

CULTURAL PSYCHOLOGY OF WORKWAYS

Jeffrey Sanchez-Burks & Fiona Lee

University of Michigan

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Cultural Psychology of Workways

The domain of work constitutes a major portion of our lives. A study conducted by the Economic Policy Institute finds that the average worker in the United States spends 1,900 hours a year, roughly a third of one's total waking hours, at work. Further, the number of hours individuals spend at work has steadily increased in the United States, e.g., a typical person works 20 days more a year than 25 years ago (Linstedt, 2002; Wessel, 2003). This trend of increasing hours at work is also documented in the European Union, despite social and political efforts to resist such trends (Picy, 2005). These figures do not take into account working hours outside the office; with the proliferation of telecommunication technologies, it is not uncommon for people to handle work-related e-mails, paperwork and phone calls at home, during one's commute, or on vacation (Barker, 1998). Given work's dominant claim on people's daily life, understanding the cultural psychology of *workways* is critical to understanding the cultural psychology of social life. Workways describe a culture's signature pattern of workplace beliefs, mental models, and practices that embody a society's ideas about what is true, good and efficient within the domain of work.

How much cultural variability is there in workways? Some have suggested that trends in business globalization may have reduced cross-cultural differences in workways; as a result of efforts made by multinational corporations to standardize structures and tasks, as well as the large percentage of managers getting their training from U.S. business schools or programs modeled after U.S. business schools (Hébert, 2005), cultural variance in workways in contemporary organizations is minimized and subsumed by the larger "business" culture. According to this view, the world of work increasingly serves as a "culture free or culture neutral zone" (Birnbaum-More & Wong, 1995; Zartman, 1992).

However, these claims about the cultural universality of workways are not supported by recent empirical evidence showing that cultural differences are amplified rather than diminished in work contexts (e.g., Sanchez-Burks, 2002; Sanchez-Burks, Lee, Nisbett, Choi, Koo, & Zhang, 2003). As we will describe later in this chapter, several studies have shown that East-West differences in relational attunement—sensitivity to social, emotional, and relational cues—are more prominent in work than non-work settings (Sanchez-Burks et al., 2003). Far from being culture neutral, workways remain deeply colored by the pallet of historical, ideological, and socio-cultural influences that operate in the larger societal context, and may well be a domain that amplifies these dynamics.

Research showing that cultural divides widen within the workplace can be problematic from a practical standpoint. Intercultural contact is often necessary at work where fluent communication and coordination must occur in the face of deep-seated cultural differences. Within major U.S. cities, for instance, about a quarter of the population was born in a foreign country (e.g., 36%, Los Angeles; 25%, Boston; 21%, Chicago, and about 11% of the U.S. population, or 26 million individuals; U.S. Census, 2000), such that most individuals have little choice but to interact with colleagues, suppliers, and customers of different cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Increases in cross-cultural contact at work also stem from the recent increase of multinational corporations; many large corporate mergers have united companies from different cultures (e.g., Daimler-Chrysler, Ericsson-GTE, Hitachi-GE), creating an environment where people from different cultures have to cooperate, communicate, and coordinate closely and effectively.

Indeed, there is general recognition by business researchers and practitioners that cultural differences in workways can create problems in job performance, that cultural differences are not

well understood, and that they are difficult to manage. For example, the business press is rife with stories of successful managers assigned to an international post and failing spectacularly to replicate their success at home. Approximately 15% to 50% of managers assigned to work with colleagues abroad curtail their assignments because of an inability to manage cultural differences in interpersonal behaviors such as receiving and giving feedback, communicating criticisms and differences in opinion, and expressing emotions at work (Bird et al., 1993; Copeland & Griggs, 1985; Deshpande & Viswesvaran, 1992; Eschbach, Parker & Stoeberl, 2001; Tung, 1987). These failures of intercultural work directly affect businesses' bottom-lines, with each failure costing an estimated \$50,000 to \$350,000 (Copeland & Griggs, 1985). From an applied perspective, there is tremendous interest in understanding how cross-cultural differences and dynamics affect interpersonal processes in the workplace, as well as specific interventions organizations can enact to diminish problems and misunderstandings that arise from such differences.

In this chapter, we lay an initial groundwork for a cultural psychology of workways. In doing so, we draw from a variety of research in social, organizational, and cultural psychology—for example, studies examining workplace relational styles, dynamics of intercultural contact, managerial and organizational perceptions, and social networks—to discuss how these dynamics reflect on cultural theory and research. Attention is given to how work affects cross-cultural dynamics, as well as how cross-cultural dynamics affect work. To the extent that both culture and work are important sources of context for individuals, this chapter also has broader implications for understanding the relationship between the individual and the context.

The reviews included in this chapter are not exhaustive but are intended to highlight emerging characteristics of the cultural psychology of workways. These characteristics include (a) greater attention to historical, ideological, and socio-cultural influences that create, maintain,

and transform approaches to work; (b) a focus on the specific cognitive and behavioral mechanisms that produce cultural variation at work; and (c) increased emphasis on research that produces rich accounts of culture-specific workways. We begin by historically tracing accounts of culture and work.

LOOKING BACK: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE ON CULTURE AND WORK

Culture and work is not a new domain of scholarly inquiry. The earliest written accounts of cultural variation, dating around the 6th century B.C., describe the unique social patterns of merchants as they traded along the shores of the Black Sea, and how the diversity of cultural practices affected this work (Ascherson, 1996; Herodotus, 2003). Similarly, the emergence of unique workways was one of the defining features of early America (Crevecoeur, 1782; Tocqueville, 1840). Historically, accounts of culture and work have been defined by two constant and defining themes that remain central to the cultural psychology of workways: attempts to understand how cultural beliefs shape the context of work and how the context of work influences cultural beliefs (Fiske, Kitayama, Markus & Nisbett, 1998).

Debates over Influence of Structure versus Beliefs

Work played a dominant role in the 19th century debates about the influence of “macro” social-organizational structures on beliefs (Marx, 1873) versus the influence of “micro” beliefs on social-organizational structures (Weber, 1904, 1947). For Karl Marx, the structural conditions of the workplace produce particular psychological states (e.g., alienation) that form the basis of social-cultural worldviews and workways. Although Max Weber did not directly disagree with this perspective, he argued that prevailing cultural ideologies played a key role in creating culturally unique workways. For example, he argued that the early (17th and 18th centuries) Calvinists believed that work was part of a religious calling and was valuable in its own right,

that idle talk and sociability was distracting to one's work duties, and that individuals ought to maintain an unsentimental impersonality at work (Bendix, 1977; Fischer, 1989; Landes, 2000). In cultures influenced by this theology, such as the United States, these beliefs about work were secularized and incorporated in the contemporary culture, such that attitudes like valuing work in and of itself, relying on the self, and limiting personal indulgences are not merely representative of Calvinist Protestants, but largely descriptive of Americans as a whole (Furnham, 1990; Lenski, 1963)

Causal evidence of this mutual constitution of context and mind was convincingly provided through a series of influential studies carried out a century later by sociologists Kohn, Schooler and their colleagues (1983). Supporting the influence of social structure on psychology (e.g., Marx 1873; Whyte, 1956), their studies showed that features of one's occupational context (for example, the relative complexity of one's job and degree of self-direction in organizing tasks) have a direct influence on people's beliefs and behaviors that extended beyond the closing workday's whistle. Moreover, they provided evidence of a reverse causal path whereby individual-level cognitions and personality characteristics shape the conditions of work (particularly over extended periods of time), suggesting that psychology also influences social structures (e.g., Bellah et al., 1996; McClelland, 1961; Weber, 1904).

Socio-Cultural History in Cultural Theory

Early studies on culture and work typically focused on a society's social history, describing how historical practices and ideologies sowed the seeds for contemporary cultural patterns. Similar to the notion of path-dependence used by economists (e.g., Arthur, 1994; Masahiko, 2001), the origins of contemporary cultural workways were traced to prior social historical events or conditions rather than to factors in the immediate, current environment (for

reviews see Arthur, 1994 and Masahiko, 2001). This of course was central to Weber's thesis on the Protestant Work Ethic (PWE); as mentioned earlier, Weber traced beliefs in the U.S. about the value of work, limits to self-indulgences, and self-reliance to the ideologies of the founding Calvinist communities in 17th century New England. Other studies showed how socio-cultural practices perpetuated these culturally unique belief systems through the generations. For example, Winterbottom (1953) compared the child rearing practices of Protestant and Catholic mothers in the U.S. and found that Protestant mothers spent more time communicating PWE values and motivations (c.f. McClelland, 1961) and introduced them at earlier ages in their child's development.

