

**Current issues in cross-cultural psychology:
Research topics, applications, and perspectives**

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Summary

Psychology has long ignored culture as a source of influence on human behaviour and still takes little account of theories or data from other than Euro-American cultures. This review deals with topics emerging in cross-cultural, cultural, and indigenous psychology and focuses on theoretical perspectives that shape current cross-cultural psychology. Theories at issue are put to the test as to their sustainability into the first quarter of the 21st century in the face of globalisation and cultural diversity and to their implications on current debates in the field.

Special emphasis is placed on the trait approach, its major critics and implications on psychological variables such as identity, group behaviour, personality variables, cognition, and so forth. Results from five decades of research are discussed in order to answer the following questions: What is psychological, what is cultural? What is universal, what is culture-specific? What is specific to one case, what is a general pattern?

Arguments and data in most of the latest publications in influential journals in cross-cultural psychology propose to view cultures as dynamic open systems. To address the issue of cultural diversity vs. national unity, research in the last years has concentrated either on multicultural aspects of nations and dealt with intercultural phenomena such as acculturation, or focused on intercultural contact in the zones where cultures meet. The complex challenges of globalisation in the area of organisational behaviour and management in international companies and joint ventures are discussed and critically evaluated. Variables such as leadership, negotiation, and decision-making are extensively treated and applications to areas such as personnel selection and training, work motivation, and organisational conflict are discussed.

1. Approaches to the psychology of culture: Historical foundations and conceptual challenges

1.1 *What is culture?*

There are probably as many conceptions of culture as there are researchers in the field. Traditionally, culture has either been seen as a set of symbolic meanings located in the minds of people or been defined as a context variable. Most authors in the field of cross-cultural psychology now follow the notion that culture can be very broadly defined as the human-made part of the environment (Herskovits, 1955) consisting of both objective elements (e.g. tools, roads, housing), and subjective elements, or a “group’s characteristic way of perceiving its social environment” (Triandis, Malpass, & Davidson, 1972, p. 3). The subjective view includes a multidimensional array of shared beliefs, norms, and values of a particular group (Thomas, 1994) that are instantiated in everyday social practices and institutions, and that have been historically cultivated, transmitted, and deemed functional across time. Thus, cultures are seen as both products of past behaviour and as shapers of future behaviour and at the same time, humans are seen as producers of culture and are being influenced by it (Segall, Dasen, Berry, & Poortinga, 1999).

Culture has long been regarded being restricted to national borders. In his influential and comprehensive study, Hofstede (1989) has compared no less than 50 national cultures and three regions. Such an approach is in accord with the conception of culture as defined by three criteria: place, time, and language (Georgas & Berry, 1995; Triandis, 1980). The tendency to mistakenly equate *culture* with *nation* or *ethnic group* is now increasingly challenged. Rather than focussing on geographical differences, numerous dimensions of cultural variation have been empirically derived. According to Schwartz (1992), any nation or subgroup in a nation may be characterised by a distinct cultural value pattern, profile (Gelfand & Dyer, 2000) or cultural standard (Thomas, 1993). Recent approaches comprehend cultures as “dynamic open systems that spread across geographical boundaries and evolve through time” (Hong & Chiu, 2001, p. 181) rather than stable and static entities.

1.2 *Brief historical overview of cross-cultural psychology*

Cultural or cross-cultural psychology has until now only made a relatively brief appearance as a methodological and theoretical system within the field of psychology, albeit many of the early writings from other disciplines (e.g. history, art, philosophy) display an interest in

cross-cultural issues. As has been noted by Jahoda (1992), at its most basic level, cross-cultural research had its inception when one group, with certain folkways and language, began to observe another group with somewhat different characteristics (see also Thomas, 1994). Most of the notions found expression in the belief that certain groups were less developed than others but would be able to advance in the direction of modern civilisation. Some of these images have endured and pertain to shape our thinking about different cultures until today (Jahoda, 1980; 1999).

Now, where does our thinking on cross-cultural psychology come from? Formal cross-cultural studies began only toward the end of the nineteenth century, just as psychology itself was becoming organised as a distinct discipline. Work in the philology tradition gave rise to the first cross-cultural journal, the ‘*Zeitschrift für Völkerpsychologie und Sprachwissenschaften*’, edited by Steinthal and Lazarus in 1860, who were both linguists and psychologists. Early cross-cultural studies focused on perception, language, and cognition (see Berry, Poortinga, Segall, & Dasen, 1992; Deregowski, 1998; Hogan & Sussner, 2001 for an overview). It is within this context that Wundt wrote his ten-volume opus, ‘*Völkerpsychologie*’ (Folk Psychology) that has greatly contributed to the discipline as a whole (Beuchelt, 1974; Bock, 1994; Schneider, 1990), although it does not constitute a cross-cultural treatise.

The modern era of cross-cultural psychology began shortly after the end of World War II. The study of human behaviour in cultural contexts evolved rapidly and led to the inauguration of several influential journals in the 1960s and 70s and to ground-breaking studies in the 1970s and 80s (see Adler & Gielen, 2001; Berry et al., 1992; Hogan & Sussner, 2001; Triandis, 1980; Whiting, 1974 for an overview). Northwestern Europe and North America have been the centres of industrial development; more than 90 percent of the studies in industrial and organisational psychology have used data from these regions of the world, although such samples represent only 15 percent of the world’s population (Triandis, 1994a). The same is true of research in cross-cultural psychology: Prestigious psychology journals are largely monopolised by North Americans, who work on questions that are often culturally distinctive. This ethnocentrism is challenged by the emergence of psychology both from and about Asian cultures (Bond & Smith, 1996a), the so-called *indigenisation* of psychology (Kim, 2001). This “gradual cultural decentring of psychology“ (Bond & Smith, 1996a, p. 209) goes hand in hand with an agreement on the fact that cultural or cross-cultural psychology is in need for shift in paradigm.

1.3 Cross-cultural, cultural, and indigenous psychology

Research on psychology and culture can be classified into the domains of cross-cultural psychology, cultural psychology, and indigenous psychology (Greenfield, 2001; Kim, 1993; Kim, 2001; Kim, Park, & Park, 2000). Whereas *cross-cultural psychology* generally operationalises culture as an antecedent variable that lies outside of and apart from the individual, *cultural psychology* sees culture as inside the individual (Price-Willeam, 1999; Shweder, 2001), as a way of knowing and construing the world and other people (Bruner, 1990). Culture is defined by shared knowledge and meaning that is derived through processes of interaction and communication (Boesch, 1991; Cole, 1996; Eckensberger, 1990). At the same time, *indigenous psychology* understands culture as subjectively created systems of meaning but goes one step further by taking informal folk theories of psychological functioning formalising them into psychological theories (Greenfield, 2001). Supporters of the indigenous approach argue that a truly universal understanding of human nature requires the development of theories originating in the indigenous psychologies of discrete societies (Kao, 1997; Pandey, 1996). The three psychologies can also be differentiated in terms of the methodologies used and the research traditions that have influenced them (e.g. universalist, contextualist, and integrationist approaches; Kim et al., 2000). Enriquez (1993) further distinguishes between *indigenisation from within* (using indigenous information as primary source of knowledge) and *indigenisation from without* (modifying psychological theories to fit the local cultural context). According to Poortinga (1999), indigenisation is important since it makes psychology relevant for non-Euro-American societies and points out the ethnocentricity of contemporary cross-cultural psychology.

Rather than elaborating upon different conceptualisations, Berry's notion that cross-cultural psychology is an inclusive position that comprises cultural and comparative approaches will be adopted here (Berry, 1999; Berry, 2000; Ho, 1998; Segall, Lonner, & Berry, 1998). According to the definition presented in Segall, Dasen, Berry, & Poortinga (1990), cross-cultural psychology is "the scientific study of human behaviour and its transmission, taking into account the ways in which behaviours are shaped and influenced by social and cultural forces" (p. 3). This definition directs research towards the goal of studying the diversity of human behaviour with regard to the cultural context in which it occurs. Most of the previous definitions also support the notion of cross-cultural psychology as "systematic comparison of psychological variables under different cultural conditions" (Eckensberger, 1972, p. 100)

in order to “determine the limits within which general psychological theories do hold, and the kinds of modifications of these theories that are needed to make them universal” (Triandis et al., 1972, p. 1).

Berry (2000, p. 198) proposes that the goals of cross-cultural psychology are “to *transport* current hypotheses and conclusions about human behaviour to other cultural contexts in order to *test* their validity”, “to *explore* new cultural systems to *discover* psychological phenomena not available in the first culture”, and “to *integrate* psychological knowledge gained from these two activities, and to *generate* a more pan-human psychology that would be valid for all people”. These three goals and their related methodological approaches will be discussed in the next few paragraphs.

1.4 Conclusion

Culture has been defined as the man-made part of the environment that consists of both subjective and objective elements and resides in the mind of individuals as well as in their environmental context. Cross-cultural psychology is deeply rooted in Western traditions of thinking and ethnocentric Euro-American approaches have shaped the landscape of cross-cultural research in the last five decades accordingly. The integration of findings from non-Western societies presented by indigenous psychology needs to be emphasised to widen the range of awareness in cross-cultural psychology.

2. Theories and models of cross-cultural psychology

2.1 *In search of a unified theory*

Much of the current debate is centred around the etic-emic distinction. The *etic* (or imposed etic) approach demands a descriptive system which is equally valid for all cultures and which permits the representation of similarities as well as differences between individual cultures. Comparisons serve not to explain the phenomenon of culture, but rather to examine susceptibility to cultural influences in individual actions and thinking. Culture is viewed as a factor of influence which should be able to explain differences in cognition, learning and behaviour. The *emic* approach, on the other hand, defines 'culture' not as an external factor the effects of which on the individual must be examined, but rather as an integral part of human behaviour (see, e.g. Gergen, 1985). In addition to that, the emic approach shows that it is not only the subjects of the research who are culture-dependent, but also the whole system of psychological thought and its underlying assumptions (Lonner & Adamopoulos, 1996).

Most researchers have used the terms *emic* and *etic* referring to culture-specific vs. culture-general constructs. As has been remarked by Morris and Fu (2001), this usage omits the essence of the distinction as it has been introduced by Pike (see Headland, Pike, & Harris, 1990). The terms emic and etic are derived from *phonemic* and *phonetic* approaches to language¹ and thus refer to the question whether cultures are described as being close to the experience of culture-specific insiders-constructs or in terms of constructs that are distant from the experience of insiders and may apply equally well to many cultures.

Helfrich (1999) and Segall et al. (1998) now refer to the imposed etic (or nomothetic) approach that often entailed a naïve application of Euro-American theories and instruments to research conducted in other settings, as one of the main methodological weaknesses in the history of cross-cultural psychology. Cultural factors do not represent experimental treatment factors, but rather organismic variables. Culture does also not represent an unavoidable unidirectional influence, but rather a systemic framework circumscribing possible courses of action (Valsiner, 1995). That is, the quality and extent of cultural penetration varies significantly between individuals because each individual constructs his/her personal culture. This is especially so as societies are becoming less and less

¹ Phonetics means the study of universal sounds used in human languages irrespective of their meanings in a particular language. Phonemics deals with sounds whose meaning-bearing roles are unique to a particular language (Berry et al., 1992).

homogeneous since the contemporary world is increasingly dominated by cultural change rather than by cultural tradition. Moreover, research should be conducted following the emic (or idiographic-contextual) approach (see Helfrich, 1999 for criticism) that, provided it is done in a careful, internal explorative manner, yields indigenous, culturally based meanings and can lead to a derived etic approach. "If extensive use of the emic approaches in a number of cultures produced instruments that satisfy the derived etic criteria, then comparative examination with such an instrument of behaviour in various cultures could yield either differences or similarities in psychological functioning" (Segall et al., 1998, p. 1103). The authors postulate that from this, a universal psychology might emerge.

The ecocultural model developed by J. W. Berry has long been the dominant research paradigm in cross-cultural psychology (Berry et al., 1992; Georgas & Berry, 1995; Whiting, 1974). The model represents a conceptual framework in which there are three types of variables: (1) contextual variables that include ecological and sociopolitical variables, (2) process variables that include biological and cultural adaptation and transmission to individuals and (3) psychological outcomes. Despite its notable focus on context variables, methodological problems and the view of culture as a nation-bound and stable characteristic (Kurtz-Costes, McCall, & Schneider, 1997; Takooshian, Mrinal, & Mrinal, 2001; Vijver & Leung, 1997) have restricted the use of Berry's model (Munroe & Munroe, 1996).

Helfrich (1999) has provided an alternative view to guide cross-cultural research: the 'principle of triarchic resonance'. According to this framework, every observable behaviour takes the specific form of interaction between the three components *individual*, *task* and *culture*. Culture exists independently of the individual and the task and remains relatively stable. On the microgenetic level, the task challenges the competence and stimulates the motivation of the individual. The evoked psychological processes lead to an observable performance. The ontogenetic perspective refers to the quantity and quality of prior individual experience. Finally, the perspective of cultural genesis focuses on the dynamics of a society's value system that affect the structure of the task as well as individual competencies and traits. Motives, interests and competencies are thus culture-specific.

This principle provides a universal framework for studying cultural variability (and is thus an etic approach). Yet, in order to explain an observed behaviour as a product of the interaction of task, individual and culture, the emic approach must be incorporated. It has been remarked that this approach rather focuses too much on behaviour instead of dealing with the underlying authentic experience (Baerveldt & Verheggen, 1999). It is not explained how experience becomes socially patterned in the first place. Viewing culture as being

separated from task and individual makes it difficult to explain human experience. The model also omits interpersonal processes and the dynamics of emotion, motivation, and social experience (Chaudhary, 1999). Lonner (1999) criticises that Helfrich's approach does not help to solve the etic-emic dilemma but on the whole represents a partially redundant contribution to the literature on these constructs. Berry (1999), on the other hand, endeavoured a symbiosis of cultural and comparative aspects of the field, allowing for cultural and ecological explorations of human behaviour within and across settings – an approach that, according to its author, best resembles the original notion of etic and emic as complementary rather than conflicting ways of achieving an understanding.

