

Three approaches to the psychology of culture: Where do they come from? Where can they go?

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Cultural psychology, cross-cultural psychology, and indigenous psychology are three approaches to the psychology of culture. The author begins by comparing the three approaches – conceptually, methodologically; and historically. She concludes that each approach has contributed knowledge of the “deep structure” of culture to the field of psychology. This “deep structure” consists of the framework of individualism and collectivism; particular cultures are therefore surface forms of one or the other of these basic cultural frameworks. Rather than being universal, classical social and developmental psychology are seen as reflecting a particular indigenous psychology. For the future, a truly universal psychology must offer a theoretical framework that encompasses alternative indigenous psychologies.

It was a great honor to be part of this important series on indigenous, cultural, and organized for the Third Biennial Conference of the Asian Association of Social Psychology. My title is “Three approaches to the psychology of culture: Where do they come from? Where can they go?” Before discussing origins and future directions, however, it is necessary to address the question, “What are they?” Therefore, I will begin with a conceptual and methodological analysis of the three approaches.

What are they? Conceptual and methodological analysis

Comparing cultural and cross-cultural psychology

The terms *cross-cultural psychology*, *cultural psychology*, and *indigenous psychology* are each fuzzy concepts with partially overlapping sets of exemplars. I will therefore oversimplify for the sake of clear exposition. I begin by comparing cross-cultural and cultural psychology, the two approaches with which I am most familiar. I will then compare indigenous psychology with each in turn, noting both unique and overlapping features.

In cross-cultural psychology, culture is generally operationalized as an antecedent variable (Berry, 1976; Lonner & Adamopoulos, 1997). In the paradigmatic instances of such an approach, culture is implicitly viewed as being outside of and apart from the individual. Culture and human activity are seen as separable. In cultural psychology (Cole, 1990; Price-Williams, 1980; Shweder, 1990), in contrast, culture is not seen as outside the individual, but as inside in an important way (Jahoda, 1992). Culture is “a way of knowing, of

construing the world and others” (Bruner, 1993, p. 516). Through processes of interaction and communication, these construals acquire a certain degree of intersubjectivity or shared meaning. Shared knowledge and shared meanings generate a set of everyday practices that also define culture (e.g., Scribner & Cole, 1981). Thus, culture and behavior, culture and mind are viewed as indistinguishable (Jahoda, 1992).

The methodological ideal of the paradigmatic cross-cultural psychologist is to carry a procedure established in one culture, with known psychometric properties, to one or more other cultures, to make a cross-cultural comparison (Berry, Poortinga, Segall & Dasen, 1992). Two classic examples are IQ tests and measures of field independence and interdependence. In contrast, the methodological ideal of the paradigmatic cultural psychologist is to derive procedures for each culture from the lifeways and modes of communication of that culture. Any cross-cultural comparison is secondary to such culture-specific procedures. For example, I derived an experimental procedure from the observed practices of weaving in an indigenous Maya community; this was a task to assess the development of cognitive representational skills, utilizing culturally familiar woven patterns; the task was designed for this cultural community only.

There is a second, closely related difference. Whereas cross-cultural psychology tends to derive its problems and procedures from established psychological methodology, cultural psychology derives its problems and procedures from an analysis of the nature of culture (e.g., Scribner, 1984, 1985; Scribner & Cole, 1981). In other words, the ideal in cultural psychology is for problems and procedures to flow from the nature of culture, both in general and in specific. For example, Scribner and Cole (1981) focused on literacy as an important cultural element, a way of interpreting and representing the world (the nature of culture in general). They proceeded to find out what each of three different literacies meant to the Vai people of Liberia (the nature of culture in specific) and to study the cognitive consequences of these literacy practices.

Variables vs. processes. Insofar as cross-cultural psychology operationalizes culture as an antecedent or independent variable, it is being studied as an *index* rather than a *process*. Whiting (1976) has talked about how each independent variable of a sociocultural nature must be “unpacked” into its component processes. This is clear for ethnic labels: such a label creates a package for distinctive cultural processes such as values and behaviors. The label serves simultaneously as an index for a variety of behaviors and as an independent variable that facilitates cross-cultural comparison. Cultural psychologists, in contrast, study cultural processes directly; they rely much less on “packaged” or indexical variables in their research designs.

Just as cross-cultural psychology “packages” culture in independent variables, it also “packages” the individual subject in dependent variables. In the same way that independent variables are stand-ins for complex cultural processes, so too dependent variables generally function as indices of individual cultural processes – such as cultural activities and social interaction – rather than constituting the processes themselves. A dependent variable is something that can be measured; it often functions to summarize a process. Again, cultural psychology attempts to study the process itself. For this purpose, it has developed its own tool kit of methods. Some, like ethnography and discourse analysis, have been adapted from anthropology. With other methods, such as the use of video, it has followed the leadership of developmental psychology as a discipline. Two kinds of psychological process stand out as being central to the theoretical framework of cultural psychology.

