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Insights into Moral Development from Cultural Psychology

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NEW SCHOOL FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH

A strong assumption of universalism characterizes psychological theories of moral development within the social constructivist tradition of cognitive developmental theory (e.g., Piaget, 1932; Kohlberg, 1969, 1971) and the distinct domain perspective (e.g., Turiel, 1983, 1988a). It is assumed that stances that treat morality in culturally variable terms give rise to an extreme moral relativism and embody a passive view of the individual, as merely conforming to social expectations. This charge was initially directed by social constructivist theorists (e.g., Kohlberg, 1971; Turiel, 1983) at social learning approaches (e.g., Berkowitz, 1964; Eysenck, 1961), perspectives that draw no distinction between morality and social convention. However, more recently, the same criticism (e.g., Turiel, 2002) has been directed at approaches to moral development within cultural psychology (e.g., Miller, 1994; Shweder, Mahapatra, & Miller, 1987), a perspective that, in contrast to social learning approaches, treats morality as based on a perceived natural law rather than on compliance with societal standards or personal preferences. Cultural psychological approaches to moral development are further criticized (e.g., Turiel & Wainryb, 2000) as being informed by stereotypical views of culture and embodying an insensitivity to contextual considerations.

This chapter begins with an overview of the assumptions of cultural psychology, focusing on theoretical claims that pertain to work on the development of moral outlooks. This is followed by a discussion of cross-cultural findings that not only establish certain universals in moral judgment but that highlight variability in moral outlook that is not presently well accommodated in the existing universalistic psychological models within the social constructivist tradition. In turn, the third section identifies challenges for future theory and research. The argument is made that approaches to moral development within

cultural psychology embody a view of individual agency and of the contextual dependence of psychological phenomena and give rise to pragmatic rather than extreme forms of moral relativism. It is argued that to enhance the cultural sensitivity of psychological theories of morality, it is critical to bridge work on moral development in the social constructivist tradition with approaches to moral development within cultural psychology (e.g., Miller, 2001; Shweder, Much, Mahapatra, & Park, 1997).

THEORETICAL ASSUMPTIONS OF CULTURAL PSYCHOLOGY

Cultural, institutional, and historical forces are 'imported' into individuals' actions by virtue of using cultural tools, on the one hand, and sociocultural settings are created and recreated through individuals' use of mediational means, on the other. The resulting picture is one in which, because of the role cultural tools play in mediated action, it is virtually impossible for us to act in a way that is not sociocultural situated ... Nearly all human action is mediated action, the only exceptions being found perhaps at very early stages of ontogenesis and in natural responses such as reacting involuntarily to an unexpected noise. (Wertsch, 1995, p. 97)

Approaches within cultural psychology are not defined on the basis of their methodology, such as whether they employ comparative or noncomparative research designs, or by their findings, such as whether or not they identify cultural differences. Rather, they are defined conceptually on the basis of their view of psychological processes as dependent on cultural processes that may qualitatively affect their form (Bruner, 1990; Cole, 1990, 1996; Fiske, Kitayama, Markus, & Nisbett, 1998; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Martin, Nelson, & Tobach, 1995; Miller, 1994, 1997, 1999; Shweder, 1990; Shweder & Sullivan, 1990, 1993). Cultural psychological outlooks assume that psychological functioning always occurs in specific sociocultural contexts and that psychological theories must and, in fact, invariably do, reflect, in part, this sociocultural grounding.

The present discussion focuses on widely shared theoretical assumptions of cultural psychology that bear on understanding the constitutive role of cultural meanings and practices in moral outlooks. Given the heterogeneity of contemporary approaches identified with cultural psychology, the present discussion emphasizes the most central assumptions and claims within this emerging set of perspectives, with a particular focus on cultural theorists working in the area of moral reasoning.

Symbolic Views of Culture

Within the perspective of cultural psychology, *culture* is understood in symbolic terms as meanings and practices and not merely in ecological terms as objective adaptive affordances and constraints (D'Andrade, 1984; LeVine, 1984; Strauss & Quinn, 1997). Developmental psychology has long given attention to ecological aspects of the context (e.g., Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Eccles et al., 1993). This type of approach recognizes that families, schools, and larger communities present individuals with different resources and experiences that serve to enhance or impede particular developmental outcomes.

An ecological perspective on culture is essential to take into account in approaches to understanding moral development and in highlighting the adaptive significance of objective characteristics of the setting. The ecology, for example, may affect the usefulness of particular types of moral outlooks, an observation made by Edwards (1975, 1994) in noting the lesser relevance of the "systems" perspective reflected in stage 4 of Kohlbergian moral reasoning for individuals living in isolated peasant or tribal communities than for individuals living in societies characterized by occupational specialization or formal

bureaucratic institutions (Edwards, 1975, 1994). Equally, ecological conditions may provide experiences that are differentially conducive to moral development, a phenomena uncovered by Hart and Atkins (Atkins & Hart, 2003; Hart & Atkins, 2002) in their finding that it is more difficult for poor urban youth to develop a sense of moral identity than it is for suburban youth whose ecology provides them with more frequent opportunities for civic participation. However, it is important to view culture not merely in functional ecological terms, but also to recognize its symbolic properties. From this latter perspective, cultural meanings and practices are understood as bearing an open relationship to adaptive constraints rather than as merely functionally based (LeVine, 1984; Shwederb, 1984; Tobin, Wu, & Davidson, 1989). To give an example, research indicates that Japanese educators tend to consider the preschool practice of having many children assigned to a given teacher as functional in providing children with experience in and promoting their knowing how to be a good member of a group (Tobin et al., 1989). This symbolic value tends to be less central in U.S. contexts, where preschool educators tend to consider it beneficial to have fewer children assigned to a given teacher, so the children may be accorded more individual attention and have more opportunities to exercise individual decision making. Thus, whereas both of these types of preschool classroom practices may be considered adaptive, the basis of their functionality cannot be understood merely by reference to objective constraints, such as teacher resources, but requires also taking into account nonfunctional values, such as pedagogical viewpoints, related to goals for the child's development.

