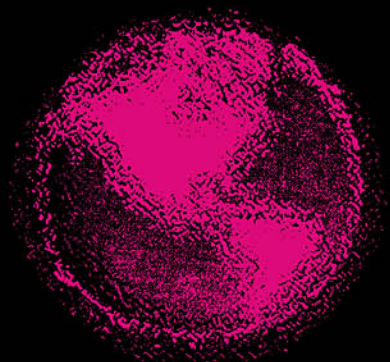


# THE PRACTICE OF SOCIAL INFLUENCE IN MULTIPLE CULTURES



Edited by

Wilhelmina Wosinska

Robert B. Cialdini

Daniel W. Barrett

Janusz Reykowski

# The Practice of Social Influence in Multiple Cultures

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*To Marek, Marta, Zosia, and Magda Lena  
and to the memory of the beloved daughter Alunia*

*To Bobette, Christopher, and Jason*

*To Leslie and Madeline*

*To Zula and Dorotka*



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# Preface

Wilhelmina Wosinska

Robert B.Cialdini

Daniel W.Barrett

The 1990s witnessed the evolution of increasingly sophisticated theories and rapidly growing empirical support for the impact of cross-cultural factors on attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. One of the areas in which the cross-cultural focus in social psychology holds great promise is the study of social influence. However, although recent published research has clearly demonstrated the need to consider the interactions between cultural differences and social influence processes, no volume reflecting the depth and breadth of this work has previously been available. The purpose of this book is to provide, in a single volume, a diverse collection of studies reporting the effects of social influence processes in multiple cultures, at both the universal and culture-specific levels.

This volume is characterized by three novel and distinct features. The first major feature is that the social influence process is considered to be a ubiquitous and pervasive characteristic of human interaction. This means that, first, social influence is conceptualized in terms of a few general governing principles that work universally for all people, although the magnitude of the impact of these principles may be culture- and context-bound. Second, this volume underscores the pervasiveness of the social influence process by expanding its connotation beyond the dynamics of individual persuasion: Influence is considered a process for generating large-scale social change. Third, and finally, social influence is approached from a moral perspective, which incorporates practices that range from the manipulative to the ethically desirable.

The second feature of our volume is that it represents a multiple cultural approach. That is, the book is largely composed of original data collected via two separate but complementary research approaches to the social influence process. One is the cross-cultural approach. Many of the chapters presented here contain analyses of different national cultures. Some of the cross-cultural chapters focus on a particular phenomenon studied simultaneously in more than one society, whereas others investigate a social influence issue within a single culture and compare their data with findings from other cultures. The second culture-focused approach may be called *multicultural*: The chapters incorporating this approach examine social influence as it applies to different subcultures within a single society rather than cultures in different nations.

Thus, as the title of the volume indicates, we are dealing with the social influence process in multiple cultures, both between and within societies. In our view, this volume represents a unique and important contribution in two ways. First, the populations that are studied herein are broadly based. This is in contrast to previous research on social influence that has, for the most part, used White, middle-class college students or, less frequently, representatives of the general population of North America. Second, this collection of studies includes examinations of Central and Eastern European cultures that, because of political and language barriers, were not previously accessible to most foreign scholars. In the past, much of the non-American research published in English language outlets has focused on Asian cultures. Virtually none investigated cultures from Central

and Eastern Europe. Now that the political barriers in this region have been lowered, valuable research that emerged in the 1990s can be more widely disseminated. In part, this volume represents an attempt to do just that by widening the potential audience for research conveying insights into the social psychological processes occurring in emerging democracies. However, we did include both Western European as well as Asian cultures. All in all, this volume incorporates Hungarian, Polish, German, Turkish, Spanish, Japanese, Chinese, Mexican-American, and EuroAmerican cultures and subcultures in the original research and includes numerous reference to additional research conducted in many more nations.

The third distinctive feature of our volume is its emphasis on the practical implications of the research presented herein. The reader not only learns how the principles and mechanisms of social influences operate powerfully in various cultures and contexts, but sees specific applications of the research data in given domains. Each chapter ends with a brief (or, in some cases, more extended) discussion of the major practical implications for its findings.

Combining these three approaches to the social influence process within an overall cultural theme allowed us to arrange the chapters into the three following sections: Part I: Principles of Social Influence Across Cultures, Part II: Social Influence and Social Change Across Cultures, and Part III: Culture and Moral Perspective in the Social Influence Process.

Part I provides analyses of how the six general principles of social influence described by Cialdini (1993; i.e., commitment/consistency, social proof, authority, scarcity, reciprocity, and liking) work universally across cultures and how cultural factors may mold the impact of the principles in specific contexts. The power of commitment/consistency (the tendency to remain consistent with one's previous actions or beliefs) is analyzed in the chapter by Iyengar and Brockner (chap. 1) in research on how the opportunity to choose their task (which affected commitment to the task) differentially impacted school performance by Asian and American children. The same principle is studied by Cialdini, Wosinska, Barrett, Butner, and Górník-Durose (chap. 2), who examine readiness to participate in a consumer survey in Polish and American culture. Another approach to commitment is undertaken by Spangenberg and Greenwald (chap. 3), who analyze its effects within the self-prophecy paradigm. Liking (the tendency to be favorably impacted by those who are perceived as likable), which is partially produced by perceived similarity, was studied (along with empathy and perceived responsibility) by Miller, Koza, and Davis (chap. 4). Their meta-analytic approach covers several European, Asian, and American cultures and deals—as did Iyengar and Brockner's research—with a class of subjects relatively neglected in social influence research—children. Cialdini et al. also investigate a second principle, social proof (the tendency to behave as referent others do), which Pietras (chap. 5) analyzes in a different consumer context. Pietras extends her research, conducted on a general population of Poles, to two more principles: authority (the tendency to comply to the expectations of others with higher status or greater expertise) and scarcity (the tendency to perceive scarce objects or situations as more desirable). The operations of the reciprocity principle (the tendency to return a favor received from another) in a specific organization located in four diverse cultures are discussed by Morris, Podolny, and Ariel (chap. 6). The final chapter in Part I, written by Gutierrez and Van Puymbroeck (chap 7.), considers the impact of different types of influence and various cultural factors on illicit

drug misuse and reactions to therapeutic assistance by Euro-American and Mexican-American women.

These six general principles of social influence were researched in various cultures, in different contexts, and on different representatives of the national cultures. Several aspects of cross-cultural differences are addressed in these chapters. Individualism/collectivism, which has been considered by many researchers as a core dimension of cultural variability, is one such construal of cross-cultural differences discussed in the volume. Other dimensions, such as universalism/particularism and power distance, are also considered, although to a lesser degree. In addition, historic national experiences such as communist governments or scarcity-based economies are also included as factors contributing to the specificity of the social influence principles' impact. Finally, both national and individual differences in cultural orientation are considered in terms of how they might differentially impact the effectiveness of the social influence principles.

Part II is devoted to the social influence processes that are based not on interpersonal exchange (which can lead to more or less momentary acts of compliance)—as was the case for most of the research in Part I—but to those that generate more permanent change of the sort observed typically in larger audiences. In other words, in this section, authors deal with the influences that lead to social change. Nowak and Vallacher (chap. 8) apply a dynamical systems perspective to structural changes and to resulting widespread attitude change in Poland. Wojciszke (chap. 9) reflects on the consequences of a strong political minority on abortion-related laws in Poland; Klinger and Bierbrauer (chap. 10) discuss acculturation and conflict resolution among Turkish immigrants living in Germany; Kopp, Skrabski, and Szedmák (chap. 11) describe increased morbidity and mortality rates in Hungary that were produced by dramatic socioeconomic changes following the fall of the communist system; and Górnik-Durose (chap. 12) examines Westernized patterns of consumption among Polish youth.