The construction of meaning. One privileged type of process is the construction of meaning, particularly shared meanings; a key aspect of this process is interpretation, the notion that culture provides a lens, through which we see and interpret (evaluate) the world. These processes – stemming from the symbolic quality of culture – constitute the research focus of a growing number of social psychologists, led by Markus and Kitayama (1991), who view themselves as cultural psychologists. The other type of privileged process falls under the rubric of development and socialization.

Development and socialization. Cultural psychology does not simply study the adult as a static entity with set cultural characteristics. Instead, it attempts to study the diachronic processes of socialization and development that constitute cultural learning and apprenticeship (e.g., Azuma, 1994; Bruner, 1993; Lebra, 1994; Ochs & Schieffeling, 1984; Rogoff, 1990; Tomasello, Kruger, & Ratner, 1993). We see these processes as creating the cultural adult, who, in turn, participates in the socialization processes of the next generation (Keller & Greenfield, 2000). It is therefore not a coincidence that the two representatives of cultural psychology in this volume, Richard Shweder and myself, are closely identified with the field of human development, while the representatives of cross-cultural and indigenous psychology are social psychologists.

Comparing cultural psychology and indigenous psychology

I believe that the first emphasis in cultural psychology – the symbolic quality of culture – is shared, at least in spirit, with indigenous psychology. Although indigenous psychology and cultural psychology clearly have independent origins (to be taken up later), they share the notion that the prime subject of study is the subject's creation of meaning systems, particularly systems that are shared or normative within a defined cultural group. *In different ways, both traditions have recognized that psychological theories are important aspects of shared cultural meaning.*

Most recently, Miller (in press), writing from the vantage point of a cultural psychologist, has, on a theoretical level, asserted the cultural grounding of all psychological theory. This cultural grounding of theory has been a strong motive, if not an explicit metatheoretical statement, for indigenous psychology. *The unique contribution of indigenous psychology is the notion that psychological concepts and psychological theory, not just data collection techniques, should be developed within each culture.*

Unlike indigenous psychology, the empirical research tradition of cultural psychology has not been based on *formal* psychological theories with culture-specific origins. However, cultural psychology has, increasingly in recent years, made ethnotheories (i.e., folk theories) of psychological functioning and development a subject for empirical investigation (Shweder & Bourne, 1982; Harkness & Super, 1996).

However, indigenous psychology aims to go one step further. *The goal of indigenous psychology is to take informal folk theories of psychological functioning and formalize them into psychological theories* (e.g., Hwang, 1987, 1998). Cultural psychology arrived at the empirical study of folk theories, including, in particular, folk theories of psychological development. *Indigenous psychology has, in turn, moved ethnopsychology from an object of empirical study to a source of formal psychological models.* In other words, indigenous psychologists have taken steps to translate ethnotheories of psychology into formal theories of psychology and, from these theories, to conduct empirical psychological studies (e.g.,

Kim & Berry, 1993). This goal is incredibly important for psychology as a whole, on both a metatheoretical and a metamethodological level; these will be discussed in the last major section of the paper, "Where can they go?"

However, cultural and indigenous psychology also differ in some respects. Because of its own origins with an emerging scientific elite in developing nations, indigenous psychology, especially in East Asia, tends, on the whole, to privilege elite populations (university students) as subjects of study and culture change as a research topic (e.g., Choi, Kim, & Choi, 1993; Yang & Ho, 1988). Cultural psychology, in contrast, tends to give a great deal of attention to relatively stable subsistence village cultures; for example, well-known studies have been done, for example, in subsistence groups in Liberia (e.g., Cole, Gay, Glick, & Sharp, 1971; Morocco (e.g., Wagner, 1978, 1982), Guatemala (e.g., Rogoff, Mistry, Goncu, & Mosier, 1993); and Mexico (e.g., Greenfield & Childs, 1991).

Comparing indigenous, cross-cultural psychology, and cultural psychology

While indigenous psychology shares the spirit of cultural psychology, its methods (in practice, although not in principle (Kim & Berry, 1993)) tend to resemble those of cross-cultural psychology. That is, indigenous psychology most often utilizes standard psychological methodology such as questionnaire formats and tends to study variables rather than processes. For example, Yang and Bond used rating scales and adjective lists in their 1990 study of indigenous Chinese personality constructs; Choi *et al.* (1993) used a questionnaire in their study of Korean concepts of collectivity. There are some notable exceptions to this picture. For example, Enriquez, the founder of indigenous psychology in the Philippines, has utilized an indigenous (and group-oriented) method of social interaction as a means for data collection. But, by and large, indigenous psychology has not felt the influence of anthropology and developmental psychology; these influences have expanded cultural psychology's methods to include research techniques such as naturalistic observation, video, ethnography, and discourse analysis.

These are the three approaches to the psychology of culture. Where do they come from?