Within a symbolic view, culture is seen in representational, directive, and constitutive terms (D'Andrade, 1984). It is well known that, in terms of their representational functions, cultural meaning systems encompass knowledge structures that provide information about the nature of reality whereas, in terms of their directive functions, they encompass social rules. However, it is less widely appreciated that, in terms of their constitutive functions, cultural meanings function to create social realities that serve to define the shared meanings accorded to particular entities or experiences (Searle, 1969; Shweder, 1984). Thus, for example, the culturally constituted category of a "bride" only has meaning against the backdrop of the agreement within a community to associate particular meanings and institutional practices with this social role. The present considerations imply that appraisals of harm, such as the judgment that abortion constitutes murder, are not based merely on biological facts. Rather, such appraisals depend as well on culturally variable definitions of the meanings to be accorded objective entities and events, such as the definition of the point during a pregnancy when a fetus is to be treated as a person entitled to protection from harm.

As applied to evaluating cross-cultural differences in moral judgment, the present assumptions imply that the relative adequacy of the knowledge assumptions that are brought to bear in moral reasoning (e.g., Turiel, Killen, & Helwig, 1987; Wainryb, 1991) cannot be fully comparatively evaluated in terms of objective criteria, such as the magnitude of harm involved. Rather, such knowledge assumptions reflect, in part, culturally based values that are contributed to experience. To give an example, helping a friend who is experiencing minor need (such as a need for directions to a store) tends to be categorized as a moral obligation by Indian populations and as a matter of personal choice by U.S. populations (Miller, Bersoff, & Harwood, 1990). This cross-cultural difference, however, arises from the greater value placed by U.S. than by Indian respondents on balancing personal freedom of choice with interpersonal commitments rather than from a difference related to individuals' knowledge of the nature of the welfare concerns involved (Miller et al., 1990). Thus, such cross-cultural differences in moral appraisal were observed to remain even when controlling for differences in respondents' assessments of the magnitude of need under consideration and the perceived desirability of helping.

Integrating Concerns With Power and With Meaning in Understanding Culture

The need to recognize the role of power dynamics in patterning cultural forms represents an insight that not only has been prominent within recent postmodern anthropological work (e.g., Abu-Lughod, 1993; Appadurai, 1988) but that is also strongly emphasized by theorists within the distinct domain tradition (Turiel, 1998b; Wainryb & Turiel, 1994). From these perspectives, it is recognized that individuals assume contrasting positions of power within societies and that cultural meanings and practices serve, in part, to perpetuate social relations based on inequality. Thus, for example, a cultural concern with hierarchy is seen as associated with social institutions in which women are given fewer opportunities than men, and in which, in cases, they suffer exploitation and abuse.

While acknowledging the critical importance of recognizing the role of power in structuring social institutions, the caution is raised from a cultural psychology perspective that culture not be viewed only in terms of such considerations. It is argued rather that effort be made to integrate a concern with power dynamics with a concern with symbolic aspects of culture. This type of insight may be illustrated in a recent comparative study examining conceptions of everyday family roles and of feminism among samples of middle age women from Japan and the U.S. (Schaberg, 2002). Although the Japanese women expressed dissent with the gender role practices of their society, their concerns did not map directly onto the issues of seeking greater freedom of choice raised by the U.S. respondents. Valuing patterns of reciprocal interdependence in family relations, the Japanese women called for greater flexibility and accommodation in gender role expectations but rejected the egalitarian model of marital relations emphasized by the U.S. respondents. Equally, the Japanese women embraced a form of feminism that embodies a concern with contributing to the larger social whole and rejected features of what they appraised to be the more individualistic feminist perspective emphasized within the U.S. In sum, it must be recognized that while individuals maintain an active perspective on their cultural practices, dissent tends to be formulated in ways that in most cases does not call for a total abandonment of fundamental cultural commitments and thus that do not simply converge cross-culturally.

Dynamic Views of Culture and Psychology. As reflected in the discussion by Shweder and LeVine (1984), which more than the highly influential review article on culture and the self by Markus and Kitayama (1991) may be considered one of the earliest and most powerful statements of the agenda of cultural psychology, theorists within cultural psychology have long recognized the importance of treating culture in dynamic terms, as nonuniform and changing. However, in contrast to work from a postmodern perspective and to various claims from a distinct domain framework, work within cultural psychology assumes that some thematic consistencies in cultural outlooks may be observed, thus making it possible to draw certain distinctions between cultural viewpoints (see also Shweder, 1979a, 1979b; Miller, 1997).

A stance that overstates the thematic nature of culture may be criticized as glossing over the heterogeneity and overlap in meanings between and within cultural communities and thus as giving rise to stereotypical claims. This type of stance notably not only may be seen in such classic works in culture and personality as Benedict's *Chrysthanemum and the Sword* (1946), but also characterizes some recent positions in cultural social psychology that have embraced the individualism/collectivism paradigm. Thus, for example, efforts to base global claims about East–West differences in analytic versus holistic thought based on data collected from primarily East Asian cultural populations (e.g., Nisbett, 2003; Nisbett,

Peng, Choi, & Norenzayan, 2001) may be criticized as glossing over important between and within group differences. In fact, it may be noted, that although some recent work that is identified with cultural psychology has been framed within the individualism/collectivism paradigm, this type of framing has been challenged by other cultural psychologists for its inattention to variation between and within cultural groups and cannot be considered a constitutive premise of cultural psychology (Miller, 2002, 2004; Strauss, 2000).

Although there is agreement between cultural psychologists and both distinct domain and postmodern theorists about the need to recognize the multifaceted, dynamic, and frequently conflicting nature of cultural meanings and practices, approaches within cultural psychology take exception with positions that interpret this concern to imply that it is impossible to identify any group differences in cultural outlook and that culture represents merely a contextual effect (Miller, 1997). This conclusion that the blending of cultural forms makes it impossible to distinguish between cultures is drawn, for example, by the postmodern theorist Gergen as he describes the interpenetration of cultural outlooks:

> We are not speaking here of the blending of all, the emergence of monoculture, but rapid and continuous transformations in cultural forms, as they are subject to multiple influences and in their altered state become the impetus for change in other locales ... if there is a continuous blending, appropriation, dissolution, and the like, how are we to draw distinctions among cultural processes? (Gulerce, 1995, p. 149–150)

In a related view, the conclusion that culture can be considered merely a contextual effect has been forwarded by Turiel and his colleagues (Turiel, 1998b; Turiel & Neff, 2000). In a recent handbook chapter on moral development, Turiel, in fact, titles one of the chapter sub headings "Culture as Context or Context as Context" to communicate his view that culture represents merely a situational influence on behavior (Turiel, 1998a).

