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The Cultural Psychology of Emotion

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Abstract 120 words

Since Darwin's time, many scholars have seen emotions as a functional adaptation to social living (Ekman, 1992; Oatley & Jenkins, 1992; Tooby & Cosmides, 1990, 1992). Emotions signal the occurrence of pressing social problems or opportunities and provide heuristics for successful behavior (Oatley & Jenkins, 1996). One of the prime reasons that emotions have likely evolved is to monitor and negotiate our social relations.

These social relations vary across cultural contexts. Human beings do not live in uniform worlds. Therefore, their emotions are not, or not most of the time, responses to universal emotional events. Human emotional behavior is not aimed at achieving general, universal goals. Rather, human beings always live in specific environments. As the anthropologist Geertz puts it:

> "People who are independent of time, place, and circumstance do not now and have not ever existed, and by the very nature of things could not exist.…becoming human is becoming individual, and one becomes individual under the guidance of cultural patterns and historically created systems of meaning in terms of which we give form, order, point, and direction to our lives." (C. Geertz, 1973), p. 49)

In other words, human beings always function in a specific cultural space and emotions help navigating this cultural space.

Both the particular relationship arrangements, and the meanings that animate and justify these arrangements, vary across cultures. Successfully navigating the cultural space means specifically engaging in relationships with other people. Therefore, emotions have to signal culturally relevant relational opportunities and problems, and motivate a culturally appropriate and effective course of action. For example, an emotion signals a *particular* threat which derives its meaning from the cultural relational arrangements and their meanings –the threat of losing honor, for example-- rather than merely danger in general. Similarly, the action motivated by this threat is the type of escape or preventive behavior that, given the particular cultural practices of relating, makes sense and has a good chance for success –avoiding contact with men, for example, when you are a Bedouin woman (Abu-Lughod, 1986). The behavior is not escape in general (see Shweder, 2003 for a similar view). In sum, the functionality of emotions within a socio-cultural context requires that they be coordinated with the specific cultural meanings and practices.

We conceptualize emotions as multi-facetted, open phenomena that are shaped to be effective in the socio-cultural context in which they occur. The primary facets of emotion are emotional experience, which is among others constituted by the appraisal of the situation and action readiness, expressive behavior, autonomic and central nervous system changes, and behavior. Our conceptualization of emotions is markedly different from the commonly held view that emotions are invariant states that, when triggered, manifest themselves in preprogrammed ways. By considering the fit of emotions into their cultural environment, we take a socio-culturally functional view.[1] The current chapter will review the evidence for systematic cross-cultural differences in emotional

experience as they are mutually constitutive with the cultural meanings and practices in which they occur.

Cultural Models

The central thesis of this chapter is that emotions within a socio-cultural context must accommodate the specific meanings and practices (Bruner, 2003), particularly those of self and relationships. We describe these meanings and practices as *cultural models* (cf. for similar constructs (Bruner, 1986, 1990; D'Andrade, 1984; D'Andrade & Strauss, 1992; Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, & Cain, 1998; Holland & Quinn, 1987; Markus, Mullally, & Kitayama, 1997; Shweder & Haidt, 2000).

Cultural models are not so much verbal propositions as ways that reality, including the psychological reality, is defined. These models reflect and foster the types of personhood and relationships that are sanctioned and condoned. They are manifest in everyday social interaction, the language, the public messages as conveyed by the media, books and educational policies (Markus et al., 1997) and, as we will argue in this chapter, in emotions. In each of these reality-constituting practices, certain ways of being and certain types of relating to others are afforded, expected, or shaped. A cultural model is decisive for what a person's world is like (Bruner, 1986), because it constitutes the means by which people make sense of and coordinate their feelings and actions alone and in concert with one another. Although cultural models are typically invisible to those that engage or enact them, they can be made more explicit in comparing different cultural models.

Throughout the chapter we will describe specific cultural models as they become manifest in emotional experience. Most research compares emotion in North American

and Japanese contexts. North American independent models highlight the boundaries of each individual, whereas interdependent Japanese models assume the mutual interdependence of people in relationships (Markus & Kitayama, 2003; Triandis, 1995). Consistently, emotions in independent, American contexts seem to highlight the individual as bounded, autonomous, and self-sufficient, and often entail influencing relationships in ways that reinforce the individual's autonomy. On the other hand, emotions in interdependent, Japanese contexts highlight and express the relatedness between people, and further action that leads to a strengthening of interpersonal bonds (Kitayama, Mesquita, & Karasawa, in press; Markus & Kitayama, 1994; Mesquita et al., 2005).

The comparison of independent North American and interdependent Japanese contexts has revealed that the patterns of emotional experience and behavior are subject to substantial variance. Thus this comparison has demonstrated the plasticity of emotions, and has therefore made a substantial contribution. It would be wrong to assume, on the basis of this research that there are two ways of having emotions, an independent and an interdependent way. The scant evidence on emotions in other interdependent cultures than East Asian suggests that emotions in different interdependent cultures can be experienced in very different ways, and the same might be true for independent contexts other than the North American main stream context. For example, research conducted among Mexicans, both those living inside and outside of the United States, suggests that emotions in Mexican interdependent contexts differ dramatically from those of Japanese interdependent contexts (discussed later in the chapter) Therefore, understanding the cultural shaping of emotion will requite moving beyond the dimension of independence

(individualism) and interdependence (collectivism) to the more detailed cultural models of self and relating. A detailed analysis of the functional role of emotions in specific social contexts will be necessary.

Importantly, we postulate that cultural models of self and relating afford and constraint emotional experience and behavior (Miller, 1997). In contrast to what some authors have suggested (Matsumoto & Yoo, in press), this is not the same as claiming that emotion representations are caused by culture, or in this case by cultural models of self and relating. We do not conceive of culture as the independent variable, and emotion as the dependent variable. Culture is not an entity, and it cannot, in that sense, be responsible for another entity, emotion. Rather, we see patterns of emotion as phenomena that constitute culture (Adams & Markus, 2004). The prevalent patterns of emotion differ across sociocultural contexts that may be demarcated not only by national boundaries, but also by age, religion, class, or gender. This way of viewing culture as *constituted by the prevalent emotion patterns* does not imply a strict homogeneity between the people within a cultural context.

Emotion and Emotional Experience

Emotions are central to social life (Frijda & Mesquita, 1994; Keltner & Haidt, 1999{Frijda, 1994 #227)). Among others, they reflect the meaning a given social context has to an individual, and they are heuristics for action, predisposing an individual towards action that promotes certain end-goals. Thus, emotions can be seen as links between the person and his or her environment. We postulated above that emotions must reflect the cultural models in which they occur, because the personal and social meaning of social

episodes and the desired personal and social end-states are implicated in the cultural models of self and relating.

Cultural shaping of emotions does not necessarily imply that everything about the emotion is culturally learned. It is possible and likely that the potential for particular aspects of emotion, such as certain configurations of the face or certain physiological responses is hard-wired. The extent to which this is the case is yet to be empirically established in full. However, the existence of hard-wired responses in no way negates the cultural constitution of emotions. The combinations, rates of occurrence, and meanings of hard-wired responses, and thus "what it is like to have an emotion", should be expected to vary widely, in ways that are consistent with the cultural model.

We would expect that cultural models shape responses at every level of the emotion: the appraisal of the event, action readiness, bodily changes, expressive and instrumental behavior, and conscious regulatory processes. Our view is different, therefore, from the one proposed by Levenson and his colleagues (this volume). We would predict that cultural differences emerge in each of the components, provided –and this is an important and often overlooked clause-- that emotions are studied in contexts that are *relevant* to the cultural models, that is, in contexts that are personally and relationally relevant. Thus we would predict cultural differences in experience (appraisal of the situation, action readiness), but also in expressive behavior, autonomic and central nervous system changes, and instrumental or relational behavior. Towards the end of this chapter we will argue that --so far-- comparative cultural research on these latter aspects of emotion has largely failed to appreciate the ways in which cultural models materialize in emotions due to a lack of consideration of the relevant cultural contexts. Thus, the

research paradigms used to study cross-cultural variation in behavior and nervous system activity were not designed toward finding cultural differences. Because culture-sensitive research can primarily be found in the domain of *emotional experience*, this will be the prime topic of this chapter.

Constituents of emotional experience. First, consistent with many current theories of emotions, we treat emotional experience as having content that can be meaningfully analyzed (Barrett, 2006; Barrett, Mesquita, Ochsner, & Gross, 2007; Ellsworth & Scherer, 2003; Frijda, 1986, 2006; Frijda, Kuipers, & Terschure, 1989; Scherer, 1984). In the current chapter, the focus is on those aspects of emotional experience that most directly implicate the relationship of an individual with his/her context: appraisals of the situation and action readiness. We thus assume that the meaning represented by these facets of emotion constitutes the core of emotional experience (see for similar views (Barrett, 2006; Clore & Ortony, 2000; Frijda, 2006). Importantly, the meaning of the situation and the projected action and goal fulfillment (i.e. action readiness) are considered central parts of the emotional experience itself. This is in contrast to many other theories of emotion that consider them peripheral to the actual emotion (e.g. Levenson et al., this volume).

