

## CHAPTER 7

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# Integrating System Approaches to Culture and Personality

## *The Cultural Cognitive–Affective Processing System*

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O chestnut-tree, great-rooted blossomer,  
Are you the leaf, the blossom, or the bole?  
O body swayed to music, O brightening glance,  
How can we know the dancer from the dance?  
—W. B. YEATS, *Among School Children*

As the chapters in this volume attest, the foundational premise that culture and person co-constitute one another, perhaps more than any other, characterizes contemporary cultural psychology (Cole, 1996; Kitayama, 2002; Miller, 1997; 1999; Piker, 1998; Shweder, 1990). Ironically, however, this very premise is most challenging for a cultural psychological view of personality, for “personality” has historically been, and in much cross-cultural research continues to be, conceptualized as the qualities of the individual that are separable from context

(Kitayama & Markus, 1999; Pervin, 1999; Poortinga & Hemert, 2001; Shweder, 1991).

The challenge for a cultural-psychological approach to personality remains to specify the nature of, and the mechanisms underlying, the co-constitution of person and culture. This chapter brings together insights from various theoretical and empirical lines of research (e.g., Hong & Chiu, 2001; Hong, Morris, Chiu, & Benet-Martinez, 2000; Kashima, 2001, 2004; Markus & Kitayama, 1998; Mendoza-Denton, Shoda, Ayduk, & Mischel, 1999; Cohen, 1997)

that together are rising to this challenge and bringing into focus a new paradigm for the study of culture and personality. At the core of this emerging consensus are discoveries over the past 20 years in personality science and social cognition that are remarkably consistent with the premise of cultural psychology. These findings allow us to revise the long-standing assumption that situations, context, and culture are somehow “noise” or “error” that obscures the consistency of personality and obstructs the search for universals. Rather than searching for fundamental human qualities that describe people *in spite of* cultural differences, this approach focuses on the cultural differences *themselves*. Cultural differences in social behavior, in this view, are meaningful manifestations of a dynamic, culturally constituted personality system, the structure and governing principles of which may, indeed, be universal.

### THE CULTURE AND PERSONALITY PARADOX

From its inception, a bedrock assumption in personality science has been that people have discernible qualities that supercede contexts and situations (Mischel, 2004; Mischel, Shoda, & Mendoza-Denton, 2002). Within this approach, a person who is high in conscientiousness should be more conscientious than most people in many different kinds of situations, and would do the appropriately conscientious thing as required by his or her culture. By the 1960s, however, it became increasingly clear that the data did not bear out this assumption, with converging data from independent investigators (Hartshorne & May, 1928; Mischel, 1968; Newcomb, 1929; Peterson, 1968; Vernon, 1964) consistently finding only modest evidence for cross-situational consistency of behavior (Mischel, 2003; Shweder, 1991; B. B. Whiting & Whiting, 1975). Bem and Allen (1974) coined the term “personality paradox” to refer to the discrepancy between the lack of strong empirical support for cross-situational consistency and our intuition that stable qualities in fact exist.

Cultural psychologists interested in the relationship between culture and personality are today faced with an analogous dilemma. On the one hand, it has been shown that for many classes of behavior, within-culture variability is greater than between-culture variability

(Barnouw, 1985; Bock, 2000; Inkeles, 1996; Kaplan, 1954; Wallace, 1961; Triandis, 1997; J. W. M. Whiting & Child, 1953; B. B. Whiting & Whiting, 1975). On the other hand, and despite the data, as perceivers and researchers we continue to have a strong intuition that some type of commonality unites the French or the Japanese, and makes them different from Argentines or the Senegalese. How does one reconcile these seemingly opposing positions? The response to the 1960s personality paradox speaks directly to the issues and alternatives faced when dealing with this “culture and personality paradox.”

### ONE RESPONSE: UNCOVER TRAITS THROUGH METHODOLOGICAL REFINEMENT

One reaction to the 1960s personality paradox was to assert that the findings on the variability of behavior across diverse situations simply reflect noise and error from inadequate sampling. In this view, the emergence and identification of cross-situational consistency is a matter of methodological improvement, primarily requiring better reliability through denser data sampling (Epstein, 1979), or more precise specification of the people or situations to which traits apply (Bem & Allen, 1974; Epstein & O'Brien, 1985; see Mischel & Peake, 1982, 1983; Snyder & Ickes, 1984; and Shweder, 1991, for lengthier discussions on this topic). Accordingly, no personality paradox in fact exists: One can continue to eliminate the role of situations by aggregating people's behavior across diverse situations, and by using global assessments that exclude context. At its core, then, this approach remains committed to treating situational variability as measurement error.

This response, though greeted with great enthusiasm, has paved the road for a resurgence of culture and personality research that, in spite of its methodological rigor, has not addressed the basic challenges to the paradigm's fundamental assumptions (e.g., Mischel, 1968). The consequence has been to reinforce further the metaphor shared by traditional personality and attribution theories “that construes skin as a special boundary that separates one set of ‘causal forces’ from another. On the sunny side of the epidermis are the external or situational forces that press inward on the per-

son, and on the meaty side are the internal or personal forces that exert pressure outward” (Gilbert & Malone, 1995, p. 21).

Today, a principal impetus in research on culture and personality is devoted to establishing the universality of a personality trait structure, reducible to a discrete number of dimensions. This approach has largely focused on replicating the “Five-Factor Model”—open-mindedness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism—across cultures (e.g., McCrae & Allik, 2002), with recent efforts aimed at “mapping” the world across the five dimensions (Allik & McCrae, 2004; McCrae, 2004). The goal of this approach is not so much in finding that the French, for example, are lower on agreeableness than Americans (McCrae, 2004), but rather that both Frenchmen and Americans can be described in terms of the five factors. Proponents of this approach cite evidence from animal studies (e.g., Gosling & John, 1999; Gosling, Kwan, & John, 2003) and heritability studies (Bouchard & Loehlin, 2001; Loehlin, McCrae, Costa, & John, 1998) as evidence for the likely biological basis of trait structure (see Triandis & Suh, 2002). It has been proposed that biological substrates underlie differences in the Big Five and, more recently, that such biological differences cause cultural differences (McCrae, 2004).

The growing literature on global traits and culture has been both ably reviewed (e.g., Triandis & Suh, 2002), and ably critiqued (e.g., Bock, 2000; Kitayama, 2002; Pervin, 1994; Shweder 1991; see also Peng, Nisbett, & Wong, 1997) elsewhere, and is not the focus of this chapter. Nonetheless, we note three important points: (1) Efforts to describe cultures in terms of a common metric assume a context-free psychic unity that cultural-psychological research is finding evidence against (e.g., Heine, Lehman, Markus, & Kitayama, 1999; Iyengar & Lepper, 1999; Norenzayan, Choi, & Peng, Chapter 23, this volume); (b) personality assessments that rely on generalized traits—including indigenously derived ones (e.g., Cheung & Leung, 1998; Church, Katigbak, & Reyes, 1996, 1998)—tacitly accept a definition of “personality” in terms of consistency across both time and situations; and (3) convergent evidence from self- and peer-ratings, or from animal studies, tell us a lot about peoples’ categorization processes (Bock, 2000; Church,

2000; Morris, Nisbett, & Peng, 1995), but only a partial story about the behavioral expressions of the personality system (Borkenau, Riemann, Spinath & Angleitner, 2006; Cervone, 2004; Shoda, 1999). Our focus below is on giving a voice to the rest of that story.