In contrast to drawing the conclusion that the hetereogeneity of cultural forms implies that no distinctions can be drawn between cultures or that culture is merely a contextual influence on behavior, cultural psychologists note that it is possible to identify at least some thematic consistencies in cultural views. As discussed more fully in the next section, cultural psychologists also note that whereas psychological processes are contextually dependent, cultural influences on psychological processes cannot be merely reduced to a contextual influence on behavior but rather represent a mediator of contextual influences and thus a consideration that must be taken into account in addition to rather than in lieu of contextual processes. As Geertz (as quoted in Shweder, 1984a) comments in regard to the issue of thematic consistency, for example:

> It's possible to overthematize, and it's possible to underthematize ... the elements of culture are not like a pile of sand and not like a spider's web. It's more like an octopus, a rather badly integrated creature—what passes for a brain keeps it together, more or less, in one ungainly whole (Shweder, 1984a, p. 19).

In drawing distinctions between cultural views, the stance adopted within cultural psychology may be seen to be similar in kind to that which is adopted in drawing other types of subgroup distinctions in developmental psychology. Thus, for example, in work on theory of mind, the claim is made that 5-year-old children tend to maintain an understanding of false belief whereas 3-year-olds tend to lack such an understanding (e.g., Wellman, 1990). This claim is informative in identifying a developmental difference, although it glosses over the heterogeneity and overlap that distinguish the outlooks of different groups of

3- and of 5-year-old children and thus arguably might be subject to the same types of criticisms as directed at similar types of group generalizations forwarded within cultural psychology. It is recognized in cultural psychology, as it is in other areas of psychology, that although subtleties are lost at less fine grained levels of analysis, for certain purposes it is meaningful to make claims about group differences in behavior. In fact, drawing distinctions between cultural perspectives is considered critical in efforts to give voice to viewpoints that otherwise could not be distinguished from what is the default mainstream outlook in psychological theory (Graham, 1992). As Butler asserts in arguing that the post-modern stance of failing to draw any distinctions between cultural viewpoints ironically gives rise to a position in which it is impossible to give voice to feminist concerns:

> If it is not a female subject who provides the normative model for a feminist politics, then what does? ... What constitutes the "who," the subject, for whom feminism seeks emancipation? If there is no subject, who is left to emancipate? (1990, p. 327).

The position of theorists within cultural psychology then is to be sensitive not only to the need to avoid stereotypy, but also to the need to avoid stances that overlook the meaningful consistencies that can be located in cultural beliefs and practices. This type of stance is regarded as critical in making it possible to give weight to cultural outlooks that are currently downplayed or overlooked in the formation of basic psychological theory and is seen as no different in kind from the type of stance adopted more generally in developmental psychology in making claims about age-related trends.

Context Dependent Nature of Cultural Influences

Whereas some work from an individualism/collectivism perspective has portrayed cultural influences on behavior as non–contextually dependent (e.g., Oyserman, Coon, & Kemmelmeier, 2002), this does not represent the claims and research findings from a cultural psychology perspective. Rather, work from a cultural psychology perspective takes into account that psychological phenomena are contextually dependent and thus that cultural influences on psychological phenomena are contextually dependent as well.

Confusion regarding this point may exist because of some arguable misinterpretation by theorists regarding the nature of claims made within work in cultural psychology. For example, Turiel and Neff (2000) characterize some of the assertions of cultural theorists as bearing on non–contextually dependent cross-cultural differences—claims that, when formulated in this way, can be easily refuted:

> Members of collectivistic societies are said to subordinate personal goals to those of the group, to make duty-based moral judgments, and to have a sociocentric and interdependent view of the self. Members of individualistic societies are said to make personal goals primary, to make rights-based moral judgments, and to have an egocentric and independent view of self. However ... it is not so clear that the moral reasoning of individual Americans can be characterized as predominately individualistic. ... Americans have multiple ways of thinking about the social world that includes concerns with the personal and the collective, and the application of these principles varies between situational contexts (Turiel & Neff, 2000, p. 287).

This type of conclusion may be criticized as a "straw man" position that overlooks the fact that work from a cultural psychology perspective routinely builds in contextual/context variation and is not making claims about non–contextually dependent group differences. It also fails to recognize that the use of labels by cultural psychologists represents a

means of expanding psychological constructs and of contributing to basic psychological theory rather than an effort to make claims about the existence of decontextualized group differences in behavior. To give an example, in arguing for a "morality of caring," Gilligan (1977, 1982) was not asserting that girls and women always reason in terms of caring and never give weight to justice issues. Rather, her point was to identify a qualitatively distinct approach to moral reasoning that, she correctly noted, was not then presently represented in psychological theory, with its exclusive focus on the "morality of justice." Likewise, in using the summary label of an "individually oriented morality of caring" versus a "duty-based morality of caring" to refer to some of the consistent differences that I observed across studies in views of interpersonal morality emphasized by Hindu Indian as compared with European-American populations (Miller, 1994), my focus was also to expand theoretical understandings of morality and not to stereotype cultural differences. To give another example, in recently arguing for a developmental model focused on "symbiotic harmony" rather than on "individuation-separation," cultural psychologists Rothbaum, Pott, Azuma, Miyake, and Weisz (2000) sought conceptually to expand present visions of the endpoints of psychological development. No claim was being made that U.S. adolescents always emphasize autonomy, or in all cases are more autonomous than Japanese adolescents, or that Japanese adolescents only form symbiotic ties with others.

In acknowledging that psychological effects are always contextually dependent and in stipulating that culture cannot be reduced to a mere contextual factor, work from a cultural psychology underscores the importance of attending both to culture and context in psychological explanation as well as underscores their mutually constitutive nature. It is not considered enough to attend to the ecological context but rather attention must be given as well to its symbolic significance, just as an attention to symbolic aspects of culture alone is insufficient without consideration of ecological dimensions of the context. For example, comparative research on attachment conducted among middle class and working class Puerto Rican and European-American mothers revealed that the outlook of the mothers was influenced not only by the symbolic meaning systems of their respective cultural communities or by the ecological contextual factor of socioeconomic status but that these two types of considerations interacted (Harwood, Miller, & Irizarry, 1995). Thus, for example, the tendency to emphasize more controling childrearing values was associated with lower socioeconomic status only among the European-American mothers and not linked to lower socioeconomic status among the Puerto Rican mothers. In another example, experimental research on the self descriptions of U.S. and Japanese adult populations both predicted and observed culturally dependent patterns of cross-cultural differences (Cousins, 1989). U.S. respondents employed more abstract self-descriptions on a decontextualized rather than contextualized self-description procedure, whereas Japanese respondents displayed the reverse contextual effect. This interaction of culture and context was interpreted as reflecting the differential meaning of the contextual manipulation in each culture, with Japanese respondents experiencing it as unnatural to describe the self in the condition that supplied no information about the context and U.S. respondents experiencing the decontextualized task as the most meaningful (Cousins, 1989). In sum, within cultural psychology, explanation attends not only to the situational factors typically considered in all psychological explanation, but also to cultural meanings that impact on how contexts are understood and on their impact on psychological responses.