Focal, normative or ideal representations of emotions. Emotional life in a culture is more than the added emotional responses that can be observed or are reported. Many cultures show unique regularities in the frequencies of certain responses that are better understood when one considers the focal, normative, and ideal representations of emotions in those cultures. The culturally unique shapes that the emotional lives in different cultures take are, among others, motivated by the central themes of cultural

models (Mesquita & Ellsworth, 2001; Mesquita & Frijda, 1992), ideal affect (Tsai, Knutson, & Fung, in press), and what anthropologists have referred to as emotional style (Middleton, 1989) or ethos (Schieffelin, 1985). "Ethos refers to the dominant emotional emphases, attitudes, and modes of expression of a culture as a whole (….) The concept of ethos has generally been used as a descriptive ethnographic characterization. However, to the extent that individuals regularly exhibit attitudes and moods characterized by the ethos, that ethos can be considered expressively normative. That is, it is culturally expected that a person feel a certain way and adopt a certain affective posture and expressive style in relation to particular events (….) A culture's ethos is thus not only a characterization of a style of feeling and behavior but also a model for it." (Schieffelin, 1985, pp.172-173). The second mission of this chapter will be to describe how focal, normative and ideal emotional representations are parts of the cultural models.

Overview of the Chapter

Our approach builds on the notion that emotional experience is always saturated with meaning, and that meaning is cultural (Bruner, 1986). Though emotions may and often do involve hard-wired processes, the meanings at the core of emotions are particularized to culture.

The first part of the chapter, then, aims to render the cultural shaping of emotion constituents transparent, indicating how emotional constituents themselves fit and contribute to the cultural models. The second part of the chapter will focus on systematic cultural differences in the focal, normative, and ideal representations of emotions, and what seem to be resultant regularities in emotional patterns.

Cultural Differences in the Constituents of Emotional Experience

When people in different cultures say they feel “angry”, they may refer to quite different experiences. In this section we start from the assumption that emotional experience can be described as an aggregate of the constituent meanings (Barrett et al., 2007; Frijda, 2006). We furthermore assume that the culturally most prevalent emotional experiences systematically reflect the cultural models of self and relating, and can thus be studied in a theory-driven and meaningful way (Mesquita, 2003; Mesquita & Markus, 2004). In the following sections we will discuss cultural differences in appraisal and in action readiness changes.

Appraisal

Appraisals are “psychological representations of emotional significance” (Clore & Ortony, 2000, p.32). Cultural models transpire in appraisals. Thus, independent appraisals will consist of the perceived impact of the situation for individual goals, whereas interdependent appraisals likely specify the impact of the situation on relational goals. Naturally, cultural models vary on more than just the dimension of individual versus relational meaning. More intricate descriptions of cultural models tend to provide better contexts for understanding the cultural specificity of appraisals.

What is the emotional situation? The appraisal of an emotional situation is rooted in the judgment of what the relevant stimulus is. Some have called this the appraisal dimension of “interest”: what is the situation that might be relevant for me? (Ellsworth, personal communication, 2004; (Frijda, 1986). There is some evidence that the parsing of reality is characterized by the pertinent cultural model.

In a recent experience sampling study by Oishi and his colleagues (Oishi, Diener, Scollon, & Biswas-Diener, 2004), the researchers found that whereas the social context

affected emotional experience in interdependent cultures, it did not in independent cultural contexts. Thus, according to this study emotions were experienced no differently in situations with others that without others in independent contexts, but emotional experiences in interdependent contexts were different depending on the presence of certain others. The way reality is parsed up appeared different.

In this study, American college students in the midwest (majority European), Hispanic students living in California, Japanese college students in Japan, and Indian college students in India completed a mood questionnaire five times a day. The mood questionnaires consisted of a positive and a negative affect scale. Each time they filled out the mood questionnaire, the respondents also indicated the nature of the situation in terms of who they were with. The six options were: Alone, with a friend, with a class mate/co-worker, with a romantic partner, with a stranger, and with family. Though cross-situational consistency of both positive and negative affect was prevalent across all four cultures, affect was more dependent on the type of situation in interdependent (Hispanic, Japanese) than independent (non-Hispanic American) cultures.[2] More specifically, in the Hispanic and Japanese groups the mean level of positive affect experienced in a family context was not significantly correlated with positive affect in a number of other social situations. In contrast, positive affect among European Americans was consistent across all six emotional situations. For negative affect, Hispanics were the only group to report different mean levels of affect in family contexts than for the other social situations; negative affect in the other three cultural groups was consistent across situations. It can be concluded that in all, particularly in the case of positive affect, the precise nature of

the social context was more consequential for the feelings of the interdependent cultural groups in this study than it was for the independent group.

Oishi and colleagues also calculated differences in the degree of *overall* within-person variability in affective experiences across situations. This was done by computing a standard deviation of mean positive and negative affect across six situations for each individual. In general, the standard deviation was larger for positive than for negative affect, meaning that the influence of the type of situation is larger for positive than for negative emotion. Furthermore, there were clear cultural differences in the direction one would expect. For positive emotions, the mean within-individual cross-situational variation was higher among Japanese and Hispanic respondents than among Americans, whereas for negative emotions all three interdependent cultural groups had a higher mean within-individual cross-situational variation than Americans. Therefore, within individuals the level of positive and negative emotion is more affected by the specific social situations in interdependent than in independent culture, consistent with the relational orientation prevalent in interdependent cultures. It should be noted that these differences in *within*-person cross-situational variation were found against the backdrop of robust universal *between*-person effects. The similarity in between-person effects meant that across cultures, a person's mean affect was predictive of his or her affect in different situations.

A study on emotional perception converges with the idea that the parsing of reality varies according to the different cultural models. In this study, respondents reported on someone else's emotional experience, rather than their own. Japanese and European Americans were presented with cartoon stimuli depicting a central person who

expressed anger, sadness, or happiness, surrounded by four other people whose facial expressions varied independently from the central person (Masuda, Ellsworth, Mesquita, Leu, & Veerdonk, 2005). Respondents were asked to rate the central person's emotional experience. The results strongly suggest that the situation of interest is constructed as the relationship among the Japanese, but not the European Americans. Consistent with an independent model, Americans judged the central person's emotional experience by his expression alone, disregarding the emotions of the surrounding people. Consistent with an interdependent model, however, the Japanese considered the emotions of all the people in the picture.

Therefore, when assessing the central person's emotional experience, Japanese were affected by the emotional expressions of others in the situation, not just by the expression of the central person. For example, anger ratings of an angry person were up if other people in the situation were angry as well, as compared to a situation where the other people were not angry. In the Japanese group, the emotions of the people in the background influenced what emotion was perceived in the central person. Japanese respondents recognized more happiness in an angry person in the middle, when this person was surrounded by happy people. Therefore, the meaning of the situation in a Japanese interdependent context is to be found in what is going on with *everybody* in the social interaction.

In a subsequent experiment, Masuda and his colleagues (Masuda et al., 2005) measured eye movement during the same emotion judgment task, and found that whereas Americans attended mostly to the central person, Japanese started to divide their attention between the central person and the surrounding people after the first second. Thus, the

reality perceived or attended to seemed to differ very early on in the task. Independent models are associated with perception of a bounded individual, whereas interdependent models guide and afford a relational perception.

Similar results were obtained by (Tsang & Wu, 2005) who had Taiwanese students rate the happiness of schematic representations of either smiley or sad faces. The central face was surrounded by four other faces that were also either smiley or sad, and varied independently of the expression of the central face. Consistent with interdependent Taiwanese models, the central face was rated higher on happiness when surrounded by happy than by sad faces. Tsang and Wu used two different shapes for the surrounding faces. These faces were either round to be like the central face, or egg-shaped to slightly differ from the central face. The effect of the emotion of the surrounding faces on the judgment of the central face was moderated by the degree of similarity between the central and the surrounding faces. Surrounding faces that were similar to the central face had a significantly larger effect on happiness ratings than had surrounding faces that were different. On the basis of these results one might infer that in interdependent contexts, other people become part of the emotion stimulus to the extent that they are seen as related to the individual or belonging to the same group.

Cultural models thus afford certain perceptions of emotional stimuli. Whereas interdependent emotional experience is focused on the group, independent emotional experience is associated with attention to the individual. These different perceptions of reality are at the basis of different types of emotional experience. Future research should explore the divergent implications of these types of emotional experience in terms of

their cognitive and behavioral consequences. Cognitive and behavioral implications would also provide stronger validation of the position here taken.

What is the perspective on the situation? Cultural models appear to be reflected in the emotional experience in yet another way, namely by the perspective taken on emotional events. Whereas people in independent contexts view emotional situations from their own perspective mainly (called an inside-out perspective, (Hamaguchi, 1985), people in interdependent contexts assess the emotional meaning from the perspective of other people, either particular other people or a generalized other (cf. (Mead, 1934). The latter perspective has been called outside-in (Hamaguchi, 1985).

