difficulties have deep roots in infancy when we begin to recognize and memorize sounds. For example, many Russians cannot distinguish the difference between the sounds *I* (in *bit*) and *ee* (in *beat*): In the Russian language, there is almost no difference between these two sounds. In addition, some linguists suggest that the Danish language is particularly difficult to speak because it contains so many unfamiliar sounds that most non–Danish people were not exposed to as infants.

CRITICAL THINKING

ON THE LABELING OF "*AMAE*" VERSUS "DEPENDENCY"

Research has consistently demonstrated that people in Japan tend to be more interdependent and experience a higher degree of emotional attachment to one another compared to people in Western societies. One interpretation of this observation is rooted in early socialization experiences. Specifically, children in Japan are encouraged to develop a pattern they call "*amae*," which makes them more interdependent (Doi, 1989). *Amae* is described as the tendency of one's self to merge with the self of another person, leading to an increased sense of security. *Amae* is especially fostered in the early mother–child relationship (Lewis & Ozaki, 2009; Yamaguchi, 2004).

In contrast, in the United States, security is conceptually linked to autonomy, self-esteem, and self-expression. Its conceptual opposite could be termed "dependency" – the need for comfort, approval, or attention, which may be

observed at the behavioral level as a child crying, clinging, shadowing the mother, and other behaviors that encourage attention from caregivers.

How different is the Japanese "*amae*" from Western "dependency"? To compare the meanings of both concepts, Vereijken and colleagues (1997) evaluated descriptions of *amae* provided by Japanese experts and descriptions of dependency given many Western experts. Contrary to their initial predictions, the researchers found a striking similarity between the behavioral descriptors of *amae* in Japan and dependency in the United States. It would thus appear that in different cultures, certain universal behavioral patterns simply carry different linguistic labels.

Questions: Different labels may describe similar behaviors. Can you find words in other languages that are conceptually equivalent to dependency in English? Ask some native speakers, such as students who are bilingual (or trilingual) in your class. What meaning do these words have in other languages? In what ways are they similar or different from dependency?

CHILDHOOD: DISCOVERING THE WORLD

Mencius (372–289 b.c.e.), an ancient Chinese Confucian philosopher, wrote that a great person is one who does not lose his childhood heart. Children are marvelous largely because they are sincere and emotionally honest. **Childhood** is a period of continuous and relatively rapid growth, learning, and development. During early childhood, children's thinking is wishful and fantastic. Young children are often uncertain about the difference between reality and fantasy, and they often conflate them. They constantly check their thinking against reality, but still believe in the magical power of their ideas.

During middle childhood, which lasts from approximately age 6–12 years, children continue to develop thinking and social skills. Conceptual thinking begins to play a greater role in their daily events. Still, the child's thinking is primarily based on direct experiences. If something is tangible or observable, it is more easily comprehended and interpreted. As an example, several studies involving English, Japanese, and Norwegian children showed that they develop elaborate conceptions of war and fighting earlier than they do of peace and reconciliation. The conceptions of war focus primarily on aspects such as killing, fighting, and the use of weapons. Conflicts are pervasive and have concrete aspects that can be directly observed. Peace, however, is a less tangible and notable phenomenon. It may not register in interpersonal experience early in life to the extent that violence and aggression do (Rosenau, 1975).

Childhood as a developmental stage is mediated by an array of practices that can be similar or different across cultures. It is a custom in many families in the United States to praise their children and express positive emotions toward them for their accomplishments. In contrast, qualitative research in New Zealand with Samoan men revealed that the overt

expression of emotion or feelings toward children was generally regarded as improper because, as fathers are prone to believe, their children have to first learn the value of humility (Anae et al., 2000).

Consider pictures that children draw: some complex and colorful, some schematic and simple, they reflect what children see or wish for – mostly based on their daily experiences and their fantasy. Studies show that in cultures emphasizing interdependency, small children draw themselves as relatively smaller than other figures (such as their family members), whereas in cultures emphasizing independence, self-portrayals are bigger (Rubeling et al., 2011). Children see the reality around them and reflect it in their thoughts and fantasies. For example, Domino and Hannah analyzed 700 stories generated by 160 Chinese and U.S. elementary school students. Chinese stories showed greater concern with authority, greater concern with moral rectitude, fewer instances of physical aggression, and greater salience of the role of natural forces and chance than the U.S. sample did (Domino & Hannah, 1987). Children's drawings also routinely reflect political issues unfolding before their eyes (Kostelny & Garbarino, 1994; Rubenstein, 1987).

EATING

In practically all cultures – with the exception of regions that suffer severe food shortages – mothers perpetually try to coax their children into eating. They use various methods for good eating, from punishment to reward and from persuasion to feeding games (Dettwyler, 1989). Eating habits and food preferences of an adult person are generally linked to early age feeding practices (Schulze et al., 2001). Eating preferences show great variability among countries and families. Bread and many types of fruit and vegetables are common in most cultures; however, there are products that children begin to eat during childhood and that are considered inappropriate for children living in other cultures. Muslim children do not eat pork; Hindu boys and girls from religiously devout families may never try beef; and Europeans almost invariably stay away from dog meat (see Chapter 7).

SOCIAL IDENTITY

Many elements of social identity are formed during childhood. Children between the second and fourth grade can clearly identify themselves with their ethnic group, nationality, and social class (Dawson et al., 1977). As an example, at this developmental stage, both Arab and Jewish schoolchildren in Israel displayed clear differences in their flag preference, attitudes toward authority, and ethnic and religious identification separating "us" and "them" – clearly divided along Arab–Jewish origins (Teichman & Zafrir, 2007; Lawson, 1975).

PLAY

Nearly anyone can confidently conclude – without having to go through all the effort of conducting formal research – that children around the world love to play. There are some types and functions of play that are universal across cultures, such as teaching

children about cooperation, competition, sharing, and other interaction patterns (Farver et al., 2000). Despite these similarities, different cultural practices develop different behavioral traits. In a study conducted in the early 1970s, playing children in North America appeared to be more competitive than children in many other societies (Madsen, 1971). However, these results need to be verified in contemporary conditions. Why? In the United States today, for example, a mother who signs up her son or daughter for a little league soccer team may receive a note from the league explaining, very politely and cautiously, that the main purpose of the sport is participation, not necessarily winning. More broadly, in many contemporary children's sports leagues in the United States (e.g., baseball, football, basketball, soccer, ice hockey, and others sponsored by parents themselves and not by the government), there are persistent attempts to emphasize a more "nonachievement" focus of these sports.

SOCIAL NORMS

Is there evidence that societal norms restricting children's behavior in many ways may cause children to become aggressive and rebellious? Some studies point in this direction. Central African Bofi farmers fit the so-called authoritarian parenting style in valuing respect and obedience and exercising coercive control over their children. However, research results have shown that Bofi children are not withdrawn, nor do they lack initiative; on the contrary, they display precisely the opposite traits (Fouts, 2005; Baumrind, 1971). According to the *suppression–facilitation hypothesis*, behaviors that are discouraged in a culture will be seen infrequently in mental health facilities. For example, if parents punish children for being violent, there should not be many violent mental patients in this country's mental facilities. The suppression–facilitation model also assumes that behaviors that are rewarded will be seen to a much greater degree. From the standpoint of another hypothesis – the *adult distress threshold hypothesis* – the behaviors that were discouraged in childhood will be seen in clinics more often than "acceptable" behaviors.

Weisz and his colleagues (1987) tested this model in a cross-cultural study that involved Thai and U.S. children. Buddhist traditions of Thailand are different from the U.S. cultural norms. The former emphasizes nonaggression, politeness, modesty, and respect for others. Parents are very intolerant toward impulsive, aggressive, and "under-controlled" behavior in their children. As the first hypothesis predicted, "overcontrolled" problems (aloofness, withdrawal) were reported more frequently for Thai children than they were for U.S. children. Problems such as violence and disorderly behavior were reported more frequently for U.S. children. Thus, at least in this study, the suppression–facilitation hypothesis received more empirical support.

ADOLESCENCE: MAJOR REHEARSAL

Adolescence – the period of time from approximately 11–12 to 19–20 years – is not only a developmental stage but also a cultural phenomenon. Adolescents have reached sexual maturity, but have not yet assumed many or most of the rights and responsibilities of adulthood. For instance, extended schooling in many developed countries stretches

the period from childhood to adulthood; however, many non-industrialized cultures encourage their members to take on adult roles as early as possible. In such cases, the adolescent stage becomes almost unidentifiable. In some countries, such as Sudan and Brazil, many children begin to work full time and take care of other family members as early as age 12, and sometimes even earlier. In other societies, such as India, a girl can marry in her early teens and move in to her husband's home to accept the roles of wife and mother. As such, cultural conditions can significantly determine the recognition of an entire developmental stage.

The rapid changes in weight and height are important characteristics of adolescence. Cross-culturally, girls mature as much as two years earlier than boys. Since the beginning of observations in the 1800s in Europe and North America, girls have been maturing earlier than previously studied age groups of girls, at the rate of approximately several months per every 10 years. For example, from 1850 to the 1950s, the average age of first menstruation in girls (*menarche*) has decreased five years and became close to 12.4 years. This trend somewhat slowed in the second half of the twentieth century and was apparently not observed in less-developed non-Western countries (Frisch & Revelle, 1970). In the United States, the average age at menarche for non-Hispanic black girls and Hispanic girls has been consistently earlier than that of white girls (Chumlea et al., 2003). One possible explanation for this earlier maturation is the improved health care, nutrition, and living conditions of most citizens of the developed regions of the world.

Based on Piaget's (1963) model of cognitive development (discussed earlier in this chapter), formal thinking at this developmental stage replaces concrete thinking, and moral judgments are often made based on the individual's values (Piaget, 1963). At the same time, adolescent thinking can still be rife with contradictions, unpredictable assumptions, and sudden turns. Despite their ability to make ethical judgments and tremendous cognitive reserves, adolescents do not yet have the vision or wisdom often found at a more mature age. Altruism and selfishness, sociability and withdrawal, tolerance and impatience may easily exist together – or rapidly vacillate – in the same individual at the same time. If the young child's perception of the world is largely naïve and trustful, adolescence is often associated with the consequent development of cynicism (Sigel, 1989b).

Cynicism – the belief that people are basically disingenuous in their actions and motivated predominantly by self-interest – can become prominent in adolescence because of both (a) the young person's tendencies to grow increasingly independent and critical, as well as (b) an increasing amount of distressing information about society that one is exposed to in late adolescence, especially in countries where political scandals are a common practice (Schwartz, 1975). However, we would expect a lack of publicly expressed cynicism in countries where the government strictly reinforces ideological and political homogeneity. In such cases, an adolescent may develop internal cynical views without exposing them to pollsters, social scientists, or even fellow citizens (Gozman & Edkind, 1992).

REBELLIOUSNESS AND SOCIALIZATION

For more than a century, many Western psychological sources have been discussing the issue of teenage rebelliousness and defiance as an anticipated period of virtually every

young person's life (Glad & Shiraev, 1999; Hall, 1916; Kon, 1979). Psychologists and sociologists have attempted to understand whether various antisocial fads associated with "youth culture" have deep psychological roots in the young person's strong motivation for independence (Petersen, 1988). "Hooliganism" in Russia, "gangs" in North and Central America, or "ladette" culture of British girls (a behavioral pattern of "acting like boys" that involves smoking, swearing, fighting, drinking, and being disruptive in school) are just a few examples of such antisocial trends among adolescents. The prevalence of young people among violent groups in non-Western cultures has been documented as well. Yet it is highly doubtful that psychological reasons alone can explain why the young join various rebellious groups. Undoubtedly there are specific socioeconomic and political factors that must be taken into consideration. For example, there are scores of documented cases in Africa involving children and young adolescents being forced against their will to join rebellious militant groups (Beah, 2008).

Social and political conditions play a significant role in individual socialization. In a study conducted in Israel, children of North American and Soviet immigrants showed significantly different patterns of behavior in the classroom. Students from North America were mostly peer-group oriented. In contrast, students from the Soviet Union (back in the 1980s) were mostly teacher-oriented (Horowits & Kraus, 1984). The Soviet system of education, compared with the U.S. system, enforced a very strong emphasis on student discipline and obedience. Moving into a new cultural environment, Soviet adolescent immigrants did not change their obedience-oriented behavioral pattern. In another study conducted in Israel, Soviet-educated adolescents were significantly more realistically oriented in their moral judgments than the Israelis who grew up in Israel (Ziv et al., 1975). Perhaps, many years of personal humiliation and the struggle against the communist government for an opportunity to emigrate from the Soviet Union contributed to the development of more realistic and pragmatic attitudes (Kliger, 2002).

Social and political factors affect adolescents' cultural identity. A study of Palestinian Arab Christian adolescents in Israel showed that most of them maintained their ethnic and religious distinct identity. However, when compared to Muslim Arabs, they expressed more willingness to adopt elements of the Jewish society. They also felt stronger assimilation pressures emanating from Israeli Jews. Christian Arabs are commonly viewed as a "double minority" because most Arabs are Muslims, and because they also live in a predominantly Jewish country. The stronger willingness of Palestinian Christian Arabs to engage in social and cultural contact with Israeli Jews may reflect a desire to gain more access to important resources such as education and work. In addition, Palestinian Christian Arabs tend to distinguish themselves historically as a more Westernized cultural group (Horenczyk & Munayer, 2007).

Overall, social and political conditions in a particular country, government policies, socioeconomic conditions including economic equality or inequality – all affect attitudes and motivations in the young. In one study, 1,500 high school students from Finland and Estonia were asked to imagine themselves in three hypothetical situations: (1) If one of your classmates is repeatedly teased by some of your other classmates, what would you

do? (2) If one of your classmates continues to be the target of a blackmailing, what would you do? (3) If you see someone stealing money from one of your classmates, what would you do? (Keltikangas-Jaervinen & Terav, 1996). The students were then offered several alternative solutions to these situations: aggressive, prosocial, socially responsible, and avoiding. Several tendencies were revealed. Estonian adolescents were more aggressive and less socially responsible in their answers than their Finnish counterparts. Moreover, avoidance was shown to be the most typical way of solving problems for Estonian students. How can one interpret these differences? The countries studied are very close geographically and share many elements of culture and history. The researchers explain the results in terms of social and political factors. For more than 40 years, Estonia was a part of the Soviet Union, whereas Finland remained an independent country. Western values of individualism were persistently emphasized in child socialization in Finland. In contrast, in Soviet Estonia, public education and socialization promoted collectivism, obedience to authority, loyalty to the homeland, and a sense of social (rather than personal) responsibility. But there is an element of confusion in these results: As noted, in authoritarian socialist countries, the system promotes collectivism, obedience, loyalty, and social responsibility. Why then did the actual attitudes of the young people in this study reveal the presence of aggression, avoidance, and lack of responsibility? The authors of the study suggest that despite the communist government's efforts, most young people in Estonia simply rejected the core values promoted by the authorities. In addition, other factors could also have contributed to the socialization of Estonian youth of the 1990s. The unprecedented political and ideological struggle in the country after it gained independence, rapid growth of crime and corruption, increasing social inequality, and a virtual loss of guaranteed social security all could have triggered a sense of frustration and disappointment in the population.

Collectivist and individualist norms influence individual behavior and perceptions of people's actions. Elbedour and colleagues (1997) compared perceptions of intimacy in the relationships among Israeli Jewish and Israeli Bedouin adolescents. More than 600 students from grades 7 to 11 completed questionnaires in which they were asked to rate statements describing same-sex adolescent friendship. Characteristics including emotional closeness, control, conformity, and respect for the friend were studied. The results showed that Jewish adolescents (who are more individualist than collectivist), as opposed to Bedouin adolescents (more collectivist than individualist), expressed less of a need to control or to conform to their friends. In contrast, the Bedouin adolescents tended to emphasize both control of and conformity to friends.

ADULTHOOD: A PERIOD OF MATURITY

In all cultures, **adulthood** represents maturity, responsibility, and accountability. This period is typically divided into three stages: early adulthood, middle adulthood, and late adulthood (Levinson, 1978). The early adulthood stage is usually linked to formative processes, whereas the middle and late adulthood stages are associated with accomplishments of various kinds. However, the line separating these periods is vague and highly variable.

Many individuals have been able to accomplish great things at a very young age. For example, Joan of Arc, considered in France an honored defender of the nation, was 19. George Washington became an ambassador to France at 21. He won his first battle as a colonel at 22. Luther was 29 when he started his religious reformation of Christianity. Isaac Newton was 24 when he began his work on universal gravitation, calculus, and the theory of colors. Albert Einstein published his famous theory of relativity at 26. Celebrated American composer George Gershwin wrote the renowned *Rhapsody in Blue* at age 26. English naturalist Charles Darwin first conceived the idea of evolution by natural selection while still in his twenties. Jeff Bezos founded Amazon at 30. Mark Zuckerberg's Facebook was 28 when it held its initial public offering in 2012. Sergey Brin co-founded Google at 25. Marie Salomea Skłodowska–Curie won her first Nobel Prize in physics when she was 36. Overall, it has been primarily younger scientists who are responsible for a great number of great scientific discoveries. Studies show, for example, that the average age for conducting prize-winning research for all disciplines was around 38 years, with physicists being the youngest at 35 years (Stroebe, 2010).

Although some psychological functions decline with age, the individual's socialization continues throughout adulthood. Two models – the **persistence model** and the **openness model** – attempt to explain this process (Renshon, 1989). According to the persistence model, adults acquire attitudes and learn behaviors early in life and tend not to change them later. For example, if a child grows up in a devout religious family in Morocco or India, he or she will likely remain religious no matter where he or she ends up living as an adult. The openness model proposes the opposite: People do change their feelings, beliefs, and behavior because they often need to adjust to changing situations, and the transformations can be substantial. From this perspective, early childhood and adolescent experiences do not necessarily determine who the person is today. Even though some students of socialization are intrigued by the persistence approach, most analysts agree that socialization does not stop at the end of adolescence. It is now widely accepted that socialization continues in the adulthood stage, and many transitions in the individual's opinions and behavior take place during this developmental period (Sigel, 1989a).

Adulthood experiences vary across cultures and depend on age, gender, socioeconomic status, occupation, family structure, and a variety of life events. Violence, economic hardship, and hunger can affect the lives of an entire generation. As an example, social and political developments in Afghanistan over the past 40 years have been marked by a series of devastating events. Among them were the revolution and removal of the king, the Soviet invasion in 1979, the war against the foreign occupation, and the seemingly endless civil war that claimed tens of thousands of lives. An adult who was born in Afghanistan in 1960 was exposed to continuous stress, poverty, trauma, and fear during practically all stages of this person's adult life. At the same time, a person born in 1960 in a small Norwegian town could have lived a life utterly free of major social cataclysms, foreign invasions, military revolts, and other unexpected events.

In adulthood, most people develop their sense of personal **identity** – the view about themselves as individuals and members of society. Identity formation cannot be understood outside of its cultural context. For example, in traditional societies, people accept their identity within this fairly systematic and stable cultural environment. This type of society provides a sense of security for its members, and the individual constantly refers to others for purposes of evaluation (Kağıtçıbaşı, 1985). Individuality is especially restricted on the level of ideology or religion. People learn about and assume their expected roles while gradually moving from one life period to another.

In contrast, in Western industrialized and technological societies, the performance of social roles is more open to individuals because the roles are not strongly formalized. Individuals assume membership in a wide variety of diverse subgroups (Camilleri & Malewska-Peyre, 1997). Western societies, compared with non-Western ones, tend to offer individuals a wide range of options, which they are encouraged to explore and select. (We will discuss identity again in greater detail in Chapter 11.) See Figure 8.1 for a summary of Western versus Eastern approaches.

In the contemporary world, the amount of education required for young people to prepare for many jobs is expanding. As these people pursue education for longer periods, they also postpone transitions into adult roles. Moreover, when the power of traditional authority weakens and young people increasingly gain control over their own lives, they generally choose to wait longer to start families. The median ages for these adult transitions are in the late twenties in every industrialized society and are rising rapidly in developing countries (Arnett, 2002). The fact that transitions into adult roles have become somewhat delayed in many societies has led to the spread of a new period of life, called *emerging adulthood*, that extends from the late teens to the mid-twenties and is characterized by the self-focused exploration of possibilities in love, work, and worldviews. Young people in modern industrialized societies commonly face this period, and it is growing in prevalence among young people in developing countries as well (Arnett, 2000).

INTEGRATIVE
(continuum between the two conceptual polarities)

WESTERN ▸▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬ ◂ **EASTERN**

individuality encouraged	*individuality restricted*
informal roles	*formal roles*
roles more influenced by self	*roles more influenced by context*
choices and options	*duty and obligation*
self-evaluation	*other's evaluation*
diversity of subgroups	*homogeneity of in-group*
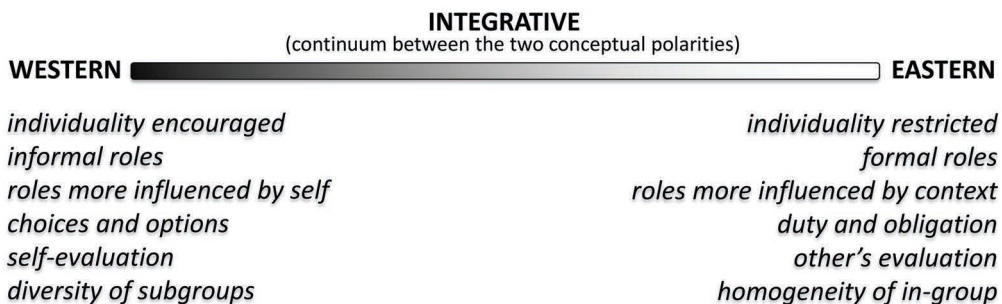
Figure 8.1 Identity Development: Western vs. Eastern Approaches

A CASE IN POINT

"FROZEN CULTURE"

American therapist Yola Ghammashi (personal interview, October 2015) has developed the concept of a *frozen culture* to describe the lives and experiences of many adult immigrants within their new homelands. Some immigrant adults settle in a new country and continue to maintain most of the customs, speech patterns, beliefs, and emotional attachments they held prior to immigration. They deliberately speak their old language, maintain most cultural habits, and resist learning or adapting to different cultural norms. Their home country, meanwhile, continues to transform over time. Customs, fashion, and speech patterns might change. Yet these immigrants continue to live in a self-created culture of the past. They feel that they do not belong to their new culture. Yet their "old" culture no longer exists in the form they remember. Do you know of any such individuals? If so, what can you discover about the elements of their frozen cultures? Why do you think some individuals find it necessary to maintain elements of their frozen culture?

In people's minds, adulthood is linked to wisdom. The more mature a person is, the wiser he or she is expected to be. Societal expectations affect our perception of adult intelligence. For instance, quickness of thinking is linked to *fluid intelligence*, the ability to form concepts, think abstractly, and apply knowledge to new situations (see Chapter 5). *Crystallized intelligence*, by contrast, is the individual's accumulated knowledge and experience. In Western societies, speed of thinking is highly valued, and fluid intelligence is interpreted as an indicator of success. In many non–Western societies, speed of operations is valued less, because experience, or crystallized intelligence, is perceived as more important than quickness (Gardiner et al., 1998). Many mediating individual circumstances and social factors affect crystallized intelligence. For example, a 60–year–old Iranian father can be a perfect mentor for his daughter who starts a small retail business in a small town near the Caspian Sea. However, the same father could be less knowledgeable and helpful after his family immigrates to another country and his children attempt to form an IT startup.

LATE ADULTHOOD: THE FINAL STRETCH

Kazuyoshi Miura of Japan, known to many as "King Kazu" joined a professional Portuguese second division club *Oliveirense*, just a month shy of his 56th birthday. Before moving to Portugal, the former Japan international spent 38 seasons as a professional soccer player in several countries including Brazil, Japan, Italy, Croatia, and Australia. Most professional soccer players these days retire in their early thirties.

When do people get "old"? Aging is both a biological and a psychological process. Although biologists haven't found conclusive explanations about universal characteristics

of aging (Cox, 1988), many people in old age across cultures suffer from similar diseases (such as optical and auditory deterioration, arthritis, diabetes, cancer, and dementia), their skin becomes less elastic, their hair gets thinner, and skin loses its pigmentation. Their muscles begin to atrophy, their bones become more brittle, and their cardiovascular system becomes less efficient. Many psychological functions decline as well, such as cognitive processing speed, short-term memory, and the ability to learn new information.

The predominant view in the scientific community used to be that mental processes invariably decline over time. However, we have discovered more recently that memory can both increase as well as decrease over time (Erdelyi, 2010). Further, as the branching of dendrites increases and connections between distant areas of the brain strengthen, the aging brain may become better at seeing relationships between different types of information; put another way, it can acquire the wisdom of "seeing the bigger picture." The great German poet Goethe completed his *Faust* when he was 80. Jean–Baptiste Lamarck completed his influential zoological work, *The Natural History of Invertebrates*, when he was 78. At the time of his inauguration in 2021, Joe Biden was 78 years old, making him the oldest person to be elected to the presidency in U.S. history. Mahatma Gandhi reached the peak of his popularity when he was 75. Mother Teresa did not slow down her charitable work before she died at 87.

In many countries, the **late adulthood** period begins with retirement, when a person formally quits his or her job. If a person did not work outside the home, this period begins perhaps when the individual gives up major family responsibilities. There are common national "deadlines" for formal retirement, which vary greatly. In Russia, a woman can retire at age 55, and men are able to do so five years later After 2020, Russia gradually increased the retirement age for both women and men. In the United States, the common retirement age is around 67. Norwegians have pushed their retirement age up to 70. It is expected that as life expectancy increases, the retirement age will concurrently rise.

Poverty, natural disasters, and chronic political and economic problems tend to keep life expectancy in some countries (Nigeria, Kenya, Somalia, and Chad, for example) at age 60 or lower. This is about 10–15 years below the average life expectancy in developed countries (GHO, 2019; Economist, 2023). For instance, Switzerland currently has a life expectancy close to 85.

In predominantly collectivist cultures, the elderly usually occupy a high social status. In contrast, in predominantly individualist societies, young people tend to enjoy the greatest status, whereas the elderly are often isolated and neglected. Studies in the past showed that respect for the elderly was higher in Japan and China than in the United States (Yu, 1993). Not long ago, in most African and Asian societies, intergenerational families were the norm, and the younger family members customarily took care of older relatives (Gardiner & Kosmitzki, 2008). Asian and Latin American families in the United States came from cultural traditions that placed great importance on the role of children to support, assist, and respect the family (Chilman, 1993; Uba, 1994). This trend might be changing these days due to the declining birth rates and the diminishing role of the family (Hsu, 1985; Tolbert, 2000).

However, many customs and traditional expectations remain. Changes in one's sense of obligation to assist, support, and respect the family were examined (Fuligni & Pedersen, 2002) among an ethnically diverse group of 745 U.S. individuals, as they began to transition from secondary school into young adulthood. A sense of family obligation increased for all young adults, with slight variations depending on ethnic and financial backgrounds. Young adults from Filipino and Latin American families reported the strongest sense of familial duty during young adulthood, compared to people of other ethnic backgrounds Some studies have observed greater familial support among teenagers from families experiencing economic crises (Elder & Conger, 2000). Gender can also shape family obligations, with traditional gender roles often urging girls, more so than boys, to provide more assistance to the family. Nevertheless, studies also show that the generations of those born in the late 1990s and early 2000s tend to maintain views that are less collectivist, less conservative, less traditional, and more self-enhancing than their parents' values and expectations (Marcus et al., 2016). This is potentially a very significant cultural shift across the globe.

A CASE IN POINT

CULTURE AND THE PERCEPTION OF AGING

This chapter began with a case in which a person wanted to legally change his age. Don't most of us wish that we were a different age at some points in our own life? Do you remember how 15 years ago, you could hardly wait for your next birthday? Childhood is a period when we actually enjoy aging – the process of becoming older. Aging, however, can be seen as unpleasant, stressful, or even traumatic. Simply ask around and listen to what people say about how they feel about getting older. Some, at the age of 25, suddenly discover that the future no longer shines with infinite possibilities. At 30, some are beginning to grasp that the shiny promises of youth are gradually fading. At forty . . . each year has its "typical" yet stressful realizations. Numerous significant physical and psychological changes are associated with aging, which researchers have identified as – to put it mildly – unpleasant (Lazarus & Lazarus, 2006).

One of many interesting features of aging is that many people never "feel their age." Specifically, they usually feel younger – which is an ambiguous disconnect that tends to increase with time. In a 2009 U.S. survey, people over 50 claimed to feel at least ten years younger than their chronological age; those over 65 reported feeling up to 20 years younger (Segal, 2013). Why is this disconnect so stressful? Because physical decline and other changes associated with aging do not match with an individual's perception of his or her own age. The negative societal perception of "old age" can also be stressful: The "grandpa" and "grandma" stigma – a negative perception of the elderly (both real or imagined) often involves condescending attitudes, dismissive opinions, or even unfair and discriminatory actions. Most people resent being seen as old and helpless.

There is a trend in many Western cultures to hide the signs of aging. In contemporary U.S. society, people often refrain from saying "old" and prefer to use the more neutral "senior" label. People surgically and chemically eliminate wrinkles on their faces and bodies, buy expensive lotions to keep their skin elastic, wear toupees and chignons, and try different tints and dyes to cloak the natural gray of their aging hair. Do adults really dislike how they look when they get older? Do they believe that they become less attractive and therefore yearn to change their appearance to boost self-esteem?

Question: Do you personally want to look younger or older? Ask other people in your class. Do people want to look older only under certain circumstances: Why would many people prefer to look younger? What are some specific things that people do, based on your own experience, to look younger or older? Using your personal observations or other sources, discuss in class how people in different families, and possibly in different cultures, deal with aging and appearing "old." Which professions, in addition to modeling and acting tend, in your view, to encourage and maintain the "younger image" hype?

Famed film actress Bette Davis reportedly quipped that "old age ain't no place for sissies." From a different vantage point, French author and historian André Maurois (1967) wrote that growing old is no more than a bad habit that a busy man has no time to form. Age and aging are strongly related to an individual's time perspective. In turn, this time perspective may affect an individual's attitudes (Cutler, 1975). In early childhood, the dominant perception is that time is virtually limitless. Early adulthood brings the realization that time is a scarce resource. Middle age and later stages lead to the perception that time is becoming seriously limited.

Gergen and Black (1965) pointed out that among public policy attitudes, orientations toward solutions to international problems are linked to one's perception of personal future time: Senior people have a sense of urgency and tend to settle conflicts, whereas the young may display more stubbornness. Renshon (1989) argued that in the arts, the phenomenon of late-age creativity and boldness occurs often in different cultures. The last works of Shakespeare, Rembrandt, Verdi, Beethoven, and Tolstoy suggest that the final stages of the life cycle might bring release from conventional constraints and free the artist to make significant creative statements that represent a culmination of the individual's personal vision.

EXERCISE 8.1 DEVELOP CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS WORKING WITH ORIGINAL SOURCES

Kim (2002) generalized comparative data on verbal communications between children and adults in several Asian countries and the United States. Japanese middle-class mothers spoke much less frequently to their young children than did their U.S. counterparts. Moreover, Chinese preschool teachers saw quietness as a sign of children exercising

self-control, rather than passivity, and appreciated silence more than the U.S. teachers. Consequently, East Asian children tended to be not as verbal as their European American counterparts. Japanese children produced significantly fewer utterances per turn than North American children, and they used verbal expression to communicate emotions less frequently than U.S. children do.

Locate this article:

Kim, H. (2002). We talk, therefore we think? A cultural analysis of the effect of talking on thinking. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *83*(4), 828–842.

Answer these questions:

What were the research data selected in this study? What were the samples selected? In your view were these samples representative (did they resemble the population of children in the studied countries)? What was the main method used in this study? How substantial were the differences found in this study? What explanations and conclusions does the author draw? Can you provide your own explanations?

CHAPTER SUMMARY

1. Since ancient times, many of the world's thinkers have considered human development a result of the interaction between environment and natural individual predispositions. Contemporary theories of human development emphasize the meaning of both individual and cultural factors of socialization. However, many classic developmental theories were ethnocentric and failed to take into account the richness of human diversity.

2. In the interdependent families commonly found in rural traditional societies, the family structure is characterized by interdependency on two dimensions: between parents and their children and among children themselves. In independent families – the typical middle-class nuclear family in most European and North American countries – the family structure is characterized by independence on both of these dimensions.

3. The developing child is seen as an individual with inborn dispositions (temperament) and skill potential. The child's environment is a part of a larger cultural system. Both the environment and the individual are seen as open and interchanging systems. The power of the culturally regulated environment comes from the coordinated action of the three elements of the niche. They relate to each other, to outside forces, and to the developing individual.

4. According to Erikson, a developing individual moves through a series of psychosocial crises. Each crisis, or conflict, grows primarily out of a need to adapt to the social environment and develop a sense of competence. Once a crisis is resolved, the individual moves further along in development. This theory, with some modifications, is applicable in a wide variety of cultural settings. However, Erikson has been criticized for mixing objective description with subjective prescription. Specifically, the virtues he uses to define the healthy individual are clearly in accordance with Western, Judeo–Christian ethics, values, and social institutions.

5. Studies suggest that the cognitive stage sequence (preoperational, operational, abstract thinking) and reasoning styles described by Piaget appear to be, with some limitations, universal across cultures. Limitations refer to the methodology and some procedures used by Piaget and his colleagues that are viewed as ethnocentric. Piaget's theory explains how children deal with conservation of volume, weight, and amount; however, everyday thinking and the ability to make practical decisions in particular cultural settings are not explained well by this theory.

6. According to Kohlberg, there are six stages of moral development in which children and adults are able to make several types of moral judgments. People go from lower stages of reasoning, where they seek to avoid punishment for wrongdoing, to the higher stages, where they choose social contracts and then universal principles to guide moral actions. This theory may be applied to different cultural settings. Yet, the methodology used in the cross-cultural studies on moral development was based on hypothetical stories about moral choices that were related mainly to U.S. subjects. Another point of criticism is that the developmental stages are closely linked to values of Western liberalism and individualism based on moral choice, values – which are not necessarily shared universally around the world.

7. Cross-culturally, human development is understood as taking place in stages. Specialists refer to particular cultural norms and biological, behavioral, and physiological changes, which are identified cross-culturally with a particular life stage. Most books on human development distinguish several common stages within the life span: prenatal period, infancy, childhood (divided into early and middle childhood), adolescence, and adulthood, which is also divided into three stages – early adulthood, middle adulthood, and late adulthood.

8. During the prenatal period, the developing embryo in the mother's womb can be exposed to favorable and/or unfavorable conditions. One's access to resources and professional prenatal care along with a stressful social and psychological environment are crucial factors affecting the unborn child's development. Attitudes about pregnancy, abortion, and childbirth vary from culture to culture and are linked to local traditions and laws.

9. Each culture provides a particular set of norms regarding parent–child relationships. Cross-culturally, the child's thinking is wishful. Each child's developmental niche includes social practices, values, and demands conveyed to him or her from parents and caregivers.

10. Adolescence is viewed not only as a developmental stage but also as a cultural phenomenon rooted in social and economic conditions. Many non-industrialized cultures encourage their members to assume adult roles as quickly as possible, almost skipping the adolescence stage. Adolescence marks the beginning of sexual maturation. Despite their ability to make ethical judgments and their tremendous cognitive reserves, adolescents do not have the vision or wisdom typically found at a more mature age.

11. In all cultures, adulthood represents maturity, responsibility, and accountability. This period is divided into stages of early, middle, and late adulthood. Early adulthood is usually linked to formative processes, and middle adulthood is associated with accomplishments. In adulthood, individuals generally form their sense of identity, which is the view of themselves as individuals and members of society. The fact that transitions into adult roles have become somewhat delayed in many societies has

led to the recognition of a new period of life, called *emerging adulthood*, which extends from the late teens to the mid-twenties and is characterized by self-focused exploration of possibilities in love, work, and worldviews.

12. In many countries, the late adulthood period begins with retirement, when a person formally quits his or her job or relinquishes his or her major responsibilities. Late adulthood is linked to the physiological process of aging. Life expectancy, general socioeconomic conditions, individual psychological and physiological characteristics, and societal attitudes toward the elderly comprise the individual's final developmental niche.

KEY TERMS

Adolescence The period of time from approximately 11–12 to 19–20 years. The child has reached sexual maturity, but has not yet assumed many or most of the rights and responsibilities of adulthood.

Adulthood The period of time from 20 years onward. The individual has achieved adult status as prescribed by norms and laws of a particular religion, culture, or society.

Attachment A strong emotional bond or tie between an individual and an attachment figure.

Childhood The period of time from age 2 to 11–12 years. The child acquires language and learns about the most important social skills.

Human development The changes in physical, psychological, and social behavior as experienced by individuals across the life span from conception to death.

Identity The view of oneself as an individual and a member of society.

Infancy The period of time from birth to 2 years when the child acquires initial motor, cognitive, and social skills.

Late adulthood The period of physical erosion and decline.

Morality A complex cognitive, emotional, and behavioral construct associated with the individual's understanding of right and wrong based largely on societal norms.

Openness model The theoretical view proposing that adults continue to change their attitudes and behavior in order to adjust to changing situations.

Persistence model The theoretical view proposing that adults acquire attitudes and behaviors early in life and tend not to change them later.

Prenatal period The period of time between conception and birth, which lasts approximately 38 weeks.

Socialization The process by which the individual becomes a member of a particular culture and incorporates its values, beliefs, and behaviors.

Temperament The combination of mental, physical and emotional traits – present in infancy and presumably of a genetic nature – that manifest in mood and behavior; one's natural predisposition.

REFERENCES

Ahmed, A. A. (2002). *Intisar: A story of a Muslim girl*. Bloomington, IN: Authorhouse.

Anae, M., Fuamatu, N., Lima, I., Mariner, K., Park, J., & Suaalii-Sauni, T. (2000). *Tiute ma matafaioi a nisi tane samoa i le faiga o aiga: The roles and responsibilities of some Samoan men in reproduction.* Auckland, New Zealand: Pacific Health Research Centre, University of Auckland.

Arnett, J. J. (2000). Emerging adulthood: A theory of development from the late teens through the twenties. *American Psychologist*, *55*, 469–480.

Arnett, J. J. (2002). The psychology of globalization. *American Psychologist*, *57*(10), 774–783.

Barber, N. (2001). On the relationship between marital opportunity and teen pregnancy: The sex ratio question. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *32*(3), 259–267.

Baumrind, D. (1971). Current patterns of parental authority. *Developmental Psychology Monographs*, *4*(1–2), 1–10.

Beah, I. (2008). *A long way gone: Memoirs of a boy soldier*. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

Berger, K. (1995). *The developing person through the life span*. New York: Worth Publishers.

Best, D. (1994). Parent-child interactions in France, Germany, and Italy. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *25*(2), 181–193.

Best, D. (2018). Off to great places! Celebrating 50 years of the *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *50*(1), 3–4.

Birman, D., & Trickett, E. (2001). Cultural transitions in first-generation immigrants: Acculturation of Soviet Jewish refugee adolescents and parents. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *32*(4), 456–477.

Blau, F., Kahn, L., Brummund, P., Cook, J., & Larson-Koester, M. (2017). Is there still son preference in the United States? National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper No. 23816. www.nber.org/papers/w23816 (accessed April 22, 2019).

Bornstein, M. H., & Tamis-LeMonda, C. (1989). Maternal responsiveness and cognitive development in children. In M. H. Bornstein (Ed.), *Maternal responsiveness: Characteristics and consequences* (pp. 49–61). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1970). *Two worlds of childhood: U.S. and U.S.S.R.* New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Brown, A. (2018). 9 sociological and cultural influences upon breastfeeding. In *Breastfeeding and Breast Milk – from Biochemistry to Impact* (Ed. Family Larson-Rosenquist Foundation) Georg Thieme Verlag KG. The Global Health Network.

Buss, A. H., & Plomin, R. (1985). *Temperament: Early developing personality traits*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Byrnes, J. P. (1988). Formal operations: A systematic reformulation. *Developmental Review*, *8*, 66–87.

Camilleri, C., & Malewska-Peyre, H. (1997). Socialization and identity strategies. In J. W. Berry, P. R. Dasen, & T. S. Saraswathi (Eds.), *Handbook of cross-cultural psychology: Basic processes and human development* (Vol. 2, pp. 41–67). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Chilman, C. S. (1993). Hispanic families in the United States: Research perspectives. In H. P. McAdoo (Ed.), *Family ethnicity: Strength in diversity* (pp. 141–163). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Chirkov, V., & Ryan, R. (2001). Parent and teacher autonomy-support in Russian and U.S. adolescents: Common effects on well-being and academic motivation. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *32*(5), 618–635.

Chua, A. (2011). *Battle hymn of the tiger mother*. New York: Penguin Press.

Chumlea, W., Schubert, C., & Roche, A. (2003). Age at menarche and racial comparisons in US girls. *Pediatrics*, *111*(1), 110–113.

Coren, S. (1992). *The left-hander syndrome*. New York: Free Press.

Cox, H. G. (1988). *Later life: The realities of aging*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Cutler, N. (1975). Toward a generational conception of political socialization. In D. Schwartz & S. Schwartz (Eds.), *New directions in political socialization*. New York: Free Press.

Dasen, P. R. (1994). Culture and cognitive development from a Piagetian perspective. In W. J. Lonner & R. Malpass (Eds.), *Psychology and culture* (pp. 145–149). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Dawson, R., Prewitt, K., & Dawson, K. (1977). *Political socialization*. Boston, MA: Little, Brown.

Dettwyler, K. A. (1989). Style of infant feeding: Parental/caretaker control of food consumption in young children. *American Anthropologist*, *91*, 696–703.

Dias, E. (2022). When does life begin? *The New York Times*. December 31. www.nytimes.com/interactive/2022/12/31/us/human-life-begin.html

Doi, T. (1989). The concept of Amae and its psychoanalytic applications. *International Review of Psychoanalysis*, *16*, 349–354.

Domino, G., & Hannah, M. T. (1987). A comparative analysis of social values of Chinese and American children. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *18*(1), 58–77.

Economist (2022). Which countries are driving the world's population growth? *The Economist explains*. www.economist.com/the-economist-explains/2022/07/11/which-countries-are-driving-the-worlds-population-growth

Economist (2023). The age of the grandparent has arrived. *The Generation Game*. www.economist.com/international/2023/01/12/the-age-of-the-grandparent-has-arrived

Edwards, C. P., & Bloch, M. (2010). The whitings' concepts of culture and how they have fared in contemporary psychology and anthropology. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *41*(4), 485–498.

Elbedour, S., Shulman, S., & Kedem, P. (1997). Adolescent intimacy: A cross-cultural study. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *28*(1), 5–22.

Elder, G., & Conger, R. (2000). *Children of the land: Adversity and success in rural America*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Erdelyi, M. H. (2010). The ups and downs of memory. *American Psychologist*, *65*(7), 623–633.

Erikson, E. (1968). *Identity: Youth and crisis*. New York: W. W. Norton.

Erikson, E. H. (1950). *Childhood and society*. New York: W. W. Norton.

Farver, J. A., Kim, Y. K., & Lee-Shin, Y. (2000). Within cultural differences: Examining individual differences in Korean-American and European-American preschoolers' social pretend play. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *31*(5), 583–602.

Fernald, A. (2010). Getting beyond the "convenience" sample in research on early cognitive development. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, *33*(2/3), 31–32.

Fernandez, S., Castano, E., & Singh, I. (2010). Managing death in the burning grounds of Varanasi, India: A terror management investigation. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *41*(2), 182–194.

Fouts, H. N. (2005) Families in Central Africa: A comparison of Bofi farmer and forager families. In J. L. Roopnarine & U. Gielen (Eds.), *Families in global perspective* (pp. 347–363). Boston, MA: Pearson.

Frisch, R. E., & Revelle, R. (1970). Height and weight at menarche and a hypothesis of critical body weights and adolescent events. *Science*, *169*, 397–398.

Fuligni, A., & Pedersen, S. (2002). Family obligation and the transition to young adulthood. *Developmental Psychology*, *38*(5), 856–868.

Gardiner, H., Mutter, J., & Kosmitzki, C. (1998). *Lives across cultures: Cross-cultural human development*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Gardiner, H. W., & Kosmitzki, C. (2008). *Lives across cultures: Cross-cultural human development*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Georgas, J., Poortinga, Y., Angleitner, A., Goodwin, R., & Charalambous, N. (1997). The relationship of family bonds to family structure and function across cultures. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *28*(3), 303–320.

Gergen, K., & Black, K (1965). Aging, time perception, and preferred solutions to international conflicts. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, *9*, 177–186.

Gershoff, E., & Grogan-Kaylor, A. (2016). Race as a moderator of associations between spanking and child outcomes. *Family Relations*, *65*(3), 490–501.

GHO (Global Health Observatory). (2019). Life expectancy. www.who.int/gho/mortality_burden_disease/life_tables/situation_trends/en/ (accessed April 22, 2019).

Glad, B., & Shiraev, E. (Eds.). (1999). *The Russian transformation*. New York: St. Martin's.

Goodnow, J. J. (1990). The socialization of cognition: What's involved? In J. W. Stigler, R. A. Shweder, & G. Herdt (Eds.), *Cultural psychology: Essays on comparative human behavior* (pp. 259–286). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Gozman, L., & Edkind, A. (1992). *The psychology of post-totalitarianism in Russia*. London: Centre for Research into Communist Economies.

Hall, S. (1916). *Adolescence*. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts.

Hamamura, T. (2011). Social class predicts generalized trust but only in wealthy societies. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *43*(3), 498–509.

Haskuka, M., Sunar, D., & Alp, E. (2008). War exposure, attachment style, and moral reasoning. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *39*(4), 381–401.

Hess, R. D., Kashiwagi, K., Azuma, H., Price, G. G., & Dickinson, W. P. (1980). Maternal expectation for mastery of developmental tasks in Japan and the United States. *International Journal of Psychology*, *15*, 259–271.

Horenczyk, G., & Munayer, S. J. (2007). Acculturation orientations toward two majority groups: The case of Palestinian Arab Christian adolescents in Israel. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *38*, 76–86.

Horowits, R., & Kraus, V. (1984). Patterns of cultural transition. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *15*(4), 399–416.

Hortacsu, N., Bastug, S., & Muhammetberdiev, O. (2001). Desire for children in Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan: Son preference and perceived instrumentality for value satisfaction. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *32*(3), 309–321.

Hsu, F. L. K. (1985). The self in cross-cultural perspective. In A. J. Marsella, G. DeVos, & F. L. K. Hsu (Eds.), *Culture and self: Asian and western perspectives* (pp. 24–55). New York: Tavistock.

Joshi, M. S., & MacLean, M. (1997). Maternal expectations of child development in India, Japan, and England. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *28*(2), 219–234.

Kagan, J., Kearsley, R. B., & Zealazo, P. (1978). *Infancy: Its place in human development*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Kağıtçıbaşı, Ç. (1985). Culture of separateness – culture of relatedness. *Papers in Comparative Studies*, *4*, 91–99.

Keller, H., Borke, J., Chaudhary, N., Lamm, B., & Kleis, A. (2010). Continuity in parenting strategies: A crosscultural comparison. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *41*(3), 391–409.

Keltikangas-Jaervinen, L., & Terav, T. (1996). Social decision-making strategies in individualist and collectivist cultures: A comparison of Finnish and Estonian adolescents. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *27*(6), 714–732.

Kim, H. (2002). We talk, therefore we think? A cultural analysis of the effect of talking on thinking. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *83*(4), 828–842.

Kim, S. Y., Wang, Y., Orozco-Lapray, D., Shen, Y., & Murtuza, M. (2013). Does "Tiger parenting" exist? Parenting profiles of Chinese Americans and adolescent developmental outcomes. *Asian American Journal of Psychology*, *4*(1), 7–18. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0030612

Kliger, S. (2002). Russian immigrants in America: Fears and hopes. In V. Shlapentokh & E. Shiraev (Eds.), *Fears in post-communist societies* (pp. 111–120). New York: Palgrave.

Klingelhofer, E. (1971). What Tanzanian secondary school students plan to teach their children. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *2*(*2*), 189–195.

Kohlberg, L. (1981). *The philosophy of moral development: Moral states and the idea of justice*. San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row.

Kon, I. S. (1979). *Psychologya yunosheskogo vozrasta [Psychology of adolescence]*. Moscow: Prosveshenie.

Kopf, D. (2017, September 20). Parents in the US don't prefer boys anymore, according to new research. *Quartz*. https://qz.com/1080634/baby-gender-preference-new-research-suggests-american-parents-no-longer-prefer-boys/ (accessed April 22, 2019).

Kostelny, K., & Garbarino, J. (1994). Coping with consequences of living in danger: The case of Palestinian children and youth. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, *17*, 595–611.

Kurtz, S. N. (1992). *All the mothers are one: Hindu India and the cultural reshaping of psychoanalysis*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Larson, R., Verma, S., & Dworkin, J. (2003). Adolescence without disengagement: The daily family lives of Indian middle-class teenagers. In T. S. Saraswathi (Ed.), *Cross-cultural perspectives in human development: Theory, research and applications* (pp. 258–286). New Delhi, India: Sage.

Lawson, E. (1975). Flag preference as an indicator of patriotism in Israeli children. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *6*, 490–499.

Lazarus, R., & Lazarus, B. (2006). *Coping with aging*. New York: Oxford University Press.

LeVine, R. (2010). The six cultures study: Prologue to a history of a landmark project. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *41*(4), 513–521.

Levine A., & Heller R. (2011). *Attached: The new science of adult attachment and how it can help you find and keep love*. New York: Penguin.

Levinson, D. (1978). *The seasons of a man's life*. New York: Knopf.

Levy, R. (1996). Essential contrasts: Differences in parental ideas about learners and teaching in Tahiti and Nepal. In S. Harkness & C. M. Super (Eds.), *Parents' cultural belief systems: Their origins, expressions, and consequences* (pp. 123–142). New York: Guilford.

Lewis, J. R., & Ozaki, R. (2009). Amae and Mardy: A comparison of two emotion terms. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *40*(6), 917–934.

Livingston, G. (2014). Fewer than half of U.S. kids today live in a "traditional" family. Pew Research Center. www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2014/12/22/less-than-half-of-u-s-kids-today-live-in-a-traditional-family/

Ma, H. K., & Cheung, C. K. (1996). A cross-cultural study of moral stage structure in Hong Kong Chinese, English, and Americans. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *27*(6), 700–713.

Madsen, M. C. (1971). Developmental and cross-cultural differences in the cooperative and competitive behavior of young children. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *2*, 365–371.

Marcus, J., Ceylan, S., & Ergin, C. (2016). Not so "traditional" anymore? Generational shifts on Schwartz values in Turkey. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *48*(1), 58–74.

Matsumoto, D. (1994). *People: Psychology from a cultural perspective*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Maurois, A. (1967). *Collected stories*. Washington Depot, CT: Washington Business.

Mayer, B., & Trommsdorff, G. (2010). Adolescents' value of children and their intentions to have children: A cross-cultural and multilevel analysis. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *41*(*5–6*), 671–689.

McDowell, N. (1988). A note on cargo cults and cultural construction of change. *Pacific Studies*, *11*(*2*), 121–134.

Mesurado, B., Richaud, M. C., Mestre, M. V., Samper-García, P., Tur-Porcar, A., Mesa, S., & Viveros, E. F. (2014). Parental expectations and prosocial behavior in adolescents from low income backgrounds: A cross-cultural comparison between three countries – Argentina, Colombia, and Spain. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *45*(9), 1471–1488.

Ninio, A. (1979). The native theory of the infant and other material attitudes in two subgroups in Israel. *Child Development*, *50*, 976–980.

Ochse, R., & Plug, C. (1986). Cross-cultural investigation of the validity of Erikson's theory of personality development. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *50*(6), 1240–1252.

Olson, S., Kashiwagi, K., & Crystal, D. (2001). *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *32*(1), 43–57.

Osterweil, Z., & Nagano, K. (1991). Maternal views on autonomy. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 22(*3*), 362–375.

Paranjpe, A. (1998). *Self and identity in modern psychology and Indian thought*. New York: Plenum Press.

Park, H., & Lau, A. (2015). Socioeconomic status and parenting priorities: Child independence and obedience around the world. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *78*(1), 43–59.

Pei, M. (2016). *China's crony capitalism: The dynamics of regime decay*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Petersen, A. C. (1988). Adolescent development. *Annual Review of Psychology*, *39*, 583–607.

Pew Research (2022). America's abortion quandary. *Pew Research Center*. www. pewresearch.org/religion/2022/05/06/americas-abortion-quandary/

Piaget, J. (1963). *The child's conception of the world*. Paterson, NJ: Littlefield, Adams.

Potapova, E., & Trines, S. (2017). Education in the Russian federation. *World Education News & Reviews*. https://wenr.wes.org/2017/06/education-in-the-russian-federation (accessed April 11, 2019).

Raghavan, C., Harkness, S., & Super, C. (2010). Parental ethnotheories in the context of immigration: Asian Indian immigrant and Euro-American mothers and daughters in an American town. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *41*(4), 617–632.

Renshon, S. (1989). Psychological perspectives on theories of adult development and the political socialization of leaders. In R. Sigel (Ed.), *Political learning in adulthood: A sourcebook of theory and research* (pp. 203–264). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Rogoff, B. (1990). *Apprenticeship in thinking: Cognitive development in social context.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Rosenau, N. (1975). The sources of children's political concepts: An application of Piaget's theory. In D. Schwartz & S. Schwartz (Eds.), *New directions in political socialization* (pp. 163–187). New York: Free Press.

Roser, M. (2017). Fertility rate. Our World in Data. https://ourworldindata.org/fertility-rate

Rothbaum, F., Kakinuma, M., Nagaoka, R., & Azuma, H. (2007). Attachment and amae: Parent–child closeness in the United States and Japan. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *38*, 465–486.

Rubeling, H., Keller, H., Yovsi, R. D., Lenk, M., Schwarzer, S., & Kuhne, N. (2011). Children's drawings of the self as an expression of cultural conceptions of the self. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *42*(3), 406–424.

Rubenstein, J. (1987). A cross-cultural comparison of children's drawings of same- and mixed-sex peer interaction. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *18*(2), 234–250.

Rudy, D., & Grusec, J. (2001). Correlates of authoritarian parenting in individualist and collectivist cultures and implications for understanding the transmission of values. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *32*(2), 202–212.

Sahithya, B., Manohar, S., & Vijaya, R. (2019) Parenting styles and its impact on children: A cross cultural review with a focus on India. *Mental Health, Religion & Culture*, *22*(4), 357–383. https://doi.org/10.1080/13674676.2019.1594178

Schlegel, A., & Barry, H. (1991). *Adolescence: An anthropological inquiry*. New York: Free Press.

Schulze, P., Harwood, R., & Schoelmerich, A. (2001). Feeding practices and expectations among middle-class Anglo and Puerto Rican mothers of 12-month-old infants. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *32*(4), 397–406.

Schwartz, S. (1975). Patterns of cynicism: Differential political socialization among adolescents. In D. Schwartz & S. Schwartz (Eds.), *New directions in political socialization* (pp. 47–62). New York: Free Press.

Schwartz, S. J., Unger, J. B., Zamboanga, B. L., & Szapocznik, J. (2010). Rethinking the concept of acculturation: Implications for theory and research. *American Psychologist*, *65*(4), 237–251.

Segal, L. (2013). *Out of time: The pleasures and the perils of ageing.* New York: Verso.

Shweder, R. (2010). Donald Campbell's doubt: Cultural difference or failure of communication? *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, *33*(2/3), 49–50.

Shweder, R., Mahapatra, M., & Miller, J. (1990).Culture and moral development. In J. Stigler, R. Shweder, & G. Herdt (Eds.), *Cultural psychology* (pp. 130–204). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Sigel, R. (1989a). Introduction: Persistence and change. In R. Sigel (Ed.), *Political learning in adulthood: A sourcebook of theory and research* (pp. vii–xvi). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Sigel, R. S. (Ed.). (1989b). *Political learning in adulthood: A sourcebook of theory and research.* Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

Snarey, J. (1985). Cross-cultural universality of social-moral development: A critical review of Kohlbergian research. *Psychological Bulletin*, *97*, 202–232.

Stone, L. (2018). *How many kids do women want?* Institute for Family Studies. https://ifstudies.org/blog/how-many-kids-do-women-want (accessed April 22, 2019).

Strand, P., Vossen, J., & Savage, E. (2019). Culture and child attachment patterns: A behavioral systems synthesis. *Perspective on Behavioral Science*, *42*(4), 835–850.

Stroebe, W. (2010). The graying of academia: Will it reduce scientific productivity? *American Psychologist*, *65*(7), 660–673.

Super, C., & Harkness, S. (1997). The cultural structuring of child development. In J. W. Berry, P. R. Dasen, & T. S. Saraswathi (Eds.), *Handbook of cross-cultural psychology: Basic processes and human development* (Vol. 2, pp. 1–41). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Tajima, E. A., & Harachi, T. W. (2010). Parenting beliefs and physical discipline practices among Southeast Asian immigrants: Parenting in the context of cultural adaptation to the United States. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *41*(2), 212–235.

Teichman, Y., & Zafir, H. (2007). Images held by Jewish and Arab children in Israel of people representing their own and the other group. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *34*(6), 658–676.

Tolbert, K. (2000, April 28). Japan's elderly: Once revered, now unemployed. *Washington Post*, p. A01.

Triandis, H. (1994). *Culture and social behavior*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Uba, L. (1994). *Asian Americans: Personality patterns, identity, and mental health*. New York: Guilford Press.

United Nations Population Division.(2018). *Levels and trends in child mortality report 2018*. www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/publications/mortality/child-mortality-report-2018.asp (accessed April 17, 2019).

Valsiner, J., & Lawrence, J. (1997). Human development in culture across the life span. In J. W. Berry, P. R. Dasen, & T. S. Saraswathi (Eds.), *Handbook of cross-cultural psychology: Basic processes and human development* (Vol. 2, pp. 69–106). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Varela, R. E., Vernberg, E., Sanchez-Sosa, J., Riveros, A., Mitchell, M., & Mashunkashey, J. (2004). Parenting style of Mexican, Mexican American, and Caucasian-non-Hispanic families: Social context and cultural influences. *Journal of Family Psychology*, *18*(4), 651–657.

