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Culture & personality: Five expert visions

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Abstract

Research on culture and personality has greatly enhanced personality science by bringing attention to the bidirectional processes by which socio-cultural factors shape personality and individuals in turn shape their social environments to fit and express their personalities. This review showcases the unique perspectives and topical contributions of five different sets of experts, who examine these issues from different standpoints and answer different questions. Specifically, these contributions focus on (1) the usefulness of anthropology-based distributive models of culture, (2) how culture and personality make-up each other, (3) the cultural and ecological basis of wellbeing, (4) how individual personality expressions relate to culture, and (5) the multicultural mind and self. These advances put personality psychology at the center of important current social science debates about the dynamic interplay between macro-level factors and individual variables, and how individuals can best manage cultural diversity and globalization.

Keywords

culture and personality, social ecology, wellbeing, personality expressions, geographic psychology, multicultural self, multicultural mind, distributive models

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Introduction

Few today would dispute that individuals develop their personalities through a dynamic, continuous, and reciprocal process of transaction with their cultures. Culture, through the institutions, meanings, and practices it is made of, influences whether and how certain personality dispositions and adaptations are supported and expressed (see Benet-Martinez, 2021; Lu et al., 2023; for comprehensive reviews). This paper provides a brief, non-exhaustive overview of the field of culture and personality by showcasing the contributions of five sets of experts who focus on the following topics: (1) the application of anthropology-based distributive models to the study of culture (Saucier), (2) the multi-level interdependence of cultural and personality processes (Gelfand), (3) the cultural/ecological basis of wellbeing (Choi & Oishi), (4) how individual personality expressions (e.g., music preferences) relate to culture (Rentfrow), and (5) multiculturalism effects on the self/mind (Hong).[1]

These researchers are a vibrant and prolific group, and for reasons that will become clearer later in this article, it clearly is an exciting time to carry research on

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culture and personality.[2] As we look to the present future of the study of culture and personality, we need to be cognizant of the ideas and findings described in these five contributions. Having moved beyond long-gone, ill-conceived notions, such as that culture is the personality profile of a group (i.e., fallacy of the "national character" studies) or that culture is an external factor completely exogenous to personality (i.e., personality cannot be understood without the cultural context that provides its definition and expression), these five perspectives put the study of culture and personality back on the road map of psychology. They also place personality science at the epicenter of important social debates traditionally relegated to economists, demographers, and political and environmental scientists (e.g., the nature of social capital, the ecological basis of behavior, what constitutes a good life, and the psychological effects of multiculturalism and globalization).

This distinguished group of culturally-informed social-personality psychologists wrote their contributions entirely independently of each other (and each contribution has been edited only minimally), and yet some common themes emerge, along with a general lack of substantive disagreement. Although each contribution tackles different research questions, they all share a multi-level and dynamic view of culture, where micro, individual personality processes and macro, socio-ecological forces, as well as group and individual variation, can be seamlessly integrated. These contributions also lend themselves well to an understanding of how culture and personality processes operate in our increasingly global and diverse societies, where multiple cultural influences coexist and influence each other, and where individuals can easily move between cultures. These common and integrative themes are fleshed out in some conclusive comments at the end of this paper, along with some future general directions for the field.

The Utility of Distributive Models of Culture for Personality Science: Moving Forward –Gerard Saucier

Siloes that separate scientific fields have their hazards. Personality psychology is mostly disconnected from anthropology, so personologists may have missed that psychological anthropology draws strongly on distributive models of culture. Such models, which offer a helpful culture-informed perspective on personality, took their full form in three classic works: Wallace (1961), Goodenough (1971), and Schwartz (1978).