There are several studies that suggest that the perspective of others is experienced as part of the situational appraisal in interdependent contexts, but much less so in independent contexts. For example, (Mesquita, 2001) compared emotions in independent and interdependent cultural contexts in the Netherlands. Respondents reported several types of emotional events from their past: positive, offensive, and immoral situations. Surinamese and Turkish minorities in the Netherlands, the interdependent cultural groups, reported more awareness of how the situation would be perceived by others than did respondents from the Dutch independent majority group. The Turkish and Surinamese regarded the emotional meanings of the situation more “obvious” than did the Dutch; they assumed that others would interpret, feel, and act in similar ways as they had done in the target situation. The meaning of emotional situations in interdependent contexts was perceived to be a feature of the world that cannot be but perceived similarly by others, whereas the meaning in the independent context was construed inside-out. To the extent that people perceived the appraisal of an event or a person to be shared by

others, it was more likely to turn into a long term belief (Mesquita, 1993). For example, in the Surinamese and Turkish groups, offense by a friend more often led to the lasting belief that the friend was unworthy of one's friendship than in the Dutch group. Others' perspectives were experienced as convergent with one's own, and provided the appraisal with some force and justification.

Similarly, in a study comparing American and Japanese respondents, both university students and community sample, the interdependent Japanese respondents reported more appraisals that reflected an awareness of the meaning of the situation to others than did the American respondents (Mesquita et al., 2005). However, in contrast to the interdependent groups in the Netherlands, Japanese represented the perspective of others as different from their own. Respondents in this study reported their emotional experience and behavior in a certain type of situation from their past -- offense, humiliation, or being valued. Respondents' emotion narratives were recorded and later coded. In the negative situations in particular, Japanese considered the meaning of the events for other people as it differed from their own. For example, more than 40% of the Japanese, versus none of the Americans, explained the situation from the perspective of a third person or a generalized other, an appraisal that can be seen to reflect an outside-in perspective. The Japanese consideration of the divergent perspective of others may be responsible for the fact that the most frequent response reported for offense was doing nothing, as opposed to assertiveness and aggression in the European American context. The awareness of the perspective of another person may make one less likely to act against the offender.

Evidence for an outside-in perspective in interdependent cultures and an inside-out in independent also emerges from a study among Canadians from Western and Eastern descent on the attribution of emotional experience to others (Cohen & Gunz, 2002). Respondents recalled an emotional event from the past that had induced a given emotion. Emotions were selected to form relational pairs, such that when one person has one emotion, a relating person may be expected to have the complementary emotion (e.g. sympathy-sadness). After one emotion was primed, respondents rated a set of ambiguous emotional faces. Because it is important in interdependent contexts to see one's own emotions from the perspective of another person, Easterners were expected to recognize more of the complementary emotion in the faces presented. Westerners, lacking the perspective of a complementary emotion, were rather expected to rely on their own experience when reading other people's ambiguous faces. The results confirmed these predictions. For example, when sympathy was primed, Easterners perceived higher levels of the complementary emotion of sadness. On the other hand, Westerners perceived the faces as more similar to the emotions they had just described. When they were primed with sympathy, they perceived more sympathy in the face pictures. Canadian respondents from Eastern descent (interdependent cultural model) showed an implicit awareness of others' perspective on the respondents' emotions, whereas Westerners lacked such perspective.

Relational appraisal. The social and relational implications of emotional events are more readily emphasized in interdependent than independent cultural contexts. First, the status of relationships with others tends to be more central in interdependent than independent appraisal. Kitayama and his colleagues demonstrated that emotional

appraisals of the situation as one of interpersonal engagement were more prevalent in Japan than North American student populations (Kitayama, Markus, & Kurokawa, 2000; Kitayama et al., in press). In a first study, Kitayama and Markus added indigenous Japanese words "that presuppose the presence of others" (cited in Markus & Kitayama, 1991, p. 238) to the standard list of English emotion words, and gave the compiled list of emotions to Japanese students who provided similarity ratings of all possible pairs of emotions. In addition to the pleasantness and arousal dimensions that are commonly found in similarity rating studies using standard Western emotion words, the Japanese ratings yielded a dimension of interpersonal engagement, with socially disengaged emotions such as pride and anger at one pole, to socially engaged emotions such as shame and feelings of connection with someone (*fureai*) at the other pole.

In subsequent experience sampling studies both positive and negative engaged emotions were more frequent than disengaged emotions in Japanese contexts, whereas the reverse was true in independent European American contexts (Kitayama et al., in press). In these studies, Japanese and European American students rated engaged as well disengaged emotions subsequently in a daily experience sampling study, and in response to 22 very diverse emotional events. In these studies, the largest differences appeared for the disengaged emotions. Whereas Japanese and European American students similarly appraised situations with regard to their implications for relational engagement, European American students reported significantly higher levels of disengaged emotions for both the positive and the negative situations. These differences in disengaged emotions thus resulted in a relatively stronger role for engaged appraisals in the Japanese context.

Convergent evidence comes from another experience sampling study with European American and two groups of Japanese college students, one in the United States and one living in Japan (Mesquita & Karasawa, 2002). In this study, respondents reported their last emotion every three hours throughout a week, and rated the eliciting situation with respect to pleasantness, as well as a number of appraisal dimensions that represented independent appraisals (such as self-esteem and control) and interdependent appraisals (such as closeness and face loss), and they indicated how pleasant or unpleasant the situation was. Pleasantness in the two Japanese groups was better predicted by the interdependent than the independent appraisals. In the European American group, pleasantness was predicted no less by independent than interdependent appraisals.

That pleasantness was no better predicted by independent than interdependent appraisals should perhaps not surprise. In European American contexts "good feelings are associated with participating in some form of mutually approving relationship" (Kitayama & Markus, 2000). Thus, relational appraisals may be highest when the relationship contributes to feelings of self-efficacy and self-esteem. Consistently, independent and interdependent appraisals in the experience sampling study just described were highly correlated.

On the other hand, independent appraisals in the Japanese groups were uncorrelated with interdependent appraisals. In the Japanese groups, feeling good about the independent aspects of self is unrelated to having a positive bond with others, and it is the latter rather than the former that predicts whether one is feeling good (Kitayama & Markus, 2000).

Respect and status were salient social dimensions for the Surinamese and Turkish respondents in the Dutch study reported above(Mesquita, 2001). Positive events were described in the interdependent contexts as raising one's status and respectability and that of one's family or in-group, whereas negative events were described as threatening or detrimental to status and respectability; this was hardly the case for the Dutch independent context. Thus, the interdependent focus on the implications of an emotional event for one's social worth was suggested by this study as well, despite the fact that it included very different cultural groups.

An emphasis on the social consequences of emotional events can also be found in cultures where many events derive meaning from their relevance to honor. Honor in this sense is based on a person's strength and power over others. A person's honor situates him socially and determines his right to precedence. (Abu-Lughod, 1986; Cohen, 1996; Cohen & Nisbett, 1994, 1997; Cohen, Nisbett, Bowdle, & Schwarz, 1996; Peristiany, 1966). Thus, emotional appraisals in honor cultures tend to be fully grounded in a consideration of the social position and social relationships of the individual. Social position is sometimes negotiable (Cohen, Nisbett, Bowdle, & Schwarz, 1996), but it can also be perceived a result of the natural order of things, such as the lower status (and thus higher vulnerability) of women to men (Abu Lughod, 1986).

More evidence for the different concerns central in emotional experience comes from a priming study (Chentsova-Dutton & Tsai, 2005). Asian American and European American college students subjects were randomly assigned to either the individual self-focus condition, in which they wrote "about themselves and the conditions in their own life", or the relational self-focus condition in which they wrote "about family members

and events in their life." After the writing task, respondents watched a sad and an amusing film clip. European American respondents watching amusing clips reported higher intensity positive emotions and smiled more after the individual focus than the relational self-focus condition. Conversely, Asian American respondents reported and showed more positive feelings after the relational focus condition than after the individual self-focus condition. One interpretation of this finding is that emotional experience is commonly associated with independent concerns in independent contexts, and with interdependent, relational concerns in interdependent cultural contexts. Once the relevant concerns are activated, the emotions become more intense. A caveat to strong interpretations of this finding is that there was no significant interaction between culture and focus of condition after watching sad clips.

Control appraisal. Evidence for the unique shaping of appraisals in independent contexts comes from the research on agency and personal control (Ellsworth & Scherer, 2003; Frijda et al., 1989; Weiner, 1982, 1986). Whereas the tendency to explain outcomes appears to universal, the tendency to attribute important outcomes to one's own individual agency seems more specific to independent contexts.This type of agency is a key aspect of independent cultural models, American in particular, where success through independent, personal accomplishment is central (Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

Participants in a number of questionnaire studies were asked to remember an instance of a given emotion, describe the situation, and then rate the situation on a number of appraisal scales that are provided by the researchers (Mesquita & Ellsworth, 2001). These appraisal studies yielded impressive evidence for cross-cultural similarities in appraisal, but agency was one of the dimensions on which appraisal profile tended to

vary across cultures. Whereas individual agency is an important dimension of appraisal in the original studies with Western samples (Frijda et al., 1989; Scherer, 1984; Smith & Ellsworth, 1985), it is much less so for non-Western samples (Matsumoto, Kudoh, Scherer, & Wallbott, 1988; Mauro, Sato, & Tucker, 1992; Scherer, 1997b). For example, Matsumoto and colleagues (1988), comparing Japanese and American students found that agency --an important descriptive dimension of emotion for American students-- was often considered "not applicable" by Japanese respondents.