### A SECOND RESPONSE: TAKING VARIABILITY SERIOUSLY

To reiterate, the data over the course of a century have shown that cross-situational variability is as at least as impressive as cross-situational consistency (Mischel et al., 2002). Whereas such variability is considered error or noise within traditional approaches, research over the past 20 years has harnessed this variability, with the hunch that a new locus of personality is to be found within this variability. But how can information about behavioral variability across situations, rather than behavioral stability across situations, possibly yield information about dispositions? An analogy from automobiles is helpful (Epstein, 1994). The analogy begins with the recognition that automobiles, like people, are readily grouped in terms of their area of origin. Peugeot, for example, is different from Mitsubishi, which is different from Chrysler. It is helpful to be able to compare these different makes of car according to certain dimensions. Are they gas guzzlers or economical? Are they clunky or speedy? Silent or noisy? Such generalizations are, of course, useful in orienting buyers toward a particular brand, yet only provide distal cues about the *mechanisms* that lead to these differences—about what is going on under the hood (Cervone, 2005).

As beleaguered car owners can attest, when experts ask diagnostic questions about cars, their questions focus on the *conditions* under which certain events occur. The types of questions asked of car owners—*When* does the car make that particular screeching sound? Does the car stall only *when* it’s going uphill?—can give clues to the expert about identifying the source of the surface characteristics (e.g., noisiness) and why the car does what it does. The conclusions drawn about the source of the problem, for example, will be different if the car seems to make noise when trying to accelerate (loose fan belt) as opposed to when trying to shift gears (transmission issue). In a fascinat-

ing way, then, information about how the car behaves in relation to different driving situations can be quite diagnostic about the car itself.

Similarly, identifying the conditions under which an individual displays a given behavior can be critical in understanding personal dispositions—in revealing, as it were, the engine driving the person. That is, even if two individuals display the same overall average level of behavior, depending on the pattern of *where* it is displayed, one may draw drastically different inferences about the person (Kammrath, Mendoza-Denton, & Mischel, 2005; Mendoza-Denton, 1999; Plaks, Shafer, & Shoda, 2003; Shoda & Mischel, 1993). Suppose for example, that Jack so consistently puts work above all else that his friends and family know they cannot count on him for social or family obligations. Jacques, on the other hand, is extremely dependable when it comes to interpersonal obligations, but is consistently late and sloppy when it comes to his nine-to-five job. Even though, on average, both Jack and Jacques might be seen or rated as equally dependable, their distinct patterns—if observed repeatedly and across multiple samples of situations—may be highly informative about differences in their motivations, goals, values—and importantly, their cultural background (Hong & Mallorie, 2004; Mendoza-Denton, Ayduk, Shoda, & Mischel, 1997). More than collections of ever more specific but disjointed behavior-in-context descriptions (see Shweder, 1991), these *if . . . Then . . .* (if situation A, then s/he does X, but if situation B, then he or she does Y) profiles—if stable—can yield important clues about the underlying system that generates them.

### **Evidence for the Stability of If . . . Then . . . Profiles**

To test for the stability and meaningfulness of *if . . . then . . .* profiles, Shoda, Mischel, and Wright (1994) analyzed the behavior of children over the course of a summer as it unfolded *in vivo* within a summer camp. The children's social behavior (e.g., verbal aggression, withdrawal, prosocial behavior) was unobtrusively observed and recorded as it occurred in relation to various interpersonal situations, with an average of 167 hours of observation per child over the course of the 6-week camp.

### *Nominal versus Psychological Situations*

How did the researchers classify the camp situations into meaningful categories? Situations can be classified at different levels. At one level, one can describe situations *nominally*; in other words, according to their surface features (e.g., study hall, cabin meeting; see B. B. Whiting & Whiting, 1975). Unfortunately, nominal situations often contain a wide array of interpersonal psychological events for different people and different cultural groups. As an example, for one group, being “at the market” may involve quickly finding one's groceries, getting on the shortest checkout line, and leaving out of the store as soon as possible. For another group, being “at the market” might involve haggling with one's favorite vendor over tea, and socializing with neighbors while choosing fruit. As such, then, situations can also be meaningfully grouped according to their important psychological features, which may cut across nominal situations and settings. Such clusters have been referred to as “psychological situations” (Shoda et al., 1994).

To be able to group the situations in terms of the psychological features that seemed important to the children at the summer camp, Wright and Mischel (1988) asked those who knew the children—the camp counselors as well as the children's peers—to describe them in detail. Specifically, they were asked to imagine that the interviewer was new to the camp and the campers, and to “tell me everything you know about (target) so I will know him as well as you do.” This was followed by standard prompts (e.g., “Anything else?”). This methodology yielded voluminous “thick description” (Geertz, 1973; Shweder, 1991) on the cultural group under study (in this case, the kids at the camp), with the added benefit of stemming from not one but many “cultural experts.” This allowed the researchers to identify those features that the experts agreed were important to the population, rather than being idiosyncratic to any given informant. To find the common themes in these descriptions, responses were coded and subjected to cluster analysis.

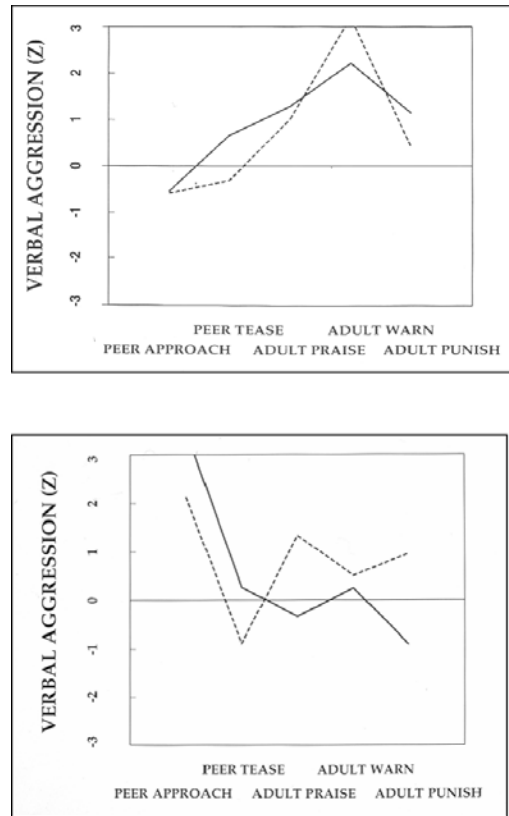
Confirming the importance of traits in the language use of Americans (Church, 2000), much of the content of the descriptions consisted of trait terms. However, the data *also* revealed that these trait descriptors tended to be *hedged* spontaneously, that is, described in

terms of the *conditions* under which targets displayed particular qualities (e.g., “Johnny gets aggressive *when* he gets teased about his glasses”). Clustering the types of situational hedges used to describe the targets revealed five psychological situations that seemed important to the kids at the camp: three negative situations (“peer teased, provoked, or threatened,” “adult warned,” and “adult punished”) and two positive situations (“adult praised” and “peer approached prosocially”). The distinction between nominal and psychological situations, though subtle, has important implications, because to the degree that culture dictates the types of situations that “go together,” exercises in the generalizability of nominal situations may be limited in their usefulness (Mendoza-Denton et al., 1997). In terms of assessment, identification of such psychological situations cannot be known without deep familiarity with the culture. We return to this point in the “Implications” section of this chapter.