Vassiliou, V., & Vassiliou, G. (1973). The implicative meaning of the Greek concept of philomoto. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *4*(3), 326–341.

Vereijken, C., Riksen-Walraven, J. M., & Van Lieshout, C. (1997). Mother–infant relationships in Japan: Attachment, dependency, and amae. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *28*(4), 442–462.

Vygotsky, L. (1978). *Mind and society*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. (Originally published in 1932.)

Weisz, J., Suwanlert, S., Chaiyasit, W., & Walter, B. (1987). Over and undercontrolled referral problems among children and adolescents from Thailand and the United States. *Journal of Counseling and Clinical Psychology*, *55*, 719–726.

Whiting, B. B. (Ed.). (1963). *Six cultures: Studies of child rearing*. New York: John Wiley.

Whiting, B. B., & Edwards, C. P. (1988). *Children of different worlds: The formation of social behavior*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Whiting, B. B., & Whiting, J. W. M. (1975). *The children of six cultures: A psycho-cultural analysis*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

WHO (World Health Organization).(2019). Abortion. www.who.int/reproductivehealth/topics/unsafe_abortion/en/ (accessed April 23, 2019).

Winter, J., & Teitelbaum, M. (2013). *The global spread of fertility decline: Population, fear, and uncertainty*. New York: Yale University Press.

Yamaguchi, S. (2004). Further clarifications of the concept of amae in relation to dependence and attachment. *Human Development, 47*, 28–33.

Yu, L. C. (1993). Intergenerational transfer of resources within policy and cultural contexts. In S. H. Zarit, L. I. Pearlin, & K. W. Schaie (Eds.), *Caregiving systems* (pp. 45–70). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Zepeda, M. (1985). Mother–infant behavior in Mexican and Mexican-American women: A study of the relationship of selected prenatal, perinatal and postnatal events. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, *45*(9–A), 2756.

Ziv, A., Shani, A., & Nebenhaus, S. (1975). Adolescents educated in Israel and in the Soviet Union. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *6*(1), 108–121.

9

CHAPTER 9
PSYCHOLOGICAL DISORDERS

A man was transported to a secluded location by his brothers, who drove for seemingly endless hours on unmarked roads. They claimed the man was insane and a danger to himself, with erratic behavior and emotions that were out of control. The man's name may have been Saed. Or maybe it was Tarik. Nobody at the place even bothered to ask. The brothers paid a required sum of about $20 and just left the man there – and they didn't look back.

Year after year, hundreds of other Afghans bring their relatives and close friends who suffer from severe psychological disturbances to such a place, which consists of small concrete cells – serving as both a shrine and a hospital – where traditional treatments are administered to those with presumed mental illness. According to age-old folk treatments, a person will be healed after spending 40 days in the shrine while consuming a daily diet consisting only of bread, water, and black pepper. The "residents" are permitted to rinse their hands, feet, and faces using only water, but they are prohibited from using soap. Their hair and nails must remain uncut and they may not change their clothes. The healing is believed to emanate from the grave of a renowned seventeenth-century religious leader whom the locals refer to as a *pir* (spiritual guide), named Mia Ali Sahib.

For decades now, clinicians from the U.S. and other countries have been training Afghan psychiatrists and psychologists in the use of Western methods to diagnose and treat psychological disorders, and providing Afghanis access to medications that are necessary to treat many severe emotional and behavioral symptoms. Yet, scores of ordinary Afghans ignore or reject Western clinical approaches (Sieff, 2012). Some do not seek help from professionals because they could not find one in the country, which has been torn asunder by civil conflict (Kovess-Masfety et al., 2022). Others do not trust Western methods of therapy. So instead, many resort to faith and tradition. They claim that the spiritual healing is successful, while acknowledging that there is no science – only faith – to support their fervently held beliefs.

―――――

Are we in a position to judge this tradition, which has been used in Afghanistan and many other countries for centuries? If the members of a cultural community interpret certain psychological symptoms in their own, culturally specific way, do we have the right to impose our secular views of how to diagnose and treat psychological disorders? What role does culture play in how we see and interpret the symptoms of mental illness, and how we treat psychological disorders? In this chapter, we will address these and many other questions related to the interface of culture and psychological disorders.

AMERICAN BACKGROUND: DSM-5-TR

According to the American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 5th edition, Text Revision (better known as DSM-5-TR; APA, 2022), a **mental disorder** is

> a syndrome characterized by clinically significant disturbance in an individual's cognition, emotion regulation, or behavior that reflects a dysfunction in the psychological, biological, or developmental processes underlying mental functioning. Mental disorders are usually associated with significant distress or disability in social, occupational, or other important activities.

> (p. 14)

The DSM, in its various editions, is the primary system of classification of psychological disorders in the United States and is utilized by the vast majority of mental health professionals, including psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, and counselors working in both private and government agencies (Demazeux & Singy, 2015; Mirin, 2002).

Alternatively, the *International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems*, 11th edition, or ICD-11 (WHO, 2021a) is a detailed description of known diseases and injuries and is published by the World Health Organization, a branch of the United Nations. It is revised periodically and is currently in its eleventh edition, known as the ICD-11. In addition to physical diseases and injuries, it also contains descriptions of mental disorders. Because of the help and cooperation from U.S. clinicians, the mental disorders section of ICD-11 is very closely aligned with the DSM-5-TR with respect to terminology and structure.

TWO VIEWS ON CULTURE AND PSYCHOLOGICAL DISORDERS: UNIVERSALIST VS. RELATIVIST

Culture can affect psychological disorders in at least five areas. The first area is the individual's culture-based *subjective experience*, including knowledge and beliefs about psychological problems. The second area is culture-based *idioms of distress*, that is, the ways individuals explain and express their symptoms according to culture-based display rules (see Chapter 6 and A Case in Point box, below). The third area is culture-based *diagnoses* for various forms of psychological disorders, including professional judgments as well as popular beliefs and folk knowledge. The fourth area is culture-based *treatment*, the way people, including professionals, attempt to overcome psychopathological symptoms. This area also includes cultural healing practices. The fifth area is culture-based *outcome* – scientific or not – according to which the results of treatment are evaluated (Castillo, 1997).

There are at least three types of interconnected symptoms, which should help us make critical assessments of mental disorders: physical, behavioral, and psychological. People tend to experience, display, and explain their symptoms according to cultural norms. Professionals who evaluate the reported symptoms also place these individuals' judgements in the context of a particular life or one's clinical experience. Therefore, we can propose two alternative hypotheses.

First: Human beings tend to develop ideas, establish behavioral norms, and learn emotional responses according to a set of their cultural prescriptions. Therefore, people from different cultural settings would understand psychological disorders differently, and their differences should be significant. This view is called the **relativist perspective** on psychopathology because it puts psychological phenomena in a relative, comparative perspective.

Second: Despite cultural differences, people tend to share a great number of similar features, including emotions, values, and behavioral responses. Therefore, the overall understanding of mental disorders should be relatively similar, even universal. This view is called the **universalist** or **absolutist perspective** on psychopathology because it suggests the existence of absolute, largely invariable symptoms of psychopathology across cultures. (See Figure 9.1.)

From the strictly relativist perspective, mental illness cannot be understood beyond the cultural context in which it develops. According to this view, socioeconomic conditions, religious, social, and political norms of each country or community should determine the way people display, understand, and treat psychological symptoms. If we accept this view, we should not apply views of mental illness formed in one cultural environment to other cultures' circumstances. Thus, it may be futile to study major depressive disorder in Japan using North American diagnostic methods because people in this Asian country are likely to describe and interpret their inner feelings and bodily reactions differently, compared to most Americans or Canadians. From this perspective, psychological disorders should be studied in contexts related to the observer, institution, and community with their unique experiences of distress and disability (Draguns & Tanaka–Matsumi, 2003).

A CASE IN POINT

IDIOMS OF DISTRESS

You have probably heard of expressions, such as "I have a gut feeling" or "I am sick to my stomach" or "My head is going to explode" or "Her behavior was cold-blooded." The English language is rich in its range of terms for psychological distress, even in comparison with other European languages. Thus, an African's complaint of "pain in the heart" or a Russian idiom of "my soul hurts" may have to account for

a wide range of symptoms for which we would use different names. Culture-based idioms of distress – the expressions by which the individual describes his or her symptoms – are very important channels through which the culture affects the subjective experience, clinical picture, and public expression of a disorder. This could include: emotional expressions or mannerisms that have cognitive emphasis on certain symptoms while ignoring others; physical actions, including seeking out professional care; and the culture-based explanations of mental disorders. People historically use scientific knowledge as well as popular beliefs to explain mental illness (Hinton & Kleinman, 1993). In Eastern Europe (Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia, in particular), many people often connect their psychological symptoms, such as headaches or anxiety, to fluctuations in atmospheric pressure or magnetic activities on the sun. However, for most people in the United States, these atmosphere–headache connections do not fit into the repertoire of idioms of distress. Cultural relativists are highly skeptical about the applicability of Western diagnostic criteria in other cultures and vice versa. They believe that culturally specific views, concepts, and expressions of distress are fundamental to understanding the illness' symptoms, prevention, and treatment (Draguns & Tanaka-Matsumi, 2003).

According to the relativist view, what is considered psychopathological or disturbing in one culture could be regarded as less disturbing or even normal in another cultural setting, and vice versa. Spirit possession syndromes are common and considered "usual" for some indigenous cultures in Africa and South America. In contrast, when someone claims that alien spirits possess their body in any Western country, these symptoms are likely to be associated with schizophrenia or some other form of psychosis. Similar to U.S. or Canadian citizens being concerned about the possibility of contracting a virus or any other contagious disease, people in some traditional African communities can experience fear of sorcerers and witches whose touch or alleged presence could cause negative health consequences, including serious psychological symptoms.

Dissociative fugue, a disorder marked by apparently purposeful travel or bewildered wandering associated with amnesia of identity or other important autobiographical information, is recognized by clinicians in only a few countries (APA, 2022). In the United States, up until the early 1970s, homosexuality was considered a form of psychological disorder. In the former Soviet Union, until the late 1980s, homosexual behavior was not only considered pathological, but it was also criminally punishable by imprisonment. Although homosexuality is no longer technically criminalized in Russia, according to polls, the vast majority of Russians (nearly 80%) hold a negative view of gays and lesbians (Shiraev, 2019). In the 2000s, homosexuality is still considered pathological or even criminal in many countries such as Iran, Angola, Cameroon, and most Arabic and Islamic countries. (We will turn to the issue of homosexuality again in Chapter 11.)

Defenders of the relativist view particularly target and criticize *ethnocentrism*, or judgment of one cultural reality from the position of the other. The most salient type

of ethnocentrism, in the eyes of critics, is one encouraged by cultural majorities. Values and norms accepted by any cultural majority – such as ethnic, religious, or racial – have tremendous power because of the sheer size of the majority and because of the fact that its members hold most of the positions of power (Lewis-Fernández & Kleinman, 1994). (Refer to our discussion of the naturalistic fallacy in Chapter 2.)

From the universalist view, the cultural impact on mental illness is important, but should not be overestimated (Beardsley & Pedersen, 1997). According to this position, psychopathological phenomena across countries and cultures tend to be mostly similar or even universal in terms of their etiology and expression. There are many examples that suggest such cross-cultural similarities. For instance, various disorders can be characterized by very similar symptoms. Among these symptoms are those related to, for instance, Alzheimer's dementia, Parkinson's disease, schizophrenia and other psychotic disorders, substance abuse, and severe autism spectrum disorders. Similarly, there is also little information on specific cultural differences in the expression of bipolar I disorder (APA, 2022). Further, in a study of Japanese and U.S. women, both samples – despite many cultural differences between them – neither reported nor displayed significant differences in their symptoms of postpartum depression (Shimizi & Kaplan, 1987). Across the world, people's experiences of caring for a family member with serious mental illness have been very similar and frequently involve negative stereotyping (stigma), guilt, shame, and hopelessness (Penny et al., 2009). Overall, the symptoms and related experiences have a similar origin, yet may manifest and feel somewhat different in various cultural settings.

INTEGRATIVE
(continuum between the two conceptual polarities)

ABSOLUTIST ────────────────── **RELATIVIST**

common origin and expression
context-free
central symptoms

culture-specific origin and expression
context-dependent
peripheral symptoms

example: depression

central symptoms

peripheral symptoms

- *dysphoria*
- *sadness*
- *lack of energy*
- *loss of interest*
- *sleep and appetite disturbance*
- *feelings of insufficiency*

- *somatic complaints (pain, headaches, weakness, imbalance)*
- *guilt*
- *suicidal thoughts*
- *anger*
- *hallucinations*
- *delusions*

Figure 9.1 Psychopathology: Absolutist (Universalist) vs. Relativist Perspectives

CENTRAL AND PERIPHERAL SYMPTOMS: AN OUTCOME OF THE DEBATE BETWEEN UNIVERSALISTS AND RELATIVISTS

Which view, absolutist or relativist, describes psychological reality with greater accuracy? While understanding both the universal nature and the relative cultural uniqueness of psychopathology, it is useful to implement an integrative approach to mental illness that synthesizes both viewpoints. In other words, major general features of psychopathology – abnormality of symptoms, maladaptiveness of the individual to current social conditions, and persistent distress – should be considered universal. At the same time, these features become evident by individuals in specific environmental, social, and cultural contexts. Each disorder, therefore, can manifest in the following two ways:

- A set of **central symptoms** that can be observed in practically all world populations.
- A set of **peripheral symptoms** that are culture specific.

For example, central symptoms of a major depressive episode – such as dysphoria, loss of energy, and thoughts of inadequacy – can be seen across cultures as:

1. being caused by biochemical factors such as impairment in the neurotransmission of serotonin.
2. a bodily syndrome manifested in the form of fatigue, disturbances in sleep and appetite, and other physical complaints.
3. psychological complaints such as difficulties in focus and concentration, ruminating about the past, and the inability to take pleasure in previously enjoyable activities (*anhedonia*).

In contrast to central symptoms, peripheral signs of this illness vary. For example, patients from Taiwan diagnosed with depression have been observed to be less likely to report feelings of guilt, compared to their Canadian counterparts who also carry the diagnosis of depression. Instead, in the Taiwanese sample, shame, bodily pain, or behavioral disturbances are more likely to be the dominant presentation, depending on one's learned expectation of what is relevant to his or her particular illness (Turner, 1997). In the section on schizophrenia later in this chapter, we will learn that hallucinations (severe disturbances of perception) and delusions (severe disturbances of thought) can be considered central symptoms of this disorder. However, the particular images and thoughts conveyed through these central symptoms are profoundly affected by the historic and cultural circumstances in which the person lives.

CULTURAL SYNDROMES

Cultural syndromes comprise a set of psychological phenomena of particular interest to psychologists. The eclectic and idiosyncratic nature of the category makes it challenging to define precisely, and there continues to be a great deal of disagreement and controversy surrounding its conceptualization and numerous manifestations. DSM-5-TR defines a cultural syndrome as "a cluster or group of co-occurring, distinctive symptoms found in

specific cultural groups, communities, or contexts" (APA, 2022, p. 17). Continuing, "the syndrome may or may not be recognized as an illness in the local cultural context . . . but such cultural patterns of distress and features of illness may nevertheless be recognizable by an outside observer" (APA, 2022, p. 17). Further, most such cultural patterns have local names.

Cultural syndromes do not have a one-to-one correspondence with disorders recognized by "mainstream" Western systems. Most of these syndromes were initially reported as confined to a particular culture or set of related or geographically proximal cultures. Recent changes in the DSM have replaced the term "culture-bound syndromes" with "cultural syndromes," but the use of both terms in many parts of the world continues. Cross-cultural psychologists and psychiatrists emphasize that cultures often influence how psychological symptoms are perceived, explained, prevented, and treated (Ventriglio et al., 2015; APA, 2000; APA, 2022). In general terms, the essence of cultural syndromes can be represented in terms of several broad categories that differentiate among relevant phenomena. These are presented below.

- An apparent set of psychopathological symptoms, not attributable to an identifiable organic cause, which is recognized as an illness in a particular cultural group, but does not fall into the illness category in the West. *Amok*, a sudden explosion of rage, recognizable in Malaysia, is an example. In London or New York, a person with these symptoms is likely to be described as "having an anger-control problem."
- An apparent set of psychopathological symptoms, not attributable to an identifiable organic cause, which is locally recognized as an illness and which resembles a Western disease category, but which (1) has locally salient features different from the Western disease and (2) lacks some symptoms recognizable in the West. One example is *shenjing shuairuo* or an anxiety syndrome in China, which resembles major depressive disorder but has more salient somatic features and often lacks the symptoms related to consistent and profound sadness that defines depression in the West.
- A discrete disease entity not yet recognized by Western professionals. A good example of this is *kuru*, a progressive psychosis and dementia indigenous to cannibalistic tribes in New Guinea. Kuru is now believed to result from an aberrant protein or "prion" that is capable of replicating itself by deforming other proteins in the brain. Kuru has also been compared to a form of Creutzfeldt–Jakob disease and may be equivalent or related to *scrapie*, a disease of sheep, and a form of *encephalopathy* labeled "mad cow disease." (See also below.)
- An illness, the symptoms of which occur in many cultural settings; however, it is only elaborated as an illness in one or a few cultural settings. An example is *koro*, known largely to people of Chinese ethnicity in Malaysia; related conditions are described in some other part of East Asia. Primary symptom: People experience sudden and intense anxiety that their sexual organs will recede into their body and cause death. (See more detailed description below.)
- Culturally accepted explanatory mechanisms or idioms of illness, which do not match Western idioms of distress and, in a Western setting, might indicate culturally inappropriate thinking and perhaps delusions or hallucinations. Examples of this include witchcraft, *rootwork* (in Caribbean), or the *evil eye* (common in Mediterranean and Latin American traditions).

- A state or set of behaviors, often including trance or possession states: hearing, seeing, and/or communicating with the dead or spirits or feeling that one has "lost one's soul" from grief or fright. These may or may not be seen as pathological within their native cultural framework, but if not recognized as culturally appropriate could indicate psychosis, delusions, or hallucinations in a Western setting.
- A syndrome allegedly occurring in a given cultural setting, which does not in fact exist but may be reported to the professional. A possible example is *wendigo* (in Algonkian Indians), a syndrome that involves a powerful desire for human flesh and fear of becoming a cannibal. Some researchers have questioned the validity of this syndrome (Marano, 1985). Meanwhile, accusing somebody of having *wendigo* was used to justify the expulsion or execution of a tribal outcast in a manner similar to the use of witchcraft allegations in Europe or North America.

Table 9.1 Cultural Syndromes from across the Globe

Amok. Known in Malaysia; similar patterns may occur elsewhere. *Amok* is a sudden rage in which an otherwise normal person goes berserk, sometimes hurting those in his path. Brooding is followed by a violent outburst; it is often precipitated by a slight or insult. The symptoms seem to be prevalent among men. It was well known to the British colonial rulers of Malaysia and has therefore passed into the English language: "*running amok.*" Historically, cases of amok have been reported in Malaysian newspapers (Osborne, 2001).

Ataque de nervios. Also known as "attack of nerves." Common in Latin America and Mediterranean groups. Symptoms include uncontrollable shouting, attacks of crying, trembling, heat in the chest rising to the head, and verbal or physical aggression. *Ataque de nervios* frequently occurs as a result of not only a stressful family event, especially the death of a relative, but also a divorce or fight with a family member. Studies of *ataque de nervios* revealed that 26 percent of people who suffer from this condition had a strong risk factor for other psychiatric disorders. More than 80 percent of these people have symptoms associated with anxiety, mood, suicidal, psychotic, or substance use dysfunctions (Tolin et al., 2007).

Bilis, colera, or **muina.** Part of a general Latin American idiom of distress and explanation of physical or mental illness as a result of extreme emotion that upsets the "*bodily humors*" (described in terms of hot and cold). Other symptoms include tension, headache, trembling, screaming, and so on. Bilis and colera specifically implicate anger in the cause of illness. In Korea, similar symptoms are labeled *Hwa-byung* or *wool-hwa-bung*, or the "anger syndrome." Symptoms are attributed to suppression of anger and include insomnia, fatigue, panic, fear of impending death, indigestion, anorexia, palpitations, generalized aches and pains, and a feeling of a mass in the epigastrium.

Brain fag. Known in West Africa. Sometimes labeled "brain tiredness," this is a mental and physical reaction to the challenges of schooling, a condition experienced primarily by male high school or university students. Symptoms include difficulties in concentrating, remembering, and thinking. Students often state that their brains are "fatigued." Additional symptoms center around the head and neck and include pain, pressure, tightness, blurring of vision, heat, or burning. "Brain tiredness" or fatigue from "too much thinking" is an idiom of distress in many cultures. The symptoms resemble anxiety, depressive, or somatic symptom disorder in *DSM-5-TR*.

Table 9.1 Continued

Dhat. Occurs in India; similar conditions are described in Sri Lanka and China as well. This syndrome is characterized by excessive concern about loss of semen from frequent intercourse, masturbation, nocturnal emission, or urine. Dhat syndrome presents with weakness, depression, and sexual problems and symptoms, such as palpitations; similar to *jiryan* (also in India), *sukra prameha* (in Sri Lanka), and *shenkui* (in China). Excessive semen loss is feared because it represents the loss of one's vital essence and can thereby perceived to be life threatening.

Falling out. Recognized in Southern United States, and "blacking out," as known in the Caribbean. Symptoms: sudden collapse and loss of sight, even though one's eyes remain open. The person usually hears and understands what is occurring around him or her, but feels powerless to move. These symptoms are labeled *obmorok* in Russian culture. This syndrome may correspond to functional neurological symptom disorder (conversion disorder) or dissociative disorder (APA, 2022).

Frigophobia. This is a condition analogous to what the Chinese call *wei han zheng*, or "fear of being cold." Patients bundle up in the steamy heat, wearing wool hats and gloves. Frigophobia seems to stem from Chinese cultural beliefs about the spiritual qualities of heat and cold; these symptoms are described primarily in the Chinese population of Singapore.

Ghost sickness. Reported in people from Native American Indian. Symptoms include preoccupations with death and the dead, bad dreams, fainting, appetite loss, fear, witchcraft, hallucinations, a sense of suffocation, confusion, and so on.

Koro. The sudden and intense fear that one's genitalia – the man's penis or the woman's nipples and/or vulva – will retract into the abdomen, causing subsequent death. The word *koro* (which likely derived from the Malay term meaning "head of the turtle," ostensibly referring to how it appears when the reptile retracts its head into the shell) appears to be a delusion or phobia in several cultural groups, in particular China, India, and Japan. Episodes of *koro* reportedly last for several hours, though the duration may be as long as two days. Treatment typically consists of prayer, ingestion of certain herbs, or the use of mechanical means (e.g., clamping of the sexual organ to prevent retraction).

Kuru. Known among the Fore people of Papua New Guinea. Characterized by progressive loss of coordination and control over muscle movements, and other physiological and neurological effects, which are ultimately lethal. The symptoms are associated with transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSEs), a group of progressive and fatal conditions that are presumed to be linked with prions and which affect the brain and nervous system.

Latah. Occurs in Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, and Japan. Symptoms include hypersensitivity to sudden fright, often with nonsense mimicking of others, and trancelike behavior. Over time, the person with these symptoms becomes so sensitive that trances can be triggered by something as seemingly innocuous as a falling coconut. *Latahs* (people who display the symptoms of latah) tend to blurt out offensive phrases, much like sufferers of Tourette's syndrome. (Indeed, Georges Gilles de la Tourette, the French discoverer of the syndrome in the 1880s, explicitly compared it to *latah*.) In addition to mimicking the actions of people around them, Latahs also tend to obey others' commands, including orders to take off their clothes. Afterward, people often report having no memory of what they said or did.

(*continued*)

Table 9.1 Continued

Locura. Incidents are known in the United States and Latin America. Symptoms include incoherence, agitation, auditory and visual hallucinations, inability to follow rules of social interaction, unpredictability, and possible violence.

Mal de ojo. Known in people from the Mediterranean and elsewhere. Sufferers, mostly children, are believed to be under the influence of an "evil eye," causing fitful sleep, crying, sickness, and fever.

Pibloktoq. Known in people from the Arctic and sub-Arctic Inuit communities, such as Greenland Eskimos. The syndrome is found throughout the Arctic with local names. Symptoms include extreme excitement, physical violence, verbal abuse, convulsions, and short coma. During the attack, individuals may tear off their clothing, break furniture, shout obscenities, eat feces, flee from protective shelters, or perform other irrational or dangerous acts. Such individuals may be withdrawn or mildly irritable for a period of hours or days before the attack, and typically report complete amnesia of the attack.

Qi-gong. Known in China. A short episode of symptoms, such as auditory and visual hallucinations, which occurs after engaging in the Chinese folk practice of qi-gong, or "exercise of vital energy," which resembles meditation (Lim & Lin, 1996). In the United States, reports about persistent hallucinations are likely to suggest schizophrenia or some other psychotic behavior.

Rootwork. Symptoms are known in the Southern United States and the Caribbean. They include anxiety, such as fear of poisoning or death, ascribed to those individuals who put "roots," "spells," or "hexes" on others.

Sin-byung. Known in Korea. This is a syndrome consisting of anxiety and bodily complaints followed by dissociation and possession by ancestral spirits. The syndrome is also characterized by general weakness, dizziness, fear, loss of appetite, insomnia, and gastrointestinal difficulties.

Shenjing shuairuo. A condition recognized in China and characterized by physical and mental fatigue, dizziness, headaches, pains, and sleep disturbance. However, key symptoms of depressive disorder identified in the West (such as persistent and overwhelming sadness) are not present.

Sore-neck syndrome. A syndrome observed in Khmer refugees in the United States. This is a type of panic disorder involving an intense fear of dying caused by a rupture of vessels in the neck from blood pressure or wind pressure. Additional symptoms palpitations, shortness of breath, headache, blurry vision, a buzzing in the ear, dizziness, and trembling.

Spell. Symptoms are described by some individuals in the Southern United States and elsewhere in the world. This is a trance in which individuals communicate with deceased relatives or spirits. At times this trance is associated with brief periods of personality changes. This is not considered psychopathological within the folk tradition; however, it is often labeled a "psychotic episode" in Western clinical settings.

Susto. Found in Latin American groups in the United States and labeled "fright" or "soul loss" among some people from the Caribbean. Symptoms are tied to a frightening event that makes the soul leave the body, causing unhappiness and sickness.

Table 9.1 Continued

Taijin kyofusho. In Japan, this refers to an intense fear that one's body, body parts, or bodily functions are displeasing, embarrassing, or offensive to other people in appearance, odor, facial expressions, or movements. This malady is included in the official Japanese classification of mental disorders. The symptoms are perhaps similar, in some respect, to social anxiety disorder (social phobia) (APA, 2022).

Wendigo. A syndrome known from the folklore of Plains and Great Lakes Natives in North America as well as some First Nations. The syndrome (which is seen as controversial by some scholars) involves a powerful, forbidden, and obsessive desire for human flesh and fear of becoming a cannibal.

Zar. Known in Ethiopia, Somalia, Egypt, Sudan, Iran, and elsewhere in North Africa and the Middle East. This refers to the belief in possession by a spirit, causing shouting, laughing, head banging, singing, or weeping. Individuals also may show apathy and withdrawal, refusing to eat or carry out daily tasks, or may develop a long-term relationship with the possessing spirit. Such behavior is not necessarily considered pathological within local settings.

Debates over cultural syndromes often revolve around both confusion within and conflations among these different categories. Many of these syndromes actually occur in many unrelated cultures, or they appear to be merely locally flavored varieties of illnesses found elsewhere. This fact is especially interesting because it shows that cultural syndromes could be viewed as an accentuation of universal trends. Specific cultures construe certain behaviors as syndromes of psychopathology, label them disorders, and treat them as illnesses. Some are not so much actual illnesses, but rather explanatory mechanisms, such as beliefs in witchcraft or humoral imbalances (a shift in the balance of some "bodily fluids").

So-called "male pregnancy symptoms" – vomiting, fatigue, toothache, and food cravings during a partner's pregnancy – were studied in On Wogeo (an island off the coast of New Guinea), the Garifuna (or Black Carib) of Central America, and the Bimin–Kuskusmin of Papua New Guinea (Munroe, 2010). Are these unique cultural syndromes? Or are they just local variations of "sympathy pain," which many of us can experience?

The concept of cultural syndromes is therefore useful insofar as it brings culture (religion and ethnic identity, in particular) to the attention of psychiatrists and psychologists trained in a different scientific or cultural tradition (Simons & Hughes, 1985).

Next, we will explore some specific mental disorders commonly identified and diagnosed in the United States within a broader cultural context.

ANXIETY DISORDERS

The definition of an **anxiety disorder** is subject to interpretations that are rooted in value judgments that vary across cultures (Satcher, 2000). However, no matter where

the person lives, each anxiety disorder can manifest itself as a set of central symptoms that can be observed in practically every culture, as well as a set of peripheral symptoms that are culture-specific (Hofmann & Hinton, 2014). For example, symptoms of an anxiety disorder are universally reported as a persistent worry, fear, or a constant state of apprehensive anticipation; further, the symptoms are maladaptive and cause significant distress in the individual. Although one person can experience, for instance, an overwhelming fear of scorpions, and another person may develop a devastating fear of college exams, they both report the existence of an emotion labeled "fear" that disrupts their daily functioning.

Central symptoms for a diagnosis of *generalized anxiety disorder* can be seen cross-culturally as (1) a bodily syndrome manifested in the form of fatigue, irritability, and muscle tension and (2) a psychological syndrome manifested as the individual's persistent worry about particular social settings or activities. Peripheral (culture-specific) signs of this specific anxiety disorder can vary. In one setting, a person may feel anxiety for not being an obedient member of their family while, in a different setting, another person feels anxiety for not being more observant of their religious faith and, hence, obedient to God.

Each national, religious, or ethnic group tends to develop conditions for the development of particular peripheral symptoms of various anxiety disorders. In Japan and Korea, for example, individuals with social phobia can develop a persistent fear of being "offensive" to others because of their looks or behavior. Such symptoms are less common in the West. Cultural norms influence what is seen as "normal" or "common," which may be viewed differently from the standpoint of other cultures. For instance, governments of many Middle Eastern countries restrict the participation of women in politics and in public life, and strict rules are applied to women's attire and behavior in public places. Therefore, a woman's persistent reluctance not to be seen in public should not be automatically considered by a U.S. professional as something resembling *agoraphobia* (the extreme or irrational fear of being in or entering open or crowded places, of leaving one's home, or of being in places from which escape may be difficult; APA, 2022).

The environment in which an individual lives often determines the type of fear he or she experiences. Fear of magic spirits, for instance, should not necessarily be diagnosed as a phobia in a culture where this type of fear is viewed as culturally appropriate. However, if this fear becomes excessive, such that it disrupts the individual's everyday activities and causes extraordinary suffering, this condition can be labeled as a phobia. Take, for example, the diagnosis of obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), which is defined as persistent and intrusive thoughts along with behavioral impulses. Should every type of obsessive thought or compulsive behavior be diagnosed as OCD? Not necessarily. Specific repetitive behavior – praying, for instance – should be judged in accordance with the norms of the individual's culture. In order to be diagnosed as OCD, it must clearly interfere with one's social role functioning.

Despite the variety of culture-specific, peripheral symptoms of anxiety disorders, there are also significant similarities. For instance, various traumatic events have direct and

indirect impact on the development of anxiety problems across the globe. Cheryl Koopman (1997) showed that traumatic events such as experiencing "ethnic cleansing" (i.e., genocide), terrorism, captivity, torture, and rape can produce similar psychological and behavioral responses in individuals of different national, cultural, and religious backgrounds. These reactions could be diagnosed as post-traumatic stress disorder, acute stress disorder (in DSM-5-TR), or acute stress reaction (in ICD-11). Individuals who have been exposed to such traumatic events – such as asylum seekers – typically have highly elevated rates of post-traumatic stress disorder compared to the general population.

With that said, similarities in symptoms do not necessarily suggest that the incidence or severity of the condition is the same across various cultural groups. With regard to agoraphobia, for instance, it has been established that this disorder is more prevalent among African Americans than among whites in the USA. Moreover, African Americans appear to be less likely than other groups to seek treatment for agoraphobia (Chambless & Williams, 1995; Eaton et al., 1991). Socioeconomic factors, such as access to health care, are likely key factors contributing to such disparities in diagnosis and treatment.

In the United States, there are some differences related to anxiety disorders among major racial groups. For example, Asian Americans commonly display symptoms of several types of anxiety disorders (such as social anxiety disorder, generalized anxiety disorder, panic disorder, and post-traumatic stress disorder) less frequently than other racial groups. White Americans were more likely to have symptoms of anxiety disorders than other groups, with the exception of post-traumatic stress disorder, which showed the highest rates among African Americans (Hofmann & Hinton, 2014).

DEPRESSIVE DISORDERS

In the past, **melancholy** (sometimes referred to as **melancholia**) was the most common label for symptoms known today as **depressive disorders**. The word *melancholy* originates from the Greek *melas* (black) and *khole* (bile, the liver-generated bitter liquid stored in the gallbladder). Used throughout centuries, the term has gradually been replaced by "affective disorder," then "mood disorder," and now "depressive disorder."

DEPRESSION THROUGH THE AGES

Various written accounts and detailed descriptions of mood-related maladies, depression in particular, are found in the texts of ancient civilizations including China, Babylon, Egypt, India, and Greece. According to the Old Testament, Saul, the ruler of Israel, was deprived of his favors with God and doomed to suffer from long-term distress and sorrow. He finally committed suicide. In *Ramayana*, the classic Indian epic, King Dasaratha goes through three episodes of deep sorrow caused by tragic family events. Depression figures prominently in another sacred Indian epic, *Mahabharata*. In this tale, a young man named Arjuna becomes afflicted with the symptoms of a serious depressive illness.

These symptoms are later relieved by Lord Krishna. It is believed that Prince Gautama Siddhartha, the future Buddha, displayed symptoms of depression early in his life. To cheer him up, his worried father and foster mother built three palaces, one for cold weather, one for hot weather, and one for the rainy season. Various descriptions of manic and depressive states are found in the Homeric epics, the earliest known works of Greek literature.

The first scientific accounts of depressive disorders are associated with the works of Greek scholars, physicians, and philosophers who shared several common views on human emotions (Simon, 1978; Tellenbach, 1980). These views were largely supported by Roman and Middle Eastern scholars and physicians.

The first English text entirely devoted to affective illness was Robert Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, published in 1621. Burton suggested that mood disorders have a wide variety of indicators, including many of those that are today considered symptoms of dissociative disorders and anxiety disorders. He included environmental factors such as diet, alcohol, biological rhythms, and intense love as contributing forces to melancholy. During the period when Burton lived, melancholia was commonly considered a condition to which noblemen, artists, philosophers, and other intellectuals were predisposed because of their exceptional compassion and emotional complexity. It was also frequently labeled as "love sickness" because of its frequent association with romantic behavior and jealousy (Gilman, 1988). In addition to this type, Burton also describes "religious" melancholia: a state of profound sadness over the loss of God's love.

DEPRESSION TODAY

Several cross-cultural studies of mood disorders show that people tend to report a broad range of common, central symptoms (Tanaka-Matsumi & Draguns, 1997; WHO, 2021b) including sadness, tension, lack of energy, loss of interest, thoughts of insufficiency, disturbances in sleep and eating, and problems with focus, attention, and memory. Beyond these core symptoms, cultural variations in the expressions of depression are also found. DSM has described several peripheral symptoms of depression: The headaches reported by the patients in Latino and Mediterranean countries; weakness, imbalance, and tiredness in Chinese and Asian countries; and problems of the "heart" reported in Middle Eastern countries all could be interpreted as signs of depression. The combination of Asian cultures' predominant belief in the unity of the mind and body along with the Asian tendency (on average) not to express feelings openly may lead to the presentation of somatic complaints along with the underreporting of psychological symptoms (Hwang et al., 2018; Goldston et al., 2008). It is therefore important to keep in mind the wide heterogeneity of Asian groups and people with Asian ancestry roots living across the globe.

At least three factors – (1) diagnostic practices, (2) understanding of the symptoms, and (3) disclosure of the symptoms – together influence the content of the clinical picture of mood disorders around the world. Research in the field has yielded results suggestive

of cultural differences in both the diagnostic practice and reporting of mood symptoms. One significant factor concerns the stigma of mental illness: People tend to hide or deny their psychological symptoms out of the fear of disapproval or outright rejection by others. Ian Neary from University of Essex undertook a three-year-long study of diagnostic practices in Japan. He suggested that some medical professionals avoid giving the diagnosis of "depression" – especially to young women – because such a judgment could, in the eyes of relatives and friends, automatically place the woman's condition in the category of "uncurable" mental illness. As a result, she could face serious difficulties finding a spouse and starting a family. With the awareness of this stigmatization risk, clinicians have sometimes provided their patients with alternative diagnoses, such as *neurasthenia* (a medical label used mostly in the first half of the twentieth century to describe a cluster of symptoms including fatigue, headaches, mood swings, and irritability) or any other such diagnosis that is more likely to be viewed as a physical (rather than psychological) problem, and therefore treatable by conventional means (Neary, 2000).

For many years, health professionals in some countries – due to folk beliefs as well as historic tendencies in their medical systems – did not recognize particular psychological symptoms. As an illustration, in the recent past, health care providers as well as average people in rural areas in many African countries, tended to view mental illness predominantly as marked, disturbing behavior with strong psychotic features (such as hallucinations and delusions). Emotional problems were not overlooked, though; instead, they were commonly explained by situational factors (Akyeampong et al., 2015).

A physician who spent two years working in Zimbabwe reported a case in which health care providers were given a case summary for evaluation. In this description, a 40-year-old woman expressed sadness, decreased motivation, lack of energy, loss of interest, and persistent ideas of personal uselessness. She reportedly said that life was not worth living and even said she once attempted suicide. What were the most common explanations? Excessive thinking. Preoccupation with her husband's infidelity. Her neighbors' jealousy. Even possible witchcraft performed against her. However, a mood disorder was not even mentioned in the evaluations (Patel, 1996).

Symptoms, if they are not directly observable by the clinician during an interview, are typically recorded according to the patient's own accounts. Could it be that some individuals have particular symptoms suggestive of a mood disorder but do not report them? There is evidence in support of this contention. It was found in one study that many Chinese patients do not acknowledge several of their own psychological symptoms, such as lack of joy, hopelessness, and loss of self-esteem. With further questioning, these symptoms were eventually revealed (Kleinman, 1986). Similarly, Yap (1965) initially noted that Chinese depressed patients had a low incidence of guilty feelings. However, later studies revealed the presence of experiences related to guilt. These examples suggest that affective and cognitive dimensions of depression were not necessarily "absent" in some Chinese patients; rather, these symptoms may be simply underreported, compared to other symptoms, particularly those related to the body (Yen et al., 2000).

SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION: SOMATIC VS. PSYCHOLOGICAL

One of the most interesting cross-cultural findings is the difference in the display of somatic versus psychological symptoms of mood disorders. Some cultural groups tend to "psychologize," whereas others tend to "somaticize" their distressful experiences (Keyes & Ryff, 2003; Marsella, 1980). For example, a study of word associations to the word "depression" in Japan and the United States found that the Japanese subjects preferred to use more somatic-referential terms, such as "headache" and "fatigue" (Tanaka-Matsumi & Marsella, 1976). Studies conducted with Chinese and Chinese American populations in the United States supported research findings emphasizing the expression of somatic symptoms among Chinese groups (Yen et al., 2000). Similar observations about cultural differences were established in a study by Ulusahin and colleagues (1994): Among British patients (representing a Western country) with depressive symptoms, there were high scores on psychological complaints such as sadness, guilt, and pessimism; in contrast, the participating Turkish patients (representing a non-Western country) showed higher scores on somatic complaints such as sleep disturbances, pains, and aches. In summary, there is evidence that people in non-Western cultures tend to "somatize" their distress, whereas those in Western cultures have the tendency to "psychologize" (Keyes & Ryff, 2003). Of course, these results are reported in terms of statistical averages; however, that does not make them any less "real."

Why do such differences in the reporting of bodily versus psychological symptoms occur at all? Some researchers refer to cultural rules of emotional display. For instance, in analyzing the differences between Asian cultures and other cultures, traditional Asian interpersonal connectedness is highly valued and rooted in duty, obligation, conformity, reciprocity, and avoidance of conflict, disapproval, and shame. For the individual raised in Chinese culture, emotional expression of depression is often perceived as self-centered, asocial, distancing, and threatening to interpersonal relationships. In contrast, the expression of physical suffering and bodily pain – which are amenable to treatment and do not threaten social ties – are more acceptable in the Chinese culture (Ying et al., 2000) and in other East Asian cultures (Grover & Ghosh, 2014). Reporting physical symptoms is presumed to be less embarrassing and more appropriate than complaining about psychological symptoms.

Other experts theorize about a greater separation of psychological and bodily phenomena in Western countries compared to Chinese society. In Chinese culture and medicine, according to these observers, the mind and body are integrated with each other, as well as within the social context (Wu, 1982). Furthermore, aspects such as stigmatization of mental illness and inadequate mental health care resources, both of which exist in Communist China, may serve as mediating variables. In contrast, the reporting of somatic symptoms would facilitate the patient receiving support from family and friends. As a result, for instance, neurasthenia as a "medical" assessment became a preferred diagnosis over the psychological diagnosis of major depression in Chinese society (Cheung, 1995).

Even though cultural differences can have a substantial impact on the expression of depression, we should be careful not to rush to judgment when analyzing reported

symptoms. Somatic complaints are not a unique set of characteristics found only in non–Western patients; such symptoms are common in many social and ethnic groups. There is also evidence that across countries, many symptoms of anxiety (which are also associated with somatic complaints) and depression overlap (Mak et al., 2011).

SCHIZOPHRENIA

Several years ago, a 29-year-old Saudi man suddenly began displaying unusual symptoms, including random convulsions and body twists. His behavior rapidly deteriorated and became erratic. Within very little time, his speech became strange and disorganized, and he lost the ability to walk. His relatives claimed they heard "the voice of a woman" emanating from the young man. The family didn't call the doctor. Instead, they brought him to religious scholars who concluded he was possessed by a *jinn* – a supernatural creature or spirit. In Islamic tradition, these evil spirits are believed to be invisible but still have the power to assume human or animal form. Some have good intentions. But others do not, invading and possessing people. For some of these religious scholars, it was concluded to be a case of possession. For treatment, they recommended the young man be isolated, chained to his bed, and read prayers. The family agreed, the young man's father even divulging that when he was young himself, a *jinn* invaded his body too, but praying eventually saved him and made him symptom-free.

––––––

If this case had occurred in the United States, would anyone have accepted a diagnosis of "evil spirits" and prescribe praying as a treatment? Is it wrong to challenge others' religious beliefs in this way, by rejecting their interpretation of a patient's behavior? After all, DSM states that certain forms of behavior should not be labeled delusional and abnormal if shared by most members of a religious or ethnic group.

Schizophrenia is a disorder characterized by the presence of delusions, hallucinations, disorganized speech, and disorganized or catatonic behavior. If we used North American diagnostic practices, the opening case in this chapter was likely to have presented such symptoms. Historically, many symptoms recognized today as schizophrenia were labeled "madness" (also "insanity" or "lunacy") as recently as 150 years ago. These symptoms included either gross excessiveness or overwhelming deficiencies of certain features in an individual's behavior and experiences. As such, it could describe aggressive, violent behavior and dramatic emotional outbursts; or, it could also concern an individual's profound lack of will, desire, or emotion. Individuals typically developed these disturbing symptoms as young adults and sometimes never improved (Shiraev, 2011).

Approximately 1 percent of the world's population today is affected by schizophrenia, the key symptoms of which appear to be universal. Despite general similar occurrence rates, there are some cultural variations. For example, there was a relatively high admission rate

with this diagnosis in the Republic of Ireland. In the United States, research shows that African Americans and people of Hispanic background continue to display a long-term increased rate of schizophrenia, almost three to four times higher than Euro-Americans (Schwartz & Blankenship, 2014; Levinson & Simmons, 1992). Acute and catatonic cases of schizophrenia have been more prevalent in developing countries compared with developed nations (Sartorius, 1992). In the United States, recent immigrants had a higher rate of incidences of schizophrenia compared to Americans born in this country (Schwartz & Blankenship, 2014). Internationally, there appears to be a similar pattern of racial disparity. There is no indisputable research explaining why such differences occur. However, many studies point out possible misinterpretations of deviant symptoms by clinicians.

Despite the assumed biological causes, individuals as well as social conditions can and do affect the course of schizophrenia. Higher educational statuses of patients, for instance, were predictive of whether the illness would remain chronic, but this trend was confirmed for only non-Western countries. People may internalize their environmental influences differently, such as in the form of peer pressure, requirements, and expectations from others. Warner (1994) explained this fact by suggesting that in the Third World countries, the better educated experience higher work-related stress. However, national differences in schizophrenia rates could also be explained by differences in access to hospitals. As far as this assumption goes, if access to medical services and facilities is limited, a more severe case is more likely to get attention than less severe cases of illness.

Schizophrenia is more common in men than in women in most parts of the world. However, a study conducted by Phillips and colleagues in China (2004) showed that this trend was reversed in China. Their results suggested the ratio between men and women diagnosed with schizophrenia was 6:10, respectively. The researchers used census data and information from the Ministry of Health and other sources to estimate that 4.25 million people in China had symptoms of schizophrenia. More recent data suggest that the number of persons affected with schizophrenia has risen to more than 7.16 million. In urban areas, the prevalence of schizophrenia in the population has risen significantly faster than in the countryside (Chan et al., 2015). This research challenges the assumption that schizophrenia has a generally uniform prevalence worldwide with only minor variations. As researchers of this study suggested, cultural, social, and economic characteristics of communities could have influenced the onset and course of schizophrenia.

The study raises further questions about diagnostic procedures, stigma associated with schizophrenia, and government control of the health statistics reported. Because of the substantial gender gap related to behaviors considered appropriate for men and women, doctors may be more reluctant to diagnose men with schizophrenia. However, this reluctance is not as likely to affect the diagnosis of women. In addition, the Communist authorities in China (as the government in the former Soviet Union) may, for political reasons, intentionally deflate the number of cases reported. The researchers of this study also detected a link between schizophrenia and suicide. Their data suggested that nearly 10 percent of the 285,000 deaths from suicide in China each year are committed by people suffering from schizophrenia. Additionally, those who commit suicide are also more likely to be women than men.

In developed countries today, schizophrenia is treated primarily by neuroleptic (antipsychotic) drugs, which aim to reduce the most profound symptoms of this disorder. A variety of psychological methods can also be used to reduce relapses. Therefore, the role of the caring family and community becomes extremely important in the life of the patient.

CULTURE AND SUICIDE

Approximately every 15 minutes, somebody in the United States takes his or her own life. Suicide is not, per se, a psychological disorder, yet suicide is caused by a variety of factors, including mental illness and substance abuse. More than 700,000 people commit suicide globally every year (WHO, 2021c). Some countries, such as Estonia and Russia, have higher suicide rates than the United States. Others, like Mexico, have lower rates (WHO, 2021c). In the Western world, males die three to four times more often by means of suicide than do females, although females *attempt* suicide nearly four times as often (Miranda & Jeglic, 2022). Males represent nearly half of the population, but commit nearly 80% of suicides. In the United States, suicide is the second-most common cause of death in adolescents, and in young males, it is second only to accidental death. Suicide is also the fourth-leading cause of death among young children (CDC, 2015). People over 85 have the highest rate of suicides, according to government statistics (CDC, 2022).

In countries such as Germany, Taiwan, and the United States, suicide rates are much higher than in less economically advanced countries: the ratio, for instance, between the United States and India is approximately 2:1. Japan has even higher rates of suicide than the United States, especially among the elderly. In developed countries including Japan, Finland, France, and Russia, suicide rates vary from 12 to 20 suicides per 100,000 people per year. They are relatively lower (5–7 suicides per 100,000) in Italy, Great Britain, and Spain.

Muslim countries that have been unaffected by war have had traditionally low suicide rates. Many countries in Central and South America have low rates also, with the exception of Guyana (23 per 100,000), Surinam (14), and Uruguay (13). Scandinavian countries, as well as Central and East European states, have higher suicide rates compared with other countries. Some Asian countries, such as Japan, Singapore, and Sri Lanka, have relatively high rates. Elsewhere in the world, higher suicide rates are reported for males. The world's highest suicide rates are reported in Lithuania and South Korea (31 per 100,000). Most of the top 20 countries with the highest suicide rates are economically affluent.

Perhaps counter-intuitively, suicide rates have historically tended to be higher in those nations that rank relatively high on subjective well-being (Inglehart, 1997). In other words, nations in which people reported that they tend to be happier than people in other nations have evidenced higher suicide rates. There is no clear explanation for this. Perhaps being deeply depressed in a society where everybody is expected to be happy is more challenging than it would be in a society where most people believe that their lives are expected to be difficult. Another possibility is that in economically advanced nations,

people's freedom of choice is emphasized, thereby "rationalizing" suicide as a personal decision one has a right to make.

Overall, suicide levels are lower in less developed countries, particularly African, Asian, and Latin American countries and Islamic nations. However, there are very few reliable studies of suicide in the Muslim world (Leenaars et al., 2010). As such, the suicide rates in Muslim countries may be underreported due to the shame and guilt associated with it (Eskin, 2004).

Suicide rates have always been high in Japan (ranging from 25 to 35 thousand every year). No religious prohibitions exist in Japan against suicide, and it has long been seen as a way to escape failure or to save loved ones from embarrassment. Moreover, in Japan, where honor is an ultimate virtue, many people have long regarded suicide as an "honorable" death, rather than an act of shame and cowardice. Yet suicide remains a relatively taboo subject to discuss publicly in Japan: Public awareness about the problem remains low, and individuals experiencing suicidal ideation are less likely to seek help from psychology professionals.

In the US, veterans, members of LGBTQ+ groups, middle-aged adults, individuals living in rural areas, and tribal populations disproportionately experience factors linked to suicide (CDC, 2022a). While suicide rates among blacks in America remain twice as low as the national average, suicide remains the third-leading cause of death among African Americans ages 15 to 19 (CDC, 2022a).

All told, suicide is a serious problem that requires research and social action. Around the world, scores of suicide cases go unreported. People tend to maintain a negative view of suicide or prefer not to discuss this problem with researchers (WHO, 2021c).

Depressive disorder remains the most serious contributor to suicide. Unfortunately, African American youths are underrepresented in outpatient mental health services and many, as a result, do not receive preventive care, which is one of the risk factors of suicide. According to the National Institute of Mental Health (2011), American Indians, Alaskan Natives, and whites had the highest rates of suicide. The rates of blacks, Latinos, and Asian youths are almost two times lower. However, studies show that newly immigrated Latinos lack familiarity with the service system and are often apprehensive of it because of fear of being reported as being undocumented.

A CASE IN POINT

SUICIDE IN RUSSIA: AN ONGOING PROBLEM

The suicide rates in Russia are currently about 20 per 100,000 population (the rate for the United States is about 13 per 100,000; in Canada the number is about 10). Even though the numbers, according to Russian government reports, keeps falling,

keep in mind that many cases remained unreported. Russia ranks third in the world in the suicide mortality rate (Bellman & Namdev, 2022). The numbers for Russian men are between five and six times higher than they are for women. How can we explain such high rates of suicide? Some would choose explanations that come quickly to mind (see our discussion of the availability bias in Chapter 2): "It's their climate!" or "It's their long nights!" However, we know that people in Iceland live in a colder climate, and the suicide rates are much lower there (around 13). One may guess: "Is it alcoholism?" Indeed, Russia has high alcohol consumption rates. South Korea too has high rates of alcoholism and high rates of suicide. Suicides occur more frequently among the inebriated. However, there are countries with high alcohol consumption rates, such as France and Ireland, but with lower suicide rates. "Is it societal violence? Could suicide be self-directed aggression?" The murder rates in Russia are among the highest in Europe. There are other countries that have higher rates of violent crimes but lower rates of suicide, compared to Russia. "Could social and economic problems contribute to suicide?" Sure, they could; yet Russian economic conditions have been steadily improving since the early 2000s. Yes, the economy has slowed down over the past several years, especially since Russia began waging its war against Ukraine in 2022. Yet most Russians are not starving. Finally, someone might suggest: "Is it the ethnic factor?" Russians, as people in fellow Slavic nations such as Belarus or Ukraine, all tend to have high suicide rates. But what does ethnicity have to do with suicide rates? Psychological science has not yet provided testable hypotheses.

Questions: What other social and cultural factors should be considered when attempting to explain suicide not only in Russia, but also in other countries?

Suicide rates are generally lower in cultures in which religion particularly opposes "self-murder." There are relatively low levels of suicide in predominantly Catholic and Muslim countries compared with many Western and Protestant nations, where suicide is considered by some as a legitimate way of escaping physical pain, personal loss, and other misfortunes of life. However, along with religious prescriptions, there are other cultural factors that might affect people's attitudes toward suicide. As an example, suicide rates in Puerto Rico are higher than those in Mexico, both of which are Catholic countries. The difference may be explained by the coexistence among Puerto Ricans of both Catholic doctrines and Indian folk beliefs (i.e., assumptions of communications between the dead and those who are alive). However, there are also suicides inspired by religious and ideological beliefs including the acts of terrorism.

Several factors contribute to suicide. As noted above, probably the most significant is major depressive disorder. Another important risk factor is substance abuse. Severe or progressed alcohol and substance use is strongly associated with increased risk of suicidal behavior in most ethnic groups. In the United States, serious problems related to drinking historically have especially affected suicidal rates among Native American and Mexican American youths (Goldston et al., 2008). All told, a combination of depression

and substance abuse is a lethal blend, leading to a high probability of suicidal behavior (Esang & Ahmed, 2018).

Another factor contributing to suicide is group pressure associated with a person's positive image as a member of a social group. In some groups, particularly Americans of Asian origin (primarily Chinese and Japanese), one of the most serious psychological problems is associated with shame or "loss of face" due to an individual's inappropriate behavior. Loss of face can serve as a precipitant for suicidal behavior if shame is perceived as intolerable, or if the group views suicide as an honorable way of dealing with difficulties. On the other hand, if the group views suicide as a detestable act, the adolescent may be less likely to attempt suicide, even in the presence of loss of face (Goldston et al., 2008).

Some early theories of suicide suggest a relationship between societal complexity and frequency of suicide (Durkheim, 1897). A cross-cultural sample of 58 societies was selected to test this hypothesis formulated more than 100 years ago. Each selected society was rated on a scale of social development, and the number of cases of suicide in the literature for each society was recorded. There emerged a significant relationship between societal complexity (e.g., urbanization, organizational ramification, and craft specialization) and rate of suicide (Krauss, 1970).

Researchers continue to study risk factors related to suicide. Depression rarely leads to suicide by itself. People who attempt or die by suicide can (and frequently do) have a variety of additional problems: losing a job, problems at school, relationship failure, physical illness, pain, disability, financial or legal difficulties, and more.

PERSONALITY DISORDERS

Personality disorders are viewed as enduring patterns of inner experience and behavior that deviate markedly from the expectations of the individual's culture (APA, 2022). Personality disorders are diagnosed when the patterns are pervasive and inflexible, stable over time, and lead to distress or impairment in one or several areas of functioning (Akhtar, 2002).

At least two issues are important in our study of personality disorders. First, each personality disorder is characterized by the excessive prominence of particular *personality traits* (see Chapter 11), as compared to cultural norms. These traits are interconnected and can manifest, for instance, as excessive grandiosity, anxiety, rigidity, aggressiveness, suspiciousness, impulsivity, ego-centrism, social detachment, and so on. Consider, for example, a young adult who persistently avoids making independent decisions, fears abandonment from others, and shuns initiating new relationships for fear of embarrassment or rejection.

Second, a behavior pattern is called a personality disorder because it appears significantly at odds with what is considered a tolerable norm in a given cultural environment. Imagine a person who constantly challenges social norms, has consistent problems with adjustment, and experiences significant distress, unhappiness, and agitation. Professionals in many

nations today recognize personality disorders as a unique diagnostic category, consisting of ten specific diagnoses (see Table 9.2).