Furthermore, agency appears to be an important predictor of pleasantness or well-being in independent but not in interdependent contexts. In American contexts emotions of agency such as pride were found to predict general feelings of well-being. In contrast, emotions of relatedness rather than emotions of agency predicted well-being in Japanese contexts (Kitayama et al., 2000; Kitayama et al., in press; Mesquita & Karasawa, 2002). These results may be related to the cross-cultural finding outside the emotion literature that demonstrated that European American children were most motivated in a task they had selected for themselves, whereas Asian American children preferred tasks that were chosen by their mother or their friends (Iyengar & Lepper, 1999). The positive connotation of individual agency may thus be specific to independent cultural models.

The differences in salient appraisals reflect different cultural models. Salient independent appraisals consist of individual agency and control and, conversely, interdependent appraisals are about the relational meanings of the situation in a number of different ways.

Action Readiness and Behavior

Emotions tend to involve behavior, or at least the intention of behavior, that aims at changing the relationship between the self and others. We will distinguish conceptually between behavioral goals (action readiness) and behavioral means (the actual behavior), despite the fuzzy empirical distinction. Behavioral goals --or inclinations to behavior-- have been coined as *action readiness* (Arnold, 1960; Frijda, 1986). Action readiness is related to appraisal in that it constitutes the tendency or preparedness to deal with the emotional issues as construed; actual behavior is the executed effort to do the same. Action readiness and behavior are thus importantly afforded and shaped by the meaning of the event as constructed, and in this way reflect the cultural model.

Action readiness and behavior themselves represent the normative and descriptive relationships between an individual and his or her social context. Both the actual and the most desirable behavioral means to reach the normative relationships between an individual and others constitute the cultural models.

Action Readiness. The few cross-cultural studies that explicitly address cultural differences in action readiness suggest that, in addition to some universal themes in action readiness, there are many cultural differences. A study by Frijda and his colleagues (Frijda, Markam, Sato, & Wiers, 1995) compared the action readiness modes reported by Dutch, Indonesian and Japanese participants after recalling a given emotional experience. All respondents rated these self-reported instances of emotions on the same action readiness items. Stimulus emotion words had proven to be among the most frequent in recall studies done with Dutch and Indonesian respondents. The Japanese words were translations of those concepts.

For each culture, factor analyses on the action readiness items suggested that five (of the six to nine) factors in each of the three cultural groups were similar: moving away, moving towards, moving against, want help, and submission. These factors can be interpreted as general themes of behavior, and they explained a substantial part of the differentiation between emotion words. Right away, it should be noted that not *all* factors were universal, and that some of the culture-specific factors are easily understood from the specific cultural models. Consistent with the independent motive of control, for example, "in command" was a unique factor of behavior in the Dutch group. And consistent with the concern for avoidance of disruption, one factor in the Japanese group consisted of disengagement (apathy, disinterest), an accepted way to give expression to negative feelings in this culture (Karasawa, personal communication).

More importantly, the relative importance of the five shared themes of action readiness differed across cultures. Cultural models of the three groups offer plausible explanations for these variations across cultures. The dimensions of moving away and moving against was more important in discriminating between emotion words in Dutch than in either of the other languages. Thus, moving away and moving against were defining elements of Dutch emotional experience. The Dutch cultural model of seeking independence, if necessary through opposition (as a way of expressing oneself; Stephenson, 1989; Van der Horst, 1996), may explain the significance of the action readiness modes of moving away and moving against in the Dutch emotional experience. On the other hand, the dimensions of moving towards and submission allowed differentiating between different emotional experiences in Indonesian and Japanese than in the Dutch contexts. These dimensions fit with the goals of relational harmony in the

cultural models of these Asian groups (Markus et al., 1997); moving towards others may reduce social distance, and submitting may make oneself acceptable to another person.

Different behavioral goals can sometimes be inferred if cultural differences in the rate of behavior are meaningful within different cultural models. For example, several studies have yielded cultural differences in the rate of general bodily or somatic activity, which can be conceived as a way to occupy space in the relationship. In questionnaire research Japanese respondents reported many fewer hand and arm gestures and whole body activity than did Americans in situations of anger, sadness, fear, and happiness (Scherer et al., 1988). The difference can be understood as fitting an emphasis on relationship among Japanese respondents, and on the individual among American participants. What is especially interesting is that the cultures did not differ in the reported control of these emotions. The lower frequency of active somatic behaviors among the Japanese is more likely the result of a lower level of initially generated activity than of post-hoc regulation.

These self-report data converge with actual measurements of general somatic behavior, or the amount of movement in any direction. Tsai and Levenson (1997) found that Chinese American couples that discussed a conflict area in their relationship displayed less general somatic activity than did European American couples. General somatic activity was one of the few physical response measures on which the two cultural groups differed.

There is some indication that the expression of high activation happiness, another emotion accompanied by expansive behavior, is more common in independent cultures. Tsai and her colleagues (Tsai, Chentsova-Dutton, Friere-Bebeau, & Przymus, 2002)

asked European Americans and Hmong Americans to relive high intensity emotional episodes of a number of emotions, including happiness. The main difference in and recorded facial behavior and physiological reactivity was that European Americans had many more social smiles during their recall of intense happy events than did Hmong Americans. This was the case despite the fact that the reported emotional feeling and physiological activity did not differ between cultural groups. Furthermore, highly acculturated Hmong Americans showed significantly more social smiles than less acculturated Hmong Americans, suggesting that adopting American culture is associated with a higher frequency of social smiles during happiness. European Americans (and by extension highly acculturated Hmong Americans) may use their social smile to convey to others that they experience the socially desirable emotion of happiness, the emotion that portrays the individual as independent and successful.

On the other hand high activation happiness expressions seem to be rarer in cultures that place an emphasis on harmony in relationships (Lutz, 1987). Expressions of elated happiness are seen as potentially disruptive because they may painfully contrast with the emotional state of others, or because they may be seen to indicate the plausibility of an individual challenging social obligations and evading responsibilities (Lutz, 1987; Karasawa, personal communication). Happiness may have had that same connotation for the Hmong Americans in the study by Tsai and colleagues.

Emotional behavior consistent with situational meaning. Differences in behavioral intent can sometimes be understood from the differences in appraisal or the meaning of the eliciting event. For example, the behavioral goals of shame differ according to different constructions of the shame stimulus (Mesquita & Karasawa, 2004).

Whereas shame in independent Western contexts tends to be linked to withdrawal or the desire to disappear from view (Frijda et al., 1989), shame in interdependent, East Asian interdependent contexts is associated with attempts to restore relationships. In the latter contexts, shame is often accompanied by declarations of shame, public apologies, and public weeping to parents or the nation, and to both public and private declarations of one's intention to change one's unworthy actions and identity (Mascolo, Fischer, & Li, 2003).

The differences in the behavioral concomitants of shame can be understood from the meanings associated with shame. Shame in independent Western contexts has been associated with an appraisal that the event is incongruent with one's identity goals, and that it is caused by one's own stable characteristics (Tracy & Robins, 2004).Thus, shame occurs when an event conflicts with who one wants to be, as is the case when a student fails his exam, attributing it to lack of ability. On the other hand, shame in interdependent East Asian cultures appears to be the assessment that what happens is incongruent with *relationship goals* -- one's obligations to others, to one's parents, to the nation, etc. – and that it brings dishonor on the people or groups to which one belongs. Of course, even in a Western context the failure to meet one's identity goals derives its significance from the potential for social rejection {Baldwin, 2004 #1594}, which ultimately is a relational concern. Yet, the nature of relationship in which this type of shame is situated is one between relatively autonomous individuals in which each is responsible for his or her success. It is very different from the focus of the relationship itself that appears to be at the center of shame in East Asian contexts. Consistently, whereas Western shame focuses on internal flaws, shame in East Asian cultures seems to be centered primarily on

negative social outcomes, regardless of whether the individual was responsible for those outcomes (Crystal, Parrott, Okazaki, & Watanabe, 2001).

Shame in East Asian cultures is thus an attempt to restore the relational harm done, rather than the emotion of ultimate failure it is in the West. The answers to East Asian shame are self- improvement and the public sharing of shame, both ways to re-assert oneself as a member of the social group to which one belongs. These behavioral goals are completely different from the common Western action readiness of shame, wanting to disappear from others' view which in turn is an appropriate response to ultimate, unchangeable failure, and thus the high potential for rejection.

Similar differences in shame reactions were indeed found in a questionnaire study on shame among salespersons in the Netherlands and the Philippines (Bagozzi, Verbeke, & Gavino, 2003). Salespeople in both cultures rated how they would respond in situations in which statements or actions by customers caused them to feel shame. Salespeople in a Dutch independent context were expected to interpret the shaming by a customer as a sign that their independent self-goals were negatively evaluated, and that they were thus denigrated and ridiculed. Philippine salespeople, on the other hand, were predicted to be concerned about their social identity, and would be concerned with the relationship with the customer. Consistent with their projected construal of the situation as harmful to the personal self, Dutch salespeople reported that their shame would lead them to protect themselves from further denigration (i.e. withdraw). On the other hand, Philippine shame was not associated with protective action.