#### If . . . Then . . . Profiles: Meaningful Patterns of Variability

Figure 7.1 shows illustrative profiles for two children at the camp. Their verbally aggressive behavior across the five types of psychological situations described earlier (Shoda et al., 1994) is shown in Z-scores—in other words, the children’s observed level of aggression in that situation, in standard deviation units, relative to the mean of the entire sample ( $Z_0$  on the Y axis). Thus, these profiles do not simply reflect the fact that situations, unsurprisingly, make a difference (e.g., on average, people tend to be more aggressive when teased than when praised). The two lines within each panel indicate the profiles based on two separate, nonoverlapping samples of situations, shown as a solid line and a dotted line. It is worth noting here that the fact that these stability coefficients are found when reliability is high (dense data sampling) flatly contradicts the key trait assumption that variability in a person’s behavior across situations is “noise” (see Mischel & Shoda, 1995; Mischel, 2004). In more recent research, the profile similarity in twins has been found to be greater than chance (Borkenau et al., 2006).

The feature of *if . . . then . . .* profiles that is important for this analysis is that they readily



**FIGURE 7.1.** Illustrative *if . . . then . . .* “signatures” of verbal aggression in relation to five situations in two nonoverlapping time samples (solid and dotted lines). Data are shown in standardized scores (Z) relative to the normative levels of verbal aggression in each situation. From Mischel and Shoda (1995, p. 249). Copyright 1995 by the American Psychological Association. Reprinted by permission.

invite questions about the person’s construals of different situations, and the relevant motivations, goals, expectations, and processing dynamics. Child 9, for example, reliably becomes verbally aggressive when warned by adults, leading observers to consider *why* he might react in particular to being warned, and the meaning of such warnings for that individual. Perhaps the child becomes embarrassed at being “shown up” by adults in front of peers, or loves to challenge authority and see how much he can get away with. Child 28, by contrast, becomes reliably aggressive when approaches socially by peers, inviting and suggesting a completely different set of explanations for his

behavior, for how the child construes the world, for what he may consider threatening, or what goals may motivate him.

As these examples illustrate, there is not a one-to-one correspondence between the outward behavior (e.g., aggression) and the underlying disposition. Instead, such profiles require explanations of another nature, and one that perceivers seem to engage in intuitively (Kammrath et al., 2005; Plaks et al., 2003): They invite questions about how the target feels, what the target thinks, and how the target perceives his or her world. In the next section, we review the theoretical account that can account for such profiles, then detail the convergences of such a model with the premises of cultural psychology.

### THE CULTURALLY CONSTITUTED COGNITIVE-AFFECTIVE PROCESSING SYSTEM

Having established *if . . . then . . .* signatures as a second, reliable locus of personality coherence, the task became to generate a framework that could account for both these profiles and overall aggregate behavioral tendencies. In response to this task, Mischel and Shoda (1995, 1999) proposed a Cognitive-Affective Personality System (CAPS) framework that integrates insights about knowledge activation (Anderson, 1988; Higgins, 1996; Hong & Mallorie, 2004; Kashima, 2001), social cognition (e.g., Cantor & Kihlstrom, 1989; Downey & Feldman, 1996; Read, Jones, & Miller, 1990), and connectionism (Hinton, McClelland, & Rumelhart, 1986; Kashima, 2004; Read & Miller, 1998, 2002). We describe the framework in some detail below as one representative of a family of approaches (see Cervone, 2004; Hong & Chiu, 2001; Kashima, 2001; Pervin, 2001; see also Hong, Wang, No, & Chiu, Chapter 13, this volume) that, rather than parsing causal forces in terms of what is “dance” versus “dancer,” demonstrates how personality processes and the mediating units proposed to account for them are *inherently* contextual in nature (see also Norenzayan et al., Chapter 23, this volume). Following the description of this general framework as it has been related to culture and personality (Mendoza-Denton et al., 1999), we extend and refine the framework to explicitly to take a system view of culture (Kitayama, 2002) into account.

Rather than being a theory of personality per se, CAPS theory is a general framework that outlines a set of principles. It proposes that human behavior is mediated by a set of cognitive-affective units (CAUs) organized within a stable network of activation. This network or organization, according to Mischel and Shoda (1995), constitutes the basic stable structure of the personality processing system and underlies the behavioral expressions that characterize the individual.

### Common Units for Culture and Personality: CAUs

CAUs are conceptualized in terms of five relatively stable “person variables” that have been identified in a century of psychological research as playing an important role in social behavior generation (Cervone, 2004; Read et al., 1990; Mischel, 1973; Pervin, 2001). They are summarized in Table 7.1. The content of CAUs is determined through, and grounded in, the individual’s cultural context—what is taught by one’s family, what is valued by one’s community, and what is afforded by one’s culture (Kitayama, 2002; Mischel & Shoda 1995; Shoda, 1999).

CAUs provide a natural bridge to the study of culture as a result of their striking convergence with widely accepted definitions of culture. Classical, as well modern, definitions of culture consistently emphasize CAU-type

**TABLE 7.1. Types of CAUs in the Personality Mediating System**

1. *Encodings*: Categories (constructs) for the self, people, events, and situations (external and internal).
2. *Expectations and beliefs*: About the social world, about outcomes for behavior in particular situations, about one’s self-efficacy.
3. *Affects*: Feelings, emotions, and affective responses (including physiological reactions).
4. *Goals*: Desirable outcomes and affective states, aversive outcomes and affective states; goals and life projects.
5. *Competencies and self-regulatory plans*: Potential behaviors and scripts that one can do, and plans and strategies for organizing action and for affecting outcomes and one’s own behavior and internal states.

*Note.* From Mischel and Shoda (1995, p. 253). Copyright 1995 by the American Psychological Association. Reprinted by permission.

constructs—values, beliefs, meanings, customs, attributions, attitudes, and appraisals—as central components of the cultural heritage that is shared and transmitted among members of a given cultural group (Geertz, 1973; Obeyeskere, 1981; Schwartz, 1992; Triandis & Suh, 2002; Triandis et al., 1980; Tylor, 1871). There seems to be wide agreement that culture plays a large role in determining what is valued, what is worth pursuing, and how to interpret the world.

Given the correspondence between elements of culture and elements of a person, it is tempting to draw a one-to-one correspondence between “culture” and “person,” such that a person is viewed as a culture writ small, or its converse, that culture is “personality writ large” (Benedict, 1934). A moment’s thought, however, reveals a much more complicated relationship between “culture” and “person.” A person cannot be a “culture” writ small, because the person can be thought of as consisting of many little cultures—people are Thai, they are men, they are family men, they are husbands, they are colleagues at work—and each of these is its own distinct culture. The mutual influence of culture and person, then, operates at multiple levels, such that each person’s social circles dictate his or her unique social reality (Linton, 1936; Mendoza-Denton et al., 1999).

