

Rethinking the Value of Choice: Considering Cultural Mediators of Intrinsic Motivation

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Accordingly, in our theory, an intentional action would be said to typify human agency only to the extent that it is self-determined. Behavior that is initiated by external or internal prods and coercion lacks a sense of volition or choice and would not be said to represent true agency, even though it is intentional.—Deci & Ryan, Nebraska Symposium on Motivation

When a conflict arises between personal and group goals [in individualist cultures], it is considered acceptable for the individual to place personal goals ahead of collective goals. By contrast, in collectivist cultures social behavior is determined largely by goals shared with some collective, and if there is a conflict between personal and group goals, it is considered socially desirable to place collective goals ahead of personal goals.—Triandis, Nebraska Symposium on Motivation

Over a decade ago, these two perspectives on motivation—Deci and Ryan's 1991 theory of self-determination and Triandis's 1990 cultural theory of individualism-collectivism—were presented at the Nebraska Symposium on Motivation as discrete areas of inquiry in psychology. The consecutive presentation of these perspectives was

portentous in terms of the research to follow and the recognition by many psychologists that social psychological findings need to be understood within the sociocultural context in which they occur. Indeed, subsequent to these Nebraska Symposia, a wealth of psychological theory and research has challenged the predictions of self-determination theory (e.g., deCharms, 1968; Deci, 1971, 1975, 1981; Deci & Ryan, 1985, 1991). Examining the effects of cultural norms and values on human motivation suggests that the pursuit of self-determination and the exercising of personal choice are invariably mediated by culture.

This chapter is dedicated to providing an understanding of how the concepts of culture and choice interact to influence human motivation. Specifically, we will review historical findings concerning the relationship between choice and intrinsic motivation, and then draw upon the increasingly complex cultural analyses provided by researchers studying self-construal (e.g., Fiske, Kitayama, Markus, & Nisbett, 1998; Heine & Lehman, 1997, *in press*; Heine, Lehman, Markus, & Kitayama, 1999; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Markus, Kitayama, & Heiman, 1996), moral development (e.g., Miller, 1984, 1994, 1997; Miller & Bersoff, 1992, 1994, 1998; Miller, Bersoff, & Harwood, 1990; Miller & Luthur, 1989), and human cognition (e.g., Choi & Nisbett, 1998; Ji, Schwartz, & Nisbett, 2000; Menon, Morris, Chiu, & Hong, 1999; Morris & Peng, 1994; Norenzayan & Nisbett, 2000; Peng & Nisbett, 1999). We will then synthesize across these multiple streams of research by offering a cultural perspective on the relationship between culture, choice, and intrinsic motivation.

Choice and Intrinsic Motivation

Since its inception, experimental social psychology has been concerned with the issues of choice, perceived control, and human motivation (Adler, 1930). Even Kurt Lewin (1952), the father of experimental social psychology, drew upon the insight that an illusion of choice is a powerful motivator, by demonstrating that as long as people believed that they had chosen to serve otherwise undesirable food items (e.g., liver), the likelihood of their engaging in the activity would increase. Since Lewin's seminal work, the implicit assumption underlying many well regarded theories in social psychology has

been that the provision of choice or control will necessarily enhance intrinsic motivation.

Consider one of the theoretical cornerstones of social psychology, cognitive dissonance. According to cognitive dissonance, when individuals perceive themselves as choosing to engage in counterattitudinal behavior, such as writing counterattitudinal essays, subsequent changes in attitudes will be observed, but when they perceive themselves to have been "forced" into that same behavior, their attitudes will not change (e.g., Collins & Hoyt, 1972; Cooper & Fazio, 1984; 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 themselves or eating grasshoppers, they will tend to perceive these behaviors as less unpleasant (Zimbardo, Weisenberg, Firestone, & Levy, 1965).

Similarly, psychologists have long argued that the provision of choice enhances feelings of personal control (e.g., Rotter, 1966; Taylor, 1989; Taylor & Brown, 1988). Simply having control over the order in which a task is performed has been shown to significantly reduce anxiety levels (Glass & Singer, 1972). In fact, one particularly well known study conducted by Langer and Rodin (1976) suggested that the health of elderly patients in a nursing home could be significantly improved if the elderly patients were led to perceive themselves as having control over mundane matters within the institution. Perhaps Lefcourt (1973) best summed up the essence of this research when he concluded, "The sense of control, the illusion that one can exercise personal choice, has a definite and a positive role in sustaining life" (p. 424).

Indeed, even a pure illusion of choice has been demonstrated to have powerful motivating consequences on human behavior. For example, some studies have shown that the mere illusion of choice can lead people to desire an activity more than when the same activity was overtly dictated (Dember, Galinsky, & Warm, 1992; Swan & Pittman, 1977). Others have shown that the exercise of choice in a chance situation, where choice is objectively inconsequential, can nevertheless have powerful psychological consequences, as manifested in increased confidence and risk-taking (Langer, 1975).

But theorists studying intrinsic motivation have provided the clearest demonstration of the link between the provision of choice and

human motivation. Drawing in part on earlier work by deCharms and Deci and Ryan virtually equate intrinsic motivation with individual choice and personal "self-determination." According to this analysis, people are actors seeking to exercise and validate a sense of control over their external environments. As a result, they are theorized to enjoy, to prefer, and to persist at activities that provide them with the opportunity to make choices, to control their own outcomes, and to determine their own fates (Condry, 1977; Condry & Chambers, 1978; Deci, 1971, 1975, 1981; Deci, Driver, Hotchkiss, Robbins & Wilson, 1993; Deci & Ryan, 1985, 1991; Malone & Lepper, 1987; Nuttin, 1973; Ryan, 1982; Zuckerman, Porac, Lathin, Smith, & Deci, 1978).

According to this research, when individuals are given a choice, their self-determination/intrinsic motivation is increased (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 et al., 1978). In these studies, the provision of choice increases levels of intrinsic motivation and enhances performance on a variety of tasks. More recent findings suggest that the opportunity to make a choice need not be directly linked to the central activity at hand in order to be associated with increased levels of intrinsic motivation. A study conducted by Cordova and Lepper (1996) suggests that even the provision of small and instructionally irrelevant choices could increase intrinsic motivation and learning. Their study shows that when working on a computer math game, having even seemingly trivial choices (like the option to select the name by which the student would be addressed during the game) increased intrinsic motivation and learning of the mathematical concepts.

Thus, the results from many studies, in diverse contexts such as education and health research, suggest that the positive consequences of choice are apparent even when choice itself is trivial, incidental, or entirely illusory. Such findings have led psychologists to assert that choice is almost invariably associated with intrinsic motivation and other beneficial effects.

Conversely, contexts in which choice is nonexistent or in which choice has been removed have been linked to psychological detriments. Seligman (1975) reported that when people encounter out-

comes which are independent of their responses (i.e., over which they have no control), they lose motivation for responding, display impaired learning, and experience emotional responses which might be labeled as anxiety and depression. Overall, lack of choice has been hypothesized to have detrimental effects on intrinsic motivation, task performance, and health status (Brehm, 1966; Deci, Spiegel, Ryan, Koestner, & Kaufman, 1982; Schulz & Hanusa, 1978). Hence, the current wisdom among psychologists is that people are invariably intrinsically motivated by contexts offering choice, whereas no-choice contexts are associated with decreased levels of motivation.

Despite the centrality of choice to intrinsic motivation among North American participants, a growing body of cultural analyses suggests the possibility that the generalizability of these findings may be attenuated and/or even reversed among cultures that extol the value of the collective over the individual. In particular, there are three departure points—all interrelated, yet distinct from each other—which compel us to rethink our assumptions regarding the relationship between choice and intrinsic motivation. In essence, previous research has presumed universality in people's perceptions and responses to the provision of choice. Yet might choosers' perceptions and responses to choice vary as a function of cultural background?

Culture and Self-Construal

Our current understanding of the relationship between choice and intrinsic motivation assumes a dichotomy between the constructs of choice and no choice. Specifically, it assumes that actors make a distinction between whether they have chosen for themselves and whether others have chosen for them. While such a dichotomy is consistent with current theories of the self-identity of Americans—for whom the distinction between self and other is critical—over a decade of research has provided a compelling cultural analysis which suggests that members of more collectivist cultures vary in their self-identities, in that they do not make a distinction between self and other but instead make a distinction between in-groups and out-groups—a distinction which may be inconsistent with the need to categorize events as being about self-made versus other-made choices (Iyengar, Ross, & Lepper, 1999; Triandis, Bontempo, Villareal, Asai, & Lucca, 1988).

According to Markus and Kitayama's 1991 theory, Westerners (hypothesized to possess independent self-construals) perceive themselves as consisting of a unique set of attributes that enable them to stand apart and to be separate from others in their environments. They find it more natural to describe themselves in terms of the singular "I," an entity which is context-free, in that they perceive themselves as being the ultimate reference points—possessing traits that are distinctive and independent of their social roles (Cousins, 1989; Holyoak & Gordon, 1983; Markus, Mullally & Kitayama, 1997; Srull & Gaelick, 1983). Independent-selves, therefore, strive to achieve independence and autonomy by establishing their distinctiveness from others, by influencing others, and by not being influenced by group and environmental pressures (Geertz, 1975; Johnson, 1985; Sampson, 1985, 1988, 1989; Waterman, 1981).