Where do they come from? Sociopolitical and scientific origins

I attended the first meeting of the International Association of Cross-Cultural Psychology (IACCP) in Hong Kong in 1972. There I met, for the most part, an assemblage of expatriates who had lived and worked in countries of the former British Empire. Living in a new culture, these people had themselves become aware of cultural differences; they provided the field of psychology with its first awareness of cultural differences. The limitation was that they saw these differences through their own cultural lenses. In the interest of universalism, they generally measured everyone and everything, using concepts, instrumentation, and methodology from their own Anglo cultural tradition. Faced with this situation in cross-cultural psychology, indigenous psychology was born on a large scale. It was part of an attempt to decolonize the mind (Sinha, 1997) – in fact, many of its pioneers and proponents inhabit former British colonies. In India, the beginnings of indigenization began soon after independence, long before the rise of cross-cultural psychology. However, this process was reinvigorated by cross-cultural psychology, both in reaction to it and aided by it (Sinha, 1997).

In many cases, after years of following Western models, researchers felt a lack and a need for the indigenization of psychology. There was a dissatisfaction with serving as a mere

test bed for psychological theories that originated in Anglo-American cultures. In many cultures of the world, researchers felt that the theories, constructs, and basic principles did not apply to them; they did not address the real psychology of the Chinese, Filipino, African, or other peoples; they paid scant attention to constructs that were central to psychological functioning in particular cultures, constructs such as *amae* in Japan (Doi, 1978) or *yuan* in Chinese culture (Yang & Ho, 1988).¹

At the first meeting of the IACCP, cross-cultural psychology meant that almost every researcher was crossing over to someone else's culture. However, the situation changed. People from many parts of the world, including Asia, began to get training in psychology, much of it in North America. The IACCP provided a forum for them, and in some cases, such as John Berry, cross-cultural researchers trained indigenous psychologists (e.g., Uichol Kim) and collaborated with them in the development of indigenous psychology.

The question has been raised as to why it took so long to achieve the indigenization of psychology (Bond, 1999), given the dissonance that must have been felt with Western models and methods. Enriquez, a founder of indigenous psychology in the Philippines, notes that some Third World social scientists "are convinced that any departure from the Western approach is blasphemy at the altar of science" (Enriquez, 1993, p. 152). From an outsider's perspective, I raise for consideration the possibility that one reason for the initially slow speed of indigenization may lie in the cultural traditions of collectivism, strong in many parts of the world where indigenous psychologies are most different from the indigenous psychology of the West.

An important part of collectivism is the respect for elders as authority figures. I raise the question (but certainly cannot answer it) of whether the initially slow pace of indigenization can be partly explained by the high esteem and respect in which many scholars from the collectivistic world, including Asia, held their North American or European psychology teachers and mentors. The early mentors in places like the United States and England were not generally versed in the effects of culture; perhaps it would have seemed disrespectful to depart from the universalistic picture they painted of human psychological functioning. On the other hand, the later rise of cultural and cross-cultural psychology (as well as a historical decline in the respect for authority (Yang, 1981), at least in Taiwan) may possibly have been more encouraging to the rise of indigenous psychology.

What are the sociopolitical roots of cultural psychology? This analysis is harder, probably because I have been so involved in the field. But, forced to commit myself to such an analysis, I would have to say that the psychological arm of cultural psychology grew out of postcolonial US liberal policy in a world increasingly dominated by the cold war. The notion here was to help the Third World develop, in order to make sure that, on the political level, Third World countries did not fall to Communism. Thus, Michael Cole and John Gay (Cole & Gay, 1967), funded by the Ford Foundation, began their cultural psychological research in Liberia as part of the African Education Program of Educational Services, Inc. (now EDC) of Watertown, Massachusetts (Cole & Gay, 1967). Daniel Wagner originally went to Morocco with the US Peace Corps (Wagner, 1978). My dissertation in Senegal in 1963 was funded by a grant (awarded to Jerome Bruner at Harvard) from the US based Ford Foundation to develop the Institute of Pedagogical Studies at the University of Dakar in Senegal. To some extent, the United States was stepping in to fill a perceived gap left by the fall of the European empires.

On the institutional level, the Department of Social Relations at Harvard, with its integration of psychological, sociological, and anthropological methods and theory, provided the educational foundation of modern cultural psychology, and was particularly

crucial in the merger of psychology and anthropology. Many cultural psychologists, such as Sarah Harkness, Robert LeVine, Elinor Rosch, Richard Shweder, Charles Super, Thomas Weisner, and myself, were trained in this department, no longer in existence. The actual term *cultural psychology* seems to date from 1969, when two anthropologists, DeVos and Hippler, wrote an article entitled “Cultural psychology: Comparative studies of human behavior” for the second edition of Lindzey and Aronson’s *Handbook of social psychology*. Hence, cultural psychology has from the beginning represented the meeting of psychology and anthropology.

On the intellectual level, cultural psychology has grown out of dissatisfaction with the universalism and decontextualized methodology of psychology in general and cross-cultural psychology in particular (Cole, 1995; Eckensberger, 1995), on the one hand. On the other hand, it has also grown out of anthropology’s wish to deal with the person (Shweder & Bourne, 1982; Shweder & Miller, 1985; Shweder & Sullivan, 1990), not merely the culture as a supra-individual envelope (Cole, 1995).