Table 9.2 DSM-5: Classification and Description of Personality Disorders

Cluster A: Odd and Eccentric Behavior	Brief Description of Symptoms	Cultural Caveats
Paranoid Personality Disorder	A prevalent distrust and suspiciousness of others and their motives	Not to be confused with behaviors influenced by sociocultural contexts or specific life circumstances (e.g. guarded or defensive behaviors on the part of immigrants or refugees due to language barriers or lack of knowledge of rules) (DSM-5, p. 651)
Schizoid Personality Disorder	A pervasive pattern of detachment from social relationships and a restricted range of emotions in interpersonal settings	Not to be confused with defensive behaviors/interpersonal styles or "emotional freezing" on the part of immigrants from other countries or individuals from a variety of cultural backgrounds (DSM-5, p. 654)
Schizotypal Personality Disorder	A persistent pattern of social and interpersonal deficits marked by cognitive or perceptual distortions and eccentricities of behavior	Not to be confused with pervasive culturally determined characteristics, particularly those regarding religious beliefs and rituals (e.g. voodoo, speaking in tongues, life beyond death, shamanism, mind reading, sixth sense, evil eye, and/or magical beliefs related to health and illness) (DSM-5, p. 657)
Cluster B: Dramatic, Emotional, or Erratic Behavior	**Brief Description of Symptoms**	**Cultural Caveats**
Histrionic Personality Disorder	A pervasive pattern of excessive emotionality and attention seeking	Not to be confused with norms for interpersonal behavior, personal appearance, and emotional expressiveness that vary widely across cultures (DSM-5, p. 668)
Narcissistic Personality Disorder	A persistent pattern of grandiosity in fantasy or behavior, need for admiration, and lack of empathy	Not to be confused with patterns of leadership behavior and/or responses in extreme situations

(continued)

Table 9.2 Continued

Cluster B: Dramatic, Emotional, or Erratic Behavior	Brief Description of Symptoms	Cultural Caveats
Borderline Personality Disorder	A prevalent pattern of instability and unpredictability of thought, emotion, and behavior	Not to be confused with adolescents/young adults identity problems characterized by emotional instability, "existential" dilemmas, uncertainty, anxiety-provoking choices, conflicts about sexual orientation, and competing social pressures to decide on careers (DSM-5, p. 666)
Antisocial Personality Disorder	A long-standing pattern of a disregard for other people's rights, often crossing the line and violating those rights.	Not be confused with adaptive responses to extraordinary, dangerous, and threatening situations (DSM-5, p. 662)

Cluster C: Anxious and Fearful Behavior	Brief Description of Symptoms	Cultural Caveats
Avoidant Personality Disorder	A long-standing pattern of feelings of inadequacy and social inhibition	Not to be confused with the variation in degree to which different cultural and ethnic groups regard diffidence and avoidance as appropriate (DSM-5, p. 674)
Dependent Personality Disorder	A pervasive pattern of dependency and fear of abandonment.	Not to be confused with behavior not in excess of cultural norms (e.g. the emphasis on passivity, politeness, and deferential treatment is characteristic of some socities (DSM-5, p. 677)
Obsessive-compulsive Personality Disorder	A pervasive pattern of preoccupation with orderliness, perfectionism, and mental and interpersonal control, at the expense of flexibility, openness, and efficiency	Not to be confused with behaviors that reflect culturally sanctioned habits, customs, or interpersonal styles (e.g. cultures that place substantial emphasis on work and productivity (DSM-5, p. 681)

DSM–5–TR notes that judgments about appropriate and inappropriate traits vary across cultures (APA, 2022). Psychologists are expected to make a determination of whether or not the diagnosis is applicable to the individual, given the cultural context in which the patient lives. For instance, consider a woman who wears flashy and sometimes seductive apparel, seeks constant approval, craves endless social attention, and is known for her

intense expression of emotions. If she were a celebrity Broadway actress living in New York city, her demeanor might be seen as quite normal, even "appropriate." But if instead she resided in a small rural town in the conservative American Midwest, the same conduct could possibly earn her a diagnosis of histrionic personality disorder.

Tolerance threshold is a term that stands for a measure of tolerance or intolerance toward specific personality traits in a cultural environment. Low thresholds stand for relative societal intolerance against specific behaviors and underlying personality traits, while high thresholds stand for relative tolerance. If a society accepts the diversity of behaviors, then tolerance thresholds would be relatively high. In Table 9.3, you will find a description of the impact of specific cultural constructs on the manifestation and evaluation of personality disorders. In sum, personality disorders represent a deviation from what is considered a "standard" personality in a specific social and cultural environment.

Table 9.3 Assumptions about the Links between Cultural Variables, Personality, and Manifestation and Evaluation of Symptoms

Cultural Variables	Manifestations and Evaluations of Symptoms
Collectivism	Collectivist norms allow very limited deviance from what is considered appropriate behavior. Therefore, there should be less tolerance to and more social sanctions against any exhibition of histrionic or antisocial traits. Personality traits that disengage individuals from the group are also among the least tolerated; these include narcissistic, borderline, and schizoid features. Dependent and avoidant personality traits should be tolerated, in general. Obsessive-compulsive traits can be useful in cases that they help an individual to follow strict requirements and rules. Paranoid tendencies may not be seen as pronounced if most people share similar fears and concerns.
Individualism	Tolerance thresholds are relatively high. Individualist norms cultivate tolerance to independent behavior and a range of deviations from the norm. Many symptoms of personality disorders in their mild form could be accepted as signs of a person's unique individuality or the person's right to choose their own behavioral scripts. However, due to expectations that individualism is based on self-regulation and self-discipline, antisocial and borderline features may stand out and be rejected.
High power distance	Tolerance thresholds are relatively high toward behavior that is in accordance with the power hierarchy. Narcissistic personality tendencies are tolerated in individuals of higher status. Antisocial traits are particularly resisted because they challenge the established order in relationships between older and younger family members, authority figures and lay people. Obsessive-compulsive traits can contribute to coping in interpersonal relationships because the person maintains the rules of subordination. Dependent personality traits are tolerated. Avoidant personality traits are likely to be tolerated. Schizoid personality traits are required for some social roles.

Table 9.3 Continued

Cultural Variables	Manifestations and Evaluations of Symptoms
Low power distance	Personality characteristics that are viewed antiegalitarian are not likely to be tolerated. Among these characteristics are narcissistic and dependent features for their association with the idea of personal subordination.
Traditionalism	Personality traits that are viewed as challenging the established order and tradition will likely be rejected. Therefore, there are very low tolerance thresholds toward histrionic and antisocial features. Other personality traits are evaluated based on the criterion of whether these traits help to maintain the existing traditional establishment.
Modernity	Traits that are not in line with the customs of openness, exchange of ideas, flexibility of customs, and individual freedom are likely to be resisted.
Specific social and cultural circumstances	Obsessive-compulsive and dependent personality traits are likely to be more appropriate in the context of social stability and less appropriate if a society is in transition. Antisocial personality traits can be useful as a means of self-preservation in especially difficult social conditions, such as rampant violence and lawlessness. Borderline personality traits can develop in extreme social circumstances. Narcissistic personality traits can develop within conditions of extreme social mobility, where individuals are able to achieve enormous success and wealth. Histrionic personality traits may be common in younger individuals from nontraditional settings. Paranoid personality traits are useful in dangerous situations, such as instances of social turmoil.

In a unique comparative study sponsored by the World Health Organization, Loranger and associates (1994) employed the help of 58 psychiatrists who interviewed 716 patients in 11 countries in North America, Europe, Africa, and Asia. The researchers utilized a specially designed semi–structured clinical interview (the International Personality Disorder Examination), which was compatible with evaluations used in the United States. The main result of the study was that personality disorders possess relatively similar features that can be assessed with a reasonably high degree of reliability across different nations, languages, and cultures. Additional studies have yielded similar outcomes, suggesting that certain symptoms can be diagnosed with a reliable degree of consistency across different racial and national groups (Fountoulakis et al., 2002).

Unfortunately, reliable comparative empirical evidence has been accumulated some time ago only for antisocial personality disorder (sometimes referred to as *sociopathy*) (Murphy, 1976). Symptoms of this personality disorder can be recognized in all social and cultural groups (Robins et al., 1991). In particular, in the United States, individuals displaying symptoms of antisocial personality disorder are charged with a greater number and variety of criminal offenses than people without these symptoms, regardless of race (Cooke & Michie, 1999; Hare, 1991). However, at least at this stage of psychological research, there are many reasons to believe that personality disorders represent categories and symptoms that widely vary in a range of cultures.

Psychologists focus largely on two basic sets of assumptions related to the manifestation and diagnoses of these disorders. The first set includes a hypothesis about specific culture-bound personality traits that are prevalent in some cultural groups and less prevalent in others. According to this view, similarities in coping strategies cause the development of similar traits in many individuals belonging to the same cultural group. As an example, some would argue that conscientiousness and deeply seated habits of self-discipline have been cultivated in the German culture for numerous decades. Therefore, on this basis, there should be many individuals raised in Germany who develop personality traits consistent with self-discipline and conscientiousness. Additionally, if a person is born outside Germany but raised there, this individual is likely to develop such traits. If this hypothesis is correct, there should, therefore, be a higher statistical probability of the occurrence of the symptoms of obsessive-compulsive personality disorder (not to be confused with the more severe diagnosis of obsessive-compulsive disorder – OCD). In other words, these symptoms should be found with a greater frequency in Germans than in people of other nations whose cultural conditions cultivate a set of different personality traits. However, such ideas have not yet found empirical support.

The second set of assumptions embraces expectations about the existence of specific social and cultural circumstances that determine our views serving as "filters" for evaluations of personality traits and personality disorders. Some traits can be seen as common and "standard" from a particular national or cultural standpoint, while they can also be seen as excessive and even abnormal (if they fit specific criteria) from another cultural point of view. For instance, if a woman from a traditional culture does not go in public places often, prefers solitary activities at home, does not have close relationships with anyone outside her family, and appears "cold" or unemotional in conversations with a researcher, these characteristics should not be considered as indicative of schizoid personality disorder. Her behavior should be judged from a broader cultural context, which contains specific gender scripts, or rules of behavior for men and women. Therefore, some symptoms of DSM-5-TR personality disorders could be evaluated as non-excessive, non-pathological, and even normal in certain cultural settings. Thus, cultural sensitivity is essential when attempting to apply DSM-based diagnoses to individuals from different cultural environments.

The idea about the existence of specific "national" or "ethnic" personality traits – both useful and problematic – has been explored by many scholars of the past and present. (We will return to this subject again in Chapter 11.)

CRITICAL THINKING

IS *HIKIKOMORI* A PERSONALITY DISORDER?

Hikikomori is a Japanese term for modern-day hermits, and has been the topic of numerous television documentaries and newspaper and magazine articles (Rees, 2002; Saito, 2012). It refers to a condition in which individuals refuse to leave their

parents' home, do not work or go to school, and isolate themselves in a single room away from their family, friends, and society at large. They typically spend their days browsing the Web or chatting online (thereby avoiding any real face-to-face contact), only occasionally coming out of their self-imposed "bubble" to acknowledge their parents, who support them financially. The vast majority of cases are male adolescents and young adults. These individuals are frequently described by others as shy, insecure, and unhappy loners. They think of themselves as worthless and undeserving of happiness. Almost all feel deep remorse at having betrayed their families' expectations (Ma, 2018). The condition may last half a year, and in some cases, much longer. Although Hikikomori is primarily a Japanese phenomenon (with cases approaching one million individuals), studies show that such individuals exist around the world (Sax, 2007). People who display symptoms of *Hikikomori* do not manifest evidence of any other serious psychological disorder, when compared to the general population.

Questions: Do you think that Hikikomori should be classified as an official mental disorder? How does it differ from schizoid personality disorder, avoidant personality disorder, or even autistic spectrum disorder? In your opinion, do you believe they are "failures" as members of their respective society? How would society as a whole function if most people displayed these symptoms?

IS SUBSTANCE ABUSE CULTURE-BOUND?

There are cultural and national standards for substance use and abuse. In an effort to use more neutral terminology, DSM–5–TR avoids the terms "abuse," addiction," or "alcoholic" because of their uncertain definitions and potentially negative connotations. Instead, DSM–5–TR opts for the broader term *substance use disorder*, defined as "a cluster of cognitive, behavioral, and physiological symptoms indicating that the individual continues using the substance despite significant substance-related problems" (APA, 2022, p. 544). There are also wide cultural variations in attitudes toward substance consumption, patterns of substance use, accessibility of substances, and prevalence of disorders related to substance (APA, 2022).

As of this writing, marijuana is legal for medicinal or recreational use in most states in the USA. Countries such as Canada, the Netherlands, Mexico, South Africa, and Georgia have either legalized or decriminalized the use of marijuana. Smoking opium was legal in some Asian American communities at the turn of the past century. The legal drinking age in the United States is 21. In contemporary Russia or Canada, however, it is 18, and the laws against selling alcohol there to minors are not strictly enforced. Today, a large proportion of countries have relatively loose alcohol-related policies. However, devout Muslims, Hindus, and Mormons prohibit any alcohol consumption. In contrast, other religious groups, including Christians and Jews, accept occasional and moderate drinking. The global average of 6.2 liters of pure alcohol per person per year equals 53 bottles of wine per person older than 15; or, to simplify, around 1 liter (2.5 pints) of wine per week.

However, the average per capita alcohol consumption varies across the world. Alcohol consumption across North Africa and the Middle East is particularly low. At the upper end of the scale, alcohol intake across Europe is the highest. Europeans, although only 15 percent of the world population, consume about 50 percent of the alcohol on earth. This equates to approximately two bottles of wine per person per week. However, across North Africa and the Middle East more than 80 percent of people have never consumed alcohol (Ritchier & Roser, 2018).

Unfortunately, alcohol causes about 3 million deaths a year worldwide. About 7 percent of all male deaths can be attributable to alcohol, compared to 4 percent of female deaths. Globally, people of lower-socioeconomic status are more vulnerable to alcohol-related diseases than other groups. Parents who drink to excess adversely affect family functioning, parent–child relationships, and the child's future. There has also been a causal relationship established between excessive use of alcohol and a range of mental and behavioral disorders and injuries (WHO, 2019a). The more social and psychological vulnerabilities a person has, the more likely the person is to develop alcohol problems (Schmidt et al., 2010). From a public health perspective, vulnerability denotes susceptibility to poor health or illness, which can be manifested through physical, mental, and social outcomes.

In most Asian countries (except South Korea), the overall prevalence of alcohol–related disorders is relatively low, and the male–female ratio is very high. Various East Asian populations have a sort of "protective mechanism" against alcohol abuse. It was found that approximately 50 percent of Korean, Japanese, and Chinese individuals lack a particular chemical in their blood, *aldehyde dehydrogenase*, that eliminates the first breakdown product of alcohol. When such individuals consume alcohol, they experience a flushed face and palpitations. Therefore, they are not as likely to consume large amounts of the substance. Cultural norms and peer pressure could change behavioral patterns, though. Studies showed that when Asian youth immigrated to the United States, they tended to drink more than their peers who live in their home countries (Halonen & Santrock, 1995). Despite some widespread beliefs, there is no scientific evidence that Native Americans share this physiological anomaly.

Alcohol–related disorders are associated with lower educational levels, lower socioeconomic status, higher rates of unemployment, and high school dropouts. However, it is difficult to determine what is cause and what is effect. For example, it has been demonstrated that people who drop out of either high school or college have particularly high rates of alcohol-use disorders (APA, 1994; WHO, 2019a). Does this mean that the individual develops a substance-related problem because he or she dropped out of school? Or did this person drop out from school because of the substance–related problem? Or were there other variables that could account for both early drop out and substance use problems? (See our discussion of correlation and causation in Chapter 2.)

Some researchers have studied biological factors that may cause differences in addictive behavior in certain cultural groups. For example, the *Journal of the American Medical Association* reported that cells of African Americans who smoke tend to absorb more

nicotine than do cells of white or Hispanic smokers. This difference, some experts hypothesize, could explain why blacks tend to suffer more from tobacco-related diseases – such as lung cancer – and have more trouble quitting the habit (Schwartz, 1998).

In the past decade, the opioid – particularly fentanyl – epidemic, rapidly spread through North America and then through a growing number of countries globally. The problem became increasingly acute after the end of the COVID pandemic. This fast-moving epidemic is extraordinarily deadly and did not discriminate along age, sex, or national lines. Similarly, addictions to heroin, crystal methamphetamine ("speed"), and crack cocaine continue to run rampant. (We will address this important and dangerous problem in the concluding chapter.)

A CASE IN POINT

SMOKING PATTERNS

Worldwide, approximately 1.1 billion people regularly smoke cigarettes or other tobacco products. Tobacco use continues to be the leading global cause of preventable death, killing approximately 7 million people each year (WHO, 2019b). Globally, the prevalence of tobacco use is substantially higher in men (40 percent) than in women (10 percent), but significantly increasing smoking rates among women in the past ten years were noted in Cambodia, Malaysia, and Bangladesh. Female smoking prevalence is actually higher than male smoking prevalence in the Cook Islands, Nauru, Norway, Papua New Guinea, and Sweden, thanks largely to aggressive tobacco industry marketing of cigarettes to women (WHO, 2015). Around 80 percent of the world's smokers live in low- and middle-income countries. About 35 percent of men in developed countries smoke, compared to almost 50 percent of men in developing nations and almost two-thirds of men in China. Currently, more than 600,000 annual smoking-attributable deaths occur in China alone (WHO, 2022). Some good news is that in the United States and Canada, among a few other countries, smoking rates are noticeably declining. Cigarette smoking among U.S. adults has now reached an all-time low, a decline of approximately two-thirds in the more than 50 years since the first Surgeon General's report warned of the health consequences of smoking (CDC, 2019).

PSYCHODIAGNOSTIC BIASES

The cultural background of the professional can influence his or her perception and interpretation of different behaviors. Psychologists carry their own subjective values, attitudes, and beliefs about the links between culture, ethnicity, and mental illness (Lopez, 1989). It is also known that doctors can misdiagnose particular diseases due to cross-cultural differences in the perception and expression of signs of illness. Psychological findings in North America may not be reliably generalized to the rest of the world (Arnett, 2008). Individuals often hold multiple interacting national, ethnic, and religious memberships, not

just one (Hays, 2001). For example, not all people from a predominantly collectivist culture such as China or India share or follow collectivistic norms. Likewise, not all Americans are prone to embrace individualism and low power distance (Kitayama et al., 2010).

As another illustration of the diagnostic bias in the clinical setting, consider how therapists' beliefs and expectations may predispose them to "see" psychopathology wherever they look. Suppose you were to ask a therapist to explain the meaning of behaviors that clients might exhibit on arriving for their scheduled therapy session. Let us imagine further that this therapist happens to view the world through a densely filtered cultural schema of psychopathology. The therapist thus calmly and confidently offers you the following interpretations:

> If the patient arrives early for his appointment, then he's anxious. If he arrives late, then he's hostile. And if he's on time, then he's compulsive.

This witticism about psychoanalysis dates back to the 1930s. Although originally intended as a joke, it was far more prophetic than most people at that time could have anticipated. It is not just a humorous illustration of "noncritical" thinking; it is also a revealing and sobering parable that alerts us to the dangers inherent in maintaining schemas that allow – even encourage – virtually any human behavior to be subsumed under one or more pathological categories (Levy, 2010).

As we suggested earlier, some specialists are skeptical about the applicability of Western diagnostic criteria to other cultures, insisting that distress is experienced and manifested in many culture-specific ways. Different cultures may either encourage or discourage the reporting of psychological or physiological components of the stress response (Draguns, 1996). In some traditional cultures, persistent nightmares are often viewed as a spiritual and supernatural phenomenon, whereas other cultures observe nightmares as indicators of mental or physical disturbance (APA, 1994).

Some existing culture-specific disorders are difficult to interpret in terms of other national classifications. For example, a neurological weakness, typically diagnosed in China, includes symptoms of weakness, fatigue, tiredness, headaches, and gastrointestinal complaints (Tung, 1994). But the Western diagnostic assessments of patients with these symptoms varied with different diagnostic procedures that are employed; it could be diagnosed as anxiety disorder, depressive disorder, or bipolar disorder (Kleinman, 1986).

Some symptoms, however, can be consistent across different national samples. A study in Russia conducted by Ruchkin, Sukhodolsky, and colleagues (2007) showed that prevalence rates of attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder were similar to those of many other countries. Recent studies on culture-specific disorders suggest that different cultures have specific labels for behavioral disorders. Cultural syndromes challenge any universal categorization because of the culturally specific content of the disorders (Tanaka-Matsumi & Draguns, 1997). But no matter how you describe a problem, it would still manifest as a maladaptive and distressful symptom, as an inability to cope with stressful situations. Therefore, the key to success in diagnostic practices is to identify distress and maladaptive symptoms accurately and within their cultural context.

PSYCHOTHERAPY

If different cultural settings can affect diagnostic practices, one can assume that culture also plays a significant role in **psychotherapy**, which refers to the treatment of psychological disorders through psychological means, generally involving verbal interactions with a professional therapist.

Research cases show that many drug rehabilitation and prevention programs designed for one particular ethnic and social category (such as white middle-class subjects) may also be applicable to other ethnic and social categories. In tolerant and supportive cultures (as well as in supportive communities and families), individuals with mental disorders tend to function better than those in less-tolerant surroundings. In Japan, especially in more traditional settings of the past, depressed patients could rely on other people, such as relatives, to make decisions for them. In U.S. culture, patients with symptoms of depression rely more on individual decision making and therefore are more avoidant and show lower self-esteem than Japanese patients (Radford et al., 1991). It was also shown in a World Health Organization study (1979) that patients from collectivist cultures had a better prognosis for schizophrenia, whereas patients from individualist cultures showed fewer signs of improvement (Tanaka-Matsumi & Draguns, 1997).

A CASE IN POINT

ATTITUDES TOWARD THERAPY IN CHINA

The twenty-first century brought rapid changes to many countries' attitudes toward mental illness and psychotherapy. To take one example, in China, rising wealth and growing complexity of life have produced a stressful environment of competition and uncertainty, to which many people have difficulty adjusting. People in China will inevitably face even more stressful problems than those that were faced two or three decades ago. At the same time, as Chinese society is becoming increasingly open, the stigma attached to mental illness and psychotherapy is gradually disappearing. More people in China see psychological problems as conditions of which they should not be ashamed. Scores of young psychologists graduate from Chinese universities. They travel globally and earn their advanced degrees in the North America and Europe. Our (the authors') psychology classes are regularly populated with enthusiastic, newly arrived students from China. The standard Western models of psychotherapy – psychodynamic, cognitive-behavioral, humanistic – are attracting significant attention. Over this decade, Chinese psychologists will be attempting to address a key question: Do Western approaches to therapy work in China? Discuss possible advantages and disadvantages of the use of Western psychotherapy in today's China.

Studies show that Mexican Americans as well as Hispanics in general are significantly less likely to use outpatient mental help than other ethnic groups, especially European Americans. Asian Americans also tended to seek disproportionately fewer treatment services compared to Caucasians (Hwang, 2006).

African Americans and Native Americans appear to use outpatient mental health services at higher rates than whites. Some studies have found that ethnic minority patients have a tendency to terminate therapy earlier than whites, before it has the chance to be effective. Many factors can contribute to this tendency, such as whether those providing mental health services are themselves members of an ethnic minority group, fluent in the language of their patients, or aware of culturally specific therapeutic procedures (see next section on "culture match"). However, the differences in the dropout rates among various ethnic groups do not appear to be statistically significant.

The stigma of mental illness continues to be a major obstacle preventing many individuals from seeking professional help. Shame of mental illness may effectuate the development of a *repressive adaptive style* rooted in an individual's desire to hide symptoms (e.g., elevated anxiety and depressive symptoms that are actually present) in order to prove that he or she is actually "fine" and healthy. Several studies (e.g., Steele et al., 2003) found a higher prevalence of repressors among children with a serious illness than among healthy children. Psychologists also report that people in collectivist cultures are more likely to display a repressive adaptive style than people from other groups. This was demonstrated in an interesting study of European American, Mexican American, and Mexican children (Varela et al., 2007). Since collectivism rewards behavior that brings positive outcomes to a group or community, individuals most likely learn to hide some of their distressful symptoms so that they will not attract unnecessary attention to themselves. In fact, this assumption is probably consistent with the fact that Latin American children tend to manifest many of their emotional problems through somatic symptoms such as pains, aches, and other forms of physical discomfort (Canino, 2004). Complaining about abdominal pain is likely to appear more "appropriate" than admitting to others one's own panic attacks. However, these assumptions need further study. It is also probable that cultural traditionalism is a serious factor preventing millions of people around the world from acknowledging their abnormal psychological symptoms without fear of being considered "sick" or "crazy."

CROSS-CULTURAL SENSITIVITY

Clinicians have noted that many Asian and Asian American patients undergoing psychotherapy tend to observe the formal hierarchical expectations of age and gender, in which they are expected to show deference, respect, and agreement with the superior and to keep most disagreements and negative feelings to themselves (Roland, 2006). As such, immigrant Asian clients may often see the therapist as an expert authority figure who will direct them in how to solve their problems (Hwang, 2006).

Such informal clinical observations are interesting, but they lack empirical support. What were the specific circumstances under which such observations were made? Approximately what proportion of clients overtly expressed this attitude toward therapists? Were there more "subtle" forms of expression? Without reliable empirical facts, even the most salient observations about a client's behavior may feed ethnic stereotypes and misconceptions (Whaley & Davis, 2007).

Imagine you are a therapist and your next client is an Asian American woman. Would you instinctively expect her to see you as an "authority figure" and to uncritically accept every word of wisdom you convey to her? How might you work with *any* patient who uncritically considers you an "authority figure"?

NONTRADITIONAL THERAPIES

Therapeutic interventions involving spiritual healing are gaining in popularity. Many psychologists today hold the position that professionals can utilize religion as an important factor to facilitate psychotherapy. A person turning to God for strength and hope may also be searching for inner resources that help in times of adversity and pain. Studies show that individuals scoring higher on measures of spirituality appear to have greater inner resources that facilitate adaptive coping and positive health outcomes.

Research findings are consistent with the extensive literature indicating that spirituality has historically been an important mechanism by which African Americans face and manage adverse life circumstances (Utsey et al., 2007). Their sense of spiritual (specifically Christian) connectedness and wholeness helps to improve their quality of life by influencing the way they cope with hardship. Native Americans, compared to other groups, have stronger faith in the healing nature of traditional practices (frequently based on folk beliefs), even as they are also seeking professional health services. For example, one study found that about 40 percent of Native American adolescents and adults with a lifetime history of depressive or anxiety disorders sought services from a mental health professional, but almost 50 percent also sought help from a traditional healer (Beals et al., 2005).

More studies are necessary to verify the effectiveness of religious or spiritual treatment as well as the use of traditional healing techniques. For instance, we still don't know if the principles of therapeutic relaxation used in Western countries could be effectively combined with Chinese folk traditions and the meditative practices of breathing and mindfulness that are also used with other clients of Asian origin. Would Japanese immigrants in North America, who are experiencing depression, headaches and bodily pains, benefit from receiving a shiatsu massage and Zen meditation (Hwang, 2006)? We also need empirical studies verifying the effectiveness of traditional Buddhist methods of anxiety reduction through mental training and introspection (Ricard, 2006; Wallace & Shapiro, 2006). Treatment practices combining traditional Islamic and modern psychological methods also need careful study across countries (Penny et al., 2009).

Although some initial research shows the importance to the immigrant community in terms of its support, engagement, and care in helping people with psychological problems, more empirical studies are necessary to support this contention (Lim et al., 2011).

CULTURE: TO MATCH OR NOT TO MATCH?

Many factors can affect therapists' diagnostic judgments and effectiveness. Among these factors is the cultural background of both the therapist and the client: the client–therapist interface. Of course, every therapist is not destined to make erroneous decisions about his or her client of a different cultural background. However, mistakes are made, and there are at least two reasons for possible misjudgments. First, some clinicians may not understand the cultural backgrounds of their clients and therefore may misinterpret their responses. For example, many clients express their thoughts and emotions according to the common communication rules in their culture. Second, knowledge of certain cultural trends may be lacking critical thinking emphasis and thus distort diagnosis. For instance, stereotypes and schemas create expectations about the "typical" symptoms of particular ethnic groups. The clinician must constantly remember that the therapy treatment should be geared toward an individual client, rather than an avatar of a cultural group.

Scores of research studies have concluded that schemas greatly influence what we perceive and the manner in which we perceive it (see, e.g., Bruner & Potter, 1964; Kelley, 1950; Reason & Mycielska, 1982; Vokey & Read, 1985). For instance, Li-Repac (1980) investigated the effect of sociocultural differences between therapists and clients on clinical impressions, perceptions, and judgments. In her study, a sample consisting of white therapists and Chinese American therapists assessed a series of videotaped clinical interviews. The therapists were told that they would be simply evaluating both white and Chinese clients. They were not, however, informed of the experiment's true purpose, namely, to compare therapists' clinical perceptions as a function of their own ethnicity.

Results showed that although both groups of therapists agreed in their general conceptions of psychological "normality," they differed significantly in their actual assessments of the same clients. Specifically, in comparison to the Chinese American therapists, the white therapists viewed the Chinese clients as more depressed, inhibited, and possessing less social poise and interpersonal capacity. Conversely, Chinese American therapists judged the white clients to be more severely disturbed than did the white therapists. These findings, although from some time ago, suggest "cultural stereotyping is a two-way street" (Li-Repac, 1980, p. 339).

As evidenced in this experiment, the impact of culture on the diagnosis of mental disorders can be profound. In essence, each group of therapists had filtered (i.e., *assimilated*; see Chapter 2) the clients' behavior through their respective sociocultural schemas, and, as a consequence, arrived at strikingly different judgments. The latent principle here again becomes manifest: More than believing what we see, we tend to see what we believe.

EXERCISE 9.1

Imagine a psychotherapist tells you that, "Most every ethnic minority client I've ever treated has dropped out of therapy prematurely. Therefore, ethnic minority people are not receptive to receiving therapy." Keeping in mind the critical thinking principle that correlation does not prove causation (see discussion in Chapter 2), what are some other possible explanations for this correlation?

1. ————————————————————————————————————
2. ————————————————————————————————————
3. ————————————————————————————————————

Suppose you read an article reporting an inverse correlation between religiosity and depression (i.e., the less religious, the more depressed). What factors could account for this relationship?

1. ————————————————————————————————————
2. ————————————————————————————————————
3. ————————————————————————————————————

Ethnic match refers to a situation in which the psychotherapist and his or her client belong to the same ethnic group. It can be linked to several important outcomes. For instance, if the therapist and the client are "matched," research has shown that it is a valid predictor of the duration of psychotherapy (Sue et al., 1991). In general, matched therapists judge clients to have higher psychological functioning than do mismatched therapists; put another way, ethnically matched therapists see less pathology in their clients than therapists from a different culture (Karlsson, 2005). To take one example, African Americans with depressive symptoms tend to be misdiagnosed with schizophrenia if they are evaluated by nonblack professionals. Overall, pairing ethnic minority clients who are seeking mental health treatment, with therapists who share the same ethnic background has been demonstrated to increase treatment utilization and lower rates of drop out (Ibaraki & Hall, 2014).

A CASE IN POINT

ARAB AMERICANS AND THE TREATMENT OF PSYCHOLOGICAL DISORDERS

About 3.5 million Americans of Arab descent are currently residing in the USA. It is not surprising that some Arab Americans resist seeking psychological treatment, in part because of a general skepticism about therapists and in part because they

hold negative attitudes about mental illness in general. Clients may have strong fears about being branded *majnun*, or crazy. Another factor contributing to Arab Americans' reluctance to seek mental health services is a lack of experience with or exposure to contemporary counseling approaches. When an Arab person develops a psychological problem, he typically seeks out the help of a family member of the same gender. Talking about family or personal problems with a professional may be seen as a threat to group honor or as being disloyal to the family. Many patients (and especially immigrants of Arab descent) with significant needs for psychotherapeutic services often resist referrals to mental health counselors or therapists. However, more recent studies show that when Arab Americans actually sign up for psychotherapy, they tend to report greater rates of satisfaction with the procedures, and attend more sessions that other, non-Arab, clients. Encouragement to seek help and assurances with regards to the confidential nature of the counseling relationship may help clients feel more comfortable in making the most of mental health services.

Sources: Abudabbeh (1996); Erickson & Al-Timimi (2001); Jackson (1997); Nassar-McMillan, S. & Hakim-Larson, J. (2003). Martin, U. (2014).

These results can be interpreted in several ways. It appears that an ethnic match between a patient and a therapist reduces certain types of diagnostic mistakes, such as overdiagnosis. So far, so good. But should we then always match patients and therapists? Not until we first consider the finding that ethnically matched professionals may not "see" some significant symptoms in their clients, thus *underdiagnosing* them (Fuertes et al., 2002; Russell et al., 1996).

Components of cognitive and behavioral therapies frequently require some linguistic adaptations, so that instructions and explanations provided by therapists become more relevant to people's experiences. For example, Muñoz and Mendelson (2005) gave the culturally relevant example from Latino culture of using the folk adage *la gota de agua labra la piedra* (which means, "a drop of water carves a rock") to illustrate how an individual's thoughts can gradually influence one's view of life and contribute to depression.

Different countries have different laws and rules regarding the involuntary hospitalization of mental patients. In most totalitarian societies (such as Nazi Germany in the 1930s and the Soviet Union prior to 1991), it was the state's prerogative to decide whether or not a person should be hospitalized, even against their will. In the history of the twentieth century and even earlier, psychiatry has been used countless times for political and ideological purposes (in this regard, see the incisive work of Thomas Szasz, 1996). In U.S. society today, based on various laws, only those who show signs of imminent danger to themselves or others may be held in mental facilities against their will. In many other countries, the rules required for hospitalization are not as strict as in the United States. But in general, studies indicate that mental health specialists show substantial agreement among themselves as to which patients should be considered dangerous, suicidal, or unable to testify or take care of themselves (Swenson, 1993).

All in all, research shows that the context of therapy should be consistent with the client's culture (Bemak & Chung, 2004; Tanaka–Matsumi, 1989). For example, Kleinman (1978) offered a framework for successful patient–therapist interactions. At the beginning, the therapist asks the client to give their interpretation of the existing problem. Then the therapist offers their explanation of the problem. Then both types of explanations are compared. Finally, both therapist and client come up with a joint explanatory concept, so that they communicate in the same language and can discuss therapy and its potential outcome.

Snacken (1991) described three desirable types of therapy between the specialist and the patient who represent different cultures. *Intercultural therapy* includes a professional who knows the language and culture of the client (and might belong to the same cultural group). *Bicultural therapy* includes two types of healers: both the Western and the native who work together. *Polycultural therapy* involves the patient meeting with several therapists who represent different cultures.

EXERCISE 9.2

Here is a list of some additional culture–bound mental problems. See if you can identify analogous conditions within DSM-5-TR for each of these syndromes. You may also refer to the cultural syndromes described in Table 9.1, earlier in this chapter.

- *Possession* (in some African countries) is a belief that one's body has been taken over by a spirit, which leads to unusual and unexpected emotional and behavioral changes.
- *Wind attacks* are recognized by many in Cambodia as a serious problem associated with the fear of "inner winds" in the body and in the neck that can cause blindness, headaches, and even stroke or paralysis of the body.
- *Malgri* is a severe abdominal pain that is believed to be caused by entering forbidden territory without purification rituals.
- *Nuptial psychosis* occurs among very young women in India whose lives are disrupted by arranged marriages. Sexual trauma, separation from the family, and stress contribute to symptoms of confusion, hysteria, and suicidal intentions.
- *Kayak* angst is an extreme anxiety, known among the Eskimos of Western Greenland. This anxiety strikes after hours of solitary hunting in unfavorable environments.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

1. Two perspectives on psychological disorders and culture – relativist and universalist – have been developed in cross-cultural psychology. The relativist perspective on psychopathology puts psychological phenomena in a comparative perspective and pays attention to unique cultural context of psychological disorders. According to the universalist perspective on psychopathology, there are absolute, invariable symptoms of psychopathology across cultures.

2. Attempting to diagnose and treat an individual, the professional should know the client's reference groups and the ways in which cultural context is relevant to clinical care, including psychotherapy. In particular, the specialist should pay attention to the following: (1) the cultural identity of the individual (that is, his or her ethnic, religious, and other cultural reference groups); (2) the cultural explanations of the individual's illness; (3) the cultural interpretations of social stressors and social supports (such as religion, level of functioning, and disability); and (4) the cultural elements of the relationship between the individual and the clinician.

3. American clinicians use the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5-TR)* to diagnose mental disorders. There are also disorders that may or may not be linked to a particular DSM diagnostic category. These are recurrent, locally specific patterns of aberrant behavior and troubling experiences that are called cultural syndromes. They are generally limited to specific societies or areas and indicate repetitive and troubling sets of experiences and observations.

4. Cultural norms, availability of resources, national standards on health, access to technology, social inequality, and many other environmental factors could affect the individual's health and general well-being.

5. Despite general similar occurrence rates, there are some cultural variations in how schizophrenia is viewed, diagnosed, and treated.

6. There are cultural variations in the expression of depression, which is also based on various individual differences, socialization experiences, cultural definitions of disorders, and stress. There is empirical evidence concerning the links between suicide and religiosity, age, sex, nationality, substance use, and various cultural traditions.

7. There are cultural variations in the expression of anxiety that range from somatic to cognitive to behavioral symptoms. Differences in diagnostic practices account in some way for cross-cultural differences in reported symptoms and could explain great cross-cultural variability for anxiety disorders.

8. Personality disorders should be viewed, diagnosed, and treated in the context of each culture's norms and thresholds of tolerance for a particular behavior. There are cultural and national standards for substance use and substance abuse. There are also wide cultural variations in attitudes toward substance consumption, patterns of substance use, accessibility of substances, and prevalence of disorders related to substance use.

9. The cultural background of the professional can influence his or her perception of different behaviors. Psychologists are likely to have their own perceptions and attributions about the links of culture, ethnicity, and mental illness. It is also known that doctors can misdiagnose particular diseases due to cross-cultural differences in the perception, attribution, and expression of signs of disease.

10. Psychotherapy across countries has different historical and cultural roots and varied cultural expressions. Different countries have different laws and rules regarding the hospitalization of mental health patients.

11. General psychological and cultural factors may affect the cross-cultural relationship between the professional and his or her client. Different ethnic groups could have various attitude patterns about mental health services. In general, the context of therapy should be consistent with the client's culture to achieve the goal of cultural accommodation.

KEY TERMS

Anxiety disorders A category of mental disorders characterized by persistent anxiety or fears.

Central symptoms Symptoms of mental disorders observable in practically all cultures.

Cultural syndromes Recurrent, locally specific patterns of aberrant behavior and troubling experience that may or may not be linked to a particular DSM–5–TR diagnostic category. Cultural syndromes are generally limited to specific societies or areas and indicate repetitive and troubling sets of experiences and observations.

Depressive disorder A category of psychological disorders characterized by a profound and persistent feeling of sadness or despair, guilt, loss of interest in things that were once pleasurable, and disturbance in sleep and appetite.

Melancholy or **Melancholia** The most common label used in many countries in the past for symptoms known today as depression.

Mental disorder A clinically significant behavioral and psychological syndrome or pattern that occurs in an individual and that is associated with present distress (a painful syndrome) or disability (impairment in one or more important areas of functioning) or with a significantly increased risk of suffering death, pain, disability, or an important loss of freedom.

Peripheral symptoms Symptoms of mental disorders that are culture specific.

Personality disorders Enduring patterns of behavior and inner experience that deviate markedly from the expectations of the individual's culture.

Psychotherapy The treatment of psychological disorders through psychological means, generally involving verbal interaction with a professional therapist.

Relativist perspective A view of psychological disorders, according to which human beings develop ideas, establish behavioral norms, and learn emotional responses according to a set of cultural prescriptions. Therefore, people from different cultural settings should understand psychological disorders differently, and the differences should be significant.

Schizophrenia A disorder characterized by the presence of delusions, hallucinations, disorganized speech, and disorganized or catatonic behavior.

Tolerance threshold A measure of tolerance or intolerance toward specific personality traits in a specific cultural environment.

Universalist perspective A view of psychological disorders, according to which people, despite cultural differences, share a great number of similar features, including attitudes, values, and behavioral responses. Therefore, the overall understanding of psychological disorders ought to be universal.

REFERENCES

Abudabbeh, N. (1996). Arab families. In M. McGoldrick, J. Giordano, & J. K. Pearce (Eds.), *Ethnicity and family therapy* (2nd ed., pp. 333–346). New York: Guilford Press.

Akhtar, S. (2002). *Broken structures: Severe personality disorders and their treatment*. Northvale, NJ: Aronson.

Akyeampong, E., Hill, A., &Kleinman, A. (2015). *The culture of mental illness and psychiatric practice in Africa*. Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press.

APA (American Psychiatric Association). (1994). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (DSM-IV)* (4th ed.). Washington, DC: APA.

APA (American Psychiatric Association). (2000). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (DSM-IV-TR)* (4th ed., rev.). Washington, DC: APA.

APA (American Psychiatric Association). (2013). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (DSM-5)* (5th ed.). Washington, DC: APA.

APA (American Psychiatric Association). (2022). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (5th ed., text rev.). Washington, DC: APA.

Arnett, J. J. (2008). The neglected 95%: Why American psychology needs to become less American. *American Psychologist*, *63*, 602–614.

Barrett, P., & Eysenck, S. B. G. (1984). The assessment of personality factors across 25 countries. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *5*, 615–632.

Beals, J., Novins, D., Whitesell, N., Spicer, P., Mitchell, C., & Manson, S. (2005). Prevalence of mental disorders and utilization of mental health services in two American Indian reservation populations: Mental health disparities in a national context. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, *162*, 1723–1732.

Beardsley, L., & Pedersen, P. (1997). Health and culture-centered intervention. In J. Berry & Ç. Kağıtçıbaşı (Eds.), *Handbook of cross-cultural psychology: Social behavior and applications* (Vol. 3, pp. 413–448). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Bellman, V., & Namdev, V. (2022). Suicidality among men in Russia: A review of recent epidemiological data. *Cureus*, *14*(3). https://doi.org/10.7759/cureus.22990. PMID: 35415026; PMCID: PMC8992693.

Bemak, F., & Chung, R. C.-Y. (2004). Culturally oriented psychotherapy with refugees. In U. Gielen, J. Fish, & J. Draguns (Eds.), *Culture, therapy and healing* (pp. 121–132). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Bruner, J. S., & Potter, M. C. (1964). Interference in visual recognition. *Science*, *144*, 424–425.

Canino, G. (2004). Are somatic symptoms and related distress more prevalent in Hispanic/Latino youth? Some methodological considerations. *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology*, *33*, 272–275.

Castillo, R. J. (1997). *Culture and mental illness*. Pacific Grove, CA: ITP.

CDC. (2015). Leading causes of deaths in males, United States. www.cdc.gov/men/lcod

CDC. (2019). Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Cigarette smoking among U.S. adults hits all-time low. CDC Newsroom Releases. November 14, 2019. www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2019/p1114-smoking-low.html

CDC. (2022). *Chronic Diseases in America*. www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/resources/infographic/chronic-diseases.htm

CDC. (2022a). *Suicide prevention*. www.cdc.gov/suicide/facts/index.html

Chambless, D., & Williams, K. E. (1995). A preliminary study of African Americans with agoraphobia: Symptom severity and outcome of treatment with in vivo exposure. *Behavior Therapy*, *26*, 501–515.

Chan, K. Y., Zhao, F., Meng, S., Demaio, A. R., Reed, C., Theodoratou, E., et al. (2015). Urbanization and the prevalence of schizophrenia in China between 1990 and 2010. *World Psychiatry*, *14*(2), 251–252.

Cheung, F. M. (1995). Facts and myths about somatization among the Chinese. In T. Y. Lin, W. S. Tseng, & E. K. Yeh (Eds.), *Chinese society and mental health* (pp. 156–166). Hong Kong: Oxford University Press.

Cooke, D., & Michie, C. (1999). Psychopathy across cultures: North America and Scotland compared. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, *1*(108), 58–68.

Cooper, D. (2003). *World philosophies*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Demazeux, S., & Singy, P. (2015). *The DSM-5 in perspective: Philosophical reflections on the psychiatric babel*. New York: Springer.

Draguns, J., & Tanaka-Matsumi, J. (2003). Assessment of psychopathology across and witin cultures: Issues and findings. *Behavior Research and Therapy*, *41*(7), 755–776.

Draguns, J. G. (1996). Multicultural and cross-cultural assessment of psychological disorder: Dilemmas and decisions. In J. Impara & G. R. Sodowsky (Eds.), *Buros-Nebraska Symposium on Motivation and Testing* (pp. 37–84). Lincoln, NE: Buros Institute of Mental Measurements.

Durkheim, É. (1964). *Suicide*. New York: Free Press. (Originally published in 1897.)

Eaton, W., Dryman, A., & Weissman, M. (1991). Panic and phobia. In L. Robins & D. Reiger (Eds.), *Psychiatric disorders in America* (pp. 155–179). New York: Free Press.

Erickson, C., & Al-Timimi, N. (2001). Providing mental health services to Arab Americans: Recommendations and considerations. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 7(4), 308–327.

Esaki, L. (2001, April 1). Connecting to the 21st century educational reform in Japan and reflections on global culture. *The Daily Yomiuri*, p. 6.

Esang, M., & Ahmed, S. (2018). A closer look at substance use and suicide. *The American Journal of Psychiatry*, *13*(6). https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.ajp-rj.2018.130603

Eskin, M. (2004). The effects of religious versus secular education on suicide ideation and suicidal attitudes in adolescents in Turkey. *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology*, *39*, 536–542.

Fountoulakis, K. N., Iacovides, A., Ioannidou, C., Bascialla, F., Nimatoudis, I., Kaprinis, G., et al. (2002). Reliability and cultural applicability of the Greek version of the International Personality Disorders Examination. *BMC Psychiatry*, *2*(1), 6.

Fuertes, J., Potere, J., & Ramirez, K. (2002). Effects of speech accents on interpersonal evaluations: Implications for counseling practice and research. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, *8*(4), 346–356.

Fung, Y.-L. (1948). *A short history of Chinese philosophy*. New York: Free Press.

Gilman, S. L. (1988). *Disease and representation: Images of illness from madness to AIDS*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Goldston, D., Molock, S., Whitbeck, L., Murakami, J., Zayas, L., & Hall, G. C. N. (2008). Cultural considerations in adolescent suicide prevention and psychosocial treatment. *American Psychologist*, *63*(1), 14–31.

Grover, S., & Ghosh, A. (2014). Somatic symptoms and related disorders in Asians and Asian Americans. *Asian Journal of Psychiatry*, *7*(1), 77–79.

Halonen, D., & Santrock, J. (1995). *Psychology: Contexts of behavior*. Madison, WI: Brown & Benchmark.

Hare, R. D. (1991). *The Hare psychopathy checklist – revised*. Toronto, ON: Multi-Health Systems.

Hays, P. (2001). *Addressing cultural complexities in practice: A framework for clinicians and counselors*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Hinton, L., & Kleinman, A. (1993). Cultural issues and international psychiatric disorders. *International Review of Psychiatry*, *1*, 111–134.

Hofmann, S., & Hinton, D. (2014). Cross-cultural aspects of anxiety disorders. *Current Psychiatry Reports*, *16*(6), 450. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11920-014-0450-3

Hsu, E., Davies, C., & Hansen, D. (2004). Understanding mental health needs of Southeast Asian refugees: Historical, cultural, and contextual challenges. *Clinical Psychology Review*, *24*, 193–213.

Hwang, W.-C. (2006). The psychotherapy adaptation and modification framework: Application to Asian Americans. *American Psychologist*, *61*(7), 702–715.

Hwang, W.-C., Ho, L. C., Chan, C. P., & Hong, K. K. (2018). Cognitive behavioral models, measures, and treatments for depressive disorders in Asian Americans. In E. C. Chang, C. A. Downey, J. K. Hirsch, & E. A. Yu (Eds.), *Treating depression, anxiety, and stress in ethnic and racial groups: Cognitive behavioral approaches* (pp. 23–47). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Ibaraki, A., & Hall, G. (2014). The components of cultural match in psychotherapy. *Cultural-Clinical Psychology*, *33*(Special Issue), 936–953.

Inglehart, R. (1997). *Modernization and post modernization: Cultural, economic, and political change in 43 societies*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Jackson, M. (1997). Counseling Arab Americans. In C. Lee (Ed.), *Multicultural issues in counseling: New approaches to diversity* (2nd ed., pp. 333–349). Alexandria, VA: American Counseling Association.

Kanehara, A., Maki, U., & Kawakami, N. (2015). Barriers to mental health care in Japan: Results from the World Mental Health Japan Survey. *Psychiatry and Clinical Neuroscience*, *69*(9), 523–533.

Karlsson, R. (2005). Ethnic matching between therapist and patient in psychotherapy: An overview of findings, together with methodological and conceptual issues. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, *11*(2), 113–129.

Kelley, H. H. (1950). The warm-cold variable in first impressions of persons. J*ournal of Personality*, *18*, 431–439.

Keyes, C., & Ryff, C. D. (2003). Somatization and mental health: A comparative study of the idiom of distress hypothesis. *Social Science and Medicine*, *57*, 1833–1845.

Kitanaka, J. (2011). *Depression in Japan: Psychiatric cures for a society in distress*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Kitayama, S., Conway, L. G., III, Pietromonaco, P. R., Park, H., & Plaut, V. C. (2010). *American Psychologist*, *65*(6), 559–574.

Kleinman, A. (1978). Clinical relevance of anthropological and cross-cultural research: Concepts and strategies. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, *135*, 427–431.

Kleinman, A. (1986). *Social origins of distress and disease: Depression, neurasthenia, and pain in modern China*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Kleinman, A., & Kleinman, J. (1991). Suffering and its professional transformation: Toward an ethnography of interpersonal experience. *Culture, Medicine, and Psychiatry*, *15*, 275–301.

Koopman, C. (1997). Political psychology as a lens for viewing traumatic events. *Political Psychology*, *18*(4), 831–847.

Kovess-Masfety, B., Karam, E., Keyes, K., Sabawoon, J., & Sarwari, B. A. (2022). Access to care for mental health problems in Afghanistan: A national challenge. *International Journal of Health Policy and Management*, *11*(8), 1442–1450.

Krauss, H. (1970). Social development and suicide. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *1*(2), 159–167.

Leenaars, A. A., Sayin, A., Candansayar, S., Leenaars, L., Akar, T., & Demirel, B. (2010). Suicide in different cultures: A thematic comparison of suicide notes from Turkey and the United States. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *41*(2), 253–263.

Levinson, D., & Simmons, G. (1992). Blacks, schizophrenia, and neuroleptic treatment. *Archives of General Psychiatry*, *49*, 165.

Levy, D. A. (2010). *Tools of critical thinking: Metathoughts for psychology* (2nd ed.). Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press.

Lewis-Fernández, R., & Kleinman, A. (1994). Culture, personality, and psychopathology. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, *103*(1), 67–71.

Li, J. (2003). The core of Confucian learning. *American Psychologist*, *58*(2), 146–147.

Lim, M., Stormshak, E. A., & Falkenstein, C. A. (2011). Psychosocial adjustment and substance use of Cambodian and Vietnamese immigrant youth. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *42*(1), 104–119.

Lim, R. F., & Lin, K.-M. (1996). Cultural formulation of psychiatric diagnosis: Case No. 03: Psychosis following qi-gong in a Chinese immigrant. *Culture, Medicine, and Psychiatry*, *20*, 369–378.

Li-Repac, D. (1980). Cultural influences on clinical perception: A comparison between Caucasian and Chinese-American therapists. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *11*(*3*), 327–342.

Lopez, S. R. (1989). Patient variable biases in clinical judgment: Conceptual overview and methodological considerations. *Psychological* Bulletin, *106*, 184–204.

Loranger, A. W., Sartorius, N., Andreoli, A., Berger, P., Buchheim, P., Channabasavanna, S. M., et al. (1994). The international personality disorder examination. *Archives of General Psychiatry*, *51*(3), 215–224.

Ma, A. (2018, January 14). A psychological ailment called "hikikomori" is imprisoning 500,000 Japanese people in their homes – and it's more of a threat than ever. *Business Insider*. www.businessinsider.com/hikikomori-worrying-mental-health-problem-traps-japanese-at-home-2018-1 (accessed May 17, 2019).

Mahbubani, K. (1999). *Can Asians think?* Singapore: Times Books International.

Mak, W. W. S., Law, R. W., & Teng, Y. (2011). Cultural model of vulnerability to distress: The role of self-construal and sociotropy on anxiety and depression among Asian Americans and European Americans. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *42*(1), 75–88.

Marano, L. (1985). *Windigo* psychosis: The anatomy of an emic-etic confusion. *Current Anthropology*, *23*(4), 385–421.

Marsella, A. J. (1980). Depressive experience and disorder across cultures. In H. Triandis & J. Draguns (Eds.), *Handbook of cross-cultural psychology* (Vol. 6, pp. 233–262). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Martin, U. (2014). Psychotherapy with Arab Americans: An exploration of therapy-seeking and termination behaviors. *International Journal of Culture and Mental Health*, *7*(2), 162–167.

Miranda, R., & Jeglic, E. (2022). *Handbook of youth suicide prevention: Integrating research into practice*. New York: Springer Nature*.*

Mirin, S. (2002). Testimony of Steven M. Mirin, M.D. Medical Director for the American Psychiatric Association on the HIPAA code set issues/ICD-10-CM implementation before the National Committee on Vital and Health Statistics Standards and Security Subcommittee, May 29, 2002.

Muñoz, R. F., & Mendelson, T. (2005). Toward evidence based interventions for diverse populations: The San Francisco General Hospital prevention and treatment manuals. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, *73*, 790–799.

Munroe, R. L. (2010). Following the whitings: The study of male pregnancy symptoms. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *41*(4), 592–604.

Murphy, J. M. (1976, March 12). Psychiatric labeling in cross-cultural perspective: Similar kinds of disturbed behavior appear to be labeled abnormal in diverse cultures. *Science*, *191*, 1019–1028.

Nassar-McMillan, S., & Hakim-Larson, J. (2003). Counseling considerations among Arab Americans. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, *81*(2), 150–159.

National Institute of Mental Health.(2011). Statistics: Suicide: Suicide rates. www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/suicide-in-the-us-statistics-and-prevention/index.shtml#races

Neary, I. (2000). Rights and psychiatric patients in East Asia. *Japan Forum*, *12*(*2*), 157–168.

Osborne, L. (2001, May 6). Case study: Latah. *The New York Times*, Section 6, p. 98.

Patel, V. (1996). Recognition of common mental disorders in primary care in African countries: Should "mental" be dropped? *The Lancet*, *347*(9003), 742–744.

Penny, E., Newton, E., & Larkin, M. (2009). Whispering on the water: British Pakistani families' experiences of support from an early intervention service for first-episode psychosis. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *40*(6), 969–987.

Phillips, M., Yang, G., Li, S., & Li, Y. (2004, September 18). Suicide and the unique prevalence pattern of schizophrenia in mainland China: A retrospective observational study. *The Lancet*, *364*(9439), 1062–1068.

Radford, M., Nakane, Y., Ohta, Y., Mann, L., & Kalucu, R. (1991). Decision making in clinically depressed patients: A transcultural social psychological study. *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, *179*, 711–719.

Reason, J., & Mycielska, K. (1982). *Absent-minded? The psychology of mental lapses and everyday errors*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Rees, P. (2002, October 20). Japan: The missing million. BBC News, World Edition. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/correspondent/2334893.stm

Ricard, M. (2006). *Happiness: A guide to developing life's most important skill*. New York: Little Brown.

Ritchie, H., & Roser, M. (2018) Alcohol consumption. *OurWorldInData.org*. https://ourworldindata.org/alcohol-consumption

Robins, L. N., Tipp, J., & Przybeck, T. (1991). Psychiatric disorders in America. In L. N. Robins & D. A. Regier (Eds.), *Antisocial personality disorder* (pp. 258–290). New York: Free Press.

Roland, A. (2006). Across civilizations: Psychoanalytic therapy with Asians and Asian Americans. *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, Practice, Training*, *43*(4), 454–463.

Ruchkin, V., Lorberg, B., Koposov, R., Schwab-Stone, M., & Sukhodolsky, D. (2007, August). ADHD symptoms and associated psychopathology in a community sample of adolescents from the European North of Russia. *Journal of Attention Disorders*, *12*(1), 54–63. http://jad.sagepub.com

Russell, G., Fujino, D., Sue, S., Cheung, M.-K., & Snowden, L. (1996). The effects of therapist-client ethnic match in the assessment of mental health functioning. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *27*(5), 598–615.

Saito, T. (2012). *Social withdrawal: Adolescence without end*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Sartorius, N. (1992). Prognosis for schizophrenia in the Third World: A re-evaluation of cross-cultural research. A commentary. *Culture, Medicine, and Psychiatry*, *16*, 81–84.

Satcher, D. (2000). Executive Summary: A Report of the Surgeon General on Mental Health, Public Health Rep 2000; 115: 89–101. Assistant Secretary for Health and U.S. Surgeon General.

Sax, L. (2007). *Boys adrift: The five factors driving the growing epidemic of unmotivated boys and underachieving young men*. New York: Basic Books.

Schmidt, L. A., Mäkelä, P., Rehm, J., & Room, R. (2010). *Alcohol: equity and social determinants*. In E. Blass & A. S. Kurup (Eds.), *Equity, social determinants and public health programmes* (pp. 11–29). Geneva: World Health Organization.

Schwartz, J. (1998, July 8). Blacks absorb more nicotine, suffer greater smoking toll, studies say. *Washington Post*, p. A3.

Schwartz, R., & Blankenship, D. (2014). Racial disparities in psychotic disorder diagnosis: A review of empirical literature. *World Journal of Psychiatry*, *4*(4), 133–140.

Shimizi, Y., & Kaplan, B. (1987). Postpartum depression in the United States. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *18*(1), 15–30.

Shiraev, E. (2011). *A history of psychology: A global perspective*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Shiraev, E. (2019). *Russian government and politics* (3rd ed.). London: Macmillan.

Sieff, K. (2012, October 23). At Afghan shrine, ancient treatment for a new epidemic. *The Washington Post.* bit.ly/20ooJ2L

Simon, B. (1978). *Mind and madness in ancient Greece: The classical roots of modern psychiatry*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Simons, R., & Hughes, C. (Eds.). (1985). *The culture-bound syndromes: Folk illnesses of psychiatric and anthropological interest*. Dordrecht, the Netherlands: D. Reidel Publishing.

Smith, P. B. (2011). Communication styles as dimensions of national culture. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 42 (*2*), 216–233.

Snacken, J. (1991). Guide pour le pratique dans un contexte multiculturel et interdisciplinaire. In J. Leman & A. Gailly (Eds.), *Therapies interculturelles* (pp. 135–140). Brussels, Belgium: Éditions Universitaires, De Boeck Université.

Starcevic, V. (1999). Neurasthenia: Cross-cultural and conceptual issues in relation to chronic fatigue syndrome. *General Hospital Psychiatry*, *21*(4), 249–255.

Steele, R. G., Elliott, V., & Phipps, S. (2003). Race and health status as determinants of anger expression and adaptive style in children. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, *22*, 40–58.

Sue, S., Fujino, D., Hu, L., Takeuchi, D., & Zane, N. (1991). Community mental health services for ethnic minority groups. *Journal of Counseling and Clinical Psychology*, *59*, 533–540.

Swenson, L. C. (1993). *Psychology and law*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Szasz, T. S. (1996). *Ideology and insanity: Essays on the psychiatric dehumanization of man*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.