As a matter of historical coincidence, a different movement around the same period introduced a similar notion of hard work as moral imperative in Japan. Robert Bellah (1957) argued that early religious beliefs during the Tokugawa period (1600-1868) in Japan left a lasting imprint on contemporary Japanese workways. Particularly, Bellah showed that early doctrines of Buddhism, Confucianism, and Shintoism encouraged ways of thinking that underlie Japan's contemporary economic and industrial development. For instance, early cultural emphasis on the family fostered the emergence of many small, family owned enterprises. Similar to development of the Protestant Work Ethic in the U.S., secular and religious beliefs mutually influenced each other. On one hand, religious values that placed political and family leaders in the realm of "divine" encouraged compliance to government policies and interventions directed to spur industrialization. On the other hand, hard work and self-sacrifice were viewed as ways to achieve religious enlightenment. As Bellah (1985) argued, the central value system that developed in the Tokugawa period remains influential in contemporary secular Japanese culture, perhaps in a more intense form.

The lasting effects of social history on culturally unique workways extend beyond moral imperatives toward hard work and self-sacrifice. For example, Schooler (1976) found that cultural variations in self-direction and authority orientation in the workplace could be predicted by when a cultural group's ancestral country abolished serfdom and hence changed the "macro" work context (e.g., England in 1603, German states in 1815, Poland in 1861). This trend was observed after controlling for social class, occupation, and religion. In other words, contemporary cultural differences in workways reflected socio-cultural conditions generations ago. These studies demonstrate the importance of investigating the influence of a group's prior social-historical conditions on the development and availability of specific psychological beliefs and attitudes.

The Study That Spawned a Movement: Hofstede at IBM

The spark that ignited a widespread interest in culture and work was a multinational survey study of IBM employees (Hofstede, 1980). By focusing on self-reported preferences for work-related characteristics, Hofstede sidestepped complex issues regarding the role of socio-historical conditions, ideology, or the mutual influence of context and mind in constituting cultural workways. Hofstede proposed that national cultures vary along four dimensions: (1) *power distance*, or an individual's preference for equality/inequality between individuals in a group; (2) *uncertainty avoidance*, or an individual's preference for structure; (3) *masculinity/femininity*, or an individual's prevalence for assertiveness, performance, success, and competition (masculinity) versus quality of life, warm personal relations, service, care for the weak, and solidarity (femininity), and (4) *individualism versus collectivism*, or an individual's preference for acting as individuals or acting in a group.

Of course, these dimensions did not originate with the publication of Hofstede's *culture's consequences*; themes about individual versus community or equality versus inequality were discussed much earlier by many social scientists (e.g., Durkheim, 1933; Mead, 1967; Parsons, Bales & Shils, 1951; Reisman, 1961; Whyte, 1956; Toonies, 1887; Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961). Hofstede's study, however, launched a widespread research interest in cross-cultural industrial-organizational psychology (for excellent reviews see Hui and Luk; 1997; Triandis, 2000; Earley & Gibson, 1998). Further, despite the study's exclusive focus on work settings, Hofstede's dimensions of culture became a dominant framework for understanding cross-cultural differences across virtually all settings, work and non-work alike.

(Back) Toward a Cultural Psychology of Workways

Despite decades of research focusing on cultural variation along broad value dimensions such as individual-collectivism or power distance, there is a paucity of valid, reliable evidence that these dimensions can explain (i.e., mediate or moderate) distinct psychological or behavioral outcomes (Briley & Wyer, 2001; Earley & Mosakowski, 2002; Heine et al., 2002; Tanako & Osaka, 1999; but see Earley, 1989 for an exception). More recently, cultural scholars have focused on the specific cognitive structures and processes that guide behavior (Morris & Young, 2002), and linking these cognitions to socio-historical and contextual features unique to a cultural group (Sanchez-Burks, 2002). This strategy of combining methodological advances in social cognitive psychology with the rich socio-historical approach of earlier cultural psychology has developed more precise, richer models of cultural workways. Specifically, this involves taking into account the role of context as well as specific mental schemas, and mapping out the conditions under which to expect both cultural differences and cultural similarities. We review examples of this work in subsequent sections of this chapter.

WORKPLACE RELATIONAL STYLES

Culturally-specific Workplace Relational Styles

Although the majority of cross-cultural psychology emphasizes cultural comparisons, examining how two or more cultures differ along any number of variables, one prevailing stream of research in cross-cultural psychology of work has examined culturally indigenous or culturally unique workplace relational styles. Workplace relational styles refer to people's beliefs about the function of relationships in the workplace, as well as relational behaviors at work (such as communicating with others, attending to another person's needs, etc.). This more anthropologic approach of examining, in depth, unique patterns of interpersonal relating within a single culture has identified a number of culturally specific workplace relational styles. These relational styles reflect deep-seated ideologies about the nature of social-emotional ties within and across work domains (e.g., Ayman & Chemers, 1983; Diaz-Guerrero, 1967; Earley, 1997; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, Marin, Liansky & Betancourt, 1984).

Chaebol. Organizational research conducted within South Korea suggests that work relations are modeled after the tradition of *chaebol*, or "company familism" (Kim, 1988). Here, work relationships are not unlike family relationships. Managers or work supervisors play a paternal role in relation to their subordinates (Hui & Luk, 1997). In this way, work organizations are typically a network of tight-knit, highly personal relationships. Variations of chaebol can be found in other Asian cultures such as Japan and India (Hui, Eastman & Yee, 1995; Kanungo, 1990; Kool & Saksena, 1988; Sinha, 1980). Managers in these cultures take care to learn about the personal lives of their subordinates, will attend the "personal" events of employees such as a relative's funeral, and actively intervene on behalf of their employees in personal affairs such as marital problems or family finances (Triandis, Dunnette & Hough, 1994). Similarly, an

employee's sense of obligation to his or her boss extends beyond the boundaries of the office or workday. Subordinates are expected to assist their bosses at work, but the boss should expect the subordinate to similarly provide assistance outside of work, and for non-work-related tasks such as household chores or assisting in family events (Hamden-Turner & Trompenaars, 1993).

Guanxi. In Chinese organizations, business relations are characterized by a distinct emphasis on building dense networks of personal relationships. Entrepreneurs conduct their business by developing *you-yi*, or deep friendships based on mutual obligation where business people make connections in their social networks available to one another (Solomon, 1999; Wall, 1990). This Chinese system of dense networks, or *guanxi*, differs from networking in Western businesses because of its transitive nature (Cai, 2001; Farh, Tsui, Xin & Cheng, 1998; Li, Tsui & Weldon, 2000). Whereas a French businessperson interested in connecting with a target person in a fellow French colleague's network might typically ask the colleague to facilitate such a connection, a Chinese operating under the principle of *guanxi* would assume that he or she has direct access to any person in the colleague's network. Thus, *guanxi* is more than using common network ties as a way to create familiarity and a base for generating goodwill, but describes the transitive nature of obligations in Chinese business practices.

Guanxi also influences preferences for business partners. For example, rather than making business decisions based on "objective" measures such as price, product quality, or technical skills, it would not be uncommon for a Chinese businessperson to do business with another person more because he or she comes from the same village, or he or she has a mutual acquaintance. These social "contracts" are seen as reassurances that a business partner will indeed be reliable and trustworthy (Sanchez-Burks, 2005). For many Asians, establishing *guanxi*

is an essential condition to an effective working relationship (Hampden-Turner & Trompenaars, 1993).

Simpatía. Like most other relationships, work relations in Latin cultures are guided by the relational script of *simpatía* (Diaz-Guerrero, 1967; Triandis, Marin, Lisansky & Betancourt, 1984). Similar to many East Asian cultures, *simpatía* emphasizes social harmony, such that respecting and understanding others' feelings is valued above all, and conflict is minimized (Markus & Lin, 1999). Unlike many East Asian cultures, *simpatía* also emphasizes the expressive displays of personal charm, graciousness and hospitality—even to those outside one's personal networks (Diaz-Guerrero, 1967; Lindsley & Braithwaite, 1996; Sanchez-Burks, Nisbett & Ybarra, 2000). *Simpatía* is a valued characteristic in many Latin cultures, even within the workplace. For example, within Italy it has been found to be a necessary (though not sufficient) prerequisite to leadership (Dechert, 1961).

