Psychological Aspects of Social Axioms
International and Cultural Psychology Series
Series Editor: Anthony Marsella, University of Hawaii, Honolulu, Hawaii

ASIAN AMERICAN MENTAL HEALTH
Assessment Theories and Methods
Edited by Karen S. Kurasaki, Sumie Okazaki, and Stanley Sue

COUNSELING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS
Clients from Around the World
Written by Nancy Arthur

CROSS-CULTURAL ASSESSMENT OF PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAUMA AND PTSD
Edited by John P. Wilson and Catherine So-Kum Tang

ETHNOCULTURAL PERSPECTIVES ON DISASTER AND TRAUMA
Foundations, Issues, and Applications
Edited by Anthony J. Marsella, Jeannette L. Johnson, Patricia Watson, and Jan Gryczynski

THE FIVE-FACTOR MODEL OF PERSONALITY ACROSS CULTURES
Edited by Robert R. McCrae and Jüri Allik

FORCED MIGRATION AND MENTAL HEALTH
Rethinking the Care of Refugees and Displaced Persons
Edited by David Ingleby

LEARNING IN CULTURAL CONTEXT
Family, Peers, and School
Edited by Stuart C. Carr and Tod S. Sloan

PSYCHOLOGY AND BUDDHISM
From Individual to Global Community
Edited by Kathleen H. Dockett, G. Rita Dudley-Grant, and C. Peter Bankart

TRAUMA INTERVENTIONS IN WAR AND PEACE
Prevention, Practice, and Policy
Edited by Bonnie L. Green, Matthew J. Friedman, Joop T.V.M. de Jong, Susan D. Solomon, Terence M. Keane, John A. Fairbank, Brigid Donelan, and Ellen Frey-Wouters

VOICES OF TRAUMA: TREATING SURVIVORS ACROSS CULTURES
Edited by Boris Droždek and John P. Wilson

A Continuation Order Plan is available for this series. A continuation order will bring delivery of each new volume immediately upon publication. Volumes are billed only upon actual shipment. For further information please contact the publisher.
Kwok Leung • Michael Harris Bond
Editors

Psychological Aspects
of Social Axioms

Understanding Global Belief Systems

Springer
Humans are surrounded by trillions of stimuli. Their eyes, for instance, can discriminate 7,500,000 colors. But, there is a severe limitation in the number of discriminably different stimuli that they can process at one time. George Miller argued that they can handle no more than seven, plus or minus two independent pieces of information at any given time. Thus, necessarily they must develop ways to simplify the task of processing the information that exists in their environment.

They do this in many ways. One way is to select the stimuli that are most important in their lives, what are often called values. Another way is to chunk stimuli by linking them to each other, so they form bundles of stimuli that can be processed as if they are one entity. Generalized expectancies of what is linked with what are beliefs, and these beliefs are structured into bundles (see Triandis, 1972).

The exceptionally important research reported in this volume focuses on these chunks of beliefs, which are called social axioms. The researchers found that in most cultures, ideas related to cynicism, complexity, reward, religion, and fate hang together. Thus, we can expect that in most cultures people who are high in cynicism will view most events through a cynic’s lens; those who see a complex world will see events in more complex ways than those who view events more simply; those who emphasize beneficial outcomes will look to resource investment for explanations of how the world ticks; those who emphasize religiosity will see supernatural interventions, while those who do not emphasize it will look for more mundane explanations of events; those who are high in fate control will expect external controls, while those who are low on this attribute will not expect fate, luck, destiny, and the like to influence the events in their life.

Thus, when humans have such beliefs, they are enabled to simplify the processing of information from the environment. The beliefs that are organized around cynicism form one domain; the beliefs that deal with religion and spirituality form another; and so on. It is then easier to process the stimuli in the environment, since the stimuli that are not important as well as the stimuli that do not belong to axioms can be ignored, and the trillions of stimuli then become manageable.

