

Chapter 3

Putting the Pieces Together: Culture and the Person

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Introduction

Culture is commonly described by normative systems that indicate preferred solutions to a set of universal problems that all societies must deal with in order to survive, such as eliciting cooperative, productive behavior and regulating individual and group relationships (Hofstede, 1980; Inglehart, 1997; Schwartz, 1999). While all solutions are present in societies, certain solutions are differentially preferred, which leads to a dominant orientation, as well as numerous alternative or substitute profiles in different societies (Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961). Many of these different cultural orientations (e.g., Hofstede, Inglehart, Schwartz frameworks) have been described in Chap. 2. In this chapter, we focus on how culture manifests within individuals and their groups to influence attitudes and behaviors.

How Culture Impacts Individuals

It is useful to think of culture as an external, hypothetical latent construct (Schwartz, 2014), to which individuals are exposed, to a greater or lesser extent, in their daily lives. Based on their experience of these exposures, they internalize aspects that make sense to them as individuals. Exposures to this cultural “press” include the

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stimuli (primes) and reward contingencies (approval or disapproval) encountered in each society that focus attention (consciously or subconsciously) on particular implicit goals, understandings, and preferences (Schwartz, 2014). However, it is important to understand that there are different levels of culture to which we are exposed. These subcultures capture variations within countries, including ethnic, class, linguistic, religious, and other groups.

At a macro-level, culture is important to the smooth function of societies. It is expressed in and through societal institutions (e.g., education, political, economic, and legal systems) that link the individual to the group. Individuals experience culture through their interactions with these societal institutions and with their social groups—those groups with whom they share a collective identity, common spaces, and ongoing social interactions. Within each society, however, individuals are exposed and react to the cultural press in different ways. This leads to substantial variations in terms of the psychological consequences of culture between individuals in a society (Schwartz, 2014). Nevertheless, we might expect that those who interact on a daily basis will share somewhat similar experiences.

At the meso- or mid-level, Fine (2012, p. 159) argued that “groups provide the mechanism through which individuals fit into larger structures and through which social structures shape individuals.” He suggested that groups (e.g., religion, profession) and social categories (e.g., age, gender) are meaningful subcultures that have a more profound and proximate impact on individuals than the broader societal culture. Of course, individuals are more than recipients of their cultures and subcultures; they may be shaped by it, but they are not determined by it. This can be illustrated by an examination of personal values, which have been extensively studied within and across cultures. Personal values are sociopsychological, in that they are shaped through the impact of culture and the process of socialization (Schönpflug, 2008), but also influenced by genetics and our immediate environment (Knafo & Spinath, 2011; Uzevovskiy, Döring, & Knafo-Noam, 2016).

The most prominent personal values theory in psychological research is Schwartz’s (1992, 1994) theory of basic human values. He defined personal values as desirable, trans-situational goals that vary in importance and serve as guiding principles in life. He identified the structure of values based on the circular motivational continuum that underlies these values.

Schwartz (1992) divided the continuum into 10 motivationally distinct basic values and later refined the theory to identify 19 (Schwartz et al., 2012) and then 20 (Lee et al., 2017) meaningful, conceptually distinct values. In this system (see Fig. 3.1), values that are located adjacent to each other (e.g., stimulation and hedonism) share compatible motivations and those that are opposing (e.g., hedonism and tradition) have conflicting motivations. The circular structure of values has been supported empirically in hundreds of samples from over 75 countries (Schwartz 2013; Schwartz et al., 2012; Lee et al., 2017).