By contrast, according to Markus and Kitayama (1991), Easterners (hypothesized to possess interdependent self-construals) perceive themselves as being interconnected with and interrelated to others in their social contexts. For such "interdependent" individuals, the focal point is not the inner self but rather the relationships these individuals have with others (Hamaguchi, 1985). Experiencing interdependence entails seeing oneself as part of an encompassing social relationship and recognizing that one's behavior is determined by, contingent upon, and to a large extent organized by what one perceives to be the thoughts, feelings, and actions of others in the relationship (Sampson, 1988). In turn, they find it more natural to describe themselves not as individuals possessing stable traits but as individuals possessing thoughts and behaviors determined and informed by the social role dictated by a given context (Cousins, 1989). Interdependent-selves, then, strive not for autonomy or independence. Instead, they pursue the goal of fitting in and adjusting with and conforming to the demands and expectations of their social in-groups (Kitayama, Suzuki, Conner, & Markus, 2001).

It would be inaccurate to infer that an interdependent-self strives for interconnectedness with just anyone. Instead, interdependent-selves feel more of a bond with, and therefore are more likely to be influenced by, others who are members of their in-group rather than their out-group (Chen, Brockner, & Katz, 1998; Iyengar et al., 1999; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis et al., 1988). Interdependent-selves, therefore, generally make more psychological distinctions

than do independent-selves among others deemed to be members of their in-group versus those perceived to be in their out-group. Thus, what distinguishes independent- from interdependent-selves is, first, their contrasting perceptions of the relationships between individuals and their social in-groups and, second, their contrasting goals for self-fulfillment.

Now consider the distinction between contexts offering personal choice and contexts in which choices are made by others. If, among independent-selves, the self is striving to be different from others and to establish its autonomy from others, then we might hypothesize personal choice-making contexts to be more salient than other-made choice-making contexts, since the act of personally choosing necessarily emphasizes the role of the self. And if independent-selves strive to establish the self as distinctive from others, then we might hypothesize that contexts offering choice would be necessarily more intrinsically motivating compared with contexts in which others have made the choice for them, because making a choice allows independent-selves the opportunity to express their individual preferences, while having others dictate personal choices threatens their expression of uniqueness. Consequently, for independent-selves, the distinction between choice and no choice mirrors the distinction between self and others.

But are both these distinctions (i.e., that between choice and no choice and between self and others) salient or even relevant among interdependent-selves? If among interdependent-selves the self is striving to be interconnected with others and is determined to fit in with its social in-group, then we might hypothesize that it is the identity of the chooser in other-made choice contexts that will be more salient than personal choices made in traditional choice contexts. Moreover, as interdependent-selves strive to be interconnected with their reference groups, making a choice may be of little intrinsic value, since choice-making contexts may be conceived, not as searches for personal preference matches but as searches for options that conform to the socially sanctioned standards of reference groups. Indeed, in some situations, the exercise of personal choice might even pose a threat to individuals whose personal preferences could prove at variance with those of their reference groups. Interdependent-selves, therefore, might actually prefer to have choices made for them, especially if the situation enables them both to be relieved of the

"burden" associated with identifying the socially sanctioned option and, at the same time, to fulfill the superordinate cultural goal of belongingness.

Culture and Moral Development

Any discussion of cultural differences in self-construal would be incomplete without considering the way cultural differences in perceptions of self-other relations are simultaneously embedded in contrasting moral frameworks (Miller, 1994, Miller et al., 1990). The ways that intentional behavior is conducted and perceived by others are necessarily understood within a moral purview. Indeed, social behavior itself is constructed, fostered, and sanctioned with reference to the community's conception of the good (Fiske et al., 1998). Essentially, one's self-construal is the conduit for processing information concerning the social world, while moral frameworks speak to the social norms of particular self-construals, which affect what selves believe they should do given the information at their disposal.

Similar to the contrasts between independent-selves and interdependent-selves, cultural psychologists are distinguishing more and more between individual rights-based cultures, where the focus on individual rights places personal freedom and choice as a primary goal, and duty-based cultures, where the focus on social duties and harmony with one's in-group is emphasized (Chiu & Hong, 1997; Miller, 1994). Consistent with the theory that independent-selves are bounded entities able to resist contextual influences, it is theorized that such individuals possess an individually oriented interpersonal moral code that, in turn, tends to be linked to a relatively rule-oriented and decontextualized style of moral judgment (Miller, 1994; Miller et al., 1990). Research comparing American and Hindu Indian populations supports the claim that an individually oriented interpersonal moral code develops among Americans, stressing personal freedom of choice and individual responsibility. Specifically, the type of interpersonal moral code emphasized among Americans may be considered individually centered in its view of interpersonal commitments as matters of personal decision making and in its concern with the weighing of responsibilities to others against responsibilities to oneself. In contrast, a duty-based interpersonal moral code develops among Hindu Indians, stressing broad and socially enforceable in-

terpersonal obligations and the importance of contextual sensitivity (Miller, 1994).

The behavioral effects of differences in an individual rights-based versus a duty-based moral framework have been powerfully demonstrated in studies examining cultural differences concerning altruistic behavior. Miller and colleagues presented American and Hindu Indian participants with hypothetical scenarios in which, for selfish reasons, agents failed to help someone who was experiencing either life-threatening need (e.g., the need for mouth-to-mouth resuscitation), moderately serious need (e.g., the need for aspirin to relieve a migraine headache), or minor need (e.g., the need for a small sum of money to purchase a movie ticket) (Miller et al., 1990). The identities of the needy others were varied from being in-group members (e.g., family members) to being out-group members (e.g., strangers). The results revealed an overall main effect for Hindu Indians in that, except when the needy other was both a stranger and in a minor-threat condition, they maintained a moral view of the incidents, with their responses showing virtually no variation related to need or role. In contrast, with the exception of cases involving life-threatening needs, Americans less frequently categorized the breaches in moral terms, with their responses showing marked effects of both need and role. Fewer Americans judged that there was an objective obligation to help or that it was legitimate to regulate helping as the level of need decreased and as the role relationship became more remote. Americans more frequently viewed the behavior in terms of personal choice and were less likely to consider it legitimate to regulate others' behavior. Moreover, Miller and Luthar (1989) found that Indian participants were more likely to categorize breaches of interpersonal relationships in moral terms (e.g., "Because it's a son's birth duty to take care of his parents . . ."), while American participants were more likely to regard them as matters of personal choice (e.g., "It's up to the individual to decide . . ."). Thus, the results support the present theory that, in contrast to cultural members possessing individual rights-based interpersonal moral codes, the perceived scope of moral obligations is greater in cultures emphasizing duty-based interpersonal moral codes.

In a more direct test of the hypothesis that individual rights-based cultures interpret responsibility in terms of personal preferences, while duty-based cultures interpret responsibility in terms of moral

obligations to others, Miller and Bersoff (1998) examined the extent to which personal preferences (i.e., liking of another) affected participants' sense of moral responsibility. They manipulated personal affinity of agents in ten vignettes and asked both Indian and American participants about the interpersonal responsibility they felt in each circumstance. Among Indians, affinity was observed to have virtually no impact on moral judgments. In contrast, in all circumstances—except for the bond between parents and their children—it was the degree of interpersonal liking that affected Americans' view of moral responsibilities toward both their family members (e.g., parents and siblings) and non-family members (e.g., neighbors). In other words, Americans more frequently judged that there was a responsibility to help in cases where they liked the person as compared with contexts where they felt less affinity toward the other. Such findings suggest the possibility that Americans perceive their responsibilities toward others to be contingent upon their personal preferences regarding the people in need, whereas for Indians perceptions of responsibility are independent of personal preferences.

Indeed, this distinction between the possession of individual rights-based and duty-based moral frameworks may help to explain why Kohlberg's six progressive stages of moral development (ranging from preconventional to conventional to postconventional) have not been found to replicate to the extent that Kohlberg originally hypothesized (Kohlberg, 1958, 1981, 1984). An assumption underlying Kohlberg's theory is the superiority of a self-determined moral code to a moral code based on the approval/disapproval of others. In essence, Kohlberg considered self-autonomy to be the pinnacle of moral decision making. Yet, a meta-analysis of 45 studies found empirical support for the universality of preconventional and conventional stages, while the postconventional stages tended to be emphasized only in modern Western cultures (Snarey, 1985). Similarly, Ma (1988) found Kohlberg's postconventional stages inadequate for a Chinese cultural context because it failed to account for Confucian and Taoist philosophies, which are central to Chinese conceptions of morality. One reason why Kohlberg's 1958 postconventional stages have not been successfully replicated in duty-based cultures may be because the values of self-autonomy are not the primary goal, nor may they constitute a salient ideal among members of duty-based cultures. In cultures where social relationships are valorized over the

individual, it follows, then, that moral progression would not lead toward self-autonomy.

