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Cultural Psychological Theory

Kimin Eom
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Cultural psychology aims to develop a principle of intentionality by which
culturally constituted realities and reality-constituting psyches continually
and continuously make each other up, perturbing and disturbing each
other, interpenetrating each other's identity, reciprocally conditioning each
other's existence.

—Richard Shweder (1995, p. 71)

Cultural psychology has revived the original intention of the cognitive revolution in which psychologists aimed to bring meaning to the study of the mind (Bruner, 1990). In contrast to much of psychological research that has been devoted to discovering "pure" context-free psychological mechanisms, the basic assumption of cultural psychology is that the human psyche cannot exist independently of its sociocultural contexts, and therefore, the study of human actions must consider the contexts in which these actions take place (Shweder, 1995). From the beginning, cultural psychology has aimed to understand the mutual influence between psyche and cultural contexts. According to the framework of mutual constitution (e.g., Fiske, Kitayama, Markus, & Nisbett, 1998), the human psyche is regarded as a product as well as a producer of culture; psychological tendencies are not only shaped by culture but also shape cultural realities. Using this general framework, cultural psychological research has flourished over the last couple of decades,

providing ample empirical evidence for the idea that culture is an inseparable aspect of human experiences, and thus, a central element to consider in understanding human behaviors.
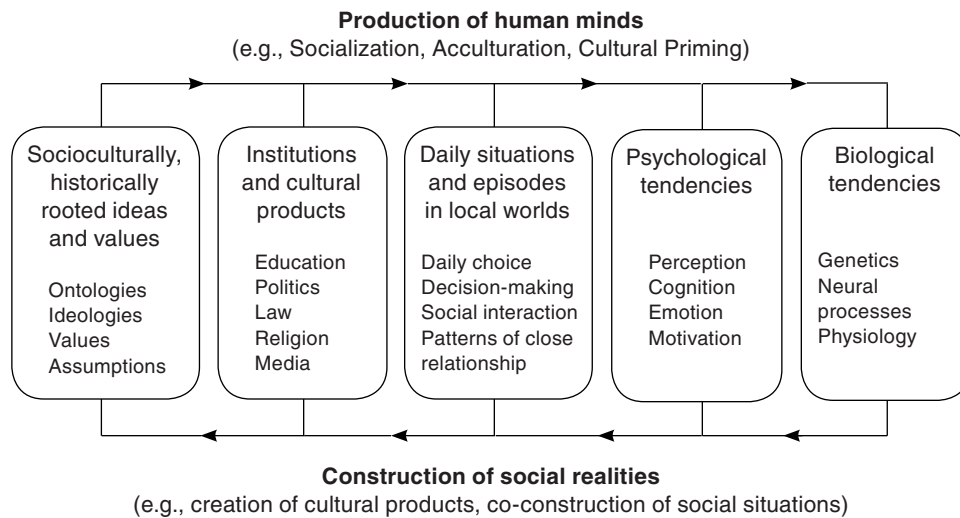
In the present chapter, we review cultural psychology as a field through the lens of the mutual constitution framework. We do so by highlighting some of the field's notable findings and methodological approaches, and also their strengths and limitations in order to locate empirical efforts within the larger framework of mutual constitution. We also evaluate the basic assumptions prevalent in the field to discuss the explanatory breadth and predictive power of the framework.

We first describe the core ideas of the mutual constitution framework and present several empirical approaches to test the ideas put forth by the framework. Next, we briefly summarize a couple of middle-range theories developed from the general framework of mutual constitution and discuss more general issues regarding theory development in cultural psychology. We then identify and evaluate a few basic relatively unquestioned assumptions in cultural psychological research, and sample empirical approaches that address these questions. Finally, we conclude with a brief discussion of future directions and challenges of cultural psychology as a field.

Human Minds as Products and Producers of Culture

The framework of the mutual constitution explains how human psychological processes, such as cognitive, emotional, motivational, behavioral, and biological processes, are shaped by individuals' participation in their cultural worlds that are replete with ideas, values, practices, institutions, and artifacts as shown in different panels in Figure 16.1. Through this participation in specific cultural worlds, individuals adopt particular ways of being and become functional cultural members. The individuals who incorporate certain cultural models into their psyche in turn act according to these models, creating, maintaining, and altering cultural realities that shape their psychology. This cycle of mutual constitution suggests that the human psyche is at the same time a cultural product and a cultural producer.