### ***Culture and Principles of Knowledge Activation***

As several researchers have noted (Kashima, 2001; Hong & Mallorie, 2004) principles of knowledge activation (Higgins, 1996) are helpful in thinking about the intersection between culture and personality. Members of cultural groups differ in terms of what goals, values, and beliefs are *available*. For example, whereas one culture may teach beliefs about spirit possession to its members, this notion may not be part of the explanatory repertoire for others’ behavior among members of other groups. The CAPS framework also assumes that people differ in the *chronic accessibility* (Higgins, 1996; Mischel & Shoda, 1995; Shoda, LeeTiernan, & Mischel, 2002) of constructs, that is, the ease with which particular CAUs become activated. For example, a strong cultural norm of valuing others’ welfare may make such a concern more chronically accessible—thus, easily activated—to individuals of that culture (e.g., Markus & Kitayama, 1991). As another example, by vir-

tue of shared experiences, stigmatized group members within a given culture may have concerns about discrimination more chronically accessible than nonstigmatized group members (Mendoza-Denton et al., 1997). Finally, the model also postulates that of all the beliefs, goals, values, encodings, and feelings that one can potentially experience at any given time, only those that are relevant in a given situation can become activated and influence subsequent behavior (Hong, Benet-Martinez, Chiu, & Morris, 2003). As such, CAPS makes specific the notion of *applicability*. For example, one cultural difference identified in prior research has been a greater tendency toward self-enhancement in the United States than in Japan (Heine et al., 1999), but this cultural difference is expressed in culturally defined situations and contexts. Another example comes from Kitayama, Markus, Matsumoto, and Norasakunkit (1997), who demonstrated that European Americans are highly self-enhancing, and this is especially true for situations that European Americans spontaneously nominate as being relevant to their self-esteem. By contrast, Japanese were found to be self-critical but, again, more pronouncedly so in situations identified by the ingroup as relevant to self-esteem. As such, culture influences personality through and through—not only in terms of the goals and important beliefs but also in the way that situations are represented and what psychological features situations contain.

Thinking about a box of crayons offers a metaphor for cultural influences and principles of knowledge activation. Culture dictates what constructs or CAUs an individual has at his or her disposal to color the world. If a given crayon (CAU) is not available, the person cannot use it. “Accessibility” refers to the ease with which a person is likely to use that crayon once it is available. If we imagine a box of crayons with three rows, for example, a person is more likely to use those crayons that are more easily reachable, such as the ones in front. Finally, “applicability” refers to the rules a culture dictates about what crayons one can use and when. A spirit possession “crayon”—if available—may be applicable to explaining mental illness in certain cultures but not in others.

### **Interconnections among CAUs**

As Kitayama (2002) notes, “It is to be anticipated that cultures should be different not only

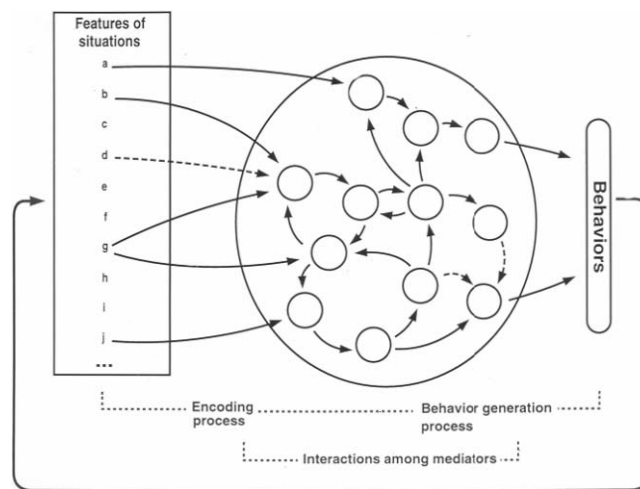
in terms of central tendencies in any given variables but also in terms of functional relations among them” (p. 93). This quote captures the second important feature of CAPS, namely, that the person is not conceptualized only as the receptacle of disjointed, unrelated CAUs. Rather, CAUs operate within an interconnected *network* whereby CAUs have excitatory and inhibitory links to each other, and in which different pathways become activated in relation to features of the situation. For any given CAU, positive (excitatory) connections to it increase that CAU's activation level, whereas negative (inhibitory) connections to it decrease its activation level. A highly simplified, schematized version of a CAPS is shown in Figure 7.2.

The large circle in the middle of Figure 7.2 represents the “person,” whereas his or her stable network of CAUs is represented by the nodes and excitatory (solid lines) and inhibitory (dotted lines) links among those nodes. Although the “network” of CAUs and interconnections is itself stable, as the individual moves across different situations, different mediating units and their characteristic interrelationships become activated (contingent on applicability) in relation to psychological features of those situations. The framework accounts for and is able to generate meaningfully patterned expression of behavior in relationship to situations, as well as to generalized overall tendencies in behavior (Shoda & Mischel, 1998). This is an important point, because it highlights the

fact that the CAPS approach does not necessarily stand in contrast to broad differences between individuals (Mischel & Shoda, 1999).

Life experiences shared by members of a group—the teachings of elders, the experiences shared with others, the values imposed by society—generate a CAPS network that is immersed in and reflects the surrounding culture. If features of a situation activate this culturally shared subnetwork, an individual may generate similar reactions to that situation, without implications for the rest of the individual's distinctive processing dynamics (see also Cohen, 1997). In other words, when situations reliably activate shared networks, cultural commonalities in behavior may occur, whereas in situations that do not activate a culturally shared psychological feature, group members' responses may not converge (although they may converge with those of another group).

Consider one of the most striking examples of cultural convergence within the United States in recent memory—reactions to the 1995 verdict of the murder trial of the African American former football star and celebrity O. J. Simpson. At the time, it was clear that opinions regarding the defendant's guilt were sharply split along racial lines. An analysis of reactions to the verdict showed that, among African Americans, certain features of the case—such as the detective who planted evidence to influence a conviction—reliably activated cognitions about historically unfair police



**FIGURE 7.2.** Schematic illustration of the CAPS. From Mischel and Shoda (1995, p. 254). Copyright 1995 by the American Psychological Association. Reprinted by permission.



treatment towards African Americans in the United States. These cognitions, in turn, inhibited others, such as “There is a lot of evidence against the defendant.” European Americans, for whom the realities of race-based discrimination are both less available and less accessible, instead focused on the evidence—and held a strong belief that Simpson should have been found guilty. Indeed, the effect of race on reactions to the verdict was mediated by the shared network of cognitions activated (Mendoza-Denton et al., 1997). Of note, reactions to verdicts of other high-profile trials are generally not of necessity split along racial lines, suggesting that members of cultural groups can share subnetworks activated in some situations but do not have to display similarity in behavior to others.

### AN INTEGRATED SYSTEM VIEW OF CULTURE AND PERSON DYNAMICS

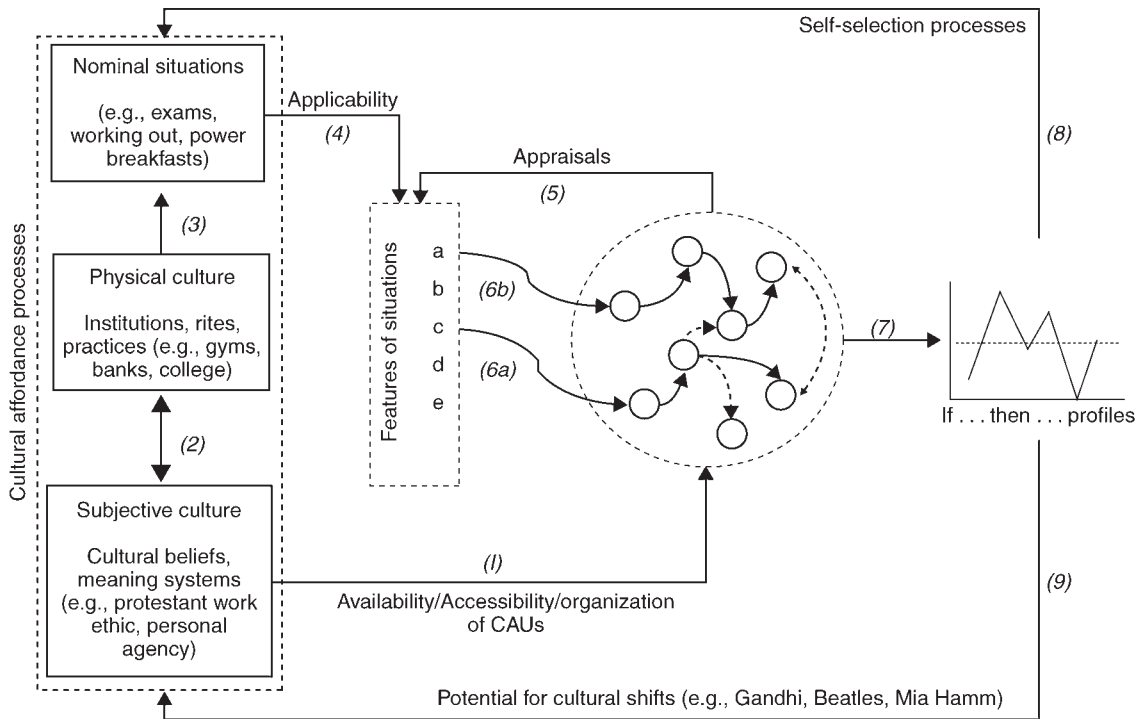
Kitayama and colleagues (Kitayama, 2002; Kitayama & Markus, 1999; Kitayama et al., 1997) have contributed a perspective that adds another layer of complexity to our understanding of the co-constitution of person and culture. Similar to how we have argued for a dynamic and flexible view of personality in favor of a static, context-free view, a system view of *culture* stands in contrast to static treatments of cultures as explanatory, even causal entities that “account” for group differences (cf. Betancourt & López, 1993). The influence of culture on personality is broader, and its dynamics influence the person at several levels, such that culture is not just stored “in the head” (a view perhaps taken too easily taken from the earlier CAPS analysis) but rather limits, directs, and invites culturally consonant behavior in other ways.