The famous anthropologist Redfield defined culture as shared understandings made manifest in act and artifact. In short, cultures help people adapt to their environment by developing shared understandings of what is important and how things go together, and how to make things so that the people in the culture can adapt more
successfully to their ecological niches. When humans are socialized into a culture, they learn what stimuli are important and which stimuli go together, so they can be sampled while ignoring the complexity of their environment. Since the environment of each culture is distinct, there are distinct ways to value the entities in the environment, and to organize stimuli so that they form distinct axioms.

This work then provides ways to characterize cultures, and gives researchers a set of lenses for looking at cultures. When researchers know what people value and how they use the axioms, they can predict what people will do in their cultural niche—how they are likely to interact with each other, how they are likely to relate to outsiders, how they are going to react to their jobs, what emotions they are likely to feel in different circumstances, and how they are going to deal with conflict.

This book is an essential reading for cultural and cross-cultural psychologists, as well as students of culture and psychology. Even educated laymen may want it in their library to occasionally find useful clues about the way culture affects people and learn how to honor the Greek admonition to “know thyself.”

University of Illinois, USA

Harry C. Triandis

Reference

Contents

Introduction ................................................................................................................................. 1
Kwok Leung and Michael Harris Bond

Section A  Integrative Reviews and Basic Issues

The Mileage from Social Axioms:
Learning from the Past and Looking Forward ................................................................. 13
Chin-Ming Hui and Natalie Heung-Hung Hui

Social Axioms and Organizational Behavior ................................................................. 31
Catherine T. Kwantes and Charlotte M. Karam

Structural Equivalence and Differential Item Functioning
in the Social Axioms Survey .............................................................................................. 51
Fons J. R. Van de Vijver, Velichko H. Valchev, and Irina Suanet

Exploring Ethnic Group and Geographic Differences
in Social Axioms in the USA .............................................................................................. 81
Theodore M. Singelis, Dharm P. S. Bhawuk, William K. Gabrenya Jr.,
Michele Gelfand, Jake Harwood, Pa Her, Junko Tanaka-Matsumi,
and Joseph Vandello

Social Axioms among Malay, Chinese, and Kadazan Students
in Sabah, Malaysia: Differences in Gender and Ethnic Groups .................. 95
Rosnah Ismail

Section B  Transmission of Social Axioms

Are Parents Decisive? The Intergenerational Transmission
of Social Axioms Under Conditions of Rapid Social Change ................. 109
Klaus Boehnke
Processes of Transmission and Change of Social Axioms and their Behavioral Influence in Spanish Culture ........................................ 129
Luis Oceja

Section C  Nomological Network of Social Axioms

Linking Social Axioms with Behavioral Indicators and Personality in Romania ............................................................... 145
Margareta Dincă and Dragoș Iliescu

Exploring the Links between Social Axioms and the Epistemological Beliefs about Learning held by Filipino Students ...................... 163
Allan B. I. Bernardo

An Examination of Proactive Coping and Social Beliefs among Christians and Muslims ............................................................. 177
S. Safdar, J.R. Lewis, E. Greenglass, and M. Daneshpour

Social Axioms in Greece: Etic and Emic Dimensions and their Relationships with Locus of Control ............................................. 197
Aikaterini Gari, Penny Panagiotopoulou, and Kostas Mylonas

Do General Beliefs Predict Specific Behavioral Intentions in Indonesia? The Role of Social Axioms within the Theory of Planned Behavior ................................................................. 217
Arief Darmanegara Liem, Sianiwati S. Hidayat, and Sumiarti Soemarno

Cynicism in Love and in Politics ................................................................................................................................. 239
Pawel Boski, Monika Biłas-Henne, and Joanna Więckowska

Social Axioms in Italian Culture: Relationships with Locus of Control and Moral Development ................................................. 269
Anna Laura Comunian

Social Axioms and Individualistic–Collectivist Orientations in Indian College Students ......................................................... 283
Anjali Ghosh

Explaining Individuating Behavior Across Cultures: The Contributions of Values and Social Axioms ............................................. 293
Sylvia Xiaohua Chen
Conclusion

Believing in Beliefs: A Scientific but Personal Quest .................................................. 319
Michael Harris Bond

Index .................................................................................................................................. 343
Editors

Michael Harris Bond descends from Anglo-Canadian stock, and completed his undergraduate training in honors psychology at the University of Toronto (1966), before venturing to Stanford University in the United States of America where he received his doctorate in 1970. Following a postdoctoral year in experimental social innovation at Michigan State University in the USA, he traveled to Japan as his wife’s dependent in 1971. While she taught English, he worked as a research associate at Kwansei Gakuin University, studying nonverbal behavior and essaying his first cross-cultural studies. These have continued during his first, full-time academic position at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, where he stayed for the last 34 years, now as research professor of psychology. He met Kwok Leung, then his undergraduate student in social psychology, in 1978.