Protestant Relational Ideology. Although the culture-specific relational styles reviewed thus far—*chaebol*, *guanxi*, and *simpatía*—all suggest a heightened emphasis on relationships at the workplace, research on American workways show a different pattern. Specifically, American workways are guided by *Protestant Relational Ideology* (PRI), an ideology that combines Lutheran teachings about the importance of work with Calvinist imperatives for restricting relational, social-emotional concerns while working (Sanchez-Burks, 2002). As put in practice by the early Calvinists, these restrictions were relaxed outside of work such that paying attention to others' socio-emotional cues was considered entirely appropriate at play and leisure (Daniels, 1995; Fischer, 1989). PRI is thus characterized by a divide in relational attunement, or attention to affective issues and relational concerns, between work and non-work contexts (Bendix, 1977; Lenski, 1961). Specifically, relational attunement among Americans is reduced in work settings

compared to social, non-work settings (Sanchez-Burks, 2005).

The social-historical origins of PRI were demonstrated in an experiment comparing levels of relational attunement in work versus non-work settings between two American samples with highly similar demographic profiles (socio-economic background, educational background, religiosity) but differed in whether their religious upbringing was connected to PRI (Protestant) or not (non-Protestant) (Sanchez-Burks, 2002, Study 1). Participants were primed either for a work context or for a non-work context, and then performed an “emotional Stroop test” where they heard positively or negatively valenced words read in an affect-appropriate tone (e.g., a sad voice for funeral) or an affect-inappropriate tone (e.g., a sad voice for wedding). Participants had to identify the semantic valence (good-bad) of each word and ignore the emotional tone of the spoken word. When primed for the non-work context, emotional tone of voice equally confused both Protestant and non-Protestant groups (that is, when the tone was affect-inappropriate, participants took longer to identify the semantic valence of the word). However, when primed for the work context, emotional tone of voice had significantly less effect for the Protestants; compared to the non-Protestant participants, the Protestant participants were better at blocking out emotional content, but only in the work context. It appears that Protestant and non-Protestant Americans had different workplace relational styles: While the non-Protestants attended to emotional content in both work and non-work contexts, Protestants limited their processing of emotional cues in the work context only.

This pattern was replicated in a study that examined levels of non-conscious behavioral mirroring, a behavior that reflects attention to another person in the relationship (Sanchez-Burks, 2002, Study 2). Participants with a Calvinist religious upbringing did not engage in non-conscious mirroring of another person when primed with a work context. However, non-

Calvinist participants in work and non-work contexts, as well as Calvinist participants in non-work contexts all showed higher levels of mirroring. Again, being at work or in a work relationship appears to reduce relational attunement and sensitivity for Americans raised in a Calvinist tradition. Though secular American culture in general is strongly affected by Calvinistic teachings (Bendix, 1977; Daniels, 1995; Fischer, 1989; Lenski, 1961), these studies show that the influence of PRI on workways seems particularly pronounced for those raised in this religious tradition.

Culturally Indigenous Workplace Relational Styles—A Summary. Taken together, research on workplace relational styles shows tremendous diversity in the mental models people use to navigate and manage relationships in the workplace. Some workplace relational styles such as *chaebol*, *guanxi*, or *simpatia* rely upon a heightened sensitivity to interpersonal relationships in the workplace. In cultures where these workplace relational styles are dominant, being at work often may require attention on two foci—on the task at hand (e.g., the budgetary implications of a proposal being presented by a co-worker), as well as the relational dimension of the social interaction (e.g., the co-workers' non-verbal gestures that unfold while they describe the proposal). Of course, this heightened relational attunement serves only as a basic building block upon which such diverse forms of workways as *chaebol* or *simpatia* are possible.

In contrast to these work patterns based upon heightened relational attunement, American workways appear as an exception, characterized in part by a relational style where affective and relational concerns are less carefully monitored and given diminished importance. As we describe in the next section, this pattern of behavior is specific to work. Outside work, Americans are just as attentive to socio-emotional cues as East Asians. This moderating role of context highlights both cultural differences and cultural similarities in workways.

It is important to note that workplace relational patterns are reflected in variables across multiple levels of analysis, from cognitions to behaviors to social network structures. For example, chaebol describes family like relationships in the workplace, guanxi is about the use of informal relationships at work, simpatia emphasizes display of and attention to subtle relational and socio-emotional cues at work, and PRI is about the separation of work and non-work relationships. In the next section, we turn to research describing workplace communication and feedback, dynamics that further reflect cultural workways in general, and cultural variation in workplace relational attunement in particular.

Relational Attunement and Indirectness in Workplace Communication

Relational attunement, or attention to affective issues and relational concerns, is often examined in the context of communication. Specifically, people's awareness and comprehension of subtle or indirect cues in interpersonal communication is often used as an indicator of relational attunement (Earley, 1997; Holtgraves & Yang, 1992; Ting-Toomey, 1988). Grice (1968) differentiates between "sentence meaning," which refers to the literal or semantic meaning of an utterance, and "speaker meaning," which refers to what the speaker intends to accomplish with the remark. Relational attunement can be seen as sensitivity to discrepancies between sentence and speaker meaning.

From the speaker's point of view, relational attunement can be defined as the speaker's intention to do more than merely transmit the literal or sentence meaning of the words exchanged (Grice, 1968). Indeed, speakers can use a wide variety of subtle communication cues to transmit indirect meaning (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Goffman, 1959). For example, one can convey criticism of a colleague's work by avoiding eye contact (nonverbal), offering faint praise (verbal indirect meaning), or using a critical tone of voice (verbal emotion) (Ambady, Koo, Lee &

Rosenthal, 1996; Lee, 1993; Goffman 1967). Similarly, relational attunement can be used by speakers with more malevolent or devious intentions, for example in the form of subtle sarcasms that protect one from accountability for negative remarks (DePaulo & Kashy, 1998).

From the listener's point of view, relational attunement can be understood as the listener's awareness of and attention to subtle communication cues to infer speaker meaning. Imagine talking to a colleague about your new supervisor. You mention that she seems nice and fair. Your colleague laughs, shrugs his shoulders and says, "Well, yes, I suppose she *is* nice and fair. Best of luck to you." If the listener is relationally attuned, he or she will be able to "read between the lines" and likely conclude from the colleague's verbal tone and gestures that the new supervisor is probably a very difficult boss. In contrast, if the listener is not relationally attuned, he or she is less likely to use and attend to subtle communication cues, more likely to expect themselves and others to be more direct in the way they communicate or "say it as it is," and only attend to the explicit meaning of what is said (Holtgraves, 1997). Using the example above, the listener is likely to infer from the colleague's statement that the new supervisor is indeed a nice and fair person.

Avoiding misunderstanding therefore requires communicators to have similar levels of relational attunement. For example, if the colleague is using indirect cues and nonverbal gestures to convey his message that the new supervisor is a difficult boss, but the listener of the message assumes that the comments can be interpreted literally, misunderstandings can occur (Brown & Levinson, 1997; Earley, 1997; Lee, 1993; Prentice & Miller, 1999). Below, we describe cultural research on relational attunement, focusing on studies on indirect communication and nonverbal communication at work.

Indirectness. One common assumption is that East Asians are more indirect in their

communication than Westerners. Because East Asians are presumably more attentive to maintaining face for others, they are more likely to “couch” the meanings of their words with subtle verbal and nonverbal cues, and more likely to pay attention to these cues in interpreting others’ speech (Earley, 1997; Lee, 1993, 1999; Ting-Toomey, 1988). However, recent studies on indirectness suggest this may not always be the case. Sanchez-Burks, Lee et al. (2003) used self-report and implicit measures of indirectness comparing managers in the U.S., China, Korea, and Singapore. The self-report measure was a modified version of Holtgrave’s (1997) indirectness questionnaire, where respondents indicated their use of indirect cues in communication within work and outside of work. The behavioral measure of indirectness asked respondents to interpret the meaning of a message either communicated between two friends or two co-workers; here, indirectness refers to going beyond sentence meaning to infer speaker meaning.

