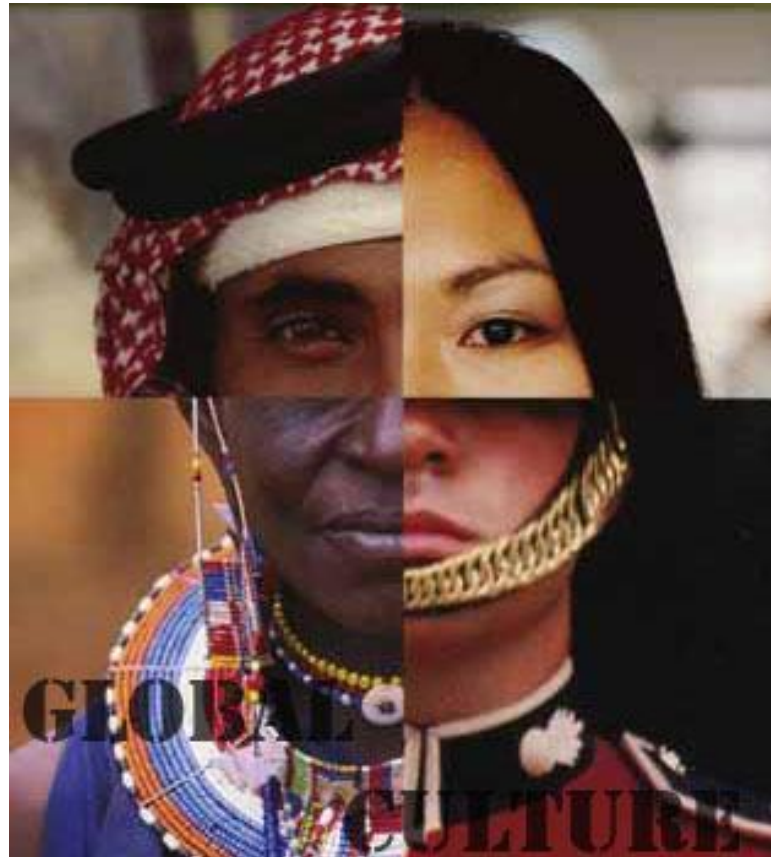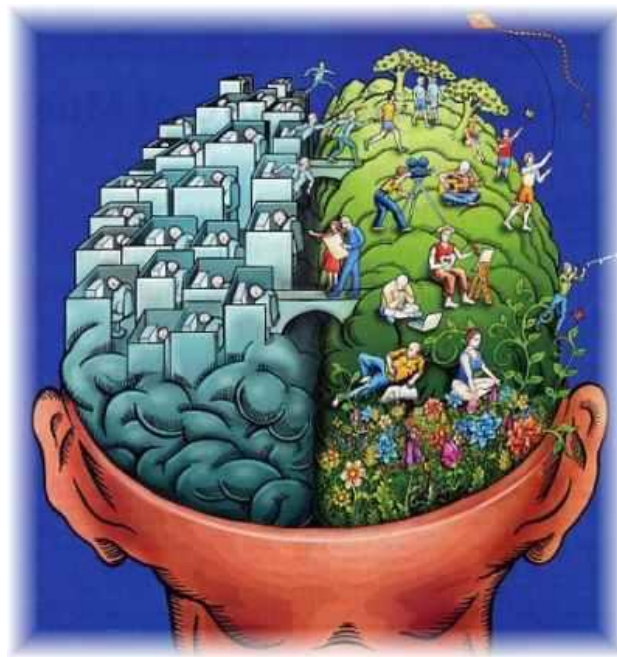# Personality and Culture

Does culture influence personality?

Culture Shapes Personality

Where one lives reveals what one is like

One's core psychological characteristics are shaped by early child-rearing practices, political regime, climate etc.

Climate's influence on Personality

Meteorological climate theory: climate may substantially influnce the nature of people and their society

Certain climates are superior to others:

People from warm countries are «too hot-tempered»

people from northern countries are «icy»

Climate of France is ideal

Charles Montesquieu
(1689-1755)

«Culture and Personality» School

American anthropological school of thought – 1930's.

How an individual's personality is shaped by the ambient culture?

Searching for common aspects that would characterize differing peoples by their cultures.

The study of culture and personality seeked to understand the growth and development of personal or social identity

Personality is Shaped by Culture

Anthroplogists **Ruth Benedict** (1887–1948) and **Margaret Mead** (1901–1978) argued that people's personality is shaped by the large part by their surrounding culture and environment.