My summary would be that distributive models involve ten core propositions:

1. *Culture is not equal to society or a group of people* – but is rather an ideational system including norms, beliefs, and values.
2. *Culture is located in individuals, thus distributed out across a population* – in the set of norms, beliefs, and values acquired by each of many individuals.
3. *One might label this "culture-in-the-person" as personality* – or as mindset, culture being the aggregate of such individual-level formations.
4. *Culture is distributed non-uniformly* – within a group, culture is non-homogeneous; individuals vary substantially in which cultural contents they know and display.
5. *Individual variability (even if extreme), can be organized to afford some mutual predictability* – joint commitment to rules (even if tacit) yields expectations for people behaving in culture-approved ways.
6. *Some of that variability is associated with subgroups* – for example, genders, social classes, subcultures, geographical regions, generational cohorts -- so every culture is by to degree multicultural.
7. *Shared culture (commonality) forms a hierarchy* – from what is shared among a few up to what is shared by most or even all.
8. *A 'culture-pool' includes both idiosyncratic and shared contents* – a wider inventory of all ideations anywhere in the population, an important potential source of change/innovation.
9. *Culture as distributed across a population is fluid, non-static* – in continual transformation across time, sometimes gradually, sometimes rapidly.
10. *Culture is characteristically complex beyond easy comprehension,* even in small-scale societies, owing to its heterogeneity and changeability.

The three classic works each posit some variant of virtually all these propositions, albeit with differing emphasis. And they include additional themes. For example, Goodenough emphasizes how cultural standards narrow the range of individuals' behaviors without imposing uniformity, and Schwartz suggests some cultures do this narrowing more than others, rather resonant with the concept of cultural tightness (vs. looseness) well-known to cultural psychologists (Gelfand et al., 2011). Goodenough introduces the notion of "cultural competence" (making analogy between "bilingual" and "bicultural"), that some individuals come to know comparatively more of a culture than others. The implication: Someone can be competent in multiple cultures. This competence-conception informs an offshoot approach that measures cultural consensus (Romney et al., 1986) and, building on that, a "cultural

consonance" approach (Dressler, 2007) wherein individual differences in how much one converges with others regarding cultural knowledge become a predictor for important outcomes (e.g., health). Another prominent offshoot is an epidemiological model of culture (Sperber, 1996), which focuses on how certain cultural contents ("representations") spread like contagions (e.g., epidemics), due to features (e.g., memorability, evocativeness) that make certain culture-aspects "catching" and likely to be retained.

Anthropology-derived distributive models offer numerous insights understanding culture-and-personality. First, they help disambiguate the definition of culture. By shining light on substantial cultural heterogeneity within groups, distributive cultural models invalidate culture-is-a-group conceptions. Indirectly, these models confront stereotypes, which ignore personality variation and reduce individuals to their group-membership; they also undermine outgroup-homogeneity assumptions that fuel prejudice and dehumanization.

Second, since distributive models, like personality, assume strong variance within groups, these are congenial models for culture-and-personality integration. Mean-level change in personality attributes might reflect (or stimulate) cultural change. Some attributes may be more culture-influenced (vs. innate-temperament-influenced) than others.

Third, they address how one's personality corresponds to culture at the individual level. The classic works define this correspondence in terms of constructs, construals, mappings, goals, values, and standards, that is, cognitive schemas that guide behavior. Essentially, shared "mindsets" make for culture, and mindset largely affect personality. In a mindset, the standards/values/beliefs (a behavior-guidance system interfused with cultural contents) are preeminent and behavior and moods/emotions more peripheral, whereas in personality as conventionally understood the patterns of behavior and mood/emotion are more preeminent.

Fourth, we see how personologists already deal with culture. For example, social-desirability values of traits (studied since the 1950s) have been derived by a cultural-consensus approach – multi-judge convergence on value-priorities. Social-desirability responding and impression management involve conformity to shared cultural standards and demonstrate cultural knowledge (Bou Malham & Saucier, 2016).

Fifth, like culture, personality structure is an organization of diversity, and more complex than any individual mind easily grasps. Cross-cultural studies of personality structure have emphasized the issue of replicability of exported (e.g., Big-Five) models, but unique aspects of the structure derived from any population bear the organizing imprint of culture. Some aspects are likely to be relatively universal, others relatively culture-specific. The structure of personality-attributes reveals certain maximal lines of heterogeneity within the culture-pool, but mindset-related structures of values and beliefs will more strongly reflect the distribution of culture within a population.

Future scientific integration of culture with personality needs an approach to culture that is not overly static, oversimplifying, or stereotype-promoting, and that takes good account of individual differences. Hopefully, that need will be filled. Distributive-type models can help.