While the circular structure of values (as shown in Fig. 3.1), appears to be universal, value priorities vary substantially across individuals, groups, and countries. First, it is important to consider norms. Schwartz and Bardi (2001) identified a pan-cultural normative baseline that recognizes widespread consensus in the most and

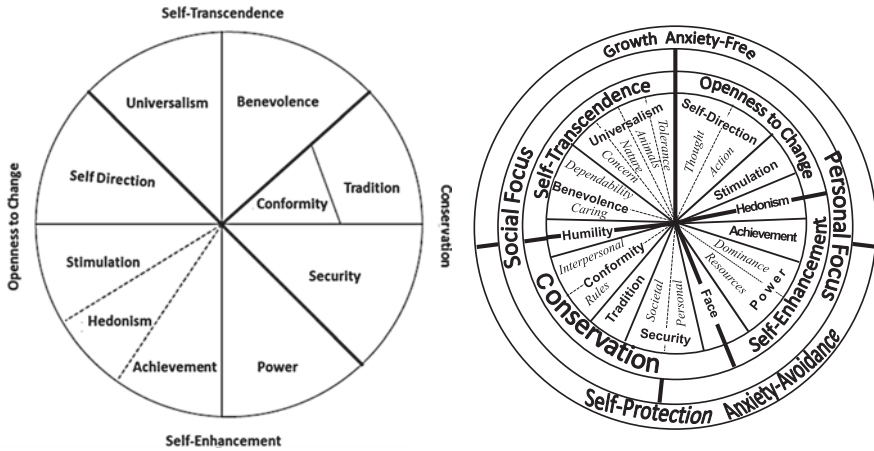


Fig. 3.1 The circular motivational continuum (a) of 10 basic values and the 4 higher order values from Schwartz (1992) and (b) for the refined system of values and their underlying dynamic sources (Schwartz et al., 2012; Lee et al., 2017)

least important values across societies. On average, benevolence, self-direction, and universalism are the most important values and power, tradition, and stimulation are the least important. This ordering is perhaps not surprising, given the importance of cooperative and supportive relationships among members of a group (benevolence: helpfulness, honesty, forgiveness, loyalty, etc.) and, to a somewhat lesser extent, toward members of out-groups (universalism: social justice, equality, broad-mindedness, etc.). They also found a very high consensus about the low importance of power, emphasizing dominance over people and resources, which may exploit or harm others. Despite these similarities across societies, they also found a great deal of variation in the importance of values both within and across societies and groups.

For instance, Schwartz (2006) examined the average of peoples’ values within regions and countries, by calculating scores for each of 76 national cultures. He found interesting differences between regions. For instance, most western European countries placed a high importance on egalitarianism, including universalism values, and intellectual autonomy, including self-direction values, whereas most Southeast Asian countries placed a high importance on hierarchy, including power values. However, Fischer and Schwartz (2011) reported that country differences only account for a little over 10% of the variance in self-reported values on average; with more of the variance being attributed to some values (i.e., the conservation values of conformity, tradition, and security values) than others (i.e., the self-transcendence values of universalism and benevolence and the openness to change values of stimulation and self-direction). This leaves a large variance within country-level values to be explained by other factors, including norms within the groups we interact with on a daily basis, as well as individual differences in genetic and other characteristics.

Researchers subsequently hypothesized that some values are likely to be more closely linked to cultural norms, whereas others are more likely to be linked to basic psychological development (Cieciuch, Davidov, & Algesheimer, 2016). For instance, emphases on personal versus social focused values (see Fig. 3.1b) are more likely to be associated with differences in latent culture (i.e., societal culture that is external to the individual and expressed through societal institutions, practices), whereas emphases on growth/openness to change versus protection/conservation values are more likely to be associated with basic psychological development (Cieciuch et al., 2016).

Personal values thus provide a system of *social representations* that are relatively stable and, at least some of which, are likely to be driven by cultural norms. This supports the expectations that when individuals enact their social roles in societal institutions, they reflect the underlying cultural emphases of their societies. For example, expectations of teachers and students in school systems may put more emphases on memorizing or on reasoning and questioning, depending on cultural norms (Schwartz, 2014, p. 7). In this manner, cultural contexts provide the opportunities for societal values to be expressed [i.e., culture as situated cognition; (Oyserman, 2015)]. How closely these cultural norms are followed depends on the degree to which individuals are constrained by the range of acceptable behavioral patterns in society.