2.1.2 *The trait approach*

Psychologists have often sought to explain cross-cultural differences in individual behaviour as differences rooted in the cultures' positions on a small collection of pan-cultural dimensions (e.g. individualism vs. collectivism, see below) and have drawn on concepts of personality psychology. According to this notion, cultures can be traced to a few cultural traits-general, stable characteristics. Within psychology, the most influential model of cultural traits has been Hofstede's dimensional analysis. Based on the results of a cross-national survey of values in the workplace, Hofstede (1989) placed 50 nations into a 4-dimensional hyperspace. The U.S. is high in individualism, whereas Japan is characterised by high collectivism. The initial impressive evidence coming out of this research has helped establishing the etic approach as the paradigmatic approach to studying culture. Following this paradigm, several generations of researchers have documented how people from cultures located on different anchors of a particular dimension react differently to similar situations (see Fiske, Kitayama, Markus, & Nisbett, 1998 for an overview).

In apparent contradiction to the global scale of social transformation and corresponding complexities and dynamics in structures of society, many researchers in cross-cultural psychology have been working and continue to work on the premise that cultural differences can be conceptualised in terms of cultural dichotomies. Typically, these dichotomies have been presented as contrasts between “the West vs. the Rest” (Hermans, 2001a, p. 267). Different terms for dichotomous distinctions have been used to characterise Western culture or self against non-Western culture or self as a whole, e.g. ‘egocentric’ vs. ‘sociocentric’ (Shweder & Bourne, 1984), ‘primary control’ vs. ‘secondary control’ (Azuma, 1984; Weisz, Rothbaum, & Blackburn, 1984), ‘individualism’ vs. ‘collectivism’ (Singelis, Triandis, Bhawuk, & Gelfand, 1995; Triandis, 1989; Triandis, 1994b; Triandis, 1995; Triandis,

Bontempo, Villareal, Asai, & Lucca, 1988) and ‘independence’ vs. ‘interdependence’ (Kitayama & Markus, 1994; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; see Kagitçibasi & Poortinga, 2000 for an overview).

2.1.2.1 Individualism vs. collectivism

Triandis and his colleagues (Triandis, 1989; Triandis, 1994b; Triandis, 1995; Triandis et al., 1998) distinguish groups on the basis of individualist and collectivist values and distinguish individuals on the basis of two personality dimensions, idiocentrism and allocentrism, that correspond to the cultural dimensions of individualism and collectivism, respectively. *Idiocentrics* tend to place particular value on independence, competition, and superiority, whereas *allocentrics* tend to place particular importance on interdependence, in-group harmony, and solidarity and can be characterised by a subordination of personal goals to those of their in-group. These multidimensional “cultural syndromes” are seen in “shared attitudes, beliefs, norms, role and self definitions, and values of members of each culture organised around a theme” (Triandis et al., 1998, p. 324). To assess these syndromes, Triandis developed questionnaires (e.g. the Individualism-Collectivism Scale, Singelis et al., 1995) that illustrate the focus of individualism-collectivism theories on locating shared beliefs within groups and differences in beliefs between groups (Cooper & Denner, 1998).

2.1.2.2 Independence vs. interdependence

In a similar effort of building a universal theory to explain community-specific differences, Markus and Kitayama (1991; Markus, Kitayama, & Heiman, 1996) proposed a “collectivist constructionist” model of independence-interdependence. They argue that “core cultural ideas” can be seen in “key ideological and philosophical texts and institutions at the collective level.” These foster “cultural shaping of psychological reality” thereby affecting “customs, norms, practices and institutions” (Kitayama & Markus, 1994, p. 4). It is further argued that American culture emphasises the core cultural idea of independence by valuing attending to oneself and discovering and expressing individual qualities “while neither assuming nor valuing overt connectedness”. These values are reflected in educational and legal systems, employment and care-taking practices, and individual cognition, emotion, and motivation. According to the independent viewpoint, individuals choose their goals, make plans, control and master or change their social world. In contrast, an approach framing the self as interdependent sees the individual at work in adjusting to and attuning

with the standards, expectations, or duties that define one's encompassing relationships and thus the person.

2.1.2.3 Challenges to cultural dichotomies

The trait approach to cross-cultural psychology entails a notion of ethnocentrism in methodology and theory. *Ethnocentrism*, a term coined by Sumner (1906), means that there exists a strong tendency to use one's own group's standard as *the* standard when viewing other groups. As Azuma (1984) notes, "When a psychologist looks at a non-Western culture through Western glasses, he may fail to notice important aspects of the non-Western culture since the scheme for recognising them are not provided by his culture." (p. 949). Apart from leading to incorrect interpretations of observations, the effects of ethnocentrism can enter into cross-cultural research by influencing the choice of research topics and instruments as well as the formulation of theories (Berry et al., 1992). "What is taken for granted, purposely discounted, or inadvertently ignored in the social behaviour of one's own culture may be focal and objectified in another, and these foreign insights may be relevant and useful in the analysis and understanding of the social behaviour of one's own culture" (Markus et al., 1996, p. 862). Additionally, including a large number of cultures in cross-cultural studies can lead to erroneous conclusions, if one does not know what is common among them culturally. The etic approach characteristically reduces cultures to a set of coordinates in a hyperspace formed by a finite set of universal psychological dimensions (Hong & Chiu, 2001). Emphasis is placed on differences between societies, thus portraying cultural communities as holding mutually exclusive, stable, and uniform views (Cooper & Denner, 1998; Hudson & Sampson, 1999) rather than regarding variation and change among individuals within each group and similarities across groups.

Another key failure of trait models is the inability to capture when it is that culture has a strong influence on an individual (Morris & Fu, 2001): "The evidence of everyday life reveals that sometimes individuals act in culturally typical manners and sometimes not, yet a trait model, much like a stereotype, implies a pervasive, continual influence on culture" (p. 328).

Recent findings from cross-cultural research have cast doubt on the universality of basic psychological processes. A variety of studies have demonstrated that how people perceive their social environment depends on their cultural background (Chiu, Morris, Hong, & Menon, 2000), situational factors (Briley & Wyer, 2001), and the ways individuals evaluate and regulate themselves in reflections of cultural learning (Lee, Aaker, & Gardner, 2000).

Briley and Wyer (2001) state that situational factors are of equal importance when predicting ostensibly culture-specific norms and values. In the studies conducted by these authors, culture-related knowledge structures (as opposed to situation-triggered cognition) were only activated when respondents had to give reasons for their choices. It is revealed that mediating situational factors automatically influence behaviour (e.g. action-plans, scripts) as well as the accessibility of culture-related cognition when people enter situations that they are already familiar with. In times of growing societal dynamics and cultural change, differences specific to the situation might in fact account for research results that were previously traced back to culture specifics (Conway, Schaller, Tweed, & Hallett, 2001). Yet, for several reasons these results do not contradict the notion that culture is an important variable. To begin with, the studies by Briley and Wyer (2001) suffer from severe methodological shortcomings (e.g. no control group is used, cultural dimensions yielded in a confirmatory factor analysis only explain 38% of the variance, results of path-analysis are not convincing). Further, the fact that individualism and collectivism are not clearly distinguishing culture-specific behaviour in these studies shows that the individualism-collectivism dimension might be “more highly interrelated in the minds of cross-cultural theorists and researchers than they are in the minds of the individuals being investigated” (Briley & Wyer, 2001, p. 206). Two conclusions can be drawn from these considerations: Firstly, global measures of the individualist-collectivist conceptualisation that do not take into account the situational specificity of norms and values, may be misleading, and may be of limited utility in predicting cultural differences in behaviour. Conway, et al. (2001) therefore adopt an interactionist approach taking into account cultural, situational and personality factors. Thus, it may be more fruitful to begin by conceptualising the specific cognitions and motives that are likely to underlie the behaviour one wishes to investigate, and in a second step determine the extent to which cultural differences in these factors account for the behavioural decisions that are typically observed. Secondly, the dichotomies of individualism and collectivism have to be put to the test before using them as a basis for experimental treatment.

Cultural dichotomies, too, cannot meet the challenges raised by the process of globalisation, since they “are insensitive to any interconnectedness and interaction” (Hermans & Kempen, 1998, p. 1115) and neglect the concept of cultural complexity (Chick, 1997). The increasing complexity of cultures manifests itself on three dimensions: (1) shared ideas and modes of thought, (2) are being made accessible to the senses (e.g. arts, science, computers) and expressed to the public, and (3) are being socially distributed among a population by means

of technology and mass communication. Different modes of externalisation allow the global distribution of meaning systems, thus increasing complexity. This complexity “creates a challenging problem for cross-cultural notions that view cultures in terms of homogeneous categories” (Hermans, 2001a, p. 268). According to Hermans and Kempen (1998), increasing cultural connections entail the phenomenon of *hybridisation*, which is based on the premise that intercultural processes lead to the recombination of existing forms and practices into new forms and practices (Pieterse, 1995), thus resulting in a transformation of cultural practices and multiple identities (e.g. a London schoolgirl from Indian origin participating in a Greek play).

Cross-cultural psychology is thus in need for a paradigm shift towards a *deterritorialisation* of culture (Hong & Chiu, 2001; Marsella, 1998; Tyler, 1999). The new definition of culture should grasp cultures as processes and dynamic open systems (Greenfield, 1996; Segall et al., 1998; Singelis, 2000). Two alternative approaches propose (1) that cultural differences reflect structures of knowledge that direct action (cognitive-constructivist approach), and (2) that culture imposes its influence through knowledge activation that is triggered off by cultural elements in the social context (dynamic constructivist approach).

2.2 Alternative trends and theoretical approaches

2.2.1 Cognitive-constructivist approach

Derived from cognitive psychology, this approach focuses knowledge structures such as implicit theories, mental models, scripts, etc. that guide judgement and decisions and direct action. This view is conceptualised as constructivist (Hong, Morris, Chiu, & Benet-Martínez, 2000; Morris & Fu, 2001), since it captures knowledge structures as being embedded in a cultural context and thus as being culturally bound. Etic as well as emic constructs are used to comprehend the role of knowledge structures. Cultural differences thus arise from differing implicit theories, mental models, and the like and are understood as context-sensitive. However, cognitive-constructivist accounts of culture do not explain why persons do not show the same behaviour across all situations and occasions but engage in *frame switching* (Hong et al., 2000). Rather, “cultural knowledge is conceptualised like a contact lens that affects the individual’s perceptions of visual stimuli all the time” (Hong et al., 2000, p. 709).

2.2.2 *Dynamic constructivist approach*

How do cultural constructs control and how does multicultural experience influence thinking and behaviour? In order to explain the experience that individuals incorporate more than one culture, the dynamic constructivist view brings together emic and etic approaches to culture as well as public and private conceptualisations. This approach is based on three premises (Hong et al., 2000): (1) Culture is not internalised as an integrated and general structure but as a loose network of domain-specific knowledge structures. (2) Individuals can acquire more than one cultural meaning system, even if these systems contain conflicting theories. (3) However, cognition can only be guided by one system at a time and thus it is postulated that “knowledge structures influence judgements only when they come to the fore of the mind” (Morris & Fu, 2001; p. 331), when they are activated and made accessible by the social world around. Hong et al. (2000) report evidence yielded from cognitive priming experiments, in which the experience of bicultural individuals switching between cultural frames in response to cultural symbols is manipulated. They used American and Chinese icons (e.g. flags, famous figures, people, landmarks) or language as primes and showed that exposure increased endorsement of group values for the Chinese participants and of independence values for the Americans. Further, Chinese generated more duties and fewer rights than did Americans when their cultural identity was made salient (Hong, Ip, Chiu, Morris, & Menon, 2001). Exposure to cultural symbols activates the corresponding cultural meaning system; cultural knowledge can be seen as a “toolbox of discrete, specific constructs” (Hong et al., 2000; p. 716).

Cultural differences are explained in terms of socially shared axiomatic assumptions or cultural theories in specific life domains; the approach thus also links ecocultural and cultural theoretical perspectives (Cooper & Denner, 1998). Bringing ecological theory and culture together implies defining individual competence within the cultural and historical context, placing emphasis on variation and change within communities. Whether or not culture would make an impact on cognition in a particular social situation depends on whether the relevant shared assumptions are available, accessible, salient, and applicable in the situation. Thus, the influences of culture on cognition and behaviour are dynamic and mediated by values, norms and the basic principles of social cognition. Morris and Fu (2001) identify three moderators of cultural differences that determine whether knowledge becomes accessible, namely the properties of the person (e.g. motives, availability of constructs), the situational context (e.g. time pressure, recent history), and the stimulus event (e.g. applicability, salience) that determine the frequency of use (Higgins, 1996). In

the last few years, these three areas have been covered by extensive research, especially in the area of intercultural negotiation (see below).

2.2.3 Moving beyond cognition

Despite its strong theoretical background, the dynamic constructivist view leaves some questions unanswered. Cultural variations in social cognition are explained by a set of universal social cognitive principles. The underlying assumption that cognitive principles are universal (that they extend beyond the Chinese and American subgroups that were studied), however, remains unproved. Moving between different cultures and switching cultural frames is likely to increase uncertainty, contradiction, ambiguity, and contrasting interests. Two questions arise from that: (1) How do people find their way without any “overall integrative knowledge system” (Hermans & Kempen, 1998; p. 1111) and (2) How does bi- or even multiculturalism affect people’s coping strategies and well-being in acculturation processes? Cultural priming procedures have until now been restricted to the study of cognition. It would be interesting to explore whether culturally distinct emotional states could be induced through priming. Furthermore, culture may be mediated by non-cognitive carriers of culture, such as practices (Rogoff, 1990; Vygotski, 1978).

2.3 Conclusion

Since the etic approach, that has been rather fruitless, theories have evolved from the trait approach to more sophisticated cognitivist notions that take situational contexts into account. Still, the bulk of research in cross-cultural psychology is conducted by following the notion of the trait-approach and aspects of culture are compared without taking into account what constitutes them. Globalisation and hybridisation challenge the notion of culture as a stable entity and the dynamic constructivist approach will surely become more important in studying processes that lead to the shaping of experience by culture.

3. Cultural variables and behaviour

Although distinctive contributions have been made by frameworks such as the dynamic constructivist approach, most researchers still adhere to the paradigm of cultural dichotomies (Willeams, Satterwhite, & Saiz, 1998). The three questions (1) What is psychological, what is cultural?, (2) What is universal, what is culture-specific?, (3) What is specific to one case, what is a general pattern? are the basis for most studies conducted in recent times.