Influences that lead to such diverse examples of social change may be termed *structural* in contrast to interpersonal or mass-mediated influences. Here, the source of the influence is neither typically an individual (although sometimes this may be a case, for instance, when a leader of the political opposition triggers an avalanche of changes) nor mass-mediated (although again mass-mediated influences may overlap with structural ones, as in the case where a radical new government commandeers major media outlets and uses them as part of a strategy to affect social change).

Although some of these chapters are primarily based on data collected in a single culture, the authors attempt to examine the implications for their findings for other cultures by discussing the potential universal and culture-specific aspects of their research.

Part III of the volume assumes yet another approach to the social influence process. Namely, it looks at it in terms of its moral aspects. There is a deeply rooted conviction—shared by representatives of the general population and also by some scholars—that social influence implies machiavellian manipulations that benefit only those who employ them. Certainly, knowledge of social influence, when combined with the ability to exert influence, can result in the manipulation of others' perceptions and opinions. Sometimes, however, strategies designed to produce one set of outcomes may inadvertently also lead to unintended and perhaps even unwanted consequences. For example, Dolinski and Kofta (chap. 13) describe some unintended consequences of the break that media often

insert between the presentation of a story headline about a person and his or her alleged involvement in a crime and the description of the details of the story: Attributions of responsibility to the named person turn out to be greater simply because the break occurred. The break is designed to retain viewers by providing a tease, yet it can produce the side effect of biasing perceptions of culpability. Manipulations may also occur on a larger scale with more serious implications. For instance, Pratkanis (chap. 14) describes the substitution of political propaganda for deliberative persuasion in established and emerging democracies, which severely hinders the actualization of democratic principles. In contrast to these two chapters, three others describe how social influence may be involved in prosocial activities. Snyder and Omoto (chap. 15) examine the role of social influence processes in volunteering to help persons suffering from AIDS. Ohme (chap. 16) depicts mass-mediated efforts to reduce the prevalence of smoking and reveals some interesting paradoxes embedded within some antismoking advertisements, crafted by a tobacco company, that may undermine their effectiveness. In the final chapter of Part III, Cody and Seiter (chap 17) suggest how deliberate manipulations by sales clerks in retail outlets may benefit both the store and the customer. Again, as in the earlier sections, if some authors primarily focus on a single culture, they nevertheless discuss the generalizability of their findings and/or hypothesize outcomes for other (contrasting) cultures.

In conclusion, this volume collects a diverse set of readings that are united in their attention to the intersection of social influence and culture. Research is drawn from multiple cultures and spans three broad sources of influence: interpersonal, mass-mediated, and structural. Although these sources of influence may be conceptually distinguishable, any single instance of social influence can easily involve all three sources. For example, illicit drug use may be a product of the confluence of structural influences (e.g., poverty), mass-mediated influences (portrayals of drug use on television), and interpersonal influences (e.g., spousal modeling). However, in a given instance, one source is often more impactful than others and may be appropriately allotted more emphasis than the others.

Because each of the three parts of the book encompasses a considerable variety of research methodologies, social contexts, and cultures, each is preceded by an integrative commentary authored by one of the book editors, Janusz Reykowski. These essays provide syntheses of the topics and themes within the corresponding sections and within the book as a whole. In addition to drawing out common themes in the chapters, they offer critical commentaries on both theoretical and methodological issues. Furthermore, they raise suggestions for future research and focus on practical applications.

All in all, this book is intended for scholars interested in cross- and multicultural research into the mechanisms of the social influence process. It is also designed for the professional whose mission is to make planned changes in a society. Knowledge about the influence process, especially regarding how it works in different cultures and within several cultural groups, should facilitate this goal. The practical implications ending each chapter may serve as encouraging instructions for such applications.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to end our introductory comments by acknowledging the tremendous organizational, financial, and moral support we have received from Dr. Jay Braun, former Chair of the Department of Psychology at Arizona State University, and Dr. Gary Krahenbuhl, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at this university. Both of these leaders warmly embraced the novel idea of conducting cross-cultural research within the Psychology Department and thus affirmed its importance in the future of psychology through their words and deeds. Such support for cross-cultural research is an especially timely response to the demands and challenges of humanity at this historical moment of the break of the millennia.

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Cialdini, R.B. (1993). *Influence: Science and practice*. New York: Harper.

## About the Editors

*Wilhelmina Wosinska* graduated from the University of Warsaw and received her doctoral degree from the Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Poland. She founded the Department of Social Psychology at the University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland, and chaired it for several years. Since immigrating to the United States in 1991, she has taught at Arizona State University West, where she introduced a new course on cross-cultural social psychology. This course reflects her area of expertise, and she is particularly interested in the study of social influence across cultures. She has published in both Polish and English. Her Polish publications include the book *Leadership in the Organization from the Perspective of Social Psychology*. Her publications in English deal with different principles and factors determining compliance in various cultures, especially in an organizational context.

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# Part I:

# Principles of Social Influence

# Across Cultures

*Janusz Reykowski*  
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## Overview and Commentary

Most of the research on social influence has been conducted in Western countries and primarily within the United States. Nevertheless, many people regard the basic principles of influence to be universal. In other words, they assume that the principles operate in similar ways in divergent cultures. This seems to be a latent assumption not only among authors who have described these principles, but also among many readers in various countries who accepted, with enthusiasm, translations of Cialdini's (1993) book *Influence: Science and Practice* into their respective languages. One question should be asked: To what extent can one generalize the findings concerning the mechanisms of social influence beyond the original milieu in which they were discovered and successfully applied? Relatedly, what is the role of cultural factors in people's reactions to various influence strategies? The first part of this volume discusses these very questions.

The first three chapters of Part I are focused primarily, but not solely, on one important mechanism of social influence that has been called the *principle of commitment*. A plethora of research has demonstrated that people who are led to commit themselves to certain behavior are likely to perform it when requested, despite mounting difficulties and decreasing attractiveness of the goal. Is this mechanism equally effective in various cultures?

In the first chapter, Iyengar and Brockner review research concerning this issue. First, they summarize many studies that show that when individuals commit to a certain activity, they develop attitudes consistent with such commitment, which then sustain this activity. Such commitment is stronger if it was public, if the corresponding activity required much effort, if it was irrevocable, and if it was freely chosen. Free choice appears to be an especially potent factor. Researchers found that every time people were convinced that *they* made the choice, they became much more persistent in their efforts. Do these results apply to people in general?

Iyengar and Brockner (chap. 1) point out that free choice holds a high position in the hierarchy of American values. It is related to the self-conception of the American people, especially to the ideal of the independent self, which is characteristic of this individualistic culture. However, the ideal of the independent self is not universal. As Markus and Kitayama (1991) explained, in collectivistic cultures, such as those in the Far East, people strive for interconnectedness and belonging. This striving is one reason that

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the interdependent self seems more malleable across contexts and why self-consistency may be less important for them. On the basis of this reasoning, Iyengar and Brockner hypothesize that the provision of personal choice can be more motivating for American individualists than for Asian collectivists. Their research reported in chapter 1 supports this hypothesis. In fact, choice was a much more effective manipulation for American children than for their Asian counterparts. At the same time, they found that Asian children were more motivated when the choice was made by an important ingroup member—the children's mothers; the Asian children did significantly worse when they made their own choices. The latter result also indicates that there must be important cultural differences in the operation of the social proof principle on behavior. For a collectivist, social proof can be a potent mechanism of influence, provided that it comes from ingroup members.

The theoretical analysis and the data provided by Iyengar and Brockner clearly show that cultural differences do matter as far as social influence processes are concerned. However, the authors formulate some warnings. In particular, they underscore that cultures are not homogenous and members of a given society are not all alike. In other words, the same dimensions of comparison that distinguish people between cultures may also differentiate people within a given culture. Therefore, to account for differences in people's reactions to particular forms of social influence, one should not depend solely on knowledge of cultural membership—one also has to take into account the specific position of the given persons on the specific dimension of comparison that is relevant for the given principle of influence. For the principles of commitment and social proofs, the relevant dimension is individualism/collectivism (I/C).

