

van de Vijver, Fons J. R., Athanasios Chasiotis, and Seger M. Breugelmans, Eds.

Fundamental Questions in Cross-Cultural Psychology

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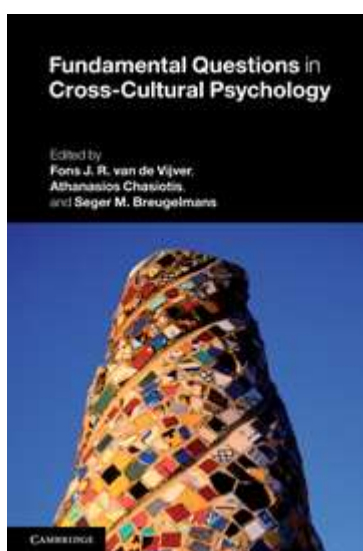
This Festschrift honoring Ype Poortinga is focused on the developments in cross-cultural psychology over the past forty years and bears the stamp of his philosophy of mitigated universalism, the contention that human differences occur against a background of similarities.

The book is divided into four parts. The first, "Setting the Stage" is keynoted by the editors who attempt to position the critical questions facing Cross-Cultural Psychology today.



Ype H. Poortinga

Part Two discusses the efforts to explain cross-cultural differences. It opens with one of the best treatments of the volume, Gustav Jahoda's Chapter Two, which provides the reader with an historical framework for the field. It dips into the classical past, then restarts with the Enlightenment, to identify the roots of the discipline and its methodologies for testing and experimentation. It seems the dark ages so rich in psychology and philosophy are dark mainly due to the lack of awareness and study on the part of today's scientific professionals, a cultural bias, no doubt. The history then mentions the contemporary challenges to the enlightenment and Universalist models and enters into an overview of the past 40 years of theory and research to track developments in the now hyper-specialized and fragmented fields of psychology and anthropology.



Walter Lonner's third chapter essentially addresses universalistic thinking and its unraveling, also with historical sequence, a "Blessed Rage for Order" in psychological studies, indicating a protostereotypical period, followed by a period of intense research and generalization, and a current period from the 1970's where new methodologies are being debated and the focus is on the relationship of culture and the individual. Cross-cultural psychology at all stages hitherto is a "Western" enterprise, resulting in all too many "pigeonholes of the mind." A future agenda that respects complexity as well as liberates us from our own scientific and academic culture is stated as desirable but the path is not clear. Certainly factors in the academic culture not directly related to its subject matter, such as the manufacture of PhD's and sabbatical practices play a role here.

Chapter 4 is John Berry's assessment of his own "Ecocultural Framework." It is an attempt to resolve the tension between culture as an entity in its own right and the playing out of adaptation in the individuals and collectivities nursing on this maternal resource as they attempt to know, integrate and perform in their cultural context and beyond it. Given the state of research, this

brings to the foreground chicken-and-egg dilemmas such as the relationship of affluence and societal size to encourage individualistic or collective values and behaviors. The ecology of culture largely starts in geography and climate, but becomes intertwined with and biological, political, and social structures where research is challenged in creating distinctions and measuring variables.

This sets the stage for Dianne van Hemert's Chapter Five, which describes and analyzes the frameworks employed in this work of explaining cross-cultural variance in terms of differences and similarities. She starts with plotting Berry's Ecocultural theory and the domain framework of van de Vijver and Poortinga and touches on the values orientation of Schwarz and the variables explored by the World Values Survey. She then subjects the identified frameworks to meta-analysis in the attempts to combine researched data bases and studies for further inferences and discoveries.

In Chapter Six, Seger Breugelmans returns to the question of the relationship between the individual and culture and the growing opinion that this influence may be more situational and more dependent on individual agency than previously thought. The author then turns to looking at the obstacles to our understanding of how this relationship develops and is practiced, namely viewing culture as a system and the perpetuation of neo-colonial and dichotomous tendencies. He then points to possible resolutions of the difficulties inherent in these views by suggesting productive avenues of inquiry in how norms and preferences provide more flexibility in interpreting situations culturally. His conclusion favors the inclusion of this normative approach as protecting both culture as psychological content and variations in individual behavior while at the same he raises questions about the applicability of the theory to sub-disciplines in the field and the further discussion about how norms come about.