Tanaka-Matsumi, J. (1989). The cultural difference model and applied behavior analysis in the design of early childhood intervention. In L. L. Adler (Ed.), *Cross-cultural research in human development: Lifespan perspectives* (pp. 37–46). New York: Praeger.

Tanaka-Matsumi, J., & Draguns, J. (1997). Culture and psychopathology. In J. W. Berry, M. H. Segall, & Ç. Kağıtçıbaşı (Eds.), *Handbook of cross-cultural psychology* (Vol. 3, pp. 449–491). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Tanaka-Matsumi, J., & Marsella, A. (1976). Cross-cultural variations in the phenomenological experience of depression. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *7*(4), 379–390.

Tellenbach, H. (1980). *Melancholy*. Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press.

Tolin, D. F., Robison. J. T., Gaztambide, S., Horowitz, S., & Blank, K. (2007). *Ataques de nervios* and psychiatric disorders in older Puerto Rican primary care patients. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *38*(6), 659–669.

Tung, M. P. M. (1994). Symbolic meanings of the body in Chinese culture and "somatization." *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry*, *18*, 483–492.

Turner, T. (1997, October). Ethnicity and psychiatry. *The Practitioner*, *241*, 612–615.

Ulusahin, A., Basoglu, M., & Paykel, E. S. (1994). A cross-cultural comparative study of depressive symptoms in British and Turkish clinical samples. *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidimeology*, *29*, 31–39.

Utsey, S., Bolden, M., Williams, O., Lee, A., Lanier, Y., & Newsome, C. (2007). Spiritual well-being as a mediator of the relation between culture-specific coping and quality of life in a community sample of African Americans. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *38*, 123–136.

Varela, R. E., Steele, R., & Benson, E. (2007). The contribution of ethnic minority status to adaptive style: A comparison of Mexican, Mexican American, and European American children. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *38*, 26–33.

Ventriglio, A., Ayonrinde, O., & Bhugra, D. (2015). Relevance of culture-bound syndromes in the 21st century. *Psychiatry and Clinical Neurosciences*, *70*(1), 3–6.

Vokey, J. R., & Read, J. D. (1985). Subliminal messages: Between the devil and the media. *American Psychologist*, *40*, 1231–1239.

Wallace, B. A., & Shapiro, S. L. (2006). Mental balance and well-being: Building bridges between Buddhism and Western psychology. *American Psychologist*, *61*(7), 690–701.

Warner, R. (1994). *Recovery from schizophrenia: Psychiatry and political economy* (2nd ed.). New York: Routledge.

Whaley, A., & Davis, K. (2007). Cultural competence and evidence-based practice in mental health services: A complementary perspective. *American Psychologist*, *62*(6), 563–574.

WHO (World Health Organization). (1979). *Schizophrenia: An international follow-up study*. Geneva: WHO.

WHO (World Health Organization). (1983). *Depressive disorders in different cultures*. Geneva: WHO.

WHO (World Health Organization). (1992). *International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems* (10th Revision, ICD-10). Geneva: WHO.

WHO (World Health Organization). (2015). *Global status report on alcohol and health 2014.* http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/112736/1/9789240692763eng.pdf

WHO (World Health Organization). (2019a). *Alcohol.* www.who.int/topics/alcohol_drinking/en/ (accessed May 26, 2019).

WHO (World Health Organization). (2019b). *Tobacco.* www.who.int/en/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/tobacco (accessed May 26, 2019).

WHO (World Health Organization). (2020). *Suicide.* www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/suicide

WHO (World Health Organization). (2021a). *International statistical classification of diseases and related health problems* (11th ed., ICD-11). Geneva: WHO.

WHO (World Health Organization). (2021b). *Depression.* www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/depression

WHO (World Health Organization). (2021c). *Suicide.* www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/suicide

WHO (World Health Organization). (2022). *Tobacco.* www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/tobacco

Wu, D. Y. H. (1982). Psychotherapy and emotion in traditional Chinese medicine. In
     A. J. Marsella & G. M. White (Eds.), *Cultural conceptions of mental health and therapy*
     (pp. 285–301). Dordrecht, the Netherlands: D. Reidel Publishing.

Yap, P. (1965). Phenomenology of affective disorder in Chinese and other cultures. In
     A. V. S. de Reuck & R. Porter (Eds.), *Transcultural psychiatry* (pp. 84–114). Boston, MA:
     Little, Brown.

Yen, S., Robins, C. J., & Lin, N. (2000, December). A cross-cultural comparison of
     depressive symptom manifestation: China and the United States. *Journal of
     Consulting & Clinical Psychology*, *68*(6), 993–999.

Ying, Y.-W., Lee, P. A., Tsai, J. L., Yeh, Y.-Y., & Huang, J. S. (2000). The conception of
     depression in Chinese American college students. *Cultural Diversity & Ethnic Minority
     Psychology*, *6*(2), 183–195.

Zuckerman, M. (1990, December). Some dubious premises in research and theory on
     racial differences: Scientific, social, and ethical issues. *American Psychologist*, *45*(12),
     1297–1303.

CHAPTER 10
SOCIAL PERCEPTION, SOCIAL COGNITION, AND SOCIAL INTERACTION

Years ago, the authors of this book, two teenagers living on opposite sides of the planet, were told an amusing anecdote about bargaining. Born in two different cultures, living under two different governments, separated by mountains of stereotypes and mistrust, we both nevertheless understood the idea of bargaining.

Two old friends meet in a bar in New York City. "You know," says one, "My son was a loser until I decided to give him a jump start in life." "What kind of a jump start?" the second asked. "Well, my son married a Saudi princess last week and got a job as vice president of Chase Manhattan Bank." "Married to a Saudi princess and vice president of a bank? How did you arrange this? You are a cab driver!" "Oh, I used the shuttle diplomacy method." "The shuttle diplomacy method? What is that?" "It is simple. A month ago, I called the Saudi embassy and asked them if there was a princess available to marry my son. They said 'No.' I then told them that I forgot to mention that my son is vice president of Chase Manhattan Bank. They immediately said, 'That makes a difference. We would be glad to find a princess for your son.'" "But wait a minute. Your son is a drummer at a night club, not a banker!" "Well, I fixed that too. I called Chase Manhattan Bank and asked them if my son could apply for the position of vice president. They said 'No.' Then I told them that I forgot to mention that my son is married to a Saudi princess. They immediately told me, 'Well, now that's a different story! Your son can begin work tomorrow.' So, that's what I call the shuttle diplomacy method."

This tale, told with numerous variations, is popular in many countries. The expression "shuttle diplomacy" comes from strategies utilized in diplomacy, where envoys go back and forth between two governments and trade proposals until a deal is struck. Contrary to what one might assume, the political context of this anecdote is not so important. Its most fascinating aspect is that, despite our cultural, political, and socioeconomic differences, both authors clearly understood the story's moral lesson regarding basic rules of human bargaining and interaction. The question then arises: Are there any empirical facts to suggest people across countries and cultures recognize and make use of the same rules of perception, cognition, and interaction? And if so, then in what areas are we different?

———

The process through which we try to understand other people and ourselves is called **social perception**. People are not born with social judgments and cultural beliefs;

rather, they acquire them through socialization experiences from their cultural milieu. If social perception is influenced by experience, then one would assume that there are both commonalities and differences in social perception: People who grow up in similar environments tend to learn to interpret many elements of their environment in common ways; meanwhile, people exposed to different environments tend to see the world differently.

Despite differences in educational systems, studies show that people tend to see many historic global events similarly. To take one example, across cultures, the world wars (especially World War II) are considered to be among the most tragic events in world history and Adolf Hitler in Germany seen as one of the most notorious villains of all time (Liu et al., 2009). Yet people tend to judge many current and historic events differently – all based on their education, access to information, political beliefs, and many other factors. Consider, for example, people's attitudes toward Russian president Putin who initiated his war of aggression against Ukraine in 2022. Across 18 nations, 90 percent of people reported that they do not have confidence in Putin to do the right thing in world affairs, and more than three-quarters expressed no confidence at all in Putin. Yet in Malaysia, a majority of those surveyed expressed confidence in the Russian leader (Wike et al., 2022).

The experiences of two individuals are not identical. For example, several studies have shown that eyewitnesses to criminal events tend to be inaccurate in what they report. Moreover, when the witness belongs to a different ethnic group than the suspect, the inaccuracies tend to increase even further (Platz & Hosch, 1988). Cultural norms influence how people perceive, remember, and then report their experiences as eyewitnesses. In experiments witnesses shown pictures of crime scenes reported more accurate central details when crime scenes were "witnessed" in their own culture compared to a different one, such as Ghana versus the Netherlands (Anakwah et al., 2020).

The process of social perception contributes to how we think about the world. **Social cognition** is the process through which we interpret, remember, and then use information about the world and ourselves. In general, as classic research in psychology has repeatedly demonstrated, social cognitions tend to be stable, and not easily changeable (Aronson, 1995). We retain our past experiences and use them to make today's judgments. For instance, until recent years, despite great medical advancements, organ transplantation was unavailable for patients in Japan because of specific ancient religious views about the unity of body and soul. Groups engaged in ethnic conflict against one another frequently see the cause of their hostility differently, each from the biased lenses of centuries-old negative judgments of the other. Even though there is no justification of oppression and colonialism, there are still individuals today who try to "explain" (i.e., justify) violence and racism.

We begin our cross-cultural analysis of social perception, cognition, and interaction with an examination of attitudes and values, exploring how people balance their attitudes and whether or not consistency in attitudes is a universal trend. Next, the chapter analyzes

how people explain the behavior of others and how they view justice, success, and failure. Finally, we will discuss the process of interaction, and in particular, the impacts of cultural contexts on conformity and obedience.

ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Attitudes are psychological constructs that characterize a person's mental position toward a fact, issue, individual, or group of people. A person's attitude is comprised of cognitive components (personal perspectives), emotional components (feelings about the topic), and behavioral components (possible intentions to act). In other words, attitudes are one's mental representations and evaluations of various features of the world.

Values are particular attitudes that reflect one's personal judgments about what is good or bad, right and wrong, or important or unimportant in life. They embody a principle, standard, or quality that an individual considers most desirable or appropriate. Values hold a more central, stable, and enduring position than other attitudes that a specific behavior (often called an *instrumental value*) or goal (called a *terminal value*) is preferred over another behavior or goal. Evolutionary psychologists suggest that values are essential to cultures because values are transmitted to new generations and regulate groups' adjustment to their environments (Confer et al., 2010).

Terminal values (goals) usually refer to social and personal concerns, whereas instrumental values designate morality and competency issues. Values lead individuals to form strong views on a variety of issues (Rokeach, 1973). For example, it is likely that an Indian woman, a devout follower of Hinduism, in the United States would not taste a beef sandwich served to her at a friend's party because abstinence from beef (a Hindu value) is stronger than "being polite" to the host (an attitude). A study in Hong Kong (which, for decades until 1977, had been a British colony) showed that values of cultural solidarity have been reflected in people's positive perceptions of their country's historical leaders and that the perception was positive and strong (Ho-Ying Fu & Chi-Yue, 2007).

We understand that attitudes and values that an individual develops tend to be diverse and conditioned by many factors. Are there, similarly, noticeable national or cultural differences in values? Do people around the world share some similar values? If so, what are these values? If they are not due to cultural differences, how do we decide what values are most important? Hofstede (1980, 1991) conducted a classic international study of 117,000 people employed by IBM in 50 nations. To simplify the analysis, he divided the studied countries into eleven clusters: Nordic, Anglo (including the United States), Germanic, Near Eastern, developing Asian, developing Latin, developed Latin, and Japan as a separate developed Asian country. He described the following cultural dimensions that reflect four major ways people cope with their most important problems: (1) individualism and collectivism, (2) power distance, (3) masculinity and femininity, (4) uncertainty avoidance, (5) long-term orientation, and (6) indulgence (see Chapter 1 for a description of these features).

Hofstede described each of the national clusters that were studied. The Nordic and Anglo samples demonstrated values low on power distance, high on individualism, and low on uncertainty avoidance. The Anglo group was high on masculinity, but the German group was low on masculinity. The less developed Asian countries and the Near Eastern bloc were both high in power distance and low in individualism. But the most remarkable comparison was made between the Anglo and Nordic cultures and the Near Eastern and less-developed Asian countries. The Anglo and Nordic groups were low on power distance and high on individualism. This pattern was called *individualist*. The opposite pattern – high-power distance and low individualism – common for non-Western countries, was labeled *collectivist*.

Schwartz (Schwartz, 2011; Smith & Schwartz, 1997) offered a different approach to evaluate key cultural differences in individual values. The researchers turned to the manner in which various groups cope with basic societal problems. Three basic issues appear to make social groups different from one another: (1) the extent to which people are independent of or dependent on groups; (2) their views on prosperity and profit; and (3) their views on whether it is appropriate to exploit, fit in, or submit to the outside world. An analysis of people's responses revealed their basic views are distributed between two opposite ends of the spectrum of human values (Lee et al., 2011; Schwartz, 2022).

Type 1. Conservatism vs. Autonomy. The conservative views are shared by individuals who believe in the status quo, advocate self-discipline, and care about family, social order, and tradition. Those who share values of autonomy emphasize the right of individuals to pursue their own ideals and to enjoy the variety of life for the sake of pleasure and excitement.

Type 2. Hierarchy vs. Egalitarianism. If a person supports the hierarchy values, he or she justifies the legitimacy of an unequal distribution of power, resources, and social roles. If a person has egalitarian values, he or she sees individuals as equals, who share basic interests and should be treated equally as human beings.

Type 3. Mastery vs. Harmony. Mastery values encourage individuals to exercise control over society and exploit its natural resources. Ambition and high self-esteem are important individual traits that accompany mastery values. Harmony values are based on assumptions that the world should be kept as is: preserved and cherished rather than violated and exploited.

Schwartz's study included 40 countries divided into several groups: West European, Anglo (including the United States), East European, Islamic, East Asian, Japan (as a single country), and Latin American. East Asian nations were especially high on hierarchy and conservatism and low on egalitarianism and autonomy. West European participants showed the opposite trend. The Anglo profile fell somewhere in between the West European and East Asian samples. One interesting finding was the established correlation between the size of the household and the values of conservatism and hierarchy. Values such as order, discipline, and compliance were promoted more often in large families

living under one roof than in smaller family units. Cultures measured high on hierarchy (and low on egalitarianism) tend to emphasize power and status differences among people. Cultures measured low on hierarchy (and high on egalitarianism) tend to minimize such differences and attempt to distribute resources more equally. Power distance is positively correlated with hierarchy and negatively correlated with egalitarianism on the national level (Schwartz, 2004, 2007). Studies also showed that the more a nation prioritized egalitarianism versus hierarchy values and harmony versus mastery values, (a) the higher was children's well-being, (b) the more generous was maternal leave, (c) the less its children were targeted by advertising, and (d) the lower its CO_2 emissions (Kasser, 2011). (Keep in mind, of course, the critical thinking principle that correlation does not prove causation, discussed in Chapter 2.)

Predominant cultural values that have been developed in a community or country influence people's views on a wide range of social, political, and personal issues. Take, for example, people's general views of security and certainty. Research findings based on cross-national studies suggest that needs for security and certainty generally yield culturally conservative values. At the same time, people choosing security and certainty over risk also show economically left-wing preferences such as support for government social and welfare programs (Malka et al., 2014).

Another example looks at a psychological construct such as honor, which in the English language typically stands for high respect, good name, or reputation. The results collected by Mosquera and colleagues (2002) indicated that people in Spain and the Netherlands, on average, understood honor in different ways. Notions of honor in Spain were closely related to the values associated with family and social interdependence. On the contrary, in the Netherlands, honor was typically associated with values of self-achievement and autonomy. (Of course, in looking at general tendencies, we need to acknowledge individual differences in values; Mosquera, 2016).

WESTERN AND NON-WESTERN VALUES

For many years, journalists, political scientists, sociologists, and psychologists have discussed the differences between two major cultural clusters of attitudes called Western and non-Western values. According to a philosophical tradition developed by the influential German sociologist and political economist Max Weber (1864–1920), the most fundamental values of Western civilization are work, achievement, striving for efficiency, and consumption of material goods. It is then argued that in non-Western civilizations, these values are somewhat important but not considered critical. The essence of non-Western values is respect for tradition, reverence to authority, and overall stability.

There are also other areas of contraposition between Western and non-Western values. Two of the most frequently examined are Western individualism and non-Western collectivism. The value of individualism was not as salient in the non-Western developing nations as it was in more economically developed Western countries (Hofstede, 1980).

For example, individualistic values historically were found to be stronger in Western countries, such as the United States, Germany, or Sweden, than they were in Taiwan, Japan, or India (Segall et al., 1990). The value of competition was reportedly higher in urban, industrial areas than in rural regions (Munroe & Munroe, 1972). However, such differences are likely to change with time, due to the ongoing social and economic changes caused by globalization as well as anti–globalization tendencies in the twenty–first century (Hayward & Kemmelmeier, 2007).

It is commonly portrayed in the media and in research publications that Western values are linked to economic prosperity, democratic attitudes, and people's satisfaction with life. An opposite view that challenges the universal importance of Western values appeared and gained strength (see discussion in Chapter 7 on motivation). Some have argued that the pursuit of Western values does not necessarily produce a climate of social satisfaction and they are no longer adaptive because they have outlived their historical usefulness (Clark, 1995). In particular, assumptions such as:

- the nature of human beings is selfish (Freud and Marx),
- scarcity is a primary condition of nature (Darwin), and
- progress means growth, complexity, competition, and freedom (Weber)

should be changed to other, non–Western concepts based on the values of order, social stability, and collectivism.

Table 10.1 Drawbacks/Disadvantages of Western and Non-Western Values

Western Individualism	Non-Western Collectivism
Less social support	Less individual autonomy
More isolation	Less privacy
Fewer social ties	Enmeshed relationships
Inhibited seeking of external resources	Excessive dependence on external resources
Deficiencies in consensus-reaching	Deficiencies in personal assertiveness
Dissatisfaction due to too many choices	Dissatisfaction due to limited choices
Estrangement from self via materialism	Estrangement from self via obligation to group
Competition yields win-lose social structure	Lack of competition yields less ambition and innovation
Breeds greed and hedonism	Breeds outgroup laziness and social loafing
Hampered leisure time	Hampered productivity
Ageism – youth over elderly	Ageism – elderly over youth
Exploitation of natural resources	Inefficient use of natural resources

Note: Derived from Bandura, 2002; Chen, 1996; Earley, 1993; Gorodnichenko & Roland, 2011; North & Fiske, 2015; Scott, Ciarrochi & Deane, 2004; and Tamis-LeMonda et al., 2008. See Levy (2010) for a discussion of the critical thinking principle, "Every Decision Is a Trade-Off."

Mohamad and Ishihara (1995) introduced and promoted the idea of a special subset of Asian values characterized by hard work, loyalty to authority, respect for traditional (i.e., heterosexual) marriage, great emphasis on education, and deferment of present enjoyment for future gain. Moreover, such values have served as the foundation for economic success of millions of people living in countries such as Japan, South Korea, Singapore, etc. Critics, however, maintain these values are not necessarily Asian nor Western in origin; rather, they are likely generic traditional values, shared equally by people in every culture (see Chapter 1).

There is ongoing debate about the perceived gap between Western and non-Western values and whether this gap is growing smaller. Some researchers suggest the gap is likely to expand. For example, in his highly influential writings, American political scientist Samuel P. Huntington (1993, 2011) referred to this controversy as a "*clash of civilizations*" hypothesis, and predicted a deepening gap between Western and non-Western values. Assuming the growth of ideological and religious fundamentalism is inevitable, he suggests billions of people on earth will question and challenge the leadership role the West plays in the world, with its materialistic Judeo–Christian values. He predicted, in a world of global equivocation, people would increasingly gravitate toward the certainty and easily identifiable cultural symbols and beliefs. This, in turn, will amplify the differences between Western and non-Western values and the countries embodying them.

The opposite view has also gained standing. For example, supporters of the "*flat world*" hypothesis believe that scores of fundamental changes such as extensive travel, international exchanges and trade, together with blogging, podcasting, open-source software, social networks, and joint knowledge projects like Wikipedia – to name a few – will make people's views more open and more compatible (Friedman, 2007). Even though many recent developments in the world may suggest a strong anti-globalization tendency rooted in nationalism, such development is not capable of stopping globalization. In your opinion, in which direction is the world generally moving: supporting the clash of civilizations hypothesis or supporting the flat world hypothesis? In what ways and to what degree might a combination of these two views be valid?

How do people first acquire their attitudes and values? And how do they utilize them to make judgments about other people and themselves? There are several theories about attitudes and values that have been scientifically tested cross-culturally. Let's examine a few of them.

STRIVING FOR CONSISTENCY: COGNITIVE BALANCE THEORY

Fritz Heider's cognitive balance theory (Heider, 1959) maintains that people seek consistency among their attitudes. In general, balance is achieved if you and a person you like agree on something or when you and a person you dislike disagree about something. It is expected that we overestimate positive traits in persons and groups we enjoy, and

that we underestimate positive traits in those persons or groups we do not favor, even if the facts suggest that our adversaries are not as bad as we had previously thought (Pratkanis, 1988). The theory of attitude balance examines consistency pressures within a simple, three-element, cognitive evaluation process. The first element (*A*) is a person who develops evaluations. The other two elements (*B*, *C*) are objects, issues, or other people who are being evaluated. For example, a young woman (*A*) adores the music of Colombian performer Shakira (*B*) who made (just assume for the sake of this example) a critical remark about global immigration policies (*C*). The woman (*A*) is likely to agree with the singer (*B*) about immigration (*C*). If, however, she dislikes what the singer says about immigration, her attitude about Shakira would probably change from very positive to less positive or even negative.

Triandis's (1994) experimental research demonstrated that while principles of cognitive balance were virtually universal in all countries studied, cognitive consistency varied across cultures. For instance, in the United States people are more concerned about the consistency of their attitudes than individuals in Japan, where the ability to handle inconsistency is considered a sign of maturity. In the former communist countries of the Soviet bloc, moral consistency required personal modesty, honesty, sacrifice on behalf of society, and public criticism of others who did not follow these standards (Gozman & Edkind, 1992; Shiraev & Bastrykin, 1988). In traditional Islamic societies, being consistent in one's religious attitudes requires a more complex behavioral reaction than the religious behavior of people in other societies. For instance, such consistency requires regularity of prayers, abstention from alcohol, paying of Islamic taxes, and following the proclamations of religious leaders (Moghaddam, 1998, 2011). This variance in cognitive consistency across cultures is likely positively linked to various cultures' level of uncertainty avoidance (see Chapter 1); yet, new cross-cultural research can bring new empirical data about cognitive balance (Baker & Carson, 2012).

AVOIDING INCONSISTENCY: COGNITIVE DISSONANCE

People experience psychological tensions when they perceive mismatch (dissonance) between (1) attitudes and behavior, (2) two or more decisions, or (3) two or more attitudes. These tensions are known as **cognitive dissonance** (Festinger, 1957). Whenever we must decide between two or more alternatives, the final choice will be inconsistent – to some extent – with some of our beliefs or previous decisions. This inconsistency generates dissonance, an unpleasant state of emotions. As a result, we feel compelled to reduce the dissonance and avoid unnecessary discomfort. There are three techniques for reducing dissonance: (1) improving our evaluation of the chosen alternative ("This is the best dress I have ever bought"), (2) lowering our evaluation of the alternative not chosen ("The dress I didn't buy was overpriced"), and (3) not thinking or talking about the decision we made ("I bought the dress, case closed").

Why do people across cultures, on average, attempt to reduce dissonance in similar ways? One reason for such consistency may be the attractive value of a harmonious,

consistent, and meaningful view of the world (Camilleri & Malewska-Peyre, 1997). To avoid frustration or discomfort, people often limit or cut off a relationship with somebody they dislike. Moreover, people avoid or ignore facts inconsistent with their beliefs. Yet, studies indicated different cultural values tend to trigger different expressions of cognitive dissonance (Boucher et al., 2009). People in predominantly individualistic cultures in Western countries, tend to experience dissonance when their behavior violates either a personal or a social standard. Meanwhile, people in predominantly collectivistic cultures, are much more concerned about violating social standards, out of fear of challenging social harmony, and thus being rejected by others (Lee & Jeyaraj, 2014; Cooper, 2007).

PSYCHOLOGICAL DOGMATISM

Some years ago, the absolute monarch of the African country Swaziland claimed that women who wore slacks and jeans were the cause of his country's and the world's problems. He also condemned human rights as a disgrace before God. He referred to the Bible when promising punishment for those women who wore pants. When speaking of human rights, he suggested that God created people unequal, and therefore humans should not attempt to change what is a divine creation. Although the world is generally evolving, these views take us back hundreds of years.

Generally, people dislike being called "dogmatic." **Dogmatism** is a tendency to be extremely selective, rigid, and inflexible in opinions and subsequent behavior. This is a powerful alliance of attitudes and beliefs, usually organized around one central idea. Dogmatism has absolute authority over the individual and usually causes intolerance toward other people who disagree (Rokeach, 1973). The dogmatic individual has a very limited way of thinking and acting, is rigid about other people's opinions, and uncritically accepts people who represent the central dogmatic idea. The dogmatic individual typically rejects those who disagree with him or her and has difficulty assimilating new information. Dogmatism and democratic values are negatively correlated, as empirical studies have shown (Schwartz, 2000). Keep in mind that dogmatism is not a dichotomous variable (see discussion of dichotomous and continuous variables in Chapter 2) and instead lies on a continuum. Can you think of any current opinion leaders who could be placed "high" on the dogmatism continuum? How about those on the "low" end?

What causes people to follow dogmatic media commentators and political leaders? There are a host of theories that attempt to explain this phenomenon. One of them concerns the drive to reduce cognitive dissonance (described in the next section) and the consequences of the belief perseverance effect (see Chapter 2). When faced with choices that might threaten their pre-existing beliefs and values, people tend to cling even tighter to their original beliefs. In effect, they become dogmatic themselves. Let's say, for example, someone is a devoted follower of an authoritarian leader, like Putin. Even when presented with the option of a clearly (at least to us) less onerous leader, the individual has great difficulty breaking out of his or her rigid "comfort zone": This person is likely to defend Putin, no matter what. The following parable nicely illustrates this principle.

A passenger on a long international flight asks the flight attendant about the dinner options. The attendant replies, "Tonight, you have your choice of either steamed dog feces with ground glass, or chicken." "Hmm," the passenger mulls it over. "Tell me . . . how is the chicken prepared?"

What causes some groups of people to be more dogmatic than others? Ofer Feldman (2006; 1996; Feldman & Zmerli, 2019), an Israeli-born researcher who for many years has lived and worked in Japan, offered an interesting explanation. In his well-known study, he compared dogmatism in politicians from the United States, Italy, and Japan. Japanese public officials were found to be less dogmatic than Italian politicians but more dogmatic than their U.S. counterparts. The findings were explained in the context of differences in political systems in the countries studied. In Italy, at the time the survey was conducted, there were eight major national political parties, and each of them was advancing a different political doctrine and philosophy of life. In-group ideological pressures within each political party were high. In the United States, two major political parties were weakly organized and highly decentralized. In-group ideological pressure was not expected to be high. The author argued that the Japanese political system contained characteristics of both Italian and U.S. political systems: high ideological solidarity and relative independence from the central party. However, one fact should be noted. The data for the U.S. sample were gathered on the local level: Only state legislators participated in the study. Local politics is traditionally different from politics at the national level and is expected to be somewhat more "pragmatic."

SOCIAL ATTRIBUTION

A student came up to his professor and asked a question about a topic that was discussed ten minutes before the end of class. After asking a few other questions, the student finally worked up the nerve to make a personal remark: "Sorry, I see you are divorced. Is that right?" The professor replied, "No, I'm married. I have a husband. What made you think that I'm divorced?" "Well, I saw a gold ring on your right hand – not on the left – and assumed that you are divorced," replied the student. The professor smiled, "In the country where I was born, it's a religious and cultural tradition for people to wear their wedding ring on their right hand." What's the lesson here? People make assumptions just by observing others based on a process called **social attribution**, through which we seek to identify and explain the causes underlying others' behavior, as well as our own.

Are there any common cross-cultural trends of social attribution? Across countries, we evaluate people and objects that we like with greater positivity, whereas we view adversaries with greater negativity, even if the facts suggest that they are not as bad as we think (Pratkanis, 1988). Groups to which we belong are commonly perceived as more heterogeneous (i.e., made up of dissimilar elements) than groups to which we do not belong (Gudykunst & Bond, 1997). Studies showed that across cultures, people tend to rate faces that have even a minor scar as less sociable, less attractive, and more dishonest than the same faces without the scar (Bull & David, 1986).

Research in the fields of communications, psycholinguistics, and social psychology suggests that people both notice accented speech and also are quick to make quick judgments about speakers with accents (Giles, 1970; Kim, 1986; Stevenage et al., 2012). In particular, speech accents affect listeners' evaluations of other peoples' competence, social status, social attractiveness, and personality characteristics, such as openness, honesty, and assertiveness (Ryan & Sebastian, 1980). Studies in the United States have also shown that "standard-accented" speakers (i.e., people who speak with a so-called TV network accent) received higher ratings on their intelligence, wealth, education, and success as compared to others (Lippi-Green, 1997). These assessments can consequently direct the listeners' behaviors toward the speaker in several ways, in that they stimulate both positive or negative stereotypes, cause certain responses, and even instigate discriminatory behavior (Abrams & Hogg, 1987; Cohen, 2012). In multicultural communities of today's big cities, the impact of a person's accent on other people's perception of this individual seems to be diminishing (Kutlu et al., 2022).

ATTRIBUTION OF SUCCESS AND FAILURE

Across cultures, it has been found that when people explain why individuals succeed or fail, they use at least one of three common explanations (Fletcher & Ward, 1988):

- individual ability ("I have skills" or "I do not have skills")
- effort ("I tried hard" or "I didn't try")
- task difficulty ("It was not so difficult" or "It was very difficult")

If a person tends to take credit for personal success and avoids responsibility for failure, this person displays the **self-centered bias**. Imagine you take a French language class but decide to drop it the next week. If you say that your failure to learn French was caused by the complexity of the language (task difficulty), you are expressing a self-centered bias (often called a self-serving bias). Several attempts have been made to examine how people in different countries display this bias in their evaluations about themselves. For example, a self-centered bias was found in samples studied from the United States, Yugoslavia, India, and South Africa. However, in Japanese samples, such bias was somewhat insignificant. Instead, researchers identified an **unassuming bias**: a tendency to explain personal success because of external factors, such as luck or help from others, and failure as a result of one's personal mistakes or weaknesses (Chandler et al., 1981).

There is evidence of cross-cultural differences in exhibiting this self-serving bias, particularly between predominantly collectivist versus individualist cultures (Campbell et al., 2000; Hooghiemstra, 2008). Different studies have suggested that there is a tendency in Asian and East Asian cultures to express the unassuming bias more often than the self-centered bias (Hooghiemstra, 2008). For example, Japanese subjects attributed failure to themselves more frequently, and success to themselves less frequently, than did their U.S. counterparts. In addition, Japanese subjects displayed a *group-serving bias*, a tendency to explain the success of other people by internal factors and failure by external ones (Kashima & Triandis, 1986; Yamaguchi, 1988). Group-serving bias is particularly strong

when individuals express their opinions in front of their group members (Bond, 1985). Yet in today's increasingly globalized world, migration plays a substantial role in reducing many cultural differences in most cognitive biases (Yiend et al., 2019).

DUTY AND FAIRNESS IN INDIVIDUALIST AND COLLECTIVIST CULTURES

These are well-known sayings: "Do not kill." "Do not steal." "Do not lie." Even though such moral prescriptions of human behavior may appear universal, their interpretation is influenced by specific cultures. There are at least two basic views of the most appropriate way of conduct in society. The first view, a *justice-based view*, emphasizes the autonomy of individuals and their basic rights. It argues that autonomy (such as the ability to act or think independently) and rights (such as the right to live, to believe, or to express opinions) should be applicable to every human being. This view is shared primarily in individualist cultures. The second view, a *duty-based view*, is based on the belief that obligation to others, respect to authority, and maintaining social order are the bases of morality. This view was more common for many years in collectivist cultures (Miller, 1994; Abu-Saad, 1998).

In most situations, people view justice in practical terms, especially when dealing with resources available to them and their distribution. Are there any cultural trends in people's views on the fair distribution of resources? People tend to like success stories involving individuals who initially had nothing but later became better off because of their effort. Myths and fairy tales from all continents show a consistent pattern: "Good" characters obtain their success through effort, while "bad" characters enrich themselves by harming others or doing nothing. Empirical studies support these traditional conventions. People in the United States and Australia perceived stories about initially poor and subsequently rich individuals as more competent and likeable than initially rich and subsequently poor individuals (Mandisodza et al., 2006). Political psychologists also suggest that there are at least two major views on fairness in relation to resources. The first stems from the *merit standpoint*, arguing that people need to have access to resources according to their skills and accomplishment. A person who contributes to society should get a bigger share of the benefits from society than those who contribute less – for whatever reason. The second originates from the *need standpoint*, asserting that people should receive equal shares of the benefits regardless of their "worth" to society (Sears, 1996). Children, the elderly, the afflicted, and the ill all may contribute little material wealth to society; however, they deserve to be treated with the same respect as everybody else.

As you might anticipate, there are national differences in the way people perceive fair distribution of resources. For example, prior research has shown that college students in the United States were more merit oriented than students in Germany, who were more need oriented (Bernman & Murphy-Bernman, 1996). Results of national surveys showed that, compared to U.S. students, twice as many young Germans endorsed statements such as (1) "the government should guarantee everyone a minimum standard of living," (2) "the government should place an upper limit on the amount of

money anyone can make," and (3) "people should help the needy even if this means getting money from those who have money." The prevailing attitudes among U.S. students were that individuals themselves were responsible for their material success (Cockerham et al., 1988). Even in countries that can be considered similar in terms of democratic principles of government, education, and social tradition, there can be substantial differences in how people view justice and what they consider a "fair" distribution of resources.

The differences between the United States and Germany were, in part, based on different social traditions in these countries and ongoing political developments. True, social welfare policies were implemented in both nations. However, in Germany the government has been perceived to be involved in social welfare programs to a larger degree than the government in the United States. The situational context of the surveys could also have affected the results. The studies mentioned here were conducted in the late 1980s and early 1990s, when prevailing attitudes among Germans were influenced by the necessity to provide for German unification and to help the needy. However, a few years later, according to opinion surveys, many Germans became increasingly skeptical of social welfare programs (Shapiro et al., 2000). In the following decades, with the growth of populist and anti-immigrant views across Europe (including Germany, Hungary, Italy, and France), people's support of welfare – especially related to most recent immigrants – diminished (Pew, 2018). Overall, according to surveys, European countries with higher levels of social trust have more favorable attitudes toward immigrants (Mitchell, 2021).

STEREOTYPES AND THE POWER OF GENERALIZATIONS

We rarely have the necessary time or resources to analyze every fact as new and unique. We tend to categorize almost everything we see, hear, and deal with. **Stereotypes** are general assumptions that all members of a given group share a particular trait or other characteristics. Stereotypes can be positive or negative, simple, or differentiated (Denmark, 2010; Smith & Bond, 1993). They can be held with varying degrees of confidence, ranging from strong to weak (Marjoribanks & Jordan, 1986).

The process of social perception often helps us simplify the incoming information and categorize it by groups. For instance, Israeli Arabs tend to see Jews as more intellectually advanced; however, they see themselves as superior socially – specifically referring to their friendships, love, family traditions, and overall collectivism (Pew, 2015; Bizman & Amir, 1982). Stereotypical beliefs such as "most illegal immigrants are criminals," or "Jews are wealthy," or "children living in same-sex parent households fare more poorly than children living in opposite-sex parent households" may be expressed in our daily judgments – despite the fact that many times these stereotypes are incorrect. True, there are some undocumented immigrants who commit crimes – but they represent a very small proportion of all undocumented aliens in the United States. Yes, some Jewish people are rich. And many are poor. And most are somewhere in between. Children from same-sex

households fare just as well as from heterosexual households. In fact, new research by European economists shows that children raised by same-sex couples perform better in school compared to kids in heterosexual couples (Long, 2019).

EXERCISE 10.1

The following passage (adopted from a popular psychology book on the topic of "body language" published over 50 years ago) presents descriptions of American, Japanese, and Arab interpersonal communication styles.

There are distinct differences in the way an American, Japanese, and an Arab handle their personal "territory." In Japan, crowding together is a sign of warm and pleasant intimacy. Like the Japanese, the Arabs tend to cling to one another. But while in public they are crowded together, in the privacy of their houses the Arabs have almost too much space: their houses are generally large and empty, with the people clustered together in one small area. Arabs do not like to be alone, so partitions between rooms are usually avoided. The Arab likes to touch his companion and feel him. The Japanese avoid touching and prefer to keep physical boundaries. Americans too tend to have boundaries in public places. You do not push or intrude into the space of another person. Arabs have no concept of privacy in a public place. Americans very seldom shove, push, or pinch other people in public. When two Arabs talk to each other, they look each other in the eyes with great intensity. The same intensity is rarely exhibited in the American culture (adapted from Fast, 1970, pp. 28–34).

Questions: Do you think there is any truth to these characterizations? On the other hand, in what ways might they be perceived as inaccurate, erroneous, or otherwise objectionable? How does one draw the line between being generally accurate versus rigidly stereotypical? As an exercise, try rewriting this passage so that it portrays a less biased stance. (As a suggestion, refer to the Barnum effect discussed in Chapter 2.)

In the course of evaluating similarities and differences between phenomena, we are subject to committing errors of at least two kinds: First, we allow genuine differences to be obscured by similarities, and second, we allow genuine similarities to be obscured by differences. Stereotyping is, in fact, permitting similarities between phenomena to eclipse their differences (see Levy, 2010, and our discussion of the similarity–uniqueness paradox in Chapter 2). Those who stereotype other people are prone to habitually, systematically, and automatically overestimate within-group similarities, while minimizing (or even ignoring) within-group variability (Fiske & Taylor, 1984). In other words, the individual perceives group members to be more alike than they really are, and at the same time, does not recognize many of the ways in which they are different from one another. In its most extreme form, this process is a fundamental component underlying prejudice, bigotry, chauvinism, racism, sexism, ageism, and so forth, wherein all members of the particular "out-group" are seen as essentially the same, while their individuality goes virtually unnoticed.

Consider the case of cross-cultural counseling. Some therapists may fail to respect – or even recognize – the uniqueness essential to each individual client. Unfortunately, these therapists may perceive a client from one sociocultural group as basically the same as every other client from that group. In this way, clients are not viewed as distinct individuals, each possessing a separate and unique constellation of life experiences, perceptions, values, beliefs, fears, and aspirations. Instead, they are spontaneously filtered through the therapist's own sociocultural stereotype lenses, from which they emerge as simply – and exclusively – "Chinese," or "black," or "gay," or "privileged," and so on. In this less-than-therapeutic environment, irrespective of individual clients' unique situations, problems, or needs, therapists would offer essentially the same cookie-cutter approach to diagnosis and treatment.

With that said, however, do not ignore the fact that two or more people can share something similar in their behaviors, emotions, and attitudes. How many times have you heard someone make the following pronouncement (or any derivation thereof): "You can't compare these two people because they are entirely different from each other!" Here we have a vivid illustration of a person making the converse mistake of allowing similarities between people to be overshadowed by their differences. Thus, the individual who adamantly maintains that "You should *never* stereotype!" is effectively blinding himself or herself to authentic commonalities that do exist within specific groups. However, by stubbornly clinging to this position, such individuals practically ensure that they will remain oblivious to true similarities within (as well as between) groups of people (Denmark, 2010).

Similarly, psychotherapists who tenaciously cling to their belief that "Every client should be viewed and treated as totally unique" runs the risk of allowing actual – and potentially helpful – similarities between persons to be overlooked or neglected. Unfortunately, the therapists' overemphasis on individual differences typically is achieved at the expense of minimizing interpersonal commonalities. As a consequence, deeply powerful and universal life experiences that appear to be intrinsic to the human condition – such as needs for love, acceptance, empathy, esteem, or meaning – are prone to be minimized, disregarded, or simply ignored.

CROSS-CULTURAL SENSITIVITY

ARE "MICROAGGRESSIONS" ACTUALLY AGGRESSIONS?

For both psychologists and the general population alike, it is essential to understand that negative stereotyping can emerge in subtle forms that are often difficult to recognize (Sue et al., 2007). One particular manifestation concerns occurrences of **microaggression**. This term refers to commonplace verbal or behavioral indiscretions (whether intentional or unintentional) that imply denigrating or negative attitudes toward any socially marginalized group, such as

those based on ethnicity, gender, age, or even disability. An example would be telling someone that they speak "excellent English," solely because their race isn't white. Or, one may "joke" to a Vietnamese American student, "Have you thought about making some extra money by getting a job at your parents' nail salon?" Other examples can include avoiding direct eye contact, asking people where they are "really" from, or not acknowledging the existence of racism, sexism, classism, and so one. People who commit these types of social indiscretions may dismiss their own words and actions as innocent or meaningless (Franklin, 2004; Solorzano et al., 2000). And their intentions may, indeed, not be malicious. But this still ignores the potential adverse consequences of their actions.

The microaggression concept has been vigorously criticized on numerous grounds. Researchers and commentators (of particular note, Jonathan Haidt, John McWhorter, and Scott Lilienfeld) point to a host of potential pitfalls, including:

- promoting psychological fragility, infantilization, and a culture of victimhood;
- squelching free speech and valuing political correctness over authenticity;
- lacking a scientific basis with an over-reliance on subjective evidence;
- unrealistically expecting people to "mind read" how others might interpret their actions;
- assuming that altering words inherently changes one's underlying feelings and attitudes;
- diminishing an individual's resiliency to coping with social discomfort or rudeness;
- falsely dividing people into binary categories ("oppressors" versus "victims");
- conflating relatively minor social transgressions with acts of intentional aggression or actual violence.

Keep in mind that identifying alleged microaggressions is a matter of degree (see Chapter 2) and a function of one's own personal values, social norms, and the cultural context in which they occur.

Is it possible to eliminate stereotypes from our interpersonal communication? Most researchers are doubtful, arguing that stereotyping is deeply embedded in human cognition (Devine, 1989; McGarty et al., 2002). But if it can't be eliminated (we are not so naïve to believe this is possible), how can its impact be reduced? Education and direct experience are important keys to decreasing stereotyping. It is also possible to reduce the influence of stereotypes on our daily judgments by learning that human diversity is greater than human uniformity. There are rich and poor, educated and illiterate, happy and angry Americans, Japanese, and Arabs, who live in big cities and small towns, who work or do not work, and who travel or basically stay in one place. Above all, people have unique personal characteristics that defy simple placement within the narrow confines of

popularly held stereotypes. What we might anticipate from an individual based on our expectations often does not match who that person really is. It would be wise to expect and accommodate to such inconsistencies.

A CASE IN POINT

IN SEARCH OF COMMONALITIES

In cross-cultural counseling settings, looking for both similarities and differences that can be constructively utilized between therapist and client is critical. Despite initial apparent differences, two individuals from different cultural groups frequently share many things in common, when actively explored. Consider the following brief vignette as an example of a search for common ground.

> *Client:* "There's no way that you can understand how I feel. After all, you're a white male, and I'm a black female. And you don't really know what it's like living in my world."
>
> *Therapist:* "You are right. I can never know exactly what that feels like. We are definitely different in those respects. But at the same time, I know what it's like to be discriminated against because of my Jewish religion. And I have had the experience of being marginalized and persecuted out of ignorance and hatred. To that extent, we do share a common experience. So, we are indeed both similar and different."

This relationship is depicted in the Venn diagram below. Despite their differences, can you think of some other ways in which the client and therapist in this scenario are likely to resemble one another?
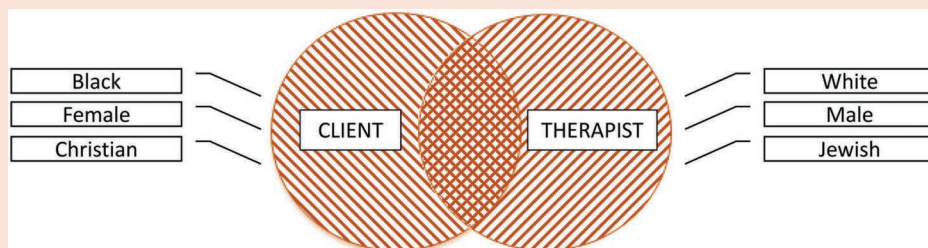
Conversely, members of "the same" cultural group, despite their commonalities, are likely to be quite different across a wide range of attributes. For instance, consider the relationship between a black female client and a black female therapist. Despite their obvious similarities, think about the myriad ways in which they could be significantly dissimilar, including their socioeconomic status, marital status, historical generation, place of birth, sexual orientation, and so on.
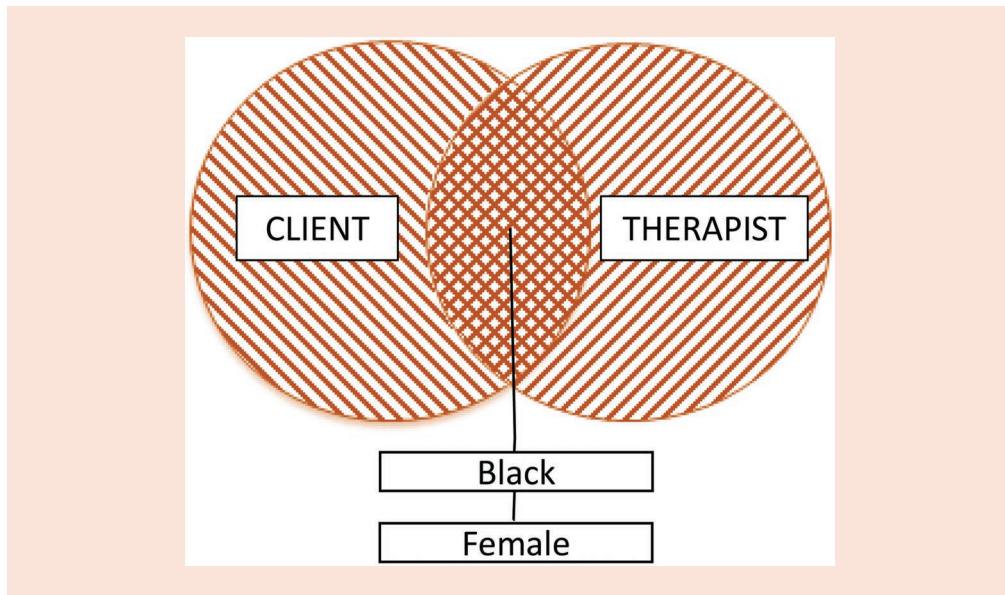
UNIVERSAL INTERACTION

Anthropologists inform us that people tend to form groups in all known human societies (Coon, 1946). Human beings are unlikely to survive living in total isolation from other people. During our lives, we join various groups, happily or begrudgingly, deliberately or by chance. A **group** consists of two or more individuals forming a relationship unit. Groups to which we belong are called *in-groups*, and groups to which we do not belong are called *out-groups*. Geographic proximity is not a necessary or sufficient condition for belonging to the same in-group. For instance, a Catholic and a Protestant may live side by side in a town in Northern Ireland, but they are likely to belong to different in-groups. Many groups to which one of them belongs – a school, a church, or a circle of close friends – could be an out-group for the other. Alternatively, a Hindu boy from New York and a Muslim child from California may never see each other in person, but they could belong to the same online fantasy football league.

When we join a group, we attain a **status** – a relative social position within a group that can be either formal or informal. Status can be earned (achieved) or given (ascribed). For example, one might expect that in liberal, democratic societies an individual's merit (such as grades at school or professional achievements) should serve as a foundation for his or her social status. On the other hand, the traditional Indian system of castes can also determine one's social position with little opportunity for social mobility. If one belonged to the lower caste, one's chances of becoming powerful and wealthy were slim-to-none. Interestingly, status has often determined an individual's consumption patterns. "Prestige foods," for example, have always been associated with high social status, since they are the most difficult to find, produce, and store. As people move up the status or prestige scale, their consumption of prestige foods increases significantly. For centuries, the type of

meat one ate (i.e., beef, chicken, pork, or fish) often corresponded with one's social status within the community (Johnson et al., 2011). In Medieval Europe about five hundred years ago, wearing pointy shoes was a symbol of high social status: The longer the tips of the shoes were, the higher the perceived status of the person. Some people would buy enormously long, pointy shoes to appear important. To keep the shoe tips erect, medieval shoemakers would stuff them with moss, hair, or wool – much to the evident delight of wealthy buyers (Imbler, 2019). In a similar fashion, these days, buying and wearing clothing from expensive or prestigious labels (no matter how beautiful or ridiculous such clothes may look) often serves – in the eyes of many – as a sign of a higher status. (Look around you: What labels do you see openly displayed today?)

By becoming a member of different groups, people may partake in more than one social status. For example, one can be an immigrant, a mother, a daughter, a nurse, a soccer coach, and a patient – all at the same time. Having a multitude of social roles inevitably affects the way people construe their identities, including their cultural identity.

Norms are established by a group and indicate how members of that group should and should not behave, such as manners, simple responses, and complex behaviors. Physical proximity, common values, and language influence cultural norms, making them culturally unique (Pika et al., 2009). However, social networks may affect existing cultural norms, forging new ones. It was common in the United States, for example, to send invitations (not online, but either handwritten or printed) to join a celebration such as a wedding or dinner party. This type of formal communication was unusual in most collectivist cultures until quite recently because people tended to tell one another personally about upcoming events. The Internet is reducing – and even eliminating – many cultural differences, by inviting people to join social networks and adopt new norms of communication, including online announcements.

Social norms are important in the definition of social roles. Social **roles** are sets of behaviors that individuals occupying specific positions within a group are expected to perform. As soon as we become part of a group, we encounter that group's norms, and as soon as we obtain a status, we begin performing social roles. For instance, in some traditional families, children always ask for their parents' blessing when making an important life decision. In some Asian and African countries today, roles are prescribed to prevent young family members from dating other youth before marriage.

A group typically establishes **sanctions**, in the form of rewards for those who follow the norms (*positive sanctions*) and condemnation for those who deviate from the norms (*negative sanctions*). In most instances, norms cannot be sustained without sanctions attached to them. Sanctions have been necessary to sustain the identity of many early religious groups, by the adoption of prayer rituals, food taboos, and dietary restrictions. Sanctions restricted individual choices by rewarding those loyal to their group (Reynolds, 2000). Negative sanctions range from mild criticism to physical punishment, while positive sanctions range from verbal appreciation to extravagant material rewards. As we saw in Chapter 1, mostly collectivistic cultures (e.g., Nepal, Pakistan, or Mexico) tend to have a stricter system of sanctions and rewards than most individualistic cultures (e.g., Switzerland, the United

States, or Germany). Then again, there are many cultural similarities in the way groups impose sanctions on their members (Barnlund & Araki, 1985).

When studying interactions from a cross-cultural perspective, in addition to defining relevant terms described earlier, one must consider the impact of population density on interaction, since it determines how many people will have direct contact with a person during a certain period. In some countries and regions, people live in crowded social environments, while in other regions large gatherings of people are rare. For example, Monaco in Southern Europe has the highest population density (23,000 people per square kilometer); meanwhile, Cambodia in Southeast Asia has a very low population density (78 people per square kilometer).

In addition to population density, we should also consider territorial behavior in the context of human interaction. Throughout different historic periods, people tended to identify with and protect territory on which they live. Territorial behavior includes actions that stake out or identify territory, ownership, or belongings. A fence around one's house or a jacket placed on a theater chair to "reserve" the seat are examples of territorial behavior. Anthropologists suggest that territorial behavior has always been common in social groups (Schubert & Masters, 1991). Territorial behavior likely has an evolutionary function: Defending a species' territory was tantamount to protecting scarce resources needed for survival.

In relation to universal interaction, cultures also differ with regard to **embeddedness** or the degree to which individuals and groups are enmeshed together. Cultures measured high on embeddedness focus on their shared goals and particular ways of life, while resisting forces that disrupt their in-group solidarity. People in embedded cultures are not particularly concerned for the well-being of those outside their groups. Practically speaking, the more embedded a country's culture, the less people tend to help strangers. Studies indicate several countries scoring high on embeddedness – Singapore, Malaysia, Bulgaria, and Thailand. Countries in "the middle" are the United States, China, and Brazil. Finally, Austria, Spain, Denmark, Sweden, and the Netherlands measure low on embeddedness (Knafo et al., 2009).

No matter what our cultural background is, the presence or absence of others can significantly alter our interaction: Bystanders, spectators, or even a passerby can enhance or inhibit our performance (Zajonc, 1965). This phenomenon is called **social facilitation**. Other people's influence on individual performance was studied as early as the 1900s, when the first groundbreaking experiments in social psychology demonstrated that social facilitation can be viewed as a cross-cultural phenomenon (Yaroshevski, 1996).

"READING" BODY LANGUAGE AND VERBAL CUES

Can an individual's cultural origin be surmised simply from watching his or her hand-counting gestures? Germans, for example, tend to gesture numbers by usually starting with

the thumb, whereas English Canadians gesture numbers usually starting with the index finger (Pika et al., 2009). However, in our modern age of travel and communication, such differences are becoming less obvious. Historically, most of our gestures have had similar meanings. Whether in Argentina, Sweden, Australia, Botswana, or India, people share common understandings of many elements of body language: They tend to accurately identify belligerent gestures, recognize friendly smiles, and appreciate the meaning of a congratulatory fist bump. For example, without saying a word, most of us can show that we don't know the answer to a question by using the universal body language of shrugging the shoulders, with palms facing upward. We use our voice in many similar ways. By speaking quietly and softly, we convey gentle attitudes, suggest reconciliation, or display our patience. Vocal volume can also indicate social status; the higher the individual's status, the greater the vocal volume or the louder a person speaks. This is especially true in competitive interactions. People tune their vocal intensity by increasing it when interacting with those closer to them in rank and decreasing it when interacting with those further above and below in status (Schubert, 1991).

Greeting and introductory interactions are comparable across cultures. When two or more people meet for the first time, they typically disclose something about themselves to one other. They utter a greeting, exchange names, and usually smile. Studies have shown significant consistency in the rules of address across different cultures (Frager & Wood, 1992; Takenoya, 2003).

Cultural traditions also regulate our initial interactions, such as situations of high- or low-cultural contexts (Berry et al., 1992). Within high-context situations, most of the important information necessary to grasp a situation is present in the context – which is not always easy to understand for a newcomer. If one person says to another in the United States, "Hey, let's do lunch sometime," this does not necessarily mean that the first individual is actually offering to have lunch with the other. Based on the situational context, the recipient of the message is expected to interpret whether the statement is really an invitation for lunch, or just a congenital way to end the conversation (which is frequently the case).

In contrast, within low-context situations, almost all the information is in the conveyed message. Most Western countries, including the United States and Canada, are considered as low-context cultures, whereas countries such as Japan, Korea, and Vietnam are considered as high-context cultures. For example, it is likely that personal self-disclosure may be more unlikely for Japanese individuals when they communicate with people from the United States than vice versa. Japanese inner life is often communicated more by innuendo, hints, and overtones than by direct interaction. Therefore, when Japanese communicate with Americans, they may appear as less relaxed and less flexible than their counterparts from California or Texas (Hedstrom, 1992).

However, do not allow your expectations create their own reality (please recall the critical thinking principle of the self-fulfilling prophecy, Chapter 2): When a Japanese person communicates with a U.S. counterpart, in most cases they will speak English. In this context, who should feel more relaxed: a person speaking English since birth or

the other person? In Japan, people bow to those whom they regard highly, including teachers, foreign guests, and people of high status. The other person is expected to bow back out of respect. Most businesspeople in Japan meeting foreigners are fine with a handshake, but expect it to be somewhat limp with limited pressure. The Japanese consider long eye contact a challenge, rather than the show if confidence as it often seen in the West (Point Park University, 2021).

There are various social, religious, and cultural factors regulating our direct interactions with others. Eye contact (or lack of it) plays a central role in interpersonal relations (Grumet, 1983). For instance, in most cultures people are taught not to stare at strangers: one never knows what reaction might follow. However, eye contact during a conversation can often be a sign of sincerity and interest. Still, this is not always the case in Korea: The social rules are that you must know another person well before you start looking into their eyes. In one study, the authors measured the eye gaze displays of Canadian, Trinidadian, and Japanese participants, as they answered various questions. When the participants already knew the answers, Trinidadians maintained the most eye contact, while Japanese maintained the least. When the participants had to think about the answers, Canadians and Trinidadians looked up, whereas Japanese looked down (McCarthy et al., 2006). Studies using eye-tracking computerized methodology have shown that East Asians tend to look at the center of a face, while Europeans and North Americans alternate their focus along a triangle formed by the eyes and mouth (Kelly et al., 2011).

When people talk to each other, they almost always produce so-called *back-channel feedback*, which is based on several verbal signals or gestures. For example, in the United States, people use short utterances such as *okay*, *right*, *hmm*, or *I see*. People who speak Arabic as their first language tend to use different back-channel feedback in a conversation: It is a steep pitch downslope (ask a native Arabic speaker to demonstrate this). As one study showed, Americans tended to misinterpret this feedback as an expressed negative emotion or a sign of disapproval (Ward & Al Bayyari, 2010). However, such misperception can often disappear after a short training exercise.

Pointing your finger at a person is considered disrespectful among Navajos and native Russians, among other groups. Touching a person during a conversation has been historically more common in cultures around the Mediterranean Sea and in some Slavic nations than it has been in European countries, such as Holland, Germany, or Finland. However, in more recent times, touching somebody (who is not your close friend) without that person's consent is increasingly viewed negatively in the West because touching in the context of current social *zeitgeist* can be viewed as a form of harassment (even if entirely unintentional) or as a sign of condescension. In Japan, people traditionally followed social rules that restrained them from touching friends of the opposite sex below the waist. This restriction was not considered relevant for many individuals in Europe and North America (Barnlund, 1975). However, these rules are undergoing a significant transformation, even at the time of this writing. Numerous studies have shown that Latinos on average interact using smaller physical distances than Japanese and other East Asians. In cultures within the Mediterranean basin or in China,

it is generally acceptable to speak loudly, while this type of communication would likely be considered impolite in Scandinavia. Overall, people's understanding of cultural, ethnic, and national customs can be very useful in cross-cultural interactions. However, keep in mind that, as our culture changes, people's views of interpersonal distances change (McArthur, 2016).