The study found the expected cultural difference in indirectness in work settings; Chinese and Koreans managers were more indirect (both as speakers and as listeners) than their American counterparts at work. For example, when asked to interpret the performance feedback “There is room for improvement but overall this is good,” East Asian managers were more likely to infer that this message was feedback given for relatively poor performance, while American managers did not go beyond the explicit meaning of the message and inferred that this message conveyed a relatively positive assessment. However, no reliable cultural differences in indirectness were found outside work settings. For example, when asked to interpret the same message framed as a discussion between two friends about a personality test, American managers were just as indirect as East Asian managers (see Figure 1).

According to the dynamic constructivist perspective of culture (Hong, Morris, Chiu & Benet-Martinez, 2000), cultural interpretative frames or schemas guide behaviors only when they

come to the foreground (i.e., become available, salient, and applicable) in the individual's mind. In this sense, cultural differences are dynamic and context-dependent. Consistent with this perspective, cultural differences in indirectness vary depending on the contextual cues that make different relational styles more or less accessible. Within the context of work, American managers activate a particular relational schema that diverges from their East Asian counterparts. However, outside the context of work, American and East Asian managers adopt similar relational schemas in their use of indirectness.

Nonlinguistic cues. We found similar moderating effects of context in research on nonverbal communication at work. Ambady, Lee, and their colleagues (1996) compared how Korean and American managers used nonlinguistic cues in their workplace communications. American and Korean managers were videotaped communicating good news (getting an unexpected bonus) or bad news (losing an expected bonus) to either a boss, peer, or subordinate. Content-filtered versions of these videos were rated by Korean or American coders for use of nonlinguistic cues.

The results showed that compared to Americans, Korean managers were more sensitive to the hierarchical nature of the relationship and modified their use of nonlinguistic cues as a function of this relationship. For example, Korean managers were rated as using more nonlinguistic cues when the listener was higher status; they were more likely to exhibit nonlinguistic cues that communicated other-enhancement, affiliation, and self-deference when communicating to a boss than to a peer or a subordinate. In contrast, American managers did not vary their use of nonlinguistic cues to bosses, peers, or subordinates. However, American managers were influenced by the content of the message, using more nonlinguistic cues when communicating bad news than good news. Korean managers, on the other hand, did not vary

their use of nonlinguistic cues based on the content of the message. Overall, the results demonstrated that Korean managers showed higher levels of relational attunement than American managers in hierarchical situations, while the reverse was true when the content of the message was particularly negative.

Although this study only examined within-culture communication—the raters of nonlinguistic cues were from the same culture as the managers who produced the cues—the observed cultural difference can be a source of misunderstanding and misinterpretation in the workplace. For example, when Korean speakers use a lot of nonlinguistic cues to signal the higher status of the listener, American listeners might mistakenly interpret these cues to mean the content of the message is extremely negative. Or when American speakers use a lot of nonlinguistic cues to signal extreme criticism, the Korean listener might mistakenly interpret these cues to merely reflect the listener's relative status rather than as a signal for the severity of the situation.

Relational Attunement at Work—A Summary

Relational attunement is of critical concern in the multi-cultural workplace. As mentioned, when speakers and listeners have different norms of relational attunement, misunderstandings and misinterpretations of information can easily occur. The research evidence we reviewed shows that cultural influences in relational attunement are complex; specifically, culture interacts with context in different ways to influence relational attunement. Cultural differences in relational attunement can be more apparent in some situations than others (for example, in work versus non-work contexts, when transmitting good news versus bad news) or more apparent in some relationships than in others (for example, in hierarchical relationships).

This raises several implications. First, though cultural *differences* have been the focus of much cultural theory and research, these studies also highlight cultural *similarities*, describing contexts and situations where people from different cultures do not behave differently from one another. These complex interaction effects between culture and context are all too often overlooked in efforts to array cultures along broad value dimensions. Second, the nature of these cultural patterns and interactions appears better explained by specific psychological mechanisms—deep-seated beliefs and cognitive processes—that are not always accessible to participants. This idea that internal cognitive or affective systems are differentially brought to the fore as situational cues change is similar to other conceptions of how personality differences are moderated by context (Mischel & Shoda, 1995). Third, this work has particular relevance for practice. To the extent that work often requires effective communication between people of different cultural backgrounds, it is critical to understand the conditions in which discrepancies in relational attunement are especially large. This concern with managing and minimizing problems in intercultural interpersonal contact is particularly salient when considering issues of diversity, to which we turn our attention next.

MANAGING DEMOGRAPHIC AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Diversity is a large topic of research in the organizational and management literature (for a review see Williams & O'Reilly, 1998). Diversity, as it has been studied, relates to issues around the management of demographic differences—what happens when people of different gender, nationality, age, functional expertise, education, tenure, religion, and ethnicity relate to one another in the context of work. Although psychologists have long tackled this problem by focusing on issues such as prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination, organizational researchers also are interested in the question of whether demographic diversity leads to better outcomes

(Chatman, Polzer, Barsade & Neale, 1998).

There are many reasons why a demographically diverse workforce might enhance work-related effectiveness and productivity. Given the increasingly diverse marketplace—both globally as well as locally—firms must be able to sell to different types of customers and work with different types of vendors in order to remain competitive in the long run. Firms that have a diverse workforce are presumably better able to take advantage of the opportunities of the global marketplace and thrive (Williams & O'Reilly, 1998). A related argument suggests that work units—firms or teams—that bring together different opinions, perspectives, backgrounds, and expertise are more likely to generate creative and innovative ideas, which are critical for long-term survival and success of the firm (e.g., Jehn, Northcraft & Neale, 1999; Lau & Murnighan, 1998).

However, the evidence that demographic diversity leads to more effective work performance has been, at best, mixed. Though demographic diversity can enhance task effectiveness in complex environments—as diversity brings about more approaches, perspectives, and opinions—it also increases emotional conflict within the work unit (Brief, 2000). Indeed, extensive research on inter-group dynamics suggests that mere contact between groups often gives rise to adverse dynamics such as implicit and explicit ethnocentrism, outgroup stereotyping, and intergroup hostility (Brown, 1986). The increase in interpersonal and social conflict that results from demographic diversity tends to undermine task effectiveness (Jehn, 1995), and this does not abate until the minority group reaches a critical mass (for example, in traditionally male professions when women represent close to 50% of the work unit; Allmendinger & Hackman, 1995). Although the potential promise of demographic diversity has not been borne out by research, several streams of research on cultural workways suggest a new

approach to defining and theorizing about diversity.

Demographic and Work Styles Diversity

The research literature on diversity most commonly focuses on the demographic features of individuals (e.g., ethnicity, nationality, age, gender) as the source of interpersonal difference and thus conflict. An implicit assumption in this literature is that people's category membership is the primary form of diversity at the workplace. This focus, unfortunately, overlooks another potentially more important form of difference, namely cultural variations in the mental models and relational styles people bring to the workplace. Organizational researchers have focused on differences in observable demographic characteristics with little attention to the substantive differences that lie underneath them, while cultural psychologists have generated rich theory and empirical data on cultural variations that could make a difference in the workplace.

Work Team and Co-worker Preferences. Recent research on work team preferences has taken initial steps to bridge these streams of work. Social and organizational psychologists have argued that in-group biases stemming from a social categorization process create a preference, when given the choice, to work with others who have similar category membership (e.g., functional background, age group, nationality, gender, ethnicity) (Pelled, 1996; Chatman, Polzer, Barsade & Neale, 1998; Williams & O'Reilly, 1998). For example, provided the opportunity to choose between an Anglo workgroup or a Latino workgroup, an Anglo worker is more likely to choose the Anglo workgroup.

However, surface-level demographic characteristics are confounded with culturally specific relational schemas; for example, people's cognitions and behaviors about appropriate relational behaviors at work tend to reflect their cultural or ethnic group memberships. In a study that disentangled their relative influence, Sanchez-Burks, Nisbett, and Ybarra (2000) asked

participants to choose between two groups—one that consisted of an ethnic in-group that exhibited a work style of an ethnic out-group, and another that consisted of an ethnic out-group that exhibited a work style of an ethnic in-group. The results showed that 85% of participants showed a preference for the ethnic out-group. In other words, similarity in working style was far more important than similarity in ethnicity per se in choosing teams and co-workers.

This finding suggests that preference for one's own ethnicity actually might reflect a preference for a certain culturally bound work style. It may be difficult to assess in actual work settings, however, whether a discriminatory action against an out-group member reflects an ethnic bias or a working style bias. Nonetheless, to the extent people automatically infer a particular working style (or any other characteristic) simply based on another person's ethnicity, the consequences of both types of prejudice are similarly insidious.