So, just as a fundamental characteristic of the American conception of self is the belief in individual rights, for Asian cultures the definition of personhood is intertwined with duties and obligations toward important others (Chiu & Hong, 1997; Shweder & Bourne, 1984). Participants who are from an individual rights-based culture seem to perceive choice-making contexts as within the realm of personal preferences and only limited by the potential of violating the individual rights of another (Haidt, Koller, & Dias, 1993; Lukes, 1973). In contrast, participants who are from a duty-based culture may perceive choice-making contexts as instances in which harmony must be maintained with their in-group, and thus fulfill the preferences of important others (Iyengar & Lepper, *in press*).

Culture and Human Cognition

In parallel with the research on self-construal and moral development, observed cultural differences in cognition suggest that members from contrasting cultures differ in their evaluations of how individuals relate to their social groups and, further, how these differences are reflected in the manner in which perceptions of the relationship of objects to their surrounding environments are encoded and remembered. In fact, Nisbett and colleagues have argued that cognitive processes may be rooted in underlying epistemologies, where Eastern thought is more holistic (attending to the perceptual and cognitive field as a whole) and Western thought is more analytic (differentiating the object from the field and using categories and rules to understand its behavior) (Choi & Nisbett, 1998; Choi, Nisbett & Norenzayan, 1999; Peng & Nisbett, 1999).

At the most basic level, it appears that cultural differences in the way the relationship between self and other is perceived influences basic cognitive processes, including formal logic, analytical thinking, and the encoding of information. Recent theory and research by Nisbett and his colleagues argues that current Western philosophy regarding human cognition—with origins in Greek traditions—is highly influenced by an analytic tradition, whereas contemporary East Asian mentalities and thought processes—with origins in Chinese cultural traditions such as Taoism, Chinese Buddhism, and

Confucianism—are cognitively integral and holistic (Nisbett, 1998; Nisbett, Peng, Choi, & Norenzayan, in press; Peng, Ames, & Knowles, in press). Evidence in support of this theory appeared early on in cross-cultural psychology. In 1949, Abel and Hsu found that Chinese Americans were more likely to describe Rorschach pictures as a whole (Gestalt) than their Euro-American counterparts, who tended to give responses based on only a part of the picture. More recently, in a series of empirical studies, Peng and Nisbett (1999) showed that dialectical thinking—the cognitive tendency to accept contradictions—is more prevalent in Eastern, versus Western, culture. More so than Americans, Chinese participants preferred dialectical proverbs rich in contradictions—such as “too humble is half proud”—and also favored dialectical resolutions to social conflicts—such as presenting both sides in an argument. In contrast, Americans preferred nondialectical proverbs—such as “for example is no proof”—and generally found exclusive fault with one side of an argument or the other. Peng and Nisbett attribute the tendency of Easterners toward dialecticism in part to their system of thought, which emphasizes complexity, change, and contradiction. Conversely, Westerners tend to emphasize Aristotelian logical reasoning—that is, considering rules and categories as essential.

The cultural proclivity to focus either on the holistic picture, as with Eastern cultures, or singular components, as with Western cultures, is apparent even when comparing the ways Easterners and Westerners cognitively process and interpret the relationships between objects and their environments. In a current study by Masuda and Nisbett (2001), American and Japanese participants were shown films of underwater scenes in which each scene depicted a “focal fish”—a large fish with salient colors and shapes—moving in front of an elaborate scene. In later memory recall tests, Japanese participants were more likely to mention inert background information, and American participants more often remembered information regarding the focal fish. Moreover, after watching the scenes, the participants were shown the focal fish either on the original background or on a new one. The ability of the Japanese to recognize a particular focal fish was diminished if the fish was shown on a different background, while the Americans’ ability was unaffected by the change in background. The results from this study suggest that American and Japanese individuals may have divergent perceptual

strategies; Americans may readily deconstruct their field to hone in on individual focal figures while paying relatively little attention to peripheral information, whereas Japanese may instinctively construct an all-inclusive field of information, which includes the image as a comprehensive entity.

Concurrent with these studies regarding people's observations of fish scenes, further studies reveal that Chinese college students were more knowledgeable about the observable behaviors of their peers than were American students (Ji et al., 2000). By using the impact of frequency scales on behavioral reports, Ji et al. found that members of Eastern cultures had more detailed representations of mundane behaviors available in memory than did members of Western cultures. This greater sensitivity to remember information external to the individual may stem from the priority that Eastern cultures place on fitting in, which requires considerable monitoring of both one's own behavior and that of others to avoid inappropriate conduct.

If it is the case that there are predictable cultural differences in the extent to which perceivers will focus on a focal object or the periphery in a scene, then might we further observe cultural differences in the perceptions of where action is emanating from? Indeed, when examining cultural differences in causal reasoning, findings repeatedly suggest that, whereas members of Western cultures judge the individual to be the responsible agent of action, members of Eastern cultures judge situations or social groups to be the directors of action. Several recent studies provide an empirical challenge to the fundamental attribution error—that when judging the behavior of others, all people will be prone to overestimate the influence of dispositional causes (Holland, Holyoak, Nisbett, & Thagard, 1993; Ross, 1977). A compelling series of studies conducted by Morris and Peng (1994) provides strong empirical support for the hypothesis that members of Western cultures are more likely to perceive the individual as the causal agent from which behavior emanates while members of Eastern cultures exhibit a greater tendency to perceive behavior as being situationally determined and, at times, even directed by groups. These studies demonstrate that Chinese and American individuals differ in their construals and judgments of social events. When shown the same descriptions of events, such as mass murders, and asked to determine the cause, Americans predominantly focused on the

presumed mental instability and negative dispositions of the murderers, while Chinese made more references to societal and institutional factors that may have affected the murderers—such as emphasizing corruption by bad example or disruption instigated by social changes. Moreover, these cultural differences in attribution were similarly replicated even when participants were explaining culturally neutral social events. When shown a picture of a group of fish with one fish swimming slightly ahead of the group, American participants saw the individual fish as leading the group (dispositional cause) while Chinese participants saw a group rejecting or chasing away the lone fish (situational cause).

To what extent do these observed cultural differences in the generation of situational versus dispositional attributions suggest contrasting perceptions of causal agents? Menon and colleagues (1999) provide a more direct examination of these culturally contrasting perceptions of agency. Specifically, investigations of East Asian and American lay theories regarding human motivation suggest that, while Americans perceive individuals as causal agents of their behavior, East Asians perceive groups or collectives as the determinants of their behavior. For instance, findings from one study revealed that American news reporters, when compared with their Japanese counterparts, focused more on the central individuals in financial scandals as the wrongdoers, whereas Japanese reporters focused more on the organizations as the dysfunctional entities. In a second study, students from Hong Kong and the United States were provided with a purposefully ambiguous vignette in which they assessed individual or collective factors contributing to a decline in performance and teamwork in a work group including a maladjusted employee. Participants could have either perceived the individual as a "free rider" who disregarded obligations toward the group or perceived the group as failing to integrate this member. When evaluating this ambiguous scenario, American students held the individual responsible, whereas Chinese students blamed the group. In essence, the repeated findings of several studies suggest that North Americans perceive themselves as determining the course of events, whereas East Asians perceive their behavior and events as being derived from the collective (e.g., formal institutions and reference groups) (for a review, see Fiske et al., 1998; Menon et al., 1999).

Thus the exploration of cognition as a culturally mediated phe-

nomenon suggests that members of Western and Eastern cultures really do differ in their processing of information. Westerners tend to cognize their surroundings in terms of their components (Masuda & Nisbett, 2001), focus on individual dispositions to the exclusion of the other components in an environment (Miller, 1984; Morris & Peng, 1994; Shweder & Bourne, 1984), and attribute power and authority to the individual (Menon et al., 1999). In contrast, Easterners tend to cognize their environment holistically (Masuda & Nisbett, 2001, Peng & Nisbett, 1999), make more judgments of others' behavior based on situational factors (Miller, 1984; Morris & Peng, 1994; Shweder & Bourne, 1984), and bestow power on the collective (Menon et al., 1999). Thus, it appears that there are culturally contrasting conceptions of agency, in that Western cultural members assign control and stability to the individual, while Eastern cultural members project such qualities on the greater social collective.

Given these contrasting cultural differences in perceptual attention and understanding of causal agents, we can hypothesize that there may be differences in the extent to which members of Eastern and Western cultures will perceive themselves as having choice. If members of Eastern cultures take their cues for behavior primarily from their external worlds, then they may be less likely to perceive themselves as possessing choice—since they may be, instead, attending to the preferences of others. Perhaps more important is the notion that members of Western and Eastern cultures differ in what they perceive to be the active and causal agent in the social world. With respect to one's perceptions of choice, Easterners may respond to a more collective notion of choice (e.g., the degree of choice one's social network is perceived to have), rather than referring to the level of individual choice one perceives oneself to have.