Ruth Benedict

Margaret Mead
Manus, Papua, New Guinea,1953-54

«Culture and Personality» School

1. All adult behavior is «culturally patterned»

2. The differences between people in various societies usually stem from cultural differences installed in childhood

3. Adult personality characteristics prevalent in a community have an influence on its culture, institutions, patterns of social change, and forms of psychopathology

Basic Personality Structure

Ralph Linton (1893-1953)

Abram Kardiner (1891-1981)

Basic Personality

- the concept of Basic Personality refers to a particular type of integration of the individuals in their cultural environment on the basis of the common socialization experience of this ethnic community members and their personal characteristics (R. Linton, 1939)

The Basic Personality Structure

Kardiner and Linton (1945) distinguished between

Primary institutions

- Produce the basic personality structure
- Ex.: things which are product of adaptation within and environment (*housing, family types, descent types, etc.*)

Secondary institutions

- The product of basic personality itself
- Include social organization technology, child training practices; manifested through religion and other social practices

An attempt to comprehend **the causal relationship** between culture and personality

A causal link

Primary Institutions ➡ *Basic personality* ➡ *Secondary institutions*

Including subsistence type, household form, and child rearing

Including shared anxieties, defences, and neuroses

Including religion, mythology, and folklore

Modal Personality

- **MP - is the most frequent type encountered in the sample**

Advantages of Modal Personality **approach over** Basic Personality **concept:**

- MP doesn't assume that most of the society members share the same personality structure
- The degree of sharing becomes an empirical problem
- Studies based on MP approach are of better quality

Modal Personality Theory

Cora DuBois hypothesized that the personality of an adult is shaped by the ways in which infants and young children are treated. How children are fed, when they are weaned, how much affection they receive, all would shape personality.

Cora DuBois spent 1.5 years doing fieldwork on **Alor Island** in Indonesia. She defined the Alorese **modal personality**—that is the most common personality type within the Alorese society.

The Alorese Modal Personality

The Alorese were defined as **hostile, suspicious, jealous and prone to temper tantrums**. There appeared to be little warmth among couples.

She observed that mothers returned to the fields to resume gardening soon after the birth of their children. Children were left with older women (grandmothers, aunts) and she believed they were given little affection or attention and they were often brutally punished or teased.

DuBois, C. (1944). *The people of Alor.* Minneapolis: Univ of Minnesota Press.

National Character

National character is a perceived predominant behavioral and psychological features and traits common in most people of a nation

The 4 National Characters:
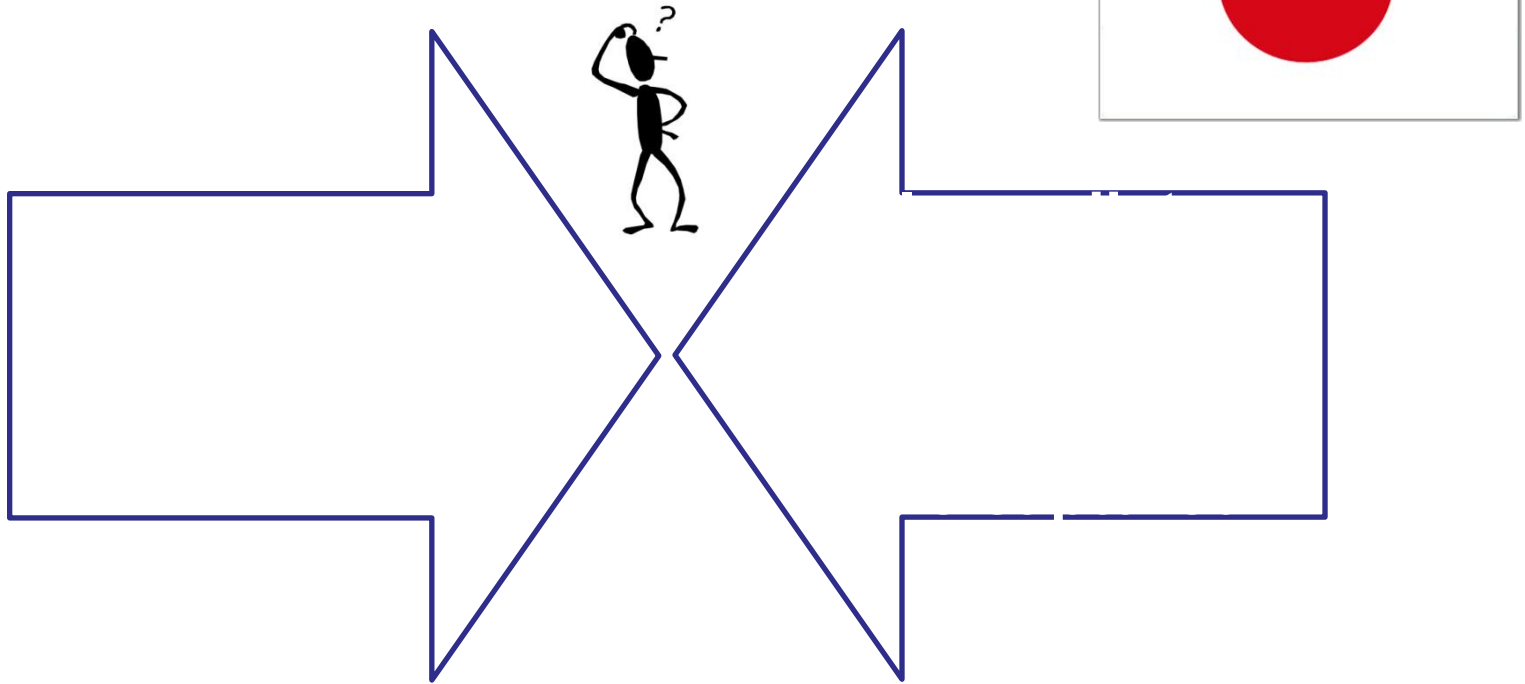
The Yellow Peril