The idea that working styles, rather than ethnicity, is a more powerful shaper of people's decisions about what team to join or with whom to work can offer a different approach to reducing prejudice and discrimination. Focusing too narrowly on demographic characteristics as the source of minority disadvantage runs the risk of missing the underlying mechanism of the prejudicial behavior (i.e., working style incongruence). If given substantive information about other people's work styles, observers may be less likely to rely on demographic categories such as ethnicity as a heuristic to infer work styles, and thus less likely to rely on these demographic categories to guide their preferences and choices of teams and colleagues (e.g., Sanchez-Burks, Nisbett & Ybarra, 2000).

Implications for Mentor-Protégé Relationships. In addition to work team and co-worker preference, diversity also has implications for mentor-protégé relationships. According to research on leader-member exchange theory (Graen, Novak & Sommerkamp, 1982; Paglis &

Green, 2002; Sherony & Green, 2002), superiors rather quickly identify subordinates with whom they will form informal mentoring relationships. Demographic biases have been shown to have an important role in these decisions, often to the detriment of minority demographic groups (e.g., Pelled & Xin, 1997). In the U.S., for example, male managers tend to form mentoring relationships with male rather than female protégés, or White managers tend to form mentoring relationships with White rather than non-White protégés (Thomas, 1993). Given that mentoring relationships are considered an essential resource for climbing the corporate ladder, many scholars and practitioners have suggested that women and ethnic minorities are inherently at a disadvantage because of this type of prejudice and discrimination in the corporate world.

However, supervisors' early preferences for subordinates actually might reflect preferences for work style similarity rather than demographic similarity. Lacking other information about these relatively new employees who are potential protégés, it is not unreasonable for supervisors to infer working styles based on demographic characteristics such as ethnicity--particularly given the substantive overlap between working styles and membership in different cultural demographic groups. However, as protégés' actual working styles become developed and apparent over time, mentors might seek out mentoring relationships with people who share their own working styles regardless of demographic congruence. Similar to work group or co-worker preferences, it might be the case that given substantive information about working styles, mentors will pick protégés not primarily based on demographic congruence, but rather based on congruence in working styles. Nonetheless, the implication of this shift in preference from ethnicity to relational work style does not necessarily alleviate problems of inter-group bias. To the extent that the relational style of the dominant group remains favored over those more common among underrepresented cultural groups, this cultural psychological

perspective on workways suggests the possibility of an overlooked nuanced form of institutional discrimination.

Extreme Diversity and Hybrid Cultures

Further evidence that diversity can be conceptualized as managing differences in work styles (rather than demographic group membership) comes from an innovative study conducted by Earley and Mosakowski (2000). In a series of experiments conducted with four-person managerial teams that worked within a large multinational firm headquartered in Bangkok, they varied the level of cultural diversity represented in the teams. The results replicated an expected effect where split teams (where two members came from one country and two members came from another country) experienced more negative dynamics and performed worse compared to homogeneous teams (all members shared a common nationality). But they also formed teams that had “extreme” levels of diversity—where each member came from a different country, such that no two members held a common cultural background. These teams with extreme levels of diversity performed better than split teams and did just as well as the homogenous teams. As Earley and Mosakowski observed, in the absence of any common cultural work styles or schemas, these highly diverse teams created a hybrid culture where team-specific norms, rules, and expectations emerged. In short, extreme levels of demographic differences allowed these teams, over time, to develop a new and shared work style, and this similarity of work style was a positive predictor of performance.

Interethnic Interviews

The consequences and implications of diversity are perhaps most controversial when one considers minorities’ access to jobs and career mobility. Overt and aversive racism continue to be a factor in hiring and promotion decisions within organizations today (Brief, 2000; Murrell,

Dietz-Uhler, Dovidio & Drout, 1994). An interviewer's ethnic biases can create a disadvantage for minority job candidates, even if these biases are not conscious or intentionally applied (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2000). A classic experiment on interethnic interviews conducted by Word, Zanna, and Cooper (1974) showed that non-conscious ethnic biases can be manifested in multiple ways; for example, Anglo-American interviewers asked fewer questions, remained more physically distant, and made less eye contact during interviews with Black candidates versus other Anglo-American candidates. These differences create a self-fulfilling prophecy whereby the interviewer's ethnic biases negatively and non-consciously affect the performance of the candidate.

However, perceived incompatibilities in the working styles of two cultural groups also can create disadvantages for minority targets or job candidates, creating conditions for what might be referred to as a *cultural incongruence prophecy* (Sanchez-Burks, 2005). The cultural incongruence prophecy suggests that a target's behavior can be influenced by differences between the evaluator's and target's culturally related cognitions. Evidence for this idea comes from a study examining non-conscious behavioral mirroring in the context of an interethnic job interview (Sanchez-Burks & Blount, 2005). Prior research shows that people have a tendency to non-consciously mirror others' behavior in social interactions, and that people have more positive subjective experiences of rapport as a result of mirroring exhibited by interaction partners (Chartrand & Bargh, 1999; Cheng & Chartrand, 2003; LaFrance, 1979). Both mirroring and its effect on perceived rapport are moderated by attentiveness to relational cues (Van Baaren et al., 2003).

Given that cultural groups differ in relational attunement (Sanchez Burks, 2002), there should be cultural differences in the display and sensitivity to the effects of mirroring. Empirical

evidence indeed shows that mirroring is more common within more relationally attuned, interdependent cultures compared to more independent cultures (van Baaren et al., 2003, 2004), and these differences in the enactment of mirroring become pronounced within work settings (Sanchez-Burks, 2002). More recently, Sanchez-Burks and Blount (2005) reasoned that Latinos' greater attentiveness to relational cues should increase their susceptibility to the negative effects of not receiving mirroring in a social interaction, while Anglo-Americans' inattentiveness to relational cues at work would reduce their vulnerability to the negative experience of not receiving behavioral mirroring. They examined the implications of these differences in a field experiment in which Anglo-American and Latino mid-level employees of a U.S. Fortune 500 company participated in a mock interview conducted in the headquarters' office suite. The participants were randomly assigned to an Anglo-American interviewer who mirrored or did not mirror the gestures, mannerisms, and postures of the applicants (while maintaining similar levels of propinquity and positivity, such as amount of smiling, across both conditions). The interviews were videotaped, and later an independent panel of professional recruiters and interview coaches, blind to the experimental conditions, evaluated the participants' performances using these videos. The results showed that, overall, the absence of interviewer mirroring negatively affected all participants. More important, the performance of Latinos was more affected by mimicry than Anglo-Americans; compared to those in the mirroring condition, Latino interviewees in the non-mirroring condition performed more poorly, reported higher levels of anxiety, and reported lower levels of self-esteem.

Although the mirroring of the interviewer in this study was experimentally manipulated, prior research showed that Anglo-Americans are generally less likely to mirror or exhibit behavioral mirroring overall (Van Baaran et al., 2003) and particularly in work settings

(Sanchez-Burks, 2002). To the extent that most interviewers in corporate America tend to be Anglo-Americans, this creates a naturally occurring environment where Latinos would underperform in interview situations. These results suggest that differences in behavioral mirroring in the workplace, even in the absence of any overt or implicit racism against minority ethnic groups, can result in outcomes that disadvantage the minority group. Adding to earlier themes of how a cultural perspective provides unique insights into intergroup biases, this research reveals how the workways of a dominant group operate as an institutionalized form of discrimination, such that it does not require malevolent individual biases to create an inhospitable environment for minorities. In this way, even subtle differences in cultural workways can provide difficult challenges for facilitating diversity in organizations.

Managing Diversity—A Summary

In this section, we argue that marrying cultural psychology with diversity research is a fruitful endeavor. Although diversity has been typically examined in organizational research as differences in observable or surface characteristics—for example, gender, race, or age—differences in less-observable characteristics such as belief systems, preferences, work styles, and mental models also can be important factors that undermine intercultural contact. From a practical standpoint, interventions to increase diversity in the workplace can benefit from an increased focus in helping individuals develop shared workways and workplace relational schemas across racial and ethnic lines.