Unlike indigenous psychology, cultural psychology still constitutes a “crossing-over” into someone else’s culture by the investigator. Also unlike indigenous psychology, its connection to cross-cultural psychology and the International Association for Cross-Cultural Psychology has tended to be erratic and ambivalent. Many cultural psychologists wanted to make culture central to psychology as a whole and therefore eschewed an organization specialized in the psychology of culture, fearing ghettoization of the topic of culture. As an ironic consequence, the development of cultural psychology has proceeded largely independent of the simultaneous development of indigenous psychology, with which it makes common cause. Their integration offers much promise for the future.

Three approaches to the psychology of culture: What have they contributed to human psychology?

Mainstream psychology did not pay much attention to culture or to cultural differences when the main findings had to do with group differences, even when these could be tied to ecological or environmental adaptation. The moment when mainstream psychology stood up and took notice of cultural differentiation in human psychology was when there was a demonstration that cultural differences undercut the assumptions on which basic psychological theory was based – a demonstration of the cultural grounding of psychological theory itself (Miller, in press).

These challenges had been developing over a long period of time: in the Whittings’ (1973) concepts of egoism and altruism, Hofstede’s and Triandis’ development of individualism-collectivism theory (Hofstede, 1980; Triandis, 1988), Shweder and Bourne’s (1982) concepts of the egocentric contractual and the sociocentric organic person, Kağıtçibaşı’s (1990) models of independent and interdependent family functioning, Miller, Bersoff, and Harwood’s (1990) concept of duty-based morality. However, the challenge was finally heard by the field of social psychology with the publication in *Psychological Review* of Markus and Kitayama’s (1991) article on the independent and interdependent self. Their challenge to social psychology was that it had been studying not the functioning of a universal self, but the functioning of a culture-specific self, the independent self. The theoretical implication was that a theory of the self, in order to be universal, must encompass both the independent and the interdependent self. The empirical implication to be drawn from their article was that we must expend the same energy on understanding the development, socialization, functioning, and *variations* of the

interdependent self that psychology had expended on the independent self. In short, they transformed Western research on the self and its theoretical presuppositions into an indigenous psychology.

What does this mean for the topic at hand – a comparison of the three approaches to the psychology of culture? An important point is that all three approaches had contributed to the conceptual framework of independence and interdependence that finally took hold in mainstream psychology. From *cross-cultural psychology*, Hofstede (1980), Triandis (1990) and colleagues had done comparative research in many different cultures exploring the differing psychologies of individualism and collectivism. Across domains, they found many different indices of these two contrastive underlying orientations. From *cultural psychology*, Shweder and Bourne (1982) had utilized ethnographic data from India to question the universality of person as defined in European-derived cultures. From *indigenous psychology*, Yang (1981) had contrasted the social orientation of Chinese culture with the individual orientation of modernism, while Ho (1993) integrated indigenous concepts across three Asian countries into a parallel psychological complex called relational orientation. On a more culture-specific level of indigenization, Yang and Ho (1988) instantiated a Chinese social or relational orientation by analyzing the indigenous concept of *yuan*, a concept of interpersonal relationships that helps to maintain interpersonal harmony and group solidarity. Similarly, Choi *et al.* (1993) instantiated the Korean relational orientation by analyzing the concepts or *woori* (we) and of *cheong*, a state of affection that bonds people together.

Thus we see that there has already been an integration *at the theoretical level* of all three approaches to the psychology of culture. The essential point is that the differences between the three approaches melt away when one has a deep theoretical framework that can encompass findings from all of them, a framework that is generative across a wide range of behavior domains and developmental stages and that can encompass both universals and cultural differences – a universal theory of cultural differentiation.

Where can they go?

Theoretical directions

I believe that we should continue to move in the direction of challenging mainstream psychology to integrate cultural considerations into theory and research. Only data that enable us to *challenge universalistic theories* (as opposed to data alone) will contribute to the incorporation of culture into mainstream social and developmental psychology. The incorporation of culture into mainstream psychology will *not* come from simply presenting data on group differences, no matter how exciting or dramatic these differences may be.

My most important theoretical mission is to introduce the idea of a *deep structure of culture*. As in language, deep structure is generative; deep structure principles of culture generate behaviors and interpretations of human behavior in an infinite array of domains and situations. I believe that the concepts behind individualism and collectivism, independence and interdependence, a relational vs. an individual orientation, and so on are all indexing a common deep structure. The deep principle is that all cultures must handle the issue of the relationship between person and group; and there are two basic alternatives for doing so: prioritize the individual or prioritize the group. These priorities do not refer to the subordination of individual interests to group interests, or vice versa. Rather they refer to

idealized values concerning whether to maximize or to minimize interdependent ties between self and others. On a cultural level, the minimization strategy constitutes individualism, the maximization strategy constitutes collectivism. Once this (implicit) choice is made, many, many specific manifestations follow in multiple contexts from child socialization to definitions of self, marriage, relations with parents, and work. They follow throughout the life cycle (Greenfield, 1999; Greenfield & Suzuki, 1997; Keller & Greenfield, 2000).