Escape from Freedom

The Slavic Soul

The Lonely Crowd

The Yellow Peril

R.Benedict , World War II:

Devotion to ingroup -> Guilt in a childhood ->Face in an adulthood

-> Strong willing to repay both for benefits and insults

Escape from Freedom

E.Fromm

Why the German people submitted to Hitler's dictatorial rule?

Authoritorian Personality: extremely obedient to authorities, contemptuous to subordinates, feel anxious to democratic institutions

E.Erikson

Analysis of Hitler's personality and behavior

The Slavic Soul

G.Gorer, M. Mead «Swaddling hypothesis»

Necessity in strong external authority in
adulthood

National Character Drama (Kluckhohn, 1962)

Traditional Russian Personality

- «Oral - expressive»
- Warm, expansive
- Trusting, responsive
- Identification with primary group-personal loyalty
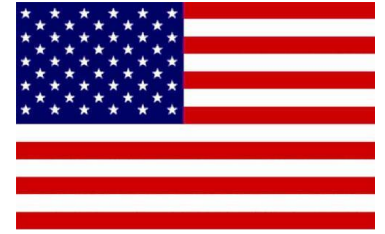- Emphasis on «dependent passivity»

Ideal Soviet Personality Type

- «Anal – compulsive»
- Formal, controlled,
- Distrustful, conspirational,
- Loyalty directed upward to superiors
- Emphasis on «instrumental activity»

The Lonely Crowd
(Reisman)

- **Gorer:**

Rejection of European ancests

Equality and resistance to authority

Constant necessity to prove masculinity

Reisman: conformity types

1)Traditional- directed

2) Inner-directed

3) Other-directed: decisions are based on what others value

Hsu: Self-reliance

Factors Affecting Stereotypical Perceptions Related to "National Character"

- **Specific events**. Wars between two countries or serious international incidents commonly generate the "aggressor" image attached to people of a particular nation many years after the end of open hostilities

- **A history of oppression.** Lasting colonialist policies and other examples of one country's domination or exploitation of another country frequently produce mutual antagonistic perceptions.

- **Wealth and poverty**. People of wealthy

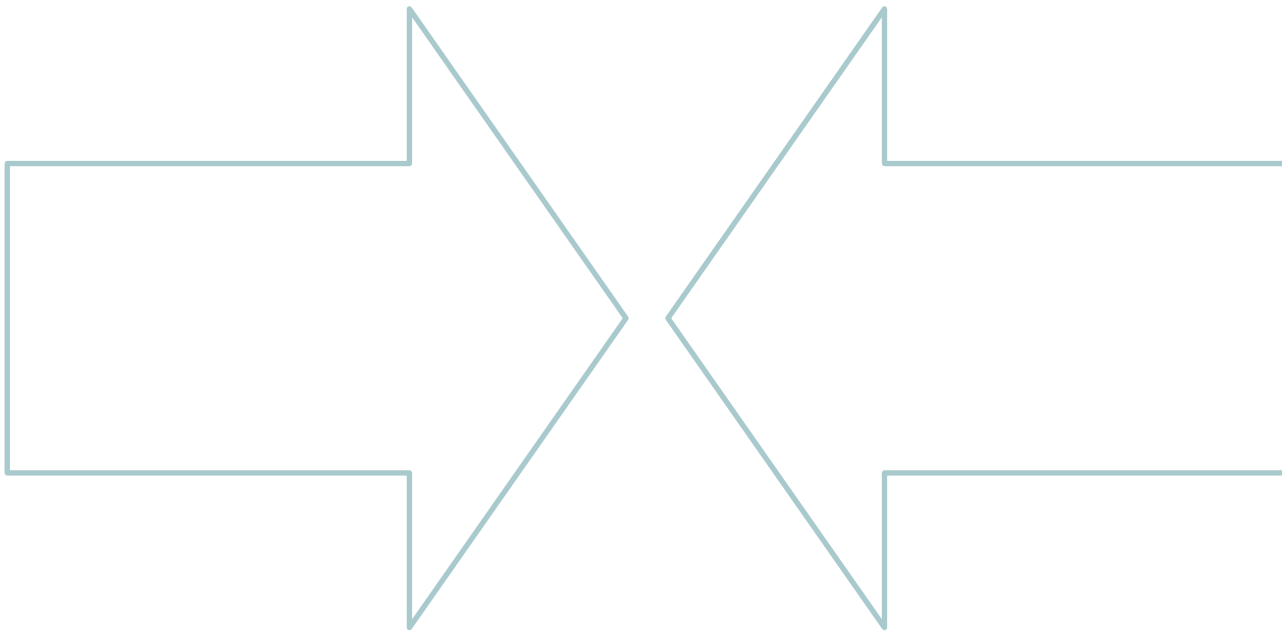# Problems with the Early Studies of Personality and Culture