Gelfand et al. (2011) show that tightness-looseness, in terms of the strength of social norms and tolerance for deviation from those norms, varies widely across countries. Tight cultures restrict the range of appropriate behavior across situations (e.g., libraries, parties, workplaces, classrooms), whereas loose cultures permit a wider range of behaviors.

However, there are some situations that have universally stronger norms (e.g., job interviews, funerals, libraries) and other weaker norms (private spaces, parties, and parks). Normatively strong situations are restricted in the range of appropriate behavior, leaving little room for individual differences, whereas normatively weak situations have few constraints, which promotes individual discretion (Gelfand et al., 2011). Since cultures clearly vary in the degree to which everyday situations are tighter or looser, tighter societies are likely to have stronger social representations across situations.

Social representations, or schema, are forms of operational knowledge, which help individuals to categorize, interpret and make sense of situations and enable them to make the plethora of daily decisions. These representations are constantly updated through our interactions, behaviors, social activities, and exposure to the cultural “press” (e.g., the media, public opinion polls, news summaries, and legal judgements). While social representations are held by individuals, they are often shared within and vary across groups (e.g., family, religion, sports, community), especially in “tight” societies. Social representations are less profound than basic cultural orientations (see Chap. 2), as they alter within shorter time spans and influence behavior only when they are activated. That is, the activation of these social representations (e.g., self-construal, holistic-analytical cognitions, or horizontal or vertical individualism-collectivism) depends on their accessibility, applicability,

and appropriateness in a given situation (Higgins, 1996). Accessibility refers to how frequently and recently they have been activated. For instance, social representations involving parenting should be more accessible for individuals who have recently interacted or who frequently interact with their children than for those who do not. Contextual cues that prime specific social representations can also make them more accessible, such as driving by a school or seeing photographs of children (see priming discussed in section on culture as situated cognition). Applicability refers to the relevance of the social representation to the situation. For instance, social representations that involve parenting will be more relevant when interacting with your own children than with other people's children. Appropriateness refers to whether or not the representation is suitable or right for the situation. For instance, social representations that involve rewards and punishments of children may be judged as less appropriate in some public places than in the home or dependent on perceptions of the child's intent.

In the next section, we focus on a relatively limited number of social representations that are pervasive and grounded in societal culture. They reflect individual's experiences within their culture(s), and are often shared with their social groups and are relatively stable across similar situations. In tighter cultures, where strong norms exist there may be less variation in the social representations applicable to specific situations than in looser cultures (Gelfand et al., 2011).

Internalized Individual Value Systems

Socially constructed representations of meaning or individual value systems become chronically accessible in different societies as a result of the frequency and efficacy of use. Overtime, these chronically accessible "schemas" become the de facto cultural operating systems for individuals in different regions and come to shape how individual values are expressed. There are many different conceptualizations of how culture is internalized at the individual level. Internalized value systems are commonly thought to reflect the importance of different cultural orientations that influence the nature of individual experience, such as self-construal (independent vs. interdependent) (Markus & Kitayama, 1991), cognitive processes (analytic vs. holistic) (Nisbett, Peng, Choi, & Norenzayan, 2001), and individualism vs. collectivism (vertical and horizontal) (Triandis & Gelfand, 1998). What these conceptualizations have in common is the notion that culture and its attendant societal norms provide different social representation of knowledge, to which individuals from each culture (or society) are socialized through enculturation.

Of course, there are many other conceptualizations, but given that it is not possible to discuss all of them here, we have highlighted a few of the most widely applied approaches in consumer research and marketing. Most of these internalized value systems reflect an individual tendency toward holding a particular worldview or social representation that influences the nature of individual experience, including cognition, emotion, and motivation; determines what information one attends to

(focal, field, attributes, relationships); and defines one's relationships with others with respect to prioritization of goals and relationship hierarchy. We will introduce each one briefly.