CONFORMITY: "WHAT IS THE GROUP DOING?"

How often do we do something simply because other people do it? **Conformity** is a form of social influence in which individuals change their attitudes or/and behavior to adhere to existing social norms or group pressures (Levy et al., 1998). Experimental social psychology provides many interesting examples of social conformity. In a series of classic studies conducted by Solomon Asch in the early 1950s, subjects were put into situations in which there were no particular rewards for conformity and no explicit punishment for deviance (Asch, 1956). When faced with an absolute majority of their fellow students agreeing on the same incorrect visual judgments (the length of various lines), almost 75 percent of the subjects conformed at least once by responding incorrectly as the group did. In total, 35 percent of the overall responses conformed to the deliberately incorrect judgments expressed by the "actors" (actually experimental accomplices posing as other research participants). We previously mentioned that each group applies a variety of sanctions to members who do not accept the group norms.

Does this mean that we always conform to avoid negative social sanctions against us? The answer is "no." Another reason is to live up to the expectations of others and therefore remain in their good graces. This is especially true when the "others" represent a majority. For example, many European women cover their heads with a scarf when they arrive in a Muslim country even though this is not required of foreigners. It has long been established that decision making, especially in an unfamiliar situation, might increase conformity, whereas prior commitments or strong beliefs are likely to reduce conformity (Deutsch & Gerard, 1955). Reduced conformity may be due to strong attitudes: A person who does not drink alcohol because of religious duty has fewer chances of sharing a drink with his or her friends who do not have such strong commitments.

Conformity can also be directly motivated by a desire to gain reward or avoid punishment. The act of social yielding (doing or saying what others say or do), often called **compliance** (Levy et al., 1998), may bring people hope. When individuals are poor, desperate, and depressed, then the prospect of a convincing solution might impel them to comply with those who make such promises. Compliance, however, is not necessarily a sign of personal weakness or desperation. Take, for example, the infamous 1977 Jonestown suicide and the 1997 Heaven's Gate suicide (you can easily search online for more information about these tragedies). In both cases, the members of two cult groups were persuaded by their respective group leaders into believing that death was the only acceptable resolution for suffering and the only way to obtain spiritual salvation. Thinking critically about these and other cases of group suicide and various forms of

compliance, also keep in mind that many powerful leaders who compel their followers to follow their orders may themselves manifest serious psychopathology, such as delusions of grandeur and persecution, marked personality disorders (such as narcissistic, paranoid, or antisocial personality disorder), obsession with suicide, and sadistic tendencies (Osherow, 1993; Zimbardo, 1997).

IS CONFORMITY UNIVERSAL ACROSS CULTURES?

Social conformity historically varies across cultures. For example, there is a positive correlation between individualism and economic wealth. In countries measured low on individualism, conformity was more popular, and autonomy was rated as less important (Berry et al., 1992). Therefore, economically well-to-do countries, when compared with poorer countries, will conceivably show fewer examples of conformity. Conformity is typically lower in upper-middle-class groups and higher in lower socioeconomic groups. It was higher in stratified and authoritarian societies as well, where parents were mostly concerned about making their children conform to existing social norms (Kohn, 1969; Shiraev & Bastrykin, 1988). A meta-analysis of studies performed in 17 societies (Bond & Smith 1996), including participants from Oceania, the Middle East, South America, Africa, South America, East Asia, Europe, and the United States, found motivations for conformity are weaker in Western societies than elsewhere. All in all, collectivistic norms are likely to facilitate conformity, whereas individualistic norms do not (Matsuda, 1985). In multicultural and diverse societies, such as the United States and Canada, the dominance of a single mainstream culture is present to a lesser extent than the influence of a single uniform culture in less diverse societies, such as Norway or Korea. Overall, government economic and social policies clearly influence collectivist and individualist norms of people living in these countries (Horita & Takezawa, 2018).

Anticipation of negative sanctions often limits the expression of views that contradict the majority's opinion, and this can result in the individual's conformity or silent agreement with others. According to Noelle-Neumann (1986), what individuals fear most with respect to their private opinions is social isolation. To avoid isolation, people try to determine what opinions other people hold. If an individual subscribes to the dominant opinion, this judgment is likely to be freely discussed and expressed. Moreover, the absence of resistance or criticism from others will strengthen the individual's opinion. If, however, an individual subscribes to a perceived minority opinion, that individual will fear social isolation and is less likely to express that opinion as freely in public. This situation results in an opinion-voicing spiral into silence, as minority opinions are less publicly shared and appear less and so become less commonly held. The moral? Social norms of the rejection of and intolerance to different ideas may affect not only the frequency of expression of certain ideas but also their salience among people's thoughts and attitudes. Moreover, lack of expression of such ideas leaves the existing social norms unchallenged.

Social and environmental conditions also influence individual conformity. For example, Berry (1967) showed that conformity is higher in societies with high-food-accumulation

practices (for example, the Temme of Sierra Leone) and lower in societies with low-food-accumulation practices (such as the Canadian Eskimo). In this case, low levels of conformity are perhaps conditioned by socialization practices: A young Eskimo may learn very early in life how to be independent as a hunter. Studies conducted in many Asian countries indicated that Asian people were engaged in conforming behavior to a greater degree than Europeans. Specifically, Chinese were shown in the past to be more conforming than Americans (Huang & Harris, 1973). Moreover, conformity has been valued among Asians (such as Indonesians and Japanese) to a greater degree than among Europeans (Matsumoto, 1994). For example, among participants of a Rokeach Value survey, Asian subjects endorse values such as conformity and obedience, whereas West European subjects emphasize independence and personal freedom (Punetha et al., 1987). Other studies showed differences in conforming behavior among representatives of countries that are "similar" to one another, such as Italy and Australia (both predominantly Christian and democratic societies). Italians were found to be more conforming than British Australians (Cashmore & Goodnow, 1986). However, more contemporary studies tend to challenge the results obtained 25 or more years ago. Studies show that conformity is likely to be attached to specific situations and is not, contrary to popular assumptions, typical in some ethnic or national groups. One study of Japanese college students demonstrated that Japanese conformed in experimental situations no more than Americans did (Takano & Sogon, 2008). Other studies pointed at a tendency for group conformity among Japan's young (Toivonen et al., 2011).

Remember that conformity should be considered a continuous variable (see Chapter 2 for a discussion on differentiating dichotomous variables and continuous variables). One can describe both high and low levels of conformity only when contrasting two or more samples. Moreover, within a single culture, different social sanctions are applied to different groups regarding their conforming behavior.

When comparing conformity across cultures, one should take into consideration the social context in which this behavior occurs. With a certain degree of generalization, we can suggest that all human behavior may be viewed as acts of conformity because most healthy individuals tend to adjust their behavior to sets of norms. Some forms of conformity can be facilitated. For instance, we conform easily and eagerly when the conforming behavior falls into the category of socially acceptable and when there is no serious moral dilemma present. That is probably why people conform readily when they see other people engaged in socially "good" and "desirable" behavior (Aronson & O'Leary, 1982–1983; Cialdini et al., 1990).

Since the United States is such a politically and ethnically diverse country, should we expect that most of its citizens are less conformist than people living in other countries, such as Turkey, China, or Denmark? Perhaps surprisingly, experimental research does not prove so. Furthermore, some studies show that people in the United States are not less conformist than people from other countries tested in similar experimental situations. The results of one study conducted in Japan showed the lowest rates of conformity on the Asch experiment in Japan, lower than in the same experiment in the United States (Frager, 1970). Hypothetically, Japanese subjects, who represent a mostly collectivist

culture, were expected to conform more frequently than subjects from individualistic cultures, such as the United States. What was the cause of such unexpected results? Was it an error in experimental procedure? Apparently, in collectivist cultures, people conform toward their in-groups and behave less cooperatively toward out-groups. In the Asch experimental procedure, the participants knew each other very little or not at all. Thus, this situation could not be termed as representing "in-group pressure."

Moghaddam (1998) interpreted the findings about low rates of conformity in some Japanese subjects as a demonstration of how different social norms may affect experimental procedures. Most of the experiments on conformity were conducted in colleges and universities and most participants were students. For some of them, situations such as experimental interactions with "strangers" were not as significant as interactions with their families and other important groups, where conformity is apparently high. It is also interesting how uncertainty avoidance may be used to explain conformity. Frager (1970) and later Gudykunst and his colleagues (1992) explained that in the United States, where uncertainty avoidance was low, people tended to have less similar "standard" rules in many social situations. However, in Japan, where uncertainty avoidance was relatively high, people tended to have clear rules of behavior in different social contexts. Therefore, conforming behavior with strangers could be quite different from conforming behavior with in-group members (Toivonen et al., 2011).

CRITICAL THINKING

"WE ALL CONFORM"

Russian social psychologist Arthur Petrovsky (1978) was convinced that most of the research on conformity collected by Western psychologists in the twentieth century contained a judgment error. His main argument was that this error takes place when psychologists describe a person's act of conformity – in the face of group pressure – as a dichotomous variable: The person has only two choices, to conform or not to conform (see Chapter 2). Moreover, in individualist cultures those who conform are often evaluated negatively in the public eye as "the led," "the followers," "people without guts," "the sheeple," and so on. Conversely, those who do not conform are often labeled as "the leaders," "the daring," and "the independent."

Petrovsky proposed that we can avoid the availability bias (when observers pay attention to what is visible or salient; see Chapter 2) and examine conformity from a broader perspective. People, especially when they make important decisions, often take into consideration not only the factors that are influencing them in the present situation, but also their values and broader social norms. In some situations, people appear to be exercising nonconforming behavior, when, in fact, they are conforming, but to different norms. For example, a group of students decides to stop by a

steak house for dinner; one of the students does not follow the group because she is a vegetarian due to her religious views. Or, consider a young woman, contrary to what her friends are doing, refuses to get into a car with a seemingly drunken friend–driver behind the wheel because she believes this drink-and-drive behavior is dangerous. Should these examples, behaviors in which individuals did not side with the majority, be considered nonconforming behavior? What is your view? Recall how conformity is defined: It is a form of social influence by which individuals change their attitudes or behavior to adhere to a group or social norms. In other words, when it appears to others that somebody does not yield to group pressure, this person still exercises conformity. However, what if the person conforms to a different set of norms? In the examples described earlier, the man conformed to the norms of his religion, and the woman conformed to the norms of "responsible" behavior, that is, a "do not drink-and-drive" imperative. In your view, are these examples of "independent"/"non-conforming" behaviors?

When we ask American students in the 2020s to express their opinions on how people in the United States compare with other national groups with regard to conformity, most say that Americans are assumed to be much less conforming than people of other nationalities. Why does it appear so? Is it due to the intrinsic personality or "character" of people living in different cultures? The answer is more complex. Those who travel the world can easily see that people who live in North America, Europe, and industrialized countries of the Far East have more choices in life, as compared to those in other less industrialized countries. These choices are related not only to products and services, but also to political selections, ideological perspectives, lifestyle preferences, and religious practices. In this way, an individual's degree of apparent conformity can be seen as largely dependent on the availability of his or her available choices. Specifically, when fewer choices are available, there is greater conformity than when many options are present (Curtis & Desforges, 2013).

For instance, if John (an American) has more choices than Lee (a North Korean), we would find that John's behavior is more diverse and complex. However, this fact should not lead us to the conclusion that John is necessarily less of a "conformist" than Lee. In reality, Lee has fewer choices and opportunities in life; therefore, the range of her behavior is inherently restricted by her environmental parameters. But this does not necessarily mean that she is more of a "conformist" than John. (In this regard, see discussion of the Fundamental Attribution Error in Chapter 2). This principle is neatly embodied in the Yiddish proverb: *Don't call a man honest, just because he's never had the opportunity to steal.*

OBEDIENCE: "I WAS ONLY FOLLOWING ORDERS"

At the very moment that you are reading this, somewhere on the planet someone is giving an order to someone else. For example, someone is telling others to rise, to move,

to work, to do their homework, to clean the house, to rescue, to build, or . . . to harm somebody. People obey other people – parents, teachers, police officers, doctors, military commanders, husbands, wives – in every culture. **Obedience** is a form of behavioral compliance when a person follows orders given by someone with greater power (Levy et al., 1998). This type of behavior is usually based on a belief that those with authority have the right to issue requests and give such orders.

Research on obedience in the United States and around the world is most notably associated with the name Stanley Milgram, a prominent social scientist from Yale University (see Milgram, 1963). As psychologists point out, Milgram's publications among the most famous and widely recognized in psychology's history (Shiraev, 2015; Hock, 1995).

Milgram showed in his experiments that most people easily obey others, and in so doing, readily violate their own moral standards and behavior. Moreover, he found that the circumstances under which people become obedient do not need be extraordinary. We sometimes obey even in insignificant social situations. The Milgram experiment and many of the replications that followed showed that obedience to authority was not just the behavior of the extremely weak, the frustrated, or the pathological. Obedience is also commonly found among "regular" individuals when they are under psychological pressure from other people. It has also been found that we tend to obey with less hesitation when somebody else assumes responsibility for our actions. In these situations, we can do something that can be considered immoral or unfair.

The Milgram experiment on obedience has been replicated in many countries, apparently with similar results: People tend to obey other people who are perceived to have power (Burger, 2009). Despite variations, it is more likely that in countries with high–power distance, rates of obedience will be higher than in countries with low–power distance. (Power distance, discussed earlier, is the extent to which there is inequality between supervisors and subordinates in an organization.) The power distance index is high when the members of a society accept that power in institutions is distributed unequally. Similarly, the power distance index is low when the members of a society tend to accept relative equality within the institutions (Hofstede, 1980).

Another factor that affects obedience is the predominant leadership style of an individual. An authoritarian style of leadership, for example, presumes direct communications from the leader to the led. The leader or any authority figure gives the orders, and the led must obey. Discussions and exchanges of information are significantly limited. For example, in postwar Germany 40 percent of students who were age 12 between 1946 and 1953 reported actual participation in school discussions and debates, whereas only 6 percent of the students who were age 12 between 1941 and 1945, during the last period of the Nazi dictatorship, reported participation in discussions (Almond & Verba, 1965). It was also found that obedience was one of the most important values cultivated by the system of German socialization during at least the past 200 years before the end of the twentieth century (Miller, 1983).

CRITICAL THINKING

CULTURAL NORMS AND OBEDIENCE

Acts of obedience committed by another individual (Person A) are identified and evaluated by an observer (Person B). But how can Person B accurately interpret the obedience of Person A if Person B belongs to a different culture? To think critically about an issue also means to ask additional questions about it. In the case of obedience, such a question might be: Why did *this* particular person follow *this* particular order? Consider, for example, an arranged marriage in India where a young woman follows her parents' recommendation to marry a man she has never seen (Rukmini, 2021). Might this appear to an American observer as an act of obedience (Saroop, 1999)? Perhaps it would, in that the woman simply followed a directive coming from other people. But from the woman's point of view, her parents' decision may not be an order, but rather some guidance based on her parents' wisdom, love, and sincere intentions. Moreover, by agreeing with her parents' choice, the young woman honors a centuries-old cultural tradition of arranged marriages. In any situation, we should not forget about the impact of external factors – such as traditions, customs, and mores – on individual behavior and obedience in particular. (In this regard, please refer to our discussion of the fundamental attribution error in Chapter 2.)

According to past other studies, parents from lower socioeconomic status groups tended to value obedience more than parents of middle-class families (Kohn, 1969). Similar results were found in a large-scale study conducted in nine countries, in which parents were asked to say which characteristics in their children were most desirable. The answers from parents who lived in the United States and other industrialized countries, such as Korea, stressed the importance of personal independence and self-reliant behavior. Parents from less industrialized nations, such as Turkey and Indonesia, indicated the importance of obedience in their children and did not endorse independence (Kağitçibaşı, 1996). Among the world's different cultural areas, African societies were rated the highest in the socialization of compliance and obedience (Munroe & Munroe, 1972). Political ideologies also seem to influence the frequency of obedient reactions. In authoritarian countries, obedient reactions were reported to be more frequent than in democratic societies (Triandis, 1994). People tend to conform to the norms because "other people" seemingly have information we do not, and relying on expectations can be a reasonable strategy when we are uncertain about how we are supposed to act, especially if we are in unfamiliar social situations (Burger, 2009).

SOCIAL INFLUENCE

Social influence in the context of psychology refers to any change that occurs in one person as a result of the real, implied, or imagined presence of others (see Levy et al., 1998).

The potential or ability of an individual to exercise control and/or authority is called **power**. You can think of social power as potential or unrealized social influence. Power can be formal or informal. Formal power is exercised mostly within activities that are defined by official regulations, laws, and institutional rules. Individuals in situations without official regulations exercise informal power. In most traditional cultures, parents do not have formal power over their family members. But informally, most parents possess and exercise parental authority over their adult children.

Experiments show that the simple presence of a cultural symbol representing a different country or ethnic group influences people into thinking spontaneously in terms of the values of that country or cultural group. For example, seeing a red lantern (a cue of Chinese culture) may suddenly make some people think of the value of fulfilling interpersonal duties (a Chinese cultural value) (Ho-Ying Fu et al., 2007). Similarly, research has shown that the way people perceive the power of other individuals can affect many aspects of group behavior. Even a simple joke may be interpreted differently by people who have power and those who do not (McGhee & Duffey, 1983). Research shows that people with relatively higher power or social status tend to consider disability, gender, and ethnic jokes as funnier and less offensive compared to the assessments of these same jokes by people with less power (Knegtmans et al., 2018).

A CASE IN POINT

CHALLENGING THE BOSS

The copilot and flight engineer of Korean Air jet Boeing 747 knew that the situation was not right: All indicators suggested a serious problem. But neither of them said anything to the captain, who failed to detect any danger. A few seconds later, the airplane slammed into the top of a hill, killing 228 passengers. Investigators confirmed that the crew – even though they knew about the problem – failed to challenge the captain. This tragedy was interpreted by some experts as an emblematic cultural issue: The pilots showed a traditional Korean deference to authority (Phillips, 1998). Would a U.S. or Norwegian copilot challenge a captain in a similar flight situation?

It is very difficult to predict specific behavior in hypothetical situations. However, studies show that general cultural norms can regulate pilots' behavior in the cockpit. Survey data collected from 9,400 male commercial airline pilots in 19 countries (Merritt, 2000) showed that norms of collectivism and individualism, respect to authority, and power distance played a role in determining specific actions of the pilot in the cockpit. For instance, strong group norms of collectivism tend to increase conformity, while group norms rooted in low power distance tend to decrease obedience to authority.

Compared to people who possess power, individuals out of power historically were more likely to be pessimistic about their own life; the status of their country; and the past, present, and future of the world (Larsen, 1972). Members of low-power groups were expected to have more empathy for members of high-power groups than vice versa. For example, it was found in the past in an early study that Arab Lebanese students in the United States were more successful in identifying typical "American" responses than Americans were in identifying typical "Arab" responses (Lindgren & Tebcherani, 1971).

There is an expression in sociology and political science called "*soft power.*" It refers to the influence of one country on others by an example: The ideas are transmitted through economic achievements, culture, movies, sports, literature, fashion, and human exchanges. Some nations, like the United States, have enormous economic, financial, and intellectual potential to exercise soft power. South Korea too is spreading its "soft power" by introducing its cars, food, toys, videos, and music (especially K-pop).

GROUP DYNAMICS: INTERPERSONAL PUSHES AND PULLS

Across the world, individuals in social groups show tendencies to adhere to their shared views so strongly that they ignore information inconsistent with those views (see discussion of "belief perseverance" in Chapter 2). There are some cultural differences in the way people express their agreement with the views of others. For example, studies show that Koreans tend to show more acquiescence or agreeableness in written answers than Americans do (Locke & Baik, 2009). This pressure toward agreement with others in a group decision-making process is called **groupthink**. Irving Janis, who first described this very powerful phenomenon, believed that groupthink is associated with concurrence seeking, and that it may often override any realistic appraisals of alternative decisions or courses of action (Brandstatter et al., 1984). In April 1961, President Kennedy agreed to support an invasion of Cuba with the help of U.S.-trained Cuban exiles to dislodge the communist regime there. This operation ended in a disaster and serves as a perfect example of groupthink. The cabinet members apparently knew that the invasion would not succeed, but nobody brought those issues to light because they apparently wanted to maintain **cohesiveness** within the inner circle of presidential advisers. Psychologist Elliot Aronson proposed that the tragic failure of the space shuttle Challenger in 1986 was also the result of groupthink. The NASA engineers, in their pursuit of a common goal, ignored several warning signs of a potential disaster (Aronson, 1995). Debates continue today on whether groupthink was a factor influencing the U.S. decision to start a war against Iraq in 2003.

Groupthink is a very compelling group mechanism among members of fundamentalist religious, radical political, and militant ethnic groups. When you join a group, you may be hesitant to express doubts regarding group decisions and group activities because your hesitation might be considered a sign of weakness and disloyalty.

Another group phenomenon, known as **group polarization**, is almost in direct contrast to groupthink. Group polarization is the tendency of group members to shift, because of group discussion, toward more extreme positions than they initially held. In the case of group polarization, group cohesiveness may not be as important for the group members. In some cases, the risky shift phenomenon occurs, which means that group decisions are often riskier than individual views held by the members before discussion or decision making (Moscovici & Zavalloni, 1969). Found in various experimental situations in the United States, in many European, and some African countries, the risky shift phenomenon is also explained as being based on particular cultural norms (Brown, 1965; Gross & De Dreu, 2019). In other words, if a culture values risky behavior in its individuals, the risky shift is more likely to occur. The risky shift phenomenon was confirmed to be present in many countries, including France, England, Canada, Israel, and New Zealand (see, e.g., Rim, 1963; Vidmar, 1970). However, the data on risk taking across cultures have been generally inconsistent (Foxall & Payne, 1989).

IS SOCIAL LOAFING UNIVERSAL?

Imagine you are working alone on a project. You have been asked to compare divorce rates around the world and collect statistical data through the Internet. You hope to finish the project in a few days. Unexpectedly, your professor tells you that two people have been assigned to help you finish the project. After hearing this news, would you feel relief? Will you slow down your efforts, anticipating that your helpers will contribute to the work load? Indeed, many people do slow down under similar circumstances, thus demonstrating **social loafing**, the tendency of group members to exert less effort on a task than they would if they were working alone. Is social loafing common in every cultural group?

The results of several cross-cultural studies show that social loafing is not a universal phenomenon. For example, research conducted in China and Japan suggests that social loafing does not occur in the group behavior studied in these countries. In some cases, the opposite phenomenon appeared. It is called "*social striving*," when a group enhances the individual performance of its members (Earley, 1989). It was found in some studies that people in the United States (most likely to be predominantly "individualists") manifested social loafing, whereas people in China (predominantly "collectivists") tended to show the opposite pattern (social striving), performing better in pairs than alone (Gabrenya et al., 1985). Perhaps in many cultures in which social loafing does not occur, the existing collectivist norms stimulate interpersonal interdependence. In other words, hypothetically, in collectivist cultures social loafing is not typical. However, this does not mean that in individualistic cultures social loafing will always be part of group relationships. Also, we should not discount the fact that the more cohesive a group becomes, the lower the occurrence of loafing (Petrovsky, 1978). Loafing is based on social and personal circumstances, such as a person's religious beliefs, political affiliation, group affiliation, or individual obligations to other people (Simms & Nichols, 2014). On the whole, it is assumed that people pursue their social goals primarily to satisfy their innate need for affiliation with others (Dang & Liu, 2022).

EXERCISE 10.2

Brainstorming is a group problem–solving technique that allows participants to generate as many different suggestions or solutions to the problem as they can in a limited period of time. The rules of brainstorming are relatively simple (Osborn, 1957). First, the group needs your ideas. The more ideas you generate, the better, because the quantity of ideas will influence the quality of the final decision. Second, you are free to generate any ideas you want. You should not worry about appearing "crazy," "naive," or "stupid"; there are no crazy, naive, or stupid suggestions in this situation. Third, criticism of other members' ideas and proposals is taboo. Be positive and generous to others. You will have time later to veto those ideas that you do not like. Fourth, you constantly try to improve the ideas and suggestions of other group members. Be constructive by suggesting how those ideas you support can be implemented.

Question: Do you think that brainstorming as a method of group decision making may have different effects in collectivist and individualist cultures? Which culture's norms would be most beneficial for successful brainstorming? Consider two hypotheses:

First, in individualist cultures, people are freer to express their individual opinions than in collectivist cultures. Therefore, brainstorming naturally "fits" into any individualist culture: People do not care so much about criticism and express their ideas freely.

Second, in collectivist cultures, individuals are more interconnected and interdependent. Therefore, any group discussion that requires mutual support and understanding is naturally in agreement with the norms of a collectivist culture. Which of the two hypotheses would you consider to be more plausible?

CHAPTER SUMMARY

1. It is an established view in psychology that social perception is culturally rooted. We acquire judgments, attitudes, and beliefs from our cultural milieu.
2. One of the most fundamental elements of the process of social perception and social cognition is attitude. Cross-culturally, attitudes help us understand and make sense of the world. They serve an ego-defensive function assisting us to feel better about ourselves. Finally, attitudes serve a function that allows us to express our values.
3. Cultures develop, maintain, and justify particular sets of values along the following dimensions: conservatism versus autonomy, hierarchy versus egalitarianism, and mastery versus harmony. There could be collectivist and individualist patterns in human values. There are also debates about the existence of so-called Western and non-Western values.
4. Cognitive balance and cognitive dissonance theories suggest that people seek consistency among their attitudes. Notwithstanding limitations, this trend was established among individuals in different countries. One of the forms of consistency seeking is psychological dogmatism, which has a wide range of cultural manifestations.

5. Research on social attributions provides some evidence that people across countries, despite many similarities, could express different attribution styles, and these differences are deeply rooted in people's social and cultural background.

6. Culture can have an impact on various individual manifestations of the fundamental attribution error and other patterns of social attribution.

7. Even though general moral principles of behavior may be universal, the interpretations of these principles can be strongly influenced by each particular culture. There are two basic views on morality. The first view, a justice-based view of morality, is associated with beliefs that emphasize the autonomy of the individual and his or her individual rights. The second view, a duty-based view, is based on the belief that obligation to others is the basis of morality.

8. Individuals make distinctions between the world within them and the world outside them. Both individual traits and environmental circumstances shape people's self-perception in a variety of ways.

9. The process of social perception often makes people simplify the incoming information and categorize it by groups. Stereotypes can lead people to think that all members of a given group have a particular trait. Research suggests that stereotypes could have a number of universal characteristics common in different cultural settings.

10. Anthropologists confirm that people tend to form groups in all known human societies. By joining a group, we attain status, a relative social, formal, or informal position, or rank within the group. As soon as we obtain a status, we begin to perform our social roles, which are the sets of behaviors that individuals occupying specific positions within a group are expected to perform. Each group has a set of norms, or rules within a group indicating how its members should or should not behave. Most of us identify our own in-groups, that is, groups to which we belong, and out-groups, that is, groups to which we do not belong. There are groups to which we may not belong but with which we identify ourselves: reference groups. Anthropologists suggest that territorial behavior is natural for both individuals and social groups. Groups that are inclusive will tend to tolerate "trespassers," whereas exclusive groups will be particularly territorial.

11. Studies show significant consistency in the rules of address across different cultures. Despite many similarities across countries, there are various social, religious, and cultural factors that regulate our specific interactions.

12. Conformity is a form of social influence by which individuals change their attitudes and/or behavior to adhere to existing groups, broader groups, or social norms. Conformity is a universal phenomenon, which has some variations across cultures. There is a positive correlation between individualism and economic wealth. In addition, in countries low on individualism, conformity is popular, and autonomy is rated as less important. In countries with high individualism, variety is valued. In particular, studies conducted in many Asian countries indicate that people of these cultures engage in conforming behavior to a greater degree than do people in the United States. Conformity is high in agricultural societies and low in hunting and gathering societies. It is typically lower in upper-middle-class groups and higher in lower socioeconomic groups. It is also higher in stratified societies.

13. Obedience is a form of behavioral compliance when a person follows orders given by someone with greater power. People tend to obey other people who have power. Despite variations, it is more likely that in countries with high power distance, rates of obedience will be higher than in countries with low power distance.

14. Groupthink is the tendency of members of groups to adhere to the shared views so strongly that they ignore information inconsistent with those views. There is evidence suggesting that groupthink is common in every culture. Group polarization is the tendency for group members to shift, as a result of group discussion, toward more extreme positions than those they initially held. In the case of group polarization, group cohesiveness may not be as important for the group members. In some cases, the risky shift phenomenon occurs, which means that group decisions are often riskier than individual views held by the members before discussion or decision making. If a culture values risky behavior in its individuals, the risky shift is more likely to occur.

15. Social loafing is the tendency of group members to exert less effort on a task than they would if working alone. In many cultures in which social loafing does not occur, the existing collectivist norms stimulate interpersonal interdependence. In a competitive reward structure, a person gains when other members lose. In a cooperative reward structure, people's rewards are positively linked. In an individualistic reward structure, the outcomes of individuals are independent of each other.

KEY TERMS

Attitude A psychological construct that characterizes a person's mental position toward a fact, issue, individual, or group of people.

Cognitive dissonance A state of psychological tension caused by the perceived inconsistency or incongruence between (1) attitudes and behavior, (2) two or more decisions, or (3) two or more attitudes.

Cohesiveness All forces acting on group members that cause them to bond within a group, including mutual attraction, interdependence, and shared goals, interests, or a sense of belonging.

Competition A form of social interaction in which individuals or groups attempt to maximize their own outcomes, often at the expense of others.

Compliance The act of social yielding; doing or saying what others say or do.

Conformity A form of social influence in which individuals change their attitudes or/and behavior to adhere to existing social norms or group pressures.

Cooperation A form of social interaction in which individuals or groups coordinate their behavior to reach a shared goal.

Dogmatism The tendency to be closed–minded, rigid, and inflexible in one's opinions and subsequent behavior.

Embeddedness The degree to which individuals and groups are enmeshed together.

Group Two or more individuals forming a complete and distinct social unit.

Group polarization The tendency of group members to shift, as a result of group interaction, toward more extreme positions than those they initially held.

Groupthink The tendency of members of groups to adhere to their shared views so strongly that they ignore information inconsistent with those views.

Leadership The process through which individuals (leaders) influence other group members toward the attainment of a specific activity or group goal.

Microaggression Commonplace, ordinary verbal or behavioral indiscretions (whether intentional or unintentional) that imply denigrating or negative attitudes toward any socially marginalized group.

Norms Rules within a group indicating how its members should (or should not) behave.

Obedience A form of behavioral compliance when a person follows orders given by someone with greater power.

Power The potentially, capacity, or ability of an individual to exercise control and/or authority.

Roles The sets of behaviors that individuals occupying specific positions within a group are expected to perform.

Sanctions Actions that reward those who follow the norms (positive sanctions) or reproach those who are deviant (negative sanctions).

Self-centered bias The tendency to take credit for successes and avoid responsibility for failures.

Social attribution The process through which we seek to identify and explain the behavior of others, as well as our own.

Social cognition The process through which we remember, interpret, and then use information about the social world.

Social facilitation The effects on performance resulting from the presence of others.

Social influence Any change that occurs in one person as a result of the real, implied, or imagined presence of others.

Social loafing The tendency of some group members to exert less effort on a task than they would if working alone.

Social perception The process through which we seek to know and understand other people and ourselves.

Status Relative social (formal or informal) position or rank within a group.

Stereotypes Traits or characteristics generally attributed to all members of specific groups.

Unassuming bias The tendency to explain one's own success as a result of external factors, and one's failure as a result of personal mistakes or weaknesses.

Value A complex belief that reflects a principle, standard, or quality considered by the individual as the most desirable or appropriate.

REFERENCES

Abrams, D., & Hogg, M. A. (1987). Language attitudes, frames of reference, and social identity: A Scottish dimension. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, *6*, 201–213.

Abu-Saad, I. (1998). Individualism and Islamic work beliefs. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *29*(3), 377–383.

Almond, G., & Verba, S. (1965). *The civic culture*. Boston, MA: Little, Brown.

Anakwah, N., Horselenberg, R., Hope, L., Amankwah-Poku, & van Koppen, P. J. (2020). Cross-cultural differences in eyewitness memory reports. *Applied Cognitive Psychology*, *34*(2), 504–515.

Aronson, E. (1995). *The social animal*. New York: W. H. Freeman.

Aronson, E., & O'Leary, M. (1982–1983). The relative effectiveness of models and prompts on energy conservation: A field experiment in a shower room. *Journal of Environmental Systems*, *12*, 219–224.

Asch, S. (1956). Studies of independence and conformity: A minority of one against unanimous majority. *Psychological Monographs*, *70*(9) (occupies whole issue).

Baker, D. S., & Carson, K. (2012). The two faces of uncertainty avoidance: Attachment and adaptation. *The Journal of Behavioral and Applied Management*, *12*(2), 128–141.

Bandura, A. (2002). Social cognitive theory in cultural context. *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, *51*(2), 269–290.

Barnlund, D. (1975). *Public and private self in Japan and the United States*. Tokyo: Simul Press.

Barnlund, D., & Araki, S. (1985). Intercultural encounters: The management of compliments by Japanese and Americans. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *16*(1), 9–26.

Bernman, J., & Murphy-Bernman, V. (1996). Cultural differences in perceptions of allocators of resources. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *27*(4), 494–509.

Berry, J. W. (1967). Independence and conformity in subsistence level societies. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *7*, 415–418.

Berry, J. W., Poortinga, Y. H., Segall, M. H., & Dasen, P. R. (1992). *Cross-cultural psychology: Research and applications*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Bizman, A., & Amir, Y. (1982). Mutual perceptions of Arabs and Jews in Israel. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *13*(4), 461–469.

Bond, M. (1985). How are responses to verbal insult related to cultural collectivism and power distance? *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *16*(1), 111–127.

Bond, R. & Smith, P. B. (1996). Culture and conformity: A meta-analysis of studies using Asch's (1952b, 1956) line judgment task. *Psychological Bulletin*, *119*(1), 111–137.

Boucher, H. C., Peng, K., Shi, J., & Wang, L. (2009). Culture and implicit self-esteem: Chinese are "good" and "bad" at the same time. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *40*(1), 24–45.

Brandstatter, H., Davis, J., & Stocker-Kreichgauer, G. (Eds.). (1984). *Group decision making*. New York: Academic Press.

Brown, R. (1965). *Social psychology*. New York: Free Press.

Bull, R., & David, I. (1986). The stigmatizing effect of facial disfigurement. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *17*(1), 99–108.

Burger, M. (2009). Replicating Milgram: Would people still obey today? *American Psychologist*, *64*(1), 1–11.

Camilleri, C., & Malewska-Peyre, H. (1997). Socialization and identity strategies. In J. W. Berry, P. R. Dasen, & T. S. Saraswathi (Eds.), *Handbook of cross-cultural psychology: Basic processes and human development* (Vol. 2, pp. 41–67). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Campbell, W. K., Sedikides, C., Reeder, G. D., & Elliot, A. J. (2000). Among friends? An examination of friendship and the self-serving bias. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, *39*(2), 229–239.

Cashmore, J., & Goodnow, J. (1986). Influences on Australian parents' values: Ethnicity vs sociometric status. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *17*, 441–454.

Chandler, T. A., Shama, D. D., Wolf, F. M., & Planchard, S. K. (1981). Multi-attributional causality: A five cross-national samples study. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *12*, 207–221.

Chen, C. (1996). Anxiety and depression: East and West. *International Medical Journal*, *3*(1), 3–5.

Chiu, C.-Y., & Hong, Y. (2006). *The social psychology of culture*. New York: Psychology Press.

Cialdini, R., Reno, R., & Kallgren, C. (1990). A focus theory of normative conduct: Recycling the concept of norms to reduce littering in public places. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *58*, 1015–1029.

Clark, M. (1995). Changes in Euro-American values needed for sustainability. *Journal of Social Issues*, *51*, 63–82.

Cockerham, W., Kunz, G., & Lueschen, G. (1988). Social stratification and health styles in two systems of health care delivery: A comparison of the United States and West Germany. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, *29*, 113–126.

Cohen, E. (2012). The evolution of tag-based cooperation in humans. *Current Anthropology*, *53*(5), 588–616.

Confer, J., Easton, J., Fleischman, D., Goetz, C., Lewis, D., Perilloux, C., & Buss, D. (2010). Evolutionary psychology: Controversies, questions, prospects, and limitations. *American Psychologist*, *65*(2), 110–126.

Coon, C. (1946). The universality of natural groupings in human societies. *Journal of Educational Sociology*, *20*, 162–168.

Cooper, J. (2007). *Cognitive dissonance: Fifty years of a classic theory*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Curtis, D. A., & Desforges, D. M. (2013). Less is more: The level of choice affects conformity. *North American Journal of Psychology*, *15*(1), 89–101.

Dang J., & Liu L. (2022). Does connectedness need satisfaction diminish or promote social goal striving? *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*. April 4: 1461672221084539. https://doi.org/10.1177/01461672221084539

Denmark, F. L. (2010). Prejudice and discrimination. In I. B. Weiner & W. E. Craigheaid (Eds.), *The Corsini encyclopedia of psychology* (Vol. 3, 4th ed., p. 1277). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley.

Deutsch, M., & Gerard, G. (1955). A study of normative and informational social influence upon individual judgment. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, *51*, 629–636.

Devine, P. G. (1989). Stereotypes and prejudice: Their automatic and controlled components. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *9*, 259–284.

Earley, P. (1989). Social loafing and collectivism: A comparison of the United States and the People's Republic of China. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *34*, 565–581.

Earley, P. C. (1993). East meets West meets Mideast: Further explorations of collectivistic and individualist work groups. *Academy of Management Journal*, *36*, 319–348.

Fast, J. (1970). *Body language*. New York: Pocket Books.

Feldman, O. (1996). The political personality in Japan: An inquiry into the belief system of Diet members. *Political Psychology*, *17*, 657–682.

Feldman, O. (2006). *Seiji shinrigaku [Political psychology]* (in Japanese). Kyoto: Mineruba Shobo.

Feldman, O., & Zmerli, S. (Eds.). (2019). *The psychology of political communicators: How politicians, culture, and the media construct and shape public discourse*. New York & London: Routledge.

Festinger, L. (1957). *A theory of cognitive dissonance*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Fiske, S. T., & Taylor, S. E. (1984). *Social cognition*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Fletcher, G. J. O., & Ward, C. (1988). *Attribution theory and process: A cross-cultural challenge to social psychology*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Foxall, G. R., & Payne, A. F. (1989). Adaptors and innovators in organizations: A cross-cultural study of the cognitive styles of managerial functions and sub-functions. *Human Relations*, *42*, 639–649.

Frager, R. (1970). Conformity and anti-conformity in Japan. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *15*, 203–210.

Frager, R., & Wood, L. (1992). Are the rules of address universal? *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *23*(2), 148–162.

Franklin, A. J. (2004). *From brotherhood to manhood: How black men rescue their relationships and dreams from the invisibility syndrome*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

Friedman, T. (2007). *The world is flat 3.0: A brief history of the 21st century*. New York: Picador.

Gabrenya, W., Wang, Y., & Lataner, B. (1985). Social loafing on an optimizing task. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *16*(2), 223–242.

Giles, H. (1970). Evaluative reactions to accents. *Educational Review*, *22*, 211–227.

Gorodnichenko, Y., & Roland, G. (2011). Individualism, innovation, and long-run growth. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America, 108*(Supplement 4), 21316–21319.

Gozman, L., & Edkind, A. (1992). *The psychology of post-totalitarianism in Russia*. London: Centre for Research into Communist Economies.

Gross, J., & De Dreu, C. K. W. (2019). The rise and fall of cooperation through reputation and group polarization. *Nature Communications*, *10*, 776. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-019-08727-8

Grumet, G. (1983). Eye contact: The core of interpersonal relatedness. *Psychiatry*, *46*, 172–182.

Gudykunst, W., & Bond, M. H. (1997). Intergroup relations across cultures. In J. W. Berry, M. H. Segall, & Ç. Kağıtçıbaşı (Eds.), *Handbook of cross-cultural psychology: Social behavior and applications* (Vol. 3, pp. 119–161). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Gudykunst, W. B., Nishida, T., & Morisaki, S. (1992). Cultural, relational, and personality influences on uncertainty reduction process. *Western Journal of Speech Communication*, *53*, 13–29.

Hayward, R. D., & Kemmelmeier, M. (2007). How competition is viewed across cultures: A test of four theories. *Cross-Cultural Research*, *41*(4), 364–395. https://doi.org/10.1177/1069397107306529

Hedstrom, L. (1992). Interpersonal style: Contrasting emphases on individuality and group conformity in Japan and America. In U. Gielen L. Loeb-Adler, & N. Milgram (Eds.), *Psychology in international perspective* (pp. 154–160). Amsterdam: Swets & Zeitlinger.

Heider, F. (1959). *The psychology of interpersonal relations*. New York: Wiley.

Hock, R. (1995). *Forty studies that changed psychology*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Hofstede, G. (1980). *Culture's consequences: International differences in work-related values*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Hofstede, G. (1991). *Cultures and organizations: Software in the mind*. London: McGraw-Hill.

Hooghiemstra, R. (2008). East-west differences in attributions for company performance: A content analysis of Japanese and US corporate annual reports. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *39*(5), 618–629.

Horita Y., & Takezawa M. (2018). Cultural differences in strength of conformity explained through pathogen stress: A statistical test using hierarchical Bayesian estimation. *Frontiers of Psychology*, *9*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.01921. PMID: 30364282; PMCID: PMC6193438.

Ho-Ying Fu, J., & Chiu, C.-Y. (2007). Local culture's responses to globalization: Exemplary persons and their attendant values. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *38*(5), 636–653.

Ho-Ying Fu, J., Chiu, C.-Y., Morris, M., & Young, M. (2007). Spontaneous inferences from cultural cues: Varying responses of cultural insiders and outsiders. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *38*, 58–75.

Huang, L., & Harris, M. (1973). Conformity in Chinese and Americans. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *4*(4), 427–434.

Huntington, S. (1993). Clash of civilizations. *Foreign Affairs*, *72*, 22–49.

Huntington, S. (2011). *The clash of civilizations and the remaking of world order*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Imbler, S. (2019). Why were medieval Europeans so obsessed with long, pointy shoes? *Atlas Obscura*. May 22. www.atlasobscura.com/articles/medieval-europeans-pointy-shoes

Janis, I. L. (1989). *Crucial decisions: Leadership in policymaking and crisis management*. New York: Free Press.

Johnson, K. A., White, A. E., Boyd, B. M., & Cohen, A. B. (2011). Matzoh, meat, milk, and mana: Psychological influences on religio-cultural food practices. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *42*, 1421–1436.

Kağitçibaşı, Ç. (1996). *Family and human development across cultures: A view from the other side*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Kashima, Y., & Triandis, H. (1986). The self-serving bias in attributions as a coping strategy. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *17*, 83–97.

Kasser, T. (2011). Cultural values and the well-being of future generations: A cross-national study. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *42*(2), 206–215.

Kelly, D., Jack, R., Miellet, S., De Luca, E., & Foreman, K. (2011). Social experience does not abolish cultural diversity in eye movements. *Frontiers of Psychology*, *2*(95). https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2011.00095

Keen, S. (1986). *Faces of the enemy*. New York: Harper & Row.

Kim, Y. Y. (1986). *Interethnic communication*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Knafo, A., Schwartz, S. H., & Levine, R. V. (2009). Helping strangers is lower in embedded cultures. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *40*(5), 875–879.

Knegtmans, H., van Dijk, W. W., Mooijman, M., van Lier, N., Rintjema, S., & Wassink, A. (2018). The impact of social power on the evaluation of offensive jokes. *HUMOR*, *31*(1), 85–104. https://doi.org/10.1515/humor-2017-0106

Kohn, M. (1969). *Class and conformity*. Homewood, IL: Dorsey.

Kutlu, E., Tiv, M., Wulff, S., & Titone, D. (2022). Does race impact speech perception? An account of accented speech in two different multilingual locales. *Cognitive Research*, *7*. https://doi.org/10.1186/s41235-022-00354-0

Larsen, K. (1972). Determinants of peace agreement, pessimism-optimism, and expectation of world conflict: A cross-national study. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *3*(3), 283–292.

Lee, J. A., Soutar, G. N., Daly, T. M., & Louviere, J. J. (2011). Schwartz values clusters in the United States and China. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *42*(2), 234–252.

Lee, J. J. Y., & Jeyaraj, S. (2014). Effects of self-construal differences on cognitive dissonance examined by priming the independent and interdependent self. *SAGE Open*, *4*(1). https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244014521434

Levy, D. A. (2010). *Tools of critical thinking: Metathoughts for psychology* (2nd ed.). Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press.

Levy, D. A., Collins, B. E., & Nail, P. R. (1998). A new model of interpersonal influence characteristics. *Journal of Social Behavior and Personality*, *13*(4), 715–733.

Lindgren, H., & Tebcherani, A. (1971). Arab and American auto- and heterostereotypes: A cross-cultural study of empathy. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *2*(2), 173–180.

Lippi-Green, R. (1997). *English with an accent: Language, ideology, and discrimination in the United States*. New York: Routledge.

Liu, J. H., Paez, D., Slawuta, P., Cabecinhas, R., Techio, E., Kokdemir, D., et al. (2009). Representing world history in the 21st century: The impact of 9/11, the Iraq war, and the nation-state on dynamics of collective remembering. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *40*(4), 667–692.

Locke, K. D., & Baik, K.-D. (2009). Does an acquiescent response style explain why Koreans are less consistent than Americans? *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *40*(2), 319–323.

Long, H. (2019). Children raised by same-sex couples do better in school, new study finds. *The Washington Post*. February 6. www.washingtonpost.com/business/2019/02/06/children-raised-by-same-sex-couples-do-better-school-new-study-finds/

Lorenz, K. (1966). *On aggression*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World.

Malka, A., Soto, C., Inzlicht, M., & Lelkes, Y. (2014). Do needs for security and certainty predict cultural and economic conservatism? A cross-national analysis. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *106*(6), 1031–1051.

Mandisodza, A. N., Jost, J. T., & Unzueta, M. M. (2006). "Tall poppies" and "American dreams" reactions to rich and poor in Australia and the United States. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *37*(6), 659–668.

Marjoribanks, K., & Jordan, D. (1986). Stereotyping among aboriginal and Anglo-Australians. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *17*(1), 17–28.

Matsuda, N. (1985). Strong, quasi- and weak conformity among Japanese in the modified Asch procedure. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *16*, 83–97.

Matsumoto, D. (1994). *People: Psychology from a cultural perspective*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.

McArthur, J. A. (2016). *Digital proxemics: How technology shapes the ways we move*. New York: Peter Lang.

McArthur, L., & Berry, D. (1987). Cross-cultural agreement in perceptions of baby-faced adults. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *18*(2), 165–192.

McCarthy, A., Lee, K., Itakura, S., & Muir, D. W. (2006). Cultural display rules drive eye gaze during thinking. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *37*(6), 717–722.

McGarty, C., Yzerbyt, V. Y., & Spears, R. (2002). Social, cultural and cognitive factors in stereotype formation. In C. McGarty, V. Yzerbyt, & R. Spears (Eds.), *Stereotypes as explanations: The formation of meaningful beliefs about social groups* (pp. 1–15). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

McGhee, P., & Duffey, N. (1983). Children's appreciation of humor victimizing different racial-ethnic groups. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *14*(1), 29–40.

Merritt, A. (2000). Culture in the cockpit: Do Hofstede's dimensions replicate? *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *31*(3), 283–302.

Milgram, S. (1963). Behavioral study of obedience. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, *67*, 371–378.

Miller, D. (1983). The correlates of entrepreneurship in three types of firms. *Management Science*, *29*, 770–791.

Miller, J. G. (1994). Cultural diversity in the morality of caring: Individually oriented versus duty based interpersonal moral codes. *Cross-Cultural Research*, *28*, 3–39.

Mitchell, J. (2021). Social trust and anti-immigrant attitudes in Europe: A longitudinal multi-level analysis. *Frontiers in Sociology*, 6. www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fsoc.2021.604884

Moghaddam, F. (1998). *Social psychology*. New York: Freeman.

Moghaddam, F. M. (2011). The Ahmadinejad effect and pre-emptive duties and rights. *Culture and Psychology*, *17*(3), 297–301.

Mohamad, M., & Ishihara, S. (1995). *The voice of Asia*. Tokyo: Kodansha International.

Moscovici, S., & Zavalloni, M. (1969). The group as a polarizer of attitudes. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *12*, 125–135.

Mosquera, P. M. R., Manstead, A. S. R., & Fischer, A. (2002). Honor in the Mediterranean and Northern Europe. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *33*(1), 16–37.

Mosquera, R. (2016). On the importance of family, morality, masculine and feminine honor for theory and research. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, *10*(8), 431–443.

Munroe, R. L., & Munroe, R. H. (1972). Obedience among children in an East African society. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *3*(4), 395–399.

Noelle-Neumann, E. (1986). *The spiral of silence: Public opinion – our social skin*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

North, M. S., & Fiske, S. T. (2015). Modern attitudes toward older adults in the aging world: A cross-cultural meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin*, *141*(5), 993–1021.

Osborn, A. (1957). *Applied imagination*. New York: Scribners.

Osherow, N. (1993). Making sense of the nonsensical: An analysis of Jonestown. In E. Aronson (Ed.), *Readings about the social animal* (pp. 68–86). New York: W. H. Freeman.

Petrovsky, A. (1978). *The psychological theory of the collective*. Moscow: Academy of Sciences.

Pew. (2015). Pew research: Jewish and Arab perceptions of Israeli society. www.iataskforce.org/resources/view/1456

Pew Research Center.(2018). News media and political attitudes in Germany. www.pewresearch.org/global/collection/germany/

Phillips, D. (1998, March 18). Is a culture a factor in air crashes? *Washington Post*, p. A17.

Pika, S., Nicoladis, E., & Marentette, P. (2009). How to order a beer: Cultural differences in the use of conventional gestures for numbers. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *40*(1), 70–80.

Platz, S. G., & Hosch, H. M. (1988). Cross-racial/ethnic eyewitness identification: A field study. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, *13*, 972–984.

Point Park University. (2021). A guide to understanding nonverbal communication in Japan. https://online.pointpark.edu/business/nonverbal-communication-japan/

Pratkanis, A. (1988). The attitude heuristic and selective fact identification. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, *27*, 257–263.

Punetha, D., Giles, H., & Young, L. (1987). Ethnicity and immigrant values: Religion and language choice. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, *6*, 229–241.

Reynolds, G. S. (2000). The Sufi approach to food: A case study of Adäb. *The Muslim World*, *90*, 198–217.

Rim, Y. (1963). Risk-taking and need for achievement. *Acta Psychologica*, *21*, 108–115.

Rokeach, M. (1973). *The nature of human values*. New York: Free Press.

Rukmini, S. (2021). *Whole numbers and half-truths: What data can and cannot tell us about modern India*. India: Westland.

Ryan, E. B., & Sebastian, R. J. (1980). The effects of speech style and social class background on social judgements of speakers. *British Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, *19*, 229–233.

Saroop, S. (1999). *Indian American attitudes regarding arranged marriages in the United States*. (Unpublished manuscript.)

Schubert, G. (1991). Human vocalizations in agonistic political encounters. In G. Schubert & R. Masters (Eds.), *Primate politics*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.

Schubert, G., & Masters, R. (Eds.). (1991). *Primate politics*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.

Schwartz, S. (2000). Value consensus and importance. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *31*(4), 465–498.

Schwartz, S., Melech, G., Lehmann, A., Burgess, S., Harris, M., & Owens, V. (2001). Extending the cross-cultural validity of the theory of basic human values with a different method of measurement. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *32*(5), 519–542.

Schwartz, S. H. (2004). Mapping and interpreting cultural differences around the world. In H. Vinken, J. Soeters, & P. Ester (Eds.), *Comparing cultures: Dimensions of culture in a comparative perspective* (pp. 43–73). Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill.

Schwartz, S. H. (2007). Universalism values and the inclusiveness of our moral universe. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *38*(6), 711–728.

Schwartz, S. H. (2011). Studying values: Personal adventure, future directions. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *42*(2), 307–319.

Schwartz, S. (2022). Understanding values: Schwartz theory of basic values. *Integration and Implementation Results*. https://i2insights.org/2022/05/10/schwartz-theory-of-basic-values/

Scott, G., Ciarrochi, J., & Deane, F. P. (2004). Disadvantages of being an individualist in an individualistic culture: Idiocentrism, emotional competence, stress, and mental health. *Australian Psychologist*, *39*(2), 143–153.

Sears, D. (1996). Presidential address: Reflections on the politics of multiculturalism in American society. *Political Psychology*, *17*(3), 409–420.

Segall, M. H., Dasen, P. R., Berry, J. W., & Poortinga, Y. H. (1990). *Human behavior in global perspective: An introduction to cross-cultural psychology*. New York: Pergamon.

Shapiro, R., Nacos, B., & Isernia, P. (Eds.). (2000). *Decisionmaking in the glass house*. Boulder, CO: Rowman & Littlefield.

Shiraev, E. (2015). *A history of psychology: A global perspective* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Shiraev, E., & Bastrykin, A. (1988). *Fashion, idols, and the self*. St. Petersburg: Lenizdat.

Simms, A., & Nichols, T. (2014). Social loafing: A review of the literature. *Journal of Management Policy and Practice*, *15*(1), 58–67.

Smith, P., & Schwartz, S. (1997). Values. In J. Berry, M. Segall, & Ç. Kağıtçıbaşı (Eds.), *Handbook of cross-cultural psychology* (Vol. 3, pp. 77–118). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Smith, P. B., & Bond, M. H. (1993). *Social psychology across cultures: Analysis and perspectives*. Hemel Hempstead, UK: Harvester/Wheatsheaf.

Solórzano, D., Ceja, M., & Yosso, T. (2000, Winter). Critical race theory, racial microaggressions, and campus racial climate: The experiences of African American college students. *Journal of Negro Education*, *69*, 60–73.

Stevenage, S. V., Clarke, G., & McNeill, A. (2012). The "other-accent" effect in voice recognition. *Journal of Cognitive Psychology*, *24*(6), 647–653.

Stroessner, S. J., & Plaks, J. E. (2001). Illusory correlation and stereotype formation: Tracing the arc of research over a quarter century. In G. B. Moskowitz (Ed.), *Cognitive social psychology: The Princeton Symposium on the Legacy and Future of Social Cognition* (pp. 247–259). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Sue, D. W., Capodilupo, C. M., Torino, G. C., Bucceri, J. M., Holder, A. M. B., Nadal, K. L., & Esquilin, M. (2007). Racial microaggressions in everyday life: Implications for clinical practice. *American Psychologist*, *62*(4), 271–286.

Takano, Y., & Sogon, S. (2008). Are Japanese more collectivistic than Americans? Examining conformity in in-groups and the reference-group effect. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *39*(3), 237–250.

Takenoya, M. (2003). *Terms of address in Japanese*. Sapporo: Hokkaido University Press.

Tamis-LeMonda, C. S., Way, N., Hughes, D., Yoshikawa, H., Kalman, R. K., & Niwa, E. Y. (2008). Parents' goals for children: The dynamic coexistence of individualism and collectivism in cultures and individuals. *Social Development*, *17*(1), 183–209.

Taylor, S., Sherman, D., Kim, H. S., Jarcho, J., Takagi, K., & Dunagan, M. (2004). Culture and social support: Who seeks it and why? *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology*, *87*(3), 354–362.

Toivonen, T., Norasakkunkit, V., & Uchida, Y. (2011). Unable to conform, unwilling to rebel? Youth, culture, and motivation in globalizing Japan. *Frontiers in Psychology*. www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3171786/

Triandis, H. (1994). *Culture and social behavior*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Vidmar, N. (1970). Group composition and the risky shift. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *6*, 153–166.

Walkey, F., & Chung, R. C.-Y. (1996). An examination of stereotypes of Chinese and Europeans held by some New Zealand secondary school pupils. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *27*(3), 283–292.

Ward, N. G., & Al Bayyari, Y. (2010). American and Arab perceptions of an Arabic turn-taking cue. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *41*(2), 270–275.

Wike, R., Fetterolf, J., Fagan, M., & Gubbala, S. (2022). Ratings for Russia drop to record lows. Pew Research Center. www.pewresearch.org/global/2022/06/22/ratings-for-russia-drop-to-record-lows/

Yamaguchi, H. (1988). Effects of actor's and observer's roles on causal attribution by Japanese subjects for success and failure in competitive situations. *Psychological Reports*, *63*, 619–626.

Yaroshevski, V. (1996). *Istoriya psychologii [A history of psychology]*. Moscow: Prosveshenie.
Yiend, J., André, J., Smith, L., Chen, L. H., Toulopoulou, T., Chen, E., Sham, P., &
    Parkinson, B. (2019). Biased cognition in East Asian and Western cultures. *PLoS ONE*,
    14(10): e0223358. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0223358
Zajonc, R. B. (1965). Social facilitation. *Science*, *149*, 269–274.
Zimbardo, P. (1997, May). What messages are behind today's cults? *APA Monitor*, p. 14.

11

CHAPTER 11
PERSONALITY AND THE SELF

Just before the turn of the twenty-first century, researchers from Stanford University recruited two groups of people from the waiting areas at the San Francisco airport. Participants were asked to fill out a brief survey in exchange for a pen as a gift. The first group consisted of people born in America and who spoke English at home. The second group consisted of people who were born in South Korea or China and spoke primarily Korean or Chinese, respectively. All participants were asked to choose from a selection of pens, most of which were orange, while only a few were green (Kim & Markus, 1999). Results showed that three-quarters of the Americans chose green – the least common color in the pile. In contrast, three-quarters of the participants from South Korea and China opted for orange – the most common color, thereby avoiding the rare color in the selection offered to them.