A system view of culture recognizes that cultural values and belief systems shape the institutions and everyday practices of a culture, which themselves provide *cultural affordances* (Kitayama & Markus, 1999) or opportunities for the expression and reinforcement of these cultural values. A core cultural belief system such as the Protestant work ethic (Levy, West, Ramirez, & Karafantis, 2006), for example, can give rise to institutions that reinforce its very unfolding, and influence the settings and situations that people navigate in their daily lives (Vandello & Cohen, 2004). In a similar

way, a belief in personal mastery over the environment, or over nature, can lead to the valuation, and construction, of gymnasiums where such mastery and discipline become practicable and true (“physical culture”; Triandis et al., 1980). At the level of the individual, these macro-level influences lead to differences in the psychological availability of certain constructs (e.g., belief in mastery over aging), the (chronic) accessibility of these belief systems (through gyms, ads, and other artifacts serving chronically to prime ideas of beauty, health, and youth), as well as the organization among the cognitions and affective evaluations. As such, then, a system view of culture reminds us that culture not only influences the content of the box of crayons people use to “color their world” but in fact also influences the coloring book itself.

### A Schematized View of the C-CAPS Model

The Cultural Cognitive–Affective Processing System (C-CAPS) model is one in which a system view of culture and a system view of the person are integrated and explicitly acknowledged to influence each other. Figure 7.3 provides a schematic view of this multisystem model: This section walks the reader through Figure 7.3. We begin with the three boxes on the left-hand side—subjective culture, physical culture, and nominal situations. As a whole, they make up the cultural affordance processes that not only shape the CAPS system but also constrain the kinds of situations to which the CAPS system is exposed. “Subjective culture” is the term that Triandis and colleagues (1980) have used to refer to the cultural beliefs, values, and meaning systems that become transmitted from one generation to the next. Examples of such cultural values might be the “Protestant work ethic” (PWE; Levy et al., 2006), “social dominance orientation” (Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994), or “collectivism” (Triandis, 1996). Subjective culture is likely to influence directly the availability, accessibility, and network relationships of the person’s own beliefs, values, and goals (arrow 1 in Figure 7.3). The cultural value referred to abstractly as “PWE,” for example, might be cognitively represented in terms of concrete cognitions such as “Be all you can be,” “Hard work pays off,” or “No pain, no gain” (see Geertz, 1973, for a discussion of abstract value systems vs. more concrete, or “experience-near” cognitive



**FIGURE 7.3.** Schematic illustration of the culturally constituted C-CAPS. Subjective and physical culture influence the contents and organization of the individual's processing system (1), and provide the cultural affordances that form a basis for the nominal situations experienced by the person (2, 3). Psychological features of situations are influenced by both nominal situations and the person's appraisal processes (4, 5). The system yields *if . . . then . . .* signatures (6a, 6b, 7), which both influence the immediate environment of the person (8) and have the potential to enact cultural change (9).

representations). Arrow 2 captures the notion that cultural value systems influence people's physical surroundings—the types of institutions that are built, for example, or the architectural designs that foster culturally valued types of social interaction. This arrow is bidirectional to reflect the notion that physical culture also reifies the cultural value systems that create and maintain it. As arrow 3 shows, cultural belief systems and institutions then afford group members the specific nominal situations that allow people to practice and further reinforce those belief systems as part of a shared reality. These nominal situations are more discretionary, temporally discrete instantiations of culture, such as taking an exam, running on a treadmill, or having a power lunch with a client.

Together, these first three boxes in Figure 7.3 take us from a broader “culture” to a more specific “context,” to a more specific “situation,” although these distinctions themselves

do not have clean, easy boundaries. Although the “power of the situation” is great (see Ross & Nisbett, 1991), even these “situations” cannot be separated from the people who collectively, as a culture, have defined and continue to define them.

Arrows 4 and 5 in Figure 7.3 reflect the co-constitutive influence of culture and the person as reflected in the psychological situation (Shoda et al., 1994). As discussed earlier, the subjective meaning of a nominal situation is influenced by the person's existing knowledge structures through appraisal processes (arrow 5; see Cervone, 2004); however, appraisals are bound to and directed by their *applicability* to a given nominal situation (arrow 4). As in the original CAPS formulation, features of the psychological situation then activate and inhibit other CAUs (arrows 6a and 6b), following a pattern of activation and inhibition such that *if . . . then . . .* profiles, as well as overall behavior tendencies, are displayed (arrow 7). As various

researchers have argued, these behaviors then influence the very situations in which people find themselves in (Levy, Ayduk, & Downey, 2001), creating a self-selection bias (arrow 8). For example, the person who believes in personal agency and control over aging is likely to find him- or herself working out, and encoding the experience as daily mastery against old age. Thus, culture and the person are both interpenetrating each other, mutually discernible yet inseparable.

Finally, arrow 9 in Figure 7.3 provides the possibility that people can alter subjective or physical culture. Gandhi inspired and mobilized entire groups of people toward a belief in the power of peace; the Beatles changed the meaning of music; Mia Hamm played soccer at a moment in history when a nation (in this case, the United States) was ready to get serious about women and sports. Thus, individuals can also influence the normative forces we call “culture.”

## TWO ILLUSTRATIONS

The stable situation–behavior profiles generated by the CAPS system lend themselves not only to the idiographic study of persons but also provide a nomothetic route to characterize cultural groups in terms of their shared subnetworks, situation–behavior signatures, and common cultural affordances. In the section that follows, we briefly illustrate some ways that a dynamic system approach to culture and personality can help shed light on cultural convergences in behavior. The emphasis in these approaches is in a deeper understanding of how history, cultural meaning systems, and contextual constraints shape the thoughts, cognitions, and affects that individuals experience. We choose two examples—research on culture of honor, and on race-based rejection sensitivity—to illustrate how macro-level forces such as a herding economy or a history of discrimination against one’s group shape the social-cognitive worlds of individuals.