According to Triandis (1994a), culture enters those situations where interpersonal relationships are not constrained by technology or other contingent factors. Culture's influence on behaviour is mediated by internal-proximal and external-distal constraints (Bond & Smith, 1996a), such as values and beliefs on the internal side and ecological, social, and political indicators on the external side. In order to gain insight into which behaviour is psychological and which is cultural, these constraints have to be partialled out, an effort that most researchers have avoided so far.

In order to gain insight into what is universal and what is culture-specific, examples from two decades of research will be presented in the following paragraphs. This review is limited to the areas of cognitive, personality and social psychology. Cross-cultural industrial and organisational psychology will be dealt with in the next section and overviews of cross-cultural clinical health psychology (e.g. health care, psychotherapy, stress management), developmental psychology (e.g. socialization, parenting, family) and other fields are given elsewhere (Adler & Gielen, 2001; Dasen & Mishra, 2001; Grossmann & Grossmann, 1990; Ho & Wu, 2001; Jahoda, 1987; Kagitçibasi, 1996; Kazarian & Evans, 2001; Keller & Greenfield, 2000; Mandl, 1993; Ponterotto, 1995; Renshon & Duckitt, 2000; Segall et al., 1999; Snyder, 2001; Trommsdorff, 1993).

3.1 *Psychological constructs and culture*

3.1.1 *Social behaviour*

3.1.1.1 Social perception: Thinking about ourselves and others

Attributions and stereotypes. Attributions refer to judgements or causal explanations about human behaviour. While individuals use attributions to make sense of their environment, their causal accounts are often influenced by motivational biases (Singelis, 2000; Smith & Bond, 1993). One of these biases is related to the need to maintain and

enhance self-esteem. Social psychological research on *self-serving biases* has demonstrated that in most cases individuals attribute their successes to internal or dispositional factors and their failures to external or situational factors. Social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) suggests that people likewise are motivated to make group-serving attributions – to generate behavioural explanations that favour members of their in-groups. According to the authors, social identity is basically defined as (1) being a part of the self-concept, (2) requiring awareness of membership in a group, and (3) having evaluative and emotional significance. Social identification rests on social categorisation, social comparison and consequences related to self-esteem. In-group favouritism has been found across cultures in attributions and intergroup stereotypes (Stephan, Ybarra, Martínez, Schwarzwald, & Tur-Kaspa, 1998). Early cross-cultural studies on stereotypes also tested whether increased cultural contact improved intergroup perceptions and relations (so-called *contact hypothesis*; Triandis & Vassiliou, 1967). More recent investigations revealed that there was no significant difference in the favourability of out-group stereotypes of Germans and Americans who either lived at home or abroad (Kosmitzki, 1996). There were, however, differences in in-group evaluations that were consistent with social identity theory and reflected the need for positive distinctiveness in intercultural comparisons: Sojourners rated their own group more favourable than did home nationals. It is further assumed that direct contact is mediated by a number of factors, e.g. linguistic and social skills, participation in the culture and perceived discrimination (Kim, Cho, & Harajiri, 1997).

Identity and the self. Many authors have dealt with the construct of the self in relation to culture (Brewer, 1991; Gergen, 1991; Hsu, 1985; Luhmann, 1993; Rothbaum, Weisz, & Snyder, 1982; Sparrow, 2000), however, there has been no sound theoretical development since the notion of individualism vs. collectivism. As has already been depicted, different cultures foster different conceptions of the self (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). This becomes particularly clear in Markus and Kitayama's definition of the self as "an organized locus of the various, sometimes competing, understandings of how to be a person [that] functions as an individualized orienting, mediating, interpretive framework giving shape to what people notice and think about, to what they are motivated to do, and to how they feel" (Markus & Kitayama, 1994; p. 92). Kagitçibasi (2000) describes the self as either related, separated, or autonomous-related (self as agent). Triandis (1989) has examined three aspects of the self (private, public, and collective) as they are exhibited within three dimensions of cultural variation (individualism-collectivism, tightness-

looseness, and cultural complexity). His review of a wide range of literature led him to conclude that the more individualistic the culture, the more frequent is the sampling of the private self (in the sense of attending to self-relevant information) and the less frequent is the sampling of the public self. These generalisations have until now not been specified and thus require a good deal more of precise operationalisation as well as detailed examination of the nature of the links between them.

In a more recent approach, Markus, Mullally, and Kitayama (1997) extend their earlier view on the self and outline how the self can be realised through participation in cultural practices across borders. Although there are culture-specific self-ways, there are multiple ways to construct independence and interdependence and constructions of both can be found in all cultural contexts. The remaining question is, how the self deals with the complexities faced when coming to terms with multiple, competing cultural meanings and practices. On thinking about how culture enters the self, Hermans (2001a; 2001b) takes this position one step further and argues that the self can be seen as culture-inclusive and the culture can be seen as self-inclusive. A dialogic self has the ability to move from one position to another in social space in accordance with changes in situation and time. Therefore, the same person is able to occupy different positions – a notion that is also held by the dynamic constructivist view as portrayed above (Morris & Fu, 2001). Hermans (2001a) poses three hypotheses in relation to the self: the “flow and flux lead to an empty self”, a “saturated self”, or “lead to a reorganization of the self in such a way that an intensified flow of positions is counteracted by an increasing need for more stable positions that guarantee a basic consistency of the self-system” (p. 255). The prevalent notion is that of multiple identities, the fusion of different positions so that hybrid combinations emerge (Hermans & Kempen, 1998), the integration rather than transcendence of different identities within oneself (Sparrow, 2000). This approach will be taken up later in connection with acculturation theory.

3.1.1.2 Social interaction: Relating to others

Prosocial emotions, such as empathy and sympathy, are found to promote altruistic and related other-oriented social behaviour across cultures (Miller, Koza, & Davis, 2001). The effects of social motives in social dilemmas (Liebrand & Van Run, 1985) and moral intuitions (O'Neill & Petrinovich, 1998) were also found to display a rather universal pattern across cultures. The resolution of moral dilemmas is mainly influenced by an evolved human nature in an evolutionary sense and is thus unrelated to culture. Fiske (1991) reports

that the four basic relational models that organise human interaction (communal sharing, authority ranking, interchange equality matching, market pricing) are universal across cultures and concludes that altruism is salient in every culture.

The influence of culture on helping behaviour seems to be rather weak. The tendency to refuse help to a person who is perceived as being responsible for his or her own plight is known as the *self-sufficiency norm* (Brehm & Kassin, 1998). Weiner's research supports a three-step model of this norm, in which attributions of need causality, mediated by affect, lead to behavioural assistance (Schmidt & Weiner, 1988). It was found that Weiner's model – although not conclusively fitting the data from collectivist samples – was applicable across cultures. Therefore, in contrast to what might have been expected from the perspective of the individualism-collectivism paradigm, prosocial emotions and motivations are not related any more to collectivism than they are to individualism (e.g. Triandis, 1989). Despite the reported similarities in prosocial behaviour, there are differences in antisocial tendencies, such as aggression and criminality, that underline the notion of differences in socialisation practices and child-rearing patterns (Kornadt & Tachibana, 1999). Longitudinal studies conducted by Trommsdorff and Kornadt (1995; 1996) related differences in pro- and antisocial motivation of adolescents to differences in conditions of socialisation across cultures. The most important variable was whether the mother was able to establish a relationship of secure attachment with her child. This was more the case for Japanese and East-German than for West-German mothers. However, new data reveal different attitudes of Japanese mothers, possibly indicating a process of social change.

While there are no gender differences in aggression across cultures, Ramirez, Andreu, and Fujihara (2001) found that Japanese and Spanish respondents differed in the type and the justification of interpersonal aggression: Japanese reported more physical aggression than their Spanish counterparts, who reported more verbal aggression, hostility and anger and more expressive representation of aggression. Japanese students showed a higher justification of verbal aggression than U.S. and Spain samples (Fujihara, Kohyama, Andreu, & Ramirez, 1999).

3.1.1.3 Social influence: Changing attitudes and behaviour

Hofstede (1989) broadly defines values as “a tendency to prefer certain states of affairs over others” (p. 19). Values are usually considered to be more general in nature than attitudes, but less general than ideologies. Value differences between cultures have mainly

been discussed within the framework of individualism vs. collectivism (Schwartz, 1992). Nearly all cross-cultural studies in social psychology are somehow related to values – a selection is presented here.

Cooperativeness and competitiveness. A lot of research on cooperation and competition has been conducted in the U.S. employing the so-called Prisoner's Dilemma Game. In a recent study, Hemesath and Pomponio (1998) examined individual economic behaviour in the Prisoner's Dilemma among Chinese vs. Americans. Results show that the Chinese cooperated 54% of the time while Americans only cooperated 26% of the time. These results suggest that Americans behave in a more self-interested, less cooperative manner than the Chinese do. These results are in line with previous investigations showing that competitive behaviour is valued more highly in the U.S. whereas cooperative behaviour is more prevalent in collectivist countries with related values (see also Chen, Chang, & Cheng, 1997). A study by Chiu and Kosinski (1994) revealed a strong inverse relationship between the presence of Chinese values (e.g. moral discipline, whole-heartedness, and Confucian work dynamism) and the degree of competitiveness in the course of handling conflicts. To sum it up, there is support for the thesis that cooperative vs. competitive behaviour is influenced by culture, but there are also other variables that matter (e.g. uncertainty, knowledge of 'soft' economics, Boone & van Witteloostuijn, 1999; a nation's pace of life, Kirkcaldy, Furnham, & Levine, 2001; climate and economic prosperity, Vliert, Kluwer, & Lynn, 2000) that should not be neglected in investigating behaviour (see Tjosvold, Leung, & Johnson, 2000 for a summary).

Conformity. The degree to which individuals will characteristically go along with the prevailing group norm has long been a topic of interest in social psychology. As far as differences across cultures are concerned, Berry et al. (1992) expect that there may be a pattern of co-variation between where a culture is located on the compliance-assertion dimension of socialisation and the typical degree of individual conformity to the group's norms. Kim and Markus (1999) accordingly report that uniqueness has positive connotations of freedom and independence in American culture, whereas conformity has positive connotations of connectedness and harmony in East Asian culture (see also Doi, 1986). In their study, East Asians preferred targets that represented conformity, whereas Europeans and Americans preferred targets that represented uniqueness. The results highlight the relationship between individual preference and the adoption and perpetuation of cultural values. Conformity in the Asch (1956) paradigm has been found in all of the

cultures studied. Bond & Smith (1996b) conducted a meta-analysis of conformity studies using an Asch-type line judgement task to investigate whether the level of conformity has changed with the course of time and whether it is related cross-culturally to individualism-collectivism. The analysis revealed that conformity has declined since the 1950s and that collectivist countries tend to show higher levels of conformity than individualist countries.

Social loafing. Studies of social loafing (defined as a group-produced reduction in individual output on easy tasks, where contributions are pooled) show that this phenomenon is not only absent but is significantly reversed in China, Israel, and Japan (Early, 1993; Early, 1994) and seem to be more prevalent in individualistic cultures.

3.1.1.4 Gender behaviour

An early influential study on gender stereotypes has been conducted by Willeams and Best (1982) who explored the distinctions made in other cultures between males and females. The authors report a dramatic similarity in the perceptions of what males and females are like. There was also little variation across cultures in the sex-role ideology (there was, however, quite a large variation within cultures – something the authors did not consider). A more recent study (Costa, Terracciano, & McCrae, 2001) produced quite a different pattern of results: Although women reported themselves as being higher in neuroticism, agreeableness, warmth, and openness to feelings, whereas men were higher in assertiveness and openness to ideas in all cultures, the magnitude of gender differences varied across cultures. Gender differences were also most pronounced in European and American cultures in which traditional sex roles are minimised. The authors present a plausible explanation for this finding and state that masculine and feminine behaviours might be attributed to roles rather than traits in traditional cultures. An overview of current literature on gender and cultural norms that assign gender roles is given in Adler (2001) and Peplau and DeBro (1999).

3.1.2 *Personality*

3.1.2.1 Traits across culture

The cultural examination of the role of traits in personality theory can be centred around the three questions (Cross & Markus, 1999): (1) How significant are traits for understanding the personality structure of members of non-Western cultures? (2) How

adequate are Western approaches for capturing personality structure in other cultures? (3) How do personality traits relate to culturally appropriate behavioural outcomes?

In answer to the first question, traits, attitudes, goals, and other internal characteristics are used as a tool for establishing an internal basis for coherence and continuity in Western cultures. In contrast, in Asian cultures, coherence and predictability lie in one's roles, relationships, obligations, and social ties, which are viewed as stable and enduring. The relationship between measures of personality traits and behavioural measures may be lower in these cultures than in Western cultures (Church & Lonner, 1998).

Much of the discussion in relation to the second question is focused on the five-factor model of personality (extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability, culture) as it has been introduced by Costa and McCrae (1985). There is mounting evidence for the replicability of the five-factor model in a wide range of cultures (McCrae, 2000; McCrae & Costa, 1997), there is, however, also support for the notion that the model is inadequate as a universal model. Emic (meaning culture-specific) approaches often reveal dimensions that are very similar to the dimensions that pertain the five-factor model, but at the same time, research has identified culturally unique personality attributes (Diaz-Guerrero, Diaz-Loving, & Rodriguez de Diaz, 2001). A sample includes *amae*, or need for dependency in Japan (Doi, 1973), *anasakti*, or detachment in India (Pande & Naidu, 1992), *philotimo*, or behaving towards one's group members as one should in Greece (Triandis & Vassiliou, 1971). Further empirical evidence that Western trait measures may not adequately predict behaviour in other cultures comes from studies of Chinese populations where indigenous constructs were better predictors of variables such as life satisfaction or filial piety than universal constructs (Zhang & Bond, 1998). Several reasons have been given for these results. Cross and Markus (1999) state that Western approaches may conceive personality very differently from their East Asian counterparts. The authors support their thesis by comparing the prevailing view in Western cultures with a central concept in Confucian perspectives that comprehends personality as a process of self-realisation rather than a relatively fixed state (see also Mischel & Shoda, 1995). In addition, Chinese perspectives on personality often include the notion of an ideal toward which one should strive. Personality is seen as the social knowledge that individuals use in working on important life tasks (Cantor, 1994). Examining personality cross-culturally challenges prevailing theories and paradigms in Western psychology and provides new tools and concepts for expanding and enhancing those theories (Bock, 2000; Church, 2000; Cross & Markus, 1999).