Part 3 of the volume looks at methods for studying culture, starting with an examination of the conceptual framework of the field, which Johnny Fontaine in Chapter Seven identifies as fourfold: *relativism*, *construct universalism*, *repertoire universalism*, and *absolutism*, attempting to bridge deep cleft created by the opposition of relativism and universalism, which has virtually divided the psychological disciplines dealing with culture into two. He first examines this twofold division for its benefits and drawbacks. Then he adds absolutism to the mix for similar analysis, and finally settles on the advantages of the fourfold framework of approaches. These four are nicely headlined in a three page table showing how each operates in theory development, research methodology, and the nature and function of language in each. He concludes the initial framework presentation by mapping the strengths and weaknesses of each. Subsequently the chapter explores this map in detail and concludes that the fourfold framework reduces confusion without introducing undue complexity.

Ronald Fisher in Chapter Eight has the courage to label the "chicken-and-eggs" challenge of much research and interpretation. He offers four methods for researching the culture/behavior link. These methods may be affected by how culture is defined. We are all familiar with the *post hoc, propter hoc fallacy* in logic (attributing something that occurs after something else to the first event as its cause). Unfortunately, in cross-cultural research, when discussing behavioral causality

we are rarely sure what comes first, to say nothing to determining whether subsequent results are related to values and if so to what degree, therefore the chicken and egg dilemma. Fisher, citing his own growing up experience in East Germany, insists that our attempts to source behavioral differences across groups need to start outside the individual, namely in the specific social, political, ecological and historic contexts from which values as psychological consequences are born.

In Chapter Nine, Alison Karasz discusses qualitative and mixed research methods. There is currently a strong revival of these methods, perhaps due in some measure to the limitations and poor results stemming from the application of quantitative methods germane to the physical sciences to the psycho-social realm. Constructivist thinking largely triumphed among cross-cultural psychologists in the “paradigm wars” which resulted from this difference of perspectives. Karasz explains why and defends the objective validity of qualitative research and then observes how methods of data collection differ and underscores the care and caveats, with which they must be chosen, initiated, carried out and interpreted. Karasz insists that we ask: Does the method fit the question one seeks to research? Does a mixed methodology (QUAL->QUANT; QUANT->QUAL; or, QUANT->QUAL->QUANT) best serve to deepen and broaden this focus? I.e., do qualitative methods establish a solid discourse so that quantitative surveys or other tests may be used to deepen them and establish the extent of the applicability of findings? The author illustrates each approach and concludes by suggests how each might in fact be instrumental in the development of methodologies for meeting contemporary environmental shifts that currently challenge psychology.

How does one separate and manage bias and real differences in research findings, and are these antithetical or can they be dealt with productively in tandem? This is the question that Fons J.R. van de Vijver seeks to progress in Chapter Ten. Various forms of bias and equivalence, their sources and incidence are examined. The *pièce de résistance* in this case is the elegant choice of the best method and tools of assessment. One needs procedures which can be used to sort out not just where and how bias or equivalence (whether one or several) occurs, but how and what is to be learned from it. The author argues for a more balanced treatment of various kinds of bias, with more attention being paid to the augmentation of bias relative to the size and scale of the studies undertaken. Finally, he asks if our appreciation of real differences and equivalences improved by the understanding of how biases themselves are generated and what they have to say about their sources. In short, bias is part of the learning available.