Kwok Leung (Ph.D., University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, USA) is the chair professor of management at City University of Hong Kong. His research areas include justice and conflict, cross-cultural research methods, social axioms, and international business. He is a senior editor of Management and Organization Review, and was previously the editor of Asian Journal of Social Psychology, a deputy editor-in-chief of Journal of International Business Studies, and an associate editor of Asia Pacific Journal of Management and Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology. He is a former president of Asian Association of Social Psychology, a former chair of the Research Methods Division of the Academy of Management, as well as a fellow of Academy of International Business, Academy of Intercultural Research, and Association for Psychological Science.
Contributors

**Allan B. I. Bernardo** is a professor, university fellow, and chair of the Counseling and Educational Psychology Department, De La Salle University-Manila in the Philippines. His current research spans three related themes: (a) the role of culturally rooted cognitions in shaping psychological processes that influence students’ achievement, of which the current paper is one example, (b) how language processes in bilinguals may influence learning-related variables and outcomes, and (c) how changes in autonomy during adolescence relate to students’ learning and academic well-being. He obtained his Ph.D. from Yale University and is currently the only psychologist in the Philippines’ prestigious National Academy of Science and Technology.

**Dharm P. S. Bhawuk** a citizen of Nepal, is a professor of management and culture and community psychology, University of Hawai’i at Manoa. He received his Ph.D. in human resource management from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA. His research interests include intercultural training, intercultural sensitivity, diversity in the workplace, individualism and collectivism, culture and creativity, and indigenous psychology and management. He has published more than 50 articles and book chapters and is a coeditor of the book, *Asian contributions to cross-cultural psychology* (1996), Sage. He is a founding fellow of the International Academy of Intercultural Research.

**Monika Biłas-Henne** is a doctoral student at the Institute of Psychology at the Polish Academy of Sciences and the Warsaw School of Social Psychology, where she completed a five-year program in psychology of intercultural relations. She also completed her postgraduate study in Latin American cultures at the University of Warsaw. Relating social axioms to love styles in Poland and Spain was the topic of her M.A. thesis. Currently she is working on her doctorate project entitled, “Multicultural group as a buffer in adaptation processes: Acculturation of international students.” This study is under way in many European Union countries participating in the Erasmus Exchange Program.

**Klaus Boehnke** is currently a professor of social science methodology at Jacobs University in Bremen, Germany. After an M.A.-equivalent degree in English and Russian, he received B.A.-(1978) and M.A.-equivalent (1980) degrees in
psychology. In 1985 he received his Ph.D. in psychology from Berlin University of Technology in Germany. His academic positions have included an assistant and associate professorship at the Department of Education of the Free University of Berlin, and a full professorship in the Department of Sociology at the Chemnitz University of Technology. His research interests are in the fields of interdisciplinary youth research with a focus on political socialization.

**Pawel Boski** is a professor of psychology at Institute of Psychology, Polish Academy of Sciences and Warsaw School of Social Psychology in Poland. Cultural psychologist by professional identity, he has research interests in values and beliefs as foundations of cultures and in acculturation. He has extensive research and teaching experience in Africa, North America, and the European Union. He is a founder of culture and psychology teaching programs in Poland, and the author of the first handbook, in Polish, discussing the “Cultural framework of social behavior.” He is an active member of International Association of Cross-Cultural Psychology, the organizer of its XV Congress at Pultusk in 2000, and is involved in *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology* as one of its associate editors.

