Society, Culture, and the Person:

Ways to Personalize and Socialize Cultural Psychology

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If you see in any given situation only what everybody else can see, you can be said to be so much a representative of your culture that you are a victim of it.

–S. I. Hayakawa

Hayakawa's famous quote about culture highlights the importance of critical reflectivity in understanding culture's impacts on us. Cultural psychology has its own culture. When cultural psychologists see their practices in the same way all other cultural psychologists do, they have become victims of their own research culture. When the authors of this volume gathered in Hong Kong in December 2006, they critically reflected on the progress and challenges of the field. In this final chapter, we further reflect on the ideas that emerged in this reflective process. In our view, these ideas contest current wisdom in the field and challenge investigators to refashion cultural psychology into an even more vibrant science of society, culture and the person. We will begin by reflecting on the field's achievements and proceed to discuss the challenges and responses.

ACHIEVEMENTS

A major achievement in cultural psychology is its successful demonstration of culture's influence on basic psychological processes. Many psychological processes that were previously taken to be fundamental human experiences (e.g., the fundamental attribution error, cognitive dissonance, self-enhancement) are now known to be culture-dependent (see Lehman, Chiu, & Schaller, 2004). Recent research findings have qualified

many of the early strong claims pertaining to culture's consequences. For example, we now know that the fundamental attribution error is not entirely absent in Asian contexts; however, instead of attributing global dispositions to the individual actors as North Americans tend to do, Asians tend to attribute global dispositions to social groups (Menon, Morris, Chiu, & Hong, 1999; Spencer-Rodgers, Williams, Hamilton, & Peng, 2007). We also know that Asians also experience cognitive dissonance; however, instead of justifying choices that implicate one's sense of competence and autonomy like many North Americans do, Asians tend to justify choices that implicate one's relationships with others (Kitayama, Snibbe, Markus, & Suzuki, 2004). We know that like North Americans, Asians also self-enhance but do so only in culturally sanctioned domains (Kurman, 2003; Sedikedes, Gaertner, & Toguchi, 2003). Nevertheless, impressive evidence has persuaded many psychological scientists to accept a major premise in cultural psychology: Culture matters! Cultural experiences can influence human psychology in many important ways.

All authors in this volume have made important contributions to this achievement and the ideas they present in this volume further extend this achievement. Some (Bagozzi, Belschak, & Verbeke; Briley; Lee & Semin; Leung & Brew; Matsumoto; Wang, Toosi, & Ambady) contribute by identifying other psychological consequences of culture. Although each of these authors seeks to explain a different psychological phenomenon (motivational predilection, emotion recognition, emotion expression, time orientation, self-regulation, conflict resolution), all of them address both the universal and culture-dependent aspects of their phenomena. For example, Matsumoto (this volume)

documents the cultural invariability of people's first uncontrolled emotional responses to successes and failures, but at the same time acknowledges the regulatory functions of culture-specific emotion display rules. Because these display rules vary across cultures, cultural differences in controlled expressions of emotions are observed.

In a similar vein, Ambady and colleagues (this volume) liken the acquisition of emotion recognition expertise to language learning. In language learning, repeated exposure to a certain language or dialect increases one's fluency in it. Because people in different linguistic communities speak different languages or dialects, the same language learning mechanism can account for predictable linguistic variations. Likewise, frequent exposure to a certain culture-dependent configuration of felt emotions and facial expressions can facilitate accuracy in emotion recognition. Because cultures differ in these configurations, people have developed greater expertise in decoding ingroup (vs. outgroup) members' emotional expressions.

Radical cultural relativism, which had a strong hold on some early theories of culture and psychology, rejects the notion of psychic unity and affirms the incommensurability of cultures. The research examples described above indicate that the dualism of psychic unity versus cultural variations is oversold (see also Chiu & Hong, 2005).

Other authors (Bond & Leung; Schwartz; Triandis) contribute by constructing broad dimensional maps to categorize or characterize numerous world cultures. These cultural cartographers are skilled in filtering out noise in the data (for example, see Smith, this volume). The cultural maps they constructed afford orderly arrangement of cultures

on theory-informed or empirically derived schemes, and provide powerful tools for anticipating and interpreting cultural differences and similarities. Cultural cartography reduces the complexity of world cultures to a manageable number of broad dimensions. Meanwhile, different cartographers have markedly different judgments on what constitute the most natural ways that cultural space should be dissected to illuminate the fundamental structure of cultural experiences.