Self-Construals: Markus and Kitayama (1991) suggest that a fundamental variation across cultures is how individuals view "the relationship between the self and *others* and, especially, the degree to which they see themselves as *separate* from others or as *connected* with others" (p. 226). The former is defined as an independent construal of the self, which is derived from beliefs about the inherent separateness of people. This leads to individuals' desires, preferences, attributes, and abilities driving behavior and being diagnostic of the individual. The latter is defined as an interdependent construal of the self, which is derived from the importance of maintaining interdependence with one's social group. Experiencing interdependence is seeing oneself as part of a social group where one's behavior is determined, contingent, and organized by the desires of others in the relationship. This belief of the separateness or connectedness to others forms the basis of how individuals from different cultures experience, understand, and interpret the environment and the world that they live in.

A significant body of empirical evidence points to the influence of self-construals in our daily lives. The conceptualization of independent and interdependent self has been widely applied in psychological and consumer research in the past decades. For example, Trafimow, Silverman, Fan, and Law (1997) find that our private and collective self-cognitions are stored in different cognitive locations and individuals from individualist cultures retrieved more cognitions related to the private self than those from more collectivist cultures (Trafimow, Triandis, & Goto, 1991). Language is often used as a prime for independent vs. interdependent self-construal in different settings (Tavassoli, 2002). The use of language also primes the salience of self-construal in bicultural individuals (e.g., bicultural Chinese students reported more collective self-statements and lower self-esteem scores when they responded to Chinese as compared to English questionnaire) (Kemmelmeyer & Cheng, 2004; Ross, Xun, & Wilson, 2002). Thus, differences in self-construal can be found across people, when contrasting those from more individualist and more collectivist cultures, and also between people within a culture. For instance, Aaker and Lee (2001) show that when primed with independent self-construal, people are more persuaded by promotion-focused information in advertising while prevention-focused information appealed more to people when their interdependent self was primed. Similarly, when Americans were primed with independent vs. interdependent self in different conditions, those in interdependent-self condition reported higher collectivist values and judged selfish behaviors more harshly (Gardner, Gabriel, & Lee, 1999).

Holistic vs. Analytic Cognitions: Nisbett et al. (2001) propose that social differences that exist between cultures can be attributed not only to beliefs about self and others (cf. Markus & Kitayama, 1991), their tacit epistemologies (cf. Triandis & Gelfand, 1998), but also the nature of their processes. Based on close readings and reviews of Greek (a main foundation of Western civilization) and Chinese (a main foundation of Asian civilization) approaches to science and philosophy, they build a

psychological theory that describes how different social organizations affect cognitive processes in two basic ways: indirectly by focusing attention on different parts of the environment and directly by making certain types of social communication patterns more acceptable than others. For instance, East Asians do not have the same commitment to avoiding the appearance of contradiction as do Westerners. Peng and Nisbett (1999) argue that there is a tradition in Eastern philosophy that opposes the formal logic tradition and promotes dialectical thinking, which involves transcending, accepting, or even insisting on the contradiction among premises (e.g., ying and yang). They suggest that East Asians tend to be more *holistic*, attending to the entire situation and assigning causality to it. They engage in “dialectical” reasoning, whereas Westerners are more *analytic*, paying attention to the object and the categories to which it belongs, using formal logic to understand behavior.