The significance of this postulate is well illustrated in chapter 2 by Cialdini, Wosinska, Barrett, Butner, and Górnik-Durose. It reports their research concerning the effectiveness of two social influence principles—commitment/consistency and social proof—in two different cultural contexts: individualistic and collectivistic. The authors hypothesize that in societies where collectivistic tendencies are relatively strong, social proof may affect compliance to a greater degree than in societies where individualism predominates. The opposite should be true about the commitment/consistency principle. The authors also expect that it would not be sheer national belonging and national I/C orientation that crucially influences compliance, but rather personal I/C orientation. They tested their hypotheses by recruiting subjects in two countries: the United States and Poland. Their data support previous research that indicated that collectivistic tendencies are more prevalent and of greater intensity in Poland than in the United States. Their main findings confirmed the hypotheses formulated by the authors. In particular, the evidence suggests that the strength of personal I/C orientation differentiates susceptibility to the two social influence procedures.

Thus, taking together the analyses and data provided in first two chapters of this part of the volume, one may conclude that the same social influence principles operate in various cultures but with unequal strength: In some cultures, some of the principles appear to be more potent than in others. The specific characteristic of the culture that was found to be responsible for this difference was individualism/collectivism. It was also found that the location of an individual on this dimension tends to determine his or her reactions to the various forms of social influence rather than his or her national culture.

The Cialdini et al. research also produced some unexpected results. One was that collectivists in both countries tended to comply more than individualists, independent of

influence principle. The authors conjecture that it may be because collectivists possess a stronger social responsibility norm than do individualists and found empirical support for it in an additional experiment described in the chapter. Nonetheless, one may still wonder whether this is a universal truth. On the basis of I/C theory (Triandis, 1990, 1994), one might expect that, for collectivists, the social responsibility norm has a rather narrow range of application—it is limited to ingroups. Moreover, this norm is also respected by individualists, although its motivational basis may be different than for collectivists. With this in mind, one has to be cautious about emphasizing the role of the social responsibility norm in this instance. Other plausible explanations could probably be generated here that could be explored in future research. However, this commentary is not the place for extensive speculations on why, in this research, collectivists manifested a higher degree of compliance than individualists.

Another unexpected result of the Cialdini et al. research concerned Polish individualists: They were not affected by the manipulations based on the commitment/consistency principle. These authors operationalized commitment/consistency as information about one's past behavior. It should be taken into consideration, however, that information about one's own past behavior may have different meaning for different people. Some people would understand it as evidence concerning their internal attributes and thus feel obliged to maintain self-consistency by behaving in the same way, whereas others may regard such information—especially when provided by someone whose strategic intentions are not concealed—as a manipulation impinging on their freedom of choice. In such a case, reactance may be a likely response. Thus, individualists who regard freedom of choice as an important value may, in some circumstances, react paradoxically to the information about their own past activities. As a matter of fact, commonsense knowledge about the Polish character suggests that reactance is a frequent reaction among Poles.

There is still another aspect of the commitment/consistency principle that should be considered here. Cialdini et al. maintain that the motivating power of the practices based on this principle comes from information about one's own past behavior. However, they would probably not argue against the proposition that the concept of commitment could be extended to include other behavior. This is in fact what Spangenberg and Greenwald (chap. 3) do in their chapter on self-prophecy. On the basis of previous research and their own studies, they suggest that predictions concerning one's own future action increase the probability of executing the given action. The authors mention two conditions that have to be met for the self-prophecy effect to occur consistently: The given action is socially desirable, and subjects are unable to make confident self-predictions based on their past behavior.

As to the first condition, it may require a fairly liberal interpretation. In one of the experiments, the self-prophecy effect was found for a rather odd kind of behavior—namely, singing on the phone. It is difficult to assume that singing on the phone is socially desirable behavior unless one agrees that social desirability can be defined in a concrete situation by specific persons or a group. The second condition indicates that there might be a competition between self-prophecy and well-established patterns of behavior. In such a competition, the well-established patterns are bound to win, indicating that consistency with past behavior has priority over consistency with situationally evoked predictions.

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Spangenberg and Greenwald argue that the self-prophecy effect is robust in both the magnitude of the effect size and the variety of contexts in which it has been observed. Therefore, it can be used as an effective tool of social influence. Although they explain this phenomenon by referring to value-action discrepancy, it can also be seen as another instance of the commitment/consistency principle. Still there are questions about its applicability in various cultural contexts. The authors consider that cultural differences in normative systems may play an important mediating role. That is, the strength of the norm associated with the given behavior may influence the self-prophecy effect concerning that behavior. Another cultural difference that is taken into consideration is the method of evoking the predictions. The authors believe that the standard American approach—using telephones or paper-and-pencil technique—would not be feasible in many countries.

However, the problem runs deeper than that. As discussed earlier and in the first two chapters, there are good reasons to doubt whether consistency appeals engender equally strong motivation in different cultural contexts. On the basis of this reasoning, one can expect that consistency effects should be much stronger in cultures where an independent construal of the self predominates than in cultures where the interdependent construal does—or, in other words, in individualistic rather than collectivistic contexts.

The role of the individualistic versus collectivistic cultural contexts in determining the effectiveness of social influence is not limited to the commitment/consistency and social proof principles. Data and analyses presented in chapter 4 by Miller, Koza and Davis, show that several other factors of social influence can be modified by cultural context. These authors focus on how empathy and sympathy are affected by three different factors of social influence: beliefs about similarity to a target person, observational set (focusing attention on psychological states—feelings and thoughts of a target person vs. focusing it on the objective situation), and beliefs about responsibility for the predicament of a target person (the target person's responsibility for his or her condition vs. external, uncontrollable causes). One may notice that only the first factor is somewhat related to the principles of social influence described by Cialdini (1993)—the similarity manipulation tends to evoke liking that facilitates social impact. The two others are more specific: They regard instances where the influence consists of evoking affective responses toward exigencies of a particular person.

The authors' present a meta-analysis of studies conducted in the United States and several countries in Europe and Asia. The results of this analysis indicate, first of all, that the three factors of social influence operate cross-culturally (i.e., it may be reasonable to contend that evoking beliefs about similarity to a given person, focusing attention on his or her psychological states, or providing information that a target person is not responsible for his or her negative situation tend to facilitate empathetic and sympathetic responding across cultures). In discussing their results, the authors point out that similarity appeared to have the least influence in eliciting the prosocial effect, but this observation is rather ambiguous. To make a direct comparison of various social influence factors, one should have a common measure of the strength of these factors. Unfortunately, no such measure is available. Therefore, it is unclear whether the weaker effect of the similarity manipulation is due to the fact that it is a less potent factor or because the given similarity manipulations were not meaningful for the subjects.

Despite the fact that the three influence factors appear to have effects in various cultures, there were also some culturally determined differences. One difference concerns the interpretation of responsibility for one's own predicament. In collectivistic cultures, a

person tends to be perceived as less responsible for his or her misfortune than in individualistic ones. In the former, a group is supposed to assume responsibility for an individual, whereas in the latter, the responsibility is attributed to a given person. It explains previous findings that show that the helping behavior of Indian subjects (representing a collectivistic culture) was not affected by information about target responsibility for his or her misfortune. It can be added that the same subjects were more empathetic if the cause of someone's plight was personally uncontrollable. It probably means that normative demands of the given culture may override differences in affective responses.

Another point where cultural differences are likely to appear is in the perception of similarity. Some of the data quoted by Miller et al. indicate that, in collectivistic cultures, ingroup/outgroup differentiation may play a significant role in evoking empathy: It is much more likely for an ingroup member. One may conjecture that group belonging may determine, to a major degree, who is perceived as similar and dissimilar.

The data provided up to this point seem to support the notion that, as far as responses to various social influence principles are concerned, I/C is a valid dimension for comparison. Nevertheless, using culture as a unit of analysis can only give us gross approximation to the phenomena one is interested in. In fact, societies belonging to the same category of cultures (individualistic or collectivistic) may still differ in their reactions to social influence, in part due to their differential historical experiences. For example, one can conjecture that extended periods of economic deprivation may sensitize members of a society to information about scarcity. Moreover, there may exist systematic differences among people representing different social categories (e.g., socioeconomic status [SES]) within a given culture in their reactions to various principles.