Culture and Choice

We have reviewed the large body of research that has demonstrated a link between the perception and provision of choice and intrinsic motivation. In the preceding sections, we also reviewed a growing body of cross-cultural research indicating differences in self-construal, moral development, and human cognition. In drawing upon these recent cultural analyses, it is hypothesized that the link between the provision/perception of choice and intrinsic motivation—

so compellingly demonstrated in studies conducted in North America—will not be applicable among cultures where individual freedom and autonomy are less salient, in turn, revealing choice to be a culturally contingent component of intrinsic motivation.

Specifically, the cultural analysis of self-construal implies that members of individualist cultures should demonstrate a greater commitment to—or greater intrinsic motivation toward—personally made choices, since such contexts may enable these individuals to fulfill their self-goal of being autonomous and unique. And, by contrast, Markus and Kitayama's 1991 analysis further suggests that members of collectivist cultures should demonstrate greater commitment toward selections that have been sanctioned by members of their social in-group, since such contexts would allow these individuals to fulfill their superordinate goal of belongingness. Moreover, according to this analysis, interdependent individuals are theorized to make critical distinctions between in-group and out-group members, and are therefore hypothesized to exhibit conformity in choice in contexts in which choosers are members of an in-group rather than members of an out-group.

Additionally, considering the cultural differences in moral development, it is predicted that unlike members of individualist cultures who perceive moral acts through the lens of personal choice, for members of collectivist cultures moral acts are understood in terms of the consideration of one's obligations and duties toward others, with less of an emphasis on personal preference. Furthermore, drawing upon the research on human cognition, it is hypothesized that members of individualist and collectivist cultures will differ in the extent to which they perceive themselves as having a choice. Since members of collectivist cultures have been observed to consider agency to lie not in the individual but in the group, they may be less prone to consider individuals as possessing the ability to make and act upon their choices.

Taking the theoretical implications of these frameworks as a whole, we are confronted by the challenge of moving beyond simple predictions of cultural differences to identifying the mediating mechanisms underlying the relationship between choice and intrinsic motivation (Weber & Hsee, 1999, 2000). Drawing upon the cultural research from all three perspectives, then, we theorize that the mediating mechanism underlying cultural differences and the relationship

between choice and intrinsic motivation inherently lies in individuals' choice-making perceptions and goals.

We propose a framework by which we might predict and understand cultural differences in a relationship between choice and intrinsic motivation. Accordingly, we hypothesize that members of individualist cultures who possess independent-selves, who have an individual rights-based morality mental model, and who give precedence to focal objects in their perceptual fields are volitional choosers. The term "volitional choosers" refers to individuals who perceive themselves to be choosers and perceive their choice-making goal to be that of personal preference matching. In contrast, we hypothesize that members of collectivist cultures who possess interdependent-selves, who have a duty-based morality mental model, and who give precedence to the periphery in their perceptual fields are dutiful choosers. The term *dutiful choosers* refers to individuals who perceive choice-making situations as circumstances in which they must identify that which is socially sanctioned and, moreover, perceive their choice-making goal to be the identification of that which will be congruent with socially sanctioned ideals. Such a framework allows us to systematically examine cultural differences in people's perception of, preference for, and commitment to choice.

Perception of Choice

Consider first the prediction that members of individualist cultures, hypothesized to be volitional choosers, will perceive themselves as having more choice than members of collectivist cultures, hypothesized to be dutiful choosers. Specifically, we hypothesize that collectivists will perceive themselves as having different quantities of choice in their everyday lives, subjectively experience less choice, and experience the same choice-making events differently.

In an initial examination of the hypothesis that members of individualist and collectivist cultures differ in the amount of choice they perceive themselves to have every day, some preliminary ethnographic studies were conducted in which Asian and American students' perceptions of everyday choices were examined (Iyengar & Lepper, 1999). Both American and Japanese students residing and taking classes in Kyoto were asked to catalog the number of choices they had made within a normal school day. Even though the Amer-

ican students had typically only resided in Japan for a month—and presumably were not aware of all the choices available to them—they nevertheless perceived themselves as having nearly 50% more choices than comparable Japanese students. This ethnographic study suggests that members of collectivist cultures—even when living in the same cultural context—perceive the quantity of choices available to them to be substantially less than people from individualistic cultures.

A more empirically robust survey of independent and collectivist members' perceptions of choice comes from analysis of the World Values Survey, which sampled people from 33 countries, including the United States, Japan, South Korea, China, and India (Sastry & Ross, 1998). All survey participants were asked to rate on a scale of 1 (*none at all*) to 10 (*a great deal*) "How much freedom of choice and control do you feel you have over the way life turns out?" Responses to this question revealed that Asians reported significantly less freedom of choice and control over their life circumstances than non-Asians. This effect remained robust, above and beyond effects of socioeconomic standing, household status, age, and gender. A similar effect was found within the American sample: both Asian Americans and Hispanic Americans perceived significantly less freedom of choice and control over their lives than Caucasian Americans. Using a very large and diverse sample, these results supplement the findings of Iyengar and Lepper's 1999 exploratory ethnographic study: Members of individualist cultures subjectively experience more choice in their daily lives than members of collectivist cultures.

To more directly assess variations in people's perceptions of choice, Iyengar, Lepper, Hernandez, DeVoe, and Alpert (2001) examined the degree of choice and autonomy people *perceived* themselves as having in their daily worklives. Citigroup consumer branches, with their identical formal organization charts and job categories, physical layout of bank branches, and financial services available, offer an ideal setting for examining how employees from individualist and collectivist cultures subjectively experience choice in the workplace. In this questionnaire study, employees (bank tellers, personal bankers, and salespersons) were sampled from a variety of individualist and collectivist countries including over 580 branches and seven countries (Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, and the United States). Specifically, participants were

asked to provide ratings on a 1 (*very little choice*) to 9 (*a lot of choice*) scale as to how much choice they felt they had in ten aspects of their jobs (e.g., in deciding how to handle problems that arise, or in determining how much they accomplish on a daily basis). Results show that both Asians and Latin Americans perceived themselves as having significantly less choice in their jobs as compared with their American counterparts. Figure 1 displays these mean responses to the perceived choice measure graphically, controlling for effects of employees' position within the organization.

To further assess the reliability of this finding, Iyengar et al. (2001) obtained branch manager ratings of how much choice employees actually had in their jobs as the best proxy for an objective assessment of the actual level of choice each employee had. On a scale of 1 (*not much at all*) to 9 (*a large amount*), managers were asked, "How much choice/autonomy does this employee have in his/her job?" Observed cultural differences remained highly significant, even after the level of choice each employee actually had was used as a covariant.

Thus, these results suggest that Asians and Latin Americans subjectively experience less choice within their working environments. Prior investigations of country variations in individualism-collectivism suggest that members of Asian and Latin American countries typically score as collectivist on these measures (Hofstede, 1991; Triandis, 1995). Consistent with prior predictions that members of Asian and Latin American countries are similarly interdependent, the results of both the study conducted with Citigroup employees (Iyengar et al., 2001) and the results obtained from Sastry and Ross (1998) suggest that dutiful choosers appear to perceive themselves as having significantly less choice than their volitional counterparts.

Hence, dutiful choosers are less likely to perceive themselves as having choice and autonomy in their daily activities, and they further consider themselves to have exercised fewer choices than their volitional counterparts. One implication of such findings is that the results obtained from psychological paradigms predicated on the perception of choice may not replicate with dutiful choosers. Indeed, there is a growing body of evidence that suggests Asians may not be as prone to dissonance reduction within the classic cognitive dissonance paradigms developed with primarily Western participants.

Consider once again the "free-choice" cognitive dissonance paradigm in which experimenters make it salient to their subjects that they

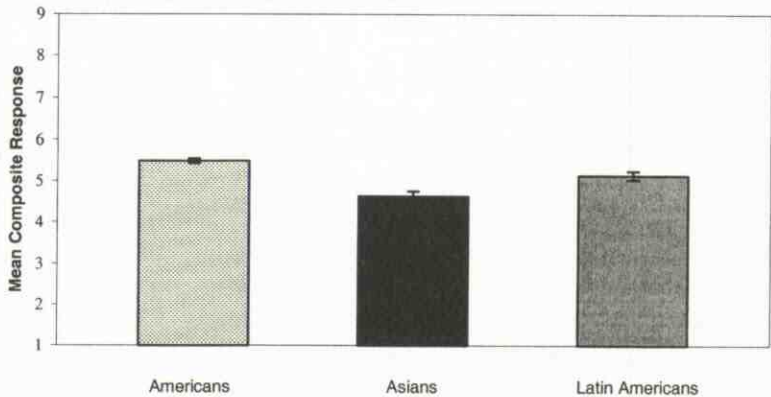


Figure 1. Measure of perceived choice in Iyengar et al. (2001). Mean composite ratings of Citigroup employees' perceived choice, measured on 1-9 Likert scales. Bars represent means, and lines represent standard errors.

are entitled to make a choice. Previous research suggests the possibility that there may be cultural differences in the extent to which people experience cognitive dissonance. Recently, Heine and Lehman (1997) conducted a study of the "free choice" paradigm (Brehm, 1956; Steele, Spencer, & Lynch, 1993) with Canadian and Japanese participants. By having participants choose between two similarly desirable CDs, they examined the levels of dissonance reduction of volitional and dutiful choosers under the same experimental conditions. As predicted by prior research with volitional choosers, Heine and Lehman replicated the now classic finding that after choosing one CD over the other, Canadians' liking for the chosen CD increases while their liking for the discarded CD decreases (i.e., they display a significant "spread" of alternatives). However, among the Japanese participants, dissonance reduction was not observed. Similarly, there are some failures to replicate the Festinger and Carlsmith (1959) experiment, as well as other forced compliance experiments, in East Asia (Choi, Choi, & Cha, 1992; Yoshizaki, Ishii, & Ishii, 1975). Moreover, none of the studies done in Japan (Hirose & Kitada, 1985; Kudo & Mitsui, 1974; Monden, 1980; Sakai, 1981) have demonstrated the standard effects of increased attitude change under conditions of high choice. Yet, when conducting another cognitive dissonance paradigm (i.e., the insufficient justification paradigm), Yoshida (1977) and Takata and

Hashimoto (1973) found evidence for the phenomenon of cognitive dissonance among East Asian participants.