The conceptual model of personality applied to nations varied significantly
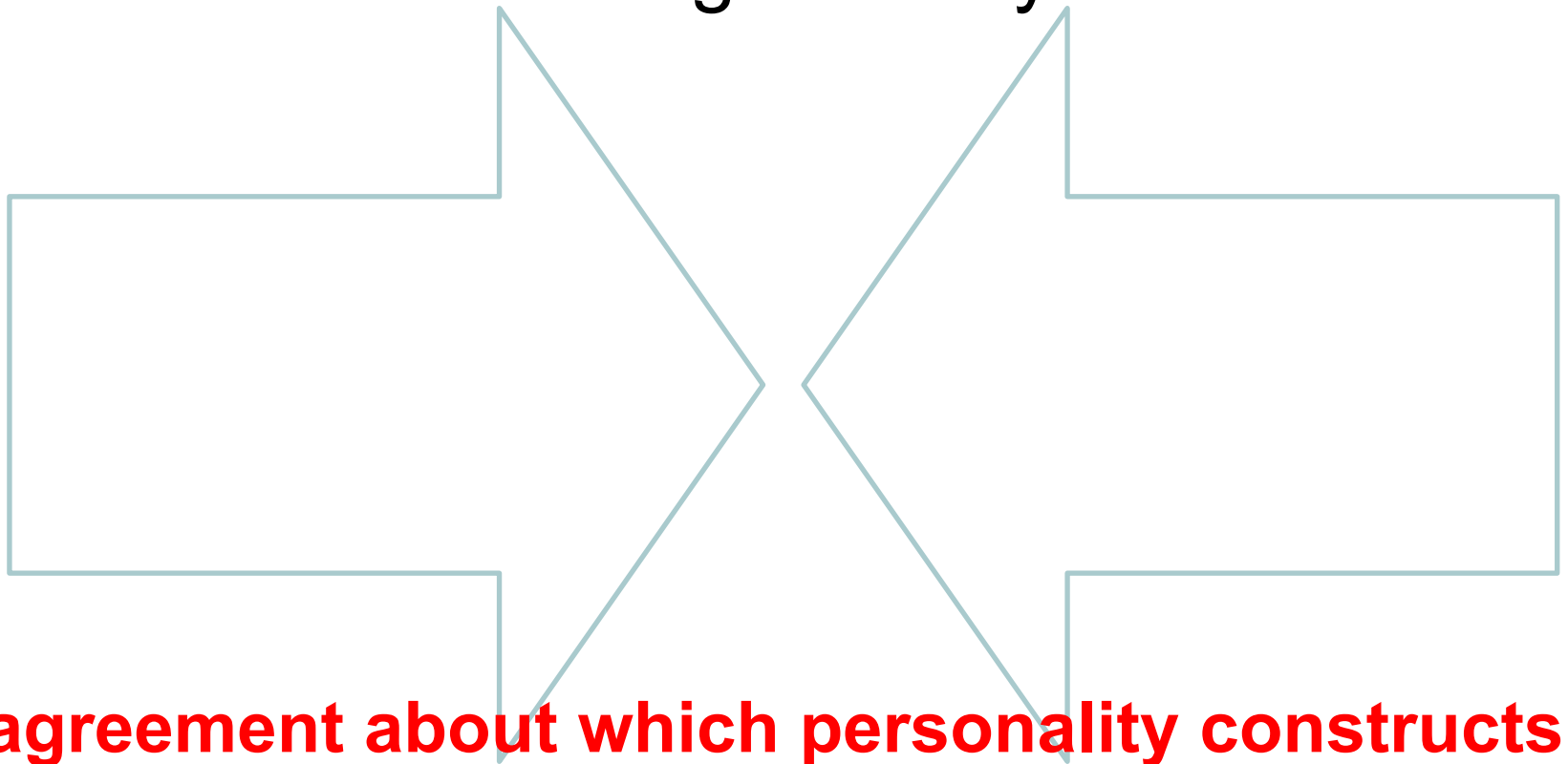
No agreement about which personality constructs to assess!!