It is important to note that the idea of mutual constitution between culture and psyche is intended as a broad theoretical framework, rather than a specific theory. It aims to provide a way to conceptually organize and to simultaneously consider numerous and divergent aspects of human lives that comprise culture. Thus, the *explanantia* of the framework are quite broad and inclusive, as they aim to explain both the shaping of psychological processes and the construction of culture. It considers practically all products of human minds, including both things that are external (e.g., documents and texts) and internal (e.g., emotions, and motivation), and the processes that connect the external and internal (e.g., socialization and creation of cultural products) (see arrows in Figure 16.1).

Production of human minds
(e.g., Socialization, Acculturation, Cultural Priming)

Socioculturally, historically rooted ideas and values	Institutions and cultural products	Daily situations and episodes in local worlds	Psychological tendencies	Biological tendencies
Ontologies Ideologies Values Assumptions	Education Politics Law Religion Media	Daily choice Decision-making Social interaction Patterns of close relationship	Perception Cognition Emotion Motivation	Genetics Neural processes Physiology

Construction of social realities
(e.g., creation of cultural products, co-construction of social situations)

FIGURE 16.1. Mutual constitution of psychology and culture.

The strength of the framework is that it inherently incorporates multiple levels of analysis and that it explicitly addresses the processes that link these different levels. Given its focus on mutuality, the framework also affords a great deal of flexibility in theoretical and methodological development, and consequently, a wide range of empirical evidence has accumulated. The majority of studies in cultural psychology to date have focused on the process of culture influencing psychological and behavioral processes of individuals (upper arrow in Figure 16.1), probably in part because psychology generally concerns itself with the question of where human psychological tendencies come from. In this process, culture may be conceptualized as a set of shared beliefs and values that are made cognitively salient and accessible through social practices and interactions (Oyserman, Coon, & Kemmelmeier, 2002), or as a system in which meanings, practices, and mental processes and responses are loosely organized and often causally connected (D'Andrade, 2001; Kitayama, 2002).

Given the inherent complexity of the concept, culture is unlikely to be fully captured by any one operationalization. Thus, the operationalization of culture in empirical efforts varies a great deal, and it inevitably relies on the use of proxies of culture. The most common way of operationalizing culture is to use existing social categories within which values, practices, and behavioral norms are shared, such as nationality (e.g., Heine et al., 2001; Kim, 2002; Kitayama, Mesquita, & Karasawa, 2006), religious affiliation (e.g., Cohen, 2009; Tsai, Miao, & Seppala, 2007), social class (e.g., Kraus, Piff, & Keltner, 2011; Snibbe & Markus, 2005; Stephens, Markus, & Townsend, 2007; Varnum, Na, Murata, & Kitayama, 2012), or region within a nation (e.g., Cohen,

Nisbett, Bowdle, & Schwarz, 1996; Nisbett, 1993). There are other forms of operationalization that are more psychological in nature, such as individual differences measured by value scales and questionnaires (e.g., Lee, Aaker, & Gardner, 2000), and cognitive priming of key cultural concepts (e.g., Lee et al., 2000; Oyserman & Lee, 2008) and cultural icons (e.g., Hong, Morris, Chiu, & Benet-Martínez, 2000). Utilizing at least one or a combination of multiple proxy variables to capture culture, studies show the fundamental influence of culture on how people think, feel, and behave, both within the mind and with other people.

In spite of the dominant research paradigm examining processes of culture that influence the psyche in cultural psychology, some notable studies also have provided the other half of the question: how the human psyche influences culture (lower arrow in Figure 16.1). Such efforts are exemplified by studies on cultural products (see Morling & Lamoreaux, 2008, for a meta-analytic review). These studies investigate how cultural products—tangible objects produced by members of a specific culture—are created by the synergy among the intentions of individuals, and thus, reflect the cultural values and norms within their society. In so doing, cultural product research conceptualizes the human psyche as a producer of cultural realities, not just as a product of cultures.