3.1.2.2 Emotion

Most cross-cultural studies on emotion (see Kitayama & Markus, 1994 for an overview) imply that emotion processes, and thus the ensuing conscious experience of emotion, may be drastically different depending on the surrounding sociocultural environment. Many of the emotions observed in everyday life seem to depend on the dominant cultural frame in which specific social situations are constructed and, therefore, cannot be separated from culture-specific patterns of thinking, acting, and interacting (Kitayama & Markus, 1994). It has even been argued recently that particular qualities and expressions of emotion are determined by cultural processes and factors rather than by biological mechanisms that are beyond control. Emotions are seen as interdependent and interpenetrating with other cultural phenomena (Menon, 2000; Ratner, 2000) as it has already been postulated by activity theory in the tradition of Vygotski (Tulviste, 1999; Vygotsky, 1987) or by cultural-historical theory (Moll, 1990; Valsiner, 1998; Vygotsky, 1978). Emotions are conceptualised as being integrated into cognition and are thus formed by cultural processes and function to perpetuate those processes. Culture consists of practical, socially organised activities, cultural concepts and psychological phenomena. As far as the quality of emotion is concerned, Western guilt, disgust, and depression are fairly uncommon among people whose cultural concepts lead them to interpret events differently from the way Westerners do (e.g. certain African tribes who attribute their misfortune to fatalistic events). The same is true for the nuance and intensity with which an emotion is felt (e.g. different notions of shame in China and Korea, Lee, 1999; distinctive qualities of romantic love, Illouz, 1997). An emotional quality is often expressed according to different display rules in different cultures that reflect social activities (Ekman & Friesen, 1971; Hemphill, 1998). Although there are cultural differences in the expression of emotions, there are also some notable similarities (e.g. eye contact as an expression of attraction, bodily reactions to happiness and sadness). These physical tendencies are, however, easily decked by cultural rules and conventions (Ratner, 2000) that also determine the management and organisation of emotions (e.g. the avoidance of anger, management of grief). There are also a number of approaches to emotions from the side of indigenous psychology (e.g. understanding and experience of emotions in Hindi India (Menon, 2000). On the other hand, there have been attempts to derive cross-cultural models of emotions (e.g. grief, Klass, 1999) and to show the universal validity of emotion-specific appraisal profiles in the elicitation of emotion (Scherer, 1997). Finally, it is important to note that the

relationship between emotion and culture can not be seen as unidirectional. According to Toomela (2000), emotions and psychological activities in general are not passive, individual concepts which only reflect social activities, as it has been postulated by Ratner (2000). It should rather be asked, “how [emotional] processes act in the unified whole of a person-environment system” (Toomela, 2000, p. 355).

3.1.2.3 Intelligence and specific abilities

The history of measuring intelligence of peoples from various cultures is full of biases. Irvine and Berry (1988) put forward that a more differentiated set of cultural experiences accounts for variations in test performance, e.g. perceptual and kinaesthetic experience, varied stimulation, demanding but democratic family climate, linguistic and conceptual stimulation (books, etc.), tolerance of non-conformity, regular schooling, positive self-concept, and so forth. Many studies have revealed a factor for general intelligence (the so-called *g-factor*) across cultures. However, according to the authors, the single best predictor of test scores in many studies were the years of schooling. Thus, the reason for finding a single factor in the analysis of cognitive test performance might not be the cognitive ability of persons but the common experience of Western-style schooling.

Another basic problem is the Western operationalisation of the construct *intelligence*. What is considered as intelligent refers to the successful adaptation to those cognitive tasks which are significant within a specific culture. Since certain achievements are highly valued within a culture while others receive little attention, the definition of what constitutes *general intelligence* per se must be culture-dependent. In sharp contrast to the general intelligence approach, Cole (e.g. Cole, 1996; Scribner, 1997) has criticised theories that attempt to link all cognitive performances to form a single intelligence with a presumed underlying general cognitive processor. Cole and his colleagues outline a context-specific approach proposing that cultural differences in cognition reside more in the situations to which particular cognitive processes are applied, than in the existence of a process in one cultural group and its absence in another (Cole & Scribner, 1974). Although Cole and his colleagues have yielded a large amount of data, the outcome is rather unspecific which might be due to what Jahoda (1980) called “an endless exploration of quite specific pieces of behaviour with no guarantee of a decisive outcome” and to the lack of a “workable theory of situations” (p. 126). Many authors have followed in the tradition of Cole and have studied cognitive

epistemology (Berry, 1996) or specific abilities such as creativity (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988; Hany & Heller, 1993) or cognitive styles (Olson & Torrance, 1996).

3.1.3 Cognition

3.1.3.1 Thinking styles

When the term *cognition* is used, it is usually referred to as the processes humans engage in when they plan, analyse, consider probabilities or solve problems. There have been very few cross-cultural studies on general aspects of cognition. Planning has been studied extensively with regard to management behaviour and the same is true for problem-solving. Nisbett, Peng, Choi, and Norenzayan (2001) have dealt with holistic vs. analytic thinking and conclude that East Asians are more holistic, attend to the entire field and assign causality to it. They tend to make relatively little use of categories and formal logic, and rely on dialectical reasoning, whereas Westerners are more analytical, pay attention primarily to the object and the categories to which it belongs and use rules, include formal logic, to understand its behaviour. Norenzayan and Nisbett (2000) report that East Asian's and American's causal reasoning differs significantly in accordance with the culture-specific mentality (e.g. holistic vs. analytic) in East Asia and the West. Ramnarayan and Strohschneider (1997) revealed that although Indian manager's problem solving strategies differed significantly from those of German managers (prudent vs. venturesome), both groups were equally effective in their specific environment (Indian vs. German culture and traditional vs. modern companies in both countries) to which their strategies seemed to be perfectly adapted.

3.1.3.2 Language and memory

Linguistic relativity. Thinking and language are intimately connected and have been studied accordingly. Language has often been described as a determining influence on the thought patterns of the members of a culture (Berry et al., 1992; Whorf, 1912/1956). The acquisition of language has also been a matter of cross-cultural research (Holland, 1987; Lin-Huber, 1998; Slobin, 1992). There has been a fairly extensive amount of cross-cultural comparative research on other aspects of psycholinguistics, ranging from directly observable phonological variables to semantic meaning. Berry et al. (1992) provide an overview of studies of cognitive universals in language. Cross-cultural research of language has also examined the changes in identity and language behaviour that occur when two

ethnolinguistic groups come into contact. Noels, Pon, and Clement (1996) indicated that identification with one of the two languages was the most commonly endorsed identity. The influence of contact on identity seems to be mediated by communication variables. Cross-cultural aspects of communication are extensively dealt with below.

Memory. Cross-cultural studies on memory have basically focussed on language effects. Lass, Yunqiu, Guopeng, Becker, & Lueer (1999) found that Chinese had higher memory span scores than German subjects for simple geometrical shapes, but not in the case of random shapes. The articulation times for the verbal descriptions of both the geometrical and the random shapes were shorter in Chinese than in German. There are several plausible explanations for these differences, e.g. differences in cultural values, school curricula, or the manner in which languages code numerical values. Ishikawa and Nobe (1998) showed that language-specific features of word-memory processes might be due to differences in the preference of visual or auditory presentation. Lau and Hoosain (1999) investigated the possibility that variations in achievements in mathematics are related to the sound duration of number names, in the context of the functioning of working memory.

Ji, Schwarz, and Nisbett (2000) presented a rather different approach to the cross-cultural study of memory and examined the difference in perception of own and others' behaviour between Chinese and American respondents. In estimating the frequencies of observable and unobservable behaviour, Chinese respondents as members of collectivist societies attended closely to their own and others' behaviours to ensure smooth social functioning, resulting in memories for behaviours that Americans could only estimate.

3.1.3.3 Learning

Learning has been thoroughly explored cross-culturally with regard to approaches to learning and personality, contextual variables, learning strategies and styles. Watkins (2001) investigated the role of self-concept and locus of control as correlates with the learning environment and academic grades. Overall, the results indicate the personality variables of self-esteem and locus of control as being related to the approach to learning a student will adopt in both Western and non-Western countries. Hill, Puurula, Sitko-Lutek, and Rakowska (2000) aimed at exploring the role of culture and context in students' motivational orientation and academic performance, as well as the relationship between these variables within each culture. The context of learning appeared to have a moderating effect on cultural influences. Results clearly showed that culture and context of learning

have an influence on students' motivational orientation and achievement (see also Pintrich, Zusho, Schiefele, & Pekrun, 2001).

3.1.3.4 Sensation and perception

Basic perceptual processes of vision were among the first phenomena studied cross-culturally (Deregowski, 1998). Colour perception, the evolution of colour vocabulary, and perception of visual illusions among different remote populations have been studied extensively by W. H. R. Rivers (1864-1922), whom many psychologists even consider as the founding father of cross-cultural psychology (Berry et al., 1992). Sensory functions are still being studied cross-culturally (e.g. the perception of depth in pictures) especially in relation to psychological aesthetics (Berry et al., 1992; Segall et al., 1990).

3.2 Conclusion

Research employing the constructs of individualism-collectivism has shown that a variety of cultural values are related to performance and behaviour. Nevertheless, many cross-cultural studies can be criticised for naïve empiricism: Instruments are believed to yield equivalent, unbiased results in different cultural populations, and differences in scores are attributed post hoc to some seemingly plausible, cultural factor. Poortinga (1998) proposes to improve the design and data analysis of quantitative studies, to contextualise methods and to search for cross-culturally invariant patterns of scores to determine the limits of influence of cultural factors. Takooshian et al. (2001) outline more methodological shortcomings in most cross-cultural studies (e.g. translation of instruments, cross-cultural issues of testing, validity generalisation, globalisation, etc.). Furthermore, most studies are still based on Western biases and perpetuate ethnocentric cultural imperialism (Kagitçibasi & Poortinga, 2000). Research in social psychology should be decentred to non-Western constructs, include both group-level and individual-level variables and conducted by multicultural research teams (Singelis, 2000). In addition to these methodological and empirical points of criticism, cross-cultural psychology needs to emphasise new theoretical frameworks (such as the dynamic constructivist view, see above), put them to an empirical test and focus on social interrelations rather than on individual differences. The next section presents emerging topics in the field of the application of cross-cultural theoretical frameworks with regard to intercultural contact through immigration and travelling or through multicultural enterprises and working teams.

4. A challenge for applied cross-cultural Psychology: Contact zones between cultures

4.1 *The psychology of intercultural contact*

The accelerating process of globalisation and the increasing interconnections between cultures involve an unprecedented challenge to contemporary psychology. We now live in a world with increasing ecological, demographic, economic, political, and educational connections: Immigration, tourism, and international cooperation challenge the notion of culture as being restricted to national borders or ethnic groups (Hermans & Kempen, 1998). Therefore, cultural or cross-cultural psychology requires a shift from the focus on differences and dichotomies between nations and ethnic groups to a more open and process-oriented notion of culture.

According to Ward, Bochner, and Furnham (2001), intercultural contacts can be classified into two broad categories: those that occur among the residents of a culturally diverse nation or society (these intra-society intercultural interactions have also been termed *multiculturalism*) and those that take place when a person from one society travels to another country with a particular objective. The term *sojourner* has been used to describe between-society culture travellers and refers to groups such as international students and business people. Tourists as well as immigrants and refugees will also be regarded below. Ady (1995) identifies the following underlying themes in this area of research: the sojourners well-being, changes in emotional adjustment over time, the extent to which sojourners interact with and engage in the host culture, the adverse psychological consequences of failing to adjust to the new culture, the ability of the sojourner to manage the transition, and the degree of competence sojourners achieve in negotiating their new setting. Between-society contacts are fuelled by the globalisation of industry, entertainment, education, and leisure pursuits (Erez, 1994).

4.1.1 *Groups in intercultural contact*

4.1.1.1 Tourists

Despite being the largest group of cross-cultural travellers (nearly 600 million people made international trips in 1996, Ward et al., 2001), tourists have been studied less frequently than sojourners, immigrants, and refugees. Psychological literature has

concentrated on the motives of tourists and on the outcomes of intercultural contact with special regard to stress, intergroup perceptions, and relations between tourists and their hosts.

4.1.1.2 Sojourners

Student sojourners (around 1.3 million international students world wide) are probably the best studied group of cross-cultural travellers (Ward et al., 2001). There is an extensive body of research that has focused on friendship networks, skill acquisition in international students, intergroup relations, fluctuation in adaptation, and the process of re-entry to home (Hammer, 1992). As far as international business people are concerned, recent data from a survey of U.S.-based companies estimated that there are about 350,000 overseas assignments, and these numbers are expected to grow in the next few years (Solomon, 1999). Research in relation to multinational organisations together with literature on culture learning and expatriate adjustment is reviewed below.

4.1.1.3 Immigrants

Migrants are an extremely diverse group and figures are difficult to verify. An estimated number of 100 million people live outside their country of origin and the U.S. and Canada accept around one million immigrants a year (Ward et al., 2001). There are wide variations in the relative cultural distance between the society of origin and the society of settlement across immigrant groups. In addition, the amount of contact that immigrants have with other cultural groups may vary enormously (Cropley, Ruddat, Dehn, & Lucassen, 1994). There is a rich literature on the experience of immigrants (Nagayama Hall & Maramba, 2001; Nauck, 2001; Phalet & Schönplflug, 2001; Schmitz, 2001), especially with regard to the acculturation process and the transmission of values (Boehnke, 2001; Knafo & Schwartz, 2001; Rudy & Grusec, 2001).

4.1.1.4 Refugees

United Nations figures indicate a massive amount and a steadily increase of movement of refugees (a recent number of 19 million people is verified) and thus describe the dramatic and devastating effects of genocide, war, and famine (UNHCR, 1998). While refugees are faced with many of the same issues and concerns of other cross-cultural travellers, they also differ from sojourners and immigrants in several ways. Research has

been conducted on traumatic premigration factors, resources for cross-cultural transition, and coping processes (Ward et al., 2001).