How do Culture and Personality "Make Each Other Up"? The Case of Tight vs. Loose Cultures –Michele Gelfand

A longstanding theoretical position in the field of cultural psychology is that culture and psyche "*make each other up*" (Shweder, 1991). Yet unpacking this notion both theoretically and empirically is challenging. A key question therein is how we can integrate research on macro distal ecological and historical factors with research on micro-level individual processes. On the one hand, the macro *structuralist* approach to culture focuses on distal institutions, ecology, and historical factors. Scholars adopting this approach generally take a long-time perspective and focus on culture as a relatively stable system of meanings that are functional in a particular ecocultural and historical niche (e.g., Hofstede, 1980). Missing within this approach, however, are the precise mechanisms through which these macro and distal factors affect more micro-level daily structures and psychological processes. On the other end of the continuum, much work has been done at a very *micro* and *subjectivist* level of analysis on societal culture. Drawing inspiration from basic social cognition research, a large body of work has accumulated on cultural differences in cognition, motivation, and emotion (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). However, as with the macro tradition, there are few conceptual bridges that help connect the individual level to distal ecological and historical contexts. Like the proverbial blind person touching different parts of an elephant, the field has been examining different aspects of a complex whole, without being well integrated.

This raises a number of important conceptual and empirical questions for the study of culture in personality psychology: How do macro processes "trickle" down to create divergence in psychological processes at the individual level of analysis? In turn, how do individuals create and sustain the stable macro contexts in which they are embedded?

To address these questions, we need theoretical and empirical bridges linking phenomena at the macro and micro levels of analysis in research on culture. In recent years, more attention has been given to cultural variation at

the *micro-structural level*—which includes the structure of everyday situations, roles, and networks within cultures—as an important yet largely neglected bridge in the study of culture (Gelfand et al., 2011, see also Kitayama et al., 1997; Morris et al., 2000). This view proposes that culture reflects a loosely organized system of adaptations at different levels of analysis (See Figure 1 in Lu et al., 2023). In particular, ecological, historical and social-political variation make certain features of situations, roles, and network structures more or less adaptive, and in turn, individuals become psychologically attuned and responsive to the requirements of the constraints in their everyday situational contexts, thereby recreating and sustaining them. Put differently, differences in cognition, motivation, and emotion are natural adaptations to the proximal chronic and recurring features of everyday situational constraints in which people are embedded, and these psychological processes further reinforce the nature of these situational constraints.

As an example, we (Gelfand et al., 2011) illustrated how chronic differences in the *strength of situations* mediate the impact of distal ecological and historical and socio-political factors and individual differences. Strong situations limit the range of behavior that is deemed appropriate, whereas weaker situations afford a much wider range of acceptable behaviors (Mischel, 1977). We theorized that societies with more natural disasters, disease prevalence, territorial invasions, and fewer natural resources, develop tighter cultures in order to coordinate to survive such threats. Cultural tightness (vs. looseness) is reflected and promoted through institutions (e.g., the media, schools, government) that foster *narrow* versus *broad socialization* (Arnett, 1995) and at the micro-structural level, through the strength of everyday situations (Mischel, 1977).

We also posited a close connection between the strength of situations within societies and individual differences. That is, the characteristics of social situations dictate the psychological processes that are needed for individuals to function well within their local cultures (Adamopoulos, 1982; Kitayama et al., 1997). More specifically, to the extent that people need to navigate situations that have high degrees of strength, they develop higher levels of *felt accountability.* Consequently, individuals develop a particular constellation of personality characteristics adaptive to situational constraints that ultimately reinforce them. Individuals in tighter cultures (e.g., Japan, Singapore, Austria) were theorized to have higher prevention focus, more impulse control, higher need for structure, higher trait conscientiousness, and higher self-monitoring ability, all of which are adaptive to and reinforce stronger situations and enable individuals to coordinate their action in the face of ecological and historical threats. A multilevel SEM model supported these linkages between ecological and socio-political contexts, situational strength, and individual differences (Gelfand et al., 2011). More generally, the strength of social situations is an empirical bridge between macro and distal cultural processes and more micro and proximal personality individual differences.