Part Four of the volume addresses the important psychological field of development, how human psychological functioning takes shape. It opens with Chapter 11, which is aimed at initiating a dialog between Russian and US research on how culture shapes the operations of the psyche. Belief in sociocultural evolution is a common starting point for both Russian and US psychology of development, but this relative theoretical coherence runs up against differing choices of methodology for exploring human development. To set the stage for this cross-cultural dialog, the authors, Michael Cole, Boris Meshcheyrakov and I. V. Ponomariov review the development of cultural-historical psychology starting with its 19th Century origins as a discipline and its incipient research on psychological differences among peoples. Attention is paid to the bridging of the

positivist and dialectical nature of the data and the disciplines that specialized in them. The bridge personality in Russian and US psychology is L. S. Vigotsky who pioneered a theoretical framework of steady creative interaction of person and environment. His seminal work was extended by active experimentation about the developmental effects of school education conducted by A.V. Zaporozhets, A.R. Luria and P. Tulviste.

On the US side, research was also conducted on the differences between non-school and school-based cognitive development and the effects of literacy on mental development. In sum, the Russian and US approach differed on theoretical premises. The Russians accorded a larger role to history and logic while the US side tended to create experiments reflecting the everyday activity of the target populations. Since new political entente between the two nations now allows much freer communication between researchers, the author expects that this will bring about a greater sharing of assumptions across linguistic and national traditions.

Çiğdem Kağıtçıbaşı explores self and family change theory in Chapter Twelve, focusing on the emergence and meaning of the *autonomous-related self*. He starts by noting the dual facets of the self, its social construction and self-construal, suggesting that relatedness and autonomy are a human communality. Kağıtçıbaşı seeks to delve beneath cultural bias on the part of experimenters about the nature of autonomy. He contends that autonomy is a phenomenon exercised in various ways, independent of the constraints of the collective-individualist paradigm, which tends to place agency and autonomy as polar opposites to relatedness. Research is showing, for example, that the development of autonomy in adolescents is supported by rather than hindered by close relationship with parents. Additionally the psychological family bonds continue to exist in disparate economic and social environments. Kağıtçıbaşı evaluates research, both deviant and supportive of this theoretical position, and ends with pointing out that the acceptance of the concept of the autonomous-related self as worthy of support in both policy and pedagogy.

In Chapter Thirteen Heidi Keller addresses the interface of biology and culture, asserting that biology is not just a preface to or foundation for human development but a consistent theme throughout its process. The brain is built to be modified by the environment in which it develops. Thus the nervous system is culturally interactive and a bearer of cultural difference, or, put more comprehensively, "...humans are biologically primed to acquire, create, and transmit culture." According to Keller, differences in adaptation strategies arise between traditional village networks and the industrialized knowledge societies rather between nations seen as cultures. Here as in the previous chapter, autonomy and relatedness are reflected in parental strategies to ready the child for the context in which it is expected that it will function. These strategies begin in mother-infant relationships and continue in social norming processes and shared meaning systems. Keller then reports on the research design and methodology used to explore this theory. In sum, culture is not in competition with nature or biology. Rather, it is engaged in a constant search for ways of understanding and building the human environment.

Differences in universals in families across cultures provide the theme chosen by James Georgas in Chapter Fourteen. Recognizing that the family is critical to cultural formation, Georgas begins with a critical look at the sociological positioning of the nuclear family as an expression of individualist

thinking *a la* Talcott Parsons. Despite changes over time and in ecological and social settings, can we say that there are there universals culturally speaking? How do family mobility and the exodus of young people from small community life affect the structure of family life as well as culture? Georgas' Families Across Cultures project, which he reports on here, looks at how families are defined and structured across cultures, then at the variables within these kinds of families in terms of social structure, roles, and psychological development. The study data are further explored applying several current cultural models that provide the methodology for determining cultural difference in the variables uncovered. The results are then analyzed to test current assumptions about how families may be changing due to modernization, mobility, globalization, etc. In general, socio-economics and religion were strongest demonstrators of variability how families observed hierarchy and practiced proximity of kin. Universals included the expressive, childcare maternal roles as well as emotional bonding, in which the order of closeness was (1) mother, (2) siblings, and (3) father. Grounded in biology and blood lines there is little expectation that family connection is radically affected by increased levels of generational mobility and globalization.