4.1.2 Dimensions and outcomes of intercultural contact

Within-society cross-cultural interactions and between-society sojourner contacts can be differentiated on several dimensions of intercultural contact such as territory of interaction (home, foreign, joint), time-span of interaction, its purpose, the type of involvement, the frequency of contact, etc. (see Bochner, 1982) for an extensive treatment of these dimensions). According to Bochner (1982), group outcomes can be classified into the categories genocide, assimilation, segregation, and integration (see Ward et al., 2001 for a more detailed description), but psychology is more concerned with individual outcomes such as different forms of accommodation on the individual (the response styles are referred to as passing, chauvinist, marginal, and mediating; Bochner, 1982), changes in the person's self-concept or ethnic identity, resolutions to contact pressure, etc. (Gibson, 2001; Hermans & Kempen, 1998; Kurtz-Costes et al., 1997; Leyer, 1991; Thomas, 1994; 1996).

Diverse indices of adjustment have been reported in the literature (e.g. self-awareness, self-esteem, mood states, health status, the acquisition of culturally appropriate behaviours, job performance, etc.). Ward and colleagues have maintained that intercultural adaptation can be broadly divided into two categories: psychological and sociocultural (Ward & Kennedy, 1999). Psychological adjustment refers to feelings of well-being during cross-cultural transition, sociocultural adjustment, on the other hand, refers to the ability to fit in or execute effective interactions in the new cultural milieu.

4.1.3 A model of the acculturation process

4.1.3.1 Berry's model of acculturation strategies

Intercultural contact, cross-cultural transitions, and phenomena such as culture shock (see below) are regarded within the framework of acculturation theory (Gibson, 2001; Smith, 1999). First studied by sociologists and anthropologists, acculturation refers to changes that occur as a result of sustained first hand contact between individuals of different cultural origins. Prominent in this area of research is Berry's model (Berry & Sam, 1997) of acculturation strategies (assimilation, separation, marginalization and integration). The integration strategy has been viewed as the optimal strategy because it appears to be a consistent predictor of more positive outcomes than the other three strategies.

In an analysis of the acculturation model, Bhatia and Ram (2001) have criticised some of its underlying universalist assumptions. Baker (1999) reveals that integration with the host culture often leads to disharmony and disintegration within the home culture and thus pleads for a better awareness of the multiple layers of the process (e.g. interfamilial, intrafamilial, and social). Ward (1996) has presented a model of the acculturation process that offers an organising framework for the synthesis of a large and diverse body of theory and research on the affective, behavioural and cognitive components of cross-cultural transition. The model conceptualises cross-cultural transition as a significant life event that may be perceived as stimulating or confusing. Individuals are seldom equipped to manage or cope effectively with demanding situations and unfamiliar patterns of social interactions. Appraisal and action involve cognitive, affective and behavioural responses for stress management and acquisition of culture-specific skills. On the micro level of the theory, characteristics of person and situation may prove to be important (e.g. language competence, cultural identity, social networks, etc.). On the macro level, characteristics of the society of settlement and origin are likely to be important.

4.1.3.2 Acculturation and identity

Immigrants, refugees, and sojourners must consider two salient questions in connection with culture contact and change: “Who am I?” and “How do members of my group relate to other groups?”. Acculturation refers to changes that take place as a result of continuous first-hand contact between individuals from different cultures and that are related to changes in cultural identity. Identification with one’s cultural background is seen as the extent of belongingness and involves the recognition and self-identification of oneself as a member of a certain group. The concept of identification also encompasses the study of attitudes, values, norms, behaviour, etc. Under the specific circumstances of immigration for example, the pressure for cultural change is often perceived as intense, immediate, and enduring, since immigrants often come from homogeneous cultures and enter a new society that has its own longstanding, distinctive cultural standards (Ward et al., 2001).

During the 1980s, identification with home and host culture came to be seen as counterbalancing, rather than opposing, forces in shaping the social identification of immigrant groups. Biculturalism was seen as the middle ground between assimilation and separation. The ‘balance model of acculturation’ (Ward et al., 2001) was the sound basis for the development of most instruments that are used to assess acculturation (e.g. the

Multicultural Acculturation Scale, Wong-Rieger & Quintana, 1987; the Asian Self-Identity Acculturation Scale, Suinn, Rickard-Figueroa, Lew, & Vigil, 1987). However, most measurements failed to differentiate between the extents to which individuals identified with two reference groups. Berry's acculturation model (see above) can be understood as a more sophisticated approach since home and host culture identity are seen as independent orthogonal domains. Despite its critics (Boski, 1994) the model has been given rise to a variety of measurement techniques (e.g. the Acculturation Index, the Cultural Identity Scale, and others; see Ward & Kennedy, 1999).

In the 1980s, researchers postulated that the most appropriate model for cross-cultural exposure was a learning experience. The implication of this was that the appropriate intervention was not therapy for the culture traveller, but preparation, orientation, and the acquisition of culturally relevant social skills (Ward et al., 2001). Sojourning was also considered as an ongoing, dynamic experience for the sojourner as well as for the host culture. Therefore, the foundation for the culture learning approach (see below) was laid (there is also an alternative approach, the stress and coping approach, that is extensively treated elsewhere; Berry, 1997; Ward & Chang, 1997).

4.1.4 Social Identity Theory

A framework that has dominated contemporary work on intercultural contact is the Social Identity Theory. Within this line of research, personality theories have highlighted aspects of ethnic or cultural identity, and theories from social psychology have dealt with intergroup perceptions and relations. According to social identification theories, identity entails a set of dynamic, complex processes by which individuals define, redefine and construct their own and others' ethnicity (Ward et al., 2001). Identity is most frequently discussed within Tajfel's Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Much of Tajfel's theorising has been based on groups that experience perceived threats to identity and has thus been used to explore identity and intergroup relations in groups that move across cultures.

It has been suggested that both cognitive and affective components of identity are more strongly aroused in minority groups and that members of these groups may experience a stronger need for in-group identification. "It followed that to provide positive social identity, groups needed to distinguish themselves positively from other groups and that intergroup comparisons were focussed on the maintenance and establishment of positively valued distinctiveness for one's in-group" (Turner, 1996, p. 16). Accordingly, Tajfel and

Turner (1986) explicate three possible reactions to threatened social identity: individual mobility, social creativity, and social competition (see Ward et al., 2001 for a summary). Several investigations within this theoretical framework have shown that demographic factors, quality and quantity of intercultural contact and characteristics and conditions of migration (e.g. duration of transition, voluntariness of the move) exert strong influence on cultural identity. It has to be critically remarked, that social identity theory largely rests on the notion of ethnocentricity. Also, otherness seems to be a matter of degree, which in principle can range from others just outside the immediate circle to the totally strange and alien. Studies on the cultural influence on self-esteem also pose a challenge to social identity theory (Moyerman & Forman, 1992). Ward & Rana-Deuba (1999) report that home and host culture identification make independent contributions to cross-cultural adjustment: Identification with culture of origin is associated with better psychological adjustment while identification with contact culture is linked to better sociocultural adaptation.

4.1.5 *Culture shock and techniques for crossing cultures*

Foundations of cross-cultural training research can be traced back to the 1950s (Bhawuk & Brislin, 2000). Cross-cultural training emerged to prevent the so-called culture shock, “an occupational disease of people who have suddenly been transported abroad” (Oberg, 1960; p. 177). It was not until the 1970s however, that cross-cultural training programmes were consolidated as “cross-cultural or intercultural orientation programmes”, designed for preparing people for living in another culture.

Culture shock is now being treated as an active process of dealing with change rather than a passive reaction to a noxious set of circumstances. Ward et al. (2001) have introduced a model for culture shock that comprises affective, behavioural, and cognitive components (the *ABCs* of culture shock). Although some of the *affective* components of culture shock (e.g. anxiety, confusion, disorientation) resemble its original representation, many authors have highlighted the significance of coping factors that reduce the distress of culture contact (e.g. self-efficacy, social support).

The *behavioural* component of culture shock is associated with the concept of culture learning with its core idea that rules and conventions that regulate interpersonal interactions vary across cultures. It has been proposed by different authors that one reason for culture shock is that sojourners break norms and receive negative reactions from hosts, but do not exactly know why. This is where cultural standards enter the scene: The concept of *cultural*

standards, as it has been introduced by Thomas (1993), refers to core characteristics of a culture-specific orientation system that embrace all kinds of perception, thinking, evaluating, and acting that most members of one culture regard as normal and appropriate for themselves and for others. Cultural standards serve the function of criteria for judging and regulating one's own behaviour and that of others. This notion of culture can be used in the development of culture-specific assimilators that help expatriates to acquire basic social skills through behavioural culture training, mentoring and learning about the historical, philosophical and sociopolitical foundations of the host society.

The third component, the *cognitive* component, refers to the notion that culture consists of shared meanings. When cultures come into contact, irreconcilable positions affect the perceptions and interpersonal beliefs of participants. As far as the response to second-culture influences is concerned, there are two distinct theoretical positions: Firstly, as predicted by Berry's acculturation model (Berry & Sam, 1997), individuals can respond by becoming more ethnocentric, by assimilating and becoming more monocultural, by becoming bicultural, or by vacillating between both cultures and not identifying with either. Secondly, Hong et al., (2000) and Morris and Fu (2001) have focused on biculturalism and put forward that people can in fact switch between cultural frames that are evoked by cultural elements in their surrounding environment. However, the development of a bicultural, mediating identity might only be adaptive in societies that genuinely value cultural diversity. The notion of a multicultural society is a relatively recent development (Thomas, 1994). According to Ward et al. (2001), significant contributions to within-society ethnic diversity have been the increase in immigration and refugee movements as well as the gradual elimination of race as a criterion for admitting or excluding immigrants. For a society to be truly multicultural, however, the "mutuality of accommodation" (Beiser, 1999; p. 45) must be acknowledged and it must be recognised that both newcomers and members of the receiving society change as a result of contact.

4.2 Cross-cultural research of organisational behaviour and work

Increasing globalisation and internationalisation characterise today and tomorrow in the industrial world. Although globalisation opens many opportunities, it also creates complex challenges. An important challenge is understanding and appreciating cultural values, practices, and subtleties in different parts of the world. All the experts in international business agree that to succeed in global business, managers need the flexibility to respond

positively and effectively to practices and values that may be different from what they are accustomed to Javidan and House (2001). It requires the ability to be open to others' ideas and opinions. As the global market is growing and becoming highly competitive, industrial and organisational psychology also needs to become more globally oriented. Joint ventures and multinational enterprises form the contact zones in which people from different cultural backgrounds meet. Cultural standards serve the function of criteria for judging and regulating one's own behaviour and that of others.

Cross-cultural industrial and organisational psychology needs to tackle a wide variety of questions that have until now been rather neglected (Triandis, 1994a): First, do organisations located in different countries differ with respect to organisational characteristics, behaviour of members or the interrelationship between these two, and second, can these differences be explained in terms of culture? What are the specifics and what are the universals in organisations across culture with special regard to cultural standards? It is the task of psychologists to develop and provide training and learning tools that accompany the process of acculturation. A knowledge base of reliable cross-cultural differences in perceptions, beliefs, or modes of information processing should be built to help with the creation of integrative bargaining solutions in cross-national negotiation (Bontempo, Bottom, & Weber, 1997).

Drenth and Den Hartog (1999) propose that an intriguing question in cross-cultural industrial and organisational psychology is whether globalisation leads to a more common organisational culture world wide and to increased convergence. In order to answer this question, research on cultural variables and behaviour in the organisational context (e.g. managerial thinking, leadership, negotiation) will be reviewed, placing emphasis on the results of Hofstede's (1989) pioneering work. It is argued that organisational practices and the way these are worked out, perceived, and appreciated across countries, are still quite dissimilar. Research from the GLOBE study on leadership (Javidan & House, 2001; Riggio, Murphy, & Pirozzolo, 2002) is described as an example. Further, the application of results from cross-cultural research will be discussed for different areas, such as selecting and training personnel. This review is mainly based on the work of Aycan (2000), Bond and Smith (1996a), Bhawuk and Brislin (2000), Drenth and Den Hartog (1999) and Triandis (1994a), who provide an overview of recent topics in cross-cultural social and organisational psychology.

4.2.1 Cross-national studies on cultural dimensions

Undoubtedly the most commonly used dimension to explain cross-cultural differences in behaviour is that of individualism-collectivism. Measured in a variety of ways (Hofstede, 1989; Triandis, Bontempo, Villareal, Asai, & Lucca, 1988), cultural differences on the individualism-collectivism continuum have been used to explain differences in risk preference (Hsee & Weber, 1999), career preferences (Jaccard & Wan, 1986), causal attributions (McGill, 1995), social responsibility (Keltikangas-Jaervinen & Terav, 1996), decision making and risk adjustment (Tse, Lee, Vertinsky, & Wehrung, 1988), definitions and constructions of the self (Kitayama, Markus, Matsumoto, & Norasakkunkit, 1997), and judgement of one's own and others' performances (Chen, Brockner, & Katz, 1998), to name only a few. Studies such as those conducted by Hofstede and Javidan et al. begin by postulating dimensions of cultural variation, develop measures for these dimensions, and then assess cultural variation along these dimensions.

4.2.1.1 Hofstede's study and its implications

Based on data from 116,000 IBM employees from more than 50 countries, (Hofstede, 1989; 1991) yielded four dimensions of cultural variation in values: Power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism, and masculinity (the dimension *truth vs. virtue* was added in later). *Power distance* refers to the extent that members of a culture accept inequality and to their perception of distance between those with power and those with little power. *Uncertainty avoidance* is reflected in an emphasis on ritual behaviour, rules and stable employment. It is found in cultures that report high levels of stress, that are more ideological and less pragmatic. *Individualism* reflects the extent that people emphasise personal or group goals. The essence of collectivism is giving preference to in-group over individual goals. Finally, *masculinity* is found in societies that differentiate very strongly by sex. Hofstede has gathered a large amount of data and has drawn implications from these dimensions concerning managerial practice. Instead of reporting single results, a more recent study that partly dealt with the same dimensions, will be delineated below.