This perspective also opens up new interpretations of cultural differences. Cultural differences in situational constraint may explain variation in emotional expression, dispositional versus situational attributions, holistic versus analytical thinking, concrete versus abstract construals, trait-behavior consistency, and generalized trust. And the influence of personal values versus norms on individual behavior (Elster & Gelfand, 2020). By taking the micro-structural level of analysis into account in culture research, we can begin to illuminate the specific ways in which culture and personality "make each other up".

Taking a Socio-Ecological Approach to the Study of Culture and Well-Being –Shigehiro Oishi & Hyewon Choi

In the opening chapter of *Ethics* entitled *The Object of Life*, Aristotle argues that ultimately happiness (eudaimonia) is the only goal that is not instrumental for other goals (i.e., the goal for itself; Book I095a7-28). Aristotle's logical argument is supported by empirical data. A survey from forty-two countries found that 69% of respondents rated happiness as "extremely important" (7 in the 1-7 point scale) ahead of health and money (Diener et al., 2018).

What is agreed on in the study of SWB?. There is an agreement on the role of genetics and personality dispositions in accounting for some of the individual differences in SWB. Roughly 30%–40% of individual differences could be explained by genetic differences; personality traits such as neuroticism and extraversion are correlated with SWB (Diener et al., 2018 for review). Likewise, there is an agreement on the role of objective living conditions such as household income and natural disasters (Diener et al., 2018); Residents of poor nations report lower levels of SWB than those of wealthier nations; victims of a major earthquake report lower levels of SWB years afterward.

What is Not Agreed?. There is no agreement on the *degree to which* culture plays a role in SWB. On the one hand, some researchers emphasize the universal predictors of SWB, such as autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2001). In contrast, other researchers argue that what it means to be well is culturally determined (e.g., Kitayama & Markus, 2000). The debate between the two arguments has not been settled because there are substantial works providing support for both arguments (e.g., the satisfaction of autonomy, competence, and relatedness needs is positively associated

with SWB across cultures, while interpersonally disengaging positive emotions such as pride are not).

What are the New Findings?. Whereas the first two decades of culture and well-being research (1991–2010) focused on North America versus East Asia, recent studies expanded to other relatively understudied areas such as Latin America, the Middle East, and Africa (see Diener et al., 2018 for a review). Over the last 10 years, culture and SWB researchers identified several person-culture fit effects on SWB (e.g., religiosity is linked to longevity only in religious cultural contexts; Ebert et al., 2020). Finally, a series of studies explored the concept of happiness across cultures. For instance, a cross-national dictionary study showed that 24 of the 30 nations sampled defined happiness as good luck and fortune, whereas 6 including the U.S. did not (Oishi et al., 2013). Likewise, a 14-country study found that fear of excessive happiness was quite strong among respondents in India, Pakistan, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, and almost absent in Brazil (Joshanloo et al., 2014).

Whereas the cultural psychological approach attempts to explicate the cultural basis of the meaning and enactment of "being well" (Kitayama & Markus, 2000), the recent socio-ecological approach tries to explicate the role of objective environments (e.g., economic condition, political systems, climate) in the meaning and enactment of "being well" (Oishi, 2014). For instance, residents of wealthy nations report higher levels of life satisfaction yet lower levels of meaning in life than those of poorer nations, in part because in wealthier nations religion is less central to people's lives (Oishi & Diener, 2014). Harsh climate is associated with lower levels of SWB in poorer nations, but not in wealthy nations where the harsh climate can be mitigated by technology (Fischer & Van de Vliert, 2011).

Some of the socio-ecological studies explored cross-national as well as within-nation variations. For example, Yuki et al. (2013) found that self-esteem is more strongly associated with life satisfaction among Americans than Japanese, and this difference is explained in part by the difference in relational mobility (or the ease with which people can form new relationships and end undesirable relationships). Likewise, within Japan, self-esteem is also more strongly associated with life satisfaction in relationally mobile prefectures than in relationally stable prefectures.