### Culture of Honor

Research on culture of honor (Cohen, 1998; Cohen, Nisbett, Bowdle, & Schwarz, 1996; Nisbett & Cohen, 1996; see also Cohen, Chapter 8, this volume) provides an in-depth analysis of how historical forces shape cultural prac-

tices and norms (cultural affordances), which in turn influence the way individuals behave in particular situations (person  $\times$  situation interactions). The research provides an excellent illustration of how seemingly contradictory surface-level behaviors can be understood, and subsequently predicted, by understanding how subjective and physical culture have shaped the characteristic cognitions, affects, and encodings characteristic of a given group within the United States.

What are these contradictory surface-level behaviors? As Cohen et al. (1996) noted, “For centuries, the American South has been regarded as more violent than the North” (p. 945). Consistent with this reputation, rates in the South and West for argument-related homicides have been shown to be higher than they are in the North (Nisbett & Cohen, 1996). Despite this reputation, however, Southerners also have a reputation for being charming and polite. A recent etiquette expert ranked Charleston, South Carolina, as the nation’s most polite city—for the 10th straight year. “When you pass people on the street, they will nod at you,” reports a Charleston city tour guide. “People who live here are, for whatever reason, polite. Whether it’s breeding or in the water, it’s hard to say” (CNN, 2005). In short, the South’s reputation for violence stands alongside its equally strong reputation for politeness, for that old Southern charm. How then, do we reconcile the view of a violent South with a view of a charming South?

According to the culture of honor hypothesis, a herding economy in combination with loose law enforcement in the Southern and Western United States have led to a cultural adaptation in which honor and reputation have become critical elements in the protection of one’s property and name. In the absence of adequate social control, it became important to respond quickly and affirmatively to being crossed, insulted, affronted, or stolen from, so as to communicate to the community not to “mess” with one’s property and to maintain one’s status. The culture of honor, characterized by strong vigilance to disrespect and ready use of violence to protect property and name, has over time affected social practices and norms. This is symbolized both in games that amount to tests of “manhood” (e.g., “chicken” games, or kicking each other in the shins) and in legal lenience toward violence instigated by affronts to honor (Cohen & Nisbett, 1994,

1997). These practices and laws are good examples of the way subjective culture influences physical culture, as illustrated by arrow 2 in Figure 7.3.

As Cohen, Vandello, Puente, and Rantilla (1999) explain, a culture of honor that rests on violent retaliation following affront dictates not only how to react when such an affront occurs, but also how to act when an affront does *not* occur. More specifically, in a culture where serious retribution is a consequence of disrespect, it is to one's best interest to be unambiguous about according respect when one is not looking for trouble. As such, then, a distinct *if . . . then . . .* pattern can be viewed as characterizing the behavior of people sharing a culture of honor.

In a laboratory-based "experimental ethnography" that provided empirical support for this "culture of honor profile," Cohen and colleagues (1996, Study 3) recruited Northern and Southern white men to participate in a laboratory study generally described to be about personality. An ingenious experimental manipulation followed. Participants were brought into the lab, asked to fill out questionnaires, and then drop off the packet at the end of a long, narrow hallway. Half of the Southern and half of the Northern participants were then subjected to an affront: While walking down the hallway, they had to squeeze past an assistant (in reality, a confederate) getting something out of a cabinet. The confederate, feigning annoyance, slammed the cabinet shut, insulted the participant under his breath, and intentionally bumped the participant on his way out of the hallway. At this point, the participant still had to make his way to the end of the hallway, but at this point a different person (also a confederate) began walking down the hall toward him. Given the width of the hallway, this in effect set the stage for a potential game of "chicken," where the point is to see who swerves out of the way first. The distance at which the participant "chickened out" or got out of the confederate's way was expected to vary both as a function of the participant's background and whether he had been bumped or not. Following this encounter, the participant finally made it to the end of the hall, where he was met by a different confederate. This confederate, blind to the regional background of the participant, rated the firmness of the participant's handshake and gave an overall impression of the participant's domineering behavior.

As expected, and corroborating prior research, Southern men who had been bumped, relative to men from the North, waited longer before stepping aside to let the second confederate through. This is consistent with the interpretation that following an affront (the bump by the first confederate), a more aggressive response to restore honor was facilitated among Southern men. Participants were also rated by the third confederate as more aggressive and dominant, and as giving a firmer handshake relative to that of Northern participants. Tellingly, however, among participants who had not been bumped, the Southern men were more "polite" than their Northern counterparts: They got out of the second confederate's way earlier, gave less firm handshakes, and were less domineering and aggressive with the third confederate.

Thus, the results from this study are consistent both with the notion that Southerners are more violent, and that Southerners are more polite. Which one is correct? The answer is both—a clear *if . . . then . . .* pattern, predicted from an in-depth analysis of the historical and social influences affecting the South, as well as astute expectations as to how those macro-level influences affect the way individuals construe and respond to situations. Importantly, a global analysis of Southern aggression without regard to the situation would miss these dynamics entirely.

### Mere Recategorization, or Dynamic Complexity?

Cultural psychologists might worry about a characterization—or caricaturization—of Southern "personality" as a two-point pattern dictated by respect and affront, where the stable aspect of the person, instead of being a global adjective, is now conveniently replaced by a global belief system or even a set of folk beliefs. However, it is important to remember that the C-CAPS—the shared networks of beliefs, cognitions, affects, and actions, activated in relation to situations—exist within a broader network that may or may not be shared by other members of the group (Kashima, 2004). For example, while two men may both have grown up in the South, and may both feel physiological arousal when verbally insulted in a hallway (Cohen et al., 1996), one of these two men may consider self-control an important life value, perhaps as a result of martial arts classes, or a deep

religious conviction of “turning the other cheek.”

Although efforts toward a contextual analysis of behavior within cultural and cross-cultural psychology have an established history (Hoorens & Poortinga, 2000), such analyses have been criticized (Shweder, 1991) as conveniently recategorizing people into smaller and smaller groups every time a prediction goes awry (e.g., where insights about “Southern men” become insights about “Southern men who hold deep religious beliefs” and eventually “Southern men who hold deep religious beliefs but who have self-regulatory competency”). By contrast, a view of the culture–personality system as a dynamic network allows us to understand how one can reconcile both cultural homogeneity and difference *as part of the same dynamic process*. The strength of the C-CAPS lies in its recognition that an individual who can behave similarly to others in his or her cultural group, when the correct psychological features of situations are activated, can act in a completely idiosyncratic manner when a different set of features is activated, thus allowing for individuality and commonality within the same individual at different times (Mendoza-Denton et al., 1997). Thus, rather than an atheoretical recategorization of behavioral responses into smaller and smaller groups, The C-CAPS view focuses on the stability of the *if . . . then . . .* Culture–personality profiles, and their diagnostic use toward a deeper understanding of the interplay between cultural conditions and processing dynamics. The level of specificity chosen with C-CAPS is a *choice* that depends entirely on the goals for which it is used, all the way from the individual life history (McAdams, 1999) to large group and cultural comparisons.

### Race-Based Rejection Sensitivity

To this point, we have provided illustrative examples of C-CAPS, such that particular features of situations (e.g., an affront to honor, or a crooked cop planting evidence) activate culturally shared dynamics that predict behavior by members of a cultural group. There is the possibility, however, of variability even in situations that seem especially relevant to cultural groups. This variability can be fruitfully harnessed to understand and map a given cultural dynamic—in other words, individual differences providing a window into psychological

process (Mendoza-Denton, Page-Gould, & Pietrzak, 2006). One example of this is work on sensitivity to race-based rejection in the U.S. context, in which clear, within-group variability coexists with a dynamic predicated on particular experiences being more likely to occur to members of a particular group.