Pragmatic Relativism

A key theoretical premise of cultural psychology is the adoption of pragmatic relativism as a stance that forms a middle ground between the poles of either absolute universalism or

extreme relativism. In adopting this position, work within cultural psychology embraces a position that is consonant with the thrust of work on moral reasoning from distinct domain and Kohlbergian perspectives.

Theorists from these various perspectives agree on the need for cultural sensitivity and for gaining familiarity with and understanding the culturally specific knowledge systems and values that affect the meanings that behaviors are given in different cultural settings. Thus, there is agreement that a universalistic stance that accords no weight to cultural meanings in moral appraisal is ethnocentric and morally objectionable. Equally, all of the various perspectives eschew an extreme relativism that requires evaluating practices in terms of purely local criteria. This kind of thrust is articulated forcefully, for example, in recent work by Turiel and his colleagues that has explored the moral outlooks of persons who are in subordinate positions within social hierarchies and whose outlooks may tend to differ from those in dominant social positions (Turiel, 1998a, 1998b; Turiel & Wainryb, 1994, 2000). Notably, in terms of cultural psychology, this kind of sensibility may be seen in the argument made by Bruner regarding the need to precede with as complete an understanding of local cultural viewpoints as possible in appraising social practices:

> Constructivism's basic claim is simply that knowledge is "right" or "wrong" in light of the perspective we have chosen to assume. Rights and wrongs of this kind—however well we can test them—do not sum to absolute truths and falsities. The best we can hope for is that we be aware of our own perspective and those of others when we make our claims of "rightness" and "wrongness." (1990, p. 25)

Likewise, Shweder links cultural psychology with culturally grounded forms of comparative moral appraisal rather than with extreme relativism:

> ... my version of cultural psychology fully acknowledges that there is no way to avoid making critical judgments about good and bad, right and wrong, true and false, efficient and inefficient. ... any culture deserving of respect, must be defensible in the face of criticism from "outside." Indeed, in my view one of the distinctive features of cultural psychology is that it is willing to try to make that defense, representing the "inside" point of view in such a way that it can be understood, perhaps appreciated, or at the very least tolerated from an "outside" point of view. (2000, p. 216)

Reflecting this type of position, in their recent edited volume examining issues of culture conflict involving immigrant populations in the U.S., Shweder, Minow, and Markus (2002) explore the difficult decisions and weightings of moral sensibilities that must occur in cases in which the native practices of immigrant populations are illegal to achieve public policy that is both culturally sensitive and ethically sound. If theorists such as Shweder and the other contributors to the volume subscribed to an extreme moral relativism, there would be no need for such an exploration, because in all cases, local practices within a family would be privileged.

It is then important to recognize that this search for morally defensible yet culturally sensitive grounds for understanding cultural practices informs both work in cultural psychology and work from distinct domain and Kohlbergian perspectives, with the differences between the viewpoints more a matter of degree rather than of fundamental agenda. Researchers within cultural psychology are open to acknowledging the role of social meanings in affecting what is considered harm or rights violations. However, the stance that they adopt does not represent an extreme relativism but a recognition that the

meanings accorded to practices affect their implications and may influence their moral status. Thus, for example, whereas from the perspective of a culture such as Sweden, the common practice of U.S. parents employing spanking as a means of disciplining their children tends to be judged as objectionable, within a sizeable number of U.S. families, such practices are accorded positive meanings and may even be associated with positive adaptive outcomes (Baumrind, 1996). This suggests that a broad range of cultural practices may be acceptable in achieving culturally valued goals and that, to avoid ethnocentrism, moral appraisals must take this variability into account, even while applying standards that are not purely culturally relative. In sum, whereas appraisals of cultural practices tend to be more relativistic within cultural psychology than in the distinct domain or cognitive developmental approaches to morality, this difference is not reflective of the endorsement of extreme moral relativism or of a culturally blind ethnocentrism within any of the approaches.

CULTURAL INFLUENCES ON MORAL OUTLOOKS

A major contribution of work in cultural psychology to understanding moral development is to identify dimensions of moral reasoning that are presently not fully taken into account in existing psychological theories. Work from a cultural psychology perspective empirically supports the universality of concerns with justice and welfare in moral outlooks as well as of distinctions between issues of morality, social convention, and personal choice. However, as discussed next, it also highlights cultural influences on perception of harm and injustice, qualitative differences in moralities of caring, as well as cultural variability in the role of spiritual concerns in moral outlooks.

Culture and Justice Reasoning

The universality of at least some moral concern with justice issues has been established on both content and formal levels in cross-cultural Kohlbergian research (e.g., Edwards, 1986; Snarey, 1985) as well as in cultural psychological research utilizing the short answer methodology developed by Turiel and his colleagues (e.g., Miller & Bersoff, 1992; Shweder et al., 1987). On a content level, this universality is seen in findings of some concern with harm or injustice in all known cultural groups and of substantial, although not complete, overlap in the types of issues regarded as instances of harm or injustice (e.g., Bersoff & Miller, 1993; Miller & Bersoff, 1992; Snarey, 1985). On a formal level, certain formal distinctions are also made universally. Thus, as Shweder (1982) suggests, both the abstract concept of avoiding harm as well as the abstract principle of justice or of equality of treatment of like cases are found in all moral codes. However, even with this cross-cultural commonality, marked cultural variation exists in the identification of acts of harm and injustice as well as in the priority given to justice considerations relative to competing moral and nonmoral concerns.

Cultural Constructions of Harm and Rights Violations. Cultural meaning systems may be seen to impact on the perception of acts as involving harm or rights violations. This occurs because to instantiate the abstract concepts of harm and injustice in particular cases consideration must be given to conceptions of personhood as well as to the boundaries of the self, conceptions defined in culturally variable ways and based on culturally variable knowledge presuppositions. For example, one must have some criteria for recognizing which entities in the environment qualify as persons and how expansively to define

boundaries of the self, such as whether the right to protection from harm extends to nonhu-man entities and whether it extends to beliefs and values (Shweder, 1982; Shweder et al., 1997). Equally, to determine that a particular action is discriminatory or unjust requires the application of a content standard for deciding that a case is sufficiently similar or different to another case to be treated as alike or different (e.g., content based criteria on which to decide that a 15-year-old should be treated differently from a middle-aged adult and not be granted a drivers license whereas an 80-year-old should be treated the same and granted one).