Many Chinese (and probably other Asian) psychologists feel that the individualism-collectivism contrast is too simplistic and accomplishes nothing more than highlighting differences between East and West. I would urge all of us to think about these contrasting worldviews as merely a skeleton frame (Gelman & Williams, 1997) upon which you can hang your more differentiated and detailed picture of indigenous Chinese (or any other) psychology. But the value of these contrasting worldviews as a frame is that it coheres, unifies, and makes sense of many different facts and facets of Chinese psychology (or American psychology, or any other indigenous psychology, for that matter).

The second value of individualism/collectivism as a skeleton framework is that it serves as a simple but powerful theory of cultural differentiation – a universal theory with one main postulate: *All cultures must handle the issue of the relationship between person and group; and there are two basic alternatives: prioritize the individual or prioritize the group (particularly in-groups such as family)*. Standard psychological theory has (implicitly) assumed an individualistic set of priorities; our postulate of differentiation requires us to give equal attention to collectivistic priorities in our theorizing. But most important, by seeing the relationship between self and group as central to both value orientations, an overarching universal is created that can generate both sets of cultural paths.

This postulate does not, however, reduce the importance of either individual differences or cultural uniqueness. None the less, it is important to note a strong cultural difference relating to the theory of individual differences: The importance of individual differences is highlighted in the individualistic value system and downplayed in the collectivistic one. Cultural uniqueness is, by contrast, highlighted in collectivistic cultures, which emphasize the importance of in-groups, and downplayed in individualistic cultures, which emphasize human universals.

These cultural differences notwithstanding, the same underlying value can take different forms in different cultures (such as the distinction between a relational or collective-centered mode of prioritizing the group (Kashima, 1990, cited in Kim & Choi, 1994)). My analogy is with human language: there is a universal capacity to learn language; all languages have a common deep structure. But specific languages are all different in highly detailed ways; and there also exist families of related languages.

I believe that we should think of individualism and collectivism as each indexing a family of related cultures. Just as it is important to learn a specific language, it is important to research and understand each specific culture. However, just as knowing French helps you to understand another Romance language, such as Spanish, knowing that a culture is in the individualistic family gives you an understanding of the overall shape and meaning of the culture; this knowledge primes you for the specifics. And just as everyone speaks the same language with a different style or accent, members of the same nominal culture can be expected to show individual variation, but that variation will occur around and will be with reference to a cultural norm.

The following narrative indicates how I came to think of individualism and collectivism as a universal deep structure of cultural differentiation. This is a story about experience at

my long-term field site, Nabenchauk, a Zinacantec Maya community in Chiapas, Mexico; it suggests both *a heuristic and a theoretical value to the idea of general cultural principles that constitute a deep cultural structure.*

When I first went to Nabenchauk, an indigenous agrarian village in highland Chiapas in 1969, I was given cultural preparation by experienced members of an anthropology field team, the Harvard Chiapas Project. They gave us novices much useful information concerning how to act in specific situations in the community. However, I perceived this information as disconnected (and therefore meaningless) bits and pieces that I had to memorize individually. When I went back to Nabenchauk in 1991, I had just organized a conference (published by Greenfield & Cocking, 1994) whose major theme revolved around the constructs of individualism and collectivism and the psychology of immigrant, indigenous, and slave families, who generally brought collectivistic cultural backgrounds with them from their ancestral cultures. I took this conceptual framework with me when I returned to Zinacantan in 1991 for the first time in 21 years.

What I found was the following: If I thought of Zinacantec culture as highly collectivistic, the culture as a whole made sense for the first time. Not only that; I could finally figure out how to act in new situations – because I had a general principle, collectivism, that could be applied in a multitude of specific situations. I had a deep principle that was generative for both understanding Zinacantec behavior and attitudes and for producing appropriate behavior while I was in the Zinacantec community of Nabenchauk. For example, I instantly understood the shock of our assistant's family when they learned that my daughter had returned to the United States and that I would therefore be sleeping alone in my house. Equally, I understood their kindness in sending a young daughter with me to spend the night at my house. In a collectivistic culture, it was non-normative to spend the night alone. Coming as I did from an individualistic culture, I was much more successful and confident in integrating into the Zinacantec milieu once I had learned this one very general principle: the principle of collectivism.

From a theoretical perspective, I concluded that individualism and collectivism are deep principles of cultural interpretation and organization that have tremendous generative value. Like a grammar, they can generate both behavior and comprehension of others' behavior in an infinite number of situations. They do not obliterate specific cultural customs; the customs are simply culturally variable instantiations of the principles. It is much the same as the way that specific languages are culturally variable instantiations of the general language capacity. With this view of deep-structure cultural skeletons, we have a means to integrate past and future cross-cultural, cultural, and indigenous findings in a higher-order theoretical framework. Note though that this skeleton has not yet achieved its final form; suggestions for further development are given in the next section.