Studies consider many different types of cultural products, such as advertisements (Kim & Markus, 1999), church websites (Sasaki & Kim, 2011), children's books (Tsai, Louie, Chen, & Uchida, 2007), school textbooks (Imada, 2012), paintings (Masuda, Gonzalez, Kwan, & Nisbett, 2008), and online web pages (Wang, Masuda, Ito, & Rashid, 2012) as products of social representation (Moscovici, 1984). Research findings show that these cultural products reflect the cultural values, norms, and psychological characteristics of their creators. For example, the contents of cultural products created in Western cultures tend to be more individualistic (e.g., valuing independence, uniqueness, and high-intensity positive affect) and less collectivistic (e.g., less valuing for interdependence, conformity, and low-intensity positive affect) than products created in Eastern or Latin American cultures (Morling & Lamoreaux, 2008).

The framework of the mutual constitution of culture and psyche is intended to encourage simultaneous consideration of multiple levels of analysis. Thus, full appreciation of the model requires considering these levels simultaneously in one program of research with the goal of seeking a cultural thread that is present across different aspects of sociocultural environments and psychological tendencies (e.g., Kim & Markus, 1999; Sasaki & Kim, 2011; Snibbe & Markus, 2005). For instance, the article by Kim and Markus (1999) provided an initial example of using the multimethod research paradigm. Contrasting East Asian cultures, where conformity is relatively valued, to American culture, where uniqueness is relatively valued, this article showed that this core cultural valuation of being different from others or being like others is consistently found across different levels of analysis from basic

preference judgment (Studies 1 and 2) to choice in a social interaction (Study 3), to the dominant themes found in advertisements (Study 4).

Taken together, cultural psychology has accumulated an impressive body of literature over the last couple of decades. These studies have tackled different aspects of the big question of how culture and human psychology make each other up, and their results facilitate the understanding of a broad range of psychological phenomena, informing both the possibilities and limitations of human psychology. In reviewing the field broadly, in the next section we will more specifically discuss theoretical contributions made by cultural psychology by focusing on specific theories developed from the perspective of mutual constitution.

Middle-Range Theories
of the Mutual Constitution Framework

As noted earlier, the idea of the mutual constitution between culture and psychology is an overarching framework that encompasses all components of culture and psychology in order to inspire middle-range theories—less general, lower-level theories with more specific predictions and hypotheses than grand theoretical frameworks (see Merton, 1968, for a more detailed concept of middle-range theory).

Our reference is solely to middle-range theories that are relevant to the mutual constitution framework and that focus on reciprocal maintenance processes between culture and psychology, rather than all theories formulated in cultural psychology. Numerous theories have been developed to elucidate the origins of cultural differences, such as the question of why some cultures become more individualistic and other cultures become more collectivistic. These theories attend to various factors ranging from biological factors (e.g., gene–culture coevolution theory: see Chiao & Blizinsky, 2010, Cavalli-Sforza & Feldman, 1981, and Lumsden & Wilson, 1981; the pathogen prevalence hypothesis: see Fincher, Thornhill, Murray, & Schaller, 2008) to socioecological factors (e.g., voluntary settlement hypothesis: see Kitayama, Ishii, Imada, Takemura, & Ramaswamy, 2006; residential mobility hypothesis: see Oishi, 2010) as potential environmental or biological pressures to develop specific cultural values and ideas. For example, the voluntary settlement hypothesis proposes that life circumstances in frontier regions (e.g., California during 19th century or the Hokkaido region in Japan)—such as survival threats, low population density, and high residential mobility—may be the origin of the cultural values of individualism (Kitayama et al., 2006). These theories offer valuable theoretical insights, with compelling evidence to understand how cultural differences develop to begin with (see Oishi & Graham, 2010, for a socioecological perspective review). Although these are theories based on the cultural psychological perspective and are areas of very active research, our focus in the present chapter is on theories developed to understand how

culture, once established, influences individual psychology—notably, collective constructionist theory and affect valuation theory—and we also briefly discuss the issue of middle-range theory building in the field.

Collective Constructionist Theory

One specific theory developed directly from the perspective of mutual constitution is the collective constructionist theory (Kitayama, Markus, Matsumoto, & Norasakkunkit, 1997). The theory posits that the co-creation processes between culture and minds occur via everyday situations that are collectively experienced in specific cultural contexts. More specifically, the theory proposes that daily situations are culturally constructed realities, and thus systematically vary from one culture to another. Individuals who subscribe to shared cultural values and assumptions collectively produce daily situations that are consistent with their cultural values and assumptions. Those situations in turn function as mechanisms of promotion and maintenance of a particular set of psychological tendencies. Thus, it is a theory that focuses on the mutual-shaping processes between daily situations and psychological tendencies from the inclusive mutual constitution framework (i.e., the interrelation between the third and fourth panels from the left in Figure 16.1).