Such behaviors, as this and other studies have shown, appear to reflect certain cultural characteristics: Americans, compared to the East Asians, tend to seek uniqueness more than sameness. In the United States, standing out and/or originality are valued as important features of one's personality and encouraged early in life. Conversely, in East Asian cultures, people are inclined to think about themselves in terms of commonalities in relation to other people and their community (Koerth, 2013).

The "pen study" was replicated more than twenty years later (Otterbring et al., 2022). This new study, based on a substantially larger sample, supported the overall conclusions of the original research. Yet a larger proportion of Asian (but not U.S.) participants selected the pen with an uncommon color than in the original study. Did this result indicate a potential change of certain attitudes and behaviors characterized by collectivism and conformity, traditionally common in East Asia?

―――――

What do these and other studies with similar results tell us? Perhaps, on the one hand, despite commonalities resulting from international travel, communication, fashions, and education, individuals often follow "cultural standards" in the way they act, think, and define themselves. On the other, these cultural standards tend to change over time. How rapidly and to what extent? This chapter delves into cross-cultural aspects of personality and the self – experiences and actions that define the individual as a whole, as well as a person's understanding of their own psychological features in relation to their surrounding cultural environment. In the course of this discussion, we also address gender roles, gender identity, sexual orientation, as well as religious identity – all of which are rapidly emerging topics in the field of cross-cultural psychology.

WHAT IS PERSONALITY?

Personality is an individual's unique pattern of psychological and behavioral characteristics that are relatively stable over time and across or within a wide range of life situations (Levy, 2010). Psychologists endeavor to describe, measure, compare, and explain such patterns. Defining personality has proven to be one of the most complex and challenging tasks in the history of psychology. Keep in mind that personality is a theoretical construct, not an actual object or thing; as such, personality is, by definition, not directly observable or measurable. As a consequence, reliable and valid definitions have proven to be elusive. Further, psychologists often view personality in accordance with their own primary theoretical orientation, ranging from humanistic and existential, to psychodynamic, behavioral, social learning, ethological, and biological. This can result in biased explanations. Nevertheless, the concept is extremely important in psychological practice for at least three reasons. The first one has to do with *consistency*. The personality concept helps psychologists establish consistency in the individual's observable characteristics to make predictions regarding the person's behavior. For example, a sociable and outgoing person living in Mexico is expected to remain sociable even after moving to the United States. The second reason refers to *causation* of behavior. Personality as a concept indicates that an individual's behavior, feelings, or thoughts are not just direct responses to external stimuli. Rather, these behaviors, feelings, or thoughts originate, to some degree, from within: a generally shy person from a small town in Kenya is likely to be reluctant to take risks in most new places. The third reason has to do with *organization*. People display thousands of seemingly unrelated characteristics. The systemic approach that has been utilized in psychological studies of personality helps psychologists delineate an individual's few salient, related qualities. For instance, you should expect that a deeply religious person under your professional care is likely to have several other individual features corresponding with religiosity, such as adherence to rituals, moral piety, or respect to religious authorities and so forth.

Fundamental and relatively permanent psychological features, patterns, or dimensions that together comprise personality are called **personality traits**. Just as strokes of a pencil or charcoal on a piece of paper define the important features of a portrait, traits help define personality (the term *trait* comes from the Latin *tractus*, which means a stroke). Some of the most common examples of personality traits are: introversion, extraversion, neuroticism, conscientiousness, egocentrism, and empathy. Taken together and in combination, one's traits form a broader personality "type," which refers to a category of elements or features sharing similar characteristics. One of the most widely known classification systems of personality types is the Myers–Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), which delineates 16 personality types based on various combinations of introversion–extraversion, sensing–intuition, thinking–feeling and judgment–perceiving, thereby yielding distinct "code types," such as ENFJ, ISFP, etc. Despite their popular appeal, such instruments – as well as type theory in general – lack scientific support.

Now we will consider several concepts central to personality. We will explore the idea of locus of control, which derives from the behavioral-learning perspective. Next, we will

look at the self as a psychological concept. Then we will turn to discussions relevant to national, sexual, and religious identity.

LOCUS OF CONTROL

People differ with regard to their anticipation of a particular result of their effort, such as success or failure. Trying to avoid defeat or punishment and seeking victory or reward, we engage in behaviors for which we anticipate a successful outcome. If we experience success, we are likely to repeat this behavior. If we fail, we don't. Of course, success depends on many factors that we can control. Many other factors are beyond our control. Think of the weather, for instance: you can't change it by working harder or getting better grades. It is common that we often cannot explain what causes events beyond our control (Kelley, 1967).

The American psychologist Julian Rotter (1916–2014) focused on an "inner" factor regulating human behavior. He showed experimentally that consistent differences exist among individuals in the degree to which they attribute or explain personal control (Rotter, 1966). Rotter showed that people can be divided into two large groups based on their **locus of control** – the extent to which individuals believe they can control and affect events. One group, the "internals" (those who have an internal locus of control), explain events as influenced by controllable internal factors. The other group, the "externals" (those who have an external locus of control), explain events as influenced by uncontrollable external factors. Please bear in mind that although Rotter divided people into two categories or groups, locus of control is not actually a dichotomous variable; in other words, "internals" and "externals" exist only as end-points on a theoretical continuum (see discussion of this critical thinking principle in Chapter 2). It has been shown in numerous studies that people with an external locus of control tend to be more engaged in risky enterprises – such as gambling – than are internals. People with an internal locus of control may tend to be "difficult" patients because they may be less likely than externals to follow the doctor's recommendations. The "internals" are not easily persuaded, and they tend to have stronger achievement motivation than externals. In the political realm, in the United States, Republicans have been shown to display a greater internal locus of control than Democrats and Independents (Sweetser, 2014). It bears emphasis that locus of control – like personality type and personality trait – is also a theoretical construct, and therefore is not directly observable (as compared, for instance, to blood type or eyesight trait).

Early publications about locus of control inspired interest in testing its cross-cultural applicability (Semin & Zwier, 1997). Do people from a specific cultural group tend to display a particular locus of control? It was found, for example, on average, that those people who live in Alabama differ on measures of locus of control in comparison with those who live in Illinois. Moreover, these differences can affect these individuals' level of preparedness for natural disasters such as hurricanes and twisters. "Internals" (most were from Illinois) were better prepared to face natural disasters, compared to those considered to be "externals" (most were from Alabama). The former, as a group, rely on

their own effort, whereas the latter often rely on luck and other circumstances (Hock, 2013). How about other groups, such as ethnic and national? Could we say, for instance, that French people have a greater internal locus of control than Chinese or Greek people, or that members of collectivistic cultures are more likely to develop an external locus of control than those in individualistic cultures? We need to think critically about these assumptions.

As members of our ethnic and religious groups, do we prefer one type of causal attribution to another? In theory, it appears so. Think, for example, about Western countries. Many individuals born in Western countries are raised to believe that people can control their life and should be the masters of their fate. "Go to school, work hard, save your money – and you will be just fine!" As such, society generally condones dispositional attributions (such as "You are fully capable of doing this!") and discourages situational attributions (such as "*Que sera sera*"). One consequence, however, is that we – who live in the West – frequently fool ourselves into overestimating the degree of control that we actually do have, while underestimating the impact of external factors that lie beyond our control. Put another way, we simply do not have as much control over people and events as we would like to believe that we do. Nevertheless, making dispositional attributions provides us with a comfortable perception or illusion of control. (Put another way, you probably never see Rolls Royce with a bumper sticker that reads, "Shit Happens.")

Research shows, with some exceptions, that individuals from Western countries are more likely to display a strong internal locus of control than individuals from non-Western countries. Studies also show that "Westerners" as a group: (1) are generally suspicious of dictatorial powers (which are "external" forces); (2) possess material resources (such as stable jobs and social security benefits); and (3) grow up in predominantly individualistic cultures emphasizing individual effort. These and other factors make people in the West less dependent on external factors. If we follow this logic, are we justified in expecting most people who are city dwellers belonging to a religious or ethnic majority, with a relatively high socioeconomic status, to have an internal locus of control? Conversely, how accurate would our predictions be if we assume that most people who are members of a minority group with a low socioeconomic status will have an external locus of control? Apparently, not very accurate: These expectations have been disproven by most comparative studies (Hui, 1982; Nowicki, 2016; Tobacyk, 1992). Clearly, being a member of a particular socioeconomic group does not automatically determine one's locus of control.

The general pattern for locus of control across groups, countries, and cultures studied has proven to be inconsistent. A few studies have yielded some differences between social groups, such as one revealing that ethnic minorities in the United States participate in lotteries more often than non-minorities (Chinoy & Babington, 1998). Persistent gambling may be a behavioral pattern typical for "externals." However, general assumptions about locus of control cannot be drawn from one behavioral pattern.

Why has cross-cultural research found little to no difference in locus of control among members of different cultures? One explanation is that there might be a methodological

problem: People tend to give socially desirable answers to survey questions (Munro, 1986). It is also possible that the locus of control scores yielded in the studies reflects the actual, "individualized" degree of control that people exert in the real world, as opposed to what's determined by their social status and cultural identity (Collins, 1974; Dyal, 1984). For instance, one might expect a person who is poor and lives in a rural area, controlled by an authoritarian government, to have an external locus of control. However, this person is also a father, a husband, a sibling, and a breadwinner for his family – roles that are linked to an internal locus of control.

What is the relationship between a person's internal/external locus of control and the person's overall evaluation of their happiness? Both external and internal factors contribute to an individual's sense of personal happiness. More than 200 participants from Canada (both of French and English descent), El Salvador, and the United States, all undergraduate students, were asked open-ended questions: "What makes you happy?" "What does a person need to be happy?" "What is a happy person?" It was found that factors contributing to happiness were perceived similarly across the cultures that were studied (Chiasson et al., 1996). For example, the most important factors of happiness were family relationships, the ability to reach one's goals, and positive self-esteem. However, there were some differences. The participants from El Salvador referred to religious values and political conditions in the country as factors affecting their happiness. Meanwhile, North Americans mentioned personal success and enjoyable life episodes. Overall, it appears from several decades of research, that people who believe and accept that they are largely in control of their lives tend to do better (or at least they think they do better) in most areas of life in contrast to those who feel that their luck, fate, or external factors guide their lives, especially in novel and difficult situations (Nowicki, 2016).

CRITICAL THINKING

WHERE IS YOUR LOCUS OF CONTROL?

When the Pew Research Center in Washington DC asked Americans to evaluate the statement, "Success in life is pretty much determined by forces outside our control," 57 percent disagreed (Gao, 2015). When the researchers asked the people of 44 countries (a sample including Western and non-Western countries, both wealthy and developing states), the percentage was significantly lower. Only 38 percent disagreed. Moreover, 73 percent of Americans rated "working hard" a score of 10 (on a scale from 1 to 10) in importance for getting ahead in life (as compared to 50 percent globally). In other global surveys, Americans, on the average, also tend to be more optimistic and more religious than people in other economically wealthy nations. U.S. residents are also more likely to believe that it is very important to work hard to get ahead in life. Nearly three-quarters of Americans believe this, while the global mean is about 50 percent. Why do

you think that Americans tend to display more of an internal locus of control than people from other countries? As a critical thinker, you would understand that these percentages and various measures of central tendency do not demonstrate that every American possesses an internal locus of control; many residents of other nations also have an internal locus of control – just not to the same extent as Americans (Cole, 2020). You could also argue that although belief in the power of your own effort is important, it is not necessarily a recipe for achievement. Other elements of success can include educational and professional opportunities, skill sets, absence of discrimination, the parameters of the choices we face based on how society is structured, and more. Based on your personal experience, what other social factors are important in affecting your locus of control and therefore your success in life?

ON "NATIONAL CHARACTER"

During a relatively short period of scientific cross-cultural research, scientists and practitioners focused on the question of whether certain personality characteristics are typical of citizens of particular countries. You can imagine the degree of speculation and stereotypical judgments these researchers had to examine. Most national characterizations still remain speculative. For instance, can anything be safely deduced from a study which shows that Canadian citizens average higher scores on a psychological measure of trust than French citizens? Even some studies have shown that, compared with Asians, the British and Germans tend to be less holistic in attention, more oriented toward personal happiness, and more egocentric in their relationships: What does this all mean in a practical sense? (Kitayama et al., 2009). Averages cannot tell us that all Americans, for example, have certain personality traits clearly distinguishing them from people in China or Germany. Overall, the differences in psychological characteristics of individuals *within* one nation are greater than the differences *between* such characteristics in people of any two nations.

Yet the discussions about the existence of particular traits associated with countries continue. **National character** is a perceived set of predominant behavioral and psychological features and traits common in most people of a nation. These features are typically rooted in people's stereotypical assumptions. Some of these expectations are short-lived and related to specific events. Others have a long history. Some of them can be offensive. Others are perceived as humorous. For example, for many generations, Europeans have shared this joke about their "character": "What is Heaven and Hell? Heaven is when the restaurant chef is French, the cop is British, the auto mechanic is German, the planner is Swiss, and the lover is Italian. In Hell, on the other hand, the chef is British, the policeman is German, the mechanic is French, the planner is Italian, and the lover is Swiss. In folk beliefs, Russians frequently appear as drunkards. Chinese may be portrayed as hardworking, math-obsessed, and having little fun in life. Indians may be depicted as computer-savvy nerds. And the French may be seen as coffee-drinking, beret-wearing, fashion-driven critics of everything. We understand, however, that these are

very inaccurate and sometimes even offensive labels. Some notable facts, sensationalistic coverage in the media, or individual experiences can create and further maintain specific stereotypes associated with "national characters" (see our discussion of the availability bias in Chapter 2).

Politics often plays a major role in how people see other nations. According to surveys, people in Japan and China (close to 80 percent in both countries) have maintained very negative views of each other for many years (Pew, 2016). During the presidency of Donald Trump, a large proportion of people (45 percent) around the world saw United States power and influence as a "major threat" to their country; this stands in stark contrast to 25 percent in 2013 when Barack Obama was president (Gramlich & Devlin, 2019). Overall, people's views of the United States as a country and its people remain positive. The most favorable views from the sample of seventeen countries are expressed in South Korea, Japan, Israel, the United Kingdom, and Poland. The least favorable evaluations are held in Malaysia and Greece (Wike at al., 2022). International surveys consistently show that Americans, for the most part, are described as assertive, hard-working, and open minded, but also antagonistic. The Pew Research Center (Gao, 2015; Pew, 2005) found in international polls that more than 50 percent of people around the world rated Americans as industrious and inventive, but also greedy and violent. Americans are seen as high in competence and low in warmth. Americans' emphasis on individualism and work ethic stands out in surveys of people around the world. Americans themselves tend to believe that hard work pays off and consider themselves hardworking (Gao, 2015). Canadians tend to emphasize multiculturalism, diversity, and inclusion as key features of their nation and their country's most notable contribution to the world (Environics Institute, 2018). In 2019, the highest proportion of Americans (almost 60 percent) believed that the world sees Americans favorably (Gallup, 2019). However, do these perceptions have a basis in reality? How do people learn about other nations? Are most people in China, for example, exceptionally polite? Are those in Germany extraordinarily organized? Are most people in Britain abysmal failures in the kitchen? If you are an American, would you personally agree, based on your experiences, that Americans generally are hardworking, but self-centered?

Views of national character are enshrined in literature, embedded in various interpretations of history, disseminated through jokes, and perpetuated by travelers' tales. For centuries, there was a relatively widespread popular belief that national character is directly related to climate: The populations in some nations are "hot-blooded" (e.g., Mediterranean, Latin American) whereas others are more "cold-blooded" (Northern European, Scandinavian). Wars between countries, lasting colonialist policies, long-standing folk beliefs, and sensationalistic coverage by the media – all can create and maintain specific stereotypes associated with "national characters" (see Table 11.1).

People in some nations may have a tendency to distinguish themselves from their neighbors and demonstrate that they are different. Ethnic Lithuanians, for example, have a long tradition of distinguishing and dissociating themselves from Russians (Yushka & Gaidys, 2008). Canadians have a generally critical view of Americans

Table 11.1 Factors Affecting Stereotypical Perceptions Related to "National Character"

Specific events. Wars between two countries or serious international incidents commonly generate the "aggressor" image attached to people of a particular nation, even many years after the end of open hostilities. Many years after World War II, Germans and Japanese still had to contend with negative stereotypes that others held toward them. Similarly, British, French, Russian, and American people, as well as people of many other nations, have also had to deal with negative perceptions attributed to their countries after past wars or international incidents.

A history of oppression. Lasting colonialist policies and other examples of one country's domination or exploitation of another country frequently produce mutual antagonistic perceptions. People in the oppressed country are generally seen by the opposite side as "troublemakers" and "violent," while people of the dominant country are seen as "arrogant" and "immoral." Take a look at the history of world empires, read about the relations between Israel and its Arab neighbors, Iran and Iraq, or the Soviet Union and its former ethnic states. These histories clearly illustrate how one country's domination over other countries produced negative perceptions on both sides.

Wealth and poverty. People of wealthy countries are commonly perceived by people in poor (especially neighboring) countries as "egotistical" and "mean," while people in poorer nations are stereotypically dismissed by some as "lazy" and "dirty." In folklore, popular tales, and daily conversations, these negative mutual stereotypes are enforced and maintained. Many people tend to believe in such stereotypes because they don't have access to experience or information that would challenge such stereotypes.

(Environics Institute, 2018) and see themselves as mirror opposites of Americans, perhaps in an effort to differentiate themselves and maintain an independent national identity (Cuddy et al., 2005).

Large and small studies assessing national traits appear frequently, and their results typically reflect long-standing tendencies as well as immediate political events. Researchers also indicate many methodological weaknesses of such studies (Van Geert et al., 2016). Overall, neither these factors nor other data establish that people of particular nations have strong personality features different from people of other nations (McCrae, 2002). One of the most comprehensive international studies across 49 countries comparing various personality traits showed that national character stereotypes have very little basis in reality (Terracciano & McCrae, 2007). As a matter of principle, psychologists should remind everyone that such stereotypes are an unreliable guide to understanding particular individuals in any given country or culture.

A CASE IN POINT

HOW ARE AMERICANS SEEN?

Several studies have summarized Americans' most commonly perceived characteristics in comparison to people of other nationalities (Gallup, 2019;

Wike et al., 2021; Henrich et al., 2010). The U.S. is generally viewed positively in advanced economies for its technology, entertainment, military and universities, but negatively for its health care system, discrimination, and the state of its democracy. In general, if you are an American, you will also be seen as more patriotic, litigious, and philanthropic than other people. You will also be perceived to be the most optimistic, and the least class-conscious people. You are likely seen as the most churchgoing (if you are a Protestant), the most fundamentalist (if you are a Christian), and more likely to see the world in absolute moral terms than people from other Western industrialized countries. Overall, there is some reason to assume that Americans might in fact be different from other people on the planet. Yet, how do you personally feel about these differences? From your point of view as an American, what are the differences between Americans and people of other nationalities? If you are not an American, what differences in perceptions do you see? (For empirical data, visit the Pew Research Center Website at http://www. pewglobal.org/ and search by the key words "America Global Image.")

THE SELF

The term **self** refers to the essential qualities of an individual, consisting of all characteristic attributes (both mental and physical) that distinguish them from others. Put another way, it denotes one's central and total being, the representation of one's identity, or the subject of experience. As with the term "personality" (discussed above), there are myriad and wide-ranging definitions of "self," which are largely a function of the observer's own philosophy and theoretical approach. Psychologists generally accept that the self comes into being at the interface between a person's inner biological processes and his or her ecological context (see Chapter 1) (Baumeister & Bushman, 2011). People often make distinctions between the world within them and the world outside of them. Both the internal and external worlds shape our self-perception in a variety of ways that can reflect the most prominent characteristics of a culture in which we live.

How we view ourselves depends on self-perception, as discussed in Chapter 10. Some elements of self-perception can be relatively consistent across countries and cultures. The phenomenon called *illusionary superiority* (a relatively stable tendency for people to overestimate their own qualities and abilities), in self-assessments tends to be cross-cultural (Stankov & Lee, 2014). It is common, for instance, for men to overestimate their own IQ and give themselves an average score of three points higher than females do (Furnham & Baguma, 1999; Furnham et al., 1999). While male online daters tend to be attracted to the physical appearance of a potential mate, females tend to base their choices on male socioeconomic characteristics (such as income, occupation, and education) over their physical characteristics. Although men tend to disclose information more readily, women tend to be more creative and prefer variety in the information provided (Abramova et al., 2016). On online dating sites, people routinely manipulate their selfies and describe their physical characteristics to portray themselves as taller, more athletic, and thinner than they actually are (Sedgewick et al., 2017; Levitt & Dubner, 2009).

Expectedly, many characteristics of self-perception have cultural roots. For example, traditional values affect how people who were born poor perceived their own social status. Socioeconomic upward mobility – measured as an increase in income and occupational status – does not substantially affect the respondents' self-image or perception of their low social status (Biswas and Pandey, 1996; Sinha & Verma, 1983). Cross-cultural research has also established that self-criticisms are more typical in Japanese individuals than in U.S. citizens (Heine et al., 1999). In fact, many studies conducted over the years have established lower self-esteem scores in East Asian countries compared to North America and Europe (Boucher et al., 2009; Brown & Cai, 2010). The findings do not suggest that Chinese, Japanese, or Korean individuals perceive themselves more negatively than their U.S. or Netherland counterparts. Rather, these lower scores are a form of expressed self-criticism, deriving from a pervasive and complex cultural tradition of self-restraint. For example, as one study suggests, the linguistic and behavioral emphasis in Japan on *kenson* (modesty) and *enryo* (reserve or restraint) lack analogous terms in Western culture. This emphasis constrains those who are Japanese from speaking or writing anything that might be perceived as arrogant, presumptuous, or impudent. In contrast, in the West, people are conditioned, on average, to avoid statements portraying them as weak and insecure (Tafarodi et al., 2011).

There are findings that point to intercorrelations between individualism and collectivism on the one hand, and high or low self-esteem on the other. **Self-esteem** is defined as the general subjective appraisal of one's own personal value, which includes both emotional components (self-worth) and cognitive components (self-efficacy) (Levy, 2019). Perhaps surprisingly, the quest for self-esteem does not appear to be an inherently universal human motive; in fact, it is a relatively recent historical development, far more prominent in Western individualistic cultures than in Eastern collectivistic cultures (see Eromo & Levy, 2017). Although greatly valued in the West, when viewed through the lens of Asian interdependent cultures, "high self-esteem" is frequently perceived as a sign of insecurity, incompetence (Kitayama, 2006), and stubbornness (Miller et al., 2002). Conversely, self-critical or self-effacing self-perceptions – the very attributes that Western cultures might view as "low self-esteem" – are often encouraged, reinforced, and eventually internalized as a habitual response tendency (Kitayama, 2006).

Perhaps consequently, studies across several decades show that people in East Asian countries (such as Japan and China) tend to report lower levels of self-esteem than do Westerners (Tafarodi et al., 2011; Tafarodi & Swann, 1996). Further, within many collectivistic cultures (e.g., Japanese, South American, and some African traditions), the drive to attain high self-esteem appears to be virtually nonexistent. Why is this the case? It could be hypothesized that collectivist cultures – which require sensitivity to the needs of others and subordination of personal goals to collective needs – promote restraints on feelings of self-competence due to high demands with respect to an individual's performance for the benefit of the group. But this is not just a function of Eastern cultures. In fact, the Judeo-Christian tradition, which has long reigned supreme in Western society, has historically considered excessive self-love to be suspect because it leads to attitudes of self-importance and arrogance – as opposed to modesty and humility – which are virtues not believed to be conducive to spiritual growth.

For years, one of the popular discussions derived from cross-cultural research on self-perception is one about the existence of a "private" versus a "public" self (Benedict, 1946; Shiraev & Fillipov, 1990; Triandis, 1994). Private self indicates feelings and thoughts about oneself for oneself. Meanwhile, public self is the concept of self in relation to others for others. People from collectivistic cultures tend to produce more group-centric and fewer self-centric descriptions of self than people from individualistic cultures. In collectivistic, and therefore interdependent, cultures (e.g., China, Japan, and Korea), people tend to identify their self mostly not as an independent entity but rather as part of particular social groups (Triandis, 1994, 1989). On the other hand, when Western subjects describe themselves, they tend to identify a great number of abstract traits – relatively unrelated to particular social groups. Asian subjects identify fewer of the same abstract traits (Naito & Gielen, 1992; Bond & Tak-Sing, 1983).

Research into social media has also revealed some cultural differences. For example, the behavior of Facebook users (who were primarily Western) was compared to that of people using Renren, the Chinese equivalent of Facebook. The researchers found that the Facebook users tended to share posts that reflected a focus on themselves – aka "solo selfies." In contrast, the posts of Renren users reflected a focus on being part of a group – that is, "us" (Qiu et al., 2013). However, other studies suggest changing cultural trends in which people see themselves compared to others (Park et al., 2017). There have also probably been substantial generational changes beginning from the past decade with the proliferation of social media and affecting the development of "private" and "public" views of the self (including so-called Western and Eastern views of self) and making them cross-culturally closer (Santamaria et al., 2010).

A CASE IN POINT

IDENTITY AND ETHNIC DISIDENTIFICATION

Americans of Filipino descent, currently the second largest Asian group in the country, have a long history within the United States, where their population exceeds 3.5 million. How do those who live in the Philippines feel about their ethnic identity? How did their historical and contemporary relationship with America shape their identity? Researcher E. J. R. David (2013) focused on an interesting phenomenon referred to as **ethnic disidentification** – detaching an individual's self from the ethnic group with which he or she had been previously associated or is currently associated. Some common manifestations of Filipino ethnic disidentification are described below:

- Filipinos in the Philippines often use skin-whitening products to make their skin lighter. Skin-whitening clinics and business are also very popular in the Philippines. Actors and other celebrities endorse these skin-whitening procedures. Children are instructed to stay away from the sun, so they do not

get "too dark." (This practice of favoring lighter skin over darker skin, known as **colorism**, is not unique to Filipinos; in fact, it can be seen with many racial or ethnic groups around the globe.)

- Filipinos tend to consider anything imported better and more special than anything local (i.e., made in the Philippines).
- Many Filipino Americans try to diminish their "Filipino-ness" by suggesting to other people that they are mixed with some other races or ethnic groups.
- Some Filipino Americans regard Filipinos who live in the Philippines as lower class (David, 2013).

Questions: Are these findings regarding ethnic disidentification applicable to only a few ethnic groups? Ask around and discuss in class if other groups have similar experiences. Have you experienced ethnic disidentification yourself in some situations in your life? What conditions (social and psychological) can trigger disidentification?

THE SELF AND SEX

Across cultures, as we have already learned, society divides individuals into categories. Ethnicity and nationality are very common categories, but women and men are perhaps the most common of all (Riger, 2002). People commonly use these words in their descriptions of other people. Most of us think of ourselves as women or men. "Male or female" commonly appears on various applications and online forms. Gender has been a very important factor affecting our knowledge of other people. Keeping in mind the significant depth and scope of this subject, which we began to discuss in Chapter 7, we will focus in this chapter primarily on sexual identity and gender roles.

TRADITIONAL CULTURAL VIEWS OF THE SEXES

For centuries, religion has been a major source of knowledge and prescriptions regarding the behavior of men and women, what they are supposed to do, and how they are supposed to be treated as members of society. In theory, men and women are born equal. Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, for example, share the belief that Adam and Eve were the original man and the woman created by God. Eve was created from one of Adam's ribs, so that all people today are descendants from this pair. However, there was no real equality, per se.

Science, for centuries, emphasized that women and men were born with different natural, anatomical features and therefore should differ in their behavior, feelings, outlooks, and personalities. Most scientists – up until the twentieth century – underscored the **natural dominance of men,** a general assumption about men's physical and biological superiority over women. The natural dominance paradigm focused on men's natural physical

strength, firm character, stamina, willpower, intellectual strength, and creativity. As an illustration, the French physician and philosopher La Mettrie wrote that men have solid brains and nerves, and therefore, have stronger personality features and more vigorous minds than women. In contrast, he wrote that in women, passion is stronger than reason, and therefore, women are prone to tenderness, affection, and passing feelings (La Mettrie, 1748/1994).

THE SEXES AND THE INTERSEX

In the context of personality, the term **sex** (as noted in Chapter 7) refers to anatomical and physiological characteristics or features of males and females, the two typically assigned sexes. These features include at least four commonly recognized clusters: reproductive organs, glands, hormones, and chromosomes. In all cultures, by looking at a newborn's external genitalia, a designated person (e.g., a doctor) "pronounces" a newborn either boy (male) or girl (female), thus officially assigning a sex label to the newborn individual. These days this pronouncement is made even before the individual is born, since many parents choose to know the sex of their unborn baby via ultrasound. Hence, the child is often referred to as "he" or "she" even while still in utero.

Immediately upon sex identification, people start treating the child in accordance with the cultural norms. Which color of ribbon would most people in the United States pick for a newborn boy? (Yes, blue.) How about a girl? (Pink, of course.) At some point, the baby receives a name. The vast majority of names assigned to us by our parents are sex-specific, such as Sally, John, Said, or Fatima. But there are exceptions, of course. In every culture, certain names can be assigned to either sex (although such names are relatively rare). Consider: Pat, Alex, Kelly, Frankie, Francis, or Sasha.

As soon as a particular sex is assigned, boys and girls are expected to be dressed differently. Their toys tend to be different too. Many activities, such as play, match the prescriptions associated with their sex (i.e., "she" and "he" categories). The growing child – and years later, the mature individual – generally follows the rules, customs, and perceptions matching the behavioral and other cultural standards of the assigned sex.

However, this cross-cultural sex dichotomy (either/or) does not accurately represent reality. There are individuals who are born with sexual anatomy, reproductive organs, and/or chromosome patterns that do not fit the typical definition of male or female. This evidence may be apparent at birth or become apparent later in life, regardless of the country in which the person lives (UN for LGBT Equality, 2015). In other words, sex is not strictly dichotomous, but rather a continuous variable (see Chapter 2). There are combinations of sex characteristics, such as anatomical structures, that are not exclusively male or female (we began this discussion in Chapter 7).

The **intersex** category is based on the features that are between distinct male and female characteristics. In very rare instances, a person can be born with so-called *ambiguous* outer genitalia – an atypical appearance preventing a child from immediate assignment to a

particular sex. Other people, even when born with genitalia assignable to a given sex, may later choose a different sex and could undergo surgical bodily transformations to achieve the physical appearance of the sex with which they feel most congruent.

A CASE IN POINT

EARLY CULTURAL VIEWS OF INTERSEX ANATOMY

Descriptions of the intersex category appear in religious and philosophical traditions dating back many centuries. In Ancient Egypt, for example, a male god Hapi represented fertility but had distinct male and female features including breasts and a large belly – two symbols of fertility. In India, the god Ardhanarishvara appears as half male and half female – like a synergy of two types of spiritual energy. The Navaho people in America believed in Ahsonnutli, a god-creator with male and female features. The ancient Greek philosopher Plato theorized that, early in history, there were three sexes: male, female, and a third union of the two. According to Ancient Mythology and Greco-Roman art, Hermaphroditus, the two-sexed child of Aphrodite and Hermes, had been portrayed as a female figure with male genitals. What do these examples suggest to you?

What were the traditional views of the intersex? Intersex individuals were traditionally perceived not only as merely different but also as odd. In India, there still exists a category of people known for centuries as *the Hijra* or the *third* gender (referred to as *aravani*, *aruvani*, or *jogappa*, according to different translations). Some Hijras, born with male sex characteristics, undergo an initiation into the Hijra by surgically removing their penis, scrotum, and testicles (Nanda, 1998). In Europe, the nineteenth-century literary sources contained descriptions of people whom we call intersex today (Kennedy, 1981). However, the social stigma attached to intersex individuals remains strong and is still a source of social discrimination and physical violence against the Hijra (Saria, 2021).

By the early twentieth century, an increasing number of doctors and researchers argued that an individual's sex could be determined not only by the external genitalia but also by at least several other biological factors. In some cases, assigning sex to a child became a non-trivial challenge, because some people may be in-between male and female (Dreger, 2000). Another problem was that doctors did not always agree on which physical characteristics should be considered as male or female. However, physicians across countries agree that testes should be considered as male characteristic and ovaries as female.

After the twentieth century, scientific developments, medicine, and experimental psychology have paid increasing attention to the established differences between men

and women in terms of their physical characteristics, motor reactions, sensory thresholds, behavioral patterns, and cognitive skills (Dumont, 2010). Today, in greater numbers, scientists challenge traditional assumptions regarding men's assumed superiority.

EVOLVING VIEWS OF THE SEXES

Modern studies focus on finding particular physiological, genetic, or evolutionary facts that help explain sex as a biological category. Contemporary research also supports the view of sex as a continuous variable. Modern genetics have established that females have two of the same kind of sex chromosomes (marked XX), while males have two distinct sex chromosomes (marked XY). However, there can be other combinations. Intersex individuals are born with mosaic genetics where some of their cells have XX chromosomes and some of them have XY. Genetics research constantly provides new evidence, in support of the view that sex is a continuous variable.

As groups, men and women on the average have different physical characteristics. Take height, for example, which is likely to be determined genetically. Overall, globally, men are taller than women. Yet in different parts of the world, the numbers vary. In the United States, the average male is around 5'9" and the average female is around 5'4". So, women, as a group in the United States, are shorter than American men, but taller than men in Indonesia. And women in the Netherlands, on average, are almost as tall as men in North America.

There are differences between men and women in prevalence of certain illnesses. Men have higher rates of autism spectrum disorder, which is diagnosed early in life (the incidences of autism diagnosed in North America and Europe are 7–10 times greater in boys than in girls). Women across the globe have higher rates of breast cancer. Although men are stronger than women in throwing velocity and throwing distance, women globally, on average, live about five years longer than men. Several studies over the last couple of decades used neuroimaging methods to demonstrate a few statistical differences in responses between men and women. A detailed analysis of these studies is not our goal here, but just to illustrate, some studies showed that women tend to have more neurons linked to language, hearing, and relational skills compared to men (Brizendine, 2007). Men and women, as groups, showed somewhat different types of responses in the brain with regard to making moral choices (Jaffee & Hyde, 2000). Females, compared to males, showed increased activity in brain regions associated with caring behavior; males, compared to females, showed increased activity in regions associated with justice-based judgments and behavior (Harenski et al., 2008).

In the past twenty years or so, a significant number of studies examined similarities and differences between men and women. Some differences appear significant, yet many others are inconsistent or insignificant. For example, studies show that across the globe, violent behavior is more prevalent in men than it is in women. There is a global gender gap in physical aggression. Young boys with behavioral problems are referred to social workers more often than girls (Hyde, 2005). Boys are more disruptive at school (OECD, 2011).

Globally, men are almost four times more likely to be a murder victim than women. Compared to women, twice as many men commit suicide (UNODC, 2015; WHO, 2015). In terms of higher education, women outnumber men as university students in every region except South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. In the most economically developed countries (such as the United States, Canada, France, or Germany) women earn 58 percent of college degrees, and this number is on the rise. In the United States, four women graduate from college for every three men (Birger, 2015).

In other areas, differences are not that significant. At school, boys read somewhat less and do less homework than girls (OECD, 2020; OECD, 2011). Teenage boys in developed countries are 50 percent more likely than girls to fail in three basic school subjects such as math, reading, and science. Globally, among low achievers in reading, math, and science, boys consistently outnumber girls (OECD, 2020). While girls as a group are somewhat better in verbal reasoning, boys tend to be better in math. More boys than girls are failing at school. In Sweden, for example, among 15-year-olds, 18 percent of boys were underachievers, and only 11 percent were girls. In the United States the ratio was 15 to 9 (OECD, 2011).

Cross-cultural research obtained on samples from more than 25 countries reveals an extremely important finding: Gender differences are rather small compared to individual variation within both male and female groups. Put another way, between-group variability is less than within-group variability. Other studies have revealed mixed findings, so the discussion of these and other research must continue. Yes, there are statistical differences between men and women across countries in terms of incidences of substance abuse, AIDS, Alzheimer's disease, and eating disorders; however, these data are influenced by many social, economic, and behavioral factors.

GENDER AS A SOCIAL CONSTRUCT

Sex as a category is rooted in biological, physiological, and anatomical factors. **Gender**, in contrast, is a complex set of behavioral, cultural, or psychological features associated with an individual's sex. Gender, as a concept, has a significant cultural component: It is the state of being male or female, determined by informally prescribed cultural norms (such as customs), the expectations about what a person should do as a member of a particular sex, as well as formal legal rules (the law) mandating or prohibiting particular actions. If gender is a social category, it can be viewed from two dimensions: internal and external. The internal (or psychological) dimension, refers to the degree of one's subjective experience of being male or female. The external (social) dimension refers to the roles that society assigns to each sex. These dimensions, of course, are interconnected and actively interact with each other.

Let's first look at the internal dimension. **Gender identity** is an individual's self-determination (or a complex self-reflection) of being male, female, intersex, or neither. For example, consider **androgyny** – a combination, coexistence, or blend of both male and female behavioral characteristics, features, and reflections. Studies show that a gender

identity, for most of us, tends to remain stable after our caregivers establish it. Yet, it can change. Therefore, gender identity is best described as a process rather than a "product": Gender identity can strengthen (when an individual feels stronger in his or her identity than before) or weaken. Although most children refer to self as "I am a boy" or "I am a girl" at a very early age, their understanding or acceptance of the meaning of these words is likely to develop over a significant period. They may never stop evolving: People constantly learn more about gender and gender identity. Gender identity may be rediscovered again. The term **gender fluid** refers to change over time in a person's gender identity, gender expression, or both.

Why does it change or evolve? Many life circumstances influence the way we identify self, including physiological factors, our interactions with our parents while growing up, our experiences with other family members, the evolving cultural norms, our friendships, our travels – they all matter. Activities such as play or education, exposure to social media, and other life experiences affect our gender identity in many ways.

Most individuals develop a specific gender identity that matches their biological sex assigned at birth. However, it is also possible that a person with an assigned sex (e.g., a young woman) feels conflicted about her assigned gender identity and roles and develops a different gender identity (e.g., a young boy). Some intersex individuals may be raised as a woman or a man but then identify with another gender or neither later in life. Also, there can be a strong, core gender identity, as well as a secondary, more fluid one that develops over the core identity (UN for LGBT Equality, 2015).

GENDER ROLES

When an individual learns about or identifies with a particular gender, this process involves understanding, evaluating, and accepting particular patterns of behavior. These are called **gender roles** – prescriptions and expectations assigned to genders on the female–male continuum. These prescriptions and expectations are typically embedded in cultural norms and transmitted from one generation to the next. Ideology, music, art, and religion play an important role in preserving such expectations about gender roles. They also become embedded into law. Popular beliefs and everyday customs are also important mediators of the knowledge about gender roles.

Across nearly every cultural group, two major clusters of gender roles have appeared: "Masculine" (having the qualities attributed to males) and "feminine" (having the qualities attributed to females). **Masculinity**, traditionally assigned to men, is a general set of features associated with strength, independence, courage, leadership, assertiveness, and logic. **Femininity**, traditionally assigned to women, is a general set of features associated with empathy, nurturance, kindness, humility, sensitivity, and intuition. Please note two essential points: (1) these terms are social constructs, not actual physical entities (like anatomical sex); (2) the definitions are inherently imprecise and value-laden. Regarding the latter point, there is, in fact, no universal consensus on their definitions. Across cultures and times, there is variability in what has been considered typically masculine

and feminine in terms of psychological characteristics, prescribed behavior, or even professions. In some cultural settings, gender roles were described as contrasting or opposing each other. In others, like in Indian philosophies, they were presented and perceived as complementary or adding to each other. Moreover, social prescriptions related to gender roles were changing due to certain political and cultural transformations. The struggle for gender equality has been gradually eliminating the gaps between gender roles (Merino, 2014).

Gender roles in history influenced the activities the individual should perform. In traditional cultural settings, women historically were supposed to be nurturing and caring, while men were supposed to be decisive and strong. These prescriptions referred to every area of life including the family, work, warfare, and education. There were also differences in how social positions and social activities (such as being a warrior or a monk), and later occupations (such as being a doctor or a nurse) associated with gender roles. You can easily provide examples from your own experiences.

Contemporary psychology does not limit gender roles to dichotomous male–female categories. More commonly, it views individuals as having many features of masculinity and femininity simultaneously. A person can be physically imposing and dominating (features typically assigned to masculinity) while concurrently caring and loving (features assigned to femininity). The term **transgender** refers to a person whose gender identity is inconsistent with their assigned sex. As such, these individuals do not fit into the traditionally assigned gender dichotomy. You might also have come across the term **transsexual**, which is a specific instance of transgender that is typically accompanied by a desire to transition to the sex or gender with which one identifies, with the assistance of medical interventions such as hormones or surgery (see Exercise 11.1 on gender reassignment surgery at the conclusion of this chapter). However, keep in mind that the term transsexual is considered by some to be outdated and/or offensive. Transgender individuals do not identify with distinct and traditional male and female gender roles. About 5 percent of young adults in the U.S. according to Pew Research reported that their gender is different from their sex assigned at birth. The proportion of U.S. adults who are transgender is higher among adults younger than 25, compared to more mature groups (Brown, 2022).

For psychologists, it is critical to understand that people possess the choice to think of themselves in ways that are separate and distinct from the type of chromosomes and external genitalia they are born with or the environment in which they were raised. How people see and understand themselves in this world is particularly important in the definition of the self (Goldberg, 2014).

TRADITIONAL VIEWS OF GENDER

For centuries, religion has served as the major source of beliefs, values, and prescriptions regarding the nature of men and women, the ways in which they should behave, and how they are to be treated as members of society. Traditional religions generally maintained a contradictory set of views on gender and gender roles. In theory, men and women were

supposed to be equal in the eyes of God. In the reality of everyday life, however, they were treated very differently across cultures and times. Such discrepancies can be traced back to early religious teachings. Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, for example, share the belief that Adam and Eve were the original man and woman created by God, such that all people today are descendants of this pair. According to holy books, Eve was created from one of Adam's ribs. This narrative has been a source of different – and highly contested – cultural interpretations regarding the equality of men and women.

Historically, customs in most countries for centuries imposed on women very limited educational choices: elementary education or simple reading and writing skills. It was also prescribed that women play the traditional home-based role of mother and wife. Just 100 years ago, women were essentially excluded from pursuing careers as scientists, engineers, or doctors. If a woman wished to work, it was expected that she would pursue such careers as teacher, nurse, librarian, or secretary. In theory, both men and women were admonished to practice moderation, self-control, modesty, and, prior to marriage, chastity. In real life, however, women faced much more stringent limitations and consequences in connection with their behavior. Restrictions included what they could or could not wear, how they should or should not behave, and even emotions they were permitted or not permitted to express. This is vividly illustrated even today by the strict regulations in certain Muslim countries concerning women's attire, including wearing of the *hijab* (customary head coverings) and the *burqa* (which fully covers the body and face), all ostensibly in the name of "modesty."

In visual arts and literature, **androcentrism** – placing males or the masculine point of view at the center – prevailed. Although written religious traditions contained female images and narratives about women, and there are female saints in some religions and female goddesses in Hinduism, written religious sources are mostly male discourses (Kinsley, 1986).

The history of science shows that for centuries, scholars believed prescribed gender roles should exist because this was customary, convenient, and guaranteed a modicum of social stability (Eagly, 1997). Science used to emphasize that women and men are born with different natural, anatomical features and therefore should differ in their behavior, feelings, attitudes, and personalities. Most scientists – up until the twentieth century – underscored the natural dominance of men, a general assumption about men's physical and biological superiority over women. The natural dominance paradigm focused on men's natural physical strength, stamina, willpower, and intellectual superiority. However, increasingly more scientists, philosophers, and physicians have come to view gender as a social construct, not an objective empirical fact. Gradually, views are changing: Although there are some natural differences between men and women, these differences are increasingly viewed as rooted more in societal values and norms, and less in biology.

EVOLVING VIEWS OF GENDER

Contemporary **gender studies** is a multidisciplinary field dedicated to the study of gender and a wide range of gender-related issues. This field has made a significant

contribution to cross-cultural psychology. Gender is commonly perceived as a continuum, and there is no absolute, invariable "male-ness" or masculinity and "female-ness" or femininity in individuals (Rothblatt, 2011). Most gender roles and their perceptions have been rooted in cultural and social norms.

One of the most influential sources of gender studies has been **feminism** which is the view that women do not have equal rights and opportunities with men, and global changes are needed to achieve social justice. At least three points are relevant to our discussion. First, feminists reject the notion of a "female brain" – the belief that there are significant inborn and physiological changes that distinguish men from women. Second, feminists believe that gender differences exist primary because historically, most important positions of power have gone to men: Men created customs, laws, and policies that systematically discriminate against women and thus satisfy men's needs to dominate and possess the other sex. Indeed, these days, despite notable progress in many areas, as of 2023, women were heads of state or government in fewer than 30 of 195 countries. Outside Western countries, women still seldom play a significant role in positions of power (exceptions to this rule exist, of course). Third, feminists maintain that most societal customs today are rooted in a masculine culture of domination and violence, rather than consensus and peace (Cohn, 2013). For centuries, male-dominated societies considered wars essential for conquering, achieving glory, testing patriotism, and dominating the weak. Femininity was seen as little more than "ritualized submission" (Goldberg, 2014).

CROSS-CULTURAL SENSITIVITY

GENDER PRONOUNS AND LANGUAGE OWNERSHIP

Imagine that you're filing out of class one afternoon when you notice a book bag sitting atop one of the desks. You look around, but you're unable to identify the bag's owner. How would you go about notifying the school staff? What, exactly, would you say? "Someone left their book bag in the classroom?" (Okay. But, "they" is plural, and the bag surely has but a single owner.) "Someone left his or her book bag in the classroom?" (Maybe, but that's extremely formal and conversationally rather clunky.) "One's book bag appears to have been inadvertently left in the classroom?" (That's even worse.)

Not an earth-shattering dilemma, to be sure. But it does highlight some important points about grammar, the use of gender pronouns, and the intersection between language and culture.

We (the authors) must admit that we have a bias. We are probably somewhat older (okay, quite a bit older) than you are, and we are likely from a generation (or two, or three) before yours. So, our knee-jerk response is: "Wait, you can't say 'they,'

because technically, that word is reserved only for cases of third-person plural!" (You know, as in, "Lucy and Desi left for work at the Tropicana night club, and *they* won't be back until later tonight.") But we would be wrong. As it turns out, the word "they" has been used – and quite acceptably by esteemed writers such as William Shakespeare – as a gender-neutral *singular* pronoun for almost a thousand years (McWhorter, 2008).

Okay, so we are willing to concede that point and get over our calcified interpretation of language. So far, so good. But suppose that you *do* happen to know the person who left the book bag. Would you then say something like, "Boris left his book bag in the classroom?" or "Natasha left her book bag in the classroom?" Put another way, is the use of gender-specific pronouns ("his" and "her") okay with you? Or, could it strike you as gender-insensitive with respect to individuals who might identify with a gender other than how they appear to you? In that case, what about "Boris left their bookbag in the classroom?" Doesn't that seem somehow odd to you? (Frankly, it does to us.) But, to be fair, this grammatical discomfort could simply be a remnant of our own cultural historical upbringing. What do *you* think is the best alternative? And why?

Let's take this a step further. Should you use the pronoun that another person might prefer? Out of respect, maybe. But should you be *required* – by your school, government, media outlets, or any other entity – to use particular gender (or nongender) pronouns?

This controversy was exemplified in the 2017 passage of Canada's gender identity rights Bill C-16. This legal decree has raised significant concerns about the prospect of "compelled speech" regarding the use (and misuse) of gender pronouns (Tasker, 2017).

To widen the scope a bit, does anybody really "own" language? If so, can specific words – or language in general – be "appropriated?" (see our discussion in Chapter 5.) Can you think of any current examples where people are debating the issue of language ownership – including in the arts, such as films, videos, and popular music – when viewed through various cultural lenses?

The moral? On the question of gender pronouns, the answer is likely to be muddled for quite some time. (The other moral: People just shouldn't forget *their* book bags in the classroom.)

SEXUAL ORIENTATION: EVOLVING PERCEPTIONS

We already briefly discussed sexual orientation in Chapter 7 in the context of motivation. In the United States, the first widely used term *homosexual* carried negative connotations,

and subsequently and gradually was replaced in literature and in the media by *gay* in the 1970s. The terms *gay* and *lesbian* became more common by the end of the twentieth century. In more recent years, terms like *LGBTQ* (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer) have gained popularity. *LGBTQ+* is another initialism that has been developed to represent individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer/questioning (APA, 2023). These are broad umbrella terms for people who may be seen as *gender non-conforming* – that is, whose gender identity or gender expression does not conform to that typically associated with the sex to which they were assigned at birth. Some who do not identify as either male or female sometimes prefer the term *genderqueer* or *gender-variant* (APA, 2019).

Across countries and cultures, the views of a person's sexual orientation were significantly influenced by tradition. Up until recently, in medical psychiatric practice, people who had homosexual "feelings" were assumed to be ill, and therefore, in need of treatment or even punishment (Laqueur, 2004). Up until the middle of the twentieth century, most psychologists across countries maintained a generally negative view of homosexuality and bisexuality and considered it a form of pathology or even disability. Individuals prone to homosexual and bisexual behavior were expected to receive treatment until they "recover." In the Soviet Union, until the early 1990s, homosexuality was considered a crime punishable by a lengthy prison term. In most African states today, homosexuality is still illegal. In some countries such as Iran, openly gay and lesbian individuals can be sentenced to death, because homosexuality is considered a major offence against religion.

The evolution of views of sexual identity and sexual orientation is a powerful example of how cultural beliefs, science, legal rulings, and ideology have been evolving in the United States over a hundred years or so. Most people's views of sexual orientation were changing together with changing scientific views and legal rulings. Eighty years ago, New York had laws against cross-dressing, onstage depictions of gays, and gatherings of gays in clubs. In the 1930s, the Motion Picture Production Code banned any discussion of or allusion to homosexual behavior. Leading psychiatrists commonly labeled homosexuals as "sexual psychopaths." President Dwight Eisenhower signed Executive Order 10450, which banned, among other things, "sexual perversion" in government and banned lesbians and gays from working in the federal government. Some 60 years ago homosexual acts were illegal (based on so-called anti-sodomy laws) in every state but Illinois. There were no openly gay political candidates or public officials. Even in the liberal press, homosexuality was attacked (Ross, 2012) The popular 1969 bestseller, *Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Sex (But Were Afraid to Ask)* asserted that homosexuality was fixable and curable so long as people ask a psychiatrist to help.

Yet the clinical perceptions and legal ruling were changing. The classification of homosexuality as a mental disorder was scrapped in 1973 from psychiatric manuals in the United States. By the early 1980s, most states had dropped anti-gay laws. Some politicians and celebrities began openly discussing their sexual identity. In other countries, there were changes too. In the twenty-first century, scores of countries, including the U.S., recognized same-sex marriages.

Several major developments took place in the twentieth century that significantly changed the scientific views on sexual orientation. Empirical research was one such development. In the first half of the twentieth century, most studies of sexual orientation were conducted within psychiatry and primarily focused on psychopathology. The research samples involved very few individuals, usually patients. The publication of Alfred Kinsey's (1894–1956) *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (1948/1998) and later *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female* (1953/1998) was a significant development partly because it was based on a large sample. Kinsey, the American physician, and his colleagues believed that humans are not strictly "heterosexual" and "homosexual"; rather, sexual orientation was a continuum. Based on the interviews, Kinsey described several types of sexual orientation. There are individuals who identified themselves as exclusively heterosexual with no experience or desire for sexual activity with people of the same sex. There are also men and women who identify themselves as exclusively homosexual. Then there are people who would identify themselves with varying levels of desire or sexual activity with either sex (Kinsey, 1998/1948).

More studies show that sexual orientation exists on a continuum with several orientations possibly present in one individual, some getting stronger or weaker, and evolving over time (Sell, 1997). Research also shows that people are not necessarily "stuck" in their described groups or categories. Although most people do not change their sexual orientation, some evolve during their lives (Savin-Williams et al., 2012). In other words, some individuals are sexually "fluid" and sexual fluidity can be recognized as a kind of sexual orientation (Diamond, 2008; 2009). These days, sexual fluidity, as a feature of an individual's identity is accepted or rejected by the society within which a person lives (Donaldson et al., 2016).

The way we identify ourselves in terms of sex, gender, or sexual orientation influences almost every part of our lives. Society has always paid attention to how individuals acquire sexual identity and express their sexual orientation. In a society where gender roles are strictly defined and enforced, people whose behavior differs from such norms have been targeted, isolated, and often prosecuted. These sanctioned sexual orientations are/were imbedded in informal customs, legal rules, and even in politics. Of course, there are societies in which sexual identity and sexual orientation are not strictly defined.

Different cultures may promote specific attitudes toward particular types of sexual orientations. In almost all cases, gays and lesbians try to adapt to traditional norms and expectations. According to researcher Li Yinhe, most gay men in China eventually choose to marry a woman. In China, men are under serious social pressure to get married and have a family, so they commonly hide their sexual orientation in order to "fit" into traditional cultural norms. These norms are not just abstract principles. For example, a traditional Chinese marriage requires that the man perform his familial duties, including the birth of a male heir for the continuation of his family line, the acquisition of a daughter-in-law who should provide support for her husband's parents, and the begetting of sons who will provide for the family well-being. Traditional Chinese marriages also represent the formation of an alliance between two extended families (Lucas et al., 2008). As you might surmise, these norms are currently in a state of gradual yet noticeable transformation.

According to a long line of studies, the general public's attitudes toward homosexuality have social and cultural roots: In the past, those countries that desired the expansion of their population were less tolerant toward homosexuality (Ember & Ember, 1990). By way of illustration, in the 1930s, homosexuality was a serious crime in Nazi Germany. Before the 1990s, it was a crime in the Soviet Union. In both countries, the rapid growth of the population was considered an important ideological and political goal. Gays and lesbians in those countries were considered criminals and mentally ill and were severely punished. For many years, even in the United States, homosexuality was considered a mental disorder. Only recently, in the early 1970s, based on the predominant opinion of U.S. mental health specialists, was male and female homosexuality removed from diagnostic manuals. In the United States, individuals with college and postgraduate educational degrees, a liberal ideological orientation, or who tend to vote for Democrats are inclined to express greater tolerance toward homosexuality. In contrast, people with no college degree, who are ideologically conservative, and vote for Republicans tend to be less tolerant.

These tendencies do not, of course, consider national, cultural, age, and other individual variations in attitudes. Younger people tend to me more tolerant to cultural changes than older ones. Historically, women have been somewhat more tolerant toward homosexuality than men, but the opinion gap was not considerable. Cross-culturally, greater acceptance of homosexuality is seen in more secular and affluent countries: For example, there is a higher support in South Africa or Argentina, and much lower in Nigeria or El Salvador (Pew, 2013).

According to Pew Research global surveys, many of the countries studied in 2002 and 2019 have seen a double-digit increase in acceptance of homosexuality. This includes a 21-point increase since 2002 in South Africa and a 19-point increase in South Korea over the same period. India also saw a 22-point increase since 2014, the first time the question was asked of a nationally representative sample there (the very fact of which indicates cultural and political changes). There have also been changes in acceptance of homosexuality over the past 17 years in Mexico and Japan. In both countries, just over half said they accepted homosexuality in 2002, but by 2020 it was around 70 percent (Poushter & Kent, 2020). Yet regardless of major changes in access to education, local laws, and cultural norms surrounding the issue of same-sex marriage and the rights of LGBTQ+ individuals around the world, people's opinions on the acceptance of homosexuality or same-sex marriages remain sharply divided by country, region, religion, and status of economic development.

RELIGIOUS IDENTITY

As you might recall from Chapter 1, a person's religious affiliation indicates his or her acceptance of knowledge, beliefs, and practices related to a particular faith. **Religious identity** is the sense of belonging to a religion and the importance of this group membership, relevant to the individual's sense of self. There are many views of religious identity. Some emphasize its subjective component, while others refer to

behavior. One type of definition that has important cross–cultural applicability involves understanding religious identity through the prism of at least four factors: believing, emotionally bonding with knowledge, acting, and belonging (Saroglou, 2011). For an initial assessment of someone's religious identity, psychologists can turn to the following description and analysis.

- *Believing.* Every religion has developed a wide range of beliefs about God or Gods, their power, actions, and their connection with human beings. In general terms, believing involves accepting that something larger, more powerful, and more knowing than human beings exists. These are basic components of every religious teaching (Park, 2005). These beliefs generally differentiate people who believe from agnostics and atheists – those who do not believe or remain skeptical (Saroglou, 2014).
- *Bonding.* Another feature of religious identity is deeply emotional. Religion is not only about beliefs but also about attachment of the individual with "higher" beings, religious teachings symbols, and other people. Bonding is practiced and experienced through prayer and meditation, in private or public settings. Bonding also can be continuous, frequent, or occasional. The existence of religious rituals and the experience of related emotions seem to be cross-cultural (Saroglou, 2014). The highest form of bonding is awe: the emotion of strong and lasting respectful admiration (Keltner & Haidt, 2003).
- *Acting.* Religious identity includes moral deeds. Religious teachings provide specific moral arguments defining right and wrong from a particular religious perspective. People develop values that help enhance social order and their relationships with other people (Graham & Haidt, 2010).
- *Belonging.* Finally, a feature that is often easy to observe in people's actions, the way they dress, the food they eat and don't eat, and the ceremonies and practices they participate in. Being part of small religious groups or larger religious communities, communicating with other members, sharing traditions through collective actions (such as observing religious holidays) – are all important features of religious identity.

PERCEIVING ONE'S OWN BODY

An individual's identity does not necessarily refer solely to his or her ethnic, religious, or gender affiliations. As humans, we often identify ourselves in terms of our bodies, our physical characteristics. Research has shown that bodily symmetry, which is considered a cross–culturally accepted feature of a beautiful body or face, is one of the strongest predictors of healthy attributes, such as a strong immune system. Evolutionary psychologists suggest that many of our visual preferences may have evolutionary roots (Thornhill & Gangestad, 2008; Cogan et al., 1996). Sobal and Stunkard (1989) reviewed several anthropological studies that measured the correlation between an individual's body weight and socioeconomic status. They noted a remarkable tendency. In rich countries, the correlation is negative: People who are lower in weight are higher in socioeconomic status. Put another way, people who are richer tended to be thinner. In underdeveloped countries, by contrast, the correlation is positive: Thinner people, in general, are usually poorer than others who weigh more.