What are the Future Directions?. First, the field is still dominated by self-reported questionnaires. It is important to take advantage of technological advancements in data collection, ranging from smart-phones, social media, and geographic information systems (GIS). It is also critical to expand the toolkit to include psychophysiology, neuroimaging, biomarkers, and facial expression. Second, most studies in this area rely on cross-sectional designs. It is important to make use of longitudinal designs, including short-term longitudinal designs such as daily diary and experience sampling methods. Third, most cross-cultural research in SWB uses translated scales developed in North America. The bottom-up approach to measurement should be utilized to see if indigenous scales capture the local conceptions of SWB better than the translated ones.

Personality Expressions Make Culture: Individuals' Musical, Film, and Political Preferences, and Their Geographic Regions –Jason Rentfrow

With the establishment of the Big Five, the past twenty years have witnessed considerable interest in personality expression. Drawing on interactionist theories, personality scholars have posited that individuals seek out and create environments, broadly construed, that reflect and reinforce their personalities and psychological needs.

There is considerable evidence that personality is expressed across a range of life domains - from consequential life outcomes, including health, relationships, and work (Ozer & Benet-Martínez, 2006) – to more micro, sociocultural outcomes, such as musical preferences, styles of dress, and personal living spaces (Gosling et al., 2002; Rentfrow & Gosling, 2003). Thus, personality appears to filter into many different areas of people's lives. Such findings inform our understanding of the nature of personality, shed light on the boundaries of traits, and have implications for therapy, education, and policy.

Research on personality expression also has the potential to inform our understanding of culture. Indeed, there is growing evidence suggesting that personality expression relates to the ways in which individuals engage with elements of culture. Specifically, when scaled-up, the characteristics common among individuals within a group - who may share similar political views, enjoy the same styles of music, or live in the same area - can shape the psychological composition of that group. For example, self-identified conservatives, as compared to liberals, consistently score higher on measures of Conscientiousness and lower on measures of Openness. Furthermore, there is evidence indicating that liberals and conservatives have different preferences for personal spaces, clothing, and books (Jost, 2017). Thus, the personality processes that attract individuals to particular belief systems are also evident in other aspects of life. Collectively, these personality expressions provide insight into the underlying bases of political ideology as well as liberal and conservative political cultures.

There is also evidence that personality is expressed in more mundane aspects of everyday life, such as the music people enjoy listening to, the films they watch, and the

books they read. For example, studies of the correlates of musical preferences have revealed links with personality, values, sexual attitudes, cognitive abilities, and political orientation (e.g., Rentfrow & Gosling, 2003). Preferences for sophisticated musical styles, like classical or jazz, are positively correlated with openness, creativity, imagination, and verbal ability. And preferences for intense musical styles, like punk or metal, are positively correlated with openness, sensation seeking, impulsivity, and athletic ability. Recent research also indicates that there are national differences in musical preferences and that the personality correlates of musical preferences generalize across countries. In other words, the positive associations between openness and preferences for sophisticated music emerge in countries in North America, Europe, and Asia (Greenberg et al., 2022).

Empirical investigations of the links between personality and film preferences have also identified a number of associations with the Big Five (Rentfrow et al., 2011). For example, preferences for "dark" films, like horror, erotic, and cult, are associated with high Openness and low Agreeableness and Conscientiousness, whereas preferences for "communal" films, like drama, romance, and comedies, are associated with high Extraversion, Agreeableness, and low Emotional Stability.

Just as with political ideology, groups of individuals who share similar preferences can reinforce and define cultural aspects of that group. One empirical demonstration comes from research on stereotypes about music fans. People tend to possess stereotypes about the characteristics of fans of many different musical styles (Rentfrow & Gosling, 2007). For example, fans of rap music are thought to be sociable and laidback, whereas fans of classical music are thought to be conscientious, and introspective. When evaluated against the actual characteristics of fans, several of the stereotypes appear to have a kernel of truth. These findings suggest a dynamic relationship between personality and musical cultures, such that individuals with particular traits are drawn to certain styles of music, and the collection of common traits, in turn, reflects the psychological composition of that culture.