Similar to self-construal theory, the conceptualization of holistic and analytic cognitions has also been applied to a large body of research over the past decades. In the area of psychological processes, it has been applied in the exploration of cultural differences in perception (Masuda & Nisbett, 2001), control (Ji, Peng, & Nisbett, 2000), identity consistency and its impact on well-being (Suh, 2002), educational approaches (Tweed & Lehman, 2002), facial recognition of other race (Michel, Roisson, Han, Chung, & Caldara, 2006), perception of facial emotion (Masuda et al., 2008), cognitive speed and accuracy with congruent self-concept (Kuhnen & Oyserman, 2002), and affective adaptation (Wilson & Gilbert, 2008). In the area of consumer and marketing research, it has been applied to understand cultural variations in how consumers respond to unexpected incentives (Valenzuela, Mellers, & Strebel, 2010), evaluate brand extensions (Monga & John, 2007), evaluate price fairness (Bolton, Keh, & Alba, 2010), engage in holistic thinking in response to self-construal manipulations in price-quality judgments (Lalwani & Shavitt, 2013) and product evaluations (Zhu & Meyers-Levy, 2009), and respond to brand extension failures (Ng, 2010), just to name a few.

Vertical and Horizontal Individualism vs. Collectivism: Triandis and Gelfand (1998) propose that not only do individuals in societies differ in their orientation toward the independence of the self (prioritizing self-goals, where attitudes are determinants of social behavior: individualism), or interdependence toward the group (prioritizing group goals where norms are determinants of social behavior: collectivism), they could be further differentiated in terms of horizontal (emphasizing equality) or vertical (emphasizing hierarchy) orientation. The vertical and horizontal aspect of individualism and collectivism refers to the nature of social relationships in each society. They contend that these are the most important attributes that distinguish different types of individualism and collectivism. In general, horizontal patterns assume that one self is more or less like every other self, whereas vertical patterns consist of hierarchies, where one self is different from other selves. The intersection of these two orientations creates four distinct patterns. Horizontal individualism suggests that people want to be unique and distinct from groups, but are not interested in status (no hierarchy), whereas vertical individualism suggests that people are interested in status. In contrast, horizontal collectivism suggests people see themselves as being similar to others and believe pursuing common goals without submitting to authority

(no hierarchy), whereas vertical collectivism suggests people emphasize the integrity of the in-group, sacrifice their personal goals for group goals, and submit to the will of authorities in pursuit of the common goals.

Similar to the other internalized individual value systems, this approach has been applied to numerous studies in both psychology and marketing. For example, it has been used to understand cultural variation in affect valuation (Tsai, Knutson, & Fung, 2006), in minority influence in decision-making (Ng & Van Dyne, 2001), response times in self-face recognition (Ma & Han, 2009), the extent that brands signal quality (Erdem, Swait, & Valenzuela, 2006), consumer attitudes toward global and local products (Torelli, Özsomer, Carvalho, Keh, & Maehle, 2012), and environmental beliefs and recycling behavior (McCarthy & Shrum, 2001).

As previously mentioned, social representations are often shared with the social groups and social categories (e.g., family, religious, education, and occupational groups, as well as age, gender, and social class) with whom we identify. Many differences in social representations and associated behaviors have been found between gender, socioeconomic, and social class groups. For example, relational goals have been found to lead to less efficient economic outcomes in negotiations between females (who hold relational self-construal) than males (Curhan, Neale, Ross, & Rosencranz-Engelmann, 2008) and cultural frames influence gender stereotypes such that Americans view men as less collectivistic while Korean men rate men as more collectivistic (Cuddy et al., 2015). Similarly, social class has been found to be influential in determining how working-class vs. middle-class individuals view choice as an expression of similarity or differentiation from others (Stephens, Markus, & Townsend, 2007). Attention to these mid-level- or microcultures allows a more fine-grained understanding of how culture impacts attitudes and behavior.