The specific methodology developed to substantiate the collective constructionist theory is the situational sampling method (e.g., Kitayama et al., 1997; Morling, Kitayama, & Miyamoto, 2002; Uskul, Cross, Sunbay, Gercek-Swing, & Ataca, 2012). In this research method, by asking participants from different cultural backgrounds to describe certain situations (e.g., situations affecting self-esteem), researchers can analyze how certain situations are defined and constructed in different cultures and how individuals respond to those situations. Researchers typically find that situations produced by different cultural groups have subtle characteristics that reflect dominant psychological tendencies in their respective cultural contexts, even though participants are given an identical prompt. These findings elegantly indicate the process of mutual constitution: Even in situations that apparently serve similar functions (e.g., self-enhancing situations), situations in different cultures present subtle differences that reflect the important values and assumptions shared in their culture. In turn, engaging in these different situations fosters corresponding psychological characteristics (e.g., being in American situations is more effective in promoting self-enhancement, whereas being in Japanese situations is more effective in promoting self-criticism) (see Kitayama et al., 1997, for a detailed discussion).

Affect Valuation Theory

Affect valuation theory (Tsai, 2007; Tsai, Knutson, & Fung, 2006) proposes that ideal affect—affective states that people *want* to feel—is influenced by

culture, and consequently, the ideal affect in a specific culture becomes a goal for its cultural members to pursue. More specifically, the theory builds on three main assumptions: (1) ideal affect differs from actual affect, (2) cultural factors shape ideal affect, whereas temperamental factors shape actual affect, and (3) discrepancies between ideal and actual affect lead to mood-producing behaviors in order to reduce the discrepancies.

The research findings from affect valuation theory provide empirical evidence on how cultural ideals play a role in mutual constitution processes in shaping not only actual psychological tendencies but also consequences of living up to cultural ideals or failing to do so. When cultures have different ideals (Tsai, Knutson, & Fung, 2006), these culturally varied ideals are manifested in cultural realities such as social situations (e.g., interpersonal interaction patterns; Tsai, Levenson, & McCoy, 2006) and artifacts (e.g., books; Tsai, Louie, et al., 2007). Thus, culturally different ideals motivate individuals to engage more actively in behaviors that help them approach their cultural ideals (e.g., Gobster & Delgado, 1992); failure to get close to cultural ideals may have a negative impact on well-being (Tsai et al., 2006a). Although the theory focuses specifically on ideals of affective states, at a broader level, it has significant implications for understanding the processes through which cultural ideals shape and influence a wide range of psychological tendencies beyond affective processes (see Na, Choi, & Sul, 2013, for a related point on culturally valued cognitive styles).

Reviewing the field reminds us that despite the ample empirical findings in cultural psychology during the last decades, only a few middle-range theories have been developed from the mutual constitution framework. Rather than articulating overarching theories that explain processes of cultural influence, a majority of studies have focused on testing whether given psychological phenomena (e.g., self-enhancement, cognitive dissonance) are culturally varied. And for their theoretical foundation, researchers generally have relied on the taxonomical organization of cultural systems (e.g., independent vs. interdependent self-construal, analytic vs. holistic mode of thinking). Of course, these approaches have satisfied one goal of cultural psychology, that is to document culturally varied ways of being, generating numerous important predictions and supportive findings about cultural variation in human psychology. These trends, however, at the same time have led the field of cultural psychology to be in a somewhat paradoxical state in which numerous testable predictions are made with few middle-range theories.

The value of middle-range theories is their ability to generate specific predictions and hypotheses. Of course, the mutual constitution framework has been a useful tool allowing researchers to systematically consider incredibly complex cultural systems and offering a great explanatory breadth. However, given its broadness and given the relative lack of middle-range theories, the predictive power of the framework itself is relatively limited, and the field still has relatively limited knowledge about how culture shapes

psychology and how psychology makes up culture. We thus underscore the importance of developing middle-range theories that could allow researchers to formulate specific, testable, and falsifiable predictions.