**Sylvia Xiaohua Chen** is currently an assistant professor in the Department of Applied Social Sciences at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University. She obtained her Ph.D. in psychology from the Chinese University of Hong Kong and M.A. in counseling psychology from Santa Clara University, USA. Her research interests include the social psychology of bilingualism and biculturalism, personality and social behaviors in cultural contexts, cross-cultural research methodology, and socio-cultural influences on illness behaviors and help-seeking patterns.

**Anna Laura Comunian**, Professor at the University of Padua, Italy, and fellow of the American Psychological Association (Divisions: 52, 1), is the founder and coordinator of the Laboratory of International and Cross-Cultural Psychology for the Personality Test Adaptation. She is past president of the International Council of Psychologists. She has conducted a series of studies concerning emotions, relationships, family, personality, and moral reasoning in Italian culture. In the cross-cultural area, her research is related to the correlates of moral reasoning, social role-taking, family interaction, parental warmth/rejection, coping styles, social axioms, and quality of experience.

**Manijeh Daneshpour** is a professor and the director of Marriage and Family Therapy Program at St. Cloud State University in Minnesota, USA. She teaches marriage and family therapy graduate courses and, as a licensed marriage and family therapist, works with individuals and families in her private practice. Her research interests and her publications are in the areas of diversity, social justice, third wave feminism, and the impact of trauma on family functioning.

**Margareta Dincă** (Ph.D. in personality assessment in psychology from University Babes Bolyai of Cluj Napoca, Romania) is a professor in the Department of Psychology at the University Titu Maiorescu in Bucharest. She teaches mult-cultural guidance and counseling, family and couple counseling, and developmental
Contributors

psychology. As a researcher in the Institute of Psychology of the Romanian Academy, she works on projects in social psychology. She has more than 50 papers in scientific journals in Romania or abroad.

**William K. Gabrenya** is a professor of psychology at Florida Institute of Technology, Melbourne, FL, USA. He received his Ph.D. in social psychology from the University of Missouri-Columbia, USA, and has held positions at Ohio State University, USA (postdoctoral fellowship) and National Taiwan University (visiting faculty). He is the editor of the *Cross-Cultural Psychology Bulletin* and is an officer in the International Association for Cross-Cultural Psychology. Bill’s research interests include indigenous psychology, sexual behavior, modernity, social class, sociology of science, and various topics in cross-cultural organizational psychology. His area of interest is Chinese society.

**Aikaterini Gari** is an assistant professor of social psychology at the Department of Psychology, the University of Athens, Greece. She is a full member of the International Association for Cross-Cultural Psychology, the European Association of Experimental Social Psychology, the European Council for High Ability, and the World Council for Gifted and Talented Children. She has specialized in the systemic approach to social group dynamics and its applications. Her publications focus on values, beliefs, attitudes, and social axioms as well as on applications of social psychology to family life, school environment, and small community. Her recent publications are concerned with dual-career family function and structure and educational values of various groups.

**Michele J. Gelfand** is a professor of psychology at the University of Maryland, USA. Her work explores cultural influences on conflict, negotiation, and revenge; workplace diversity and discrimination; and theory and methods in culture and psychology. She received her Ph.D. from the University of Illinois, USA, and has published in the *Academy of Management Review, Annual Review of Psychology, Journal of Applied Psychology, Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, and Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*. She is the coeditor of *The handbook of negotiation and culture* (with Jeanne Brett) and *The psychology of conflict and conflict management in organizations* (with Carsten De Dreu).

**Anjali Ghosh** is an associate professor at the Psychology Research Unit, Indian Statistical Institute, Calcutta, India. She received her Ph.D. in psychology from the University of Calcutta and taught psychology at the Patna University. Her research interests include social and cross-cultural psychology, identity development, cognitive and moral development of children, and self-efficacy.

**Esther Greenglass** is a professor of psychology at York University, Canada. She has published widely in the areas of positive psychology, gender roles, work-family, coping, burnout, and stress. Her work appears in a wide variety of academic journals. She has written or edited five books, including volumes on emotion and stress, and she has contributed over 50 invited chapters to several volumes and encyclopedia. She has served as guest editor of journals for special issues. She is