Problems with the Early Studies of Personality and Culture

Very little concensus about how to operationalize national character

Problems with the Early Studies of Personality and Culture

All sorts of different methods were used to measure personality and national character:

- *Ethnographies*
- *Clinical interviews*
- *Autibiographical essays and surveys*
- *Analyses of popular movies and children's books*

The crisis in Culture and Personality

- *The continuity assumption* (the notion that early childhood experiences determine adult personality);

- *The uniformity assumption* (the notion that each society can be characterized in terms of a single personality type);

- *The causal assumption* (causal link between primary and secondary institutions in culture);

- *The projective assumption* (projective tests developed and standardized in one society
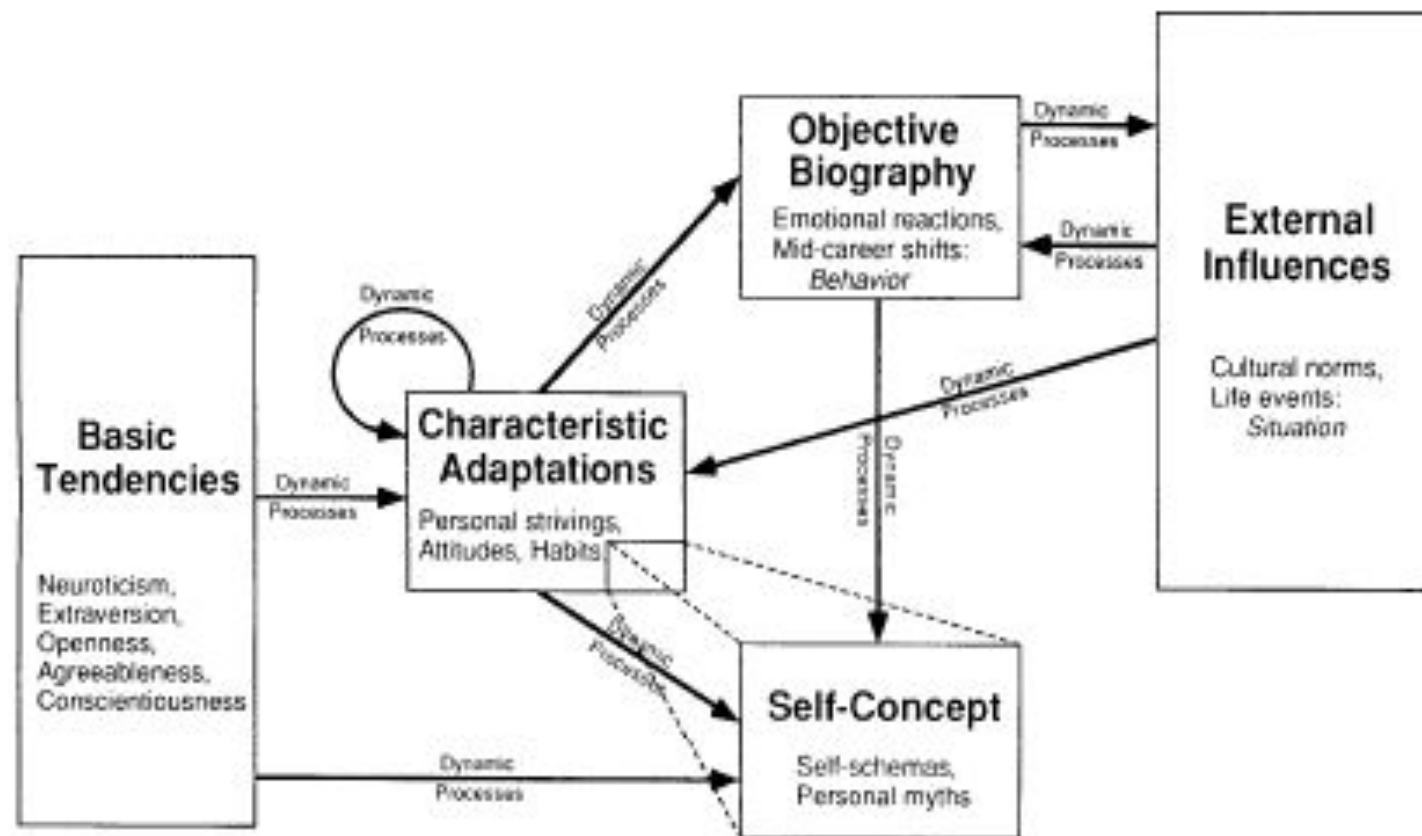
Five-Factor Theory (McCrae & Costa, 1996)

FIGURE 3.2. A five-factor theory of personality, with examples of specific content and arrows indicating the direction of major causal pathways mediated by dynamic processes. Adapted from Costa & McCrae (1994).

Basic Tendencies

Phenotypically, traits can be desribed **as enduring tendencies to think, feel, and behave in consistent ways**:

- *Extraverts talk a lot;*
- *Conscientious people are methodical and persistent over periods of time.*

Basic Tendencies, rooted in biology, are not directly accessible either to observation or to introspection

Characteristic Adaptations

Basic Tendencies interact with the environment in shaping those psychological structures that guide behavior:

- *habits, values, plans, skills, scripts, schemas, relationships*

These are **Characteristic Adaptations:**

Because they reflect the individual's underlying dispositions

Are designed to respond to the requirements of the environment

Five-Factor Model of Personality

Personality descriptors can be consistently grouped into a small number of factors.