At best, there seem to be mixed results for the cross-cultural validity of cognitive dissonance in East Asia in the way that it has been conceptualized in the West. But is it really the case that members of collectivist cultures do not experience cognitive dissonance? Why should the "high choice" conditions of these experiments, which are prerequisites for obtaining cognitive dissonance with volitional choosers, prove so ineffective for dutiful choosers?

Perhaps a more detailed examination of the "free choice" paradigm and the high choice conditions is warranted. Within the Brehm free choice paradigm, for instance, it is assumed that when participants have to choose between two CDs that they consider equally desirable, certain inconsistencies will arise (e.g., the negative features of the chosen CD and the positive features of the rejected CD) regarding their choices. For volitional choosers, these thoughts are blatantly inconsistent with their choice-making goal of choosing the CD that best matches their preferences. As cognitive dissonance predicts, the easiest way for volitional choosers to resolve these inconsistencies is to adapt their subjective opinions of each CD so that they are compatible with their choice-making decisions. Yet for dutiful choosers there is good reason to believe that this same choice-making context may be experienced quite differently. As previous research suggests, dutiful choosers may perceive and experience less choice than their volitional counterparts, even when the choice-making event may be identical. Furthermore, it may not be dutiful choosers' priority to pick the CD that is most in line with their personal preferences, but rather to make the socially "correct" decision, which attends to the preference of important others. When dutiful choosers make their selections, then, there may not be dissonance between their personal preferences (attractiveness of each CD) and their behavior, since their goal may *not* have been to pick the CD that they personally liked best. Therefore, we might expect their liking of each CD to remain the same (i.e., they would not be prone to the effects of cognitive dissonance).

In support of this hypothesis, recent studies have shown dissonance reduction with participants from collectivist cultures, but only when the preferences of others were invoked before participants made their decisions. For example, Kitayama et al. (2001) were able to replicate the findings of Heine and Lehman (1997) with participants

from the United States and Japan, demonstrating once again that dutiful choosers did not engage in dissonance reduction in the standard cognitive dissonance paradigm. Yet when participants were asked to estimate the preference of the "average college student" before making their choice, Japanese participants displayed comparable dissonance reduction (a significant spread of alternatives). Priming participants to focus on others did not affect the American participants; they demonstrated a significant spread of alternatives in both conditions. Despite being asked to consider the preferences of others, American participants appeared to persist in basing their selection on personal preferences, which resulted in postdecisional rationalization of their choice regardless of experimental condition. Consequently, while volitional choosers' primary motivational goal of consistency with personal preference was sustained in both conditions, considering the preferences of peers appeared to engender, in dutiful choosers, a motivation to rationalize that their choice conformed to what was socially sanctioned.

Similarly, Hoshino-Browne, Zanna, Spencer, and Zanna (2001) used a free choice paradigm with three groups of Canadians: Euro-Canadians, and Asian Canadians who either strongly identified themselves as Asian (non-assimilated Asians) or did not (assimilated Asians). In this case, however, these researchers compared a standard condition in which the participants were to choose one of two equally desirable items as a gift for their best friend. The results revealed that Euro-American and assimilated Asians showed an equally strong spread of alternatives in the standard condition, but no such effect was demonstrated in the best friend condition. In contrast, the non-assimilated Asians exhibited a significant spread of alternatives only in the best friend condition, with no dissonance reduction effect for the standard condition—reminiscent of the null effect for Japanese participants in Heine and Lehman (1997). These studies strongly suggest that cognitive dissonance can be aroused in dutiful choosers when the choice is made in the context of in-group others.

It is important to note the empirical verification of cognitive dissonance in members of collectivist cultures, since the observation that Asian thought is more conducive to dialectical cognition—more amenable to holding contradictory thoughts simultaneously—would predict that cultures influenced by such ways of thinking would inoculate, or at least attenuate, the need for self-consistency (Nis-

bett, Peng, Choi, & Norenzayan, in press; Peng & Nisbett, 1999). However, an examination of choice-making goals suggests instances under which dutiful choosers experience cognitive dissonance to a greater degree than their volitional counterparts. Specifically, dutiful choosers may experience more pressure to maintain consistency between one's selection and the preferences of important others. It seems dutiful choosers are unlikely to align choosing an item solely in terms of their personal preference. On the other hand, volitional choosers may not feel any pressure to maintain consistency between their selections and the preferences of important others, and may not readily consider the opinions of others when making their decisions.

Both frameworks, however, demonstrate that volitional and dutiful choosers experience the same choice condition, even in the same experimental laboratory, in divergent ways. In essence, one's perception of choice may have less to do with the presence or absence of choice, and more to do with the choice-making framework choosers bring to the situation.

Preference for Choice

In the previous section, we reviewed evidence which suggests that dutiful and volitional choosers perceive and subjectively experience seemingly identical choice-making situations differently. To what extent are cultural differences in the perception of choice mirrored in cultural differences in the desire for choice? Since dutiful choosers perceive themselves as having fewer choices as compared with volitional choosers, one obvious hypothesis might be to predict dutiful choosers perceive themselves as having fewer choices merely because their value for the presence of choice is less than that of volitional choosers. Alternatively, a contrasting hypothesis might predict that it is not differences in the desire for choice which account for the differences in perceived choice, but that it may be differences in the extent to which the preferences of others are given consideration when making a choice that account for cultural differences in perceived choice. What this implies, then, is that what distinguishes dutiful choosers from volitional choosers is that, when making decisions, they consider their personal preferences *in tandem* with the preferences of their important others.

Consider first the hypothesis that dutiful choosers may report

the experience of personal choice making to be less desirable than do volitional choosers. Recall again the aforementioned Citigroup study conducted by Iyengar et al. (2001). In addition to asking Citigroup consumer branch employees to report their perceptions of how much choice they have in their daily worklives, they were also asked to rate the importance of *having* a choice for each of the same series of tasks addressed in the perceived choice measure (e.g., "Accomplishing all of my tasks by the end of the day"). Results revealed nonconclusive cultural differences in the desirability of choice—in that, compared with Americans, Singaporeans perceived choice to be less important in their daily work lives, while Taiwanese and Filipinos regarded choice to be more important; Latin Americans rated the importance of choice similarly to Americans. Since, on a 9-point scale, ratings of importance of choice ranged from 6.5 to 7.5, it appears that, in general, the presence of personal choice may be universally regarded as desirable.

Although there is no evidence to suggest cultural differences in the importance attached to the preference for choice, a growing body of evidence in support of our second hypothesis suggests that there are culturally contrasting differences in the extent to which choosers' preferences will reflect their own preferences or those of others. If it is the case that volitional choosers wish to perceive themselves as being independent choosers unaffected by the influence of others, then it would stand to reason that when confronted with a choice-making situation in which knowledge concerning the preferences of others is available, volitional choosers should prefer that which establishes them as different from the rest—even if such a choice does not maximally match their personal preferences. By contrast, if it is the case that dutiful choosers prefer to perceive themselves as acting in accordance with the wishes and standards of their social in-group, then it stands to reason that, when confronted with the knowledge of others' preferences, dutiful choosers' preferences will be swayed by the preferences of others—especially if these others are perceived to be members of their in-group. Recall again the finding that dutiful choosers perceive themselves as having less choice than volitional choosers. One explanation for why members of collectivist cultures may think they have less choice may be that in considering the preferences of important others they substantially limit the amount of personal choice they can exercise. Furthermore, within a choice-

making context, dutiful choosers may be much more oriented toward the preferences of others when making a choice. While both dutiful and volitional choosers equally weigh the importance of choice, when it comes to the choice-making context, dutiful choosers may attend to and consider more the preferences of others.

For instance, recent field experiments provide compelling demonstrations of the way Americans give greater preference to options that distinguish them from others than to options that are more personally satisfying (Ariely & Levav, 2000). In these field studies, they examined the variety of dishes selected among groups ranging from two to six members in a Chinese restaurant and found that diners—when in the presence of others—chose more varied dishes than would be expected by random sampling. In a second study conducted in a bar, beer selections were compared across customers who stated their choices in the presence of others and those who stated their choices privately. Customers who chose in the more collective setting (the more typical choosing scene in a bar) displayed significantly higher variety-seeking than customers who made their selections in private. After imbibing their drinks, participants who made their selections without considering others' selections were significantly more satisfied with their beer choice than participants in the collective condition.