In holding contrasting definitions of personhood, views of territories of the self as well as definitions of what constitutes harm, individuals from different cultural backgrounds have been found to vary widely in their concrete moral judgments about issues involving potential justice concerns. Vasudev and Hummel (1987), for example, illustrate how Brah-min respondents in India react to Kohlbergian moral dilemmas with a more encompassing conception of human life than shown typically by U.S. respondents or than assumed by Kohlberg (1971). Rather than limit protection from harm to humans, protection from harm is extended to all forms of life, resulting in a stance that treats vegetarianism as a moral matter. As the following Indian respondent argued when asked in response to the Heinz dilemma whether Heinz should steal to save the life of his pet animal:

> One makes choices between many forms of life, but the overall guiding or spiritual principle should be that all forms of life are of value. In the spiritual tradition, for example, carelessly or needlessly breaking a leaf on a flower is also construed as an act of violence. ... We in India are vegetarians; the principle of vegetarianism is that life should not be destroyed. (Vasudev & Hummel, 1987, p. 115)

Research also points to cases in which the views of harm and rights that are maintained in the U.S. and in certain other Western populations are more encompassing than those emphasized in certain non-Western communities. Thus, in an investigation that contrasted a secular U.S. adult population to an orthodox religious population in India, it was ob-served that Indians were more prone than U.S. respondents to treat practices involving gender inequality as morally desirable rather than morally objectionable (e.g., unequal inheritance of men and women) (Shweder et al., 1987). Equally, in an example involving individual differences, the tendency of U.S. adolescents to consider abortion to be im-moral as compared with being a matter for personal decision making has been observed to reflect contrasting definitions of personhood and associated assessments of whether or not abortion constitutes an act of harm (Smetana, 1981).

The argument is made by theorists from a distinct domain perspective that these types of cultural differences arise from contrasting real-world knowledge assumptions that are brought to bear in determining whether a particular behavior entails harm rather than from fundamental variation in moral codes (Turiel et al., 1987; Wainryb, 1991). From this perspective, the tendency of Indian respondents to consider it immoral for an eldest son to have a haircut and eat chicken the day after his father's death (Shweder et al., 1987) is seen as reflecting respondents' "unearthly belief-mediated" understandings that such behavior would bring harm to the father through causing his soul not to receive salvation (Turiel et al., 1987). From the perspective of this type of interpretation then, whereas culture is seen as providing knowledge assumptions that impact on individuals' interpretations of the nature of reality, it is not viewed as giving rise to fundamental differences in the tendency to view acts of harm and injustice as immoral. Furthermore, it is assumed that differences in moral outlooks may be resolved through rational analysis that assesses the relative adequacy of contrasting epistemological assumptions.

Although theorists from a cultural psychology perspective concur with this argument from a distinct domain perspective about the need to take culturally based knowledge assumptions into account in interpreting cultural differences in moral outlook (Wainryb, 1991), they differ with the assumption that it is possible to fully adjudicate differences in moral outlook on a rational basis and question the informative nature of the analytic stance that assumes that cultural knowledge may be fully held constant in this way while appraising moral reasoning. As discussed, cultural meaning systems encompass not only representational knowledge but also constitutive presuppositions that are not fully rationally or functionally based. This implies then that categorization of experience (e.g., deciding that a fetus qualifies to be treated as a person) reflects, in part, values that may not be empirically adjudicated by obtaining more facts about a situation. Equally, the analytic stance of attempting to appraise cultural differences in moral outlook while holding constant cultural differences in beliefs and knowledge systems is seen as a position that, in effect, attempts to assess cultural influences on moral outlook while at the same time analytically holding such differences constant. Whereas it is considered valuable to identify the contrasting culturally based meanings that contribute to cultural variation in moral outlook, it is seen as ultimately reductive and untrue to everyday phenomenal experience to partition out those influences to tap a measure of "pure" moral outlook.

In sum, culture plays an important role in everyday justice reasoning through affecting the interpretation of harm and injustice. Justice reasoning, the present considerations imply, cannot be simply self-constructed based on inductively assessing the degree to which actions involve harm or rights violations but reflects, in part, culturally variable epistemological and constitutive presuppositions about the nature of social reality.

Cultural Variation in Priority Given to Justice Considerations. Cultural work also indicates that, even in cases in which individuals' culturally based knowledge assumptions are comparable and they agree about the moral status of the issues of justice and harm involved, cultural variation may exist in the priority that individuals give to justice as compared to competing moral concerns. In these cases, the source of cultural variation lies in certain cultural groups giving relatively greater weight to issues other than justice or individual rights in their moral judgments.

Indirect evidence for this type of effect may be found in the marked cross-cultural differences observed in research on Kohlbergian measures of moral judgment. As Snarey (1985) reported in a survey of Kohlbergian research conducted in over 45 culturally diverse samples, most populations do not reason in postconventional terms but rather tend to emphasize Stage 3 conventional reasoning. Thus, only approximately 6% of responses observed in this cross-cultural Kohlbergian research reflected a mixture of postconventional and conventional concerns (Stage 4 and 5), with only 2% purely postconventional in nature. In emphasizing Stage 3 reasoning, respondents were giving priority in the Kohlbergian dilemmas not to the issues of justice and individual rights but to matters involving role obligations. This sensitivity to the justice issues but prioritizing of the competing interpersonal themes is illustrated, for example, in the following response given by a Kenyan respondent to the Kohlbergian "Joe Dilemma," involving the issue of whether a son should refuse to grant his father's apparently unfair request:

(If a father breaks his word), it will cause hatred because the son will be angry, saying, "I wanted to follow my own intentions, but my father cheated: he permitted me and then refused me"...So it is bad...(However) the one for the son is worse. Imagine a child disobeying my own words, is he really normal? (Edwards, 1986, p. 425)

The respondent is aware of justice concerns, as seen in his reference to the father having cheated, but accords these concerns lesser priority as compared with the obligation of the son to obey his father's wishes. Although this type of response would have been scored by Kohlberg as merely conventional in nature, it gives evidence of a respondent giving more importance to communitarian than to justice issues (Snarey & Keljo, 1991).