As mentioned, the preference for and perpetuation of a dominant, culturally unique workway can be just as insidious as the preference for a dominant ethnic group. Organizational structures and practices, such as selection and attrition (Schneider, 1987), can reproduce and sustain a singular work style, mental model, or cultural ideology, which undermines diversity in

workways. For example, in a study of corporate recruiters of U.S.-based Fortune 500 firms, Heaphy and her colleagues (2005) found that job candidates who built rapport with an interviewer by blurring the work and non-work divide (e.g., by mentioning a girlfriend or commenting on family pictures of the interviewer) were less likely granted a second interview. In other words, job candidates who do not conform to the uniquely American workway of restricting personal issues at work are less likely to be recruited. These institutional practices that reinforce homogeneity in workways do little to help business organizations reap the advantages of an ethnically diverse workforce. Of greater concern, given that workways are often culture-bound, organizations that pursue homogeneity of workways are likely to also bring about homogeneity of cultures and ethnicities. Indeed, organizations may justify or couch racially discriminatory hiring practices behind the more “politically correct” motivation of preserving a singular workplace relational style.

On a more optimistic note, organizational change can play a role in facilitating larger cultural change. For example, in the dot-com boom of the 1990s, there are many examples of companies bucking normative traditions by embracing non-work activities in the workplace—employees played ping-pong during breaks at work, or went on whitewater rafting trips as a company. Or, as mentioned, as the marketplace becomes more global and companies become more multinational, it is increasingly a fact of life that employees have to adapt to and work with people with dramatically different workways. Echoing the ideas of Marx (1873), individuals exposed to these different institutional environments are likely to develop different ways of working (such as different norms of blending work and non-work activities) and may in turn be catalysts for bringing about larger changes in cultural ideology.

ORGANIZATIONAL & MANAGERIAL PERCEPTIONS & EXPECTATIONS

Cultural research in the organizational and managerial literature has focused on a plethora of managerial practices that differ across cultures. Many of these more applied findings have important contributions to psychological theory and research. In the next section, we highlight several key findings in this area. These include cross-cultural research on attributions in the workplace, expectations of conflict, and beliefs about professionalism.

Cross-cultural Attributions for Performance

Work is a domain where performance—success or failure—is of important consequence for both the individual and the organization, and attributions or explanations of performance have been a topic of extensive research in cultural workways. In this section we review three lines of research that have particular bearing on cultural psychology—positivity attributional biases, attributions to individuals versus groups, and organizational attributions.

Positivity Biases. How managers make attributions about positive and negative events such as success and failure has important implications for the future performance of employees and the organization at large. For example, the propensity to make dispositional attributions to explain performance can lead managers to overlook important structural causes of failure (in the case of poor outcomes), or misappropriate resources to a few undeserving employees (in the case of good outcomes). The latter phenomenon was eloquently described by Gladwell (2002) in his analysis of the downfall of the now infamous Enron Corporation. According to Gladwell, no expenses were spared to hire the best and brightest individuals from elite business schools during the heydays of Enron. These employees were fast-tracked and given huge financial and strategic responsibilities, even though they were under-qualified, under-trained, and inexperienced. When these individuals failed, they were given more, rather than less, responsibility and control. Enron's culture of identifying a few winners, and then maintaining their "star" status by

consistently making dispositional attributions for their successes while making situational attributions for their failures, contributed to the ultimate downfall of the entire company.

This propensity to focus on dispositional attributions of winners is consistent with cultural research on the positivity bias, or the propensity to make internal attributions for others' successes and external attributions for others' failures (the positivity bias is similar to the self-serving bias, except that the attributions are directed toward others; Sears, 1983). Hallahan, Lee, and Herzog (1997) content analyzed how sports journalists made attributions about winners and losers, and found cultural variation in how the positivity attributional bias is expressed. Specifically, journalists from Western cultures predominantly focused on winners, making internal attributions for their successes, and praising their abilities to the sky. This results in a "star" culture in Western societies, where disproportionate attention is paid to the winners, and extraordinary and outstanding abilities and talents are attributed to them. Journalists from Eastern cultures, in contrast, predominantly focused on losers, making external attributions for their losses. In Eastern cultures, effort is expended on equalizing winners and losers so that no one stands out—journalists spent more time making excuses for the losers so they did not appear below average or sub par.

Group vs. Individual. Research has shown cultural differences in how individuals versus social collectives are held accountable for outcomes. Zemba, Morris, and Ames (2005) found that Japanese were more likely than Americans to attribute organizational outcomes to a single leader (e.g., CEO). Specifically, they found that Japanese attributed blame to a business leader for harms caused by the organization (e.g., environmental accident), whereas Americans were reluctant to do so unless there was a clear connection between the action and the individual. Relatedly, Japanese leaders were more likely to take the blame and resign for organizational

failure, even if it was not caused directly by their own actions and even if the cause originated before the leader became a member of the organization. Individual representatives of the group—such as the CEO or the leader—are viewed as the proxy of the group and have to assume blame for organizational level failures.

The notion that cultural differences exist in the status of groups and individuals also is salient in the literature on motivation. How to motivate workers to perform well or exhibit other behaviors the organization finds desirable is of great interest to business scholars and practitioners. The early work of William Ouchi (1981) showed that, in contrast to American managers, Japanese managers used the work team as the source for motivation for individual workers. Similarly, DeVoe and Iyengar (2004) showed that while American managers tended to attribute their subordinates' motivation exclusively to work-related incentives such as salary, Latin American and Chinese managers were more likely to believe that social incentives (such as belonging to a group, building harmonious relationships) were more important sources of motivation for their subordinates. Like other research on cultural psychology, an individual's inextricable embeddedness within the social collective appears to be much more salient in Eastern than Western cultures (Sagiv & Schwartz, 2000).

Organizational Attributions. Besides individuals, social collectives such as organizations also make attributions. For example, several studies examined the attributions business organizations make for their performance by content analyzing the text in their annual reports to shareholders (Bettman & Weiss, 1983; Lee, Peterson & Tiedens, 2004; Salancik & Meindl, 1984; Staw, McKechnie & Puffer, 1983). Ambady, Shih, Hallahan, and Lee (2005) have used this technique to examine attributions across cultures. Specifically, they content analyzed the attributions contained in the annual reports of publicly traded companies in four countries—

India, Hong Kong, Singapore, and the U.S. Results showed that Indian companies changed from a prototypical Eastern attributional style (more external attributions, or attributing performance to competitors, government policy, or economic conditions) before 1991—the year India experienced a large-scale economic restructuring to allow more Western capital—to a prototypical Western attributional style (more internal attributions, or attributing performance to managerial decisions or internal strategy) after 1991. During the same time period, attributions made by Singapore and U.S. companies (countries with no large scale economic or political change during the 1991 timeframe) showed no changes in their attributions. Also, attributions in Hong Kong companies changed from a prototypical Western attributional style before 1997—the year when Hong Kong was handed over to China from British rule—to a prototypical Eastern attributional style. Again, Singapore and U.S. companies showed no changes in attribution styles during the same time.

These results have several implications. First, they show that cultural differences in attribution styles are reflected not only in individual level inferences of causality, but also in the publicly communicated inferences of social collectives. Although annual reports are written by individuals, they nevertheless represent the views of the business organization as a collective. The results showed that like individuals, organizational attributions reflect East-West differences in preference for internal versus external attributions. Second, cultural differences in organizational attributions are sensitive to larger cultural, political, and economic influences. Whether the observed attributional shifts in Indian and Hong Kong firms reflect changes in how the executives or employees of the organizations actually thought about their performance, or the organization's attempts at appealing to different audiences over time, they changed in predictable ways with larger "macro" forces in the economic and political environment, and the change

occurred quite quickly (a year after the seminal event). It appears that the cultural differences in organizational attributions are highly transitory and sensitive to the larger context.

Expectations about Conflict Across Cultures

Research on conflict at work has most commonly focused on how different types of conflict affect individual and team performance. Although the data is somewhat equivocal, there is some evidence (primarily from U.S. and Northern European samples) that task conflict—disagreements about the work itself—can facilitate team performance and creativity through constructive debate (Jehn & Bendersky, 2003; DeDreu & Weingart, 2003). In contrast, relationship conflict—disagreements and dynamics unrelated to the task that involve interpersonal tensions and personality clashes—is a robust and reliable predictor of team underperformance and dissatisfaction (DeDreu & Weingart, 2003).

However, expectations of and reactions to conflict do not mirror the empirical findings, and further exhibit cultural differences. Neuman and colleagues (2005) conducted two studies comparing perceptions of task and relationship conflict between Americans, Koreans, Chinese, and Japanese managers. The results showed that Americans and East Asians both believed task conflict was a roadblock to success. Though East Asians also believed relationship conflict was detrimental to task performance, Americans did not believe that relationship conflict necessarily affects team performance. In fact, when given the opportunity to join a talented team that will likely experience relationship conflict, Americans were twice as likely as East Asians to state that they would join such a team.