These small scale cultural maps, illuminating as they are, should not be taken to represent the way individuals *represent and experience* their cultural experiences (see Kashima, this volume; Wyer, this volume). To do so risks committing the ecological fallacy, which occurs when investigators make an inference about an individual based on aggregate data for a group (see Robinson, 1950 for discussion on this widely recognized error in the interpretation of statistical data). For example, even if a certain culture has a high average level of endorsement of individualist values, it would be erroneous to conclude based on this result that *an average individual* in the culture values individualism. This result also does not warrant the inference that the modal values in a culture are the antecedents of an individual's behaviors simply because this individual is a member of the culture. When an investigator makes this kind of inference, the cultural attribution fallacy occurs (Matsumoto & Yoo, 2006; Wan & Chiu, this volume).

Thus, as Kashima (this volume) reminds us, while global cultural dimensions or dichotomies are useful interpretive tools for comprehending cultural similarities and differences, they do not explain why individuals in a certain culture behave in specific way (see also Hong & Chiu, 2001). To explicate an individual's behaviors in his or her

cultural milieu, it is necessarily to understand how individuals comprehend and remember their cultural experiences and let these experiences and their cognitive representations guide their judgments and behaviors in concrete situations (Chiu & Hong, 2006, 2007; Wyer, this volume).

Armed with rich knowledge of cultural similarities and differences, some authors (Brislin; Friedman & Wu; Leung & Brew; Schwartz; Sedikides, Wilschut, Routledge, Arndt, & Zhou; Tov, Diener, Ng, Kesebir & Harter) have made a convincing case for the relevance of cultural psychology to important real life outcomes at the levels of the individual (e.g., conflict management, management of culturally diverse teams, acculturation stress) and the nation (e.g., peace and happiness, capital flow).

These authors' research also uncovers some new questions in cultural psychology: Do happiness and peace have the same meanings in different political regimes and at different stages of economic development? Can the same metric be used to measure happiness and peace in different countries? What would an individual need to maintain personal adjustment and achieve competent performance in a multicultural environment (Chiu & Hong, 2005)? Will possessing a rich repertory of cultural knowledge suffice (see Brislin, this volume)? How important is the development of a multicultural mindset for navigating cultures (see Friedman & Wu, this volume; Klafehn, Banerjee, & Chiu, in press; Leung, Maddux, Galinsky, & Chiu, 2008)? When will attachment to one's heritage become an impediment to successful acculturation (Chao, Chen, Roisman, & Hong, 2007)? When will one's heritage culture nostalgia become a resource for coping with the demands of an unfamiliar culture (see Sedikides et al., this volume)?

CHALLENGES AND RESPONSES

Carlson (1985) posed two critical questions to social-personality psychologists: Where is the person in personality psychology? What is social about social psychology? In our reflections on the culture of cultural psychology, we challenge ourselves to answer two similar questions: Where is the person in cultural psychology? What is social about social psychology?

Where Is the Person in Cultural Psychology?

When Richard Shweder (1990) defined cultural psychology, he emphasized the mutual constitution of culture and psyche: "Cultural psychology is the study of the ways subject and object, self and other, psyche and culture, person and context, figure and ground, practitioner and practice live together, require each other, and dynamically, dialectically, and jointly make each other up." (p. 1)

Although almost all cultural psychologists accept the basic premise that culture and psyche make each other up, research in cultural psychology is marked by a lopsided emphasis on culture's influence on the individual. One reason for the imbalance arises from the assumption within cultural psychology that all behaviors occur within a certain cultural context; therefore it is inconceivable how individuals can act as exogenous agents on culture.

There are two ways to "personalize" cultural psychology. First, even if we accept the idea that all behaviors occur within a certain cultural context, it is still meaningful to

account for culturally conditioned behaviors in terms of the psychological processes of separate individuals belonging to the culture (Chiu & Hong, 2006, 2007). Several authors (Hong; Markman, Grimm, & Kim; Oyserman & Sorensen) have explored this possibility. Wyer (this volume) has provided an integration of these ideas.

