

Topic 12: Cross-cultural Psychology

What is culture?

- “The shared way of life of a group of people”
 - Berry et al., 2002
- “Culture refers to shared values and concepts among people who most often speak the same language and live in proximity to each other. These values and concepts are transmitted for generations, and they provide guidance for everyday behaviours”
 - Brislin, 2000
- “The man made part of the environment”
 - Segall, 1990

How did culture originate?

Three hypotheses put forward by Lehman, Chiu & Schaller (2004)

1. Terror Management Theory: awareness of the inevitable death of self. This may be a motivator for self esteem, ethnicity, religion and even love
2. The creation of a shared reality: security that others also experience the world in the same way. A commonality with others' views of the world
3. An unintended by-product of interpersonal interaction: social influence occurs in any act of communication, more intensively between those who are physically and socially close

Culture

Note that culture is *not*...

- Nationality — a political concept (equivalent to citizenship; passport)
- Race — inherited physical make-up
- Ethnicity — a person's origins

Cultural transmission

- Enculturation and Socialisation (Matsumoto & Juang, 2008)
 - ➔ Enculturation: process by which values and norms of a culture are passed onto it's members
 - Family
 - Community
 - Formal institutions
 - ➔ Socialisation: process by which individuals acquire social skills and values for integration into a group or community
- Shaping of an individual's cultural self:
- Continuous process
 - Deliberate

What is cross-cultural psychology?

- Comparative study in behaviour in different cultures
- How different cultures affect our behaviours and minds

- Branch of psychology that attempts to test the boundaries of knowledge about human behaviour by comparing it in two or more cultures (Matsumoto & Juang, 2008)
 - Cross-cultural psychology compares cultures, whereas cultural psychology is concerned with an overall understanding of behaviour at the level of an individual culture (not making comparisons)

Cross-cultural psychology

Theoretical issues (Berry et al., 2002)

- **Absolutism:** since psychological phenomena are the same across all cultures, culture plays no role in the display of human characteristics
 - True human nature will emerge when external 'nuisance' variables like cultural norms and ideologies are sufficiently removed (Adamopoulos & Lonner, 1994)
- **Relativism:** all human behaviour is culturally patterned
 - Describe human beings as they function within their socio-cultural environment (Adamopoulos & Lonner, 1994)
- **Universalism:** basic psychological processes are common to all human beings [predominant]
 - Cultural variation is important (Adamopoulos & Lonner, 1994)

Acculturation

- Adoption of the behaviour patterns of the surrounding culture
- Process of adapting to a culture other than the one originally identified with
- Contact between individuals or groups from dissimilar cultural backgrounds, as well as the adaptation (or lack thereof) that takes place as a result of such contact (Berry, 1980, 1997)
- Cultural syndromes: clusters of values, attitudes, customs and practices that characterise a culture

Cultural syndromes

- Hofstede's Value Dimensions: comprehensive study on how workplace values are influenced by culture

VALUE DIMENSION	DESCRIPTION
Power distance	Ways of dealing with inequality
Uncertainty avoidance	The degree of tolerance of the unknown
Individualism-collectivism	The degree of integration of individuals within groups
Masculinity-femininity	Differences in the social roles of women and men
Long- versus short-term orientation	The degree to which delayed gratification of material, social and emotional needs is encouraged

Acculturation (continued)

- **Berry's model of Acculturation:** based on physical environment, biological factors, cultural institutions, new social relationships, changes after adaptation

Four types of acculturation strategies:

- Integration: maintaining own and new culture
- Assimilation: rejecting own culture in favour of new
- Separation: maintaining own culture but rejecting new
- Marginalisation: rejecting own and new culture

Culture Shock

- Feelings of confusion and uncertainty experienced when adapting to a new culture. Can generate feelings of rejection of the environment, and regression to the previously comfortable environment
- Usually felt by international students, immigrants and refugees
- Phases of culture shock:
 1. The honeymoon: initial reactions of euphoria
 2. The crisis: feelings of frustration and anxiety
 3. The recovery: culture learning, crisis resolution
 4. Adjustment: enjoyment of new environment

Multiculturalism

- Set of social and political policies that maintain a multicultural society
- In a descriptive sense, multicultural is simply a term which describes the cultural and ethnic diversity of contemporary Australia. We are, and will remain, a multicultural society. As a public policy multiculturalism encompasses government measures designed to respond to that diversity
 - Department of Social Services Australia, Nov 7, 2014

Australia: a multicultural and diverse society

- The term 'multiculturalism' is now embodied in the official policy
- Principles of citizenship (Dept. of Immigration and Citizenship, 2007)
 1. The responsibility of all
 2. Respect for each person
 3. Fairness for each person
 4. Benefits for all

Cultural distance

- Degree of similarity of values, attitudes, customs and practices between people of different cultures
- Australian recognition of extensive human rights initiatives at the UN and closer relationships with neighbouring regions have contributed to changes in immigration policies, and thus the composition of the Australian population