Metatheoretical directions

Indigenous psychological models imply the metatheoretical fact, already alluded to, that *Western theories of psychology are just as indigenous as any others* (Rudman, 1987). I elaborate this point by showing that the universal aspirations of a specific theory, Piaget's theory of cognitive development, is, in important ways, compromised by its "indigenous" roots (Greenfield, 1974). Whereas Piaget saw his model of cognitive stages (from sensorimotor to formal operational) as a universal theory of development, his model is also an ethnotheory of the development of the Western scientist, with scientific thinking as the highest stage. Just like all indigenous psychologies, mainstream psychological theory

constitutes the formalization of a folk theory of psychology, what Heider (1958) called a “naive psychology.”

Piaget’s theory is no exception; it is the folk model of a scientific culture. Scientific culture is, in turn, a manifestation or component of individualistic culture, in which individual manipulation of the physical and technological world has priority over interpersonal bonds. It treats technological intelligence, as opposed to social intelligence (Mundy-Castle, 1974), as the most important aspect of cognitive development.

Although the stages may invariably unfold in the order described by Piaget (i.e., we would not find major stage reversals in any culture), not all cultures have as their idealized endpoint the Western scientist. Indeed, many cultures see social intelligence and wisdom as their highest forms of cognition. This alternative conception of cognitive development and intelligence has been fortified by the work of indigenous psychologists like Durojaiye (1993) in Africa. However, progressions toward this type of endpoint are not at all captured by Piaget’s sequence of stages. Thus, a truly universal theory of cognitive development would have to include a cultural choice point between (1) scientific cognition as the most important goal of cognitive development, and (2) knowledge of social interaction and social relevance as the most important goals of cognitive development (Greenfield, 2000). Under this analysis, Piaget’s theory moves from the universal to the particular; it becomes an indigenous theory, reflecting the outcome of prior cultural differentiation. Our cultural deep structure – that is, our universal theory of cultural differentiation – will in the future require another postulate in order to include cognition, thereby going beyond social development and social psychology and becoming a complete theory of cultural differentiation in psychological functioning and development.

My analysis of Piagetian theory as indigenous to the culture of science is an example of taking a mainstream Western psychological theory and treating it as indigenous to the West. At that point I am no longer a cultural psychologist, but rather an indigenous psychologist of the Euro-American cultural tradition. We need other American psychologists – the indigenous psychologists of the United States – to carry out more analyses of this kind, particularly on mainstream theories in social psychology. Only this development will erase the false dichotomy between universal and indigenous theories. Only by recognizing the nature of mainstream theories as indigenous, can we arrive at true (vs. illusory) universals.

Metamethodological directions

Objectivity vs. perspective. The notion from indigenous psychology that concepts and theory should be developed within each culture deconstructs, on the metamethodological level, the illusionary methodological concept of objectivity and replaces it with the more valid and therefore more productive concept of perspective. If universal theories actually represent particular cultural *perspectives*, then the notion of objectivity – a viewpoint from outside the system – ceases to exist.

Historically, modern psychology was born from the methodological ideology of objectivity i.e., the erasure of perspective; within psychology, perspective has always been perjoratively termed “bias.” In sharp contrast to this tradition, an important tenet of cultural psychology is the logical impossibility of an observer-independent or objective perspective (Greenfield, 1993, 1997; Miller, 1997). (Within physics, this is known as the Heisenberg principle.) This is a strong philosophical position concerning scientific methodology. It supports the idea of the culture-specific theorizing of indigenous psychology in the following way:

When one studies behavior in one's own culture (as most psychologists do), one has *de facto* an insider's cultural perspective. Partly because this fact runs counter to the very ideological assumptions of psychological science, the insider's perspective almost always goes unacknowledged (cf. Rogoff & Morelli, 1989). Yet this perspective is crucial. With reference to his or her own group, the insider understands the meanings and motives behind in-group behaviors, meanings and motives that may be misinterpreted or devalued by outsiders looking through the lenses of their own cultural values. This is what indigenous psychologists have understood. For example, in 1984, the Japanese psychologist, Hiroshi Azuma wrote, "When a psychologist looks at a non-Western culture through Western glasses, he may fail to notice important aspects of the non-Western culture since the schemata for recognizing them are not provided by his science" (Azuma, 1984, p. 49). On the other hand, Western psychological theories have all been developed by insiders to the culture in which the theories emerged and were nourished by initial data; in this sense, mainstream theories have been born indigenous. However, their true origin has not been acknowledged, and they have been erroneously labeled "universal."

An example of the unacknowledged insider perspective is the topic of self-esteem in US psychology. Not until the work of Markus and Kitayama (1991) did it become apparent that self-esteem is not a universal quality, but a culture-specific ideal. In sharp cultural contrast, Markus and Kitayama noted the importance of self-effacement, rather than self-esteem, in the development of a Japanese person. Note too that this bicultural team of researchers reflects both an insider and an outsider perspective on both the cultures they have studied. This is probably an important reason why they were able to remove the cultural blinders informing self-esteem research in the United States.