These ideas are investigated in chapter 5 by Pietras. Her focus is on the effects of three social influence principles (scarcity, social proof, and authority) on Polish consumer behavior. Pietras argues that I/C should have some bearings on the impact of the social proof principle. At the same time, societal experience—a long period of economic shortage—can increase susceptibility to a scarcity appeal. Moreover, she takes into account the role of sociodemographic categories (age, gender, income) and a psychological variable (locus of control) when testing these principles. In her field experiment, reactions were obtained from people chosen randomly from adults in shops and on the streets to leaflets advertising a new product. The leaflets differed with respect to the kind of appeal they contained. The appeals reflected three social influence principles: scarcity, social proof, authority. The dependent measures were attitudes toward the product and intentions of buying it.

The author hypothesized that the relatively higher level of collectivism in Poland should make the social proof tactics more effective than the others. Moreover, the 40 years of experience of shortage of the most of ordinary goods should make Poles especially sensitive to the information about scarcity. Unfortunately, the author's hypotheses could not be tested directly because she lacked comparison groups. Therefore, she has tested the tactics against each other. Surprisingly, she found that social proof was less effective than authority and scarcity. Nevertheless, it is difficult to interpret this finding. Does it mean that the collectivistic participants were not sensitive to information about others' preferences and behavior or, as the author suggests was more likely the case, that the operationalization of this tactics was inappropriate? It is doubtful that telling Poles "that people all over the world like this product" suggested a reference

group that was sufficiently relevant to invoke social proof. Collectivists are more likely to react to the opinions of their ingroup rather than of people in general. Therefore, one should not be surprised that collectivistic subjects would not be impacted by such information.

Interestingly enough, social proof information was more persuasive for people with high income, suggesting that *people all over the world* was a better reference group for more affluent consumers. This finding is an illustration of the thesis that, when considering the role of cultural differences on social behavior, one should take into account social categories within the culture.

It should be stressed that one may not formulate, on the basis of these data, general statements about differences in effectiveness of the three social influence principles. The main difficulty consists in the fact that the effectiveness of the message depends not only on the underlying principle, but also on its specific content. Therefore, one does not know whether the greater effectiveness of a particular principle in comparison to the other ones was related to the greater sensitivity of the given group to this kind of tactic or due to the more or less adequate translation of the principles into specific messages.

However, one can compare the effectiveness of the same messages for different kinds of people. Thus, Pietras' data indicate that men manifested less compliance than women (or that the product was intrinsically more attractive for women than for men), that older people were more influenced by the authority principle than younger people (either because an authority played a greater role for the older people or because they were more susceptible to a specific kind of authority—in this case, the authority of a physician), and that people with a higher income were more likely to be influenced by the behavior of an international reference group. These data also suggest that people with external locus of control were more susceptible to all kinds of influences than people with internal locus of control.

Obviously it is difficult to formulate firm conclusions from these data. However, at least one can say that the effectiveness of the social influence principles was modified by a number of sociodemographic and cultural factors (such as age, gender, income) and psychological factors (such as locus of control). Thus, all of these kinds of variables should be considered in future research regarding the impact of culture on social influence processes. This claim is consistent with Diaz-Guerrero's (1993) speculation regarding the need to include sociohistorical precursors when examining national cultures.

Another approach to cultural differences in response to social influence is presented in chapter 6 on feelings of obligation in the workplace in several countries. In this chapter, Morris, Podolny, and Ariel compare responses to an imagined request for assistance in performing a dull task. Their subjects were from four countries: Germany, Hong Kong, Spain, and the United States. The main finding of this research was that various channels of influence were differentially effective in these nations. Three such channels were investigated in this research: power, friendship, and formal position in an organization. In other words, the request for assistance came from people with high or low power, from people who were or were not identified as friends, or from someone who belonged to the same or a different branch of the organization and had a designated location in the command structure. For the U.S. participants, the most influential channel was power, whereas in Germany it was formal position in the organization, in Spain, friendship and formal position, and in Hong Kong, power and formal position. Not surprisingly, in each

sample, other channels were also effective, albeit to a lesser degree. In some countries, some channels were apparently altogether closed.

The extent to which these findings are generalizable is not clear. For instance, do the same channels operate in the case of other types of influence, such as inducing a political action or a purchase or altering one's beliefs? One also does not know whether people would display the same pattern of responses in real-life situations as opposed to the *imagine* scenarios used in this study. These uncertainties notwithstanding, there is good reason to expect that individuals from different cultures manifest differential susceptibility as a function of the source and character of the influence attempts. What are the possible sources of his differential susceptibility? At least two dimensions of cultural differences postulated by Hofstede (1983) can be considered. One is the previously mentioned I/C dimension. Assuming that Spain is a relatively collectivistic country, one may not be surprised that friendship played a significant role there. What about Hong Kong? Chinese people are allegedly highly collectivistic, so why has friendship not appeared there as an important channel? Does it mean that Hong Kong workplace ingroups are not defined in terms of friendship, at least not in the terms that were used in the study? Or is it that, as the authors suggest, in the Chinese context, attitudes toward persons in power have a collectivistic connotation—they represent filial relationship?

Another dimension that is likely to be relevant for differences in compliance is power distance. However, the two countries where power channels were the most effective—the United States and Hong Kong—are not high on this dimension (Hofstede, 1983; Schwartz, 1994). Therefore, it seems that widely known, general characteristics of a culture do not provide easy explanation of the obtained findings. The authors propose their own classification of the differences between cultures and argue that their data are consistent with it.

It seems that there is a common message in the five chapters of Part I: All the major factors of social influence considered here operate in various cultures, but there are culturally related significant differences in their effectiveness as well as in the specific conditions of their operation. Some of the observed differences can be explained, at least partially, as the result of differences in culturally bound normative systems that can be accounted for by means of one important dimension—individualism and collectivism. These normative systems affect the construal of the self-concept, which partially determines the differential susceptibility of individuals to various social influence factors.

The role of cultural determinants, however, is broader than that. In chapter 7 Gutierrez and Van Puymbroeck discuss other consequences of cultural differences. The problem they identify is the differential responses to treatment for substance misuse among people belonging to divergent cultural groups. Their data show that Mexican-American women have significantly lower prospects of recovery from drug misuse than Euro-American women and both Mexican- and Euro-American men. What makes this particular group more resistant to the therapeutic influences than other groups?

First of all, the authors indicate that there are strong cultural expectations concerning abstinence from substance use for the Mexican-American women. The dominant cultural pattern is that they are more likely than other groups to abstain from alcohol use; when they do use it, they do so in much lower quantities and frequencies. This is true for women in urban and rural communities, for recent immigrants, and for second and later generations as well. The strong normative barriers against substance misuse among these women provide a kind of a shield protecting them from the pressures existing in their



milieu. This shield is highly effective in contemporary societies where these women are exposed to many pressures and temptations to use substance. Once these normative barriers are broken (the authors describe a number of factors that contribute to such breakdown), recovery is difficult. Gutierrez and Van Puymbroeck label this as the *cultural abstinence violation effect*.

This phenomenon is probably a more general one and has some bearings for a theory of social influence. Namely, one can expect that strong culturally enforced norms can provide effective protection against counter-normative social influences, but they make it much more difficult to save the transgressors. The authors mention internal and external sources of this difficulty. The internal source is the strong feeling of shame that prevents the afflicted women from seeking help from family and friends. There is also an external factor—stigmatization. Mexican-American women who abuse alcohol are considered black sheep in their environment. According to the authors, a special therapeutic program needs to be developed for the Mexican-American women that takes into consideration conditions unique to their substance misuse experience.