Thus, there are both cultural differences and cultural similarities regarding beliefs about conflict: Americans share with other cultures the belief that task conflict limits team performance, but differ from other cultures in beliefs about the detrimental effects of relationship

conflict to team performance. These findings are consistent with PRI, the uniquely American workway that minimizes the importance of social and emotional concerns at work; Americans expect work-related conflict to exact a toll on work performance, but did not expect personal or social conflict to play a role at work. This suggests that “conflict frames,” or subjective construals of conflict that influence decisions and behaviors (Gelfand, et al. 2001, 2002; Pinkley, 1990), are more strongly shaped by prevailing cultural ideologies than by the actual relationship between conflict and performance.

Culturally Bound Beliefs about Professionalism

“Being professional,” in the vernacular of Western business speak, is an often-used standard invoked by organizations to regulate behavior of its members, or by individuals to orient their impression management strategies using culturally and organizationally relevant cues such as décor or dress (Elsbach, 2003, 2004; Rafaeli & Dutton, 1997). Yet, exactly what “being professional” means is rarely explicitly defined. Although idiosyncrasies may exist between industries, organizations, and even roles within a firm, notions such as professionalism can provide a window into culturally implicit meanings about how to behave appropriately while at work.

Recent research suggests that perceptions of professionalism are indeed culturally bound. Heaphy et al. (2005) assessed people’s schema of professionalism by having managers from multiple cultures affix images of work-related items (such as a stapler, file folder, or an award certificate) and non-work-related items (such as a family photo or a child’s drawing) to an image of an empty office cubicle of a person described as having either a “professional” or “unprofessional” reputation. Results showed that perceptions of professionalism entailed restricting the amount of non-work symbols to fewer than 20%. Interestingly, far from a cultural

universal, this perception of professionalism was moderated by the amount of experience managers had working in the U.S. Specifically, the more time managers had lived and worked in the U.S., the more likely they were to perceive restriction of personal content displayed in the office as an indicator of high professionalism. Of course, all societies have beliefs about appropriate behavior at work. Though translations of professionalism appear in many cultures—‘puro’ in Japan, ‘epangelmatismos’ in Greece, profesionalismo in Mexico--this research suggests that its particular connotations within American business are far from universal and, instead, are deeply imbued with tacit cultural meanings.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

In this section, we highlight streams of research that may be particularly fruitful for the study of cultural workways in particular and cultural psychology more generally. Particularly, we highlight theories, variables, and methodological approaches that are less common in psychological research, but hold potential to provide a rich perspective for cultural psychology research in the future.

Social Networks

Cultural psychology of workways is not limited to a study of people’s minds or social contexts. Social networks, or the pattern of interconnections between individuals, play an important role in the mutual constitution of individuals and institutions within cultures (Ariel, Poldony & Morris, 2000). Social network research examines actual patterns of social behavior—who talks with whom, to whom do people go for task and personal advice, to whom people hand off their work—and examines the consequences of these various network strategies for individual, team, and organizational outcomes and behaviors.

Social network analysis offers much potential for future research in cultural psychology. For instance, multiplexity, or the degree of overlap in a social network, is a particularly interesting variable in that it taps both the content and the structure of the interconnecting web of people's social relations. The level of multiplexity in an individual's network indicates the extent to which the same set of people serve multiple roles in that network (e.g., the same person has the roles of confidant, co-worker, and cousin simultaneously). For example, given PRI's central tenet of separating work and non-work domains, the social networks of individuals in cultures influenced by PRI should have lower levels of multiplexity (Kacperczyk, Sanchez-Burks & Baker, 2005).

Recent cross-cultural evidence supports this notion. Ariel, Poldony, and Morris (2000) compared social networks among employees of a multinational bank in Spain, Germany, and the U.S. They found that, despite organizational attempts at standardization across its branches, there remained substantial cultural variations in actual patterns of social relations. For example, in Spain, employees' networks showed greater multiplexity—that is, more overlap between advice and personal networks, such that the same person would be sought out for both work and personal advice. In contrast, American employee networks showed significantly lower multiplexity, indicating two non-overlapping networks, one for work-related issues and one for personal issues.

Transitivity is another network characteristic that may be an important predictor for success within some Asian cultures (Gelfand & Cai, 2004). As mentioned, professional networks in China are fashioned in a way that is consistent with the broader notion of *guanxi*, where two people who are connected based on mutual obligations can expect people in each other's networks to respond in kind despite being one step removed in the social network. For example,

imagine Kaiping wishes a favor from a potential business associate, Chi-Ying, someone he does not know personally. Both Kaiping and Chi-Ying, however, are connected to a mutual friend Lijun. It is acceptable under the principle of *guanxi* for Kaiping to approach Chi-Ying directly without going through Lijun. Kaiping can further expect Chi-Ying to offer him the same favors and special treatment as she would to Lijun (Gelfand & Cai, 2004).

Understanding and adapting to these social network characteristics, such as multiplexity or transitivity, may be particularly critical skills for operating effectively in today's global marketplace. For example, having a network with a lot of multiplexity may be advantageous for a businessperson generating new business in Spain. Or having a highly transitive social network may benefit an entrepreneur who wishes to expand her business into China. In short, having network characteristics that fit in with another culture might facilitate one's success in operating within that culture.

The ability to alternate between multiple network strategies to "fit in" across multiple cultures may be an additional skill that predicts success in the global marketplace. For instance, businesspeople who have to work within multiple cultures might have to switch back and forth between a high transitive and a low transitive network, or a high multiplex or a low multiplex network, depending on their colleagues' cultural background. In this way, achieving "cultural fluency" may entail understanding and evoking different network structures across cultural divides.

Besides examining the relationship between various network characteristics to performance across cultures, future research also could examine antecedents to culturally adaptive network structures and skills. For instance, prior exposure to different cultures might create more flexibility in network structures and strategies, such that individuals who are multi-

cultural (who identify with different cultures) may have more facility in switching back and forth between different types of networks. Further, network structures might powerfully affect individual belief systems. For example, the American entrepreneur who participates (willingly or not) in the Spanish business world and develops higher multiplexity in her social networks as a result might begin to attenuate her own beliefs about separation of work and non-work life.

Organizational Culture

Cross-cultural research typically examines culture at the level of a nation—for example, Japan versus the U.S.—or the level of ethnic groups—for example, Asian Americans versus Latinos. Yet, cross-cultural research also can be conducted at the level of the work group or work organization. Organizational culture refers to the observable values and norms that characterize an organization (Schein, 1996) or commonly held schemas (ways of thinking about and doing things) that individuals within an organization might share. Organizational culture has been called a variety of terms, such as “organizational personality” (Barnard, 1968), corporate climate, corporate soul, or organizational psycho-unity (Denison, 1996).

In one sense, organizational culture is analogous to national or ethnic cultures (Alutto, 2002). Both types of “cultures” entail shared beliefs, values, and norms of a particular social system, be it a business organization or an entire society. One can think of organizations as nested in nations, where a country might have numerous organizations within it, and organizational cultures are influenced by the larger national culture in which they operate. Likewise, one can think of nations as nested in organizations—where multiple national units exist within a single organization (such as Hofstede’s multi-national study of IBM), and differences between national units are influenced by the larger organizational or firm culture.

Comparing these two research streams—organizational culture and national cultures—

side by side, it is evident that dimensions and concepts that have been used to describe national cultures have been used to describe cultures within organizations or firms. For example, the concept of individualism/collectivism,(INDCOL) originally used in cross-national comparisons, has been used to examine cultural differences between business firms, functional departments, or work teams within the same country (Lee, 1997, 1999). Particularly, multiple studies have examined how creating a more collectivistic versus individualistic orientation within a workgroup (via experimental manipulations) affects group and organizational dynamics (Chatman & Barsade, 1995; Lee, 1997, 1999).

Despite this limited cross-fertilization of the two literatures, there is little theory or research that has explored the similarities and differences of cultures at these various levels of analysis. In an exception, Earley and Mosakowski (2002) suggest that, compared to organizations, national cultures are less transient and less affected by the entry and exit of any single individual. However, these differences have blurred as organizations have grown increasingly large, diverse, and global, while national values have shown to be much more susceptible to environmental jolts and changes (Ambady, Shih, Hallahan & Lee, 2005).