Second, we can take a functional perspective to culture and define culture as a collection of shared knowledge tools a human group constructs to coordinate group members' activities and to manage the opportunities and constraints in the environment for the purpose of achieving personal and collective goals (Chiu, Kim, & Wan, 2008). Taking this perspective, although all members of a culture have at least partial knowledge of the prevailing cultural proscriptions and prescriptions, they may choose to follow or disobey them (Chiu & Chen, 2004). Cultural conformity is expected from individuals who have internalized the cultural norms or expectations (Wan et al., 2007; Wan & Chiu, this volume). Cultural conformity is also expected when conformity yields psychological benefits (Chiu, Morris, Hong, & Menon, 2000; Fu et al., 2007), or when non-conformity brings punishment (Chao, Zhang, & Chiu, in press). As Gordon Allport (1955) put it more than half a century ago:

> "That the cultural approach yields valuable facts we cannot possibly deny, for culture is indeed a major condition in becoming. Yet personal integration is always the more basic fact. While we accept certain cultural values as propriate, as important for our own course of becoming, it is equally true that we are all rebels, deviants, and individualists. Some elements in our culture we reject altogether; many we adopt as mere opportunistic habits, and even those elements

> that we genuinely *appropriate* we refashion to fit our own style of life. Culture is a condition of becoming but is not itself the full stencil." (p. 82)

What Is Social About Cultural Psychology?

Do we need to retain *culture* as an organizing construct in cultural psychology? What would a cultural psychology without culture be like? Hong (this volume) contends that cultural differences in judgment and behaviors can be understood in terms of the mental constructs that are applied to comprehend the current situation. Culturally received constructs have a high likelihood of being applied simply because of their high frequency of use. Oyserman and Sorensen (this volume) argue that an individual's behaviors in a certain cultural context can be predicted from the specific self-construal that are activated in the situation and the activated self-construal's allied constructs and information processing strategies (which together form a cultural syndrome). Markman et al. (this volume) posit that cultural differences can be reduced to group differences in the strength of such personal motives as fear of isolation. These arguments do not diminish the value of comparative research in cultural psychology – such comparisons often lead to identification of important individual difference variables or mental constructs that have previously fallen into investigators' cultural blind spot. However, these views raise a critical question: What is social about cultural psychology?

Tsui (this volume) writes against psychological reductionism, arguing that a culture should be defined by the central themes that organize its ideas and practices into a coherent whole. For example, what characterizes a collectivist culture is a configuration

of psychological traits: endorsement of interdependence, preference for holistic and dialectical information processing, field dependence, conformity, conflict avoidance, and prevention focus, etc. Likewise, what characterizes an individualist culture is a configuration of different traits: endorsement of independence, preference for analytical thinking, field independence, and promotion focus, etc. (see Lee & Semin, this volume). In short, the whole cannot be reduced to the sum of the parts.

Unfortunately, the evidence for the cultural coherence argument or systemic view of culture is wanting (Choi, Koo, & Choi, 2007; Kashima, this volume; Oyserman, Coon, & Kemmelmeier, 2002). In their meta-analysis of between-country and within-country differences in individualism/collectivism, Oyserman et al. (2002) found that a country can be more individualistic than another country in one domain of individualism/collectivism and more collectivistic in the other. This and other collaborative evidence (Ho & Chiu, 1994; Matsumoto, 1999; Takano & Osaka, 1999; Poortinga, 2003) casts doubt on the defensibility of the systemic view of culture in both anthropology (Shore, 2002) and psychology (Dutton & Heath, in press; Kashima, this volume; Poortinga, 2003).

Wan and Chiu (this volume) offer another way to "socialize" cultural psychology. According to them, it is insufficient to define culture merely in terms of its members' modal responses to individual difference measures of values and beliefs. Instead, they argue to include in the definition of culture the cultural group's collective consensus on what define the culture. More interestingly, what people in a culture generally believe to be important in the culture may not correspond perfectly to what most people in the

culture actually value. In fact, an individual may erroneously believe that an idea he or she has heard many times before *from the same source* is a widely held idea in their community (Weaver, Garcia, Schwarz, & Miller, 2007). Furthermore, the beliefs and values that people generally believe to be shared in a culture are important guides to its members' judgments and behaviors.

Another way to "socialize" culture is to connect culturally received behaviors to the actors' physical and social ecology. To George Herbert Mead (1934), the goal of social psychology is to "explain the conduct of the individual in terms of the organized conduct of the social group." (p. 7) Along this line, some authors of this volume have linked the cultural patterning of individual behaviors to regional differences in climate (Tavassoli, this volume), to group differences in language use as a social institution (Semin, this volume), and to the different levels of residential mobility in different human populations (Osihi & Kisling, this volume). For example, when residential and occupational mobility is low, people live in a stable environment and develop behavioral strategies to adjust to it. When mobility is high, people tend to choose environments that fit their individual preferences (Oishi & Kisling, this volume, Chen, Chiu, & Chan, 2008).

Broadly speaking, individual behaviors can be conceptualized as strategies adapted toward the various opportunities and constraints that are present in a human group's physical and social ecology. For example, the regional prevalence of pathogens correlated positively with country-level collectivism and negatively with individualism (Schaller & Murray, in press). One interpretation of this finding is that some aspects of

collectivism (e.g., conformity to disease control norms) can serve to control the spread of pathogens in the group.