In conclusion, one may suggest that, although there are several general mechanisms of social influence, their specific characteristics can be distinct in different cultures. In attempting to account for these differences, one must consider that the dynamics and effects of the social influence processes may depend not only on the content of the beliefs, normative systems, and values dominant in the given culture, but also on the formal characteristics of the normative systems—their strength and rigidity.

It is apparent that differences in the effectiveness of social influence principles across cultures is partially dependent on one major dimension of culture variability: individualism/collectivism. Evidence presented in this volume suggests that at least some social influence principles have different effects on individualistic and collectivistic contexts. Some additional comments concerning the nature of the I/C dimension should be added.

First, it should be borne in mind that individualism/collectivism may not be a one-dimensional construct, because a number of studies have demonstrated its multidimensionality. For example, in their recent article, Triandis and Gelfand (1998) argued that there are two kinds of individualism and two kinds of collectivism: horizontal—emphasizing equality—and vertical—emphasizing hierarchy. The authors provide some theoretical and empirical arguments supporting this claim. Obviously the differences in the characteristics of the I/C construct may have some bearing on the theory of social influence (e.g., one can expect that reactions to various social influence tactics would differ in people representing vertical vs. horizontal collectivism—or individualism). Other authors describe still other dimensions of I/C (e.g., Bierbrauer, Meyer, Wolfradt, 1994; Kim, 1994; Reykowski, 1998).

Second, societies are not homogenous in terms of their mapping on the I/C dimension. A single society may contain major variations in I/C orientation depending on sociodemographic categories as well as territorial ones. For example, in the United States, collectivistic tendencies are strongest in the Deep South and individualistic tendencies are greater in the Mountain West and Great Plains (Vandello & Cohen, 1999).

Third, the I/C construct can be analyzed on both the societal (cultural) and individual levels, and there may be important differences between the two. On the societal level, the I/C construct refers to systems of dominant beliefs, norms, and values, as well as to institutions and cultural products. It is a kind of a broad context in which the lives of



society members are conducted. The role of the cultural context was considered in chapter 7, where the authors, although not explicitly dealing with I/C, clearly demonstrate how the cultural context can affect the individual's behavior—in this case, susceptibility to social influence. On the individual level, the I/C construct refers to the structure of beliefs and values in the minds of individual persons. Cialdini et al. demonstrate that the individual's position on the I/C dimensions plays a more important role in his or her reaction to social influence tactics than does national I/C. In other words, information concerning the characteristics of the culture (societal level) is not sufficient if one wants to predict behavior of a concrete member of the culture (individual level). There may be another problem as well, for which existing data are insufficient to suggest a clear resolution: Can one assume that reactions to social influence are independent of context? In other words, is there no difference in the functioning of an individualist (or, respectively, the collectivist) in the individualistic and collectivistic cultural milieus? Apparently a clear answer to this question is not currently possible, although there have been some attempts at looking at this issue (Sinha & Tripathi, 1994).

Fourth, it should be stressed that, although the I/C construct is an important dimension of cultural differences that mediates the effects of social influence, it is not the only dimension. In this part of the volume, several other impactful dimensions are discussed (e.g., in chap. 6). Moreover, as suggested earlier, specific sociohistorical experiences can also affect people's reactions to social influence. An example of such societal experience is going through a long period of economic shortage. Some other important dimensions of culture comparison have been described by Hofstede (1980) and Schwartz (1994). Of course, there are others that might also be considered. This multidimensionality of cultural differences becomes a theoretical challenge because it necessitates the development of a comprehensive model that could account for interactions between various dimensions.

The role of content-related cultural differences notwithstanding, there are also important differences in the formal characteristics of normative systems. The data analyzed in Part I (e.g., chap. 7) indicate that the effects of social influence also appear to depend on the strength and rigidity of the normative systems operating in a given culture. If the normative systems are strong (consequently supported by the members of the society) and rigid (not allowing even minor departures), they may effectively prevent counternormative influences. Of course, the social influence process is culturally embedded: The strength and rigidity of societal norms can be viewed as the specific effects of social influence existing in a particular cultural milieu.

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# Cultural Differences in Self and the Impact of Personal and Social Influences

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## ABSTRACT

*A long and rich tradition in Western-dominated social psychology has examined the effects of people's observations of their own behavior on their subsequent attitudes and behaviors. Studies in this tradition examine and find moderating effects of various contextual factors (e.g., volition and publicness) on people's tendencies to align their attitudes/behaviors with their observed behaviors. Conversely, there has been a historical tradition for examining the effects of social influences and group pressure on human thought and behavior. Recent findings reviewed in this chapter suggest that cultural differences in independence and interdependence moderate the relative impact of one's own and other's behavior. People from cultures stressing independence are more influenced by observations of their own behaviors, whereas people from cultures stressing interdependence are more influenced by observations of their peers' behaviors.*

Historically, there have been two research traditions in the study of influence: one focusing on the effects of personal information and the other dealing with the effects of social information. Influence based on personal information refers to people being affected by their observations of what they have said and done in the past. Influence based on social information refers to people being affected by their observations of others' attitudes and behaviors. This chapter considers how the impact of these two forms of influence varies across cultures.

## THE POWER OF PERSONAL INFORMATION

The last of the human freedoms is to choose one's attitudes.

—Victor Frankl

Much theory and research on influence suggest that people are more committed to behaviors they have chosen. One of the first to draw on this insight, Lewin (1952), the father of experimental social psychology, demonstrated that housewives could be persuaded to purchase otherwise undesirable meats (e.g., sweetbreads) if they were

convinced not of the benefits of consuming such meats, but instead that they had chosen and publicly committed to purchase and consume these meats. Since Lewin's seminal studies, decades of research have repeatedly shown that people are influenced by personal information (i.e., their observations of what they said and did in the past).

In particular, studies indicate that when individuals behaviorally commit to a situation, they tend to develop attitudes consistent with their commitment (e.g., Kiesler, 1971; Salancik, 1977). Moreover, research has identified four variables that moderate the effect of behavioral commitment on subsequent attitudes. First, people are more persuaded by acts they engaged in publicly rather than privately (cf. Hovland, Campbell, & Brock, 1957). Second, people make judgments about how committed they are to a particular belief based on past efforts exerted in support of their belief. In other words, people make attitude inferences based partly on the frequency of the acts of commitment in which they have already engaged (cf. Sherif, Sherif, & Nebergall, 1965). Third, people are compelled by those commitments that are irrevocable (see Gerard, 1968). Fourth, people are persuaded by those acts that they perceived to have been volitional or freely chosen (cf. Freedman & Steinbruner, 1964). Essentially, after committing themselves to a particular position that is public, effortful, irrevocable, and freely chosen, people are likely to think and act congruently with that position (Aronson, 1992; Cialdini, 1993).

Although the influence of these four moderating variables often coexist, it is the last variable—that of perceived choice—that has received by far the most theoretical and empirical consideration. Salancik (1977) theorized that, without choice, people need not infer that their behavior has any implication for their attitudes. Publicness, effortfulness, and irrevocability bind individuals to their behaviors, forcing them to come to terms with their previously committed deeds. However, their perception that they have freely elected to act in a particular way instigates the degree to which they give credence to their earlier commitments. Thus, although the publicness, effortfulness, and irrevocability of one's behavior may enhance its impact on subsequent attitudes and behaviors, the influential determinant may be volition or perceived choice.

### THE INFLUENCE OF CHOICE

Give me liberty or give me death!

—Patrick Henry

Since the beginning of American political and legal history, the concept of *choice* has been drawn on as a persuasive device for influencing social ideology. Not surprisingly, psychological research and theory have also manipulated choice to illustrate its merits as a powerful influencing weapon on human thought and behavior. In fact, the provision of choice has proved to be so powerful that the motivational consequences of choice extend even to contexts in which the choice is trivial, incidental, or entirely illusory.