In essence, the insider's role is to safeguard the perspective of the subjects, so that it will be represented in the problem definition, methods, and interpretation of results of the research. (See Serpell (1993, p. 66) for an example of the conscious use of the insider in actual research within the framework of cultural psychology.) However, in recent years, cultural psychology has come to develop even more direct methods of investigating and therefore safeguarding this perspective, such as Tobin, Wu, and Davidson's (1989; Tobin, 1989) use of video records from several cultures as a stimulus for interpretation by members of each of the cultures.

At the same time, however, a knowledgeable outsider has an important perspective as well. An out-group member can see, and therefore study, aspects of the dominant culture that insiders have taken for granted or even repressed. The outsider can also serve as a cultural intermediary in making one culture more understandable to another.

Perhaps even more important to the methodology of cultural and cross-cultural psychology is the role of the culturally marginal person; these are people who have had important socializing experiences in more than one culture. Many indigenous psychologists, because of their graduate training abroad, are in this position. Because of firsthand knowledge of two cultures, they can use the perspective of one culture to raise to consciousness an important aspect of the other, one that insiders may simply have taken for granted.

In conclusion, psychological models are relative to the perspective of the theory builder. Indigenous psychology deconstructs objectivity into an awareness of perspective *per se*. Most important, it makes us aware that insider perspective has always been a source of psychological theory; we must now transform this awareness into a metatheoretical principle; indigenous psychology has led us to reclaim the insider perspective as a privileged

source of psychological theory. Out of a multiplicity of insider perspectives, an overarching theoretical perspective can be constructed that is broad enough to encompass all. At that point, each indigenous psychology can be a building block of a truly universal theory of psychology.

Methodological directions

The interaction of indigenous psychology with cultural psychology may be extremely valuable on the methodological level. Because “the indigenous psychologies approach emphasizes understanding rooted in the ecological context” (Kim & Berry, 1993, p. 3), methods that are suitable to study action, interaction, and interpretive processes in naturalistic situations in various ecologies should be central to indigenous psychology. But they have not been in most countries where indigenous psychologies flourish. Japan, with its well-developed field of developmental psychology, is a notable exception to this generalization.

Therefore, interaction between cultural and indigenous psychology can expand the methodological repertoire of indigenous psychology in a theoretically meaningful way. An example of a methodology from cultural psychology that can investigate both cultural behavior and cultural interpretation is Tobin *et al.* (1989; Tobin, 1989) use of video, mentioned above. Videos of behavior in several cultures are shown to members of each culture. There is an opportunity for analysis of the behavior (based on a permanent video record that can be played and replayed), as well as interpretations of the behavior in each culture by observers of each of the other cultures. Hence, the method yields data on subjects’ cultural interpretations, reflecting the lenses of their indigenous cultural models, and on cultural behaviors themselves (the content of the videotapes). Enhancing the possibilities of this method is the recent development of excellent new technology for digital video analysis (Stigler, 1996). This technology makes it quite simple and practical to get large sample sizes of video observers from each culture (e.g., Jacobs, 1999), as well as large samples of videotaped behavior, in order to carry out quantitative analyses of processes of cultural interpretation and processes of cultural behavior.

Toward empirical integration

A final direction for the future is to move from studies based on methods from a single approach to the psychology of culture to studies integrating methods from two or even all three of the approaches. I would like to end by providing an example of how approaches from cultural and cross-cultural psychology can be combined in a single study and what such a combination can contribute. The example comes from my research group’s study of the role of cultural values in intergroup conflict on multiethnic high school sports teams in the United States (Greenfield, Davis, Suzuki, & Boutakidis, in press). The members of each sports team came from multiple ethnic groups. The conflict that I will report was between an Asian-American and a Euro-American member of a girls’ volleyball team.

In terms of methodology, *cultural psychology* was most central to the research: we studied interactional processes as observed ethnographically by researchers and described by team members in personal journals they kept during their sports season. Our primary focus was on a central cultural process, the interpretive creation of meaning. We investigated whether and how players with a more individualistic outlook would misinterpret and misunderstand other players with a more collectivistic way of interpreting the world, and vice versa.

But we were also interested in assessing the value system the players brought into the sports situation, and, to assess these values, we administered several measures of individualism and collectivism, including the Triandis (1996) IND-COL Scale. These indexical assessments were in the style of *cross-cultural psychology*.

Our question was whether the values which two different individuals bring into an interaction can predict the nature of their interaction and the cultural meanings they would construct together. *Cross-cultural psychology* is interested in indexing the values a person carries with him or her – a static trait. *Cultural psychology*, in contrast, is interested in process: the social construction and use of these values. The relationship between these concerns, the interaction between index and interpersonal process, was the subject of our research

First, we identified real-world conflicts (as observed at volleyball practices and games or in first-person accounts from player journals); we focused on value conflicts, specifically, misunderstandings in which one protagonist took an individualistic position, while the other took a collectivistic position. We saw these as misunderstandings that reflect two worldviews on a collision course in a multicultural society. Our prediction was that, in a conflict between a person assessed as more individualistic (as indexed by the IND-COL or other measure of individualism and collectivism) and a person assessed as more collectivistic, the former person would take the individualistic position in a real-world conflict, while the latter would take the collectivistic position.