These culturally different responses associated with shame in turn predicted differential performance outcomes, again as reported. For the Dutch salespeople

protective action – that was highly related to shame-- was *negatively* associated with sales volume, communication effectiveness, and relationship building. Thus, within the Dutch sales business shame is a counterproductive emotion. On the other hand, shame in the Philippine sales business was positively associated with "adaptive resources", consisting of relationship building, civic virtue, and courtesy, apparently in an attempt to fix the relationship with the customer. For Philippine salespeople, shame appears to be a productive emotion.[3]

Another study illustrating the way behavioral goals rest on the cultural understanding of emotional situations compared the behaviors Northern and Southern men in the United States in an experimental setting in which they were offended (Cohen, Vandello, Puente, & Rantilla, 1999). Offense in Southern cultural settings challenges one's honor especially when it is intentional, but in Northern cultural settings it does not (Cohen et al., 1996). For this reason, Southerners avoid any perception of offense by following an elaborated system of politeness rules. This leaves Southerners inexperienced with subtle hostility when it occurs. In contrast, Northern discourse prepares Northerners well for these small hostilities and rudeness. Consistently, Southerners took longer than Northerners to respond with anger (ratings of (a) facial expressions (b) the risk of physical or verbal confrontation) to an annoying confederate in an experiment who interfered with task completion. On the other hand, once the annoying behavior had angered the Southerners, they expressed more intense anger and were judged more ready to engage in physical or verbal confrontation. One interpretation of these findings is that once the offense is taken seriously, Southerners *must* reciprocate in order to defend their honor and even the bill.

In the experiment just discussed, the confederate offered his apologies at the end of his annoyances. Apologies were more readily accepted by Northerners who remained calm, and by Southerners who had become angry. Thus, for Northerners it was easier to forgive when they had not worked themselves up first, but for Southerners it was easier to forgive when the bill was evened. Finally, six months after the experiment was over, Southerners who had remained calm and Northerners who had become angry were much better at recognizing the confederate's picture than were Southerners who had been angry and Northerners who had remained calm. The emotional experience was apparently more memorable for Southerners who had not evened the bill and for Northerners who had violated their cultural script of remaining calm. Both the behaviors observed and the consequences of these behaviors could be understood and predicted from the meaning of the eliciting situation.

Emotional behavior tailored to the cultural context. There is also some evidence for cultural differences in the specific behaviors that are used to realize similar behavioral goals. The questionnaire study of action readiness among Dutch, Indonesian and Japanese groups is a case in point. For example, the behavioral goal of submission was instantiated by comply, depend, and apathy in the Dutch group. In the Indonesian group it was instantiated by those same three action readiness modes plus modes that reflected a lack of control over one's actions (inhibited, helpless, blocked, and negatively: in command). In Japan, submission was formed by action readiness modes of dependence (depend and comply), of lack of control (blocked, helpless), and of social engagement (make up for it, tenderness). The specific action readiness modes serving the overarching behavioral goal -- submission in this case -- appear to be cross-culturally different in

ways consistent with cultural models. In the independent Dutch context submission is restricted to those contexts where one is dependent, or without the energy to resist it. In interdependent cultures not taking control may be a sufficient condition for others to take the lead. Therefore, to feel blocked or helpless may automatically mean to submit. Furthermore, consistent with the Japanese model of relationship (e.g., Lebra 1994), social engagement in Japan may in fact mean being able and willing to yield to other people.

More evidence that behavioral goals fit the meaning of emotional situations comes from narrative study with North Americans and Japanese, reported above (Mesquita et al., 2005). As reported, cultural differences in behavioral goals fit with the models of self and relating. The most prevalent response categories reported by the European American respondents were to be *assertive* or *aggressive*, both behaviors that underline the boundaries between different people. On the other hand, the most frequent action readiness or behavior reported in the Japanese group, *doing nothing*, serves to maintain the relationship, or at least not disturb it in any obvious way. These results are unlikely to be produced by differences in the American and Japanese concrete offense situations, because similar results for appraisal and action readiness differences were obtained in controlled study that used vignettes (Mesquita et al., 2005, Study 2).

Similarly, in comparative work with Dutch, Surinamese and Turkish respondents in the Netherlands, Mesquita (1993) found that aggressive goals tend to be sought after in ways that make sense within the unique cultural models. For example, Surinamese and Turkish respondents reported a higher tendency to show indifference in situations in which they had been harmed by another person. The high value attached to relatedness in

those cultures, as compared to the Dutch, turns "indifference" -- the denial of engagement -- into an effective act of aggression.

Ethnographic work suggests that culture-specific behaviors sometimes are chosen to serve the emotional goals without being disruptive of the cultural models (Mesquita & Frijda, 1992). For example, according to the ethnographers the Balinese reaction to frightening events is falling asleep (Bateson & Mead, 1942). This behavior can be understood as a culture-specific instantiation of a more general goal of fear -- avoidance. Falling asleep satisfies -- at least subjectively-- the goal of reducing one's exposure to the threat, while at the same time avoiding the emotional disruption that other fear responses are felt to cause. Therefore, falling asleep can be considered a culturally effective way to accomplish the goal of avoidance (or ‘moving away’).

Withdrawal may have different meanings dependent on the specific cultural and situational context. *Satru* in Javanese contexts refers to an institutionalized pattern of avoidance, in which the individuals in conflict refuse to speak or interact with one another (H. Geertz, 1961). Given the Javanese ideal of social harmony (*rukun*) that requires the concealment of all dissonant aspects, *satru* "is an excellent mechanism for the adjustment of hostility in a society that plays down violence and the expression of real feelings, since it allows for the avoidance of an outbreak of rage while still permitting significant expression of it" (Geertz, 1961,, pp.117-118). In this case, withdrawal thus serves feelings of hostility in a context that does not allow for straightforward hostility.

In sum, the meaning, and therefore the appropriateness and effectiveness, of certain behaviors in specific contexts is different by cultural model. Note that a relational

or interdependent orientation does not always lead to reaching out and being sociable. Shame in East Asian cultures has been described to lead more often to approach than shame in Western contexts. However, the Balinese and Javanese examples suggest that the direction of emotional behavior in situations of potential conflict tends to be just the opposite, namely withdrawal. Conversely, shame in Western contexts tends to be associated with withdrawal whereas hostility is paired to antagonistic behavior. Thus, the type of emotional behavior in independent and interdependent contexts, rather than being consistently in one direction, follows from the meaning of the behavior, given a certain cultural context.

Evaluating the Importance of Cultural Differences in Meaning

How important are the differences in emotions? Are they superficial variations on a universal theme, or rather, essential to emotional experience? We contend that *if* one wants to understand or predict what people in different cultures feel and do during emotional episodes, the culture-specific meanings of emotions are indispensable. It might often be possible to make the cultural differences in emotion dissipate when describing the phenomena at a sufficiently high level of abstraction (Mesquita, Frijda, & Scherer, 1997), but doing so takes away from the understanding of the psychological phenomenon (Mesquita & Frijda, 1992; Mesquita et al., 1997). It is possible, for example, to describe the prevalence of relational appraisals in interdependent cultures as an alternative way to positive self-feelings. People in interdependent cultures might determine if they feel good about themselves by keeping tabs on their social value, in the same way that people in independent cultural contexts monitor their personal value or self-esteem. Conversely, one could argue that self-esteem is the Western manifestation of the universal need to

belong (Leary & Baumeister, 2000) and, given this, people across cultures appraise their chances of being accepted or rejected by others. How precisely one's social value is computed –whether by self-esteem, honor, or level of fitting in—may be different across cultures. However, the appraisal of social value can be deemed universal.

We do not deny that it is possible in many cases to read these universal themes into the observed cultural differences, and doing so may be useful, depending on the research question of interest. However, an accurate representation of the actual emotional experience in different cultures, requires understanding of the culturally embedded meanings of emotion-eliciting events (Mesquita et al., 1997).Cultural models constitute the content of feelings, and render emotional acts comprehensible and predictable.

For example, it is important to understand that insults are conceived of as honor violations in the South of the United States. This interpretation explains why, in response to insults, Southerners show more anger and aggressive responses than Northerners who do not have an honor culture. This interpretation also explains why Southerners are likely to bear less resentment than Northerners after they have expressed their anger (the bill is evened; strength is being exhibited) (Cohen et al., 1999). In order to understand the emotional experience and emotional responses, it is thus important to consider the cultural models that lend meaning to the antecedent event.

Similarly, it is important to know that Westerners are more likely to attribute personal agency to emotional events, because agency appraisals have important correlates in the course and experience of emotions. For example, blaming someone else for an offense –the prevalent American anger appraisal-- rather than assuming that these things

happen or that another person probably had a good reason –the common Japanese appraisal— has very different implications both for emotional experience and behavior (Mesquita et al., 2005). Blaming the other person tends to result in assertion and aggression. Sympathizing with the offender on the other hand, leads to decreased emotionality and thus in many cases to doing nothing at all.

The question here is not whether it is *possible* to describe behavior without reference to culturally rich meanings, but rather whether such is a relevant level of description given the question of interest. We contend that in most cases highly abstract descriptions of behavior would neither capture the precise intentions of the behavior nor their subjective experience. If one is to predict or understand what people will do or want to do in actual emotional contexts, one has to take into account the meaning that these behaviors have in these contexts, beyond just moving in a certain direction. It is important to know whether moving away is an expression of hostility, as is the case for Javanese (H. Geertz, 1961), or an escape from the exposure to others, as is the case in Western shame (Bagozzi et al., 2003; Frijda et al., 1989). The consequent social and behavioral consequences as well as the experience of this behavior are likely to be very different depending on its meanings.