In the clearest demonstration of the relationship between choice and human motivation, researchers have repeatedly shown that the provision of choice is linked to intrinsic motivation, which in turn is correlated with greater commitment. Specifically, the provision of choice increases levels of intrinsic motivation and enhances performance

on a variety of tasks (Deci, 1975, 1981; Deci & Ryan, 1985). In a typical study, the intrinsic motivation of participants is compared across two conditions, one in which participants are given a choice ("Which one of the following six puzzles would you like to do?") and a second in which participants are told by an experimenter which puzzle to undertake (Zuckerman, Porac, Lathin, Smith, & Deci, 1978). Findings consistently indicate that, when given a choice, people tend to do better and persevere more at these activities—both of which may reflect greater commitment.

More recent findings suggest that the opportunity to make a choice need not be directly linked to the central activity at hand to be associated with increased levels of intrinsic motivation. Even the provision of small and instructionally irrelevant choices can increase intrinsic motivation and learning (Cordova & Lepper, 1996). The Cordova and Lepper study showed that when students work on a computer math game, even trivial choices, such as the option to select the name by which they would be addressed during the game, increased intrinsic motivation and learning of mathematical concepts.

Indeed, even a pure illusion of choice has powerful motivating effects. Consider one of the theoretical cornerstones of social psychology—cognitive dissonance. When individuals perceive themselves as choosing to engage in counterattitudinal behavior, such as writing essays, subsequent changes in attitudes are observed. In contrast, when they perceive themselves to have been forced into that same behavior, their attitudes do not change (e.g., Collins & Hoyt, 1972; Cooper & Fazio, 1984; Festinger, 1957; Goethals & Cooper, 1972; Linder, Cooper, & Jones, 1967; Sherman, 1970). Likewise, as long as individuals believe that they have chosen to undertake an unpleasant activity, such as administering electric shocks to oneself or eating grasshoppers, they will tend to perceive these behaviors as less unpleasant (Zimbardo, Weisenberg, Firestone, & Levy, 1965).

Researchers have even argued that the illusion of choice can influence the quality of human life (e.g., Rotter, 1966; Taylor, 1989; Taylor & Brown, 1988). One particularly compelling demonstration conducted by Langer and Rodin (1977) suggested that the health of elderly patients in a nursing home could be significantly improved—even leading to decrements in mortality rates—if the elderly patients were led to perceive themselves as having choices over relatively trivial matters within the institution. Perhaps Lefcourt (1973) best summed up the essence of this research when he concluded that, "the sense of control, the illusion that one can exercise personal choice, has a definite and a positive role in sustaining life" (p. 424).

In summary, the positive effects of choice appear ubiquitous. The provision of choice seems inherently linked with intrinsic motivation, perceived control, and personal commitment, all of which are in turn correlated with numerous psychological benefits. One explanation for the importance of choice may be its concomitance with self-responsibility. As long as people perceive their behaviors to be volitional, they presume responsibility for their actions and, consequently, their behaviors can serve as a source of information for constructing personal attitude statements (Bem, 1972; Bem & McConnell, 1970; Jones & Harris, 1967). Individuals may ask themselves, "What must my attitude have been if I was willing to perform this behavior in this situation?" Such a theory might suggest that a necessary factor underlying the power of choice is that an individual's drive for consistency will take precedence over his or her convictions.

Support for this theory comes from one of the most reliable compliance techniques—the commitment/consistency principle (also known as the foot-in-the-door technique; Dillard, 1991; Freedman & Fraser, 1966). This technique begins with a request

that is so small that it almost always elicits compliance. After initial compliance is attained, a larger, related request is then made. Agreement to perform the second request is usually enhanced by this technique and is often interpreted as resulting from a desire to be consistent with the initial commitment (Cialdini, 1993). Thus, one's perception of choice may be inextricably linked to one's desire to be consistent. Just how central is the power of choice and how pervasive is the desire for internal consistency, especially in societies less permeated by the rhetoric of personal freedom?

## CULTURE AND CHOICE

In the world, there are two great decrees. One is fate and the other is duty. That a son should love his parents is fate: you cannot erase this from his heart. That a subject should serve his ruler is duty: there is no place he can go and be without his ruler—no place he can escape to between Heaven and Earth.

—Confucius, *Analects*

Just as the cultural ideals of individual freedom and liberty are reflected in the way Americans are influenced by the provision of choice and personal history, so too might the ideals of duty and fate mitigate the effects of such powerful influencing tools in cultures less individualistic than our own. In particular, although the provision of choice is an integral part of American ideals, one might wonder what role it plays in contexts less individualistic—contexts that emphasize social interdependence over personal autonomy.

Drawing on the cultural analysis of Markus and Kitayama (1991), one may expect members of more collectivist cultures to be less influenced by their personal histories. Indeed, the findings regarding the effects of freely chosen behaviors on subsequent attitudes and behaviors might be particularly applicable to North Americans and Western Europeans. Markus and Kitayama's theory regarding self-systems argues that, although personal agency and internal consistency are essential elements of the self-concept of American individualists, it may be less relevant to the self-concepts of members of more collectivist cultures (characteristic of Asia and elsewhere).

Markus and Kitayama (1991) suggest that Americans possess a model of the self as fundamentally independent. Such individuals desire a sense of autonomy and seek to express their internal attributes to establish their distinctness from others in their environment. For Americans, then, it is important to be consistent with what one has done in the past to establish one's own stable internal attributes. Consequently, making a choice provides an opportunity to display one's preferences, express one's internal attributes, assert one's autonomy, and fulfill the goal of being unique. Thus, for Americans, internal consistency and personal agency may be deeply inter-twined with their sense of self-identity.

Now consider a different cultural context—one in which the members possess a more interdependent model of the self. In contrast to American individualists, Markus and Kitayama (1991) theorized that members of more inter-dependent cultures (most

non-Western cultures) strive for interconnectedness and belonging with their social ingroups by maintaining harmony and endeavoring to fulfill the wishes of their social ingroups (DeVos, 1985; Hsu, 1985; Miller, 1988; Shweder & Bourne, 1984; Triandis, 1990, 1995). Moreover, because the superordinate goal for interdependent selves is to strive for interconnectedness, they possess a more malleable self-identity across contexts, suggesting that how they behaved in the past may not be an accurate reflection of their current or future preferences. For such individuals, the exercise of personal choice may be considerably less significant.

Recent research has provided strong empirical support for this hypothesis (Iyengar & Lepper, 1999; Iyengar, Lepper & Ross, 1999). In two studies, the provision of personal choice motivated American individualists more than Asian collectivists. In the first experiment (Iyengar & Lepper, 1999), patterned after traditional choice paradigms, Asian- and Euro-American children were exposed to either a choice condition, in which they were offered an option of engaging in one of six activities, or a no-choice condition, in which they were told by an experimenter which of the six activities to undertake. Subsequent findings revealed that, although performance on the activity did not vary by culture, EuroAmerican children proved significantly more committed to personally chosen activities than were the Asians.

A second study conducted by Iyengar and Lepper (1999) showed even more powerful cultural differences in circumstances in which the actual choices involved seemed quite trivial. Using a paradigm patterned after the one employed by Cordova and Lepper (1996), both Asian- and Euro-American fifth graders engaged in a computer math game in either a personal choice condition or a no-choice condition. In the personal choice condition, participants were given half a dozen instructionally irrelevant and seemingly trivial choices (e.g., "Which icon would you like to have as your game piece?"). In the no-choice condition, participants were assigned the same icons as the ones selected by participants in the choice condition. Once again, compared with the Asian participants, Euro-American children preferred more challenging math problems, showed more task engagement, and actually reported liking the subject of mathematics more when they had been allowed to make such seemingly trivial choices. Indeed, what is intriguing about the findings resulting from these two studies is not just the observed cultural differences in the power of choice, but the observed cultural differences in the power of externally dictated preferences on human motivation. We elaborate on cultural differences in the no-choice condition later in this chapter.