Another line of research that demonstrates the ways in which personality expression can impact elements of culture comes from research concerned with the geographical distribution of personality. Drawing on theory and methods from cultural and environmental psychology, research in geographical psychology aims to map the spatial distribution of psychological traits and investigate the ways in which those traits are expressed (Rentfrow & Jokela, 2016). Results from research in this area reveal geographical variation in personality within nations and cities. For example, metropolitan cities in the US and Europe generally score high in Openness, and low in Agreeableness and Neuroticism compared to suburban and rural areas. Furthermore, geographical variation in personality is associated with political, economic, and health indicators, as well as musical preferences (Rentfrow & Jokela, 2016). For instance, geographical variation in Openness is positively associated with liberal politics and economic resilience. Additionally, regional variation in Neuroticism is associated with a range of health indicators, including morbidity, disease rates, and depression. Overall, research in geographical psychology demonstrates how large groups of individuals who share some similarities in personality, whether by way of selective migration or social influence, can give reflect and also reinforce particular aspects of culture.

Multicultural Identities and Experiences –Ying-yi Hong

In the face of rapid globalization, multicultural exposure is no longer constrained to migrants or sojourners. That is, globalization often brings multiple cultural traditions into the same space, and thus the relevant questions are how individuals acquire multiple cultural knowledge through exposure, and how this knowledge acquisition shapes individuals' minds, personalities, and identities. Understanding the dynamics and impact of multicultural exposure requires the consideration of two different kinds of processes: the ***multicultural mind*** and the ***multicultural self*** (Hong & Khei, 2014).

Multicultural Mind. The multicultural mind refers to the acquisition of knowledge (values, beliefs, and practices) shared by the cultural groups that an individual is being exposed to. It concerns the "cold" cognition one develops after submerging oneself in different cultures. Individuals who have acquired two or more of these cultural knowledge systems are dubbed "bicultural" or "multicultural" (Hong et al., 2000). Cultural priming and cultural frame switching are the processes involved in multicultural individuals' exposure to different cultural situations and how they adjust their thoughts, affect, and behaviors spontaneously and appropriately to these varying cultural contexts.

Cultural Frame Switching and Cultural Priming. To understand how multicultural individuals switch between different cultures, Hong and colleagues (2000) developed an experimental method called cultural priming. Cultural priming usually involves three experimental conditions. Take a Chinese-American bicultural as an example. In that case, the three conditions would include a Chinese culture prime condition, an American culture prime condition, and a control condition. The Chinese-American bicultural participants would be randomly assigned to one of the

three conditions and be exposed to pictures of the corresponding cultural icons in order to activate the cognitive accessibility of that cultural knowledge system. After the priming procedure, participants' responses on some culturally-relevant dependent measures (e.g., attribution, cognitive, affective, or behavioral) would be assessed across the three cultural priming conditions. Their responses from this task would then be compared with those typically found among monocultural Chinese versus American samples. Relevant research has shown cultural priming effects on a wide range of outcomes that range from personality, self-presentation, emotion, and attributions to cooperative behavior and economic decisions (see reviews in Hong & Khei, 2014).

Multicultural Self. The multicultural self refers to the emotional bonding one has with multiple cultures, that is, the self-concept and identity aspect of multiculturalism. Research on the multicultural self examines whether and how one's multiple cultural memberships are a defining feature of the self and guide important aspects of one's life. Therefore, this process often includes the "hot" emotions and thoughts one can experience when navigating between different cultures.

Bicultural Identity Integration. Bicultural individuals differ in the degree of Bicultural Identity Integration (BII), or the extent to which they can emotionally and cognitively integrate their multiple cultural memberships into the self (see Benet-Martinez et al., 2021; for a review). Specifically, BII captures two dimensions of bicultural identity: cultural blendedness (degree to which two cultures are perceived as combinable) and cultural harmony (degree to which two cultures are perceived as non-conflictual). High levels of BII, cultural harmony in particular, are beneficial both psychologically and behaviorally. For instance, immigrants with higher BII experience less anxiety and higher self-esteem. Saad et al. (2013) also found that Chinese-Americans with high BII have better creative performance in bicultural contexts (where both Chinese and American symbols were present) but not in a monocultural context (where either Chinese or American symbols were present). Tadmor et al. (2012) also found that high BII is linked to higher cognitive complexity and creativity. High BII leads to better intergroup perceptions also (Miramontez et al., 2008).