In the United States, most people hold negative attitudes toward being overweight (Gallup, 2018). According to surveys, people attribute increased body weight to being poor or having poor health. The obese are blamed for their weight, which is presumed to be under their voluntary control. Obese women, more often than men, are rated negatively by peers. These stereotypical views about one's weight did not exist in some other cultures around the world. In developing countries, for example, in which major causes of death are due to malnutrition and infection, thinness is not desired. A study in Indonesia and Great Britain showed that participants in Indonesia rated a wider range of female figures as attractive compared with Britons (Swami et al., 2011). Yet gradually, in countries such as India, China, the Philippines, and some Latin American countries, an increased standard of living beginning back in the 1990s was correlated with increasing body weight (Rothblum, 1992). Weight stigma is not unique to the United States, and exists around the world (Puhl, 2021).

Despite different cultural views of body weight, comparative studies show evidence that men across continents always prefer women with slim waists. A comparative study of British literature of sixteenth- to eighteenth-centuries analyses of the Indian epics *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*, and an examination of classical Chinese poetry of the Six Dynasties era, compared with statistics of top U.S. fashion models, showed a positive bias toward a small waist (Singh et al., 2007).

There are also cross-cultural similarities in the way people perceive the leg-to-body ratio. A study of 3,103 participants from 27 nations rated the physical attractiveness of seven male and seven female silhouettes. Male and female silhouettes with an average ratio were perceived as more attractive than more extreme ones. The silhouettes with short or excessively long legs were perceived as less attractive across all nations (Sorokowski et al., 2011).

How long will these perceptions last? Are they changing even as you read and discuss what's in these pages? Cross-cultural psychology is just as much about deep-seated traditions, as it is about transformation and change.

EXERCISE 11. 1 GENDER REASSIGNMENT SURGERY: THE CASE OF GEORGE/CHRISTINE JORGENSEN

People usually do not change their ethnic identities: If you are born to French–Canadian parents, how can you reverse that? Gender identity is different. Some people alter their gender identity in the attempt to match their "true self" to their body. Others modify their body to match their gender identity. One of the first to undergo a series of sex-change procedures was George Jorgensen a 25-year-old American artist, photographer, and an Army veteran who fought in World War II. George struggled with his assigned sex and identity as a man for some time, describing himself as a "shy and miserable person." He was unable to find a doctor in the United States who was capable or willing to take a chance and perform a sex-reassignment surgery but he did manage to find them in Denmark. Off to Denmark George went. The surgery and treatment required special

permission from the Danish government at that time. After several operations, George changed his name to Christine. She was not only among the first to undergo such surgery and post-surgical treatment (Benjamin, 1966), but she also became an advocate for the rights of transgender and intersex individuals.

Questions: Search the web to find stories about individuals who have undergone sex change procedures in the United States and in other parts of the world. What kinds of specific problems do these individuals share? Why were these individual unhappy before the surgery? Were they happy before the procedure? How did they feel after the surgery? What was the public reaction to such sex–change procedures in the countries that you investigated in your study?

EXERCISE 11.2 ADIAPHORA: THE "LIQUID IDENTITY?"

Are our self-perceptions and the views of our identity becoming increasingly . . . fluid, or as some say, "liquid?" There is an emerging view in the social sciences that, in the twenty-first century, many people find themselves living in "liquid times," where men and women increasingly exist without any solid cultural bonds. This is why the term "liquid" is used, suggested by the famous Polish-born thinker, Zygmunt Bauman (Bauman, 2006). He describes how people are moving away from a "solid" culture with established norms, customs, roles, and values to a different type of modern, "liquid" identity. People today are likely to identify themselves in almost any way they want, including gender, sexuality, nationality, and more. Having fewer permanent bonds, more people associate themselves in whatever way they can manage. As a result of these changes, *adiaphora has* emerged – a state of association by convenience, often linked to indifference and moral detachment. In a contemporary world of fast food and shallow relationships, where our attention is fixated on personal electronic devices, when we have difficulties settling on any issues of importance, people of a liquid culture are becoming increasingly selfish, losing their sensitivity to the plight of others (Bauman & Donskis, 2013).

Questions: In your personal experience, do you find that more people around you have an increasingly unclear sense of self, defining themselves in whichever way they deem expedient or convenient? Do you perceive them as becoming increasingly indifferent and detached from other people? Can you provide any specific examples or personal observations that support this contention? How about any that disconfirm this contention?

CHAPTER SUMMARY

1. Personality refers to a stable set of behavioral characteristics of an individual. Psychologists are looking only at relatively stable patterns and enduring features of the individual's behavior and experience.

2. Research shows that, with some exceptions, individuals from Western countries are more likely to display a stronger internal locus of control than individuals from non-Western countries. However, the general pattern for locus of control across the groups, countries, and cultures studied is inconsistent.

3. During a relatively short history of cross-cultural psychology, researchers and practitioners frequently focused on the question about whether certain personality characteristics could be typical in citizens of particular countries, but not of others.

4. National character is a perceived set of predominant behavioral and psychological features and traits common in most people of a nation. Views of national character are enshrined in literature, embedded in various interpretations of history, disseminated through jokes, and perpetuated by travelers' tales.

5. How people view their own "national characters" is based on a large number of factors. Overall, various personality traits show that national character stereotypes have only little basis in reality.

6. The term "self" refers to the essential qualities of an individual, consisting of all characteristic attributes (both mental and physical) that distinguish them from others. Psychologists generally accept that the self comes into being at the interface between the inner biological processes and the ecocultural context to which the person belongs.

7. Self-esteem reflects a person's general subjective evaluation, both emotional and rational, of his or her own worth.

8. Some individuals experience ethnic disidentification – detaching an individual's self from the ethnic group with which or she has been previously associated or is currently associated.

9. In the context of personality, the term sex refers to anatomical and physiological characteristics or features of males and females, the two typically assigned sexes. Contemporary research supports the view that sex is a continuous variable.

10. Religion for centuries has been a major source of knowledge and prescriptions about the behavior of men and women, what they were supposed to do, and how they were supposed to be treated as members of society.

11. Gender is a complex set of behavioral, cultural, or psychological features associated with an individual's sex. Gender as a concept has a significant cultural component.

12. Gender identity is an individual's self-determination (or a complex self-reflection) as being male, female, intersex (between male and female), or neither.

13. When an individual learns about or identifies with a particular gender, this process involves understanding, evaluating, and accepting particular patterns of behavior. These are called gender roles – prescriptions and expectations assigned to genders on the female–male continuum. These prescriptions and expectations are typically embedded in cultural norms and transmitted from one generation to the next.

14. Contemporary gender studies is a multidisciplinary field dedicated to study gender and a wide range of gender-related issues. Gender is commonly perceived as a continuum, and there is no absolute, invariable "male-ness" or masculinity and "female-ness" or femininity in individuals.

15. Across countries and cultures, the views of a person's sexual orientation have been under significant influence of tradition.

16. The evolution of views of sexual identity and sexual orientation is a powerful example of how cultural beliefs, science, legal rulings and ideology have been evolving.
17. Some individuals are sexually "fluid" and sexual fluidity can be recognized as a kind of sexual orientation. These days, sexual fluidity is an individual's identity feature that can be accepted or rejected by a particular society within which this individual lives.

KEY TERMS

Androcentrism Placing males or the masculine point of view at the center of a theory or narrative.

Androgyny A combination, coexistence, or blend of both male and female behavioral characteristics, features, and reflections.

Colorism The practice of favoring lighter skin over darker skin.

Ethnic disidentification Detaching an individual's self from the ethnic group with which he or she has been previously associated or is currently associated.

Femininity Traditionally assigned to women, a general set of features associated with empathy, nurturance, kindness, humility, sensitivity, and intuition.

Feminism The view that women do not have equal rights and opportunities with men, and global changes are needed to achieve social justice.

Gender A complex set of behavioral, cultural, or psychological features associated with an individual's sex.

Gender fluid Denoting or relating to people who do not identify themselves as having a fixed gender.

Gender identity An individual's self-determination (or a complex self-reflection) as being male, female, intersex (between male and female), or neither.

Gender roles Prescriptions and expectations assigned to genders on the female–male continuum.

Gender studies A multidisciplinary field dedicated to study gender and a wide range of gender-related issues.

Intersex A category based on features that are between distinct male and female characteristics.

Locus of control The extent to which individuals believe they can control and affect events.

Masculinity Traditionally assigned to men, a general set of features associated with strength, independence, courage, leadership, assertiveness, and logic.

Microaggression Commonplace, ordinary verbal or behavioral indiscretions (whether intentional or unintentional) that imply denigrating or negative attitudes toward any socially marginalized group.

National character A perceived set of predominant behavioral and psychological features and traits common in most people of a nation.

Natural dominance of men A general assumption about men's physical and biological superiority over women.

Personality An individual's unique pattern of psychological and behavioral characteristics that are relatively stable over time and across or within situations.

Personality traits Distinguishable displays or patterns of behavior and experience.

Self The essential qualities of an individual, consisting of all characteristic attributes (both mental and physical) that distinguish them from others.

Religious identity The sense of belonging to a religion and the importance of this group membership, relevant to the individual's sense of self.

Self–esteem The appraisal of one's own personal value, including both emotional components (self-worth) and cognitive components (self-efficacy).

Sex The anatomical and physiological characteristics or features of males and females, the two typically assigned sexes.

Transgender A term referring to a person whose gender identity is inconsistent with their assigned anatomical sex.

Transsexual A specific instance of **transgender** that is also typically accompanied by a desire to transition to the sex or gender with which one identifies, with the assistance of medical interventions such as hormones or surgery. This term is considered by some to be outdated and/or offensive.

REFERENCES

Abramova, O., Baumann, A., Krasnova, H., & Buxmann, P. (2016). Gender differences in online dating: What do we know so far? A systematic literature review. In *Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences, at Kauai, USA* (Vol. 49). www.research gate.net/publication/281965128_Gender_Differences_in_Online_Dating_What_Do_ We_Know_So_Far_A_Systematic_Literature_Review

APA. (2019). *Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender.* American Psychological Association. www.apa.org/topics/lgbt/

APA. (2023). *A guide to sexual orientation and gender diversity terms.* American Psychological Association. www.apa.org/ed/precollege/psychology-teacher-network/ introductory-psychology/diversity-terms

Bauman, Z. (2006). *Liquid times: Living in an age of uncertainty.* Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Bauman, Z., & Donskis, L. (2013). *Moral blindness.* Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Baumeister, R., & Bushman, B. (2011). *"The self": Social psychology and human nature* (2nd ed.). Belmont, CA: Cengage.

Benedict, R. (1946). *The chrysanthemum and the sword: Patterns of Japanese culture.* Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.

Birger, J. (2015). *Date-onomics: How dating became a lopsided numbers game.* New York: Workman.

Biswas, U. N., & Pandey, J. (1996). Mobility and perception of socioeconomic status among tribal and caste group. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 27*(2), 200–215.

Bond, M., & Tak-Sing, C. (1983). College students' spontaneous self concept: The effects of culture among respondents in Hong-Kong, Japan, and the United States. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *14*, 153–171.

Boucher, H. C., Peng, K., Shi, J., & Wang, L. (2009). Culture and implicit self-esteem: Chinese are 'good' and 'bad' at the same time. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *40*(1), 24–45.

Brizendine, L. (2007). *The female brain*. New York: Harmony.

Brown, A. (2022). About 5% of young adults in the U.S. say their gender is different from their sex assigned at birth. *Pew Research*. June 7. www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2022/06/07/about-5-of-young-adults-in-the-u-s-say-their-gender-is-different-from-their-sex-assigned-at-birth/

Brown, J. D., & Cai, H. (2010). Self-esteem and trait importance moderate cultural differences in self-evaluations. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *41*(1), 116–123.

Chiasson, N., Dube, L., & Blondin, J.-P. (1996). Happiness: A look into the folk psychology of four cultural groups. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *27*(6), 673–691.

Chinoy, I., & Babington, C. (1998, May 3). Low-income players feed lottery cash cow. *Washington Post*, p. A1.

Cogan, J., Bhalla, S., Sefa-Dedeh, A., & Rothblum, E. (1996). A comparison study of United States and African students on perceptions of obesity and thinness. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *27*(1), 98–113.

Cohn, C. (2013). *Women and wars*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Cole, N. L. (2020) Four things that set Americans apart and why they matter. *ThoughtCo*, August 27. thoughtco.com/what-makes-americans-unique-4048010.

Collins, B. E. (1974). Four components of the Rotter internal-external scale: Belief in a difficult world, a just world, a predictable world, a politically responsive world. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *29*, 381–391.

Cuddy, A. J. C., Norton, M. I., & Fiske, S. T. (2005). This old stereotype: The pervasiveness and persistence of the elderly stereotype. *Journal of Social Issues*, *61*, 267–285.

David, E. J. R. (2013). *Brown skin, white minds: Filipino-American postcolonial psychology*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.

Diamond, L. M. (2008). Female bisexuality from adolescence to adulthood: Results from a 10-year longitudinal study. *Developmental Psychology*, *44*(1), 5–14.

Diamond, L. (2009). *Sexual fluidity: Understanding women's love and desire*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Donaldson, C., Handren, L., & Lac, A. (2016). Applying multilevel modeling to understand individual and cross-cultural variations in attitudes toward homosexual people across 28 European countries. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *48*(1), 93–112.

Dreger, A. (2000). *Hermaphrodites and the medical invention of sex*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Dumont, F. (2010). *A history of personality psychology*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Dyal, J. (1984). Cross-cultural research with the locus of control construct. In H. Lefcourt (Ed.), *Research with the locus of control construct* (Vol. 3, pp. 209–306). New York: Academic Press.

Eagly, A. H. (1997). Sex differences in social behavior: Comparing social role theory and evolutionary psychology. *American Psychologist*, *52*(12), 1380–1383.

Ember, C., & Ember, M. (1990). *Anthropology*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Environics Institute. (2018). Canada's world survey 2018. https://bit.ly/3eu396b

Eromo, T. L., & Levy, D. A. (2017). The rise, fall, and resurgence of "self-esteem": A critique, reconceptualization, and recommendations. *North American Journal of Psychology*, *19*(2), 255–302.

Furnham, A., & Baguma, P. (1999). A cross-cultural study from three countries of self-estimates of intelligence. *North American Journal of Psychology*, *1*, 69–77.

Furnham, A., Rakow, T., Sarmany-Schuller, I., & De Fruyt, F. (1999). European differences in self-perceived multiple intelligences. *European Psychologist*, *4*(3), 131–138.

Gallup Polls. (2018). Personal weight situation. https://news.gallup.com/poll/7264/personal-weight-situation.aspx

Gallup Polls. (2019). Americans give US world image highest ratings since 2003. https://thehill.com/homenews/news/431402-more-americans-saying-us-is-rated-favorably-than-at-any-time-since-2003-gallup

Gao, G. (2015). How do Americans stand out from the rest of the world? Pew Research Center. www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/03/12/how-do-americans-stand-out-from-the-rest-of-the-world/

Goldberg, M. (2014, August 4). What is a woman? *The New Yorker*, pp. 24–28.

Graham, J., & Haidt, J. (2010). Beyond beliefs: Religions bind individuals into moral communities. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, *14*, 140–150.

Gramlich, J., & Devlin, K. (2019). More people around the world see U.S. power and influence as a "major threat" to their country. Pew Research Center. www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/02/14/more-people-around-the-world-see-u-s-power-and-influence-as-a-major-threat-to-their-country/

Harenski, C., Antonenko, O., Shane, M., & Kiehl, K. (2008). Gender differences in neural mechanisms underlying moral sensitivity. *Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience*, *3*(4), 313–321.

Heine, S., Lehman, D., Markus, H., & Kitayama, S. (1999). Is there a universal need for positive self-regard? *Psychological Review*, *106*(4), 766–794.

Henrich, J., Heine, S., & Norenzayan, A. (2010). The weirdest people in the world? *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, *33*(2/3), 123.

Hock, R. (2013). Personality. In C. Campanella, J. Mosher, S. Frail, & M. Schricker (Eds.), *Forty studies that changed psychology* (pp. 190–197). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

Hui, C. H. (1982). Locus of control: A review of crossnational research. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, *6*, 301–323.

Hyde, J. (2005). The gender similarities hypothesis. *American Psychologist*, *6*(6), 581–592.

Jaffee, S., & Hyde, J. S. (2000). Gender differences in moral orientation: A meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin*, *126*, 703–726.

Kelley, H. H. (1967). Attribution theory in social psychology. In D. Levine (Ed.), *Nebraska Symposium of Motivation* (Vol. 15, pp. 192–240). Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press.

Keltner, D., & Haidt, J. (2003). Approaching awe, a moral, spiritual, and aesthetic emotion. *Cognition and Emotion*, *17*, 297–314.

Kennedy, H. (1981). The "third sex" theory of Karl Heinrich Ulrichs. *Journal of Homosexuality*, *6*(1–2), 103–111.

Kim, H., & Markus, H. (1999). Deviance or uniqueness, harmony or conformity? A cultural analysis. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *77*(4), 785–800.

Kinsey, A. (1998). *Sexual behavior in the human male.* Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press. (Original work published 1948.)

Kinsey, A. (1998). *Sexual behavior in the human female*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press. (Original work published 1953.)

Kinsley, D. (1986). *Hindu goddesses: Visions of the feminine in the Hindu religious tradition*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Kitayama, S. (2006). Does self-esteem matter equally across cultures? In M. H. Kernis (Ed.), *Self-esteem: Issues and answers* (pp. 376–382). New York: Psychology Press.

Kitayama, S., Park, H., Sevincer, A. T., Karasawa, M., & Uskul, A. K. (2009). A cultural task analysis of implicit independence: Comparing North America, Western Europe, and East Asia. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *97*, 236–255.

Koerth, M. (2013). What your New Year's resolutions tell us about the way you think. http://boingboing.net/2013/01/16/what-your-new-years-resoluti.html

La Mettrie, J. O. (1994). *Man a machine and man a plant* (R. A. Watson & M. Rybalka, Trans.). Indianopolis, IN: Hackett. (Original work published 1748.)

Laqueur, T. (2004). *Solitary sex: A cultural history of masturbation*. Cambridge, MA: Zone Books.

Levitt, S., & Dubner, S. (2009). *Freakonomics: A rogue economist explores the hidden side of everything*. New York: Harper.

Levy, D. A. (2010). *Tools of critical thinking: Metathoughts for psychology* (2nd ed.). Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press.

Levy, D. A. (2019). The "self-esteem" enigma: A critical analysis. *North American Journal of Psychology*, *21*(2), 305–338.

Lucas, T., Parkhill, M. R., Wendorf, C. A., Imamoglu, E. O., Weisfeld, C. C., Weisfeld, G. E., et al. (2008). Cultural and evolutionary components of marital satisfaction: A multidimensional assessment of measurement invariance. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *39*, 109–123.

McCrae, R. R. (2002). NEO-PI-R data from 36 cultures: Further intercultural comparisons. In R. R. McCrae & J. Allik (Eds.), *The five-factor model of personality across cultures* (pp. 105–126). New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum.

McWhorter, J. (2008). *Our magnificent bastard tongue: The untold story of English*. New York: Penguin.

Merino, N. (2014). *Gender roles*. Farmington Hills, MI: Greenheaven Press.

Miller, P. J., Wang, S., Sandel, T., & Cho, G. E. (2002). Self-esteem as folk theory: A comparison of European American and Taiwanese mothers' beliefs. *Parenting: Science and Practice*, *3*, 209–239. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327922PAR0203_02

Munro, D. (1986). Work motivation and values: Problems and possibilities in and out of Africa. *Australian Journal of Psychology*, *38*, 285–296.

Naito, T., & Gielen, U. (1992). Tatemae and Honne: A study of moral relativism in Japanese culture. In U. Gielen, L. Adler, & N. Milgram (Eds.), *Psychology in international perspective* (pp. 161–172). Amsterdam: Swets & Zeitlinger.

Nanda, S. (1998). *Neither man nor woman: The Hijras in India*. New York: Wadsworth.

Nowicki, S. (2016). *Choice or chance: Understanding your locus of control and why it matters*. New York: Prometheus Books.

OECD. (2011). *Against the odds: Disadvantaged students who succeed in school.* OECD Publishing. www.oecd.org/PISA/PISAproducts/PISA-againsttheoddsdisadvantagedstudentswhosucceedinschool.htm

OECD. (2020). Girls' and boys' performance in PISA. In *PISA 2018 Results (Volume II): Where all students can succeed*. Paris: OECD Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1787/f56f8c26-en

Otterbring T., Bhatnagar R., & Folwarczny M. (2022). Selecting the special or choosing the common? A high-powered conceptual replication of Kim and Markus' (1999) pen study. *Journal of Social Psychology*, *3*, 1–7.

Park, C. L. (2005). Religion and meaning. In R. F. Paloutzian & C. L. Park (Eds.), *Handbook of the psychology of religion and spirituality* (pp. 295–314). New York: Guilford Press.

Park, J., Norasakkunkit, V., & Kashima, Y. (2017). Cross-cultural comparison of self-construal and well-being between Japan and South Korea: The role of self-focused and other-focused relational selves. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 8. www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2017.01516

Pew Research Center. (2005). *U.S. image up slightly, but still negative.* Washington, DC. www.pewtrusts.org/en/about/news-room/press-releases-and-statements/2005/06/23/american-character-gets-mixed-reviews-us-image-up-slightly-but-still-negative

Pew Research Center. (2013). *The global divide on homosexuality.* www.pewresearch.org/global/2013/06/04/the-global-divide-on-homosexuality/

Pew Research Center. (2016). Japanese and Chinese hold negative views of each other. www.pewresearch.org/global/2016/09/13/hostile-neighbors-china-vs-japan/china-japan_2016_01/

Poushter, J., & Kent, N. (2020). The global divide on homosexuality persists. Pew Research Center. www.pewresearch.org/global/2020/06/25/global-divide-on-homosexuality-persists/

Puhl, R. (2021). Weight stigma study in the U.S. and 5 other nations shows the worldwide problem of such prejudice. *The Washington Post.* June 12. www.washingtonpost.com/health/overweight-discrimination-common-harmful/2021/06/11/2946c538-c88c-11eb-afd0-9726f7ec0ba6_story.html

Qiu, L., Lin, H., & Leung, A. (2013). Cultural differences and switching of in-group sharing behavior between an American (Facebook) and a Chinese (Renren) social networking site. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *44*(1), 106–121.

Riger, S. (2002). Epistemological debates, feminist voices: Science, social values, and the study of women. In W. Pickren & D. Dewsbury (Eds.), *Evolving perspectives on the history of psychology* (pp. 21–44). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Ross, A. (2012, November 12). Love on the march: Reflections on the gay community's political progress – and its future. *The New Yorker*, pp. 45–53.

Rothblatt, M. (2011). *From transgender to transhuman: A manifesto on the freedom of form.* Author.

Rothblum, E. (1992). Women and weight: An international perspective. In U. Gielen, L. Adler, & N. Milgram (Eds.), *Psychology in international perspective* (pp. 271–280). Amsterdam: Swets & Zeitlinger.

Rotter, J. (1966). Generalized expectations for internal vs. external control of reinforcement. *Psychological Monographs*, *80*, 1–28.

Santamaria, A., de la Malta, M., Hansen, T., & Ruiz, L. (2010). Cultural self-construals of Mexican, Spanish, and Danish college students: Beyond independent and interdependent self. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *41*(3), 471–477.

Saria, V. (2021). Hijras, lovers, brothers: Surviving sex and poverty in rural India (thinking from elsewhere). New York: Fordham University Press.

Saroglou, V. (2011). Believing, bonding, behaving, and belonging: The big four religious dimensions and cultural variation. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *42*, 1320–1340.

Saroglou, V. (2014). *Religion, personality, and social behavior.* New York: Psychology Press.

Savin-Williams, R. C., Joyner, K., & Rieger, G. (2012). Prevalence and stability of self-reported sexual orientation identity during young adulthood. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, *41*(1), 103–110.

Sedgewick, J.R., Flath, M.E., & Elias, L. J. (2017). Presenting your best self(ie): The influence of gender on vertical orientation of selfies on tinder. *Frontiers of Psychology*, *8*: 604. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2017.00604

Sell, R. L. (1997). Defining and measuring sexual orientation: A review. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, *26*(6), 643–658.

Semin, G., & Zwier, S. (1997). Social cognition. In J. Berry, M. Segall, & Ç. Kağıtçıbaşı (Eds.), *Handbook of cross-cultural psychology* (Vol. 3, pp. 51–76). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Shiraev, E., & Fillipov, A. (1990). Cross-cultural social perception. *St. Petersburg University Quarterly*, *13*, 53–60.

Singh, D., Renn, P., & Singh, A. D. (2007). Did the perils of abdominal obesity affect depiction of feminine beauty in the sixteenth to eighteenth century British literature? Exploring the health and beauty link. *Proceedings of the Royal Society of London. Biological Sciences*, *274*, 891–894.

Sinha, J., & Verma, J. (1983). Perceptual structuring of dyadic interactions. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *14*, 187–199.

Sobal, J., & Stunkard, A. J. (1989). Socioeconomic status and obesity: A review of the literature. *Psychological Bulletin*, *105*(2), 260–275.

Sorokowski, P., Szmajke, A., Sorokowska, A., Cunen, M. B., Fabrykant, M., Zarafshani, K., et al. (2011). Attractiveness of leg length: Report from 27 nations. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *42*(1), 131–139.

Stankov, L., & Lee, J. (2014). Overconfidence across world regions. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *45*(5), 821–837. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022114527345

Swami, V., Henderson, G., Custance, D., & Tovée, M. J. (2011). A cross-cultural investigation of men's judgments of female body weight in Britain and Indonesia. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *42*(1), 140–145.

Sweetser, Kaye D. (2014). Partisan Personality: The Psychological Differences Between Democrats and Republicans, and Independents Somewhere in Between. *American Behavioral Scientist*, *58*(9), 1183–1194.

Tafarodi, R., & Swann, W. (1996). Individualism-collectivism and global self-esteem: Evidence for a cultural trade-off. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *27*, 651–672.

Tafarodi, R. W., Shaughnessy, S. C., Yamaguchi, S., & Murakoshi, A. (2011). The reporting of self-esteem in Japan and Canada. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *42*(1), 155–164.

Tasker, J. P. (2017). Canada enacts protections for transgender community. *CBC News*. www.cbc.ca/news/politics/transgender-rights-bill-senate-1.4163823

Terracciano, A., & McCrae, R. (2007). Perceptions of Americans and the Iraq invasion: Implications for understanding national character stereotypes. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *38*(6), 695–710.

Thornhill, R., & Gangestad, S. W. (2008). *The evolutionary biology of human female sexuality*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Tobacyk, J. J. (1992). Changes in locus of control beliefs in Polish university students before and after democratization. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *13*(2), 217–222.

Triandis, H. (1989). The self and social behavior in different social contexts. *Psychological Review*, *96*, 506–520.

Triandis, H. (1994). *Culture and social behavior*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

United Nations for LGBT Equality. (2015). LGBT rights: Frequently asked questions. http://bit.ly/1RwMHAZ.

UNODC (The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime). (2015). www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/statistics/index.html

Van Geert E., Orhon A., Cioca, I. A., Mamede, R., Golušin, S., Hubená, B., & Morillo, D. (2016). Study protocol on intentional distortion in personality assessment: Relationship with test format, culture, and cognitive ability. *Frontiers of Psychology*, *7*(933). https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2016.00933

WHO (World Health Organization). (2015). *Preventing suicide: A global imperative*. www.who.int/mental_health/suicide-prevention/world_report_2014/en/

Wike, R., Silver, L., Fetterolf, J., Huang, C., & Moncus, J. (2021). *What people around the world like – and dislike – about American society and politics*. Pew Research Center. www.pewresearch.org/global/2021/11/01/what-people-around-the-world-like-and-dislike-about-american-society-and-politics/

Wike, R., Fetterolf, J., Fagan, M., & Gubbala, S. (2022). *International public opinion of the U.S. remains positive*. Pew Research Center. www.pewresearch.org/global/2022/06/22/international-public-opinion-of-the-u-s-remains-positive/

Yushka, A., & Gaidys, V. (2008). A case in point: Lay discourses on Soviet Lithuania during Brezhnev period (1964–1982). In V. Shlapentokh, E. Shiraev, & E. Carroll (Eds.), *The Soviet Union: Internal and external perspectives on Soviet society* (pp. 132–139). New York: Palgrave.

Zhang, V. (2020). *Li Yinhe: Woman is a rational animal*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. https://womanisrational.uchicago.edu/2020/12/08/li-yinhe/

12

CHAPTER 12
APPLIED CROSS-CULTURAL PSYCHOLOGY: IMPORTANT HIGHLIGHTS FROM SOCIAL JUSTICE, DIGITAL CULTURE, AND HEALTH CARE

In March 2015, Chumani Maxwele, a student at the University of Cape Town in South Africa, hurled human feces against a statue of Cecil J. Rhodes (1853–1902), a British mining magnate, politician, philanthropist – and ardent white supremacist. Maxwele and a group of his supporters then launched into *toyi-toyi*, a traditional protest dance that had often been performed in the times of apartheid (the system of South African legalized racial segregation). Rhodes, the target of their protest, had played a leading role in South African politics in the late nineteenth century. Today, he is often seen as having laid the ideological groundwork for the later apartheid system that rigorously divided white and black South Africans (Shiraev et al., 2022).

The protests initiated by Maxwele soon gained ground among other students and faculty at the University of Cape Town. "Rhodes Must Fall" became a rallying cry. In the following weeks, students occupied a university building. Under increasing pressure from these students, the university removed the statue of Rhodes from campus. Subsequently, the protests spread to other South African universities, where students using the Rhodes case called for the "decolonization of education." The protests even reached the University of Oxford in the UK, where Rhodes had established the prestigious Rhodes Scholarship, the oldest international graduate scholarship in the world. Thousands of Rhodes Scholars have achieved distinction as politicians, academics, scientists, doctors, authors, entrepreneurs, and Nobel Prize winners. Given the stark contrasts surrounding the history of Cecil Rhodes, it is not difficult to see why his complicated legacy is a matter of considerable debate to this day.

The *Rhodes Must Fall* movement addressed important issues that are still relevant to our lives. The protesters proclaimed they were revolting against institutional racism and the cultural legacy of colonialism that they believed pervaded the academic system in South Africa and beyond. They attacked Rhodes as an avatar of this legacy.

As this case dramatically illustrates, cultural symbols from the past can affect today's attitudes, values, and, most importantly, actions. Cultural values shift over time, as you have learned from this book, and one group's hero can be another's villain. Although the

specific target under attack may take the form of a material object – in this case, a statue – the underlying dynamics are invariably driven by cultural values.

———

Psychology remains essentially a theoretical discipline when its principal goals are to describe, predict, and explain events. It becomes an applied discipline when its goals are to control and change events. The theoretical and applied goals of cross-cultural research are frequently inseparable, as demonstrated throughout this book.

For decades, cross-cultural psychologists have provided research-based answers that balance both theoretical and practical concerns for many thousands of professionals working in medicine, therapy, counseling, education, community services, business, sports, and many other areas (Bemak & Chung, 2017). Over the past ten years or so, however, cross-cultural psychology has increasingly embraced a new focus: addressing issues relevant to social justice, diversity, equity and personal dignity. As we noted, the vignette above is not simply an example of people's negative reactions to lifeless artifacts linked to some distant historical events. Rather, it illustrates the necessity for all of us to reconsider many assumptions and pre-judgments that have dominated our textbooks, the media, and culture at large, and to constantly re-evaluate our positions about a wide range of issues in a rapidly changing world. One caveat before we begin: This is not about "canceling" – a theme to which we will return in this chapter – but rather reassessing traditional foundations of our societies, which have frequently been rooted in inequality, oppression, and violence. Let us begin with an examinations of social justice.

MODERN SOCIAL JUSTICE MOVEMENTS

The term **social justice** refers to the fair treatment of all people in a society, including the distribution of resources, privileges, opportunities, and outcomes. The meaning of social justice in Western, democratic states has shifted throughout history (Morrill, 2018). It is currently receiving the growing attention from psychologists across the globe, involving particular emphasis on the rights of historically oppressed, exploited, marginalized, or minority populations. As of the time of this writing, an ongoing debate continues to rage in the field between those (people most commonly identified as "individualists") who advocate that our focus should be toward equality of *opportunity* versus those (usually political "progressives") who argue that our primary goal should be a greater focus on equality of *outcome*.

Psychologists apply their research toward striving for social justice goals in at least three major, interconnected areas (see Thrift & Sugarman, 2018):

- **Reducing discrimination against individuals and social groups**, including past unfairness and oppression. Psychologists study and provide culture-sensitive remedies that can, potentially, address such discrimination by delivering improved education, counseling, and professional treatment for those individuals who have been

marginalized because of their socioeconomic, educational, or immigration status. Psychologists also play an active role in reducing the impact of cultural stereotypes of groups that are typically seen as relatively successful in our society, such as those of Jewish or Asian descent. Research shows that Asian Americans, for example, have often been portrayed in the United States as the "model minority" for seemingly having achieved socioeconomic success and being free of problems (Shih et al., 2019). This is not the case. Asian Americans, despite their general economic and educational success, still face both open and covert discrimination and prejudice.

- **Encouraging diversity, equity, and inclusion** throughout society within multiple cultural contexts (such as in traditional vs. non-traditional environments). For instance, psychologists develop and promote multilingual psychological services for individuals (mostly immigrants) with limited language skills, work on expanding social services to undocumented migrants (such as in the United States, France, the United Kingdom, and Canada), and provide recommendations to promote diversity in college admissions, hiring in the workplace, and so on.

- **Promoting individual responsibility, helping behavior, and volunteerism**. Psychological research will have only limited applied value if it does not actively seek to include the marginalized, help the afflicted, encourage the disenchanted, and assist the disadvantaged. Here the emphasis is on the advancement of social welfare, education, and improved access to health care (both physical and mental) by encouraging others to take a more active role in assisting those in need through altruistic acts of charity, self-sacrifice, and philanthropy.

SOCIAL JUSTICE AND RACE

In Chapter 1, we introduced the concept of race and then critically analyzed psychological research regarding similarities and differences among racial groups. But what is the practical utility of such studies? If, for example, a psychologist establishes that African Americans are, on average, more apt to experience severe and debilitating symptoms of major depression than members of the white population, what does this mean in terms of real–world applications and social policies?

One possible answer is provided by **critical race theory (CRT)**. CRT began in the 1970s as an academic and legal approach to studying racism based on the premise that racial bias – intentional or unintentional – is institutionally structural or systemic in nature, and that race is a social construct rather than a biologically determined trait. Although CRT has more recently come under fire as part of a broader critique against politically progressive agendas, its impact continues to reverberate across society. As an application of this theory, fundamental changes in most areas of life – including education, hiring practices, health care, and political redistricting – are needed to address and overcome such biases. Psychologists as practitioners can play a meaningful role in the process.

One of the assumptions of CRT is the notion of **white privilege**, which refers to the set of ascribed inherent social and economic advantages – obvious or subtle – that white people, on average, possess by virtue of their race in a culture characterized by racial

inequity. According to CRT, "whiteness" is a condition that – deliberately or not – advances the interests of white people (broadly defined) at the expense of other groups. Moreover, a so-called "colorblind" attitude (for example, a therapist may claim, "I do not see or treat my patients differently with respect to their racial or ethnic identities") might still result in racially discriminatory outcomes. Black Americans, for instance, on average, have more limited access to health care services compared to white Americans, due to decades of financial and educational disparities between these two groups. Moreover, according to CRT, race frequently intersects with other identities such as gender, sexual orientation, language, educational level, immigration status, and social class to produce complex combinations of power and advantage of one group over others.

Should psychologists, in the context of CRT, consider a "woke" approach to their professional responsibilities as researchers and practitioners? The term **woke**, which dates back to the 1930s, has many (and sometimes confusing) meanings, but mainly refers to the quality of being aware of and actively attentive to important societal facts and issues, especially those pertaining to race, gender, and social justice. The label became mainstream in the 2020s due to the impact of activists and citizens in the United States, representing a broader awareness of social injustice with regard to racism, sexism, and homophobia around the globe. To complicate matters somewhat, currently it can also stand for promoting politically "progressive" agendas – which are perceived by some sectors of society to be unreasonable, oppressive, or excessive.

Individual awareness often leads to specific ideas, which often translate into individual action, and then into social crusades. **Black Lives Matter** (**BLM**), for example, refers to both a phrase and a decentralized international sociopolitical movement dedicated to fighting violence and systemic racism toward black people, particularly in the form of police brutality. Although the movement began in 2013 after the acquittal of George Zimmerman in the shooting death of African American teen Trayvon Martin, it surged to international prominence in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic following the murder of George Floyd by Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin.

Applied to the work of psychologists, wokeness stands for both a general awareness and subsequent specific actions to address centuries of racial injustice and discrimination, such as by promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). To cite one arena, African Americans are significantly underrepresented in senior leadership roles in most professions in the United States (James & Desormeaux, 2023).

At the same time, psychologists should avoid declarative statements about their commitment to social justice simply because such statements may be viewed as "socially appropriate." **Virtue signaling** (also known as *moral grandstanding*) refers to the disingenuous act of publicly displaying a righteous stance on a social or political issue with the intent of looking morally good in the eyes of others (see Kafka, 2023). For example, a person enthusiastically broadcasting in social media that she unequivocally stands for racial justice and vigorously supports the BLM movement may be seen by some people as engaging in virtue signaling because this individual is known by those close to her for her clear lack of genuine interest in social justice issues.

CRITICAL THINKING

"WHITE FRAGILITY" VS. "WOKE RACISM"

Robin DiAngelo coined the term "white fragility" (2018) to denote a wide range of purported defensive responses – whether conscious or unconscious – that white people characteristically display in reaction to discussions of racism. These responses include guilt, fear, excuses, argumentation, anger, dismissal, silence, and withdrawal. It is DiAngelo's tenet that white fragility is the predictable consequence of white people's belief in their own superiority and consequent sense of entitlement. To DiAngelo, fragility is not an indicator of weakness; rather, she believes it is actually a powerful means of white racial control and the protection of white advantage. If a white person feels hurt or offended by feedback about race, for instance, that very response is interpreted as a type of bullying, whose function is to obscure racism, protect white dominance, and unfairly shift the focus away from a black person's experience. She believes that when white women cry in response to being called racists, black people are reminded of white women crying as they lied about being raped by black men ages ago. DiAngelo asserts that when white people are generalized about, it is one of the most powerful triggers of their alleged fragility.

She maintains that white people are unaware of racial histories (including the "original sin" of slavery and its present-day impacts), structural and systemic racism, and how they all contribute to subtly racist attitudes. These can be manifested, according to DiAngelo, in seemingly innocent utterances by white people such as "I know people of color," "You don't know me," "You hurt my feelings," "The real oppression is class," "I don't feel safe," and even "I disagree." Such less obvious forms of alleged racism allow even white people who see themselves as progressive or liberal to perpetuate racist ideologies in their daily lives, thereby harming people of color.

DiAngelo argues that all disparities between white and black people are based on white racism. She stresses that she is not advocating a good/bad dichotomy: Your own inner racist does not, per se, mean that you are a bad person. DiAngelo is also highly critical of individualism (which she contends is foundational to a racist society), the American Dream, and the philosophical concept of objectivity.

Robin DiAngelo is a white American academic, social justice educator, and diversity trainer.

John McWhorter, in his book *Woke Racism* (2021), delivers a sharp rebuke of white fragility, the antiracism movement, and "woke" ideology. He views them as being rife with contradictory assertions, lacking in empirical evidence, and more akin to a dogmatic, evangelical religion than a coherent or rational body of thought. He criticizes DiAngelo's book, in particular, as essentially a racist tract that infantilizes,

dehumanizes, and condescends toward black people. McWhorter asserts that her book is replete with claims about race and racism that are either simply false or are divorced from reality, such as her pronouncement that in the American higher-education system, "no one ever talks about racism." Although DiAngelo labels her approach as "antiracism," McWhorter argues that, by attributing everything to race, it is barely distinguishable from other racist arguments that have been deployed throughout human history.

McWhorter also eviscerates DiAngelo's approach for ensnarling white people in no-win dilemmas, where anything they do or say can be used against them as evidence of their racism. To illustrate this predicament, McWhorter recites what he terms a "catechism of contradictions" to which white people are regularly subjected. For example,

- *You must strive eternally to understand the experiences of Black people. BUT you can never understand what it is to be Black, and if you think you do, you're a racist.*
- *Black people cannot be held accountable for everything every Black person does. BUT all whites must acknowledge their personal complicitness in the treachery of whiteness throughout history.*

Any resistance on the part of white people – such as objecting that their ideas are being dismissed solely on the basis of their skin color – is interpreted as an exercise of white privilege and further evidence of their fragility.

Put another way, white people must either plead guilty to their inherent racism (in which case DiAngelo is proven correct in her indictment) or they resist such accusations (in which case their defensive/"fragile" response also proves her point): To deny it is to confirm it. (In this regard, see the belief perseverance effect and the assimilation bias in Chapter 2). Perhaps most troubling of all to McWhorter, DiAngelo fails to provide anything in the way of a specific plan for solving the real-world problems that Black people face in their daily lives. Her only prescription is "doing the work" – which consists of blind obedience, vacuous incantations, and ultimately total submission to this new gospel.

John McWhorter is a black American academic specializing in linguistics, race relations, and American studies.

Critical Thinking Questions:

1. Who do you think presents the more persuasive argument for their point of view? Why?
2. Can you identify any errors in critical thinking from either of the authors? If so, which ones?
3. Can any of their assertions be put to an empirical test? If so, which ones and how?

As you might recall from Chapter 11, people form their identities based on their affiliation – real or imagined – with social groups. **Identity politics** refers to of a wide range of political theorizing and activities founded on a shared perception of oppression experienced by members of particular social groups (e.g., based on race, gender, religion, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status), thereby valuing group identity over individual identity. As a consequence, such people develop behavioral and political agendas based mostly upon these identities.

The opening vignette in this chapter discusses a growing opinion that certain cultural artifacts or symbols ought to be removed or "canceled" because, based on identity politics, they promote injustice and serve to deepen divisions among social groups. This presents a potentially thorny dilemma: How should psychologists working in multicultural environments handle such attitudes? On the one hand, if psychologists truly support diversity and inclusion, they should strive to tolerate different points of view – even those with which they might vehemently disagree. On the other hand, what would be the appropriate response to statements or actions that are clearly racist, sexist, or in other ways discriminatory?

The term **cancel culture**, which emerged in the second half of the 2010s, generally stands for a social phenomenon in which those who are judged to have behaved in an unacceptable or offensive manner are shunned, ostracized, boycotted, or occupationally "removed". The targets of cancel culture have included celebrities (Dave Chappelle, Louis CK), politicians (Thomas Jefferson, Al Franken), authors (J.K. Rowling, Dr. Seuss), educators (Jason Kilborn, Dorian Abbot), and even consumer products (Mr. Potato Head, Uncle Ben, various sports team mascots).

Admittedly, people often overuse the term "culture" to describe virtually any societal attitude or trend. As such, it is probably too broad to effectively capture this phenomenon. Nevertheless, whatever term is employed, it refers to a set of values and practices rooted in the assumption that labeling, shaming, silencing, or eliminating an individual, a symbol, or even information is an effective way to facilitate debate and promote improved societal functioning.

To take an example, many countries across the globe have witnessed the defacing or outright removal of artifacts dedicated to late leaders who fell out of favor with the populace. Statues have been demolished, cities renamed, portraits defaced, and photographs doctored. In Russia, in the 1990s, under massive popular pressure, thousands of monuments dedicated to Vladimir Lenin (former head of the Soviet Union) in central squares of provincial towns were toppled. In the United States, almost two hundred monuments of generals or other symbols of the Confederacy linked to slavery have been removed from public spaces – bolstered by impassioned spectators and widespread media coverage. Even the earthly remains of late leaders are not immune from such deeds. In history and today, controversies abound regarding the "appropriate" location of the tomb of a deceased leader or a luminary. The remains of dead emperors, popes in Rome, leaders like Cromwell in Britain, Stalin in Russia, Franco in Spain, or even writers like Molière in France – and scores of others – have become targets of public rebuke and subsequent actions.

Identity affects the ways people view history and, through that lens, perceive themselves and other people today. **Historical revisionism** involves the practice of re-examining or reinterpreting historical events or theories based on motivations that can be benevolent, malevolent, or dispassionate. Such revisionism also involves a challenge to older, traditional moral judgments. The way a person perceives historical events translates into the individual's view of self, others, and society in general.

Even calendars are not immune to being challenged in this way. Calendars (defined as a cultural system of naming and organizing a period of time, typically into days, weeks, months, and years) can be closely related to people's cultural identities. To take one relatively recent example, in the United States, the *1619 Project* (Jones, 2019) focuses on the impact of slavery on American history. A key assumption of this movement is that the 1776 Declaration of Independence is not, in fact, the most important point of origin of the United States; rather, it was the arrival of the first slaves from Africa – which occurred in the year 1619. (Do you think it would be desirable – or even possible – to honor both dates?)

Attempts at historical revisions of calendars are not new. The French Revolutionary calendar, for example, was created and implemented during the French Revolution, and used by the French government for about 12 years from late 1793 to 1805, and by revolutionaries in 1871. The calendar was designed, along with other purposes, to remove all religious and royalist influences. In fact, the new calendar was a cultural statement against religion and monarchy. More recently, in North Korea, the traditional calendar was canceled and replaced with a different one: *The Juche Calendar* begins with the birth of Kim Il Sung, the founder of North Korea. His birth year – 1912 in the generally accepted Gregorian calendar – is "Juche 1" in the Juche calendar. By introducing this calendar, North Korean officials emphasized their "cancelling" of a commonplace international calendar to emphasize their ideological superiority to their neighbors, like China, Japan, and the rest of the world.

How should cross-cultural psychologists respond to revisions of history? Although there is no adequate "one-size-fits-all" formula (see the Barnum effect in Chapter 2), one potentially very useful answer is to strive toward inclusiveness. Psychologists should be aware of – and respect – people's cultural identities and acknowledge that a student, a teacher, a patient, a journalist, an employee each may have a different vision of history and society. Although historical events themselves can be regarded as facts, how we interpret these facts is not a privilege – it is a human right.

EXERCISE 12.1 HISTORICAL ARTIFACTS: TO REVISE OR NOT TO REVISE?

Select three culturally based artifacts (monuments, statues, flags, or names of bridges, airports, schools, libraries, streets, etc.). Then answer both questions below:

1. Make a case for why they should be renamed or removed.
2. Make a case for why they should be preserved.

SOCIAL JUSTICE AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS

In Chapter 11, we discussed several basic issues related to gender as a cultural construct. One of the most crucial and urgent issues today – in which psychologists can play a major role – is overcoming sexism. **Sexism** refers to prejudice or discrimination rooted in biased views of sex or gender. Although it can be directed toward anyone, the targets are primarily girls, women, and transgender individuals. Sexism is predicated on in the belief that one sex is "superior" (i.e., more advanced or more valuable than) to another. Sexism also imposes sometimes arbitrary or artificial limits on what men, women, and transgender people can or should do. For many years, psychologists have been drawing attention to sexism to raise awareness about the oppression of girls/woman in various countries. More recently, sexism as a concept was expanded to include awareness of the discrimination of *any* sex, including boys/men and intersexual/transgender individuals.

Learning about sexism is important both for gaining professional knowledge and for developing good citizenship skills. Sexism can take many forms. It can take the form of being openly hostile – think of a person who states that women are generally incompetent, illogical, or subordinate to men – to justify certain professional decisions, such as demoting or not promoting a woman. In other cases it can be more disguised or subtle. As shown in classic research studies (e.g., Glick & Fiske, 1997), a man may state that, "women are needier and weaker, therefore they need additional help from us men." Sexism, as you can see, incorporates stereotypical statements that are used to rationalize or prescribe behaviors for an entire group.

CHRISTINE VS. BRETT

Let us consider the case of Brett Kavanaugh, who in 2018 was granted a lifetime appointment as an associate justice of the Supreme Court of the United States. Every candidate for a position on the Supreme Court is nominated by the president and must be confirmed by the Senate. Sometimes, such confirmation hearings can lead to highly partisan and contentious debates. Such was the case during the hearings for Kavanaugh, which were broadcast live by most media outlets, as they turned to issues not just of his experience, but of his character (Kantor & Twohey, 2019; Hemingway & Severino, 2019).

During the confirmation proceedings, a female psychology professor, Dr. Christine Blasey Ford, accused Kavanaugh of sexually assaulting her in the early 1980s when they were attending nearby schools. Professor Ford testified that while at a party, Kavanaugh and his classmate committed violence against her by pinning her to a bed, groping her, trying to pull off her clothes, all the while covering her mouth to prevent her from screaming. She reported being terrified that she was going to be raped, or even killed. When these allegations appeared in the public eye, two other women also openly accused Kavanaugh of sexual misconduct and even gang rape decades before. Seething with emotion, Kavanaugh "categorically and unequivocally" denied the accusations.

Tensions quickly rose. Hundreds of people picketed the Senate buildings in Washington D.C. and demonstrated in other cities across in the United States, condemning Kavanaugh's

nomination and demanding a serious investigation into these allegations. Some carried signs reading, "We believe survivors," "Kavanaugh is a liar," and "Kava-No" (Shugerman, 2018). The British *Guardian* went so far as to publish the headline, "Rapists have no place on the Supreme Court" (Filipovic, 2018). Those opposed to his nomination argued that the seriousness of the charges against his character were sufficient to halt – or at the very least, temporarily suspend – the hearings. On the other side, those who were supporting Kavanaugh's nomination also publicly demonstrated on his behalf.

The deliberations over Kavanaugh's candidacy rapidly devolved into an emotionally charged debate over his personality. His character was probed and criticized from different angles: his drinking habits (he mentioned his affinity for beer dozens of times), his uneven temper, his apparent flippancy in responding to questions, even his cryptic comments in his high school yearbook. And everything was on open display. All told, it was a massive public scandal (Shiraev et al., 2022).

In the end, however, despite Ford's riveting and compelling testimony (which we urge you to watch online), Kavanaugh's nomination was decisively approved. Many observers still maintain that deep-seated sexism was on full display during these contentious hearings. It is reasonably speculated that had the Kavanaugh nomination occurred in the 1950s or 1960s, it would not have generated a similar social and political scandal because of the cultural environment of the times. That notwithstanding, in the year 2018, the events clearly and dramatically captured the public's attention.

At around the time period of the Kavanaugh hearings, there was a surge in a powerful social movement ignited by many women in the United States, Europe, and then worldwide, who revealed their stories of surviving sexual misconduct and sexual violence in their past. In part, such revelations were inspired and fueled by several high-profiled media reports and other stories of gross sexual wrongdoing by top-level celebrities (in particular, movie mogul Harvey Weinstein). Women utilized social media, using #MeToo as a hashtag. **#MeToo** is a global social movement that seeks to expose and prevent sexual harassment and assault, especially against women, in which people publicize their experiences to combat various forms of sexual misconduct. #MeToo became a symbol of women's social and awareness about sexual harassment and assault. It also marked an important cultural shift in perceptions and reaction to sexual harassment in all areas of life.

There are many aspects of behavior and judgment about which most people are more aware and sensitive today than they were 50 – or even ten – years ago. This has a great deal to do with the specific types of political systems in which people live. Unfortunately, sexism, gender discrimination, and sexual harassment, although improved in some areas, is still a common occurrence today in numerous countries where their voices are still muzzled.

REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS AND ABORTION

Comprehensive cross-national studies conducted since the 1990s show highly polarized differences in people's attitudes about women's reproductive rights and abortion (Kaasa & Minkov, 2020). We have already examined the question of when "life" (however

that is defined) begins (see Chapter 8). One of the key points of disagreement in the reproductive rights debate is whether or not abortion is a basic right.

- One position maintains a resolute belief that "reproductive rights are human rights" – akin to the right to life, the right to health, and the right to be free from violence. Therefore, a person's access to safe, legal abortion should – and must – be guaranteed. Moreover, institutions or groups that attempt to constrain this access in effect "force" women to seek illegal and unsafe abortions, which risk health complications or even death. In sum, decisions about a person's body must be made by the person (HRW, 2022).
- Another position presents powerful and persuasive arguments that any deliberate destruction of human life is ethically and morally wrong. Further, any action that destroys an embryo or fetus is tantamount to killing – even murdering – a person.
- A more middle-ground position holds that abortion should be legal up to the point of "fetal viability." After that time, abortion should be prohibited except for specific circumstances, such as in cases of rape, incest, or when the life of the mother is jeopardized.

In the United States, majorities of both men and women express support for legal abortion, though women are somewhat more likely than men to hold this view (63 percent vs. 58 percent). About three-quarters of Asian adults (74 percent), two-thirds of black adults (68% percent), 60 percent of Hispanic adults, and 59 percent of White adults agree that abortion should be legal in all or most cases.

For centuries and across cultures, religious values (see Chapter 1 on values) have dictated policies and behavior related to abortion. In Islam, for example, religious scholars have determined that *ensoulment* (the moment at which a human or other being gains a soul) occurs 120 days into a pregnancy; prior to that, abortion is permissible under some circumstances (Mohammad & Brown, 2023). In contrast, the Catholic church historically has maintained that human life must be unequivocally protected starting at the moment of conception. Polls show that opinions on abortion based on religion are divided. In 2022, 56 percent of Muslim Americans thought abortion should be legal in all or most cases (Ikramullah & Neggaz, 2022). Overall, about three-quarters of U.S. Catholics say abortion should be illegal in some cases but legal in others; just 10% say abortion should be illegal in all cases (Smith, 2022). Psychologists working with diverse populations should take into account people's religious beliefs and cultural values, always treating these individuals with sensitivity and respect.

CROSS-CULTURAL SENSITIVITY

WHAT'S IN A NAME? "FEMALE" HURRICANES VS. "MALE" HURRICANES

Is there any correlation between human names and the destructive power of hurricanes? Evidently so. First, a bit of background. A tropical storm officially

becomes a hurricane when it reaches wind speeds of 74 mph. At that point, the World Meteorological Organization assigns it a name (e.g., Katrina, Sandy, Andrew, Camille, Ike, and so on), drawn from an alphabetical list which alternates between female and male names – with no regard for the specific geographic location, nature, or quality of the hurricane itself. A study published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* examined 92 of the most recent hurricanes that made landfall in the United States. Results showed that hurricanes with women's names seem to have killed more people than did those with men's names. Why is that? The researchers proposed that some people do not take hurricanes with women's names as seriously as they take those with men's. As a result of this biased perception, they tend to act more carelessly: They might assume that a hurricane named after a woman will not be as destructive (Jung et al., 2014). Do you accept the researchers' explanation? Can you offer any others to explain this effect?

Such biased assumptions referred to in the cross–cultural sensitivity box are called stereotypes, as we have examined in previous chapters. In your daily encounters, you can apply the three following strategies to help in overcoming gender stereotypes:

- **Be aware.** Try to monitor the extent to which your gender stereotypes can affect your current experience, impressions, and perceptions. Try to become more aware of your own and other people's stereotypes. Awareness of them will be the first step to increase your ability to change them.
- **Look for multiple causes.** When attempting to explain gender differences, look for multiple causal factors (see Chapter 2). Why, for example, do girls tend to earn better grades in school than boys? Why are men more likely than women to earn degrees in the fields of physics, technology, engineering, and mathematics? Why are men on average more likely to be injured in accidents and physical fights than women?
- **Cultivate new perceptions.** Reducing gender stereotypes is only a first step in applying your knowledge. The goal is to form more accurate perceptions based on facts, including sound psychological research. It is true that in North America, more men than women earn doctorate degrees in physics. Does this mean that women are not particularly good at advanced science studies? No. At least half of doctorate degrees in molecular biology and neuroscience are now awarded to women. True, there are more men getting graduate degrees in economics and philosophy, but women tend to get more doctorate degrees in history and psychology (Leslie et al., 2015).

SOCIAL JUSTICE AND LGBTQ+ RIGHTS

LGBTQ+ is an initialism that stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, with the "+" sign denoting all other gender identities that are not specifically covered by the other five initials (APA, 2023). A modern branch of psychology that studies and assists individuals whose orientation is transgender or gender-variant, "LGBTQ+

psychology" is a theoretical and, most importantly, applied field that is gaining support and recognition globally in the 2020s.

Most people who identify as transgender (see Chapter 11) must deal with significant social and psychological challenges. The San Francisco Unified School District, for example, surveyed middle school children and discovered that fully 50 percent of transgender kids had contemplated suicide (for a wide range of psychological reasons) at some point in their lives, compared to 6 percent of straight youth (Wilson, 2014). A 2020 U.S. study indicated that the number of transgender youths considering suicide was at 40 percent (Austin et al., 2020). In China, the estimates were even higher than those in North America: In this transgender population, the lifetime prevalence of suicidal ideation was 56 percent (Chen et al., 2019). Other studies have shown that transgender youth have a two- to threefold increased risk of psychological problems, including mood and anxiety disorders, as well as suicidal ideation and suicide attempts (Reisner et al., 2015).

Another problem that needs recognition and action is the ongoing stigmatization, discrimination, and even open hostility toward individuals who are gay, lesbian, transgender, or gender-variant. **Homophobia** consists of systemic aversion to homosexuality and LGBTQ+ individuals. It should be noted that the suffix "phobia" technically refers to some form of *fear*; however, in this context, one should not assume that one's aversion, dislike, or discriminatory behavior is necessarily fear-based. There are other causal pathways that could produce aversion. People of any sexual orientation can experience such feelings of aversion. Homophobia is often based on an irrational fear of something new or negative stereotypes against people who may appear different. In many countries, like in Russia or Iran, for example, homophobia is codified into law. People can face significant prison terms for speaking openly on behalf of the LGBTQ+ community, defending their rights, or just discussing intersex or transgender issues. Perhaps surprisingly, in Iran, sex-change surgeries have been legalized, yet being openly gay or lesbian can bring serious legal threats (Saeidzadeh, 2016).