One of the reasons for the relative lack of theories in the field lies in some of the basic assumptions of the framework that are widely shared without much explicit reflection. As a dominant theoretical framework in cultural psychology, the framework of mutual constitution brought its own set of implicit assumptions and empirical routines into the field. Thus, we now direct our focus to and evaluate basic assumptions in cultural psychology.

Dominant Assumptions in Cultural Psychology and How to Question Them

In this section, we outline several basic assumptions commonly shared in cultural psychological research. Some of these assumptions are core aspects of the field, but others are implicitly shared assumptions that are sustained by habitual omission of explicit empirical efforts to address the questions. We will discuss three particular issues: causal understanding of cultural influence, cultural changes and variation within culture, and intersectionality of different layers of cultural influences. In addition to outlining the issues, we will describe a few existing approaches that exemplify the much-needed effort to address these specific concerns.

Consideration of Causality

The key aspect of the framework of mutual constitution is its emphasis on the mutuality of the influences. It recognizes that the causal influences are by nature bi-directional. This position allows great explanatory flexibility in how culture and human minds create and shape each other, but at the same time, it could pose the danger of overinterpreting causality. Whenever shared threads are found across different levels of analysis, it is easy to assume that the observed tendencies exist because of mutual shaping between culture and human psyche. Moreover, coupled with the fact that actual experimental treatment of "culture" is virtually impossible, psychological investigation of the exact processes through which culture shapes the psyche and the processes through which the psyche makes up culture poses a challenge.

One useful way to examine the question of causality is use of cultural priming methods (Oyserman & Lee, 2008). The cultural priming studies complement other cultural psychological findings that rely on culture as a measured variable. Moreover, these studies reveal a pathway through which cultural influences occur. Research using cultural priming may be grouped into at least two types. One set of studies focuses on activation of cultural frames via cultural symbols, taking the dynamic constructivist approach

(Benet-Martínez, Leu, Lee, & Morris, 2002; Hong et al., 2000; Zhang, Morris, Cheng, & Yap. 2013) or languages (Ji, Zhang, & Nisbett, 2004). These cultural icons (and/or languages) activate a generalized set of cultural frames rather than specific concepts. Studies show that when a certain cultural frame is activated, individuals generally act in a way that is more prevalent in that cultural context (but also see Cheng, Lee, & Benet-Martínez, 2006, for the moderating role of bicultural identity). These studies allow the study of causal processes in which being in a specific cultural context triggers a set of associated behaviors among people who have already acquired the specific cultural knowledge.

Another set of studies focuses on direct activation of particular key conceptual elements of a cultural dimension of interest, such as individualistic and collectivistic values and beliefs (see Oyserman & Lee, 2008, for a meta-analytic review). This method aims to uncover the role of a specific aspect of culture that is theorized to be a cause of the observed cultural difference. One example is the pronoun-circling task in which participants are instructed to search and circle the first-person singular pronouns (e.g., I, me, or mine) or plural pronouns (e.g., we, us, or ours) in order to activate individualistic or collectivistic mind-sets, respectively (e.g., Brewer & Gardner, 1996; Gardner, Gabriel, & Lee, 1999).

These cultural priming studies successfully demonstrate how stored cultural minds are activated by situational cues, and these stored thoughts, in turn, shape social judgments and behaviors. It is also important to note, however, that these studies focus primarily on the cognitive aspects of culture. Culture is an inclusive concept by nature that cannot be reduced to a psychological schema or a knowledge structure (Miller, 1999). Activated thoughts are elements of cultural systems, not the culture per se. Consequently, it does not allow investigations of how the cultural schemas are internalized into individuals' minds through participation in specific cultural worlds (e.g., institutions and social interactions as shown in the panels in Figure 16.1). Thus, the cultural priming research effectively captures relatively proximal processes of cultural influence (i.e., cultural schemas' influence on psychological tendencies), but not necessarily their links with other cultural factors at different levels.

For more inclusive ways to uncover the processes through which culture shapes psychology, we argue that the field will need to direct its empirical efforts to the processes of enculturation and acculturation. Culturally shared meanings and perspectives enter the minds of individuals through socialization from birth, through parenting and teaching, as well as through engagement in social practices and interactions with other cultural members. Research suggests that at birth, infants in all cultures are quite similar, and as they get older and psychologically mature, expected cultural differences emerge (e.g., Miller, 1984). Moreover, even fully grown individuals go through psychological changes, and these changes occur especially when one's cultural context is changed through immigration. Research in accul-

turation shows that immigrants adopt the psychological pattern of their new culture through their exposure to and their engagement with the culture (e.g., De Leersnyder, Mesquita, & Kim, 2011). Uncovering these processes would also inform the question about how culture causally shapes human minds.