One explanation for these cultural differences is that internal consistency is not as relevant for members of more interdependent cultures. Specifically, collectivists may be less committed to their previously stated preferences because there is no expectation for past preferences to be reflected in current ones. Consider the study conducted by Cialdini, Wosinska, Barrett, Butner, and Gornik-Durose (chap. 2, this volume) in which Euro-American and Polish participants reported their willingness to comply with a request to fill out a survey after considering their past compliance to similar requests. The results show that one's past actions have relatively more impact on Americans (the more individualistic culture) than on the Polish (the more collectivistic culture). More specifically, researchers found that it was not the nation of origin, but rather the extent to which persons are individualistic or collectivistic, that moderates the likelihood of those persons being influenced by past deeds.

## THE POWER OF SOCIAL INFORMATION

That we have found the tendency to conformity in our society so strong that reasonably intelligent and well-meaning young people are willing to call White Black is a matter of concern.

—Asch (1955, p.34)

Once more, psychologists' understanding of the determinants of human thought and behavior is shaped by societal preoccupations. Just as the American ideals have glorified the concept of independence, so too do American values renounce the existence of social influence. In parallel with the research on the power of personal information, there has been a tradition of examining the consequences of social information, which is the extent to which people are influenced by their knowledge of what others have said and done. The prospect that individuals may yield to group pressure and may sacrifice their individuality in the face of social norms has dismayed many psychologists, including Asch (1955). There are several examples of such research traditions, but perhaps the most outstanding are the studies of conformity.

In his seminal study, Asch (1952) examined the influence of social information on compliance. In the presence of nine other confederates who all provided the wrong answer, Asch asked Euro-American male participants to name which of three comparison lines was the same length as a standard. To his chagrin, Asch found that 36% of his subjects conformed to group pressure. Subsequently, over 100 studies have been conducted to examine the pervasiveness of and factors affecting conforming behavior. Recent meta-analyses indicate that the greater the size of the majority, the greater the likelihood of conformity (Bond & Smith, 1996). Additionally, research on conformity and social comparison theory (Festinger, 1954) suggests that the more ambiguous the stimulus, the greater the likelihood for people to rely on their peers for making judgments.

Despite the apparent pervasiveness of the influence of social information, it may be argued that Americans are not as subject to committing to attitudes and behaviors instigated through social influence when compared with other cultural groups. Not to be understated is the fact that 64% of Asch's (1952) participants did not submit in the face of social opposition. Moreover, although the participants in the Asch experiments complied with the dictates of their social situation, there is little evidence to suggest that their compliance demonstrated in the laboratory led to long-term commitment and internalization of attitudes. Might we observe a greater prevalence of reliance on social information in more socially interdependent cultures?

## CULTURE AND SOCIAL INFORMATION

Filial piety and fraternal submission! Are they not the root of all benevolent action?

—Confucius, *Analects*



Just as the ideals surrounding personal choice and independence are reflected in Americans' greater commitment to personal information, so too might the ideals of sacrifice and submission suggest the increased persuasiveness of social information among people from more interdependent societies. A growing body of research provides support for this hypothesis.

Drawing once more on the theory of Markus and Kitayama (1991), one might argue that people possessing interdependent self-models will be more receptive to the imposition of others' attitudes when making judgments about personal attitudes and behaviors. Because interdependent selves strive not for autonomy and independence, but rather interconnectedness, they might actually prefer the choices selected by others, especially if the social context enables them to fulfill the superordinate cultural goal of belonging.

The aforementioned study by Cialdini et al. (chap. 2, this volume) on social proof provides some initial insights about this phenomenon. Building on their previous research, Cialdini and his colleagues surveyed the willingness of Euro-American and Polish participants to fill out a questionnaire when considering the prior compliance rates among their peers. Social proof was shown to be a more powerful compliance technique in Poland than in the United States.

Additionally, a recent meta-analysis on conformity tested the hypothesis that collectivists would conform more than individualists (Bond & Smith, 1996). Findings from this meta-analysis suggest that participants from collectivist countries tended to show higher levels of conformity than participants from individualist countries. If conformist behavior is strongly related to collectivism, then the decline in conformist behavior among Americans since the 1950s observed in the meta-analysis of Bond and Smith might suggest an increase in individualism in the United States.

Although the evidence suggesting collectivists' greater tendency for conformity is substantial, more refined experimentation suggests that it may be too simplistic to contend that interdependent selves are invariably more conformist than independent selves. In particular, for individuals possessing interdependent selves, the effects of having one's preferences dictated by others should depend on the identity of the chooser. Given that the identity of an interdependent self is fused with ingroup members, a choice that conforms to the selection of an ingroup member should provoke significantly more commitment. The same selection made by an outgroup member, however, may be just as uninspiring as other-choice contexts are for American independent selves. Depending on the degree of closeness between the chooser and the self, a person making choices for another can be perceived either as a benevolent agent or an arrogant usurper of an individual's right to choose.

The previously described studies conducted by Iyengar and Lepper (1999) tested the hypothesis that members from more interdependent cultures will be more intrinsically motivated by the choices made by others as compared with their own choices. Earlier we discussed the differential effects on Euro- and Asian-American children of the choice and no-choice conditions. Now we consider the cultural difference within the (two) no-choice conditions. For half of the students in the no-choice conditions, the person making the choice for them was a previously unencountered adult (i.e., the experimenter), whereas for the other students, the person making the choice was a person with whom participants shared a close and interdependent relationship (i.e., their mothers). Results show that, in contrast to the Euro-American participants, Asians were much more motivated and performed the best when their mothers had made the selection.

Iyengar and Lepper (1999) conducted a second cross-cultural study in which participants' closeness to the source of social influence varied. Specifically, it was hypothesized that the effect of social information on the intrinsic motivation level of individualistic persons would be relatively unaffected by whether the source of the social information were members of an ingroup or an outgroup. In contrast, the identity of the source of social information was expected to be much more pronounced among collectivistic persons. In this study Asian- (collectivistic) and Euro-American (individualistic) fifth graders encountered either a choice or a no-choice manipulation while playing a computer math game. Participants were given trivial, instructionally irrelevant choices or had their selections assigned to them by either an equal-status peer group (i.e., their classmates) or a lower status group (third graders at a rival school). The findings were striking. They showed that, in contrast to Euro-Americans, Asians were more intrinsically motivated and learned more when the choices had been made by their classmates than when they made their own choices, which in turn produced better results than when the choices had been made for them by unfamiliar and lower status others. In contrast, for Euro-Americans, the critical distinction proved to be between having a choice and not having a choice. That is, they showed significantly more commitment, more motivation, and higher learning in the context offering them trivial choices as compared with either of the two no-choice contexts.

In summary, two major research streams in American social psychology have investigated the effects of: (a) one's own behavior—especially freely enacted deeds—on subsequent attitudes and behavior (Bem, 1972; Festinger, 1957), and (b) other people's behaviors on individuals' subsequent attitudes and behaviors (for a review, see Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978). Recent findings reviewed here suggest that the relative impact of one's own behavior and the behavior of others are moderated by cultural differences in individualism/collectivism. Individualists tend to be more influenced by their own behavior relative to collectivists, whereas collectivists are more influenced by other people's behavior relative to individualists, especially those exhibited by people who are close to the target individual.

### **THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

The fact that cultural differences in individualism/collectivism moderate the impact of one's own behaviors and other people's behaviors underscores the need for further research. We discuss herein five potentially fruitful avenues for future investigation, including: (a) operationalizing the psychological factors presumed to mediate the relationships between culture and attitudes/behaviors; (b) articulating the aspect of individualism/collectivism that is most operative in a given situation; (c) distinguishing the impact of individualism/collectivism from that attributable to other cultural dimensions; (d) identifying moderating influences on the tendency for individualists to be more affected by their own behaviors than collectivists; and (e) identifying moderating influences on the tendency for collectivists to be more affected by other people's behaviors than individualists.