Further evidence that cultural differences exist in the priority given to justice issues relative to competing moral concerns may be seen in experimental research among U.S. and Indian adult and child populations that tapped reasoning about hypothetical conflict situations, in which fulfillment of a justice issue conflicts with fulfilling a competing interpersonal responsibility (Miller & Bersoff, 1992). An idiographic procedure was employed in constructing these conflict situations to insure that individuals viewed the individual justice and interpersonal breaches involved as equivalent in their seriousness. Consonant with the patterns observed in Kohlbergian research, the Indian respondents tended more frequently to give priority to the competing interpersonal obligations than did the U.S. respondents in non–life-threatening situations. Thus, for example, whereas virtually all of the U.S. respondents judged that it was morally wrong to steal a train ticket even if this was the only way to fulfill the interpersonal responsibility of attending a best friend's wedding, a majority of the Indian respondents judged that it was morally required to take part in the wedding, even if this meant having to engage in the justice breach of stealing the ticket.

In sum, cultural variation exists in the moral priority given to justice issues compared with competing moral concerns. Even when cultural groups agree on the moral status of justice issues in a particular case, their judgments may differ as a functioning of competing moral commitments that they hold.

Cultural Variation in Responsibility Judgments.

Cultural Variation in Responsibility Judgments.   Although research on judgments of responsibility has tended to proceed independently of work on moral judgment, judgments of responsibility are implicated theoretically in moral judgment and constitute a significant source of cultural variability in everyday moral reasoning. The domain of rule-governed behavior involves voluntary action, in which the agent is judged to have sufficient control over his or her behavior that he or she can at least potentially be held responsible for performing it. An agent tends to be judged less responsible for a given behavior to the extent that the behavior is unintended, the agent lacks the capabilities to understand the consequences of his or her action or to control its execution, or the behavior is influenced by situational pressures (Darley & Zanna, 1982; Fincham & Jaspars, 1980; Heider, 1958).

Evidence that responsibility judgments may be a source of cultural variability in moral judgment may be seen in a cross-cultural study that tapped both U.S. and Indian adults' and children's moral appraisals of justice violations committed under potentially extenuating circumstances (Bersoff & Miller, 1993; see also Miller & Luthar, 1989). It was observed that more Indian than U.S. respondents absolved agents of accountability for justice breaches that had been undertaken in response to situationally induced emotional duress or under circumstances that involved agent immaturity. In turn, not only did U.S. respondents take these types of potentially extenuating circumstances into account less frequently, but they took them into account in differing ways. Thus, strikingly, for U.S. respondents their domain categorization of justice breaches shifted from viewing the breaches as moral violations when the breaches were presented in the abstract to viewing such actions as matters of personal choice when they were presented in the context of potentially extenuating contextual circumstances (e.g., arguing that it was a moral violation to break into a locked house in the case when no extenuating circumstances are present

but that it is the agent's own personal decision whether to do this under circumstances in which the agent has been frightened by an unexpected noise). These observed cross-cultural differences result from contrasting culturally based knowledge presuppositions and values, including assumptions regarding the degree agents of different ages and under different situational pressures are regarded as vulnerable to situational influences.

In sum, work on moral accountability judgments provides further evidence that differences in moral categorization of justice breaches may occur even in cases in which there is cross-cultural agreement on the moral status of the justice issues involved. Given that everyday justice reasoning does not occur in relation to abstract cases but always involves contextual circumstances, the present considerations highlight ways that culturally variable background assumptions can give rise to marked concrete differences in everyday moral reasoning.

Culture and Moralities of Caring

Responsiveness to the needs of others has traditionally been viewed as having a moral status that is subordinate to that of justice. It is argued that, in contrast to the negative injunctions of the morality of justice, positive obligations to help others in close relationships are too unbounded in scope to be fully realizable and thus cannot be considered as moral duties (Kohlberg, 1981; Nunner-Winkler, 1984). From this perspective, caring for a friend is regarded as morally desirable but ultimately a matter for personal decision making. Thus, in both the Kohlbergian framework and in the distinct domain perspective, obligations to be responsive to the needs of others in close relationships are considered superogatory expectations that are discretionary in nature rather than matters of duty (Kahn, 1992; Kohlberg, Levine, & Hewer, 1983). Culturally based research challenges these assumptions in highlighting the need to expand the moral domain to include issues of caring and friendship as well as in highlighting the existence of multiple culturally grounded moralities of caring.

In a cultural challenge to the Kohlbergian framework, Gilligan (1977, 1982) argued for the existence of a morality of caring that treats responsiveness to meet the needs of others in close relationships as fully moral. Gilligan maintained that through processes of gender-based socialization, boys develop an autonomous sense of self that gives rise to a morality of justice and that is compatible with the individualism of the larger culture (Gilligan & Wiggins, 1988). In contrast, girls develop a connected view of self that gives rise to a morality of caring, but that is culturally devalued. Although later research challenged the assertion that moralities of caring and of justice are gender related (Walker, 1984), it has supported the existence of a morality of caring and the claim that theories of justice morality need to be broadened to encompass interpersonal responsibilities.

Cultural critiques have extended the work of Gilligan in making the further claim that the morality of caring framework of Gilligan itself is culturally bound. Thus, it has been argued that the view of socialization emphasized in Gilligan's model gives little weight to cultural processes (Miller, 1994). In Gilligan's approach, the morality of caring is portrayed as developing outside of the larger individualistic values of the culture and only the morality of justice is seen as culturally based. However, it must be assumed that socialization of the morality of caring always occurs within a cultural context and thus that the form of this morality is culturally influenced.

In a program of cross-cultural research that we conducted, we demonstrated that the approach to the morality of caring identified by Gilligan is culturally specific and that a qualitatively distinct approach to the morality of caring is found among Hindu Indian

populations. In a series of studies, it has been shown that Indian respondents, as compared with U.S. respondents, show a greater tendency to view meeting the needs of others in close relationships as a matter of moral duty rather than of personal choice (Miller & Bersoff, 1995; Miller et al., 1992; Miller & Luthar, 1989), take contextual factors more fully into account in their moral reasoning (Bersoff & Miller, 1992; Miller & Luthar, 1989), give greater weight to interpersonal responsibilities over competing justice obligations (Miller & Bersoff, 1992), treat interpersonal reciprocity in moral rather than personal choice terms (Miller & Bersoff, 1994), and regard moral responsiveness to family and friends as non-contingent on personal affinity and liking (Miller & Bersoff, 1998). Importantly, in each of these investigations, individuals' responses varied depending on the contextual factors being manipulated, with cross-cultural commonalities observed in addition to cross-cultural differences. To give some examples, although Indians showed a greater tendency than U.S. respondents to categorize helping others in moral rather than personal choice terms, even U.S. respondents considered helping as obligatory in cases involving extreme need (e.g., Miller et al., 1990; Miller & Bersoff, 1992). Also, although U.S. respondents tended to emphasize personal choice considerations more than did Indian respondents, even Indians categorized helping in personal choice terms in certain cases that did not involve welfare concerns or in-group bonds (e.g., Miller et al., 1990; Miller & Bersoff, 1994).