As several researchers have emphasized, the psychology of minority group members must be understood within the group’s own context and historical background, an important part of which is a history of stigmatization and the continuing discrimination that exists to this day (Sellers, Caldwell, Schmeelk-Cone, & Zimmerman, 2003; Shelton, 2000). This history, as well as prior experiences, are likely to affect individuals in profound ways, affecting both the sense of self (Humphreys & Kashima, 2002; Mischel & Morf, 2003; Kashima et al., 2004) and the stable responses that the individual marshals in response to discrimination. One such mechanism termed *sensitivity to race-based rejection* (RS-race; Mendoza-Denton, Downey, Purdie, Davis, & Pietrzak, 2002; Mendoza-Denton et al., 2005) also illustrates the intricate co-constitution of culture (societal stereotypes and prejudice), nominal situations (e.g., the university setting), and the person (RS-race dynamic).

Growing out of developmental perspectives on attachment, the construct of RS-race has its theoretical precursors in research on rejection sensitivity (Downey & Feldman, 1996; Levy et al., 2001). Based on a series of prospective, longitudinal, and experimental studies, Downey and colleagues have proposed that when people experience rejection from parents, peers, or other important figures in the form of abuse or neglect, they are vulnerable to developing anxious expectations of rejection, namely, a “hot,” affectively laden expectation that future rejection lies in store in similar kinds of situations. These anxious expectations are activated in situations where rejection is both applicable and salient (Higgins, 1996), and is a good illustration of the idea that the stable dispositional feature of the individual, namely, anxious expectations, are made accessible specifically in relation to features of the situations. Ayduk, Downey, Testa, Yen, and Shoda (1999), for example, found that when rejection-sensitive women were rejected, they retaliated by bad-mouthing the perpetrator; however, when an alternative, benign explanation for the rejection was offered, no retaliation was observed.

These anxious expectations lower the threshold for perceiving the rejection and, once the rejection is perceived, activate intense, “hot” reactions to it.

To the degree that affiliation and acceptance can be considered a fundamental human motive (Fiske, 2004), people may be universally capable of developing the dynamic of rejection sensitivity (anxious expectations → ready perceptions → hot reactions) if rejected or neglected. However, the manifestation of rejection may be expressed in many different ways that are constrained by culture. Mendoza-Denton and colleagues (2005) postulated that rejection can occur on the basis of not only idiosyncratic characteristics but also devalued group membership—such as gender, sexual orientation, or race.

Cultural influences come into play at several levels. First, as has been widely recognized, stigma is context-specific: An attribute or personal characteristic that is devalued in one domain may be valued (or be neutrally valenced) in another context (Crocker, Major, & Steele, 1998). As such, the context within which a person operates can dictate the type of interpersonal experiences—and stable dynamics—that develop as a result. Second, even when two groups might be negatively stigmatized, the nature of the stigma depends on the assumptions that a given stigma carries about one’s group. In the United States, for example, being African American carries a suspicion about academic inability (Steele, 1997), but not about athletic ability, whereas the reverse is true of Asian Americans (Chan & Mendoza-Denton, 2004). As such, then, although two people may be equally apprehensive concerning their status, the situations that activate their rejection concerns are different. Finally, the coping mechanisms marshaled in response to the rejection may be different. Again, one’s cultural group provides one with culture-specific strategies, values, and culturally appropriate strategies marshaled in response to rejection.

If one takes such a cultural-psychological analysis seriously, it becomes difficult, if not impossible, to create a technique to assess status-based rejection expectations *independently* of context. Accordingly, Mendoza-Denton et al. (2002) conducted focus groups to find out the situations that activate race-based rejection concerns among African Americans, and constructed a questionnaire based specifically on those situations (this methodology

parallels Kitayama et al.’s (1997) situation sampling procedure). The kinds of situations included scenarios such as a random traffic stop or being passed over for an opportunity to answer a difficult question in class—situations that contain “active ingredients” for making discrimination applicable and salient among African Americans. The researchers administered this questionnaire to a sample of African American, European American, and Asian American undergraduates. As expected, African Americans scored highest on the measure, whereas European American and Asian American participants scored low and did not differ. Individual differences in the measure predicted spontaneous attributions to race in these situations among African Americans but not among European Americans or Asian Americans (Mendoza-Denton et al., 2002). Among African Americans, individual differences in anxious expectations of race-based rejection subsequently predicted, over a 3-week period, reports of rejection, and more intense feelings of alienation and rejection following the rejection. Over the course of five semesters, individual differences in RS-race among African Americans predicted students’ grade point averages (GPAs). This last result in particular illustrates well how culture is both “in the head” and “out there.” Individuals enact self-protective mechanisms in response to discrimination, which, at a system level, is maintained by the broader culture’s subjective culture (e.g., stereotypes, system justifications), physical culture (majority-dominated college settings), and nominal settings (unequal opportunities). Rather than being a question about explaining the phenomenon either through social or personality psychology, this approach shows not only their inseparability but also the indispensability of their interplay for an understanding of the dynamic.

It may be helpful at this point to consider a hypothetical scenario in which two Americans—one black, one white—score equally highly on a measure of neuroticism, but in one case the score is capturing the individual’s concerns surrounding societal discrimination, whereas in the other the score is capturing the individual’s concern surrounding romantic relationships. Far from being mere “adaptations” (McCrae, 2000), not to be confused with dispositions, we argue that it is *precisely* by knowing about the trigger features, the outcomes, and the historical context surrounding

the behavior of each person that one begins really to arrive at the cultural psychology underlying social behavior (Cohen, 1997; Mendoza-Denton et al., 1997). A deep understanding of people's responses to the particular predicament in question depends on cultural background, as well as cognitive-social learning history—in one case, a strong historical backdrop of oppression and discrimination (Mendoza-Denton et al., 2002) and in the other, perhaps neglect or abuse in the home (Downey & Feldman, 1996). To draw on an earlier analogy, the only way to distinguish between the two cars is by looking under the hood.

## IMPLICATIONS

### Assessment Issues

Having provided two illustrations of how the C-CAPS operates, we now turn to a discussion of personality assessment through a cultural-psychological lens. As noted earlier, the current dominant approach to personality assessment and comparison across cultures is the global trait approach (Triandis & Suh, 2002), which is both helpful and attractive because it provides a rigorous, methodologically driven approach to assessment. However, as we have noted, aggregating or ignoring situational variability in behavior necessarily precludes an analysis of the ways in which personality dynamics and culture influence one another.

But how should situations be grouped? This is the critical question for a viable cultural-psychological approach to personality. As reviewed earlier, this approach suggests that rather than looking at nominal situations (e.g., the marketplace, the university, a social chat around the water cooler) that are of limited generalizability (e.g., see B. B. Whiting & Whiting, 1975), people act on situations that are *psychologically* similar (e.g., contexts that are ripe for social rejection; opportunities in which one can advance one's children's education). The distinction between nominal and psychological situations lies precisely at the heart of a cultural psychology in which the world outside is interpreted through the lens of the culture, and those interpretations are themselves facilitated through cultural affordances. To the degree that psychological situational groupings are culturally specific, it is the task of the cultural psychologist to uncover those

local meanings and not be lured by outward appearances. As some of the research summarized in this chapter illustrates, personality processes as they are embedded and expressed in their cultural context can be captured with various methodologies.