Consideration of Change and Variation within Cultures

The primary focus of the mutual constitution framework is on maintenance and perpetuation of a cultural system. Therefore, the framework is effective in explaining the cultural consistency across different levels of analysis as well as across historical time frames, but it is limited in explaining and predicting specific processes of cultural change and in offering a systematic understanding of variations in the degree to which culture shapes the human mind. We argue that this limitation comes from two implicit assumptions of the framework.

First, although theoretical discussion acknowledges culture as a malleable and dynamic system, the framework would predict a set of discernible core cultural values and world views to be consistently present across different levels of analysis and time (e.g., see Kim & Markus, 1999, for consistency across levels of analysis; and see Nisbett, Peng, Choi, & Norenzayan, 2001, for historical consistency). However, the fact that culture can change, and is always changing, is a far more important fact than what has been empirically acknowledged to date. Change in one level of the cultural system brings subsequent change in other interlocked levels, so that significantly different cultural realities are formed and revised. For example, innovative technological developments (e.g., the Internet) leading to different social interaction patterns and/or influential and exceptional thinkers (e.g., Mandela, Darwin) bringing new ideas and values into a society can trigger huge cultural changes. These dynamic processes of cultural change have been investigated relatively little in cultural psychology thus far.

Second, although it is acknowledged that how and why people behave, think, and feel vary within a cultural context in the abstract, the extent to which individuals are influenced by cultural engagement is assumed to be relatively unvaried. At the least, the possibility of individual variation in the degree to which people are impacted by culture has not been fully incorporated. In typical research paradigms in cultural psychology that compare psychological characteristics among cultural groups (or among conditions), researchers tend to focus on the mean levels of each culture rather than on individual variations within culture. This paradigm has been used to provide powerful, contrasting characteristics between cultural groups, but may lead researchers to overlook an important question on whether and how cultural influence can be manifested among different individuals.

More recently, some theoretical advances have been made allowing sys-

tematic considerations of cultural influence in conjunction with individual differences. One approach comes from the gene–culture interaction model (Kim et al., 2010a, 2010b, 2011; see Kim & Sasaki, 2014, for a review). This model suggests that the degree to which individuals demonstrate culturally prototypical psychological tendencies may vary depending on whether or not individuals carry genotypes associated with greater sensitivity to environmental input. Indeed, a study shows that individuals with a more socioemotionally susceptible genotype (e.g., GG genotype of OXTR *rs*53576) engage more in culturally fostered behaviors (e.g., emotional coping in the United States or emotion suppression in Korea) than those with a less susceptible genotype (e.g., AA genotype of OXTR *rs*53576) (for details, see Kim et al., 2010a, 2011). These findings show that the degree to which individuals are susceptible to cultural influences may vary and that some of this variation may be shaped by genes.

Another approach that examines within-culture variation is the CuPS (culture × person × situation) model (Leung & Cohen, 2011). This model proposes that the ways that the same type of person behaves in particular situations can vary between cultures. For example, Leung and Cohen (2011) showed that those who endorse the value of honor (person) behaved in opposite ways in a situation in which they received a small favor from others (e.g., receiving candies) (situation) according to their cultural backgrounds (culture). Among people from honor cultures (e.g., American Southerners), those who endorse the value of honor are more likely to return a favor to the others who offered a small gift, whereas among people from nonhonor cultures (e.g., Northerners), the same types of people who endorse the value of honor more are less likely to reciprocate a favor.

These findings highlight the ideas that individuals may vary in the degree to which they are influenced by cultural norms and that considering this individual difference may help to explain variation in behaviors and responses in specific situations within culture. Conversely, they show that even the same individual difference factors (e.g., genetic factors) do not necessarily predict the same behaviors in different cultural contexts. Thus, these new approaches that integrate between- and within-culture variation provide important frameworks for a more complete understanding of the relationship between culture and psychology.