SOCIAL JUSTICE, AGEISM, AND DISABILITY

Cross-cultural psychologists would be remiss if they failed to address the problems and obstacles that people face globally due to their age or disability. **Ageism** is prejudice or discrimination against individuals or groups based on their age. The term refers to discriminatory practices against individuals whose age can be seen by others as both "too old" and "too young." These are popular beliefs and stereotypes that perpetuate biased assumptions about a wider range of human development.

Mandatory retirement after a person reaches a certain age (such as 60 or 70) is legal in many countries today. In Brazil, for example, according to their constitution, government employees must retire at the age of 70. In Israel, people must retire at the age of 67 (Epstein, 2018). In the United States, mandatory retirement due to age is generally unlawful, except in certain industries and occupations that are regulated by federal law

(e.g., military service) or state law (e.g., as relevant to judges). How do you think culture affects people's views of age? Do you believe, for instance, that psychologists should support the policy of mandatory retirement?

The American Psychological Association supports the full participation and inclusion of individuals with disabilities, commonly referred to currently as "persons with diverse needs and abilities." Specifically, in terms of applications of this policy, psychologists advocate for full inclusion of individuals with disabilities in education, training programs, clinical practice, and research. Psychologists must be aware about negative attitudes and prejudice that are common in the world against individuals with disabilities – which includes psychological challenges, such as, for example, autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Although the symptoms associated with ASD are often identified as deviating from what is considered statistically "normal," such comparisons are often determined by one's particular culture (Atherton et al. 2023). Still, it is the responsibility of psychologists working in applied fields to fight against negative stereotypes associated with disabilities.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Environmental justice refers to the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people, regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies (EPA, 2023). This includes their equal access to a healthy, safe, and sustainable environment, as well as protection from environmental harm. Heavily influenced by the American civil rights crusade, the environmental justice movement began in the United States in the 1960s. It was later expanded to address international environmental discrimination and inequalities within disadvantaged groups.

How can cross–cultural psychologists make a positive impact on the issues relevant to environmental justice? Granted, we, psychologists, do not build roads, bridges, or skyscrapers. We do not clean up polluted oceans and rivers. And we do not provide funding for people to move into safer, environmentally sustainable houses. However, psychologists can make a difference, above all, through their persistent dedication to educated action (Manning & Amel, 2022).

More than 600 million people in the world – about 8 percent of the global population – live in extreme poverty, on less than $2.15 per day. Fully half of the global population lives on less than $6.85 per person per day. Most of those people live in environmentally vulnerable conditions prone to ecological disasters, such as floods or droughts, for which remedies are too slow or extremely difficult to receive (World Bank, 2022).

Psychologists are in a position to utilize many of the tools in their professional arsenal – research, publications, lectures, speeches, media interviews – to positively affect social policy via local, state, and national governments. A psychologist living in a comfortable,

air–conditioned home – whether in Dallas, Delhi, or Dubai – has a moral opportunity to lobby for just and fair environmental conditions for everyone on the planet.

Environmental justice also concerns people's effort to promote **green values** and green policies in all areas of their lives. This refers to a political ideology that advocates for environmental quality and an ecologically sustainable planet, for example by promoting products that are recyclable, biodegradable, or nonpolluting.

In applied terms, several types of action are called for.

- One is encouraging collective action for systemic change in people's attitudes about the environment. Unfortunately, unsustainable options are typically the "easiest" – driving petroleum-fueled vehicles, not recycling, purchasing non-biodegradable plastics, wasting precious resources like tap water, and even littering. As a consequence, it requires more effort, intentionality, educational programs (and yes, sometimes more funding) to behave in ways that support sustainability. Psychologists can play an important role in this process (Manning & Amel, 2022).
- Another action involves emphasizing people's common "environmental identity." Despite some cultural differences, there is something bigger that can unify us in different countries and on different continents. Specifically, we can display our collective concern for a sustainable environment (Scott et al., 2021), thereby mitigating the perils of climate change and global warming.
- A third is combating the pernicious effects of **greenwashing**. Greenwashing is defined as an act of deceptive advertising which involves conveying the false impression that a company or product is more environmentally friendly than is actually the case. Common examples include fraudulent marketing campaigns by oil corporations, food and beverage companies, plastic producers, and automobile manufacturers. It generally attempts to capitalize on the growing public demand for environmentally sound products. Such practices may be strategically subtle, or as blatant as simply slapping a "green" label on a product to make it appear more sustainable or healthy. Greenwashing is big business, and utilizes many of the same tools employed in political propaganda (which we addressed in Chapter 6). Psychologists can apply their knowledge and research in the areas of attitude change and persuasion to battle the onslaught of such propaganda campaigns.

GREENPEACE

In terms of broad scale social action, consider the case of Greenpeace, an organization that was initiated by a few individuals and then gradually built support from around the globe. Greenpeace traces its roots to 1971, when a half dozen interconnected young people grew increasingly frustrated over nuclear testing. Early "green peaceniks" sailed on an old fishing boat from Vancouver, Canada, to Amchitka, a small island near Alaska's west coast, with the hope of disrupting underground nuclear testing. They subsequently launched a worldwide campaign against commercial whaling and seal hunting, as well as global demonstrations against toxic waste and pollution (Shiraev & Zubok, 2024). In

fact, the story of Greenpeace in many ways ushered in the political ideology of green values (discussed above). Greenpeace stands for not only altering specific policies, but also transforming the psychology of our cultural environmental views.

Greenpeace has both inspired enthusiastic supporters and spurred scornful critics. Many admire its bold style of international environmental activism, whereas others see it as cynical and self-promoting. In the beginning, Greenpeace fought for causes that didn't enjoy widespread understanding or support. Further, their tactics in the past likely alienated more people than they attracted. But where Greenpeace once had just a few members, it now draws on the energy of tens of thousands of volunteers, researchers, and lawyers. Although Greenpeace and other similar groups have modified many of their tactics and targets, they remain steadfastly loyal to the goal of environmental protection.

Greenpeace today is an organization that receives hundreds of millions of dollars in donations from almost three million individual supporters and grants. Greenpeace activists are committed to using nonviolent protest to raise the level and quality of public debate about the environment (Greenpeace International, 2023). The group promotes *harmony values* (see our discussion in Chapter 10), and relies on scientific research to support its claims. Two of its key and interconnected methods are direct action and public education: Activists aim to raise awareness of environmental issues by sponsoring lectures, research, and educational programs.

DIGITAL CULTURE AND ITS APPLICATIONS

In the English language, the word *digital* has been in use for hundreds of years. By the end of the twentieth century, digital as adjective was already semantically attached to virtually all technical products and services containing a digital component: audio CDs, DVDs, photos, cameras, musical instruments, and so on. Soon this term was used with regard to personal computers, the Internet, satellite radio, digital television, websites, videogames, and various social networks. **Social media** are forms of interactive electronic communication on the Internet through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, and other content. Examples include websites for social networking, Twitter (now rebranded as X), Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok. Digital technology's application to psychology continues to evolve, as we discuss below.

DIGITAL FOOTPRINTS

Since their earliest days on the planet, human beings have been leaving their physical footprints wherever they roamed. In a broader anthropological or metaphorical sense, they also left other markings that have remained with us and can become important cultural symbols, ranging from the Great Wall of China and Mayan temples to private handwritten letters and framed photographs of relatives who lived many decades ago. The

impact of people from the past remains with us in the form of towers (Gustave Eiffel), bridges (George Washington), streets (Martin Luther King, Jr.), schools (Galileo Galilei), hospitals (Albert Einstein), airports (Indra Gandhi), cities (George Vancouver), even entire religions (Jesus Christ). If a person has no physical "footprints" left, then all knowledge about this individual inevitably vanishes from the cultural memory of succeeding generations.

The digital domain's rapid growth has changed the ways in which people now leave their footprints. Many of our digital footprints have already been implanted – regardless of your wishes or expressed consent. These include our names, images, opinions, tweets, "likes," purchases, and many more, which are digitally stored, virtually indefinitely. In fact, most people today appear to others in the form of their digital footprints. Studies conducted a few years ago have already shown that, by analyzing an individual's digital footprints, an artificial intelligence (AI) service system can detect a few characteristics of an individual and then make recommendations and predictions regarding their consumption patterns (Adeyemi et al., 2016). On a dating app, you "exist" in the minds of subscribers as an individual of a certain reported height (often increased by individuals to appear taller), weight (reduced to appear slimmer), or age (via outdated photos, altered via digital filters, flattering lighting) to appear younger.

Our digital footprints in many ways reflect on who we are – or at least how we wish to be seen. In another sense, like a magnifying glass or a chemical catalyst, they can enhance and spread our thoughts and emotional states. For example, an introverted person in a small South Korean town can find a social network as a great opportunity to express their thoughts and desires, or even seek dating opportunities, which otherwise would have remained in private. Studies show that people socializing online now express things that they would never mention in face-to-face meetings. Unfortunately, individuals who generally keep their anger under control, can now use the web for bullying others or for relentless emotional rants. In short, social networks can be seen as a digital enhancement or "amplification" (see our discussion of the *twittification effect* in Chapter 2) of the individual's characteristics. According to research, online political discussions (frequently involving anonymous people) are evaluated as angrier and less civil than those in real life. Networks of online partisans create worldviews that appear to become way too extreme, and online disinformation campaigns appear more intense than ever before (Haidt & Rose-Stockwell, 2019).

The Internet and social networks provide people with knowledge that they might have been able to obtain elsewhere (for example, from newspapers, books, friends, or teachers). However, the major difference now is in both the scope and the speed with which we can obtain information. Today, for example, instead of simply saying, "I feel sad, tired, and hopeless," a person can learn via online chats with AI about clinical symptoms of depression. One possible result? The appearance of increased numbers of the self-reported incidence of depression – and opportunities for treatment – compared to the pre-Internet era.

We will now discuss three important areas of cross-cultural applications: digital privacy, digital trolling, and digital companionship.

PRIVACY

In college sports, taunting of the opposite team is almost unescapable and has been part of a "humorous offence" in competitive sports for generations in many countries. Yet modern taunting often involves the weaponization of private digital footprints. Before the game – be it football in Liverpool or a cricket game in Karachi – home team fans learn online about many details of the opposite team players' personal life from Instagram or other social networks, and then during the game heckle these players about everything from their mischievous pets and visiting relatives, to recent breakups (Kessler, 2022).

What is privacy anyway? Legal scholars have described privacy as a someone's lawful "right to be let alone." Communication professionals across the globe understand privacy as the ability of the individual to selectively send and receive information. For psychologists, privacy is the ability of individuals to withdraw themselves from the presence of other people or withdraw their digital footprints. This is exceedingly difficult to achieve: Virtually everything you text, email, or post can become open for public consumption. Overall, people tend to protect their personal autonomy defined according to specific cultural rules (Margulis, 2003).

One of the most important aspects of privacy is the desire and ability to safeguard material objects and ideas that we consider an essential part of who we are. This includes our body, personal possessions (such as clothes, amulets, or artifacts) as well as some behaviors, thoughts, feelings, and even our personal knowledge (for example, close relationships) that we qualify as private. Our awareness about privacy gives us the ability to choose which elements of our material and psychological world can be accessed by others, and to control the extent, manner, and timing of the use of those parts we choose to disclose (Onn et al., 2005). Privacy is undeniably a continuous variable (see discussion of continuous versus dichotomous variables in Chapter 2). Some of us tend to be more "private" than others, whereas others choose more public exposure on social networks. These choices can be individual as well as based on cultural norms.

Many cultural norms related to privacy have shifted throughout history along with political, ethical, and legal barriers that protected privacy. In predominantly collectivist cultures, privacy tends to be limited, while individualist cultures are likely to boost privacy norms in the name of individual choice (see Chapter 1). Privacy barriers in online communications today are rapidly weakening compared to the pre-Internet era. Our personal information which is stolen can subsequently lead to identity theft, which is significantly easier to commit in the digital space. Across countries and cultures, the necessity to be careful and mindful about own digital footprints has fast become an urgent priority.

TROLLING

Not long ago, while making a dinner reservation in a Stockholm restaurant, our mutual friend decided to go by a different name. He went by *Oliver*, the first name that popped

out of his mind when he was on the phone with a scheduler. When we chided him, he pushed back: "Why shouldn't I use a bogus name? Who's being harmed?" In similar situations, like at department stores, when a clerk asks for our phone, some of us (yes, we the authors too!) sometimes deliberately give false information about ourselves. Among several reasons for giving bogus information is people's understandable concern for their privacy. Online "private" and "incognito" settings on your browser can provide a measure of privacy, such as preventing cookies being saved or by hiding your searches from other individuals who may gain access to your computer. Again, this is done to mitigate potential harm.

Yet some individuals pursue different goals for hiding their online identity. One of them is called **trolling**, which is the deliberate act of posting provocative or inflammatory content on various Internet platforms with the goal of antagonizing, insulting, offending, or otherwise upsetting others. An *Internet troll* is someone who enters an online discussion or posts comments almost solely to upset the discussants, disrupt the conversation, or achieve other destructive goals while remaining anonymous. Almost by definition, trolls deliberately protect their privacy.

Psychologists are interested in different kinds of Internet trolls. Some trolls seek profit through their fraudulent actions: They purposely seek other people's vulnerabilities to commit financial or other type of fraud online. This may involve **catfishing**, which refers to any online scam in which an individual creates a fictitious persona on a social media (usually dating) website, with the goal of compromising the victim in some way, such as financial gain, cyberstalking, harassment, or revenge. Other types of trolls are employed by private companies, politicians, or government agencies to sway elections or to promote their particular causes, such as supporting wars of aggression (one of the authors of this book spent substantial time studying how the Russian government used online trolls to infiltrate social networks and justify war against Ukraine). Such trolls create fake accounts and act according to a plan to either weaken a political opponent, promote a candidate or a political idea, or provoke confusion among audiences (Buckels et al., 2019).

Are modern trolls different from the individuals who were engaged in such activities in the past? Cross-cultural studies can be useful here. Pranksters and tricksters, as research shows, have existed in all cultures and throughout history (Hyde, 1998). One can certainly propose that today's trolls are akin to those mythological creatures from Scandinavian folklore, who appear ugly and nasty to humans. Carl Jung (see Chapter 7) wrote about "the trickster" archetype that is prone to mischief, often of a malicious kind. Other writers refer to "bad" or "evil clowns," known in national folklores or from popular films in many cultures. (Remember Joker, the infamous supervillain from several Hollywood blockbusters about *Batman*?) Evil clowns are driven to insult, offend, or even destroy other people, and to gain a noticeable reaction from their deeds (Radford, 2016). A few studies have shown similar personality characteristics attributed to both evil clowns and Internet trolls (Buckels et al., 2019).

Researchers have identified at least two personality factors that can explain the motivation behind some of these individuals: sadistic pleasure and harm rationalization

(Buckels et al., 2019). Trolls tend to deeply resent successful people. They also seem to relish their ability to disrupt others and cause them psychological harm, while expressing minimal remorse for their actions. A study in Australia (Sest & March, 2017) showed that "cyber-trolls" scored lower on empathy and higher on sadistic tendencies. Some trolls are likely to expose patterns of *katagelasticism* (described in Chapter 6), a psychological condition in which a person excessively enjoys laughing at the expense of others. Further, by downplaying (i.e., rationalizing) the consequences of their actions, trolling often becomes a fun game that is often perceived as not really hurting anyone. And even if someone does get hurt, trolls can minimize or ignore their own guilt (Buckles et al., 2019).

DIGITAL COMPANIONSHIP

Despite all the super-connectivity of the modern world, social and psychological isolation remains a serious challenge. Demographics play a role here. Falling fertility rates across the planet, and as a result, smaller families in most countries have left increasing numbers of older people living alone. Further, many among the young believe they no longer need to live with their aging parents, who can afford to live by themselves. Research shows that social isolation adds nearly seven billion dollars a year to the total cost of Medicare (a government health insurance program in the United States for older people and people with certain disabilities) in part because, people who live alone show up to the hospital sicker and tend to stay there longer (Engelhart, 2021).

One of the consequences of prolonged social isolation is loneliness. "Loneliness intervention" is not a new subject in clinical and developmental psychology. Yet, the digital world is creating a new kind of therapeutic intervention: **digital companionship**. This involves the use of digital technologies (particularly AI) to assist an individual with numerous tasks as well as to provide a personalized form of emotional support and companionship in a culturally sensitive context.

This is quite different from the kind of *digital assistantship* offered by Google, Siri, Alexa, and similar devices to help us with quick information, shortcuts, and tips. In contrast to digital assistants, digital companions tend to be more interactive, proactive, culture-sensitive, and incorporate significant features of the user, including ethnicity, gender, and religion.

There is already compelling psychological research on the use of computer technologies, gadgets, and toys in helping children and adults cope with symptoms of autism spectrum disorder (Giansanti, 2021). The use of digital companionship among the lonely – most of whom are elderly – is a relatively new line of research into therapeutic methods and psychological support (Intuition Robotics, 2020).

Digital companionship is embodied in the use of so-called *social robots* or *companion robots*, which are collaborative devices specialized in social interaction. They offer customizable interaction that responds to the user's personality and learn from such interactions. The robot can switch to a different language, communicate via smartphones, and remind us about meals, medication, and routine house chores. But this is not all that they can

do. Robots can conduct poetry readings, discuss fairy tales, and share in the latest news, and pay attention to things that are relevant to the user. Some robots can even track the progression of dementia in elderly clients by monitoring changes in vocal patterns in conversations (Engelhart, 2021). Digital companions do not simply wait around to carry out the user's commands. They can use various sensory inputs to be proactive, to check if the person needs assistance, if the person is in the mood to chat and to determine a suitable topic for a conversation.

Social robots are expected to be instruments of competence, companionship, and independence that can serve a therapeutic role. Is digital companionship effective? And if so, in which areas? Long-term studies are planned or already under way. Some nursing homes and organizations have started studying the effects of the use of social robots in alleviating loneliness and easing negative emotions (Sheridan, 2020). Among preliminary results, several are encouraging. Social robots can, for example, assist in certain motor activities and as interactive timekeepers for the elderly. They serve as cognitive stimulators by offering interactive games, trivia, or maintaining a conversation (Giansanti, 2021). Not long ago, New York State's Office for the Aging launched an experimental project, distributing a kind of therapeutic robot to 60 state residents and then tracking these people's self-assessments over time. Researchers found that almost three-quarters of participants felt less lonely after one year of digital companionship (Engelhart, 2021).

We must bear in mind, however, that throughout history, every new communication technology brings a range of unknown and sometimes unpredictable effects (Haidt & Rose-Stockwell, 2019). Yet, over time, people continually look for ways to improve the balance between positive and negative consequences.

NATIONALISM, WAR, AND PEACE

In Chapter 10, we discussed attitudes and values as an individual's relatively stable representations and evaluations of reality. Many such representations refer to people's views of ethnic groups as cultural units and to nations as sovereign political entities. People often distinguish their attitudes toward the social groups to which they feel they belong versus their attitudes toward "others" – to which they do not. One such attitude is **nationalism**, which in the most general sense, stands for individual and collective identification with a country or a nation (see Chapter 1). Nationalism is a very complex phenomenon and has several, sometimes confusing meanings, some positive and some negative. It can refer to not only loyalty and devotion to one's nation, but also elevating one's culture above all others.

Psychologists differentiate *positive nationalism* and *negative nationalism*. Positive nationalism reflects people's pride in their nation's past and present (Mylonas & Tudor, 2021). Many people, for example, are proud of their countries' ancestors and what they accomplished. Positive nationalism can also include a measure of critical scrutiny of their country's past and present. People who tend to embrace positive nationalism, like good critical thinkers, see the world as an amalgamation of various forces, factors, and outcomes.

Positive nationalism frequently serves as a unifying force. People influenced by nationalist attitudes tend to put aside their political differences to stand shoulder to shoulder as citizens against a common enemy. Political parties mend their prior differences to defend their country against foreign threats. To take a very recent example, members of various ethnic groups in Ukraine viewed themselves after 2022 as a more unified group as a consequence of the Russian invasion of their homeland. In just a few months into Russia's aggressive war, fully 85 percent of Ukrainians identified themselves above all as citizens of Ukraine – rather than as residents of their region, representatives of an ethnic minority, or some other criterion. This reflected a 20 percent jump from only two years previously (Palikot, 2022).

A more intense form of positive nationalism is called *patriotism*. The terms "nationalist" and "patriot" can be very confusing, with scholars having debated their meaning for many decades. Moreover, the terms *nationalist*, *patriot*, *patriotic*, or *unpatriotic* are often deliberately misused to boost one's popularity and to chastise political opponents. (Just what does it mean to be a "true patriot" of Taiwan, Israel, Iran, or the United States?) In public discourse, research shows that being perceived as a "patriot" is virtually always more positive than being a "nationalist." This is likely due to the fact that, according to research, some forms of nationalism and patriotism are associated with people's prejudice, intolerance, and uncritical obedience to authority (Theiss-Morse, 2009; see also Chapter 10).

In the media, as well as in their daily lives, people are likely to encounter various forms of negative nationalism, which embraces attitudes of superiority, dominance, and belittling other national or ethnic groups. When viewed through this lens, it is akin to the psychological construct of *narcissism* (see Eromo & Levy, 2017). The Russian and Iranian governments for many years appealed to the nationalism in their countries to mobilize public opinion against liberal values and practices (like views of racial equality and LGBTQ+ rights) of the West and other democratic countries (Shiraev & Khudoley, 2019; Rasmussen, 2018). This form of nationalism tends to be divisive and can result in violence (Muller, 2008). To take an example, before 1948, Jews and Arabs lived together in Palestine under the British administration. When the British withdrew, the Jews in Palestine formed the independent state of Israel, supported by the United States, the Soviet Union, and several Western countries. The neighboring Arab leaders then went to war against Israel, and lost. This led to the flight of Palestinian Arabs from their lands and the formation of two sharply distinct national groups, Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs – which have remained, unfortunately, embroiled in conflict for over three-quarters of a century (Smith, 2020). To take another example, in the 1990s, the collapse of the multi-ethnic country of Yugoslavia led to sparks of nationalism, a violent conflict that took the lives of tens of thousands of people, an international military intervention to stop the violence, and the emergence of several new independent countries in southeast Europe.

Another and more extreme form of negative nationalism is *chauvinism*. An early form of chauvinism emerged in the first half of the 1900s in the form of Nazism, an ideology and political philosophy rooted in the belief of the supremacy of the "Aryan race." Modern neo-Nazism is a dangerous combination of anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, homophobia, sexism, militarism, and racism. In its virulent, active form, chauvinism can be an effective

weapon deployed to mobilize various populations, especially the less affluent and less educated, to act in support of certain domestic political agendas.

A new form of nationalism – *populist nationalism* – was on the rise in many countries after 2016, through the years of the COVID-19 pandemic, and into the 2020s. This was exemplified by the Brexit referendum in the United Kingdom (the decision to leave the European Union), the strengthening of nationalistic sentiment across the globe (including in China, Russia, Italy, Turkey, Poland, and Hungary), and the appearance of strong nationalist, anti-immigration parties in Germany, the Netherlands, and Austria, among other countries (Shiraev & Zubok, 2024). Populist nationalism is highly divisive because it promotes separating people into "us" vs. "them" categories. It is particularly destructive because it pits some national and ethnic group against others.

Negative nationalism in its many forms is also linked to *xenophobia*, which is a fear and contempt of strangers, foreign countries, and foreigners. This can be weaponized by some politicians and especially authoritarian regimes to mobilize public opinion, crush political opposition, win elections, neutralize critics, and even justify war. Xenophobia also results in the systematic exclusion of "others" based on their cultural or national identity as alien from that of the host country (Suleman et al., 2018).

FUNDAMENTALISM

Fundamentalism is different from nationalism, yet they share many psychological features. It consists of a set of values rooted in rigid adherence to traditional (usually religious) principles and practices and is often associated with intolerance to individual choice and secularism. Fundamentalists advocate a return to the past (often imagined and idyllic) before so-called modern influences (like diversity, acceptance, and tolerance) came to "undermine" traditional values. To fundamentalists, openness, transparency, human rights, and democracy threaten local cultures and the fundamentalists' authority. At least two broad categories of fundamentalism can be distinguished. *Private fundamentalism* can be found among devout followers of Islam, Christianity, Judaism, and other religions. The definition indicates a self-contained aspect of these beliefs and practices: People who embrace private fundamentalism tend not to impose their views on other individuals and are likely to be more tolerant toward other people's religious views. *Political fundamentalism*, in contrast, advocates and dictates the ways by which people must live and run their communities (Husain, 2002). Al-Qaeda and ISIS are examples of Islamic fundamentalism that have profoundly affected hundreds of millions of lives in the second decade of this century.

How can psychologists apply this knowledge to their daily work? An essential first step is expanding their awareness about such issues. For instance, in conducting psychotherapy with clients whose history (or even current experience) includes exposure to extreme forms of nationalism, fundamentalism, or chauvinism as part of their cultural background, the therapist's knowledge base can serve to promote a greater degree of understanding and empathy, and thereby a higher probability of successful therapeutic outcomes. Psychologists must also be good listeners, carefully attending to the nuances of their clients' linguistic

expressions, including cultural idioms. Another important element is the psychologist's dedicated stance against the many forms of ethnic or religious prejudice, such as anti–Semitism or Islamophobia (i.e., hostility toward and discrimination against members of these groups based on their collective identity). Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia threaten not only the Jewish and Muslim communities, but all of us as individuals and citizens (U.S. National Strategy to Counter Anti-Semitism, 2023).

After the Russian government launched its war against Ukraine in 2022, the media began examining *Russophobia*, which refers to a state of persistent antipathy toward people with a Russian ethic identity as well as a broader prejudice against Russian culture, history, or policies. As a consequence, psychologists should help us learn to separate the actions of national governments (or more specifically their leaders) from the views held by the citizens of these countries. In the United States following the end of World War II in 1945, it took about two decades for anti-German and anti-Japanese sentiment to abate for most American citizens, due to the war-time actions of their respective governments. Similarly, it was the government of Russia – a relatively few individuals – that waged its unprovoked war in Ukraine. Although it's true that within Russia, there were (and sadly, still are) quite a few eager supporters of the war, there are many more opponents, who feel restrained from speaking up publicly due to fears of severe reprisal, such as imprisonment or death.

PEACE PSYCHOLOGY

Some lessons from psychology's relatively recent past might stimulate your interest in applying your knowledge toward the goals of pursuing peace and non–violent conflict resolution. Consider **peace psychology**, a theoretical and applied branch that studies ideological and psychological causes of war, violent conflicts, and aggression with the goal of developing educational programs and reducing violence and the threat of force in international relations and domestic policies (Greening, 1986; Shiraev & Zubok, 2024). Peace psychology maintains that most causes of war and violence are preventable. Psychologists working in this field have conducted research on a wide range of social issues and topics, including forgiveness, social awareness, altruism, and conflict resolution. It takes both political leaders and ordinary people to relinquish their old images of "the enemy" and seek possibilities for dialogue with their adversaries.

One application of peace psychology is the global field of *public diplomacy*, which involves the organized interaction among citizens of different countries to establish a dialogue intended to find solutions to international disputes or other issues. Public diplomacy sets out to help politicians, experts, students, and ordinary people to communicate, understand, and ultimately, reduce international tensions. Several pioneers of peace psychology, including Thomas Greening, made important practical contributions to the improvement of U.S.−Soviet relations in the 1980s (Greening, 1986). These psychologists organized face-to-face meetings between officials, students, teachers, musicians, and other individuals in the United States and the Soviet Union to extinguish the old "enemy" image and promote a new atmosphere of trust. Peace psychology encourages the appreciation of diversity and shares the fundamental belief that conflicts can be resolved without violence and for the benefit of the various conflicting groups (Woolf & Hulsizer, 2018).

HEALTH CARE

POVERTY, CULTURE, AND HEALTH

While most people in the wealthier areas of the world are seeking to enhance the quality of their lives, for almost a billion people, their chief daily concern is simply survival. Every year, the World Health Organization publishes data about major contributors to illness and premature death. Poverty consistency ranks among the top factors on the list. Therefore, a key task of psychologists and other professionals working in poor regions is to help people achieve decent living standards and acquire access to health care (Duflo, 2016).

There are many cultural and psychological factors, such as customs and values, that can adversely affect people's attitudes and actions related to their physical and mental health. Some of these involve erroneous folk beliefs, cultural myths, or fear of sanctions from others in the community. See Table 12.1 for a few examples of how particular cultural beliefs and practices contradict international health initiatives and scientific evidence.

Table 12.1 Health Policies vs. Cultural Beliefs

Current International Health Initiatives and Policy Recommendations	Specific Cultural Beliefs, Popular Practices, and Health-Related Myths
Certain practices, especially involving the abuse of children and women (such as forced child labor or systematic spousal cruelty), should be condemned and abolished. Governments and communities should seek to curb such practices.	People from other countries, especially in the West, have no right to interfere with local communities regarding specific cultural traditions. Every culture has the absolute right to determine its own practices, whether or not they follow Western standards of mistreatment or abuse.
In poorer countries, lower fertility rates and smaller families improve people's economic opportunities, educational possibilities, and general health. Therefore, high fertility rates should be reduced.	Fertility rates are beyond people's control. Contraceptives and other birth-control methods should not be used, based on religious and other cultural reasons.
It is imperative to gather and disseminate detailed information about how many people are affected by infectious diseases, such as AIDS, COVID, and tuberculosis. People should be educated about the prevention and treatment of such diseases.	AIDS is not caused by an infection. COVID is not caused by a virus. In general, the number of cases should be underreported to avoid accusations of "immoral" behavior or poor health policies. It is a personal failing to admit such diagnoses to others.
Certain psychological problems (such as anxiety, depression, or schizophrenia) should be recognized and diagnosed by qualified professionals. Treatment for such problems should be made available, including the use of medication and counseling.	There is no such thing as a mental disorder. All psychological dysfunctions are a result of moral weakness or spiritual failings. The remedy for such dysfunctions is beyond the abilities of contemporary medicine or psychology and should, instead, be treated by religious or traditional means.

Time and again, research shows how availability of and access to resources (physical and mental health care, the presence of qualified medical professionals and psychologists, as well as educational opportunities) all positively affect the individual's healthier habits and better health. Educated individuals in an economically secure community have a better chance to recognize their symptoms of anxiety and depression, for example, and seek professional help, compared to people with less knowledge and fewer opportunities.

SPIRITUALITY, SCIENCE, AND HEALTH

Historically, many psychologists provide psychotherapy or **counseling**, which involves the provision of professional guidance and support in addressing and resolving personal, social, or psychological problems and challenges. Such services are typically offered from a contemporary Western position of science that utilizes some combination of cognitive interventions, behavioral modifications, and biomedical treatment as the main approaches to psychological disorders. Historically, university-based psychological science in Western countries has separated psychology and religion. As a result, most professional psychologists have little knowledge or training in the field of "spiritual" issues, which were viewed as nonscientific and therefore undeserving of attention.

Spirituality refers to a broad range of concepts and phenomena concerning the human spirit or soul – as opposed to material or physical objects – which can encompass both religious and non-religious belief systems. In a psychological context, spirituality emphasizes mind over matter, being over having, and mental effort over physical action. Within a multidisciplinary scientific approach, psychologists these days try to understand spirituality and its effects on treatment and health. Yet psychologists tend to have rather limited experience in spirituality, which is an essential source of motivation, emotion, and reasoning for many people living in traditional cultures and modern settings (Verginer & Juen, 2019; Penny et al., 2009).

Spirituality includes a vast number of human activities and beliefs not limited only to faith in God, per se. To some people who are not religious, spirituality encompasses their deep belief in positive outcomes, optimism about the future, and the powers in our environment that provide us with a sense of competence and strength. To other people, spirituality consists mostly of their adherence to certain rituals and customs, such as meditation and prayer, which help them to reduce stress, improve their sense of well-being, and minimize feelings of dysphoria. Yet to other people, spirituality serves as a vital source of motivation, proving them with a sense of joy, personal empowerment, purpose, and meaning.

Rejecting speculations about the "sheer power of the mind" (like telepathy, telekinesis, and faith healing), psychologists studying spirituality currently try to apply scientifically sound methods of comparative analysis. Based on such studies, some researchers have found evidence that spiritual factors, such as strong religious beliefs, prayer, meditation, and combinations of these, can affect at least four interacting physiological systems: the brain, the endocrine system, the peripheral nervous system, and the immune system

(Tinoca & Ortiz, 2014). Spirituality as a factor, for example, is correlated with lower blood pressure, pulse rate, and endocrine activity (Ray, 2004).

Various relaxation methods rooted in Eastern philosophies and religious traditions, including Hinduism and Buddhism, have been gaining in popularity. They place self-awareness, forgiveness, and growth-seeking experiences at the center of therapeutic treatment. Interest in *mindfulness* (internal and external experiences occurring in the present moment) and the practice of meditation also continues to grow.

Psychologists and health professional need to be cautious, however, because the results of research can vary widely. In some areas, the impact of spirituality is recognized. For instance, there is evidence that spirituality is correlated with lower rates of cardiovascular diseases (Chamsi-Pasha & Chamsi-Pasha, 2015). However, contemporary science has no evidence that spirituality improves recovery from acute illness or that deeply religious people have longer life expectancy.

A CASE IN POINT

DO PRAYERS ACTUALLY HEAL?

Since ancient times, people have faithfully turned to the act of praying to provide comfort and assistance for those in distress. Whether for an ailing parent, a depressed friend, a drug-addicted sibling, a sickly child, the victims of a natural catastrophe, or even an injured pet, we fervently seek the divine intervention of a power greater than ours to provide aid and relief for the afflicted. But do prayers actually work? Can they, for example, help to heal people with a physical malady?

Herbert Benson and his associates (2006) decided to put this question to the empirical test. In a research study known as "The Great Prayer Experiment," 1,802 coronary artery bypass patients at six different hospitals were randomly assigned to one of three conditions: Group 1 received prayers but weren't informed of this fact; Group 2 did not receive prayers, but weren't informed of this fact; Group 3 received prayers and were informed of this fact. Relatively standardized prayers for a quick, healthy recovery were offered by the members of three Christian churches. The primary outcome measure was the presence of complications within 30 days of surgery.

How would you predict the experiment turned out? Results comparing Group 1 and Group 2 showed virtually no difference in their rates of complications. Interestingly, Group 3 showed a *higher* rate of complications; that is, outcomes were worse for patients who knew they were being prayed for. How can we account for this? It has been speculated that perhaps Group 3 experienced some kind of stress-related

performance anxiety (see Dawkins, 2006). But we have nothing definitive for this question. What we did learn is that prayer appeared to have no effect on outcomes in this study and that patients who were not prayed for (Group 2) fared much better than those who were (Group 3). How might you explain these results? Use your tools of critical thinking from Chapter 2.

Working in traditional cultural environments, psychologists often find that many individuals tend to explain psychological disorders based on **pseudoscience**, which consists of a collection of beliefs, statements, or methods falsely claiming to be scientific. Beliefs in supernatural forces, "miracle" healing, or occult phenomena are very common around the world. People in many traditional communities (and even certain Christian fundamentalist sects in the U.S.) believe that various psychological problems originate as God's punishment for evil acts.

HOLISTIC TREATMENT

Research into spirituality has contributed to the *holistic health movement*, a multidisciplinary applied field focusing on the fundamental assumption that physical, mental, and spiritual factors contributing to an individual's illness are all interconnected and important in treatment. The holistic approach in medicine also elevates the importance of psychological factors in the medical treatment and prevention of illness (Remen, 1996). Under the influence of holistic ideas, during the past 50 or so years, many new centers of holistic treatment have appeared in North America, Europe, and across the world. Increasing numbers of trained professionals with medical and psychological degrees are turning to spirituality, classical literature, folklore, and indigenous methods of healing to identify and apply effective treatment methods involving both body and mind. Supporters of holistic treatment do not see their clients simply as "constellations of symptoms"; rather, they emphasize the uniqueness of every individual's history, beliefs, values, and environmental context.

Holistic principles also find application in *narrative medicine*, a clinical field in which medical professionals focus on the interpretation and understanding of patients' stories of their illness (Charon et al., 2016; Charon, 1992). Several medical schools and residency programs have initiated training physicians in this treatment mode. Narrative medicine helps doctors, nurses, social workers, and therapists improve the effectiveness of patient care by elevating professionals' capacity for attention, reflection, representation, and affiliation with patients and colleagues (Charon, 1993). Narrative psychotherapy similarly focuses on how people's unique stories shape their lives.

What should a health care worker do in situations when people in local communities embrace "nonscientific" (i.e., from a Western standpoint) views of psychological problems and disorders? Does a university-trained professional have an obligation to

raise doubts in the minds of the local population about the validity of supernatural beliefs explaining the nature and causes of psychological problems? There are no easy answers here. It is generally advisable to start with a relatively objective assessment of the type and degree of impairment being manifested. In addition, it is reasonable to work within the client's belief system and culture-specific components of the client's illness, without necessarily endorsing the validity of such beliefs. In other words, psychologists are encouraged to respect their clients' beliefs, but do not have to accept them as scientifically valid.

CONCLUSIONS

A key theme running throughout this book is that when comparing cultural groups, we should attend both to their differences and to their similarities. This principle holds true for all such comparisons, including those based on gender, ethnicity, race, religion, nationality, or socioeconomic status.

We (the authors) have advocated that we should learn to recognize and respect the differences we have with others. Further, we believe that cross-cultural psychology should strive to embrace diversity in its numerous forms, including diversity of ideas, opinions, and customs. But this does not mean surrendering one's own values in the process. Nor does it mean that all points of view are equally valid. Opinions are not facts. "Tradition" is never a valid excuse for the willful subjugation of any other group. As such, we reject any value system suggesting the inherent superiority of some groups over the inferiority of others.

Although it may be tempting to focus on the differences between ourselves and other people, we believe it is the similarities that hold the essential key for improved understanding, social progress, and the greater good. Always keep this in mind: *The differences between most groups are generally smaller than the differences within these groups.* In other words, despite our differences, we are likely to share much more in common with people in other groups . . . provided that we actively look for it.

Of course, psychologists alone cannot make everyone healthy, secure, and happy. Despite enormous economic progress in many countries, hundreds of millions of people – nearly 10 percent of the global population – still live in extreme poverty. Almost 1 in 4 people in the world do not have access to clean drinking water. Civil hostilities continue to tear nations apart. Bloody wars fought in the name of religion, government, and ethnicity are still waged across the globe.

Nevertheless, cross-cultural psychology is in a prime position to respond to existing and emerging global and local challenges, particularly those involving ethnic, religious, national, and other cultural issues. From racial and gender equity to environmental awareness and greater respect for the rights of children and the elderly, cross-cultural psychologists can lead the way to a more science-based and compassionate cultural dialogue that encourages the open exchange of ideas that different cultures can offer to one another.

True, psychologists are neither magicians nor policy makers; nor do they dictate what is taught in schools or which laws are enacted by governments. However, we believe that psychologists – through their research, publishing, volunteer activism, social media postings, podcasts, interviews, volunteer actions, and many other venues – can ultimately influence social policy. Psychologists are able to influence other people's opinions, alter stereotypes, provide motivation to address social injustice, reduce harmful behaviors and emotional distress, and recommend socially meaningful actions.

What can you do now? Put your knowledge to good use. Continue to hone and apply your critical thinking skills, which you have learned here and elsewhere. Don't rely on AI to do your thinking for you. Share your ideas. Engage in meaningful dialogue with others, particularly those with whom you might initially disagree. Take action for those causes which you find to be just and righteous to improve the lives of others.

The great Chinese thinker, Lao Tzu, taught that a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. We have already taken the first steps together through the pages of this book. Let us continue our journey and see what we can do to make the world a better place. Now. Everywhere. Always . . .

CHAPTER SUMMARY

1. Over the past decade cross-cultural psychology has increasingly embraced a new focus: addressing issues relevant to social justice, diversity, equity, and personal dignity.
2. Social justice as a focus of modern psychology involves particular emphasis on the rights of historically oppressed, exploited, marginalized, minority, or disadvantaged populations.
3. Critical race theory emerged in the 1970s as an academic and legal approach to studying racism based on the premise that racial bias – intentional or not – is institutionally structural or systemic in nature, and that race is a social construct rather than a biologically determined trait.
4. Applied to the work of psychologists, "wokeness" stands for both a general awareness and subsequent specific actions to address centuries of racial injustice and discrimination, such as by promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI).

5. Psychologists should be aware of – and respect – people's cultural identities and acknowledge that each individual may have a different vision of history and society.

6. Learning about sexism in all areas of our life is important both for gaining professional knowledge and for developing good citizenship skills.

7. Across countries, religions, and political affiliations, one of the key points of disagreement in the reproductive rights debate is whether or not abortion is a basic right.

8. LGBTQ+ psychology is a theoretical and applied field that gained support and recognition globally in the 2020s. It represents a modern branch of psychology that studies and assists individuals whose orientation is gender-variant or transgender.

9. Cross-cultural psychologists should address the problems and obstacles that people face globally due to their age or disability.

10. Cross-cultural psychologists should promote the causes of environmental justice and work toward the fair treatment of all people, regardless of race, gender, religion, ethnicity, national origin, or income, with respect to their safety, health, opportunity, and comfort.

11. Massive technological innovations have changed the cultural norms related to privacy as well as the political, ethical, and legal barriers that protected privacy in the past.

12. Psychologists using digital technologies (particularly AI) are working to assist individuals with numerous tasks as well as to provide a personalized form of emotional support and companionship, all within a culturally sensitive context.

13. Efforts should be made to support positive nationalism, which stands for one's sense of pride in their nation's cultural past and present. However, psychologists should be aware of the various forms of negative nationalism, which embraces attitudes of superiority, dominance, and belittling other national or ethnic groups.

14. Many cultural and psychological factors, such as customs and values, can affect people's attitudes and actions related to their physical and mental health. Psychologists should be aware of these factors and acknowledge them in their daily work.

15. Always keep in mind that the differences between most groups are generally smaller than the differences within these groups.

KEY TERMS

Ageism Prejudice or discrimination against individuals or groups based on their age.

Black Lives Matter (BLM) Refers to both a phrase and a decentralized international sociopolitical movement dedicated to fighting violence and systemic racism toward black people, particularly in the form of police brutality.

Cancel culture A social phenomenon in which those who are judged to have behaved in an unacceptable or offensive manner are shunned, ostracized, boycotted, or occupationally removed.

Catfishing Refers to an online scam in which an individual creates a fictitious persona on a **social media** (usually dating) website, with the goal of compromising the victim in some way,

such as financial gain, cyberstalking, harassment, or revenge.

Counseling The provision of professional guidance and support in addressing and resolving personal, social, or psychological problems and challenges.

Critical race theory (CRT) 1. An academic and legal approach to studying racism based on the premise that racial bias – intentional or unintentional – is institutionally structural or systemic in nature, and that race is a social construct rather than a biologically determined trait (original meaning). 2. More recently, frequently invoked as part of a broader critique against politically "progressive" agendas, with particular criticism of the premise that white people are inherently racist.

Digital companionship The use of digital technologies (particularly AI) to assist an individual with numerous tasks as well as to provide a personalized form of emotional support and companionship in a culturally sensitive context.

Environmental justice The fair treatment of all people, regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to their equal access to a healthy, safe, and sustainable environment, as well as protection from environmental harm.

Fundamentalism A set of values rooted in rigid adherence to traditional (usually religious) principles and practices and is often associated with intolerance to individual choice and secularism.

Green values (Green politics) A political ideology that promotes environmental quality and an ecologically sustainable planet, for example by promoting products that are recyclable, biodegradable, or nonpolluting.

Greenwashing An act of deceptive advertising which involves conveying the false impression that a company or product is more environmentally friendly than it actually is; a form of **virtue signaling**.

Historical revisionism The practice of re-examining or reinterpreting historical events or theories based on motivations that can be benevolent, malevolent, or dispassionate.

Homophobia Systemic aversion to homosexuality and LGBTQ+ individuals, which may or may not be fear-based.

Identity politics A wide range of political activities and theorizing founded on a shared perception of oppression experienced by members of particular social groups (e.g., based on race, gender, religion, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status), thereby valuing group identity over individual identity.

LGBTQ+ An initialism that stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, with the "+" sign denoting all other gender identities that are not specifically covered by the other five initials.

#MeToo A global social movement that seeks to expose and prevent sexual harassment and assault, especially against women, in which people publicize their experiences to combat various forms of sexual misconduct.

Nationalism In its most general sense, refers to individual and collective identification with a country or a nation.

It can consist of *positive nationalism* and *negative nationalism*.

Peace psychology A theoretical and applied branch that studies ideological and psychological causes of war, violent conflicts, and aggression, with the goal of developing educational programs and reducing violence and the threat of force in international relations and domestic policies.

Pseudoscience A collection of beliefs, statements, or methods falsely claiming to be scientific.

Sexism Prejudice or discrimination rooted in biased views of sex or gender.

Social justice Fair treatment of all people in a society, including the distribution of resources, privileges, opportunities, and outcomes. Currently, this involves particular emphasis on the rights of historically oppressed, exploited, marginalized, or minority populations.

Social media Forms of interactive electronic communication on the Internet through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, and other content. Examples include websites for social networking, Twitter (now known as X), Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok.

Spirituality A broad range of concepts and phenomena concerning the human spirit or soul, as opposed to material or physical objects, which can encompass both religious and non–religious belief systems.

Trolling The deliberate act of posting provocative or inflammatory content on various Internet platforms with the goal of antagonizing, insulting, offending, or otherwise upsetting others.

Virtue signaling The disingenuous act of publicly displaying a righteous stance on a social or political issue solely with the intent of looking morally good in the eyes of others. Also known as *moral grandstanding*.

White privilege The set of ascribed inherent social and economic advantages – obvious or subtle – that white people possess by virtue of their race (skin color) in a culture characterized by racial inequity.

Woke/Wokeness 1. The quality of being aware of and actively attentive to important societal facts and issues, especially those pertaining to race, gender, and **social justice** (original term dating back to the 1930s). 2. Maintaining and promoting politically "progressive" agendas, perceived by some to be unreasonable, oppressive, or excessive (more recent usage).

REFERENCES

Adeyemi, I. R., Razak, Shukor, A., & Salleh, M. (2016). Understanding online behavior: Exploring the probability of online personality trait using supervised machine-learning approach. *Frontiers in ICT*, May 31, 2016. https://doi.org/10.3389/fict.2016.00008

APA (American Psychological Association). (2023). *A guide to sexual orientation and gender diversity terms*. www.apa.org/ed/precollege/psychology-teacher-network/introductory-psychology/diversity-terms

Atherton, G., Morimoto, Y., Nakashima, S., & Cross, L. (2023). Does the study of culture enrich our understanding of autism? A cross-cultural exploration of life on the

spectrum in Japan and the West. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*. https://doi.org/10.1177/00220221231169945

Bemak, F., & Chung, R. C.-Y. (2017). Refugee trauma: Culturally responsive counseling interventions. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, *95*(3), 299–308.

Benson, H., Dusek, J. A., Sherwood, J. B., Lam, P., Bethea, C. F., Carpenter, W., Levitsky, S., Hill, P. C., Clem, D. W., Jain, M. K., Drumel, D. Kopecky, S. L., Mueller, P. S., Marek, D., Rollins, S., & Hibberd, P. L. (2006). Study of the therapeutic effects of intercessory prayer (STEP) in cardiac bypass patients: A multicenter randomized trial of uncertainty and certainty of receiving intercessory prayer. *American Heart Journal*, *151*(4), 934–942.

Buckels, E. E., Trapnell, P. D., Andjelovic, T., & Paulhus, D. L. (2019). Internet trolling and everyday sadism: Parallel effects on pain perception and moral judgment. *Journal of Personality*, *87*, 328–340.

Chamsi-Pasha, H., & Chamsi-Pasha, M. (2015, October 3). Spirituality and religiosity in cardiac rehabilitation. *British Medical Journal, 351*. www.bmj.com/content/351/bmj.h5000/rr

Charon, R. (1992). To build a case: Medical histories as traditions in conflict. *Literature and Medicine*, 11(1), 93–105.

Charon, R. (1993). The narrative road to empathy. In H. Spiro (Ed.), *Empathy and the medical profession: Beyond pills and the scalpel* (pp. 147–159). New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Charon, R., Colon, E., DasGupta, S., Hermann, N., & Irvine, C. (2016). *The principles and practice of narrative medicine*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Chen, R., Zhu, X., Wright, L., Drescher, J., Gao, Y., Wu, L., Ying, X., Qi, J., Chen, C., Xi, Y., Ji, L., Zhao, H., Ou, J., & Broome, M. (2019) Suicidal ideation and attempted suicide amongst Chinese transgender persons: National population study. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, *15*(245), 1126–1134.

Dawkins, R. (2006). *The God delusion*. London: Bantam Press.

DiAngelo, R. (2018). *White fragility: Why it's so hard for white people to talk about racism*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Duflo, E. (2016). *Poverty and shared prosperity 2016: Taking on inequality*. Washington, DC: World Bank Publications.

Engelhart, K. (2021). Home and alone: What robots can – and can't – do for the old and lonely. *The New Yorker*. May 31, pp. 24–29.

EPA. (United States Environmental Protection Agency). (2023). *Environmental justice*. www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice

Epstein, S. (2018). Mandatory retirement: Is it legal?. *Binah*: February, 25–26.

Eromo, T. L., & Levy, D. A. (2017). The rise, fall, and resurgence of "self-esteem": A critique, reconceptualization, and recommendations. *North American Journal of Psychology*, *19*(2), 255–302.

Filipovic, J. (2018, September 18). Rapists have no place on the supreme court. Kavanaugh's accuser must be heard. *The Guardian*. https://bit.ly/3meXzHS

Giansanti, Daniele (2021). The social robot in rehabilitation and assistance: What is the future? *Healthcare*, *9*(3). 244. https://doi.org/10.3390/healthcare9030244

Glick, P., & Fiske, S. T. (1997). Hostile and benevolent sexism. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, *21*, 119–135.

Greening, T. (1986). Passion bearers and peace psychology. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, *26*(4), 98–105.

Greenpeace International. (2023). *The issues we work on*. www.greenpeace.org/international/

Haidt, J., & Rose-Stockwell, T. (2019). The dark psychology of social networks. *The Atlantic*. December. www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2019/12/social-media-democracy/600763/

Human Rights Watch (HRW). (2022). *Access to abortion is a human right*. www.hrw.org/news/2022/06/24/qa-access-abortion-human-right

Husain, M. (2002). *Global Islamic politics.* New York: Longman.

Hyde, L. (1998). *Trickster makes this world: Mischief, myth, and art*. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

Ikramullah, E., & Neggaz, M. (2022). *The majority of American Muslims believe abortion should be legal in all or most cases. American Muslim Poll*. www.ispu.org/2022-abortion-data/

Intuition Robotics (2020). Digital assistants vs digital companions: What's the difference? https://medium.com/swlh/digital-assistants-vs-digital-companions-whats-the-difference-a4eefd0ba5db

James, L., & Desormeaux, L. (2023). The state of Black leadership: What can be done to create sustainable change. *Consulting Psychology Journal*, *75*(1), 1–4.

Jones, H. J. (2019). *The 1619 project*. In C. Roper, I. Silverman, & J. Silverstein (Eds.). New York: Random House.

Jung, K., Shavitt, S., Viswanathan, M., & Hilbe, J. (2014). Female hurricanes are deadlier than male hurricanes. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, *111*(24), 8782–8787.

Kafka, A. M. (2023). Seeing through woke-washing: Effects of projected diversity values and leader racial diversity on equity in workplace outcomes. *Consulting Psychology Journal*, *75*(1), 94–118.

Kantor, J., & Twohey, M. (2019). *She said: Breaking the sexual harassment story that helped ignite a movement*. New York: Penguin.

Kaasa, A., & Minkov, M. (2020). Are the world's national cultures becoming more similar? *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *51*(7–8), 531–550. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022120933677

Kessler, A. (2022). Can social media alter a war? *Wall Street Journal*. January 2. www.wsj.com/articles/can-social-media-alter-a-war-nato-russian-bots-colonial-pipeline-national-security-ukraine-cyberwarfare-hack-invasion-11641130267

Leslie, S. J., Cimpian, A., Meyer, M., & Freeland, E. (2015). Expectations of brilliance underlie gender distributions across academic disciplines. *Science*, *347*, 262–265.

Manning, C., & Amel, E. (2022). How to use psychology for sustainability and climate justice. *Psychology Student Network*. American Psychological Association. March 1. www.apa.org/ed/precollege/psn/2022/03/psychology-sustainability-climate-justice

Margulis, S. T. (2003). Privacy as a social issue and behavioral concept. *Journal of Social Issues*, *59*(2), 243–261.

McWhorter, J. H. (2021). *Woke racism: How a new religion has betrayed America*. New York: Portfolio/Penguin.

Mohammad, L. & Brown, A. (2023). Muslim-American opinions on abortion are complex. What does Islam actually say? *NPR. Religion*. www.npr.org/2023/02/01/1152071397/muslim-abortion-islam-religion-united-states

Morrill, Z. (2018). *What does social justice really mean for psychologists? Mad in America*. www.madinamerica.com/2018/09/social-justice-really-mean-psychologists/

Muller, J. (2008). Us and them: The enduring power of ethnic nationalism. *Foreign Affairs*, 87(22), 18–35.

Mylonas, H. & Tudor, M. (2021). Nationalism: What we know and what we still need to know. *Annual Review of Political Science*, *24*(1), 109–132.

Onn, Y., et al., (2005) *Privacy in the digital environment*. Haifa Center of Law & Technology, pp. 1–12.

Palikot, A. (2022). Hard-won unity: Polls show Russian invasion is transforming Ukrainian self-identity. Radio Liberty. Print. August 23. www.rferl.org/a/ukrainian-unity-identity-poll-russian-invasion/32001348.html

Penny, E., Newton, E., & Larkin, M. (2009). Whispering on the water: British Pakistani families' experiences of support from an early intervention service for first-episode psychosis. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 40(6), 969–987.

Radford, B. (2016). *Bad clown*. Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press.

Rasmussen, S. (2018). Besieged Rouhani takes hard line. *The Wall Street Journal*, July 12. A9.

Ray, O. (2004, January). How the mind hurts and heals the body. *American Psychologist*, *59*(1), 29–40.

Reisner, S., Vetters, R., Leclerc, M., Zaslow, S., Wolfru, S., Shumer, D., & Mimiaga, M. (2015). Mental health of transgender youth in care at an adolescent urban community health center: A matched retrospective cohort study. *Journal of the Adolescent Health*, *56*(3), 274–279.

Remen, R. N. (1996). *Kitchen table wisdom: Stories that heal*. New York: Riverhead Books.

Saeidzadeh, Z. (2016). Transsexuality in contemporary Iran: Legal and social misrecognition. *Feminist Legal Studies*, *24*, 249–272.

Scott, B., Amel, E., Koger, S., & Manning, C. (2021). *Psychology for sustainability*. New York: Routledge.

Sest, N., & March, E. (2017). Constructing the cyber-troll: Psychopathy, sadism, and empathy. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *119*(1), 69–72.

Sheridan T. B. (2020). A review of recent research in social robotics. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, *36*, 7–12. https://doi.co/10.1016/j.copsyc.2020.01.003

Shih, K., Chang, T.-F., & Chen, S. Y. (2019). Impacts of the model minority myth on Asian American individuals and families: Social justice and critical race feminist perspectives. *Journal of Family Theory and Review*, *11*(3), 412–428.

Shiraev, E., Keohane, J., Icks, M., & Samoilenko, S. (2022). *Character Assassination and Reputation Management*. New York: Routledge.

Shiraev, E., & Khudoley, K. (2019). *Russian foreign policy*. London: Macmillan.

Shiraev, E., & Zubok, V. (2024). *International relations* (4th ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.

Shugerman, E. (2018, October 18). "Kava-No": Kavanaugh's classmates rally against him outside Yale club. *Daily Beast*. Retrieved from https://bit.ly/3gDTJqO

Smith, C. (2020). *Palestine and the Arab–Israeli conflict: A history with documents* (10th ed.). New York: St. Martin's.

Smith, G. A. (2022). *Like Americans overall, Catholics vary in their abortion views, with regular Mass attenders most opposed*. Pew Research Center. www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2022/05/23/like-americans-overall-catholics-vary-in-their-abortion-views-with-regular-mass-attenders-most-opposed/

Suleman, S., Garber, K. D., Rutkow, L. (2018). Xenophobia as a determinant of health: An integrative review. *Journal of Public Health Policy*, *39*, 407–423.

Theiss-Morse, E. (2009). *Who counts as an American?: The boundaries of national identity*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Thrift, E., & Sugarman, J. (2018). What is social justice? Implications for psychology. *Journal of Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology*, *39*(1), 1–17.

Tinoca, C., & Ortiz, J. (2014). Magnetic stimulation of the temporal cortex: A partial "god helmet" replication study. *Journal of Consciousness Exploration & Research*, *5*(3), 234–257.

U.S. National Strategy to Counter Anti-Semitism. (2023). The Whitehouse Online. www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/U.S.-National-Strategy-to-Counter-Antisemitism.pdf

Verginer, L., & Juen, B. H. (2019). Spiritual explanatory models of mental illness in West Nile, Uganda. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *50*(2), 233–253.

Wilson, K. (2014, August 6). Transgender at 10. Willamette Week. Retrieved July 3, 2023 from www.wweek.com/portland/article-22897-transgenderat10.html

Woolf, L. M., & Hulsizer, M. R. (2018). Peace psychology: A gateway and path to culture and diversity. In K. D. Keith (Ed.), *Culture across the curriculum: A psychology teacher's handbook* (pp. 427–446). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

World Bank. (2022). *Poverty*. www.worldbank.org/en/topic/poverty/overview

INDEX

Locators in **bold** refer to tables.