### Bottom-Up Approaches

As described earlier, Wright and Mischel (1988) used clustering techniques to identify different types of commonly used situational modifiers that the cultural experts in that context (the targets' peers and counselors) used to describe a particular cultural group. This is an example of a "bottom-up" strategy, in which the researcher recruits "experts" or informants in a given culture to provide the raw data for subsequent coding and clustering.

### Top-Down Approaches

A second, "top-down" approach to assessment is one in which the researcher begins with a theory of the internal processing dynamics that may characterize a type, and is then able to hypothesize the distinctive *if . . . then . . .* profile for that type, as well as the psychological trigger features that define the profile (e.g., Downey & Feldman, 1996). A theory about a cultural group's distinctive processing dynamics can be derived from careful study about a group's history, or the social, environmental, and historical forces that have shaped its people. An excellent example of this approach is the careful analysis leading to the culture of honor research reviewed earlier. A hybrid approach, containing elements of both a top-down and a bottom-up approach, is seen in Mendoza-Denton et al. (2002), who not only hypothesized the dynamic of RS-race on the basis of historical and societal analysis but also interviewed people about the specific situations in which the dynamic would be played out.

### Interpreting Cross-Cultural Differences in Global Traits

Researchers have shown quite convincingly that there are trait-level differences among cultural groups (Triandis & Suh, 2002). Again, the proposed approach is not incompatible: The C-CAPS predicts, and is able to account for, both *if . . . then . . .* patterns and broad differences between groups. In considering find-

ings that two cultural groups differ—or do not—on a given trait, however, the C-CAPS approach uncovers alternative interpretations to a one-to-one correspondence between the trait and underlying dispositions.

Consider findings from Kammrath et al. (2005, Study 3), who presented people with several distinct *if . . . then . . .* patterns that were nevertheless identical in their overall interpersonal warmth. For example, one target was reliably friendlier toward authority figures than to peers, whereas a second target displayed precisely the opposite pattern. A third target was not differentially friendly toward authorities and peers. Participants rated their impressions of each target using Goldberg's transparent, bipolar Big Five scale (Goldberg, 1992). From a global trait perspective, people should rate all targets equally on Agreeableness and Extraversion, given that all targets displayed the same overall level of interpersonal warmth. The results showed that although ratings of Extraversion did not differ across the three targets, the target that was warm toward authorities was seen as distinctly disagreeable, whereas the target that was friendly to peers was rated as quite agreeable (the third target was rated in the middle). These findings suggest caution in interpreting broad trait dimensions as indexes of overall behavior aggregates. In the research described here, the targets did *not* actually differ in their overall warmth, despite clear differences in perceivers' ratings of their Agreeableness.

A second caution in interpreting trait-level cultural differences too literally is seen in Shoda, Mischel, and Wright (1993), who also analyzed data from the boys' summer camp described earlier (Shoda et al., 1994; Wright & Mischel, 1988). For this analysis, the researchers analyzed the *if . . . then . . .* profile patterns of those boys who were collectively agreed to be prototypical exemplars of "friendly," "withdrawn," and "aggressive" children. Surprisingly, when looking at the children's physical aggression, it was not the prototypically "aggressive" children who displayed the most overall physical aggression—it was the campers labeled as "withdrawn." Evidently, even though the perceivers used the label "aggressive" to describe children and agreed as to which children could be described this way, the specific pattern to which the label referred did not necessarily correspond to the surface-level behavior. As another example, consider find-

ings on gender stereotypes by Mendoza-Denton, Park, Kammrath, and Peake (2004). Despite the fact that men are stereotypically labeled as "assertive" and women as "passive," Mendoza-Denton et al. found that women are in fact expected to be more assertive than men in certain situations (e.g., those that have to do with home and hearth). The relevant point is that perceivers' labels do not necessarily correspond to the surface-level manifestations of behavior that the labels suggest.

As these examples suggest, the relationship between the trait terms people use to describe others and the behavior patterns to which they relate is not straightforward. People undeniably use traits, and the basic classification of these into five categories seems to have solid support, but their interpretation as reflecting biological dispositions of entire cultural groups (e.g., McCrae, 2004) seems premature. Having identified through careful, rigorous work that some groups of people differ from others in the traits ascribed to them, the logical next step seems not to look for genetic differences, but rather to understand cultural variability in the lay theories associated with these traits.

## CONCLUSIONS

In the seminal article "Cultural Psychology: What Is It?" Shweder (1990) refers to a song by Paul McCartney and Stevie Wonder, "Ebony and Ivory," with the lyric, "We all know that people are the same wherever you go." Shweder cites this lyric as an example of the intuitive lay notion, based on Platonic philosophy, of psychic unity—in other words, the idea that in spite of cultural superficialities, a basic humanity unites all of us (see Triandis, Chapter 3, this volume). In current cross-cultural conceptualizations, such psychic unity is claimed to be a universal personality trait structure that goes above and beyond cultural differences—with the strong claim that, indeed, people are the same wherever you go. Cultural psychology has suggested an alternative path to this approach, rejecting the notion of psychic unity and instead preferring to show that, by virtue of the fact that culture and psyche make each other up, people are just, irreducibly, not the same wherever you go.

And yet McCartney and Wonder do seem to have a fundamental point that cannot be easily dismissed. It stands to reason that, as a species,



there should be a set of characteristics that unites all of us. Within the C-CAPS framework, the potential candidates for universality are the basic architecture of the system and its governing principles—availability, accessibility, applicability, and organization.

Despite calls not to equate personality exclusively with global traits, and warnings about the utility and comparability of broad constructs across cultures (Bock, 2000; Church, 2000; Kashima, 2001; Pervin, 1999), the tacit equation of consistency with “individual behavior dispositions that are expressed as consistent behavior across time and across situations” (Poortinga & Van Hemert, 2001, p. 1034) remains, in our reading, the default assumption among researchers interested in culture and personality. The cost of this assumption for the study of culture and personality is that it bypasses some of the most exciting advances in current personality science, and obscures opportunities for integration (Church, 2000; Mischel, 2004; Shoda & Mischel, 2000; Shoda et al., 2002; Triandis, 2000).

We have proposed here that a processing model that can account for person  $\times$  situation interactions may be fruitfully applied to understanding how culture and person are mutually constitutive. This model departs from the classic notion of a bounded, causal entity called a “person” that exerts a unidirectional causal influence on behavior independent of situational or cultural forces. The framework offers a perspective that legitimizes cross-situational variability in behavior as the output of a culturally imbued, dynamic, meaning-making process (see Norenzayan et al., Chapter 23, this volume). It identifies an alternative set of mediating units—and their interrelationships—as the active ingredients of a cultural personality system. The cognitive–affective units and contextual variables outlined in Figure 7.3 are framed at a broad level, and require specification at the level of CAU contents and contextual variables to be able to offer prediction. In terms of the contents and cultural manifestations of the C-CAPS, Shweder’s (1991) description could not be more apt: “The mind, left to its own devices, is mindless” (p. 83).

Thus, rather than itself specifying a set of predictions, the C-CAPS framework offers a set of principles that researchers can use to guide their theory-building work. Such theory building, as we have reviewed, can occur in both a

top-down or a bottom-up approach, but likely requires as a first step intimacy with a cultural group, through either observation or the insights of cultural informants (see also Cohen, Chapter 8, this volume). We have argued that insights in social cognition and personality science over the past two decades provide a set of principles for research that can lead to a cumulative science of culture–personality studies. A failure to take them into account risks falling prey to overgeneralizations and untenable stereotyping that in the past yielded studies of “national character” (Benedict, 1934) and “modal personality” (DuBois, 1944) that were ultimately untenable (see Triandis, Chapter 3, this volume).

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