Those factors represent the basic dimensions of personality

The Big Five

 «A relatively strong concensus has been reached that the pattern of covariation among pesonality traits can be best summarized by five orthogonal dimensions that are consistent across instruments, observers and cultures»

(McCrae & John, 1992)

Neuroticism (emotional instability, anxiety, hostility)

High
Anxious, easily depressed, irritable

Low
Calm, even-tempered, emotionally stable

Extraversion (positive emotions, sociability)

High
Lively, cheerful, sociable

Low
Sober, tactium

Openness to experience (curiosity, imaginativeness, sophistication)

High
Curious, original, artistic

Low
Conventional, down-to-earth

Agreeableness (sensitivity, gentleness, warmth)

High

Trust, compassion and modesty

Conscientiousness (persistence, goal-directness, dependency, self-discipline

High

Organization, punctuality, purposefulness

Five-Factor Model of Personality

1. FFM was discovered through analyses of English-language trait names

2. It's also possible to measure traits through the use of personality questionnaures

3. The most widely used measure of FFM is **Revised NEO Personality Inventory** (NEO-PI-R)

Main Evidences

1. Heritability: personality traits are substantially heritable;

2. Stability: personality traits are very stable across the life-span, slow changes in the mean level are systematic and identical across the world;

3. Universality: the five-factor structure is generalizable across languages and cultures;

4. Unchangeable: environment and life-events have a very limited effect on personality

Variance Explained by Genes

	Jang, Livesley & Vernon (1996)	Riemann, Angleitner & Strelau (1997)
Neuroticism	41%	52%
Extraversion	53%	56%
Openness	61%	53%
Agreeableness	41%	42%
Conscientiousness	44%	53%

* Most broad personality traits yield heritabilities in the range of 40 to 60% and even higher when corrected for the measurement method

Universality of Genetic Structure

Is the Genetic Structure of Human Personality Universal? A Cross-Cultural Twin Study From North America, Europe, and Asia

Shinji Yamagata and Atsunobu Suzuki
University of Tokyo

Juko Ando, Yutaka Ono, and Nobuhiko Kijima
Keio University

Kimio Yoshimura
National Cancer Center Research Institute

Fritz Ostendorf and Alois Angleitner
University of Bielefeld

Rainer Riemann
University of Jena

Frank M. Spinath
Saarland University

W. John Livesley and Kerry L. Jang
University of British Columbia

This study examined whether universality of the 5-factor model (FFM) of personality operationalized by the Revised NEO Personality Inventory is due to genetic influences that are invariant across diverse nations. Factor analyses were conducted on matrices of phenotypic, genetic, and environmental correlations estimated in a sample of 1,209 monozygotic and 701 dizygotic twin pairs from Canada, Germany, and Japan. Five genetic and environmental factors were extracted for each sample. High congruence coefficients were observed when phenotypic, genetic, and environmental factors were compared in each sample as well as when each factor was compared across samples. These results suggest that the FFM has a solid biological basis and may represent a common heritage of the human species.

Generalizability of Personality Structure

For generalizibility of the dimensional structure of personality across languages and cultures a large numbers of cultures must be studied

Untill recently only few worldwide personality datasets have been available

NEO-PI-R

2001 – McCrae (2001) published self-report data for 26 countries

2002 – the database was soon expanded to **36 cultures** covering five major language families: Indo-European, Uralic, Altaic, Dravidian, and Sino-Tibetian (McCrae, 2002).

2005 – College students from **50 cultures** identified an adult or college-age man or woman whom they knew well and rated the 11,985 targets with the third-person version of NEO-PI-R (McCrae, Terracciano et al., 2005).

Tests of Universality

- In 1997, McCrae and Costa reported data from six cultures—Portugal, Germany, Israel, China, Japan, and South Korea—that supported the universality of the FFM structure. Subsequent studies in Iceland, Estonia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Turkey, India, Russia, Zimbabwe, and many other cultures have continued to support this hypothesis (see McCrae & Allik, 2002).

- Although the case for additional, indigenous factors is still made by some writers (e.g., Cheung & Leung, 1998), it seems likely that the **FFM itself can be found in any culture**.

Tests of Universality

Universal Features of Personality Traits From the Observer's Perspective: Data From 50 Cultures

Robert R. McCrae and Antonio Terracciano
National Institute on Aging, National Institutes of Health,
Department of Health and Human Services

78 Members of the Personality Profiles
of Cultures Project

To test hypotheses about the universality of personality traits, college students in 50 cultures identified an adult or college-aged man or woman whom they knew well and rated the 11,985 targets using the 3rd-person version of the Revised NEO Personality Inventory. Factor analyses within cultures showed that the normative American self-report structure was clearly replicated in most cultures and was recognizable in all. Sex differences replicated earlier self-report results, with the most pronounced differences in Western cultures. Cross-sectional age differences for 3 factors followed the pattern identified in self-reports, with moderate rates of change during college age and slower changes after age 40. With a few exceptions, these data support the hypothesis that features of personality traits are common to all human groups.