Thus, one important direction for future research is examining the relationship between national cultures, organizational cultures, and individual psychology. One possible proposition is that organizational cultures may reflect the larger national culture in which they operate. For example, value differences that exist between cultures (i.e., autonomy-embeddedness, hierarchy-egalitarianism, mastery-harmony) may affect organizational cultures (Sagiv & Schwartz, 2000). For example, organizations in autonomous cultures may be relatively open to change and diversity; but organizations in embedded cultures function as extended families, taking responsibility for organizational members in all domains of life. Organizations in hierarchical cultures may

emphasize the chain of authority, assigning well-defined roles and goals to individual members, while organizations in egalitarian cultures may be more flexible in allowing individuals to decide how they will enhance organizational goals. Organizations in mastery cultures may be dynamic, competitive, and strongly oriented to achievement and success, while organizations in harmony cultures may be more concerned with the organization's integration and impact on the larger society and environment.

Another possible proposition may focus on the interface between organizational and national cultures. Specifically, the fit between organizational and national culture may predict organizational performance. One may argue that organizations with cultures that fit in with the prevailing values of the larger national culture might be more successful, or more favorably perceived by shareholders and the general public. To the extent that organizations exhibit cultural values that are inconsistent with the larger culture, they may violate expectations held by the general public about what is generally good and desirable, leading to unfavorable impressions and lower stock prices (Lee, Peterson & Tiedens, 2004). Alternately, one may argue that organizations with cultures that differ from the prevailing values of the larger national culture will be viewed as more innovative and cutting-edge.

Cultural Intelligence or CQ

Thinking is for doing, and within the domain of work, learning about culture is critical for successfully navigating cultural differences. The recent construct of cultural intelligence offers one such mechanism through which people can manage cross-cultural differences. Earley and Ang (2003) wondered why some people can operate well in new cultures, while others have difficulty fully understanding or practicing new cultural values and behaviors. They suggest that this ability cannot be fully explained by social or emotional intelligence, empathy, or other

individual differences. They coined the phrase cultural intelligence (or CQ) to describe an individual's ability to adapt to new and unfamiliar cultures. CQ has cognitive components (grasping culture-specific knowledge as well as meta-cognitive skills such as self-awareness and creating new categories), motivational components (willingness to adapt and change oneself as the cultural context changes), and behavioral components (ability to generate new behaviors within a new cultural context).

As mentioned earlier, difficulty in managing cross-cultural business relationships is both common and costly (Copeland & Griggs, 1985), and many of these failures may be attributed to insufficient levels of CQ (Earley & Ang, 2003). CQ, though an individual difference, can indeed be developed. For example, cognitions such as culture-specific knowledge—how to conduct a meeting in Japan or how to exchange gifts in China—can be learned, as well as meta-cognitive skills relevant to CQ, such as social perception, reasoning, or self-monitoring. Similarly, motivation can be increased through goal-setting exercises to change individual attitudes. Behavioral change can be instilled through behavioral modification techniques.

CQ is a promising individual-level variable that directly addresses the concept of cultural fluency in intercultural interactions. Although CQ is applicable to most if not all dimensions along which cultures vary, future research may find that the usefulness of CQ is moderated by the nature of cross-cultural differences. For example, when individuals have to negotiate between cultural phenomena in which they do not have clear or intuitive understanding—for example, differences between high and low context cultures—CQ might prove especially helpful. Or when individuals are reluctant to admit to certain culturally ingrained behaviors due to self-presentation concerns—such as being less relationally attuned in certain settings—having high

CQ or being trained in CQ might have a strong effect on improving the quality and effectiveness of intercultural contact.

Examining Cultures Using Dilemmas

Dilemmas are an underutilized methodology for examining cultural differences. This approach is exemplified in the research of Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars (1993), who presented people in multiple cultures with a series of work-related dilemmas and asked respondents to make a choice between two extreme positions. For example, managers were asked to choose one of the following two descriptions of a company: *(A) As a system designed to perform functions and tasks in an efficient way. People are hired to fulfill these functions with the help of machines and other equipment. They are paid for the tasks they perform.* *(B) As a group of people working together. The people have social relations with other people and with the organization. The functioning is dependent on these relations.*

Using this approach, they found important cultural differences and similarities specific to work but with clear implications for broader contexts. For instance, in the dilemma posed above, only 36% of the managers from Japan chose ‘A’, whereas this option was favored by 70% or more of the managers in the U.S., with Sweden and Italy somewhere in between (56% and 46%, respectively). Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars argue that managers’ decisions in such dilemmas reflect and express the national culture in which they operate—dimensions such as universalism, collectivism, and achievement.

Though some researchers (Oyserman et al., 2002) have questioned the validity of value dimensions such as INDCOL as a useful way to understand cultural differences, this criticism may reflect the problems with using scales as a way to measure values, rather than the concept of values per se. Indeed, Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars (1993) show that theoretically

grounded dilemmas based on individualism and collectivism show consistent and theoretically explainable cross-cultural variation. This, together with the consensus with which other cultural theorists have described constructs analogous to INDCOL (e.g., Durkheim, 1933; Kluckhohn & Strodebeck, 1961; Parsons & Shils, 1953; Reisman, 1961; Tonnies, 1887), suggests that broad value dimensions could be usefully re-examined with the dilemma methodology in future research. Specifically, when the validity of self-reported values cannot be established (see Heine, Lehman, Peng & Greenholtz, 2002; Peng, Nisbett & Wong, 1997) or when experimental methodologies are not viable (as in many applied field settings), the dilemma methodology exemplified in Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars' (1993) research offers much promise.

CONCLUSION

The emerging research on cultural psychology and workways offers a unique perspective that is relevant for theory and research in cultural psychology. The interplay between the micro, psychological processes and the macro, structural processes that characterize the research on cultural workways provides critical insights for understanding how and why cross-cultural differences and similarities emerge, as well as when they may be particularly problematic for intercultural relations.

In understanding what constitutes a psychology of workways, it should be noted that much of experimental psychology may have unintentionally been studies on work. The most commonly used methodological paradigm in psychology experiments engages participants in a task-oriented “work” setting. For example, participants often come to an office and are asked to perform in some sort of problem-solving, decision-making, perceptual, or interpersonal task. Participants are typically given a set of instructions, and asked to follow them and perform

accordingly within a given timeframe. Also, participants typically receive some sort of compensation—money or course credit—for the “work” they perform.

Although participating in a short psychological experiment has clear differences from long-term employment within an organization or workgroup, participants in a typical psychology experiment are more likely to be under a “working” mindset than a “playing” or social, non-working mindset unless such a context is explicitly primed or created (e.g., studies of romantic partners). Findings from the experimental literature may therefore largely be studies of work-related cognitions, feelings, and behaviors. To the extent that a large part of cultural psychology employs this experimental paradigm, this may contribute to a cultural literature that overestimates the prevalence of certain types of cultural differences and underestimates other types of cultural differences. In this way, research on cultural workways provides a contextual anchor for assessing the cultural psychology of social life.

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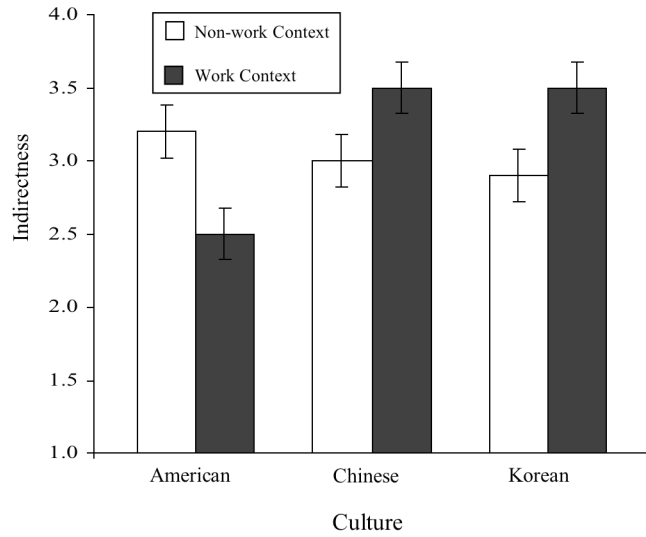


Figure 1. Indirectness as a function of context and participant's culture. Adapted from Sanchez-Burks, Lee, Choi, Nisbett, Zhao, & Koo, 2003)