Although there have been many critiques of Hofstede's work (see Smith, Dugan, & Trompenaars, 1996; Sondergaard, 1994, for summaries of critiques), there is general agreement that the dimensions he proposed hold. For example, in reviewing 61 replications of Hofstede's research, Sondergaard (1994) concluded that the cultural differences predicted by Hofstede were generally confirmed.

4.2.1.2 The GLOBE research program and its implications

The Global Leadership and Organizational Behaviour Effectiveness (GLOBE) research program gathered a team of researchers who collected data on cultural values and practices and leadership attributes from 18,000 managers in 62 countries. The aim of the study was to enhance global managers' cultural acumen. The authors (Javidan & House, 2001; Riggio et al., 2002) discuss similarities and differences among countries studied in nine cultural dimensions: performance orientation, future orientation, assertiveness, uncertainty avoidance, power distance, collectivism, family collectivism, gender differentiation, and humane orientation. The dimensions will be briefly explained in the following paragraphs and a short description of the main findings will be provided (for in length discussion see Javidan & House, 2001).

Assertiveness. Assertiveness is the extent to which a society encourages people to be tough and confrontational vs. modest and tender. Highly assertive societies such as the U.S. and Austria have a "can-do" attitude and tend to value competition. They have sympathy for the strong and the winner. The less assertive societies such as Sweden and New Zealand tend to prefer warm and cooperative relations and harmony. They have sympathy for the weak and emphasise loyalty and solidarity.

Future orientation. This dimension refers to the extent to which a society encourages future-oriented behaviours such as planning and investing in the future. Countries with a strong future orientation, such as Singapore, Switzerland, and the Netherlands, are associated with a higher propensity to save for the future and longer thinking and decision-making time frames. Countries with a weak future orientation, such as Russia, Argentina, and Italy, are associated with shorter thinking and planning horizons and greater emphasis on instant gratification.

Gender differentiation. Gender differentiation is the extent to which a society maximises gender role differences. Countries with little gender-differentiated practices such as Hungary, Poland, and Denmark tend to accord women a higher status, an equal education and a stronger role in decision-making. In contrast, such countries as South Korea, Egypt, and China with a high degree of gender differentiation tend to accord men higher social status and have relatively few women in positions of authority.

Uncertainty avoidance. This dimension is defined as the society's reliance on social norms and procedures to alleviate the unpredictability of future events. Societies that are high on uncertainty avoidance, such as Switzerland, Sweden, and Germany, have a stronger

tendency toward orderliness, structured lifestyles, clear specification of social expectations, and rules to cover situations. In contrast, in countries such as Russia, Greece, and Venezuela, there is strong tolerance of ambiguity and uncertainty. People are less concerned about following rules and procedures.

Power distance. Power distance is defined as the extent to which a community maintains inequality among its members with respect to authority, prestige, status, and material possessions since power is expected to be shared unequally. Societies that are high on power distance, such as Russia, Thailand, and Spain, tend to expect obedience towards superiors and clearly distinguish between those with status and power and those without it. In contrast, countries like Denmark and the Netherlands practise low power distance; they tend to be more egalitarian and favour stronger participation in decision-making.

Institutional emphasis on collectivism vs. individualism. This dimension reflects the degree to which individuals are encouraged by societal institutions to be integrated into groups within organisations and the society. Societies that strongly value individualism, such as Greece, Italy, and Argentina, tend to value autonomy and individual freedom. Rewards are based on individual performance because self-interest is more strongly valued than the collective good. In contrast, in countries such as Sweden, South Korea, and Japan, group harmony and cooperation is paramount. People in these societies tend to prefer similarity to others rather than distinctiveness and they are motivated by other members' satisfaction and cooperation.

In-group collectivism. This dimension refers to the extent to which members of a society take pride in membership in small groups such as their family and circle of close friends, and the organisations in which they are employed. In countries like Iran, India, and China, being a member of an in-group is very important to people and group members have strong expectations from each other. In contrast, in countries like Denmark, Sweden, and New Zealand, family members and close friends do not expect any form of special treatment, and people do not feel an obligation to ignore rules or procedures to take care of close friends.

Performance orientation. This dimension refers to the degree to which a society encourages and rewards group members for performance improvement and excellence. Singapore, Hong Kong, and the U.S. have the highest reported scores on this dimension. People prefer a direct and explicit style of communication and tend to propose a sense of urgency. In contrast, people from countries like Russia, Italy, and Argentina emphasise loyalty and

belonging, view feedback as discomfoting, emphasise tradition and associate competition with defeat.

Humane orientation. This dimension is defined as the degree to which a society encourages and rewards individuals for being fair, altruistic, generous, caring, and kind to others. Malaysia, Ireland, and the Philippines are among the countries scoring highest in terms of humane orientation. In these countries, human relations, sympathy, and support for others are highly valued. People are usually friendly, sensitive and tolerant, and value harmony. In contrast, former West Germany, France, and Singapore received the lowest reported scores on humane orientation. In these societies, power and material possessions motivate people. Self-enhancement is a predominant value and assertive styles of conflict resolution are preferred.

4.1.2.3 Conclusion

How do the results of this study help to behave and perform effectively in intercultural contact? Firstly, the study allows to comprise a set of cultural standards for every nation under investigation based on the nine dimensions. Secondly, the results may lead to *clusters* of nations along a dimension. In an international team from Switzerland, Italy, South Korea, and the Netherlands one can expect differences in the length of decision-making time frames, the reliance on rules, the extent to which participation is favoured, and so forth. Being aware that a society is high on uncertainty avoidance, for instance, helps a manager to know what to expect and do with respect to scheduling meetings, enforcing punctuality, preparing agendas, and formalising decisions made during meetings. Two companies that are considering merging, one from a high uncertainty-avoidance society and one from a low uncertainty-avoidance society have to investigate the management practices of each other to identify potential areas of conflict and to determine whether such conflicts can be resolved. A starting point is knowledge of the cultural distance between two merging countries with respect to the cultural dimensions described and discussed above.

However, the translation of the results into the design of management strategies has to be done cautiously. Although cultures are differentiated according to the dimensions defined, there is no substantive theory behind the study and culture is seen as stable and nation-bound. Some of the conclusions also seem oversimplified given that within-culture variance was often found to be larger than the variance between cultures.

4.2.2 Cultural variables and organisational behaviour

4.2.2.1 Communication and negotiation

Communication. Undoubtedly, one of the most important features of a global manager's job is to effectively communicate with people from other parts of the world. Effective cross-cultural communication involves finding integrated solutions, or at least compromises, that allow decisions to be implemented by members of diverse cultures (Martin, 1989). A culture's level of uncertainty avoidance, performance orientation, collectivism, humane orientation, and power distance has a lasting influence on the process of communication (Javidan & House, 2001). The dimensions mentioned go along with differences in language and communication styles (indirect, soft, and vague vs. explicit and result-driven), types of language with males and females, contents of the message (clear, fact-based, and containing rules vs. high personal involvement), structuring of the communication process (highly formalised vs. no advance planning and no time schedule), importance of feedback (one-way vs. two-way dialogue²), and outcome expectations (explicit results vs. group cohesion and harmony).

Many non-verbal communication signals (e.g. mutual gaze, bodily contact, gestures) also vary cross-culturally. The misuse and misinterpretation of signals and conventions is often the source of misperception and stereotypical attributions. For example, Northern Europeans are very sensitive about having their personal space invaded and engage in less physical contact. *Contact cultures*, on the other hand, include Arab, Latin America, and Southern Europe (Collett, 1994). Arabs and Latin Americans also display a high frequency of mutual gaze and might regard the low-gaze Europeans as impolite and disrespectful (Burgoon, Coker, & Coker, 1986). There is a large body of evidence for the cross-cultural variation in rules, conventions, and forms of address that is dealt with elsewhere (Collett, 1994; Ward et al., 2001).

Negotiation. Negotiation has been defined as the process by which two or more parties attempt to resolve goals perceived incompatible (Bazerman, Curhan, Moore, & Valley, 2000; Gelfand & Dyer, 2000). Unfortunately, most cross-cultural studies on negotiation have been conducted in order to provide descriptions and advice on how to negotiate in numerous countries (e.g. Brett, 2001) and thus not been useful for testing theories about negotiation across different cultures and contexts. In their review of two

² The preference of top-down communication is one of the reasons why multisource feedback is not accepted in countries with high power distance (Bracken, Timmreck, & Church, 2001).

decades of cross-cultural negotiation research, Gelfand and Dyer (2000) identify two basic models that have been guiding research so far: Firstly, studies have been dealing with the influence of culture on negotiation tactics and outcomes or secondly, studies have been focussing the interaction between culture and proximal situational conditions on negotiation outcomes. The authors put forward that most of these studies suffer from three general pitfalls, namely the use of geographical location as a surrogate for culture rather than employing cultural dimensions, the neglect of psychological processes that are involved in negotiation, and the disregard of situational factors. To list but a few of the main findings from this line of research, studies of intracultural simulated buyer-seller negotiations indicate that while cooperative problem-solving strategies are most effective in the U.S., competitive behaviour works best in Russia, Taiwan, Germany, Great Britain, and Mexico (Campbell, Graham, Jolibert, & Meissner, 1988; Graham, Mintu, & Rodgers, 1994). Cohen (1991), Leung (1996), and Erez (1992) conclude that behaviour is influenced both by variations in individualism-collectivism and by specific situational demands. From the theory of individualism-collectivism, it is possible to make some predictions concerning negotiation behaviour: Collectivists see more differences between in-groups and out-groups than do individualists (Chan, 1991). Hence, conflict is seen as natural, and compromise is rejected. Further, collectivists have very clear ideas about ends (Triandis, 1994b). The supreme value is the survival of the in-group, and any means is acceptable. By contrast, the individualist looks for common ground and begins the negotiation by examining areas of agreement. Collectivists do not consider it a virtue to put themselves into other people's shoes; individualists are more likely to do that. However, the evidence regarding this line of inquiry is mixed: Pearson and Stephan (1998) report that people from collectivist societies tend to prefer a negotiation style that includes taking into account the interests of the other party. These contradictory findings might be due to the fact that psychological processes (e.g. motives, emotions) that are involved in negotiations in different cultures are ignored (see below for an alternative model). In addition to that, Pearson and Stephan (1998) compared the U.S. and Brazil – the latter not being a “typical” collectivist society. McCusker (1994; cited in Gelfand & Dyer, 2000) has argued that the reciprocation of tactics will occur more likely in cultures that emphasise exchange via communal relationships. Individualist cultures (e.g. the U.S.) tend to emphasise exchange relationships and thus keep track of the exchanges that occur to be able to reciprocate them immediately. In contrast, in collectivist cultures (e.g. Korea), benefits are given in accordance to other's needs.

Gelfand and Dyer (2000) present an alternative approach to the cross-cultural study of negotiation by operationalising culture on a variety of specific value dimensions. Central to the model are the negotiator's psychological states (e.g. implicit theories, judgement biases, motives, mental models) that are directly affected by culture. Additionally, culture is seen as a moderating variable of the influence of situational factors on psychological states and of the influence of psychological states on behaviours. Taking this model as a basis, several investigations are described and topics for further research are identified. To give an example, culture is believed to affect the negotiators implicit theories or schemas about the negotiation context. As a study conducted by Tinsley (2001) has shown, conflict and negotiations are perceived quite differently in the U.S. and Japan. Cultural ideals also have an influence on biases in negotiator cognition, e.g. judgement biases such as overconfidence, as well as on information processing.

As has been mentioned above, the dynamic constructivist view put forward by Morris and Fu (2001) has revealed a number of interesting results in regard to negotiation. (Chiu, Morris, Hong, & Menon, 2000) found that the desire for a definite answer (Need for Closure, NFC; Ford & Kruglanski, 1995) as a trait magnifies the negotiator's reliance on implicit theories that are chronically accessible in his culture (e.g. stereotypes). As Chiu et al. (2000) elaborate, Americans are chronically high in NFC and are more likely to attribute a person's action to dispositions, whereas NFC does not affect this tendency for the Chinese. Apparently, NFC reinforces the Americans' tendency to attribute behaviour of their opponents to personality (and thus stable) dispositions and to decide in favour of competitive rather than cooperative tactics. Further research on the American competitive style and the Chinese harmonising style was done by Fu and Morris (2000, cited in Morris & Fu, 2001; see also next section). As far as features of the social context are concerned, research has concluded that accountability to constituents makes negotiators more competitive because it creates concern for one's reputation (Gelfand & Realo, 1999). In collectivist cultures, however, accountability increased reliance on cooperative norms. In accordance with that, Briley, Morris, and Simonson (2000) found that requiring of negotiators to give reasons made the Chinese more likely to compromise while it made Americans less likely to do so. Time pressure as a context variable has been proved to magnify cultural differences in attribution biases (Chiu, et al., 2000).

To summarise, Morris and Fu (2001) conceptualise culture as knowledge that is more likely to be activated when it has been triggered by reminders of one's culture in the surrounding

context. Outcomes in intercultural negotiations can be shaped by setting the right atmosphere and manipulating cultural elements, since the situational, cultural, and social context determine which cultural script for negotiation (e.g. competitive vs. harmonising) will be activated. Chang (2001) concludes that “although people cannot control the cognitive process that activates their cultural lenses, they can control the conditions that determine whether culture will kick in” – a conclusion that is only partly true: It is one of the goals of intercultural training to teach people how to regulate and control their cognitive processes in relation to culture in order to avoid misperceptions and cultural overemphasis.