The voluntaristic approach to interpersonal commitments observed among U.S. respondents in the studies discussed is congruent with the claims of the morality of caring framework of Gilligan; however, the pattern of results observed among Indians does not conform to the predictions of the morality of caring framework. It was for this reason that new adjectives were introduced to refer to each of these two broad types of perspectives, with the pattern of results observed among U.S. respondents described as reflecting an "individually oriented" morality of caring and that observed among Indian respondents described as a "duty-based" morality of caring (Miller, 1994). In making this claim, the only point was to adopt theoretical language to signal that the pattern of results observed in India are not well captured by Gilligan's morality of caring framework and that there are multiple forms rather than only one form that the "morality of caring" takes. Notwithstanding the charges forwarded by theorists from a distinct domain perspective (e.g., Neff, 2001; Turiel, 2002), the intent of such a label was to contribute to making basic psychological theory more culturally inclusive and not to make the claim that response modes are uniform within each cultural group. As noted, all of the studies documented overlap in responses between cultures and contextual variation within cultures. In fact, even in the paper in which the distinction was first introduced, it was noted (Miller, 1994) that the labels were not intended to map directly onto the individualism/collectivism dichotomy and that more subtle analyses would be expected to reveal other qualitatively distinct approaches to interpersonal morality.

Research conducted in other non-Western cultures has, in fact, identified other approaches to interpersonal morality that differ in important ways from those captured either by the individually oriented approach of Gilligan's morality of caring framework or the duty-based approach identified in India. Thus, for example, research in Japan has documented the existence of approaches to the morality of caring based on senses of *omoiyari* or empathy within one's ingroup (Shimizu, 2001). Within such an approach, emphasis tends to be placed on maintaining good interpersonal relations. Also, in another example, work with various Chinese cultural populations points to the contrasting premises that underlie moral outlooks grounded in Confucian and Taoist thought (Dien, 1982; Ma, 1988, 1989, 1992, 1997). Central to these outlooks is the concept of *jen*, an affectively grounded concept that encompasses such ideas as love, benevolence, and filial

piety. In still another example, concerns with social harmony have been observed among Polish populations (Niemczynski, Czyzowska, Pourkos, & Mirsk, 1988) as well among Black Caribs of British Hondura (Gorsuch & Barnes, 1973) and Nigerian Igbo populations (Okonkwo, 1997). In fact, in a review of cross-cultural Kohlbergian research, Snarey and Keljo (1991) make the case for the existence of a *Gemeinschaft* voice of community that they argue was erroneously scored at the conventional level in cross-cultural Kohlbergian research and that represent qualitatively distinctive and culturally diverse forms of the morality of caring.

In sum, the critique of Kohlbergian theory offered by Gilligan pointed to the need to broaden work on morality to include interpersonal responsiveness to family and friends as fully moral concerns rather than to limit morality to justice considerations. What cross-cultural research has added to this insight is to highlight that Gilligan's morality of caring framework constitutes only one culturally specific version of interpersonal morality, with alternative culturally variable moralities of caring found in different sociocultural settings.

Culture and Moralities of Divinity. Finally, a major thrust of cultural research has been to recognize that moral codes encompass not only issues of harm, justice, welfare, friendship, and family ties but entail in many cases spiritual concerns. It was this insight that led Shweder and his colleagues to argue for the existence of a tripartite approach to morality that encompasses concerns with "divinity" in addition to concerns with "autonomy" or justice and concerns with "community" or caring (Shweder et al., 1997).

Some of the earliest evidence for the importance of spiritual considerations in moral reasoning appeared in cross-cultural Kohlbergian responses that revealed religious concerns as informing individual outlooks. It was observed, for example, that Igbo Nigerians base their responses to Kohlbergian moral dilemmas on what they consider to be the revealed truth of a divine being rather than on a secular outlook (Okonkwo, 1997) and that the moral judgments of Algerian respondents are premised on a belief in God as the creator and supreme authority of the universe (Bouhmama, 1984). Research has also demonstrated that orthodox Hindu Indian respondents justify their responses to the Heinz dilemma on the basis of the negative consequences of suffering and spiritual degradation that they believe would ensue from different courses of action (Shweder & Much, 1987) as well as that spiritual concerns underlie the concerns with *karma* and *dharma* in the outlook of samples of Buddhist monks (Huebner & Garrod, 1991).

Notably, a concern with spiritual considerations has also been documented in work with U.S. populations. Haidt, Koller, and Dias (1993), for example, demonstrated that lower class Brazilian children, as well as lower class African-American children, tend to treat certain actions they regard as disgusting or disrespectful in moral terms, such as eating one's dog, even while considering such actions to be harmless. Likewise, Jensen (1997) observed that concerns with sanctity and spirituality inform the outlook of orthodox Baptist adults from the U.S. South. As may be seen in the sample response reproduced below, a practice such as divorce tends to be regarded within this community as a moral affront or sacrilege, in constituting a violation of God's will:

> Divorce to me means (that) you slap God in the face. In other words, you bring reproach upon God. . . . we could lose salvation . . . and that's why I think divorce is shameful. (Jensen, 1997, p. 342)

Even in populations that are secular or at least non-orthodox in their religious outlooks, spiritual considerations have been observed to inform moral viewpoints. In a study of

the moral conceptions of Canadian adolescents and adults, Walker, Pitts, Hennig, and Matsuba (1995) noted the salience of concerns with religion, faith, and spirituality in individuals' moral reasoning, concluding that "(f)or many people, their moral framework and understanding is to some extent, if not entirely, embedded in their religion and faith" (p. 403). In another example, a qualitative study of humanitarians and social activists documented that these individuals maintain deep spiritual commitments that underlie their moral codes and that, in part, inspire their involvement in social and political action (Colby & Damon, 1992).