Conformity has also been found to be a strategy for avoiding accrual of negative reputation. In societies where groups and relationships are typically closed to outsiders (e.g., Japan), reputation control is a major social mechanism for regulating individual conduct – those who are excluded from their group or relationship because of their bad reputation may find no alternatives to accept them. Consequently, individuals in these societies are motivated to conform to group norms (Yamagishi, Hashimoto, & Schug, in press).

Furthermore, such societies may also develop mechanisms for mutual monitoring of individual behaviors. One such mechanism is delegated deterrence, or the tendency to punish group members "not because they are deemed collectively responsible for wrongdoing but simply because they are in an advantageous position to identify, monitor, and control responsible individuals – and can be motivated by the threat of sanctions to do so" (Levinson, 2003, p. 4). Some recent evidence has linked the greater prevalence of collective responsibility in China (vs. the U.S.) to the more salient goal of delegated deterrence in China (Zhao et al., in press).

ARE SOCIETY, CULTURE AND THE PERSON A LOVE-HATE TRIANGLE?

A major assumption in cultural psychology is that through socialization, individuals internalize the norms and values of the society and act in accordance with cultural expectations. Social scientists have contested this assumption. In his provocative

monograph entitled "The Oversocialized Conception of Man," Denis Wrong (1976) rejected this view and argued that social actors are not simply acceptance-seekers. Instead, individuals have personal and class agenda, and culture is an evolved mechanism to regulate personal and class interests, as early writers such as Sigmund Freud and Karl Marx posited. Our analysis in the previous section also suggests that individuals do not always conform to cultural expectations, and cultural practices are often developed to subdue the ambitions of the individual or a subgroup of individuals in the society. Thus, many writers are critical of the oversocialized conception of human sociality in cultural theories. For example, in a disparaging tone, anthropologist Appadurai (1996) wrote, "The noun *culture* appears to privilege the sort of sharing, agreeing, and bounding that fly in the face of the facts of unequal knowledge and the differential prestige of lifestyles, and to discourage attention to the worldviews and agency of those who are marginalized or dominated." (p. 12)

Chiu, Kim and Chaturvedi (in press) have characterized the relationship of the person, the society, and culture as a love-hate triangle – They need each other and seek to control each other. Multilevel selection theories offer a useful perspective on this relationship. These theories were developed to address an unresolved issue in cultural evolution. Many cultural evolution theories conceive of culture as an evolved fitness-enhancing mechanism – it allows individuals to adapt to different social and ecological environments and to maximize *individual fitness* (Barkow, Cosmides, & Tooby, 1992). Kenrick and colleagues (Cohen, Kenrick, & Lee, 2006; Kenrick, 2006) have used this idea to explain the evolution of different cultural beliefs about God. For example, human

groups living in different physical and social ecology will develop different religious beliefs. In societies where individuals are surrounded by loosely connected others, the belief in an omniscient God, who is harsh and punitive towards transgressions, would prevail to protect the individuals from the transgressors, maximizing the survival fitness of the individuals. This evolutionary perspective suggests that complex social systems emerge from initial random transactions among individuals in a given ecology. An underlying assumption in this evolutionary approach is that the cultural ideas were evolved to maximize individual fitness.

If culture is an evolved mechanism to maximize individual fitness, why are altruism and cooperation valued in most cultures? In a social dilemma, individual interests are pitted against the interests of the group. Selfish choices of individuals would almost always guarantee better immediate outcomes for the individuals at the expense of the group's long-term interest (Schroeder, 1995). Although the collective benefits more from cooperation among its members, selfish non-cooperators within the group (the free-riders) would have evolutionary advantage over the altruistic cooperators because they can acquire more resources and reciprocate nothing in return. Consequently, selfish optimizers would eventually dominate all societies. Nevertheless, contrary to this prediction, cooperation prevails in most societies. How do evolutionary theories account for the emergence of altruistic norms and practices?

The multilevel selection theory (Sober & Wilson, 1998; Wilson & Sober, 1994) holds that a higher-level organism, such as a social group, can evolve as a unit through the evolutionary process of higher-level selection. The theory of metasystem transition

(Turchin, 1977) also conceptualizes the society as a metasystem with higher order control. Inspired by these ideas, Campbell and colleagues (Campbell, 1990; 1994; Heylighen & Campbell, 1995) proposed the theory of collective evolution. They maintained that evolution takes place at different levels simultaneously. Each level can be conceptualized as a "node of selection" (Campbell, 1990). A node of selection can be an individual, but it can also be a group. Evolution favors those nodes that possess fitness-enhancing characteristics. Therefore, if a group possesses the characteristics that would increase its fitness relative to other groups, the group would have a competitive advantage over the others, although this advantage might not be immediately apparent at the individual level (Sober and Wilson, 1998).