4.2.2.2 Leadership and participation

In his summary of an extensive program of leadership research in Japan, Misumi (1985) proposed that researchers distinguish between general or universal functions that effective leaders must carry out and the specific ways in which these functions are expressed. Leadership patterns are operationalised on the basis of subordinate ratings on two dimensions: The P (task performance) and M (group maintenance) general leadership functions predict leadership effectiveness and resemble dimensions postulated by North American researchers (e.g. Blake & Mouton, 1964). It is expected (see Bond & Smith, 1996a) that studies using relatively general characterisations of leader style will yield evidence of cross-cultural consistency in effectiveness. It was found that work teams within Japan, Hong Kong, the U.S., and Great Britain led by leaders rated high for P and M all achieved higher work quality (Smith, Misumi, Tayeb, Peterson, & Bond, 1989; Smith, Peterson, Misumi, & Sugiman, 1990). However, the correlation of P- and M-factors with specific items showed cultural differences. Cross-cultural studies of transformational leadership show that transformational style indicates greater efficacy across cultures (Bass & Avolio, 1993). This hypothesis is also supported by the Global Leadership and Organizational Behaviour Effectiveness (GLOBE) Research Program (Den Hartog et al., 1999, Javidan, 2001 #395): Specific aspects of transformational leadership are strongly and universally endorsed across cultures. Drenth and Den Hartog (1999) contend that this research shows that although attributes associated with charismatic leadership are universally valued, this does not imply similar enactment of such characteristics across cultures. In general terms, internationalisation does induce convergence of only certain organisational characteristics. Accordingly, other authors suggest that in collectivist, high-power-distance cultures, participative management may not be effective until subordinates

learn to expect it. Expectations about participation are more likely to occur in individualistic, low-power-distance cultures. Thus, although participative management appears to be a universally effective management style, subordinates need to be given the knowledge that they should use it (Triandis, 1994a).

To sum it up, the results of studies employing generalised measures of leader style seem to be rather similar across cultures (Carey, 2001; Drenth & Den Hartog, 1999). So, while the laws of leadership behaviour are the same on a high level of abstraction, on the specific level of “What do I need to do to be viewed as considerate?” the leader must acquire different kinds of information. The results of studies that have been focused upon specific attributes of effective leadership are in accordance with this assumption: Okechuku (1994) found differences in the perceived traits associated with managers’ ratings of effective subordinates in Canada, Hong Kong, and China, as did Black and Porter (1991), who compared managers’ ratings in the U.S. and Hong Kong. Howell, Dorfman, Hibino, Lee, and Tate (1995) contrasted business-leader effectiveness in Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Mexico and the U.S. and found general effects for leader supportiveness and contingent reward, but cultural specificity for participation in decision-making and contingent punishment. The Industrial Democracy in Europe International Research Group (IDE, 1993) has shown that when more specific measures of leader style are employed, cultural differences are more apparent.

4.2.2.3 Decision making

Weber and Hsee (2000) provide a review of recent cross-cultural investigations of judgement and decision-making topics that is centred around the four areas: probability judgement, risk perception, risk preference, and use of different modes of decision-making. The cross-culturally most-studied special case of probability judgements are people’s confidence judgements in the accuracy of their answers to general knowledge questions. Yates and Lee (1996) and Yates, Lee, and Bush (1997) have provided evidence for cross-cultural variations in the degree of overconfidence and found Chinese and several other East Asian groups (but not Japanese) more confident than Americans that their decisions were correct. These differences may be due to differences in belief processing: Whereas the Chinese have a greater propensity to select the first adequate problem solution that is identified, Americans tend to survey a range of alternatives before deciding. (Yates & Lee,

1996) attribute this to the influence of socio-economic conditions (e.g. level of technological development, which might correlate with quantitative sophistication).

As far as the perception of risk is concerned, investigations have shown that the probability of a (financial) loss had a greater effect on perceived risk for Western samples, but the magnitude of losses had a larger effect on the risk perceptions for Chinese (Bontempo et al., 1997). Slovic (1997) summarised a series of studies that suggest that cultural differences in trust in institutions to protect their citizens may lie at the root of differences in perceived risk: Reduced trust may result in a negative affective response to potential hazards.

Weber & Hsee (1998) collected data from American, German, Polish, and Chinese respondents about their willingness to pay for a set of financial investments options, and about their perception of the riskiness of these options. The authors report that Chinese thought the risk was lowest and paid the highest prices; the opposite was true for the Americans. To account for these results, Weber and Hsee pose the hypothesis that members of socially collectivist cultures can afford to take greater financial risks because their social networks insure them against catastrophic outcomes (the so-called *cushion hypothesis*).

Yates and Lee (1996) coined the term *decision modes* in their description of culture-specific preferences for particular methods or strategies for arriving at decisions and distinguished between analytic, rule-based, automatic, affect-based, and story-based decision making. It is suggested that the Chinese frequently employ a decision-making mode, which the authors refer to as the folk-precedent-matching method. Chinese tend to use stories and legends from the past and match them with the current situation. The appropriate action is simply to do what was done before. People from collectivist cultures also tend to use role-based decision making which fosters social connectedness rather than employing cost-benefit-based decision making that is more effective in maximising individual profit.

4.2.2.4 Work motivation and behaviour

Meaning and motivation. The Meaning of Work International Team (MOW, 1987) defines work meaning as a one-dimensional axis with the two ends “costs to the individual” and “collective benefits of work”. The MOW-team performed surveys in the U.S., Japan, and six West European countries and found so-called *work centrality* highest in Japan. In accordance with that, Schwalb, et al. (1992) found that Japanese employees reported being motivated by the task itself, in contrast to greater U.S. emphasis on affiliation. Different studies support the notion that there is a stronger linkage between work and family concerns

in collectivist cultures (Misra, Ghosh, & Kanungo, 1990) that may also contribute to the manager's well-being (Xie & Jamal, 1993). In Western cultures, control over one's environment is usually associated with motivation (Weisz et al., 1984). Those who feel in control are likely to be satisfied with their lives, while those who are not able to exert control are often depressed (Langer, 1983). Participation in decisions that affect one's outcomes is one way to increase control (Cawley, Keeping, & Levy, 1998). However, in high power-distance cultures participation may not be valued. Before introducing change, workers must thus be indoctrinated in the philosophy of participatory management (Triandis, 1994). Ronen (1994) provides an excellent overview of work values and underlying dimensions for theories on motivation across cultures.

Work behaviour. Comparisons between the work behaviour of Hong Kong and U.S. managers have proved popular. Numerous studies have revealed that activities showed considerable differences: Hong Kong respondents preferred assertive influence-tactics, whereas Americans preferred rationality, exchange, and ingratiation; Chinese managers spent more time with their superiors and received more written material from them than U.S. managers; high correlations between traits and performance appraisals were found in the U.S. but not in China (see Smith & Bond, 1993 for an overview). Kao and Sek-Hong (1993) present contrasts between the Western and Eastern cultural contexts and subsequent orientation of employees. Rationality, self-autonomy, and individualism in Western societies have led to diffusive trust at work, with work organisations becoming more contract-oriented. In contrast, in Oriental cultures (e.g. China, Japan) high trust underlying a high-level of organisational commitment is ingrained in the traditional properties of these societies which emphasise altruistic orientation in economic and social life.

4.2.3 Translation of research results into different areas of organisational behaviour

4.2.3.1 Selecting and training personnel

Personnel selection. In their review of personnel selection processes and measurement tools, Hough and Oswald (2000) identify two emerging topics: team member selection and cross-cultural selection issues. With their expanding global markets, culturally diverse work teams, and expatriate work assignments, international and multinational organisations place new demands on selection processes and measurement tools. Cross-cultural research on staffing mainly focuses on the applicability of U.S.-based recruitment

and selection methods in different countries (Aycaan, 2000), although the purpose of recruiting and the criteria and methods for selection may vary across cultures. Some of these variations will be presented here.

When selecting employees for overseas assignments, corporations naturally base their decisions on the employee's previous behaviour, performance, and accomplishments. The assumption that the employee who is competent at home might also be competent abroad has been questioned by various researchers (Black & Porter, 1991; Guthrie, 1975; Triandis, 1994a). Validities of domestic selection instruments may not be generalised as to international sites, because different predictor and criterion constructs may be relevant, or, if the constructs are the same, the behavioural indicators may differ. The most commonly cited reason for failure, however, is the family (Arthur & Bennett, 1995; Nyfield & Baron, 2000) – a fact that has long been ignored by most Western institutions. Even if employees soon adjusted to their new cultural environment and began to perform adequately, the family often continued to suffer from culture shock. As Hesketh and Bochner (1994) put it “the difference between working in an air-conditioned office in New York and one in Bangkok is less extreme than the difference between a New Jersey supermarket or schoolroom and their Thai counterparts” (p. 209). The vast majority of companies base their expatriate selection decisions on technical competence alone (Aryee, 1997), finding a very high failure rate among expatriates is therefore not surprising (between 15% and 40%, Shackleton & Newell, 1997). Before relating to intercultural competencies, two main conclusions can already be drawn: (1) Intercultural training should be a *must* for expatriates and should also include family members, and (2) additional post-entry and continuing social support during the early stages of the assignment abroad should be given. On-the-job support and cultural mediation by colleagues have proved to be useful (Furnham & Bochner, 1986; Ward et al., 2001).

Which *criteria* should be used in intercultural selection and training? According to Bolten (2000), three main dimensions can be distinguished (see also Gertsen, 1990). The *affective* dimension comprises constructs such as tolerance for ambiguity and frustration, open-mindedness, adaptability, self-confidence, flexibility, empathy, openness, low ethnocentrism, and intercultural readiness to learn. *Cognitive* constructs basically relate to the knowledge of home, host, and intercultural action patterns and schemas and the ability to communicate cross-culturally (e.g. foreign language skills, meta-communicative competencies, knowledge about rules and conventions). Finally, the *behavioural* dimension includes social competencies and the translation of affective and cognitive constructs into

action. According to Bolten (2000), international management therefore requires *technical knowledge / expertise* (e.g. international work experience, knowledge of the host culture's technical standards), *strategic knowledge* (organisational skills, problem solving ability, decisiveness), *social competence* (interpersonal skills, team ability, empathy, assimilative ability), and *individual competence* (intrinsic motivation, self-management, self-awareness). Arvey, Bhagat, and Salas (1991) list five criterion domains that nearly resemble those reported: (1) technical skills, (2) personal qualities, (3) appropriate motivation, (4) a supportive family situation, and (5) language skills. Similar dimensions have been used in the construction of the Global Personality Inventory (GPI; Schmit, Kihm, & Robie, 2000). In their article, the authors vividly illustrate the operationalisation of these dimensions and provide a guideline for the development of cross-cultural valid instruments. Mendenhall and Oddon (1985) conclude that four dimensions are important in employee selection and training: self-orientation, other orientation, accurate perceptions, and cultural toughness. According to Triandis (1994a), a positive self-orientation requires the expatriate's ability to reduce stress, to substitute reinforcements in the new culture for those lost, and technical competence. Other orientation enables the expatriate to develop a positive attitude towards the new culture. This includes the ability to interact with the host culture and to develop friendships. As has already been reported above, attributions vary across cultures and are the major source for misunderstandings. Accurate perceptions (e.g. being non-judgemental, having a high tolerance for ambiguity, and using broad categories when thinking about events) are thus vital to prevent high failure rates among expatriates (Triandis, 1994a). The dimension Mendenhall and Oddon (1985) refer to as cultural toughness, embraces competencies such as a positive self-concept, empathy, adaptability to new environments, motivation to work abroad, and task orientation.

These dimensions mirror a general trend in personnel selection: It is becoming increasingly apparent that job performance is a function of both ability and motivational or dispositional factors, and that the latter elements of performance have links to personality (Borman, Hanson, & Hedge, 1997). The burgeoning interest in personality measures as predictors of job performance has led to the development of international selection instruments and standards for translating tests into another language. Psychologists from many different cultures might be involved in all phases of inventory development and validation: a strategy that was used to develop the GPI (Schmit et al., 2000).

However, these trends have to be observed critically. Although several personality inventories originally developed in English have demonstrated similar psychometric properties across languages and cultures (Katigbak, Church, & Akamine, 1996; McCrae & Costa, 1997; Nyfield & Baron, 2000), the proper adaptation of measurement devices is still a major methodological concern. Lonner (1990) discusses four issues in relation to testing across cultures: (1) familiarity of testing and assessment to people of the culture in question, (2) universal validity of psychological constructs and concepts, (3) equivalence of the bases of comparison across cultures, and (4) verbal or visual mode of test stimuli. Sud and Sharma (1990) have investigated the prevalence of test-anxiety in different cultures and come to the conclusion that measures of this construct should be included in ability and personality assessments. In order to avoid distortion, Lonner (1990) recommends pre-tests and multiple methods.

Another issue of research has been the cross-cultural comparison of selection and training methods. Funke (1996) and Levy-Leboyer (1994), for example, found that within Europe there is considerable diversity in approaches to selection: (1) interviews and application blanks appear to be used in all countries, (2) references were used most in the UK but there is a reluctance to give written references in France, (3) graphology is used only in France, (4) situational tests and assessment centres are used more often in the UK, Germany and the Netherlands than in France and Belgium and not at all in Spain, and (5) in general there is greater test use in France and Belgium than in the UK and Germany. Ryan, McFarland, Baron, and Page (1999) consider whether these differences in staffing practices might be explained by cultural differences across nations. In an extensive study, the authors found that organisations in cultures that are high in uncertainty avoidance used a more extensive selection process (they conducted more interviews), were more likely to use a fixed set of interview questions, and audited selection processes more often. Further, selection decision making was more hierarchical in organisations in cultures high in power distance.

Intercultural training. The competencies reported above (e.g. self-insight, accurate perception, self- vs. other-orientation, and cultural toughness) can also be used as a sound basis for intercultural training. Further, training should be orientated on the consequences of negative strategies, e.g. maintenance of identity, acceptance of circumstances, and comparisons with negative examples (Stahl, 1998). Various training techniques have been developed and can be classified into four distinct categories along the dimensions *culture-general vs. culture-specific* and *information-giving vs. interaction training* (Bolten, 2000).

Culture-general or culture-specific assimilator training and simulator techniques and role plays are among those commonly used. In their review on five decades of training literature, Bhawuk and Brislin (2000) identify theory-based culture-general assimilator training as an effective tool to increase self-awareness and sensitivity for preparation for interaction in any culture. Behaviour modification training following the conceptual framework of Bandura's social learning theory has also proved successful. According to Bhawuk and Brislin (2000), modification training is necessary for habitual behaviours that people are not usually aware of, especially behaviours that are acceptable and desirable in one's own culture. A rather different approach is depicted by Konradt (2000). Current psychological training techniques such as *cognitive apprenticeship* and *anchored instruction techniques* are applied to intercultural learning. Hypermedia and web-based tools such as *Hyper Cross Cultural Training (HyperCCT)* and *Hyper-Führer*[®] have numerous advantages over traditional seminars and training since they promote self-instructed learning, motivation, cognitive flexibility, and transfer by providing personalised learning environments and instant feedback.