Normative or ideal representations of emotion

Emotional life in a culture is more than the sum of single emotional responses such as described in the previous section. Different patterns of emotion can be described in terms of the frequency of individual emotional responses (as discussed in the previous section), but they become easier to understand when considering the focal, normative and ideal representations of emotions in those cultures. This discussion turns to an

examination of prevalent or prescribed emotion norms and goals, because they affect the evaluation of certain emotional states as “good” or “bad”, and also determine what people seek out or avoid.

Focal Emotions and Emotion Regulation

Cultures have emotions they “admire and despise” (Mesquita & Ellsworth, 2001), the so-called focal emotions. Focal emotions are central in social discourse. Admired emotions tend to be those reinforcing the cultural model, whereas despised emotions violate the model (Mesquita, 2003). Focal emotions, whether positive or negative, are importantly motivating. In ways that will be illustrated shortly, admired emotions are sought out and frequent, and despised emotions avoided and rare (cf. (Eid & Diener, 2001; Fessler, 2004; Mesquita & Frijda, 1992).

An example of an admired, and thus focal, emotion is happiness in American contexts. Excited happiness seems to be sought out and cherished in many different ways (D'Andrade, 1984). First, many occasions are created that bring about happiness, such as compliments, celebrations, and awards (Kitayama, Karasawa, Heine, Lehman, and Markus, 1999 in (Heine, Lehman, Markus, & Kitayama, 1999; Miller, Fung, & Mintz, 1996). Second, Americans tend to seek out those occasions that make them feel unique, and therefore happy (Elliott, Chirkov, Kim, & Sheldon, 2001; Kim, 2001). Third, when encountering positive events, Americans appear to feel better and appraise the event as more self-esteem increasing than people from some other cultural contexts, such as Japanese (S. Kitayama, Matsumoto, Markus, & Norasakkunkit, 1997; Leu, Mesquita, & Ellsworth, under review). Fourth, there is some evidence that Americans express their happiness more, or at least signal to others that they have happiness (Tsai et al., 2002;

Wierzbicka, 1994). Thus excited happiness, the ultimate emotional goal in the American independent cultural model, motivates and regulates (a) social production of events, (b) individual selection of events, (c) emotional appraisals typical of happiness, and finally (d) the expression of emotion.

An example of a despised, and thus focal, emotion is anger in many cultures that value harmony and equilibrium of mind, such as the Utku Inuits in Canada (Briggs, 1970). Anger is a very central topic of discourse among the Utku, and it is always discussed in association with the dangers attached to it. Ingroup anger is avoided at all cost. Like approach, avoidance of a focal emotion is accomplished at different levels of the generative process of the emotion (Mesquita & Albert, in press). First, events that would elicit anger are avoided. For example, normative behavior aims to avoid frustrating others or block their goals. Second, anger is mostly avoided and discouraged by others, who disapprove of it, show fear or incite shame. It is unlikely for this reason too that anger would be sought out. Third, Utku Inuits seem to be reluctant to blame another person for a negative event, with blame being an appraisal that is conditional to anger. Blame does not fit the Utku worldview of resignation and acceptance ((Solomon, 1978). Finally, Utku Inuits regulate anger expressions, as is clear from the display rules they convey to children. Thus the focality of anger, the ultimate threat to social harmony which is so central in the Utku cultural model, can be inferred from (a) the suppression of the social events that would elicit anger, (b) the relative absence of blame appraisals, and (c) the near absence of anger expressions.

Ideal Affect

Even when emotions are not focal in this strong sense, the average person's ideal emotions may differ from one culture to the next. Tsai and colleagues (Tsai et al., in press) distinguished between actual and ideal affect, and found cultural differences in ideal affect. Whereas actual affect was measured as the feelings you *typically* feel, ideal affect was measured as the feelings you would *ideally* like to feel (Tsai et al., in press). Not surprisingly, European Americans, Chinese Americans, and Chinese in Hong Kong in Tsai's study indicated that they would ideally like to have more positive and less negative emotions than they actually experienced. For the current purpose, only the findings on ideal affect will be discussed.

However, cultural differences were found in the type of ideal affect, such that European Americans and Chinese Americans valued high activation positive emotions more than Chinese. Conversely, Chinese and Chinese Americans valued low activation positive emotions more than did European Americans. The authors propose a link between ideal affect and the preferred type of environmental control. Westerners prefer *influence,* and Easterners prefer adjustment. According to the authors, "in order to successfully influence or change the physical or social environment, a person must be able to *mobilize* resources. Because high activation states facilitate mobilization of resources, people with influence goals should value *high activation positive states*; in contrast, "low activation states promote attention to environmental stimuli, people with *adjustment* goals should value low activation states"

Emotion Norms

Positive emotions are not necessarily evaluated as positive, and negative emotions not necessarily as negative. Eid and Diener (2001) compared the emotion norms in four

countries, two countries with independent (United States, Australia) and two countries with interdependent (China, Taiwan) cultural models. They expected that people in cultures with an independent model would tend to focus on positive information about the self, and thus would value self-conscious emotions that signal that personal goals have been accomplished, such as pride, but would negatively evaluate emotions signaling negative self-information, such as guilt.

Interdependent models, on the other hand, were expected to further a focus on negative information about the self, since this information is important to prevent one from violating social norms, and thus they were expected to positively value guilt. In these interdependent contexts, pride would make an individual stand out, and would thus be seen as inappropriate and undesirable. Interdependent models were thus predicted to lend positive meaning to this negative emotion and negative meaning to the positive self-conscious emotion.

In fact, this study found that pride was largely desirable and guilt largely undesirable in the countries with independent models.[4] Furthermore, the majority of people living in independent cultural contexts valued all positive emotions (joy, affection, pride, contentment) positively and all negative emotions (anger, fear, sadness, guilt) negatively. The emotion norms in the interdependent contexts were both different and more numerous. For example, in China two patterns of positive emotion norms were found about equally often. By both Chinese patterns of norms pride and contentment were assessed as somewhat negative. Taiwanese tended to evaluate joy, affection and contentment as positive, but pride as neutral or negative. Thus, as expected by the

authors, people in interdependent contexts tended to consider some positive emotions as undesirable or inappropriate.

The opposite was found for the negative emotion norms as well. The emotion norms for among Australians and Americans, as well as among some Taiwanese, assessed all negative emotions (anger, fear, sadness, and guilt) as undesirable or inappropriate.[5] A good percentage of Chinese, and a somewhat smaller part of Taiwanese, however, evaluated guilt as a positive or neutral emotion; guilt was definitely deemed more undesirable in independent contexts.

Overall, the norm patterns for negative emotions were less clear, and all cultures had more heterogeneous norms for negative emotions than for positive than for positive ones. As the authors acknowledge, a better picture of the emotion norms in a culture may be obtained when examining specific situational norms.

Emotion norms and ideals shape emotional experience. Ideal and normative affect are more than statements of preference. Tsai and her colleagues (in press) powerfully demonstrated that culturally ideal emotions were important predictors of depression (as measured by the CES-D-scale). Depression in the European American group was accounted for by the discrepancy between actual and ideal high activation positive emotion (HAP), and only marginally by low activation positive emotion (LAP). In the Chinese group, on the other hand, depression was accounted for by the discrepancy between actual and ideal LAP, and not by HAP. This is consistent with the Chinese focus on adjustment.

Interestingly, the only group for which the discrepancies between actual and ideal affect for both HAP and LAP predicted depression was the Chinese American group,

who also reported high levels of both HAP and LAP as their ideal emotions. Therefore, the ideal emotions in a culture are not just statements about emotions, but very importantly, they constitute the emotional experience.

That emotion norms shape emotional experience was also suggested by the study by Eid and Diener (2001), discussed before. For each of the four countries (China, Taiwan, U.S., Australia), low to medium-sized correlations were found between positive emotion norms and emotional experience, for both the frequency and the intensity of emotional experience. The cultural norms and ideals for positive emotion thus shape the patterns of emotional experience. The correlations between negative emotion norms and emotional experience were less strong.

Regulation Goals

Cultural models appear to influence the goals of emotional regulation. Whereas American independent models appear to promote happiness and de-emphasize unhappiness, the importance of experiencing both good and bad feelings, and moderating both is stressed in East Asian contexts (Lu, 2001; Minami, 1971; Ng, Ho, & Smith, 2003). Striving for emotional balance is normative in the latter contexts (Heine et al., 1999), as it signals maturity and role fulfillment.

The evidence for cultural differences regulatory goals is only indirect. Cultural differences in regulation are inferred from findings (a) that, over time, Americans report more positive than negative emotions, and East Asians report a balance between the two, and (b) that, in experimental tasks, Americans seek out events that are likely to elicit positive affect, whereas East Asians prioritize tasks that prepare them to meet social standards over tasks that are likely to produce positive affect.