Indeed, a series of cross-cultural studies suggest that while Americans prefer to exhibit uniqueness in their choice preferences, members of more collectivist cultures exhibit a preference for conformity in their choice preferences. Studies conducted by Kim and Markus (1999) suggest that dutiful choosers are more likely to prefer items that are common whereas volitional choosers are more likely to prefer items that are unusual. When offered a pen as a gift for completing a survey, Koreans were much more likely to choose the more common colored pen, while Americans were much more likely to choose the less common colored pen. In a separate study, they examined advertisements in Korean and American magazines. Results indicated that advertisements from collectivist cultures were more likely to emphasize conformity themes (e.g., respect for collective values and beliefs, harmony with group norms, and following a trend), whereas advertisements from individualistic cultures were more likely to emphasize uniqueness themes (e.g., rebelling against the collective values and beliefs, freedom, choice, and individual uniqueness).

These preliminary investigations complement the recent studies conducted by Cialdini and his colleagues, who observed that volitional and dutiful choosers might vary in the extent to which they rely on prior experience or personal judgment as compared to peer or expert judgment when making choices (Cialdini, Wosinska, Barrett, Butner, & Gornik-Durose, 1999). For example, American participants proved more persuaded to engage in an activity when they believed that they had previously chosen to engage in that activity, whereas Polish participants proved more persuaded to engage in an activity that they believed peers like them had engaged in before. Thus, when making a choice, volitional choosers seem to be more inclined to rely on the heuristic "I know what's best for me," and as a consequence they may place less emphasis and reliance on the recommendations of peers and experts. By contrast, if the primary goal of dutiful choosers is to identify the appropriate choice—as defined by others—then relying on the judgments of others may be a more commonly followed heuristic.

Thus far, then, there is evidence to suggest that dutiful choosers desire personal choice to the same extent as volitional choosers, yet at the same time they may be more persuaded by the preferences of others when making a choice. Might it be that, whereas for volitional choosers, personal choice takes precedence over the choices of others, for dutiful choosers, both personal and others' preferences receive equal consideration? To test this hypothesis, a recent questionnaire study conducted with an ethnically diverse American student population—including students who identified themselves as Caucasian, Asian, and Latino—provides a preliminary investigation of how volitional and dutiful choosers explicitly prioritize their considerations of personal interests as compared with their considerations of the interests of others when making a choice (DeVoe & Iyengar, 2001). Specifically, participants were asked to rate their agreement on several questions tapping the extent to which personal preferences and the preferences of important others were considered to be primary factors when making everyday decisions. Consistent with findings that suggest no cultural differences in the importance of personal choices, results revealed no ethnic differences in responses to the importance of personal preferences in decision-making processes (e.g., "When making everyday decisions, my first priority is to consider what's best for me personally"). Yet there were

cultural differences in the extent to which the interests of others are given priority. Asians were significantly more likely than their Caucasian and Latino counterparts to endorse statements that indicated important others as primary in their decisions (e.g., "When making everyday decisions, my first priority is to consider the wishes of people I care about"). Consistent with the second hypothesis, then, it appears that dutiful choosers consider both their own preferences and the preferences of important others when making everyday decisions, whereas volitional choosers primarily consider their own personal preferences (see Figure 2).

Commitment to Choice

Now that we have examined differences between volitional and dutiful choosers in terms of both their perceptions and preferences for choice, we turn to the implications these differences may have for people's demonstrated commitment to their choices. According to our analysis, commitment is operationalized as measurements of task engagement, task performance, and subjective well-being. In particular, we will compare contexts offering personal choice to contexts in which others' choices are given precedence.

Specifically, we hypothesize that volitional choosers' commitment to activities undertaken will vary as a function of whether they perceive themselves as having personally chosen them or whether they perceive themselves as having had their activities unwontedly dictated by others. In contrast, we hypothesize that dutiful choosers' commitments to activities they have undertaken will vary as a function of whether they perceive the chosen activity (regardless of whether or not the activity is chosen by self or others) to be one that is congruent with the standards of their social in-group or whether or not it is perceived as being in violation of socially accepted standards. Thus, drawing upon differences between independent- and interdependent-selves articulated by Markus and Kitayama (1991), we predict that volitional choosers, with independent-selves, will exhibit the same low level of commitment to activities that are chosen by others—either in-group or out-group members. However, we predict that dutiful choosers, who have interdependent-selves, will be more committed to activities when they are chosen by in-group members than when they are chosen by out-group members. Moreover, we

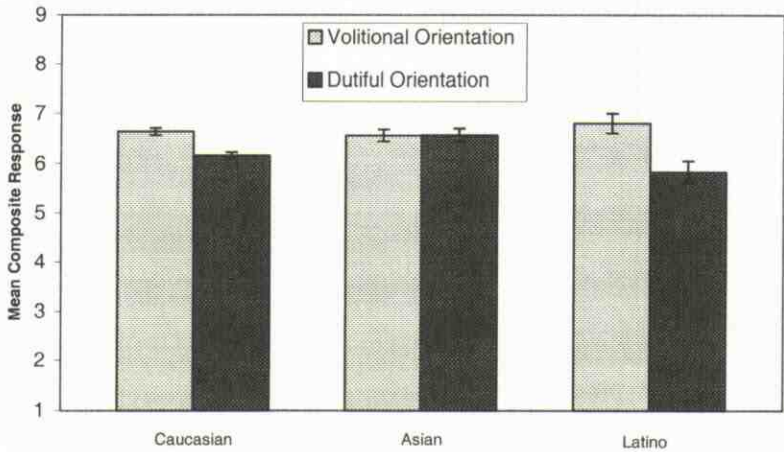


Figure 2. Measure of chooser style in DeVoe and Iyengar (2001). Mean composite ratings of dutiful and volitional orientation by ethnicity, measured on 1–9 Likert scales. Bars represent means, and lines represent standard errors..

assert that, when activities are chosen by important others, dutiful choosers will be even more committed to these activities than when they choose them on their own, as a convergence of personal and collective goals is reinforced. In sum, it is assumed that volitional choosers' commitments to choice are reliant on the perception of asserting personal preferences, while dutiful choosers' commitments to choice are two pronged—affected by both personal preferences and the preferences of important others.

In an attempt to examine the effects of personal and others' preferences on volitional and dutiful choosers' commitments to choice in an experimental setting, as well as to further specify the relationship between choice and intrinsic motivation, Iyengar and Lepper (1999) conducted two studies with both Asian American and European American children. Specifically, Iyengar and Lepper sought to empirically test the hypothesis that, although individuals from independent cultures (e.g., Americans) are routinely more committed to their own choices, members of more collectivist cultures (e.g., Asians) may sometimes be more committed to choices that are made for them—especially if those making the choices are identified as important members of their reference groups.

In the traditional choice/no-choice paradigms that manipulate

personal and other-made choices, it is typically a previously unknown experimenter who makes choices for the participant (e.g., Zuckerman et al., 1978). Iyengar and Lepper (1999), however, compared these traditional conditions to others in which the person making choices for the subject was a member of an important reference group. Because members of collectivist cultures are theorized to view distinctions between social in-group and out-group members as more important, varying the identity of the chooser to reflect this distinction was predicted to significantly influence collectivist participants' responses to others' choices (Iyengar et al., 1999; Triandis, 1988, 1989, 1990; Triandis et al., 1988). Identifying the chooser as a member of a relevant social group may de-emphasize a dutiful chooser's perception of choice removal by making the potential of fulfilling the preferences of important others more salient.

In the first experiment, a yoked design was employed in which both Asian American and European American children (7–9 years old) either were asked to choose an activity for themselves or were told that someone else had chosen for them. Specifically, in the personal-choice condition, participants were allowed to select which of six activities they wished to undertake, whereas in two no-choice conditions, participants were assigned this same activity. For half of the students in these assigned-choice conditions, however, the person making the choice was an adult the child had not met (the experimenter), whereas for the other students, the person making the choice was a person with whom participants shared a close, interdependent relationship (the child's mother). Subsequently, these students' performances at the activity, as well as their commitments to engage in the same activity during a later free-play period, were measured. As earlier research would predict, the findings suggested that European Americans were most highly motivated and performed best when given a personal choice, as compared with situations in which choices were made for them, either by the experimenter or by their own mothers. Asian Americans, by contrast, were most motivated and performed best when their mothers had made the selection for them, and they did significantly worse when they had made the choice themselves. Like their European American counterparts, however, they did least well when the unfamiliar experimenter had made the choice for them. These findings are displayed graphically in Figure 3 (a, b).