Chapter Fifteen, by Anastasios Chasiotis looks at how evolutionary developmental psychology may contribute to cross-cultural psychology. The author argues against this being an *intra muros* debate and suggests that contributions of evolutionary biology may in fact resolve circularities in cultural research and thinking. Childhood rearing, puberty and reproductive behavior and other factors of parental motivation exhibit identifiable traits that demonstrate the interaction of biology and culture and can be the basis of cultural variables. The influence of siblings is active in socialization and in the creation of autobiographical memory, both factors in the shaping, propagation and retention of cultural variables.

Part 5, addressing concepts of culture, would be of highest interest to the interculturalist reader, in terms of familiarity of subject matter and clarity of expression, particularly for those without an active research background. Lutz Eckenberger's Chapter 15 looks at the relationship of theory, data and, ultimately, the extraction of meaning from them. Absolute meaning is an illusion, since meaning is contextual and a "truth" in both daily life and science needs to be tested for its truth. Here, historical perspectives such as those of C. P. Snow and Thomas Kuhn come into play as we seek to understand the relationship of sciences and branches of sciences, in this case psychology, to each other. We need to look at their various cultures, so to speak. The major challenge in moving forward is surmounting the dualisms ingrained in Western thinking on both the scientific and popular levels and disciplining our passion for discerning causality. Eckenberger goes on to look at cultural differences from the level of physical/measurement science, biology and symbolic (socio-cultural) perspectives, and finally from that of self-reflective consciousness, this latter being the potential articulation of what is contained in human mental processes for the sake of bringing forth meaning. Eckenberger's closing task is elaborating a model for the interrelatedness and potential integration of the four viewpoints on culture. Noting that, in matters human, intentionality is a prerequisite for causality, it is important to understand the levels at which action takes place, its dynamics and its constraints. Eckenberger attempts to map the levels of action and meaning in detail and offers it as a useful perspective for doing cross-cultural psychology.

In Chapter Seventeen Michael Harris Bond, on the edge of retirement himself, contributes an autobiographical reflection on his experiences in the timeline of the field of cross-cultural psychology. “Ulysses returning” is his thematic metaphor, no doubt suggesting that the return home may appear to be the end of a journey but in fact is part of it, and there may be enemies of one sort or another yet to be slain as reminiscences encounter harsh realities. This is a subjective chapter and my reviewer’s response is to highlight items which I felt were kindred to my experiences as an interculturalist. So, here goes—in my language, not Bond’s:

- Yes to Ulysses—life is a journey in uncharted waters full of unexpected adventures—be brave and wily (flexible).
- Stimulated by interesting and intriguing foreign students and visitors as well as digging into new places on the planet.
- Patient digging uncovers treasures, but there is also the lure of serendipity.
- Define yourself, your understanding, your role and your tasks.
- Talk to the right people, choose your teams bravely but judiciously, question your results. Use, but challenge the rules of your discipline.
- Stay abreast of developments and methods in your field. Follow your interests and your passions.
- Take a morning swim!

In Chapter Eighteen Sholom Schwartz offers perspectives on values, both cultural and individual. This is a difficult subject for me to review, since my perception of what are described as values in scientific, generalized, abstract terms are not values at all but foam generated by waves of research on the beaches of academia. In my view, values must be defined by those who own them, and attempts to sample, define and categorize them from afar are likely to betray them as well as propagate the kind of neo-colonialism that various authors in this work insist we all need to come to grips with. Having expressed my bias, I feel freer to continue with a more dispassionate look.

In these pages, Schwarz unfolds his two theoretical perspectives on the chapter topic. He first presents ten universal personal values in abstract terms and indicates how they express themselves. Next he addresses the cultural values, which he describes as ideals finding expression in beliefs, attitudes, norms, symbols, etc. These in turn press into the personal values prevalent in a society, revealing the structure of its culture. Schwartz identifies seven polar value orientations along which cultures align. He then elaborates on them and charts them adding to the clarity of the presentation. As noted above, press on the individual’s values and behaviors and are interpreted according to the contexts in which she or he is found. Schwartz maintains dual value systems, insisting that the individual and cultural values sets function differently and, hence, cannot and should not be conflated. Once presented, he offers a largish list of the kinds of issues and questions which the two sets of values orientations are suited to explore within and between societies. He indicates the levels at which specific kinds of analyses should occur. He includes a brief exposition that applies the his values theories to a cross-cultural comparison of attitudes and behaviors associated with the acceptance of immigrants into society.