Prevalence of positive affect or emotional balance? The relative prevalence of positive emotions in North American as compared to Asian cultures has been established both in online measurements of emotion (Mesquita & Karasawa, 2002; Scollon, Diener, Oishi, & Biswas-Diener, 2004; Tsai & Levenson, 1997) and in retrospective reports (Oishi, 2002). For example, in a large experience-sampling study, Mesquita and colleagues sampled the emotions of American, Japanese and Taiwanese students for the duration of a week (Mesquita & Karasawa, 2002; Mesquita, Karasawa, & Chu, in preparation). Four times a day, students were asked to recall the last emotion they had experienced during the preceding 3-hour interval. Using a bi-dimensional scale of pleasantness-unpleasantness, Mesquita and colleagues found that American students, on average, appraised the emotional situations in their lives as better than neutral, whereas Japanese and Taiwanese students evaluated their lives on average as neither positive nor negative.

Other studies with different methodologies have established convergent results. Dating European Americans couples, who watched a tape of their discussion immediately preceding reported more positive than negative emotions, while Asian Americans reported similar ratios of positive and negative affect (Tsai & Levenson, 1997). Respondents provided the continuous reports of their emotions while watching the videotaped interaction. The experience sampling studies as well as the online couple study were designed to reduce retrospective bias, by having respondents report emotions very close to their actual experience. Thus the emphasis on positive emotions appears to be present in online experiences.

In addition to having more positive experiences, European Americans tend to remember events more positively than Asians, even if the two groups initially gave appraise situations equally positive. In several experiments, European Americans retrospectively rated their satisfaction with a task significantly higher than did the Asian Americans, despite the lack of cultural differences in the ratings at the time of that task (Oishi, 2002). European Americans thus tend to remember and represent their emotional lives as more positive than Asian Americans, in part because they remember their feelings as more positive than they actually were at the moment.

The positive memory bias does not always replicate for European Americans. In one experience sampling study, Scollon and her colleagues found that all five cultural groups in the study, European Americans included, underestimated the frequency of their positive emotions in retrospective reports, as compared to online reports of the same emotions (Scollon et al., 2004).

The same experience sampling study provided evidence for balanced emotional styles in East Asian cultures (Scollon, Diener, Oishi, & Biswas-Diener, 2005). Respondents in this study rated their emotions seven times a day for a week. For East Asians (Japanese, Indian, Asian American), the number of positive emotions reported was positively associated with the number of negative emotions reported. In the two other cultural contexts (European Americans, Hispanics in the United States), there was no significant relationship between positive and negative emotions. The results suggest that, over time, positive emotions in East Asian contexts seem to be moderated or balanced out by negative emotions, whereas this is not the case in the US contexts.

The experience sampling study also clarifies that East Asian groups did not experience positive and negative emotions at the exact same moment. This suggests that findings from previous studies suggesting that in those cultures, people who experience more positive emotions also experience more negative emotions (Bagozzi, Wong, & Youjae, 1999; Kitayama et al., 2000), can best be interpreted as reports over time. Similarly, studies suggesting there is no relationship between experiencing positive and negative emotions in East Asian context (Schimmack, Oishi, & Diener, 2002) may best be interpreted as reports over time. The two styles of regulation associated with East Asian contexts contrast with the North American experience of positive emotions at the cost of negative emotions.

There is some evidence that the cultural differences in regulatory style are driven by positive rather than negative events. Leu and her colleagues provided Chinese, Japanese, and American respondents with standardized events in the form of a diary (Leu et al., under review). The diary episodes included both positive and negative events. In the North American group there was clear evidence for the emphasis on positive emotions at the expense of negative emotions in response to the positive events. Whereas Japanese and Chinese moderated their positive emotions with negative emotions (e.g., citing both happiness and fear of being too happy), European Americans reported positive emotions, almost to the exclusion of negative emotions. In the negative situations, however, no cultural differences in the relationship between positive and negative emotions were found. Thus, when something bad happens all three cultures try to see the positive side of it, and feel some positive affect as well; however, when something good happens, only the Chinese and Japanese try to see the negative side of it. This appears to represent the larger emphasis on maximizing positive feelings and

minimizing negative feelings among European Americans, in contrast with a focus on moderating positive and negative emotions among East Asians.

Good feelings are not a universal motive. Very important in much of the foregoing discussion is that maximizing positive affect at the exclusion of negative affect is not a universal motive. A number of recent experimental studies comparing the task motivation between European American and either Japanese or Asian American respondents (Heine et al., 2001; Oishi & Diener, 2001, 2003) suggest this too. In these studies, North Americans sought out events that they liked, but Japanese (Asian Americans) would not. In one experiment {Heine, 2001 #1000}, respondents received either failure or success feedback on a particular task (e.g., a word association test). All respondents were then given the opportunity to spend more time on the task. Though Japanese and European American respondents both *liked* the success feedback better than the failure feedback, Japanese were motivated to work on a task after failure feedback whereas European Americans were motivated by success feedback. Apparently, a task that proves pleasurable is not universally motivating.

In another study, Asian and European Americans solved anagrams and rated their enjoyment of the task and its difficulty right after finishing the anagrams (Oishi & Diener, 2003). About a month later, participants were asked to either perform the same task this time, or do a comparable new task. The more European Americans enjoyed the task the first time, the more likely they were to select it a month later; for the Asian participants, there was no relation between enjoyment and task selection. Thus, positive affect was not a motive for Asians participants.

Based on these studies, we postulate that pursuing positive affect is normative when feeling good about yourself is the goal, as appears the case in European American cultural contexts. However, when meeting social standards is the goal, self-improvement takes precedence over feeling good. The latter seems to happen in Japanese and Asian American contexts.

In conclusion. Cultures, as well as individuals within those cultures, have different representations of the emotions that are desirable or normative. The study of ideal and normative representations brings out an important way in which emotional lives can be different across cultures and, moreover, illustrates that differences in emotion ideals and norms importantly and differentially inform emotional experience and behavior. At the same time, the work on normative and ideal emotions is underdeveloped. The concepts are both insufficiently demarcated and related to each other (but see Tsai, 2006). It is not clear for example, if people are capable of reporting norms regarding the focal emotions in their culture, or to what extent a person's ideal emotions are derived from culturally endorsed emotion norms. Finally, the mechanisms by which focal, normative, and ideal emotions shape the emotional experience are virtually unexplored.

Beyond independent and interdependent models

The majority of the research reviewed above contrasts the emotions in North American and East Asian contexts. These studies have contributed greatly to an understanding of how culture influences emotion. However, there is a need to move beyond characterizations of cultures as either independent or interdependent, and to address emotions in other cultural contexts. The little evidence collected on emotions in

other cultural contexts suggests that we have to consider cultural models of self and relating in more detail than currently the case.

A study by Schimmack and colleagues (Schimmack et al., 2002) makes this point. In this study, the zero correlation between positive and negative emotions was shown to be exclusive to East Asian cultures, rather than being characteristic of collectivist cultures generally. Controlling for the East Asian philosophical tradition of a country, collectivism did not contribute any variance to this emotional pattern (Schimmack et al., 2002). Thus, the study shows that our understanding of emotional experience in different cultures is furthered by an understanding of different kinds of interdependent models.

Other studies also demonstrate that the distinction between independent and interdependent cultural models does not suffice for a comprehensive understanding of cultural differences in emotional experience. For instance, there is now ample evidence to suggest that some non-Asian groups from interdependent cultural contexts have high positive affect, higher even than European Americans. Thus, in an experience sampling study, (Scollon et al., 2004) found that Hispanic students in California scored significantly higher on positive emotions than European American university students, who were followed by Asian students both in the United States and in Asia. The elevated positive ratings for Hispanics were found with respect to online ratings, global ratings, and retrospective ratings of positive affect. Furthermore, Hispanics and European American respondents reported somewhat lower negative emotion that the Asian groups. Hispanics and Asians, both engaging in interdependent models, could not have been more different with respect to their emotions.

Albert and Mesquita (2005) found similar results with low acculturation and low education Mexicans in North Carolina. Compared to European Americans who were matched in education, Mexican immigrants reported feeling more positive and less negative emotions on an emotion scale (Barrett & Russell, 1998).

Not much is known about Mexican interdependent models, but it is clear that this kind of interdependence has radically different implications for emotional experience. Whereas East Asians, Japanese in particular, have been described as moderating their positive feelings to fit in with others and fulfill their roles, Mexican contexts do not prescribe this type of emotion regulation. Rather, happiness in Mexican contexts is intertwined with interdependence, and seems to be culturally encouraged. Emotional expressivity is valued (Klein, 2001).Happiness and happy events are seen as an asset rather than an obstacle for role fulfillment and social adjustment. Happiness is explicitly associated with interdependence in relationships.

At the same time negative events appear to be downplayed in Mexican cultural contexts, by emphasizing that individual problems are less important than fulfilling one's roles in social life (Valdes, 1996). Difficulties should be accepted (Diaz-Gerrero, 1967). Acceptance and resignation rather than self-criticism appear to be required for role fulfillment. One is supposed to deal with the difficulties the best one can, without dwelling on them (Valdes, 1996). Though this is far from a comprehensive description of Mexican cultural models, the outlines make it clear that interdependence, and therefore the emotions in different interdependent contexts, can take on very different formats.

Discussion

A Cultural Perspective on Emotions.

Examining culturally particularized emotions yields some important insights into the nature of emotion generally. These insights would not have been obtained without careful examination of the way emotions fit with the cultural models in which they occur.