Contextual Issues: Culture as Situated Cognition

In order to understand how internalized value systems influence attitudes and behavior, we need to know how these social representations (or mind-sets) come to frame individual perception, knowledge, and interpretation of the situation. Culture-as-situated-cognition (CSC) theory (Oyserman, 2015) suggests that culture can be thought of at three levels (see the introduction section for a discussion on culture at the macro-, meso-, and micro or individual levels). At the highest level, culture is a human universal, “a good enough” solution to universal needs. At the intermediate level, culture is also a specific meaning-making framework, a “mind-set” that influences what feels fluent, what is attended to, which goals or mental procedure is salient. At the most proximal level, culture is a set of particular practices within a specific society, time, and place. Human societies share common universal needs, but situations differ in which need is salient and which solution is preferred. This means that people are sensitive to cues as to which cultural mind-set (e.g., individualistic mind-set, collectivistic mind-set) is situationally relevant. Oyserman, Sorensen, Reber, and Chen (2009) further suggest that people perceive focal targets

and integrate information differently due to the situation depending on the cultural mind-set and task demands in terms of their congruence to the situation. These cultural mind-sets are cued at particular moments in time. This culture-as-situated cognition perspective suggests that people are socialized to use collective or individual mind-sets depending on what the situation calls for. Consequently, situations often cue us to different ways of thinking about the self, and as such, cultural differences may stem from the prevalence of psychologically meaningful situations within and across societies (Oyserman et al., 2009).

Contextual cues automatically and nonconsciously activate the relevant cultural mind-sets. Accessible mind-set shapes perception, reasoning, and response. Although these cultural mind-sets are likely to be automatically and nonconsciously activated, even when brought to conscious awareness, the mental content, cognitive procedures, and goals that they make salient are likely to be applied unless a reason not to be is also brought to mind. This experience of “cultural fluency” allows one to “go with the flow” and not pay much attention to culture as it unfolds, which is why, in one’s own culture, it is often hard to even notice that things could happen any other way.

Markus (2016) explains that motivation is shaped by the multiple intersecting cultures, those of national origins (e.g., macro-level culture), but also those of gender, race, ethnicity, class, religion, workplace, sexual orientation, etc. (i.e., meso-level culture, cultural mind-sets) that people engage each day and across their lives. Motivations and cultures are thus interacting and dynamic systems that change with conditions and contexts. Similar to the culture-as-situated cognition framework, she proposes that “it is the relative balance between the cultural attention and elaboration accorded to the *internal attributes of the self* and that accorded to *others and their expectations* as the source of meaningful action” (p. 161).

Activation/Priming of Cultural Mind-Sets and Biculturalism

The constructivist view suggests that culture influences behavior through the cultural mind-sets or cognitive lenses people use to make sense of ambiguous information (Leung & Morris, 2015). Applying the cultural lens to the intersubjective approach thus provides a means to integrate cultural influences on behaviors through social norms (that direct typical or appropriate behavior in a given situation). The constructivist approach thus traces cultural differences to the cognitive lenses or templates that guide our interpretations, expectancies, and responses. People with the same internalized value priorities may still show different judgments and tendencies as a function of the schemas conferred by their cultures. This view differs from the values model with regard to predictions about the generality and stability of cultural patterns of behavior because schemas exert an influence on behavior only at moments when they are activated, or put into use as a filter for information processing. The activation of a cultural mind-set depends on its (1) accessibility, (2) applicability, and (3) judged appropriateness.

Evidence of activation of cultural mind-sets can be seen in biculturals' ability in cultural frame switching (CFS), a process whereby biculturals have access to and apply two different cultural meaning systems in response to cultural cues (Hong, Morris, Chiu, & Benet-Martinez, 2000). That is, Chinese American biculturals can respond in characteristically Western attribution style when primed with American cues but make more East Asian responses when primed with Chinese cues. In practice, CFS behavior has also been demonstrated in domains of self-construal and persuasion in both biculturals and monoculturals (Gardner et al., 1999).