In Chapter Nineteen Peter Smith turns the focus to the cultural contexts of organizational behavior and what cross-cultural psychology can learn from them. He starts with the relationship of organizational culture to national culture. Here the dispute is how to aggregate the data of research in describing an organizational culture from data sources such as the Hofstede researches and that of the GLOBE study. Indications are that organizational values derived from individual aggregate scores cohere with national values, pretty much irrespective of behavioral differences stemming from them. Given that, it is of growing interest to research how people experience work for pay inside organizations. Researchers in this vein tend to focus on work satisfaction and other elements in the relationship of employee to the organization and fellow workers, to their expectations of each other and finally satisfaction with the reward system.

Teamwork has been an extremely attractive area for research. Much of this, however, aggregates individual responses as predictors, much like the organizational analyses mentioned above. Smith briefly describes the state of research on two other organizational topics, leadership and negotiation. Leadership perspectives are currently dominated by the GLOBE results, and given the buzzword status of “leadership” in organizations and branding of corporate educational services, it would appear to this reviewer that much, much more study will be needed to understand the phenomenon and, in many cases perhaps, debunk the hype. Several studies about negotiation reported here offer some insights into its dynamics, but there is little that brings us closer to more conclusive views than can already be obtained from the larger organizational and national aggregations.

Smith’s focus now turns from the organizations existing within a national culture to the multinational perspectives and the phenomena associated with globalization. Despite the noise of change, it seems that there is considerable stability to operational cultures as these express themselves in different cultures. So, the challenge turns in the direction of how to at least cope with them or manage them to advantage. Given the lack of direction from aggregate organizational studies, the focus becomes individual skills, or what we are calling “cultural (and in many situations, linguistic) competence.” These are needed whether differences occur on the person-to-person level or whether individuals face the additional multi-contextual challenges of forming and maintaining effective global teamwork.

Much research needs to be done on the directions of successful global organizations. One preliminary study finds these communalities among them: an orientation to competitive performance, customer focus, and openness to diversity. Likewise, more study is needed as there are but a few cultural indicators of success when it comes to mergers, acquisitions and foreign investment. In this field there are no certainties. Much depends on the climate of the transaction launching the new entity, on the degrees of autonomy it is accorded, and cultural distance between the parts. All of these factors can potentially play a decisive role and occur in a context filled with variables both internal to the organizations as well as in the national, legal and economic ambience in which organizational coupling occurs. Despite the centrality of organizations in today’s world, the spotlight of research has largely sought out commercial organizations, leaving us largely in the dark when it comes to public, voluntary and supranational

entities. In the absence of better wisdom, the burden of cultural adaptation and competence rests primarily on the shoulders of individual actors within organizations.

Chapter Twenty returns us to an examination of the relation of culture with the self. Chi-Yue Chiu and Young-Hoon Kim work to identify basic principles in this relationship and extract some of their implications. How are we shaped by culture and how deep is its imprint? The authors seek to establish principles or norms to sort out the abundant literature in this field and then support their choices with credible theory and empirical results. The theater of discussion supposes degrees of polarity between so-called Easterners and Westerners. The authors choose *Positive Distinctiveness* as the universal driver of group identification. While both Easterners and Westerners need to express positive distinctiveness, culture determines how it is expressed and how its expression is regulated. East-West expressions of positive distinctiveness will be more or less strengthened or weakened, depending on the applicability of norms of modesty. Finally Easterners will be more expressive of this if the channels of expression allow for subtlety and indirection. Do these preferences indicate substantial differences of self-construal? Not necessarily. The authors close by noting the convenience of having national cultural attributions, but at the same time bewail the constraints these impose. As a result of these, individual agency and multiple agendas are restricted and the culture's variety and creativity is diminished.