Inline with this idea, in a social dilemma study (Sheldon & McGregor, 2000), participants were first identified as intrinsically or extrinsically oriented in a pretest (See Kasser & Ryan, 1993, 1996). Participants who valued intimacy and community and were willing to make self-sacrifice for the common good were classified as intrinsically oriented; those who valued money and popularity and were inclined to pursue self-interest were classified as extrinsically oriented. The participants either played the game with four participants with matched orientation or with four participants with mixed orientations. Each participant in the group acted for a timber company. They made bids anonymously to decide how much timber to harvest from a self-replenishing forest, and continued to bid until the forest became completely depleted. The results showed that within the mixed groups, the extrinsically oriented participants tended to make selfish choices and harvested more than the self-restrained intrinsic participants. Interestingly,

groups with extrinsic participants harvested less than groups with intrinsic participants only because the extrinsic groups depleted the forest quickly. This result shows that at the group level of selection, intrinsic groups had a selective advantage over the extrinsic groups. However, at the individual level of selection, intrinsic participants were disadvantaged within a mixed group.

Thus, all human societies face this problem: If maximization of collective fitness requires cooperation, how can a society discourage individuals from making selfish choices that maximize individual fitness at expense of the group? Control mechanisms that prevent selfish maximization can operate at multiple levels. At the individual and interpersonal levels, individuals can develop strategies to detect free riders and form coalition with altruistic individuals. For example, individuals may obtain information about other people's reputation and consider this information when they seek out coalition partners. This strategy is illustrated in a study (Sheldon, Sheldon, & Osbaldiston, 2000) in which participants were allowed to recruit their friends to take part in a "group bidding game." The game was a 4-person prisoner's dilemma game. In this game, individual players could yield to temptation and defect or could cooperate to achieve the highest joint outcome for the group. Each player's prosocial value orientation was assessed. As expected, likeminded prosocial individuals tended to be friends and played in the same group. In addition, the prosocial groups had better average performance than did than the less prosocial groups. In short, reputation control, and other complementary interpersonal control strategies such as mutual monitoring, gossip (Kniffin & Wilson, 2005) and social exclusion (Spoor & Williams, 2007) are effective

collective fitness-enhancement mechanisms, particularly in closed societies (Yamagishi et al., in press).

However, free riders are much harder to detect in large, open societies. Such societies often have to rely on other mechanisms of shared control (e.g., collective responsibility, Chao et al., in press) and "culture" (Fiske, 2000) to regulate individual interests.

As mentioned, an important part of culture is the values members of the society agree to be important to the society (Wan & Chiu, this volume). Communication is a primary process through which members of the society reach consensus on what is important to the society (Kashima, this volume). Some individuals may internalize some of these values. When they do, they would act in accordance with the pertinent cultural expectations even at absence of other evolved social control mechanisms. For these individuals, the interests of the individual, society, and culture are fully integrated. Not surprisingly, Charles Darwin (1859) believed that the highest possible stage in moral culture is when people recognize that they need to control their thoughts.

However, people are not fully socialized – At times, some people may feel the conflict between their personal desire for selfish optimization and the society's press for collective optimization. When the cooperation norms are not salient, selfish interests may find a leak in the social control mechanisms and express themselves in various malevolent forms (e.g., corruption, nepotism, Heylighen & Campbell, 1995).

CONCLUSION

So, what is social about cultural psychology? Where is the person in cultural psychology? A major premise in cultural psychology is that culture and psyche make each other up. We submit that these mutual constitution processes do not occur in a social vacuum. Cultural psychology emphasizes culture's authority over human psychology and has focused its research attention on finding culture's imprints on human behaviors. However, at times, culture may seem powerless when confronted with individuals' self-interests, just like the powerless Superego facing the Id. The authors in this volume have contributed good ideas to make cultural psychology a more vibrant science of the society and the individual. These contributions illustrate that cultural psychology can do a lot more than describing cultural differences. We submit that cultural psychologists can see farther and can contribute more to psychology and other social sciences. As new problems are identified and new solutions found, cultural psychology will broaden and deepen our understanding of the intricate interrelations of society, culture, and the person.

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