McCrae, R.R. et al., (2005). Universal features of personality traits from the observer's perspective: Data from 50 cultures. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 88, 547-561.

Osseies vs. Wessies

Angleitner and Ostendorf (2000): large Easten and Western German samples.

They found identical structures!!

Thus, the a half-century long experiment to create a «new man» appears to be a failure.

Despite of the popular lore about «ossies» who are not willing to adapt to the Western standards, their personality profile is similar to one of «wessies»

Multidimensional Scaling Plot of 36 Cultures
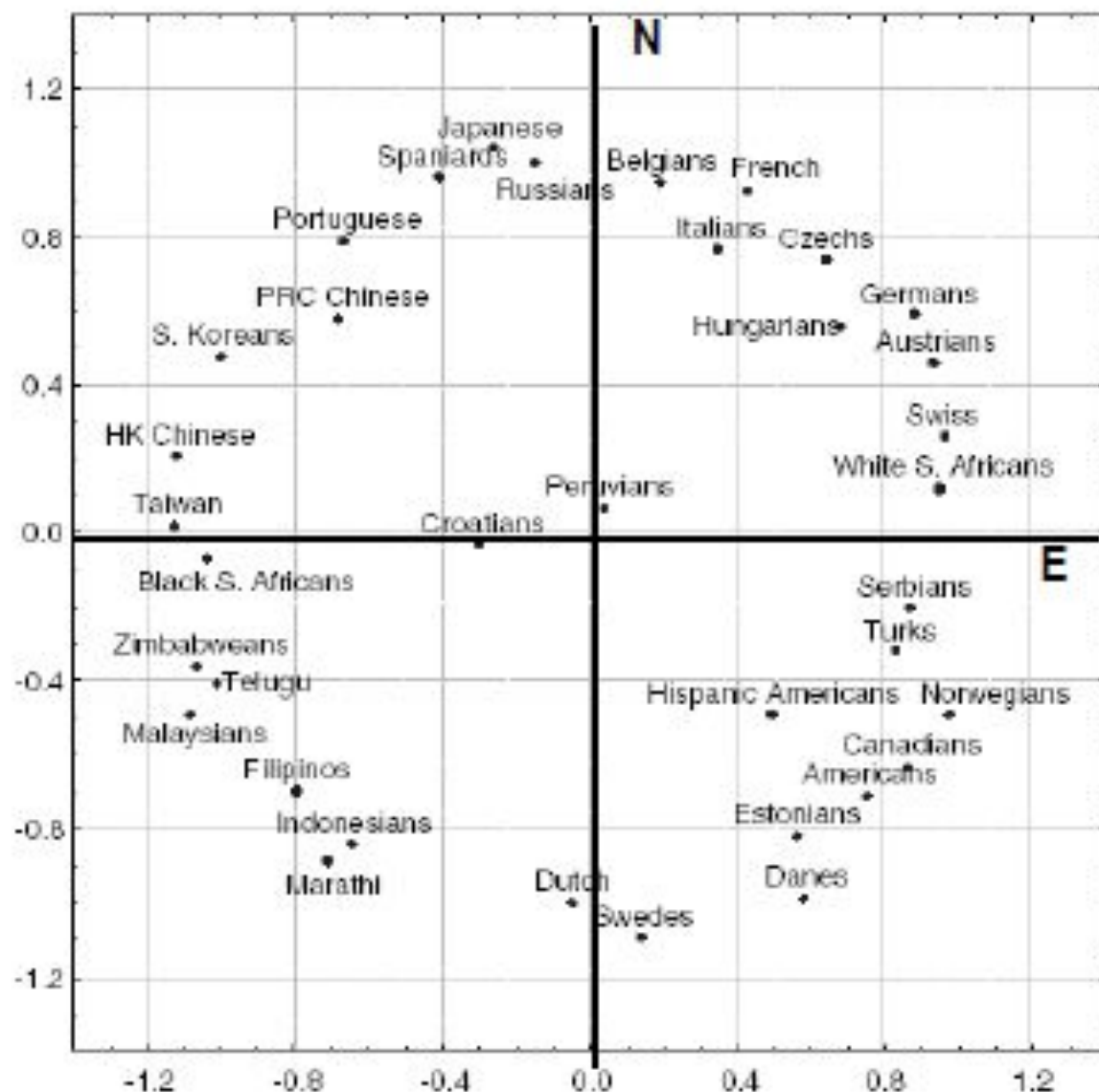
Main Results

- Distribution of self-reported personality traits is organized geographically

- Multidimensional scaling showed a clear contrast of **European and American** cultures with **Asian and African** cultures. The former were higher in extraversion and openness to experience and lower in agreeableness.

- Distance from the equator and mean temperature **were not** meaningfully related to personality factors.