Part 6, the conclusion to the volume is written by the feted professor Ype Poortinga himself, who looks at the current thinking on the scope of cross-cultural psychology and how it is being studied both within and beyond this volume, highlighting critical issues and suggesting how they may be approached. First, he looks at the history and status of empirical research, particularly in the areas of perception and cognition. If these two human endowments are universal, how do differences in stimuli they are exposed to shape them? Next, he casts an eye on the use of socio-psychological dimensions, asking how we can address the mounting difficulties around the work of pioneers such as Hofstede and Triandis, and more lately Schwartz et al., in order to continue to use their dimensions beneficially. Currently their applicability and ability to predict and explain behavior is increasingly limited by unexplained variances.

Poortinga then turns to the genesis of cultural psychology and its concern with "culture inside the person." What is inside and what is outside? On our answer to this question hangs our perception of culture as an entity independent of the person and the acceptance of mentalities resident in a collectivity. The field now possesses a large and varied tool chest of methodologies, whose versatility, Poortinga laments is untapped. Taking stock of the field and the volume, he identifies the challenge posed by overemphasis on citing difference, which he asserts is often a *deus ex machina* for what are more complex questions. How do we reconcile both everyday observation and the sweeping generalizations found in the cultural disciplines with the unimpressive statistical verification when differences are explored? We have a need for the economy found in generalizations, yet they must be tempered by accuracy. The relativist vs. universalist debates are happily dying down, given that more and more people engaged in intercultural fields are seeing them as complementary perspectives rather than polar opposites.

Going forward, Poortinga looks to a better balancing of the biological and cultural contributions to the field. Genetics and ecologies are intertwined. The degrees to which they touch on culture and personality invite more attention. We are curious as to how this complementarity will develop as well as how the increasing fuzziness of domain thinking will affect the organization of cross-cultural differences. While inevitably be arbitrary to some degree, we need cultural conventions to organize what we do. Poortinga illustrates this with the fact that, while it is entirely arbitrary whether the right or left side of the road is chosen for the direction of traffic, it is critical that this decision be made and observed. Culture requires these kinds of conventions about all kinds of behavior, some critical, some trivial depending on how strongly they affect social inclusion.

Poortinga sees promise in the growth of mixed methodologies and multilevel analysis models as well as reinforcing habits of concrete observation of our species in action. He defends “culture” as a concept that, while diffuse and under attack, certainly will continue to be our code word for what we do until a more precise and elegant formulation of the phenomena it describes should appear. With respect for the past, there is promise in new developments in evolutionary biology, and neuroscience that we would be foolish not to inquire into.

Evolution or revolution in cultural sciences? The choice is ours. Poortinga ends at this fork in the road. As a backpacker hiking the rich, uneven and rock strewn landscape provided by this Festschrift, My mind echoes the admonition, “Don’t throw the baby out with the bathwater.” The origin given for this saying is most certainly apocryphal, but runs that in earlier times the hierarchy of familial bathing was father, mother, children. The bathwater became so clouded with dirt that the last infant might go unnoticed and be discarded while emptying the tub! The future of the cross-cultural theory and practice lie somewhere in the now swollen, clouded and turbulent residue of the intense efforts of the past. Both discretion and courage are needed to trash what is now irrelevant and preserve and grow what will carry us into the future.

All in all, this is not a book for the layperson or beginner in either psychology or intercultural practice. There are places to dip in, but it is all too easy to drown in the massive amount of unexplored and unexplained technical jargon which may make it for many a forbidding read or at best an exercise in mastering Google search. It is heavy on detail and references and light on explanation and conclusions, reflecting the state of the art, perhaps, but one has the sense that, as is often the case with a Festschrift, the authors have written for each other in the main, occasionally both touting and questioning their own contributions to the field. Unsuitable for BBB (bed, beach or bathroom) reading, it requires dedicated hours and needs to be digested in discrete quantities to savor what it truly offers. This reader hopes that these review pages may at least provide a helicopter view of the quite dense terrain of cross-cultural psychology addressed by this volume.