In interpreting the implications of the emphasis on spiritual considerations in moral outlooks, the claim has been made that religious concerns are conventional rather than moral in character (Nucci & Turiel, 1993; Turiel & Neff, 2000), an interpretation favored as well by Kohlberg (1981). In support of this interpretation, Nucci and Turiel (1993) demonstrated that in asking populations of Amish-Mennonite, Dutch Reform Calvinist, and Jewish children whether particular behaviors that involve either religious issues (e.g., premarital sex) or harm (e.g., hitting) would be alright to engage in if there is nothing in the Bible about the act and God had not said anything about it, children treated the religious issues as contingent on God's Word and the matters of harm as noncontingent. This type of methodology, however, poses counterfactuals that arguably may not fully succeed in tapping the perceived moral status of religious injunctions. In contrast to acts with overt harmful consequences, such as hitting, acts that involve spiritual violations, such as premarital sex, have a moral status that is not based on harm and that may be known only through reliance on such authorities as Scripture or the Word of God. Thus, whereas children can observe that the harm of hitting remains, even if God has not said anything about such behavior, they may interpret God's act of not saying anything about premarital sex as implying that there is nothing wrong with such activity. In this case, children would be regarding God not as a conventional authority with the arbitrary power to determine right or wrong, a stance that would reflect a conventional orientation, but rather would be viewing God as an all-knowing source of enlightenment through whom what is morally right or wrong can be known, a moral stance.

In sum, existing research suggests that spiritual issues impact on moral reasoning either indirectly through affecting individuals' real-world knowledge presuppositions or directly through forming an alternative type of moral concern. Spiritual concerns appear to constitute both a source of knowledge about morality, through the vehicle of faith, as well as a type of moral concern based on considerations such as purity and sanctity rather than on considerations of harm or welfare.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS AND CONCLUSION

Culturally based research on morality has increased in recent years, with such work being conducted not only by researchers associated with cultural psychology but by researchers associated with social constructivist perspectives (e.g., Nucci, Saxe, & Turiel, 2000; Turiel, 2002). To build on this growing base of cross-cultural theory and research findings, it is important to approach research questions taking into account the valuable insights that the various perspectives have to offer.

One valuable area of future interchange between these various approaches to moral development is to build conceptual models that integrate a concern with culture with a concern with development. A critique that may be offered of approaches to moral development within cultural psychology is the failure to date to offer a well-developed developmental model. Although culturally based research has been undertaken that examines

the socialization of morality in everyday interaction (e.g., Edwards, 1985; Fung, 1999), no systematic, culturally based theories have been offered that capture the developmental changes occurring in children's moral outlooks. Theorists within cultural psychology do not consider enculturation to represent a passive process in which the child merely absorbs the understandings of his or her culture but rather an active one in which meanings are transformed, created, and transformed, even as they influence an individual. However, to date there has been limited exploration of this process by cultural researchers. In turn, it may be argued that whereas researchers in the distinct domain and Kohlbergian traditions have offered developmental theories of morality, their approaches give little weight to cultural influences on the course, direction, and endpoints of child development. It requires then taking into account the insights of both of these traditions to succeed in formulating models of morality that are simultaneously cultural and developmental in nature (Schwartz, 1981).

The area of dissent and cultural change represents another example of a domain in which greater integration is needed between these various approaches to moral development. Although theorists from a distinct domain perspective have conducted important work focusing on questions of dissent, to date this work has tended to give limited attention to respects in which dissent is expressed in culturally variable ways. In this work, there has been a concern with uncovering the contrasting outlooks of individuals in nondominant positions within societies and in documenting that the privileges that certain individuals of higher status are given may entail the oppression of individuals of subordinate rank. However, a limitation of this work has been its tendency to frame research questions in ways that have limited cultural sensitivity. Thus, for example, research conclusions that portray family life in cultures such as India as reflecting arrangements in which men have most of the rights and women most of the duties (Neff, 2001) must be interpreted with caution, given the failure in such research to include probes that ask directly about the responsibilities of men within families (responsibilities that notably are not identical to those of women) and the framing of questions in terms of concepts that tend not to be applied spontaneously by the respondents themselves in everyday interaction (such as use of the concept of rights to refer to the privileges associated with different role relationships in Indian families). In turn, concern with the cultural meanings informing dissent is more prominent in research within cultural psychology. To give an example, in a qualitative study of family interaction, Much (1997) examined the motives of a Hindu Indian adolescent who, against the wishes of both his parents and the cultural beliefs of his community, stopped wearing the Sacred Thread, a holy Hindu Indian religious symbol, because he considered it only a relatively unimportant social convention that merely served to identify him to others as a member of the Brahmin caste. As Much noted, although this action constituted a serious challenge to the authority of both his parents and the larger community, it was framed in a way that did not challenge deeper premises of the culture, such as the fundamental principles of hierarchy and the importance of Brahmin identity. Although researchers in cultural psychology thus tend to give weight to local meanings in their analyses, to date they have paid only relatively limited attention to the perspective of individuals in subordinate social positions. It requires then integrating the attention to subordinate social status that has been privileged in the distinct domain tradition with the attention to local meanings that has been privileged in cultural psychology to attain a fuller appreciation of both the universal and culturally specific aspects of dissent.

More generally, the present considerations underscore the need for greater interchange between researchers in cultural psychology and researchers representing other contemporary traditions in moral development. To realize this goal, it is critical for researchers to

appreciate the subtlety of contrasting perspectives and to avoid the tendency to stereotype or to dismiss the claims being made in different traditions. Thus, for example, although it is valid for researchers within the distinct domain perspective to criticize limitations of some work in cultural psychology that is explicitly framed in terms of the individualism/collectivism dichotomy, it becomes a stereotype when this type of criticism is applied in a wholesale way to dismiss all work in cultural psychology (e.g., Turiel, 2002). Likewise, evidence uncovered by cultural psychologists of life satisfaction in traditional gender roles within particular hierarchically structured societies (e.g., Menon & Shweder, 1998) cannot be taken to imply that there is no validity to the claims made by distinct domain theorists about perceived female oppression in such communities.

In conclusion, research on moral development within cultural psychology shares many of its major assumptions, goals, and agenda with work in other more universalistic traditions of research on moral development. This overlap implies that work in cultural psychology should be understood as complementing these alternative approaches, rather than as antithetical to them. It must be recognized that a major challenge for work on moral development is to take into account both culture and context as it explores common as well as culturally variable dimensions of moral outlooks.

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