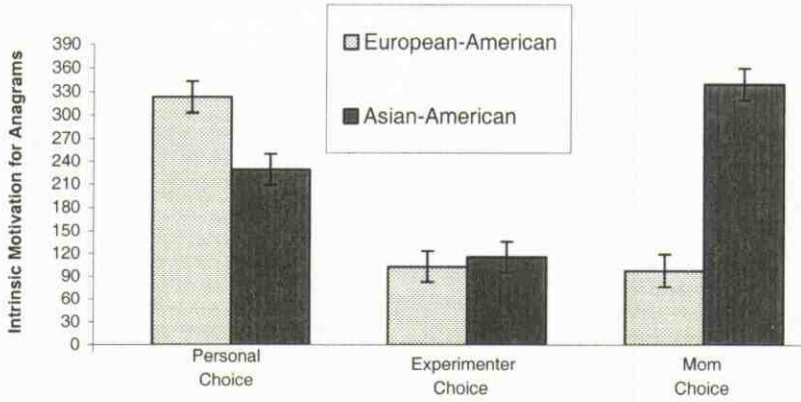


Figure 3a. Measure of intrinsic motivation in Iyengar and Lepper (1999), experiment 1. Mean time spent on anagrams during a free-play period, by experimental condition. Scores are in seconds, out of a possible 360 seconds total. Bars represent means, and lines represent standard errors.

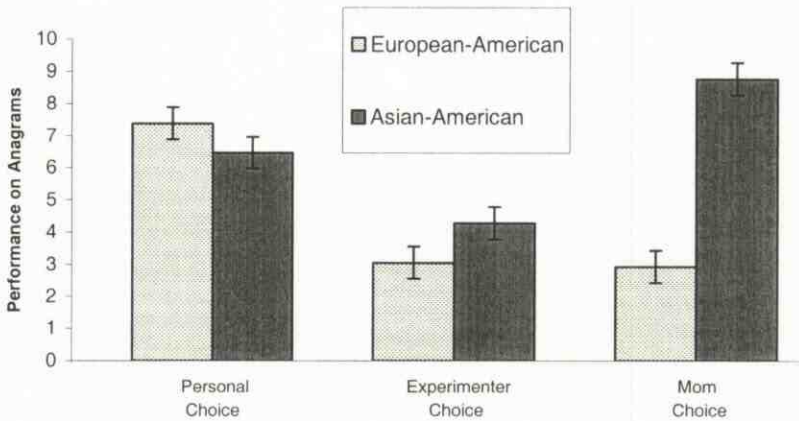


Figure 3b. Measure of performance in Iyengar and Lepper (1999), experiment 1. Mean number of anagrams completed correctly, by experimental condition, out of 15 possible. Bars represent means, and lines represent standard errors.

A second study by Iyengar and Lepper (1999) showed comparable and even more powerful cultural differences under circumstances in which the actual choices involved seemed quite trivial and in which peers rather than parents made choices for students.

This second experiment used a paradigm adapted from Cordova and Lepper (1996). Here, both Asian Americans and Euro-American fifth-graders engaged in a computer math game under one of three conditions. In the personal-choice condition, participants were given six instructionally irrelevant and seemingly trivial options, such as "Which icon would you like to have be your game piece?" In two yoked no-choice conditions, students were told that they were being assigned these same choices on the basis of a vote taken either among their own classmates (in-group condition) or among slightly younger children at a rival school (out-group condition). As in the first study, the findings were striking. European American children preferred more challenging math problems, showed more task engagement, and actually learned more when they had been allowed to make their own choices, as compared with either of the other conditions in which choices had been made for them. By contrast, Asian Americans were more committed to the game and learned more when they were told that their classmates had made the choices than when they made their own choices. This, in turn, produced better results than when the choices had been made for them by unfamiliar and lower-status others. Figure 4 (a, b) presents these results.

These studies replicate previous research findings in that both volitional and dutiful choosers' commitments to the tasks as well as their levels of performance were greatly facilitated by making personal choices, as opposed to having unknown others make choices for them. However, the inclusion of a condition in which in-group members made choices for participants revealed dramatic differences in volitional and dutiful choosers' responses. Dutiful choosers' commitment to and performance on the tasks were boosted to an even greater degree by having choices made by important others, whereas this had deleterious effects on volitional choosers' commitment and performance. It may be that having important others make choices for dutiful choosers allowed for a convergence of personal and group preferences. Taken together, these studies suggest that the value placed on fulfilling the preferences of important others is a key difference in the motivational goals of dutiful and volitional choosers.

In order to test whether findings observed among children from contrasting cultural backgrounds will be generally applicable among adults from a variety of independent and collectivist cultures—specifically, among employees of Citigroup, a global organization—Iyengar

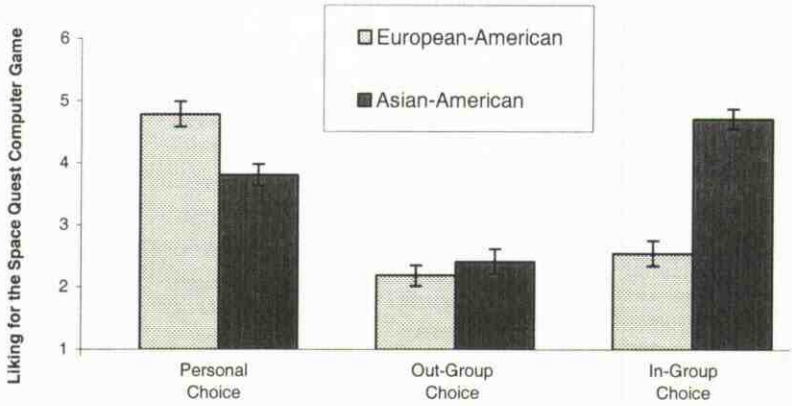


Figure 4a. Measure of intrinsic motivation in Iyengar and Lepper (1999), experiment 2. Mean liking for the activity, by experimental condition, measured on a 1–5 Likert scale. Bars represent means, and lines represent standard errors.

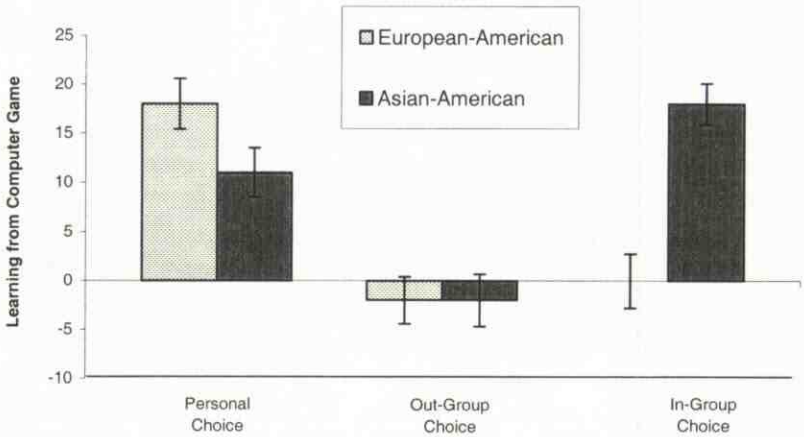


Figure 4b. Measure of direct learning in Iyengar and Lepper (1999), experiment 2. Mean pretest to posttest change in percentage correct, by experimental condition. Bars represent means, and lines represent standard errors.

et al. (2001) examined whether variations in perceived choice can actually predict significant factors such as job satisfaction, intrinsic motivation, and job performance. In an initial exploration, Iyengar et al. observed cultural variations in the extent to which employees

reported themselves as being intrinsically motivated at their jobs. Using a scale designed to measure intrinsic motivation patterned after Heath (1999), which tapped employees' interest and enjoyment of their job tasks (e.g., "I enjoy my job" and "In this job, I am accomplishing something worthwhile"), the composite mean responses were examined according to nationality (i.e., American, Asian, and Latin American). Asians reported the least intrinsic motivation, while Latin Americans reported the most, with Americans lying between the two. An identical pattern of cultural differences was observed in measures of employee job satisfaction.

Thus far, Iyengar et al.'s findings suggest that Asians perceive themselves to have less choice than others, would prefer more choice at their jobs, and are less intrinsically motivated by their jobs as compared with both Americans and Latin Americans. According to common organizational wisdom, such employees should show obvious decrements in their performance. However, if it is the case that the relationship between perceptions of choice, intrinsic motivation, and performance is less relevant among members of Asian cultures—as demonstrated in prior studies by Iyengar and Lepper (1999)—then it stands to reason that despite the fact that Asian employees report decrements on these dimensions, no apparent consequences for job performance should be visible. In fact, findings from this study reveal that although perceptions of choice, intrinsic motivation, and job satisfaction were all significant positive correlates of employee performance among American and Latin American employees, only job satisfaction was significantly correlated with performance among Asians.

Moreover, when participants were questioned regarding the extent to which they experienced a lack of choice at their jobs (e.g., "At work, my supervisor makes the majority of the decisions about what I do"), the findings were consistent with the other measures of perceived choice. Once more, results showed Asians to be significantly higher than their American and Latin American counterparts in their perceptions that supervisors regulated their work decisions. Upon examining the relationship between perceived managerial regulation and employee performance, a negative correlation was observed for the Americans; this relationship was nonexistent for Latin Americans and was positive for Asians. This analysis indicates that when choices were made for workers by their supervisors, there was a

negative association with performance for Americans, but a positive association in regard to Asian employee satisfaction. Just as with the experimental studies conducted by Iyengar and Lepper (1999), choices made by consequential others did not negatively impact the performance of dutiful choosers as they did for volitional choosers. While these studies are not entirely comparable, they suggest that the relationship between choice and motivation is substantially different for volitional and dutiful choosers.

