

The field of intercultural research received significant cross-fertilization from many academic disciplines, such as anthropology, behavioural science, communication studies, economics, linguistics, political science, psychology, sociology and, lately, neurology, with researchers starting to investigate how the function of our brain is influenced by culture. Each added welcome new insights and perspectives; alas, integrating these different perspectives into a holistic context often proved complex.

Harry C. Triandis, a social psychologist who is now a professor emeritus at the University of Illinois, embraces this complexity in his book *Culture and Social Behavior*. He uses the concepts of *emics*, culture-specific, unique elements that apply within the system of a culture but do not offer much value when contrasting different ones, and *etics*, universal cultural elements whose study helps in finding and formulating cross-cultural generalizations.

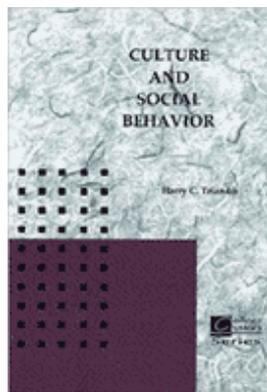
The important point, the author argues, is to find *convergence* between different methods of understanding reality. Triandis suggests this approach as a foundation for both, understanding and comparing cultures. Even concepts that translate easily across languages, he warns, do not have identical meanings, so one

must pay attention to many aspects when aiming to analyze subjective culture.

Two chapters of the book serve to explore this in greater detail, offering an integrative overview across a wide range of related research. Subsequent chapters analyze cultural differences in social behavior, from social relations and communication to aggression, helping, dominance and conformity. The final chapters of the book discuss diversity, intercultural relations, and intercultural training.

Throughout this work, Triandis emphasizes concepts that others in the field often overlook. For instance, he contrasts loose cultures and tight ones, distinguished by their degrees of tolerance for deviation from cultural norms. This distinction is paramount when evaluating other interculturalists' models, such as the "cultural dimensions" that became popular in intercultural training since the 1980s and are still widely used. Similarly, the author highlights the need to understand intergroup relations, as opposed to interpersonal ones, in assessing stereotypes and conflict potential.

Bottom line, *Culture and Social Behavior* is a valuable resource for those looking to acquire a deeper understanding of the value, and of the caveats, of studying behaviors across cultures.



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172 24/Culture and Social Behavior. Individualists are likely to see them as insincere, because they do not present to the "outside" what is "inside." The correct evaluation of this behavior, however, is that, for the collectivist, "virtue," in the form of "proper action," is of the greatest importance. What an individual thinks is of no great importance when the group is all important. Social behavior between an outgroup and in-group member is very different in the case of collectivists, but not too different between individualists. In fact, individualists are often proud that they do not favor the ingroup in job selection or promotion. Collectivists think that it is natural that one should favor the ingroup. Cross-cultural psychologists study how different cultural factors influence individual behavior. They often focus on things that are universal among different cultures of the world, as well as differences among societies. One interesting phenomenon that cross-cultural psychologists have observed is how people from individualist cultures describe themselves compared to how those from collectivist cultures describe themselves. Research conducted by Ma and Schoenemann found that while 60% of Kenyans (a collectivist culture) described themselves in terms of their roles within groups while 48% of Americans (an individualist culture) used personal characteristics to describe themselves. A Word From Verywell. Culture is a very important aspect to understand the behavior of a consumer. It signifies the set of values of a particular community. An individual decides to behave in a certain manner because of his culture. A social status of an individual usually comprises of an individual's attitude, class and prestige. It depends on the way he carries himself socially or the position at which he is in his work or family or even in his group of friends. The social status of an individual influences his consumption pattern. Example - A CEO may want to have a celebration and give a party to his colleagues, friends and family, so for his social status he may want to book a five star hotel, something like Taj or Oberoi instead of any other normal hotel.