Emotions as social, relational phenomena. First, emotions are social phenomena. They are about the relationships between people, rather than being strictly personal phenomena within the heart or the head of an individual. Even in cultures that stress the relative independence of different individuals in relationships, as is the case in North American culture (Rothbaum, Pott, Azuma, Miyake, & Weisz, 2000), emotions tend to contribute to the normative type of relationship. Emotions in North American contexts tend to underline the autonomy of people in relationships (Mesquita et al., 2005; Rothbaum, Weisz, Pott, Miyake, & Morelli, 2000), which is the condoned relationship format in this context. On the other hand, emotions in interdependent contexts underline and realize the interdependent relationships in these cultures (Kitayama et al., in press).

Emotions are rooted in collective meanings. Second, emotions are not merely subjective individual phenomena. Rather, emotions constitute the cultural models. They are constructions of the emotional situation, based on cultural meanings and practices, and they are goals that make sense only within the parameters of the cultural models.

Collective representations of emotions influence experience. Third, emotions are not just online experiences that happen to occur. Cultural representations of emotions, especially focal emotions, emotion norms and ideal affect, motivate the experience of emotions. They do so by facilitating positively valued emotional experiences and inhibiting negative emotional experiences. Emotion representations also are the standards by which the significance of emotions is judged (see Tsai et al. in press).

The cultural psychology of emotions is not the enterprise of endless mapping all possible variations in experience. Rather, a cultural psychological approach allows for the inference of general principles of emotion through careful descriptive study of the emotional phenomena as they actually occur in their culturally particular forms. The end goal of cultural psychology, like the end goal of all science, is the reduction of rich data to general principles. However, *only* an abstraction that acknowledges the central place of meaning in emotional experience and behavior can really contribute to our understanding of the actual emotional experience and behavior that people have.

Methods

If culture matters so much, why do so many studies find cross-cultural convergence in emotional phenomena? There are probably two reasons. One has to do with research design and the other with interpretation of the results.

Research design. Cross-cultural convergence in emotional phenomena can often be attributed to the use of methods that do not allow for the finding of important cultural differences. In a way, one has to be aware of what the differences might be to create paradigms that allow for establishing them. One has to have a theory of emotional differences in order to measure them. For example, it would have been impossible to discover that Japanese identify the emotion in a person's face by considering not only that person's facial expression, but also the expressions of others in the same environment, were it not for presenting a picture displaying several people at once. The traditional paradigm of showing one isolated face without any social context would not have yielded cultural differences in this respect. Similarly, many experimental designs have placed individuals in a situation by themselves (for an exception, see Tsai and

Levenson, 1997). It is very unlikely that conditions in which an individual is isolated from his or her social environment will reveal any of the emotional differences associated with differences in the normative relationships between people.

Likewise, many studies are confined to emotions that are salient in Western cultures, and compare these emotions with the translated counterparts in other cultures. It is often not at all clear that these emotions are equally relevant in the cultures of comparison. Certainly, including emotions on the basis of their relevance for another, not Western culture, has been shown to change the results of emotion research. Thus, for example, Kitayama and his colleagues added typical Japanese emotion words to words that are salient in Western cultures, and found a dimension of social engagement that accounted for substantial variance in emotional experience (Kitayama et al., 2000; Kitayama et al., in press). This dimension could not have been found in cross-cultural research that only included the translations of commonly used English emotion words (Russell, 1983).

Importantly, establishing cultural differences in emotions seems to require a theory about the kinds of differences that one might find, as well as the methods that are capable of revealing these differences.[6]

Interpretation of data. Practices in data interpretation have also contributed to the common conclusion of emotional similarity. As discussed, many studies have described the phenomena at a level that is so abstract it would be hard to imagine *not* finding cross-cultural similarities. For example, Scherer & Wallbott (1994) looked at the antecedent events of emotions, and found large consistency in the antecedent events associated with particular classes of emotions. However, the categories used to code the events were

rather abstract. For example, ‘relationships’ constituted one category, and this category was universally the most important elicitor of joy-emotions. This finding seems to be descriptive of a condition of human life –and is interesting in that way—but it does not help to specify the emotional experience in particular cultures. It is questionable for example, that knowing that a positive emotion is elicited by ‘relationships’ will help to understand or predict the precise appraisals, behavioral goals and behaviors that are likely to follow.

Another practice in cross-cultural research on emotions is to conclude universality when the percentage of a certain response is higher than chance. However, depending on the number of answers possible, the chance rate of responses can be as low as 18% (for 6 response options). Although it is important that people associate certain behaviors (Consedine, Strongman, & Magai, 2003), facial expressions (Matsumoto, 1996),and antecedent events (Boucher & Brandt, 1981) significantly more often with the same emotions than if it were chance performance, it does not show that behaviors, facial expressions and antecedent events are universal. It shows that there is some universal human aspect in these different facets in emotions. The actual emotions may still show a lot of cultural specificity.

Differences in Emotion Talk or Emotional Experience?

Much, though certainly not all, of the research that we reported consists of verbal reports from people in different cultures. Some might comment that, while the ways people “talk” about their emotions may differ across cultures, the emotions themselves are not (e.g., Ekman, 1992). This chapter maintains that emotional experience itself is different across cultures, and that meanings are importantly driving these differences.

There is growing evidence that cultural differences in emotion go beyond the emotion discourse and that emotional meanings are consequential. Emotional meanings affect the kinds of behavior reported, for one. Many behaviors can be explained from the emotional meanings as construed, and this is true for behaviors reported for protagonists in emotional vignettes (e.g., Bagozzi et al., 2003), for self-reported behaviors in past emotional episodes (e.g., Mesquita et al., 2005), and for the behaviors as observed by ethnographies (e.g., Briggs, 1970).

Cultural construals of the emotional situation are also consistent with the results yielded by experimental judgment tasks of facial expressions. Thus, differences in emotion identification have been found that are consistent with the differences between independent and interdependent construals of the situation (Cohen & Gunz, 2002; Masuda et al., 2005). In independent contexts, judgments of facial expressions are based on the emotions of one individual only, whereas judgment of emotions in interdependent cultures is based on the perception that multiple people's emotions are interdependent.

Furthermore, there is clear evidence that the meaning of emotions themselves is consequential. Emotion norms and ideals have been associated with choice behaviors (Oishi & Diener, 2003). Thus, feeling good is an important motive in cultures that value positive emotion, whereas it does not motivate people in cultural contexts that emphasize emotion moderation and role fulfillment. Similarly, cultural evaluations of emotional states are important predictors of depression (Tsai et al., in press), and of emotional experiences in general (Eid & Diener, 2001). Thus, cultural meanings of emotions themselves are important predictors of both behavior and affective experience.

In sum, understanding the variance in cultural meanings of emotions is an important condition for the understanding of emotional experience itself.

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[1] A functional view does not mean that every instance of emotion fits the cultural goals and practices. It means that, on average, the cultural shaping of emotions renders them more effective in a cultural context than if they were not shaped to fit the cultural model.

[2] The Indian students formed an exception to the other interdependent cultures..

[3] One possible explanation for the difference in types of shame responses would be that words representing shame in different cultures simply cut the domain of emotional experience differently. In that case, studies comparing these emotional experiences across cultures by asking for an experience of the word of shame would simply prompt different parts of the emotion domain. In support of this hypothesis, Japanese has a single word denoting both shame and embarrassment (Rusch, 2004), and Chinese reportedly has five words for shame alone (Frank, Harvey, & Verdun, 2000). It is unclear, however, that these differences in vocabulary are solely responsible for the different experiences. First, it is entirely possible that Japanese do not distinguish sharply between the different uses of the shame word, and that different experiences of this word are experienced as sharing lots of similarities. This would be consistent with findings by reported by the anthropologist Daniel Fessler who studied shame experiences among the inhabitants of a fisher village in the Indonesian province of Bengkulu. Whereas Malay, the language these villagers speak, has only one word to refer to both shame and embarrassment, Fessler concludes that *malu* does not encompass different homonyms. Bengkulu villagers in the Indonesian described the feelings and action tendencies of *malu* as no different when the emotion occurs in classical shame situations as compared to embarrassment situations (Fessler, 2004). Second, despite having one rather than five shame words, Americans were perfectly able to distinguish between the five different forms of shame that the Chinese language distinguishes (Frank et al., 2000). It is thus not obvious that the differences in shame behaviors are associated with differences in word use.

[4] The description of these data is simplified for the purposes of this chapter. In fact, the authors calculate latent classes of people. Some of these latent classes are culturally

specific, but most were found across cultures. If a respondent's data fits into a class, this reflects the *likelihood* that this respondent values certain emotions as desirable, undesirable, or neutral. We simplified the data by describing the latent classes to which most respondents in a culture belong, and within each class the emotion norms that are most likely to be adhered.

[5] Some Australians and Americans, however, considered anger and sadness as positive emotions.

[6] This is of course not to deny the cross-cultural similarities in emotions that are found when one studies English emotion terms. There is certainly reason to assume some shared core of emotional experiences based on the research that has been conducted (Oishi et al., 2004; Scherer, 1997b; Scherer & Wallbott, 1994; Scollon et al., 2004). The relative importance of these similarities compared to the differences cannot be judged based on the available evidence.