Recent findings have even suggested that there may be cultural differences in the extent to which the perception of choice is associated with subjective well-being. In individualistic cultures, it is often assumed that perceiving oneself as having less choice—as seems to be the case for Asians and Latin Americans—will have negative effects on well-being (Langer & Rodin, 1976; Taylor, 1989). But Sastry and Ross (1998), who examined the impact of people's perceptions of choice and control on psychological distress from participants in 33 countries, delineated a more variable relationship. Their results revealed considerably different relationships for volitional and dutiful choosers. Specifically, Sastry and Ross found that the negative relationship between people's perceptions of choice and control and depression were significantly less for Asians and Asian Americans than for non-Asians. Caucasian Americans with a high sense of freedom of choice and control had much lower levels of depression and anxiety than Caucasian Americans who believed that they did not have freedom of choice and control over important outcomes. The same relationship was not observed for Asian Americans and Asians. Like Asian Americans, Hispanic Americans perceived themselves to have less freedom and control; however, like Caucasian Americans, Hispanic Americans also demonstrated the negative association between these perceptions and distress, even after such variables as lower education and income were taken into account (Mirowsky & Ross, 1984; Wheaton, 1980).

By including Hispanic Americans and/or Latin Americans in our examination of the relationship between choice and intrinsic motivation, we are further pressed to specify the extent to which they are more or less similar to dutiful choosers. While Asians and Latin Americans seemed to resemble each other on measures of perceived choice (Iyengar et al., 2001; Sastry & Ross, 1998), the evidence suggests that perceived choice functions in a similar manner for both Ameri-

cans and Latin Americans, but differently for Asians. These results are consistent with Ross and colleagues (Mirowsky & Ross, 1984; Sastry & Ross, 1998), who suggest that Latin American values (specifically Hispanic American and Mexican values) may more closely resemble the values of European countries and therefore resemble volitional choosers. Indeed, the preliminary results of DeVoe and Iyengar (2001) show Latin Americans to be less oriented toward the preferences of important others than their Asian American counterparts when making decisions. In fact, the discrepancy between dutiful and volitional orientations was even more pronounced for Latin Americans than it was for Caucasians, with Asians showing a uniformly high orientation for both. As these results appear to contradict the conclusions of Hofstede (1991) and Triandis (1995), further investigation is required in order to specify the degree to which Latin Americans should be considered more dutifully or volitionally oriented (i.e., the extent to which Latin Americans attend to both personal and important others' preferences).

Perhaps more broadly, such concepts as intrinsic motivation and individual choice, which research has shown to be highly related to both employee satisfaction and performance in individualistic cultures, may not readily hold for dutiful choosers. For instance, the concept of intrinsic motivation is predicated upon the existence of an independent self-construal (Markus & Kitayama, 1991), and therefore, it stands to reason that the construct would have less predictive value for participants who have an interdependent-self and place a higher priority on the preferences of others. Similarly, simultaneously attending to the preferences of important others as well as one's own preferences may veil main effect associations between performance and intrinsic motivation for dutiful choosers.

In sum, these results indicate that a more thorough examination of volitional and dutiful orientation must be undertaken when assessing participants' commitment to choice. The findings reviewed here present a serious challenge to assuming that the provision of choice functions in comparable ways for both volitional and dutiful choosers, and in turn cross-culturally. Both at the cultural and individual level, volitional and dutiful choosers seem to exhibit different motivational states with respect to their perception of choice. Specifically, choice-making contexts that afford dutiful choosers the opportunity to fulfill the preferences of important others (albeit by

having personal choice removed) appear to be just as motivating as—if not more motivating than—the fulfillment of personal preferences.

History of Choice

In this chapter we have presented various ways in which people from different cultures perceive, prefer, and are committed to choice. Furthermore, we have proposed that the underlying mediator of these differences is that of contrasting choice-making goals: volitional and dutiful. At this juncture it seems appropriate to propose that while one culture may foster a particular goal over another, different historical time periods may have fostered similar or related goals over others. For instance, Gergen (1973) has proposed that psychological findings may not generalize outside their historical context. Just as Baumeister (1987) has documented historical shifts in how the self has been understood, choice-making goals may have undergone comparable shifts. What we are suggesting is that, while cultural psychology is mainly concerned with differences between cultures, it may also be viable to identify differences within cultures over time.

In a recent analysis of the United States legal system, Friedman (1990) has postulated current American society to be functioning as a "republic of choice." His theory implies that free and unrestrained choice has become the very core mechanism for constituting the self and acts as an interpretive frame through which American society evaluates economic, political, and social reality. However, Friedman underscores the extent to which this is particular to our current moment in American history. Despite the all-pervasive and deep-rooted nature of choice to American ideals, the very concept of "choice" has taken on fundamentally different meanings over the past two centuries.

Consider, for instance, the concept of "freedom of choice." This rhetoric has been in formal legal use since the American Revolution, yet its meaning over time has taken on distinctly different connotations, assumptions, and proscriptions. While the concepts of individualism and choice were familiar terms to both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, they have complex meanings—meanings that have shifted and varied over time and from culture to culture. In particular, there has been an historical shift in how ideas as fundamental as freedom of choice are interpreted within the American legal

system. Friedman (1990, p. 26) points out that if Thomas Jefferson—a great democrat and apostle of freedom—were to come back from the dead today, “the range of choices would amaze and no doubt horrify him—choices people are allowed and encouraged to make in every walk of life, all in the name of freedom: choices about sexual and family relationships, about religious identity, about ways of talking, dressing, acting, and so on.”

Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, and Tipton (1985) have identified two types of individualism—utilitarian and expressive—that to some degree capture the shift in how Americans have perceived and understood the term over 200 years. Utilitarian individualism considers the goal of maximizing individual self-interest in economic terms, whereas expressive individualism “holds that each person has a unique core feeling and intuition that should unfold or be expressed if individuality is to be realized” (Bellah et al., 1985, p. 334). The former demarcates the notion of freedom to external events, such as the functioning of economic and political systems, while the latter broadens and internalizes the notion of freedom to include the functions of the private self. Friedman contends that the current conceptualization of individualism, which denotes an obligation to choose one’s lifestyle, is in stark contrast to the 19th century’s definition of freedom, which was confined primarily to political and economic terms (i.e., markets and votes). In the 19th century, for instance, the freedom one experienced in one’s private life was confined to morally correct decisions, which hinged primarily on the freedom to control darker impulses in an unquestioned traditional sense. Expressing freely one’s own personal thoughts, as well as developing one’s own unique qualities, was simply not an aspect of the 19th century’s understanding of individualism.

Recently, Schwartz (2000) has decried the “tyranny of choice” that has come to permeate consumer society and is complicit with the modern expression of individualism. Similarly, Conger (1981) documented shifts in the family from groups of interdependent individuals whose responsibilities are given in their socially defined statuses to groups of autonomous agents who freely choose their commitments. In both cases, identifying an historical shift provides us with an opportunity to examine a hypothetical transformation in American priorities, and more specifically, choice-making goals. Were 19th-century Americans more attentive to the preferences of

their important others? Were collective values (e.g., the priorities of the family) more salient to one's life in the 19th century? Moreover, in a global economy that increasingly reproduces a model of individualism, are societies that have been classified as collectivist undergoing transformations that affect choice-making goals? Several of these hypotheses can be tackled via empirical methodologies readily used in cross-cultural studies. For instance, Kim and Markus's 1999 analysis of magazine advertisements for uniqueness and conformity themes could be elaborated upon by examining within cultural differences via archival research.

In a similar vein, the analysis of cross-cultural differences on the dimension of individualism and collectivism addresses salient differences in values and meaning, but fails to consider subcultural and individual differences. In 2000, Sampson reassessed how Eastern-Western comparisons have been overlooked within group diversity. Continually, the "Western tradition," which encompasses Judeo-Christian values, is used interchangeably with individualism, when some of these values may be more accurately identified as collectivist (e.g., Rabbinic Judaism). Correspondingly, Nisbett and Cohen have identified a "culture complex" (e.g., the culture of honor in the U.S. South), which is salient in only one or a few particular sets of geographically proximate or historically related societies (Cohen & Nisbett, 1994; Nisbett & Cohen, 1996; Fiske et al., 1998).

We suggest that one way of more accurately capturing both between and within cultural differences is to identify contextual goals as potential mediating variables. Particularly with ethnic groups such as Asian Americans and Latino Americans, which reflect extreme social and economic diversity, the identification of key mediating variables is essential to more fully understand the "noise" in our analyses. All of this goes to suggest that the cultural psychology perspective underscores the importance of the historical dimension and that any comprehensive analysis must attend to the historical and cultural context within which the psychological phenomenon of choice exists.

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