Priming can only make knowledge accessible if it already exists in memory. Priming cultural mind-set allows researchers to test if both individualistic and collectivistic mind-sets can be primed across cultural groups, addressing the question of whether both are part of universal culture. Hence, priming is the method of choice for testing the possibility that cognition is both situated and constructed (Oyserman, 2015). When primed, individual's associative network (including semantic content and procedural knowledge) cued by priming is expected to "spill over" into subsequent tasks, hence bringing culture to the fore. In this way, priming methods test the effect of accessible knowledge on current judgment. This is based on the assumption that while knowledge accessibility can be the temporary result of priming or of a more chronic mind-set as a result of one's everyday environment, priming is unlikely to influence subsequent judgment unless the cued content is already available in memory. Consequently, temporary or chronic accessibility effects should be a reflection of culture (Bargh & Chartrand, 2000).

Putting It All Together: When and Why Culture Matters

Leung and Morris (2015) also suggest that cultural differences in judgment patterns are carried more by perceived prescriptive norms than by personal beliefs. Hence, country differences in cognitive biases are less likely to be expressions of divergent inner values than beliefs across cultures that are accommodations to different perceived cultural norms. Intersubjective consensus is based on individual perceptions of these norms. Identification with a culture is best predicted from the match of internalized values to the intersubjective consensus in the culture, not the match of internalized values to the average of peoples' values in a society. Norms-based accounts do not assume a consensus of personal beliefs or values in a culture, they assume more sharedness in perceptions of the group's norms—assumptions about what a typical group member believes, does, and expects. Norms could explain the stability and persistence of cultural patterns of social behavior. It could therefore account for individual malleability and societal persistence, micro-level fluctuation with macro-level stability.

This notion of cultural mind-sets as determined by intersubjective consensus (or descriptive norms) is also proposed by Gelfand and Harrington (2015), who argue that descriptive norms are distinct from internalized values and explain cultural differences in a wide range of domains, including compliance, causal attribution,

counterfactual thinking, harm perception, conformity, cultural identification, and negotiation. They further explore the cultural, situational, and individual difference factors that could determine when descriptive norms will have the strongest motivational force on individual behaviors. For example, in situations where the goal is to manage uncertainty and threat, to manage social impressions, and where one is in position of power or dependence.

Different types of situations also make different kinds of norms salient. Injunctive norms become particularly salient in situations with cues about social evaluation. In general, the higher the evaluative pressure, the more salient are norms, the more they influence individual behaviors. In situations where injunctive norms are absent, people turn to descriptive norms, which serve as heuristics to guide judgments and actions. People in tight cultures are chronically aware that their actions are being evaluated, so they are prevention-focused, cautious, and dutiful; they exhibit more impulse control and more self-monitoring.

In the management domain, both descriptive and injunctive norms combine to inform situational strength, which has been useful as a way of conceptualizing and predicting person–situation interactions. Meyer et al. (2014) explore the ways in which individual differences influence perceptions of situational strength and examine its moderating effects on two types of voluntary work behavior (i.e., organizational citizenship behavior and counterproductive work behavior). Meyer et al. (2014) defined situational strength in terms of implicit or explicit cues provided by entities external to the individual, regarding the desirability of various forms of behavior, and show that it moderates behaviors in organizational settings. The key dimensions of situational strength as defined by Meyer et al. (2014) can be reframed in terms of norms: clarity (the understandability of norms); consistency (agreement between different norms); constraints (freedom to act according to one’s values); and consequences (accountability of behavioral outcomes). This framework is also similar to the tightness-looseness scale (Gelfand et al., 2011) that comes to predict individuals’ likely adherence to norms in society, listed below with its corresponding dimensions of situational strength in parenthesis:

1. There are many social norms that people are supposed to abide by in this country.
2. In this country, there are very clear expectations for how people should act in most situations. (Clarity)
3. People agree upon what behaviors are appropriate versus inappropriate in most situations in this country (Consistency)
4. People in this country have a great deal of freedom in deciding how they want to behave in most situations. (Reverse coded) (Constraints)
5. In this country, if someone acts in an inappropriate way, others will strongly disapprove. (Consequences)
6. People in this country almost always comply with social norms. (Consistency)

Figure 3.2 below is an illustration of how the three levels (macro-, meso-, and individual) of culture and individual value systems and situations (context) jointly predict individual attitudes and behaviors in each situation.