Biculturals' level of BII-harmony also moderates how they respond to cultural primes through frame switching. Low BII-harmony individuals (i.e., those experiencing bicultural identity conflict) shift their biases to contrast with norms of the primed culture rather than to assimilate with it. Mok and Morris (2009) compared Asian-American with conflicted cultural identities to those with compatible cultural identities. Conflicted Asian-Americans exhibited contrarian responses — more Western biases (on measures such as focal/holistic attention, need for uniqueness, and individualism) after Chinese priming and more East Asian biases after American cultural priming. One explanation is that conflicted biculturals feel dis-identified with their cultures and dissociate themselves from the primed culture. An alternative explanation is the motivation to protect the non-cued cultural identity (Mok & Morris, 2009). Recent studies using subliminal priming indicate these kinds of responses occur implicitly rather than through conscious impression management (Mok & Morris, 2009). This contrastive response of conflicted biculturals may prevent them from meshing well with their cultural contexts; nevertheless, it might also protect them from groupthink when working in groups from their two cultures. Low BII-harmony thus, might be a double-edge sword. While it relates to lower levels of cultural accommodation and feelings of psychological adjustment, it might also prevent decision biases.

Lay Theories of Race. Because culture and race/ethnicity are often conflated, how multicultural individuals conceptualize the nature of race and ethnicity should also affect how they manage their identities. In particular, two lay theories of race have been identified – racial essentialism refers to a belief in race as a fixed biological essence that determines a person's traits and ability, whereas social constructivism refers to a belief in racial categories as malleable. Asian Americans who believed in racial essentialism identified less with the American (host) culture than did those who believed in social constructivism (No et al., 2008). Furthermore, in terms of cognition, holding racial essentialism was associated with less flexibility in cultural frame-switching, more rigid racial categorization, and dampened creativity. Multicultural individuals holding racial essentialism also showed worse psychological well-being than did those holding social constructivism because racial essentialism increases the racial barrier in interracial contexts.

Taken as a whole, this approach conceptualizes culture as a knowledge system that is shared, albeit not uniformly, among a group of individuals who are oftentimes demarcated by nationality, race, and/or social economic status. The shared cultural meaning system shapes personal construct (using George Kelly's terminology), constituting an integral part of personality. That is, people are like naive scientists who see the world through a cultural knowledge lens. The multicultural-mind and multicultural-self approach postulates an emergent trend that an individual can possess multiple cultural lenses, resulting from adaptation to globalization.

Conclusion: Emerging Themes, Future Directions

From these expert contributions we learn that (1) anthropology-derived distributive models of culture offer numerous insights for understanding culture and personality processes because they help reconcile the notion of a stable personality with the dynamic nature of culture and heterogeneity within groups, (2) that culture and personality mutually constitute each other at multiple levels of analysis, (3) that subjective wellbeing –a key aspect of individual and societal functioning— is culturally bound both in terms of its definition and predictors, and also highly influenced by the socio-ecological features of the objective environment (e.g., economic condition, political systems, climate, relational mobility), (4) that personality expressions, such as the ways people arrange their personal spaces, and their preferences for music, clothing, books, politics, and geographic residence, inform us about the ecologies of certain cultures and social groups, and also explicate how individuals engage with their culture, and (5) that the understanding and management of multicultural experiences and identities requires a within-individual perspective intimately linked to personality.

Excitement about these important and broad contributions should be tempered however by a fact mentioned earlier: personality studies that bring a cultural and/or ecological perspective to their questions and designs continue to be a minority, even though personality is ideally equipped to explore these topics (due to its methodological sophistication regarding measurement issues and analysis of large data sets). We wish more traditionally trained personality psychologists would come to see the benefits and opportunities brought by adding a cultural dimension to their studies. Cultural personality studies can elucidate how macro contextual factors mediate and moderate personality outcomes, help to dispel shaky cultural stereotypes, and test the generalizability of well-known theories and findings in personality. Cultural personality studies that rely on samples of individuals who are multi-lingual and multi-cultural also offer researchers quasi-experimental designs and ways of teasing apart possible cultural, linguistic, and method effects on personality. For recent reviews of these kinds of studies see Benet-Martinez (2021).