Consideration of Intersectionality

Another important but relatively understudied question in cultural psychology is intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989; see Cole, 2009, for review). The concept of intersectionality highlights the notion that individuals are often at the intersections of multiple social categories (e.g., race, sex, social status, etc.), and consequently, these simultaneously experienced multiple social categories lead to specific psychological outcomes that cannot be explained by the sum of the effects of those categories. For example, African American

females may experience discrimination specifically as Black women that is different from the sum of race and sex discrimination.

In cultural psychology, reflecting psychologists' general preference for relatively simple models, researchers have tended to investigate the effects of a single cultural category or value dimension of interest, such as nationality, religion, or social class, controlling or collapsing across other social/cultural categories. This is, of course, a necessary approach to scientifically abstract, coherent, and comprehensible patterns (Kim, Sherman, & Taylor, 2009). Yet, it is also important to recognize that one's cultural experiences are interactively shaped by multiple cultural groups to which one concurrently belongs. For instance, a Christian Asian American would have the unique cultural experience of being at the intersection of his or her religious culture and ethnic culture, which cannot be reduced to the effect of either cultural group. Thus, neglecting the issue of intersectionality would limit understanding of the relationship between culture and psychology, and might even result in biased understanding of any one social/cultural category (Cole, 2009).

Recent findings suggest that considering the intersectionality between multiple social/cultural categories may allow researchers to conduct more complicated analyses of relationships between different cultural identities and psychology. For example, Gobel and Kim (2014) investigated national culture and social class in combination, showing that social background signaling behaviors of the high social class vary between national groups. Specifically, they found that in high power distance cultures such as France, high social-class individuals nonverbally signal dominance more than low social-class individuals. In contrast, in low power distance cultures such as the United States, there is no significant difference in dominance signaling between high and low social-class individuals. Also, Grossmann et al. (2012), considering the interaction between age and nationality, showed that Japanese and Americans differ in terms of the change in reasoning styles according to age. Wise reasoning (e.g., consideration of multiple perspectives, flexibility, etc.) increases with older age among Americans, whereas there was no significant association between age and wise reasoning among Japanese. These findings demonstrate that the psychological influences that come from belonging to these different social categories are not necessarily additive. Thus, it would be important to develop specific theories and accumulate empirical findings about how multiple social/cultural categories are simultaneously and interactively associated with psychological outcomes.

Future Challenges in Cultural Psychology

In this chapter, in addition to a very brief review of empirical advances in cultural psychology, we reviewed a couple of significant middle-range theories in the field, underscoring the importance of developing more cul-

tural psychological theories. Finally, we presented a critical assessment of a few implicit assumptions shared within the field. Reflecting on the field of cultural psychology makes it clear that the mutual constitution framework has allowed cultural psychologists to begin to understand and investigate the interplay between culture and human minds in systematic ways. The main strength of the framework is that it offers great explanatory breadth and reasonably good predictive power at least regarding how psychology and behaviors would manifest themselves in different cultural contexts. The framework allows consideration of cultural environments as inclusive systems and at the same time permits the generation of testable predictions. However, most of the empirical success has taken place in documenting cultural differences based on a taxonomical understanding of the world, and it has not been as successful in creating theories indigenous to the field of cultural psychology. Moreover, the survey of the field as a whole brings forward the basic assumptions of the framework and underscores the importance of evaluating them.

The next set of challenges for cultural psychology lies in generating new theories from a cultural psychological perspective in order to stimulate the next wave of research. The field started with and focused on national-level cultural comparisons for the first 10 years or so and since then has been successfully branching out in terms of the topics of research and forms of culture to be investigated over the next 10 years. An impressive number of findings have accumulated showing cultural divergence in psychological phenomena. Perhaps it is now time to place greater focus on the process of mutual influence between culture and psychology. It is important to remember that documentation of culturally varied ways of being is only one of the missions of cultural psychology. Another mission is to understand specific *processes* of how humans become cultural beings and how cultural systems are made up by human minds. The field needs more formal theories to address this goal.

During the past few decades, cultural psychology has made a remarkable set of discoveries showing that humans are products of culture and that humans in turn act as co-creators of culture. The current review presents small slices of cultural psychologists' endeavors in order to examine the core assumption that launched the field. These efforts collectively testify to the importance of contextualizing the human psyche within the continual cycle of culturally constituted realities and reality-constituting psyches making each other up, as well as underscore the potential for future discoveries.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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