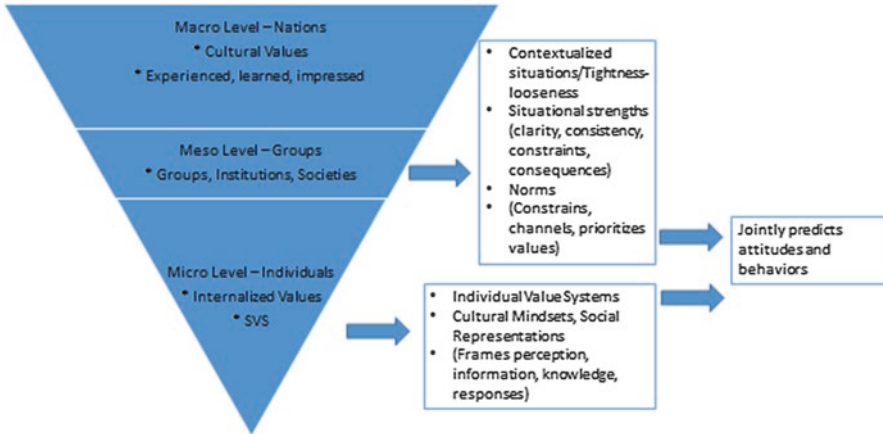


Fig. 3.2 Integration of cultural levels, individual value systems, and contextualized situations

Given that individual value systems are akin to cultural operating systems that increase in accessibility due to the frequency and efficacy of their use What then would determine their activations? Oyserman et al. (2009) suggest our cultural mind-sets (or schemas) are cued at particular moments in time. The culture-as-situated cognition perspective suggests that societies socialize people to be able to use collective or individual mind-sets depending on context. Cognition, according to these models, is contextualized—defined by social contexts, human artifacts, physical spaces, tasks, and language (Smith & Semin, 2004). Taken together, situated approaches make three critical points. First, cognitive processes are context sensitive. Second, this context sensitivity does not depend on conscious awareness of the features of situation on cognition. Third, while the working self-concept is context sensitive, context effects on cognitive processes are not mediated by self-concept. In fact, situations may also cue individual content, procedures, and cognitive styles directly (Smith & Semin, 2004). Thus, how people think about themselves depend on what is relevant in the moment. In eight studies, Oyserman et al. (2009) show that culture, instead of being fixed and largely immutable patterned ways of thinking and of organizing the social world, is malleable. A situated model allows for the possibility that culturally tuned mind-sets are sensitive to immediate contextual cues.

In this chapter, we have presented ample evidence that attitudes and behaviors can best be predicted by accounting for both individual and normative/contextual differences, especially in a cross-cultural setting. We hope this helps address the initial difficulty in understanding cultural values as meaning systems that are experienced and interpreted by people within a culture in different ways, leading to variability both across and within cultures at the individual level (Fischer, 2006; Schwartz, 2014). Thus, it is important for researchers to understand the purpose of their studies and their intended level of generalization prior to data collection. There

is no easy solution. You cannot understand cultural norms by simply adding another standard question into a survey. Normative systems are socially constructed and highly complex. It is important to systematically investigate the social representations that impact the context of interest in each cultural setting, including the situational clarity, consistency, constraints, and consequences.

One viable solution is for researchers to combine qualitative and quantitative approaches to assess differences in the nature and degree of the behavior of interest in different settings. Researchers starting from a qualitative approach will bring insights into how informants see their world. Alternatively, researchers might employ multiple methods, including observation, interviews, and surveys, to uncover differences attributable to social norms and the ways in which they are interpreted. However, cross-cultural researchers cannot expect to understand cultural and normative nuances in situations that differ from their own socialization. We would strongly encourage collaboration among colleagues from many different cultures and walks of life. You just might be surprised and delighted.

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