The bulk of the training literature addresses the preparation and orientation of persons intending to work or study abroad. However, there will be an increasing demand for within-culture training, as work forces become more culturally diverse. Hesketh and Bochner (1994) depict an example of managers from a large Australian bank who took part in such a proactive and preventive measure. Further research on the applicability of between-culture measures to training within a culture is definitely needed. There are attempts to adapt these measures and training programs to the work with ethnic minorities (Sue, 1997), however, these therapeutic applications are more in line with counseling programs than with multicultural training.

4.2.3.2 Performance management

Performance management consists of three critical phases, namely planning, evaluation, and development. The *planning* phase addresses two issues: setting goals and determining performance dimensions. Individualist and collectivist cultures differ in methods of goal setting as well as importance attached to goals that serve the individual vs. the group (see Aycan, 2000 for an overview). As far as performance dimensions are concerned, Arvey and Murphy (1998) identified a number of dimensions (e.g. job-specific knowledge, communication competence, administrative competence) that have yet to be

tested on a cross-cultural basis. There is some evidence that certain dimensions (e.g. awareness of duties, trustworthiness) are more salient dimensions of performance in collectivist cultures (Triandis, 1994a). In individualistic cultures, *performance evaluation* includes providing feedback and recognising individual differences, whereas in collectivist cultures the purpose of the same phase is to justify decisions on promotion and to instill loyalty (Triandis & Bhawuk, 1997). In collectivist cultures (high in power distance), methods such as 360-degree performance appraisal may be perceived as disturbing group harmony. Direct feedback may also be seen as equivalent to a rejection of the person (Triandis, 1994a) in these cultures. Thus, members from collectivist cultures tend to seek indirect, implicit, and subtle forms of feedback to prevent confrontation and embarrassment. Another barrier to cross-cultural application of performance appraisal are differences in rating errors (e.g. modesty bias, leniency bias) that affect reliability and validity of measures (Yu & Murphy, 1993). Findings on cultural differences in preference of reward are in line with what has already been reported: In collectivist cultures, rewarding the group as a whole is the preferred measure of *development* to rewarding the individual. Finally, the process of training can also be impacted by culture, especially with regard to the way information is processed (Early, 1994).

4.2.3.3 Cultural influence on groups

Much of the work done cross-culturally on the subject of group processes considered the scope and intensity of conformity to group norms and cooperation with group members in the Prisoner's Dilemma game or similar settings (see above). Basic aspects of group performance, such as productivity and conformity, thus differ by culture. These differences may well prove problematic in multicultural teams. Merritt and Helmreich (1995) found that US airline pilots and flight attendants endorsed lower power distance and collectivism than did pilots and attendants within the same airlines from seven East Asian countries. However, culturally heterogeneous teams that have experienced difficulties in working together initially, show better results in performance than homogeneous teams three months later (Watson, Kumar, & Michaelsen, 1993).

Another aspect of team work is that Western-trained expatriate managers try to install self-managing working teams (or 'semi-autonomous work groups' as they have been labelled in Europe) without taking into account that such an approach could be inappropriate in some cultural settings. Self-managing working teams include a number of characteristics that

might be culture-specific, such as the team deciding who will do which task and in what sequence, the team doing its own quality control and setting its own goals (Antoni, 1994; Wellins et al., 1990). Resistance to self-managing teams might occur more often in societies that accept the unequal distribution of power (Kirkman & Shapiro, 1997). The same authors suggest that people from collectivist cultural background may be more inclined to accept team work since cooperation is valued higher than competitiveness. This view is rather contradictory, since high power distance is positively correlated with collectivism (Bochner & Hesketh, 1994). This example shows that content-free theorising inevitably leads to discrepancies and should rather be based on the specific composition of the work force and empirical investigation. As has been remarked by Ward et al. (2001), the genre is also limited due to its reliance on Hofstede (1989) somewhat dated work to define cultural categories. According to Haley-Banez and Walden (1999), optimal theory should be used for a better understanding of group development in groups comprised of culturally diverse members, since it assists group leaders to become more multiculturally competent.

4.2.3.4 Job design in a cross-cultural perspective

When designing jobs, it is important to consider several kinds of matches: The skills of the worker must match the challenge of the job and the needs of the worker must match the values of the culture that can be satisfied by the job (Triandis, 1994a). Some authors have speculated that models like Hackman and Oldham's (1980) theory of job design does not apply to collectivist cultures, where motivation is a function of task interdependence rather than a function of task variety and feedback (Morishima & Minami, 1983). German work psychology (e.g. Hacker, 1986) has dealt with criteria of human work and has identified some aspects as important with regard to a person's well-being: Research concentrates on whether a work is feasible, preventing harm, reasonable, and promoting personality development. Unfortunately, no systematic cross-cultural research has been conducted in this field. According to Hofstede (1989), humanising the work means different things, depending on the culture's position on Hofstede's masculinity and power distance dimensions. In the U.S. it means job enlargement, while in Sweden it means forming groups that complete the job. However, this hypothesis has until now not been tested empirically.

4.2.3.5 Organisational culture

There is a vast amount of literature dealing with organisational climate and culture (Schneider, 1990; Triandis, 1994a). Issues such as problems of transfer of culture from one unit of a corporation to another or of cultural conflict within the same corporation have rarely been discussed with reference to national culture, albeit the idea to make national and organisational cultures consistent in order for the organisations to function well is widely accepted (Erez, 1992; 1994). Ouchi and Jaeger (1978) contrasted the ideal type of Americans (Type A) and Japanese (Type J) with Type Z companies. The contrasting attributes between the former types are short-term vs. life-time employment, individual vs. consensual decision making, individual vs. collective responsibility, rapid vs. slow evaluation and promotion, explicit vs. implicit and formalised vs. informal control, specialised vs. non-specialised career paths, and segmented vs. holistic concern for the employees by the organisation. Type Z are those American companies, that combine individualistic values and collective, non-individual patterns of interaction. Thus, Ouchi and Jaeger argue that Type Z is a successful American adaptation of an organisational culture to the national culture. However, rigorous tests of this hypothesis are not yet available.

4.2.3.6 Organisational development

It is a commonly accepted view that organisational development in the U.S. is based on the assumption that the culture will be low in Hofstede's dimensions, except for individualism. Countries with different value profiles (see above) require different kinds of organisational development interventions that are consistent with the subjective culture of the group or organisation being changed. According to Berry et al. (1992), change can be examined at the level of individuals, organisations, or at the cultural level. In the antecedents of change, there are contacts between an *external* (e.g. another organisation) and an *internal* culture or between *outsiders* (e.g. members of other headquarters) and *insiders*. Changes in the socio-cultural level will have effects at the individual level, and vice versa. As a consequence of the contact, various processes will occur that will result in both cultural and individual change. This viewpoint calls for organisational development that is culture-specific.

4.2.3.7 Organisational conflict

When individuals or units of an organisation belong to different cultures, there is a great likelihood that conflict will occur. Findings about intergroup conflict imply that perceived in-group vs. out-group differences are sustained and intensified when individuals distrust the out-group (e.g. due to lack of knowledge), when there are discrepancies in subjective cultures (leading to stereotypical perceptions), and when certain personalities (e.g. cognitively simple, ethnocentric) are dominant. Reductions in conflict can be obtained when in-groups and out-groups come in contact under particular conditions, such as when they have superordinate goals (Triandis, 1994a). The outcome of conflict can include agreements, the imposition of bureaucratic controls, or the development of a new culture that controls one or both of the parties (e.g. Type Z companies, see above).

4.2.3.8 Management and business practices in different countries

The literature on international management practices is extensive. As it becomes apparent from most of the investigations that were undertaken cross-culturally, there is a great deal of diversity in management style. No doubt, the within-culture variation exceeds the between-culture variance. Anyhow, studies have been focussing on universals and specifics in management styles across cultures along Hofstede's dimensions. Many have concentrated on Japanese and U.S. management and identified three underlying factors that are useful to distinguish Japanese and American management practices: long-term vs. short-term planning, career vs. limited employment, and collective vs. individual responsibility. In Japanese management, emphasis is placed on sufficient time for implementation and development, extensive investment in employee training, lifetime employment, teamwork and participative management. Further, Japanese firms spend more per employee on non-payroll benefits than American companies – a finding that might be due to the Japanese company's paternalism. The Japanese leader, by showing love, care (also referred to as *amae*, Doi, 1973), and paternalism inspires and motivates subordinates to work hard, be cooperative and sacrifice themselves for the good of the group. Japanese success seems to be related to collectivism and may be inspired by Confucian ethics. Despite of several attempts that have been made to transfer Japanese management practices, these ideas have not been very successful in Western organisations (Antoni, 1996). In a more recent study, however, Thomas (1999) showed that there are similarities between the effectiveness of German and Chinese cultural standards (e.g. fact orientation vs. social harmony orientation

or individual vs. social conformity orientation) and the styles of managing cultural diversity. However, there is a growing realisation that cultural differences play a major role in exacerbating market-related difficulties (Schrage, Chao, Wuehrer, & Koeslich, 1999). One integral aspect of Chinese business practice that is particularly often cited as a distinguishing factor is known as *guanxi*. Guanxi relationships are characterised by mutual trust and a willingness to enter into commercial arrangements that produce long-term mutual benefits (Shenkar & Ronen, 1993). Westerners, in contrast, regard business relationship as a short-term transaction in which each party attempts to maximise its benefits and thus perform less well in joint ventures with Chinese companies (Abramson & Ai, 1999).

4.3 Conclusion

Theoretical advancements in the field of cross-cultural industrial and organisational psychology have not yet reached a level that allows them to adequately guide practice (Erez, 1994). However, there clearly is a responsibility for cross-cultural psychologists to apply their expertise to problems of economic and social change in order to contribute to human well-being. Research on the psychological effects of immigration on the individual as well as on the surrounding culture has to be conducted more systematically. As far as cross-cultural organisational psychology is concerned, several areas of research are still underrepresented (e.g. staffing, performance management, employee health and safety). Rather than concentrating on the popular topics of leadership, expatriation, and work-related values, future research should expand in scope to encompass topics that contribute to the improvement of the human conditions at work (Aycan, 2000). It also becomes quite apparent that the discipline calls for more communication among different scholarly communities, such as international relations specialists from politics and economics to provide a better understanding of related topics in the context of cultural complexity.

5. Directions for future research & practical implications

5.1 *Implications and guideline for intercultural practice*

Economic activity increases on a global scale. We encounter people of different nations across real and virtual borders. One lesson that cross-cultural psychology teaches us is to take into account the influence of culture on various aspects of work. How can we use culture as a variable to explain and predict organisational and work behaviour in a specific situation? Although theoretical advancements in cross-cultural psychology have not yet reached a level that allows adequate guidance in practice, several recommendations can be made.

Intercultural effective and efficient behaviour and action require flexible usage of domain-specific knowledge and demand individual competence to act according to one's cultural and situational context. The dynamic constructivist view (Chiu, Morris, Hong, & Menon, 2000; Morris & Fu, 2000) reveals that culture is internalised as a loose network of domain-specific knowledge structures. Research from cognitive and social psychology shows us that cognition and action can only be guided by one cultural meaning system at a time, although individuals can acquire more than one system. In order to be successful in a specific cultural context, domain-specific knowledge structures have to be made salient and be brought to the fore of the mind.

In a first step, domain-specific knowledge has to be defined. Research on cultural dimensions (e.g. assertiveness, future orientation, individualism, in-group collectivism, etc., Hofstede, 1980; Javidan & House, 2001) can help to identify aspects of behaviour that are culture-specific or universal. As has been mentioned above, the results of studies on cultural dimensions allow to comprise a set of cultural standards for every nation under investigation and may lead to clusters of nations along a dimension.

Second, in order to make cultural knowledge accessible, moderating and mediating variables (such as situational, organisational, and personality factors) have to be used thoroughly. Organisation-related behaviour in specific situations (e.g. negotiation, communication, leadership, job design, performance management) can be seen in a three dimensional space with *culture* as the first dimension (being both an external and an internal dynamic process), *organisation* (being embedded in a model of multiple interacting forces such as the internal and external environmental context, organisational characteristics, and organisational outcomes), and *situational and personality factors* (directly influencing

thinking and action). Cultural standards are directly or indirectly influenced by these factors and can be used as landmarks that guide our own behaviour and serve the function of criteria for judging that of others.

5.2 Implications for research

Results from several decades of research on cross-cultural organisational and industrial psychology have revealed major similarities and differences in behaviour and underlying experience. The question remains, whether globalisation leads to a more common organisational culture world wide and to increased convergence in management strategies and practices (Drenth & Den Hartog, 1999). A world-wide convergence can be observed among the institutional structures that provide the behaviour settings for various sojourner groups. International business practices are being unified through industry and commerce and work and organisational structures tend to become more standardised. As far as the cultural level is concerned, there are, indeed, signs in values and behaviour suggesting that oriental societies are shifting towards individualism and cultural distance decreases (e.g. changes in the political and educational system, different role of the family). However, cultural change and global homogenisation are again being studied from the ethnocentric perspective of Western societies. No doubt, there are broad homogenising influences such as the globalisation of the entertainment business, the news media, and the internet. On the one hand, these factors drastically reduce cross-cultural differences, but at the same time, within-cultural differences are enlarged. A major concern that has been raised in this context is the undervaluing of the local in the course of emphasising the global (Holdstock, 1999). So-called 'modern' and 'traditional' values can very well coexist without conflict as long as sojourners are equipped to handle them.

Cross-cultural psychology should take a comparative perspective and focus on cultural changes and related coping strategies in different societies from an interdisciplinary perspective. It should be noted that changes on the level of society also constitute changed structural conditions for individual values, expectations, and behaviour. The individual people's action again can cumulate and in turn affect changes of the system. Thus, the interrelations of institutions, factors, and processes in relation to social interactions should be studied within and across cultures from a 'glocal' perspective.

Cross-cultural psychology has largely neglected within-culture aspects, although interethnic conflicts are most prevailing and interactions within some culturally heterogeneous nations

are increasingly fraught and are responsible for the steadily increasing number of refugees. Transformation of societies and the mutuality of accommodation are issues for cross-cultural and within-cultural investigations in the future.

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