### **Operationalizing the Psychological Mediator**

Many studies examining cross-cultural differences are predicated on the assumption that participants' culture (or nation) is a proxy for some psychological factor that influences their attitudes or behaviors. However, researchers often fail to measure the relevant psychological factor. In many cross-nation studies, researchers (e.g., Morris & Peng, 1994; Iyengar & Lepper, 1999) do not assess the psychological factor presumed to account for their findings; that is, psychological measures related to individualism/collectivism often are not included in their studies.

It is important that future research include operationalizations of the psychological variables hypothesized to account for cross-nation differences (e.g., Cialdini et al., chap. 2, in this volume). To begin with, there is often considerable within-culture variability in the relevant dimensions: All people from Asia are not collectivistic—or *allocentric* in Triandis' (1995) terms—nor are all people from Western cultures individualistic—or *idiocentric* in Triandis' terms. By measuring the psychological factors, future researchers will be able to evaluate their underlying assumptions that the participants in their studies exhibit beliefs/values associated with their respective nations. More important, researchers will also be able to evaluate whether the psychological factors presumed to differ by nation actually account for observed differences between nations on the relevant dependent variables.

A recent study by Chen, Brockner, and Katz (1998) provided a demonstration of the procedure we advocate. The study was designed to examine conditions under which collectivists showed greater ingroup favoritism than individualists. Specifically, participants from the People's Republic of China (the collectivistic nation) and the United States (the individualistic nation) worked on a task and were given feedback about their individual performance. Half were told that they had performed well (individual success condition, whereas half were told they had performed poorly (individual failure condition). Cross-cutting the individual feedback induction was an orthogonal manipulation of ingroup performance. Half were told that their ingroup had performed well (ingroup success condition), whereas half were told that their ingroup had performed poorly (ingroup failure condition). A three-factor analysis of variance (ANOVA; nation  $\times$  individual feedback  $\times$  group feedback) yielded a significant triple interaction effect. The only condition to produce a cultural difference in ingroup favoritism was the individual success/ingroup failure condition, in which participants from the People's Republic of China showed greater ingroup favoritism than did those from the United States.

Additionally, participants also completed self-report measures tapping their individualistic versus collectivistic beliefs. When people were classified as individualistic (I) or collectivistic (C) based on their beliefs (rather than the nation from which they came), a triple interaction among I/C beliefs, individual feedback, and group feedback also emerged. The form of the interaction revealed that it was only in the individual success/group failure feedback condition that participants with relatively collectivistic beliefs showed greater ingroup favoritism than those with more individualistic beliefs.

To evaluate whether the effect of nation was mediated by people's I/C beliefs, an additional regression analysis was conducted in which both triple interaction effects (nation  $\times$  individual feedback  $\times$  group feedback and I/C beliefs  $\times$  individual feedback  $\times$  group feedback) were entered simultaneously into the equation. The results show that the triple interaction involving nation no longer was significant, whereas the triple interaction

involving I/C beliefs remained significant. Thus, the pattern of findings observed by Chen et al. (1998) suggests that it was participants' I/C beliefs that accounted for the observed differences between cultures in participants' ingroup favoritism.

### **Delineating the German Aspect of Individualism/Collectivism**

A second mandate for future research stems from the multifaceted nature of individualism/collectivism. Markus and Kitayama (1991) and Triandis (1995) have noted that the construct actually consists of a number of related but conceptually distinct dimensions, including individual-collective primacy (i.e., whether people put more emphasis on their individual versus their social ingroup's interests, especially when the two are in conflict), independent versus interdependent self-construal (whether people define themselves based on their distinctiveness from others or their connectedness to others), self-reliance, and sociability, to name just a few. It is likely that certain aspects of I/C beliefs are more significant in some situations than in others.

To illustrate this point, consider again the study by Chen et al. (1998). In their study, participants completed multiple measures of I/C beliefs, including Triandis' (1995) scale of horizontal and vertical individualism and collectivism, Singelis' (1994) measure of interdependent self-construal, and a shortened version of the Triandis et al. (1986) idiocentrism-allocentrism scale (previously used by Brockner & Chen, 1996). When participants were classified on the basis of preexisting categories based on the survey instruments, no mediating effects of I/C beliefs on the impact of nation were observed.

In fact, the Chen et al. conceptualization suggested that it was the participants' I/C primacy beliefs in particular that should have a moderating influence on their reactions to personal and ingroup feedback. Accordingly, the authors selected those items from the previously existing scales that seemed to most closely correspond to the notion of individual-collective primacy (e.g., "I usually sacrifice my self-interests for the benefit of the group I am in" and "I will stay in a group if they need me, even if I am not happy"). The results show that it was only participants' responses to the items tapping I/C primacy that accounted for the relationship between culture and ingroup favoritism.

Furthermore, there were substantial differences between participants from the two nations in their responses to the previously existing scales. For example, participants from the People's Republic of China had significantly greater levels of interdependent self-construal (Singelis, 1994) than those from the United States. However, responses to the previously existing scales did not explain the relationship between nation and ingroup favoritism. In other words, even if one were to find national differences on certain dimensions, it is still necessary to evaluate whether differences between nations along these dimensions actually account for differences between nations on the main dependent variables.

### **Distinguishing the Impact of Individualism/Collectivism From Other Constructs**

Our third recommendation for future research pertains to distinguishing the mediating effects of individualism/collectivism beliefs from other factors that may differ between nations. Consider, for example, Hofstede's (1980) notion of power distance, which refers

to the extent to which people perceive differences between persons in their level of formal authority to be a natural and even desirable aspect of the social order. In high power distance nations, people with less formal authority believe that it is appropriate and useful to make clear distinctions between those who have authority versus those who do not. The opposite is found in low power distance nations, in which people share in the power maintained by those in high-authority positions. Although power distance is conceptually distinct from I/C beliefs, the two tend to be empirically related to a modest degree. Collectivists tend to have high power distance beliefs, whereas individualists generally have low power distance beliefs. Just as we recommend that future research include measures of I/C beliefs (to evaluate whether such beliefs account for the relationship between the nation from which people come and their responses to the primary dependent variables), so too is it important to measure other psychological factors showing between-nation differences. This is done to evaluate whether these factors provide an alternative explanation of observed relationships between participants' nation and their responses to the primary dependent variables.

### **When Are Individualists Influenced by Their Own Behavior?**

One of our primary assertions is that the attitudes of people from individualistic cultures are more likely to be influenced in the direction of espoused behaviors, relative to collectivists'. Moreover, we have asserted that cultural differences in the tendency for attitudes to become aligned with actions are especially pronounced for behaviors enacted with perceived choice (Iyengar & Lepper, 1999). Choice was one of several contextual factors identified by Kiesler (1971) and Cialdini (1993) as moderators of the influence of behavior on subsequent attitudes. Others include publicity, effortfulness, and irrevocability. The common principle underlying the hypothesized moderating influence of the various contextual factors is *retrospective rationality* (Salancik, 1977). When people see themselves performing behaviors that are volitional, public, irrevocable, or effortful, they are likely to infer in retrospect that they truly believe in those behaviors.

Although contextual factors other than choice have been hypothesized to moderate the impact of people's behaviors on their attitudes, social psychologists have devoted far more attention to the choice factor than all others combined. Perhaps the tendency to focus on choice—a concept linked to individual freedom—is the product of an individualistic orientation on the part of Western social psychologists. Similarly, the handful of studies that have examined how cultural variables moderate the impact of people's behavior on their attitudes have also focused on the choice factor (Iyengar & Lepper, 1999). Yet it is important for future researchers to evaluate whether the observed tendency for individualists to be more influenced than collectivists by behaviors enacted volitionally also would apply to behaviors enacted publicly, irrevocably, and effortfully. In other words, is there something unique to high-choice conditions that cause the attitudes of individualists to be more influenced by their behaviors relative to collectivists? Or are Iyengar and Lepper's (1999) findings part of a more general phenomenon in which the conditions hypothesized to moderate the impact of people's behavior on their attitudes (e.g., publicity) are more applicable to those from individualistic than collectivistic cultures?