Furthermore, and simply put, a cultural perspective, and research programs like the five ones reviewed here, can in fact make us better at "seeing" personality. It follows then that culturally informed personality researchers, by virtue of being familiar with different "cultural logics" and "ideals", will be more equipped to correctly identify patterns of consistency and coherence in individual differences, and understand their meaning and consequentiality (e.g., the fit brought by being high in trait conscientiousness in a tight vs. loose culture; or what it means to be very happy in a culture that emphasizes luck and fortune vs. self-realization).

Cultural personality psychology has the potential to finally fulfill Allport's dream of a discipline that captures the complexity and uniqueness of individuals' experiences, and the life-long transactions people have with their sociocultural worlds. Cultural personality research also offers scientists, managers, policymakers, and the public ways to understand, manage, and benefit from the omnipresent cultural diversity that characterizes our society.

Relevance statement

The five perspectives reviewed here put the study of culture and personality back on the road map of psychology. They also place personality science at the epicenter of important social debates traditionally relegated to economists, demographers, and political and environmental scientists (e.g., the nature of social capital, the ecological basis of behavior, what constitutes a good life, and the psychological effects of multiculturalism and globalization).

Cultural personality studies such as the ones reviewed here can elucidate how macro contextual factors mediate and moderate personality outcomes, help to dispel shaky cultural stereotypes, and test the generalizability of well-known theories and findings in personality. Cultural personality studies that rely on samples of individuals who are multi-lingual and multi-cultural also offer researchers quasi-experimental designs and ways of teasing apart possible cultural, linguistic, and method effects on personality. Lastly, culturally informed personality researchers, by virtue of being familiar with different "cultural logics" and "ideals", are well equipped to correctly identify patterns of consistency and coherence in individual differences, and understand their meaning and consequentiality (e.g., what it means to be high in trait conscientiousness in a tight vs. loose culture; the meaning of happiness in cultures that emphasizes luck and fortune vs self-realization).

CONCLUSION: Cultural personality psychology has the potential to finally fulfill Allport's dream of a discipline that captures the complexity and uniqueness of individuals' experiences, and the life-long transactions people have with their sociocultural worlds. Cultural personality research also offers scientists, managers, policymakers, and the public ways to understand, manage, and benefit

from the omnipresent cultural diversity that characterizes our society.

Key insights

- Culture and personality have a bi-directional and mutually constitutive relationship.
- Cultural factors shape personality and individuals in turn express their personalities through their engagement with particular cultural practices and products.
- Anthropology-based distributive models of culture are useful for the study of culture and personality.
- Cultural and ecological factors shape wellbeing and explain cross-national variations.
- Growing numbers of individuals have multiple cultural socializations and this has consequences for their personalities.
- Current research on culture and personality elucidates the dynamic interplay between macro-level factors and individual variables.

Author note

Authors are listed in alphabetic order except for V. Benet-Martinez, who compiled and integrated the contributions by each author, provided input, and wrote the introduction and conclusion.

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Supplemental material for this article is available online. Depending on the article type, these usually include a Transparency Checklist, a Transparent Peer Review File, and optional materials from the authors.

Notes

1. What this paper does NOT contain is a discussion of all the pertinent conceptual (e.g., how culture's many forms –e.g., nationality, ethnicity, gender, class, religion– relate to each other; difference between cultural and cross-cultural psychology), methodological (e.g., emic-etic debate, treatment of confounds), and meta-science (e.g., cultural biases in psychological research, replicability revolution) issues that ought to be considered when studying culture and personality. This is motivated by the paper's main goal of showcasing the particular expertise and perspectives of five sets of experts, but also by the fact that a discussion of the above, admittedly important issues would be highly redundant with recently published reviews (Arshad & Chung, 2022; Benet-Martinez, 2021; Lu et al., 2023).
2. And yet the consideration of culture, race, and ethnicity in mainstream personality research continues to be insufficient, as the field has historically focused on culturally narrow populations (e.g., White Europeans) and also systematically neglected structural factors (e.g., power, privilege, and context) in understanding personality (Arshad & Chung, 2022).

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