The following example shows just such a conflict. The heart of this conflict stems from a contrast between the individualistic emphasis on *self-esteem* and *the protection of self-esteem in front of others* (self-enhancement) vs. the collectivistic emphasis on *promoting personal modesty* (self-depreciation).

Documenting each player's basic value perspective, as reflected in real-world behavior, a member of our research team noted that when a Euro-American player, Arlene, made a good play, she looked at the coach for approval and praise; when she made a mistake, she was quick to explain the reasons and circumstances for the error. In contrast, when Molly, an Asian-American player, made a good play and her team-mates cheered, Molly hid her face in her shirt to hide a smile and pretended to wipe sweat.

While promoting one's self-esteem (Arlene's behavior) is seen as beneficial from an individualistic perspective, this may be seen as undesirable egotism from a collectivistic perspective. On the other hand, while modesty and self-deference (Molly's behavior) are seen as behavioral ideals in collectivistic societies, such behavior may be interpreted as a lack of self-assertion in individualistic societies. It is these negative interpretations of the positive values of the other framework that provides a potential for intergroup conflict and misunderstanding, the subject of our research.

Indeed, this type of misunderstanding did take place between Arlene and Molly. Arlene's consistent defense of her own self-esteem was interpreted pejoratively by Molly, in her journal, as "her big ego." Ending the volleyball season with a team banquet, the co-captains presented each member of the team with a light-hearted joke gift. Arlene's gift, presented by Molly, was an arrow; in her presentation speech, she told Arlene that the arrow was to pop her ego. Arlene was offended by this "gift."

Could these positions in an interactional conflict process be predicted by static indices of individualism and collectivism? The answer was yes. Relative scores on the Triandis IND-COL scale indeed "predicted" the value positions taken in this particular conflict. On the Triandis scales of individualism and collectivism, Molly scored both as more collectivistic and as less individualistic than Arlene. Over a large set of such conflicts involving many

different players, relative collectivism scores, as measured on this scale, consistently and reliably “predicted” value positions when two people engaged in a conflictual interaction revolving around issues of collectivism and individualism.

This study combines methodological and theoretical elements from *cultural* and *cross-cultural psychology*. It does so by making a link between indexical scores on standardized cross-cultural assessments and the construction of conflict and misunderstanding in a real-life interpersonal process. It also links the predictive ideals of mainstream psychology with the descriptive/interpretive ideals of cultural psychology. Such an integration of methods is important because it allows the researcher to assess how laboratory assessments of individuals play out in real-life cultural contexts. At the same time, it moves the psychology of culture from laboratory assessments to real-world ecological contexts. While real-life contexts are intrinsically specific, the principles of behavior are potentially universal. It remains to test them out in other contexts in other cultural and cross-cultural situations.

Conclusion

My vision is that integration of findings from cross-cultural, cultural, and indigenous psychology will take place by means of a deep-structure theory; this deep-structure theory, a universal, will then generate the surface-structure forms of cultural processes and particular indigenous concepts and theories. The integration of indigenous psychologies into a universal framework must take place on the level of theory – by comparing the conceptual meaning of results obtained with different theoretical models and different empirical methods. Integration of research findings cannot take place on the data analysis level utilized by cross-cultural psychology. This cannot happen because the concepts, and therefore the procedures used and data generated from culture to culture, will never be comparable in a mathematical sense; however, they will be both meaningful and comparable in a psychological sense.

Whereas cross-cultural psychology has supported universalism in a very traditional positivistic sense (Lonner & Adamopolous, 1997; Poortinga, 1997), both cultural psychology and indigenous psychology have contributed to universal psychology by deconstructing it. Often in the past, a contrast has been drawn between universal theory and indigenous theories. With the aid of cultural and indigenous psychologies, however, we can now recognize so-called universal psychological theory as just another indigenous theory that must be put in a higher-order conceptual framework, on the same footing with other indigenous theories. This higher-order conceptual framework will have truly universalistic qualities. In the body of the paper, I provided a rationale for why this unifying, universal, and higher-order conceptual framework should be considered the deep structure of culture and be developed as an outgrowth of the constructs of individualism and collectivism.

I am grateful for this opportunity to consider the three approaches to the psychology of culture, alongside the five distinguished colleagues whose papers appear in this issue. I hope that this paper, along with the others, will contribute to increased interaction among and awareness of indigenous, cultural, and cross-cultural psychology, thus fertilizing new methodological and theoretical initiatives in all three approaches to the psychology of culture.

Author note

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Note

- 1 An important exception is Triandis (1972), who discussed the Greek concept of *philotimo*, which has the same status in that culture as *amae*, etc.

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