- Observed differences between cultures may be the result of differences in gene pools or in features of culture; acculturation studies and the analyses of other natural experiments are needed to understand the origins of geographical differences in personality traits.

The Russian Character and Personality Survey

Principal investigators: René Mõttus, Anu Realo, Helle Pullmann, Anastasia Trifonova, Jüri Allik; **Participants**: 10,862 students from 40 Russian universities and colleges locating in 33 different geographically different regions

Personality Traits of Russians from the Observer's Perspective

JÜRI ALLIK[1]*, ANU REALO[1], RENÉ MÕTTUS[1], HELLE PULLMANN[1],
ANASTASIA TRIFONOVA[1], ROBERT R. McCRAE[2] and
56 MEMBERS OF THE RUSSIAN CHARACTER AND PERSONALITY SURVEY[†]

[1]*Department of Psychology, University of Tartu and The Estonian Centre of Behavioural and Health Sciences, Estonia*
[2]*Gerontology Research Center, National Institute on Aging, National Institutes of Health, USA*

The Mean Personality Profile of Russians …
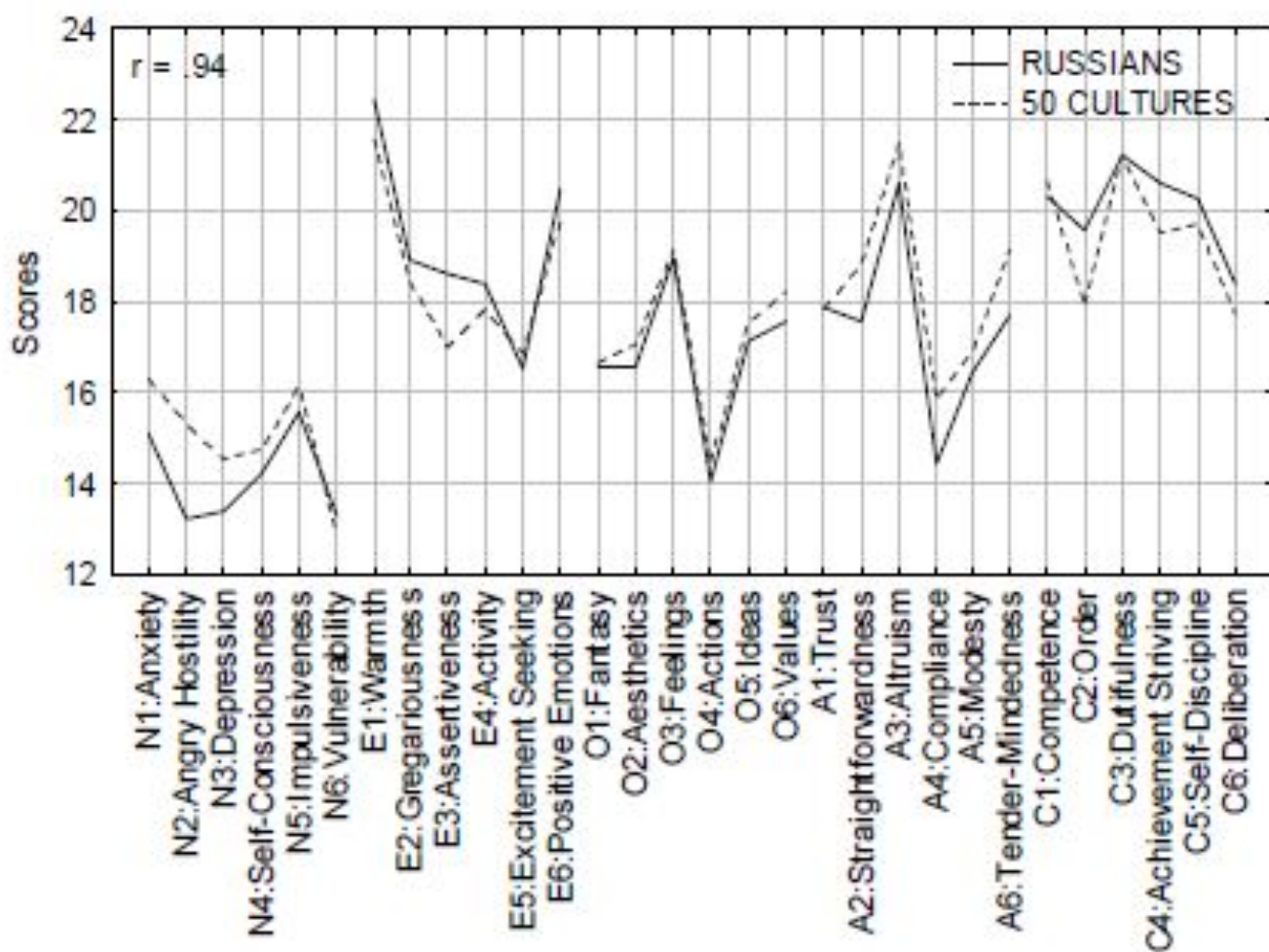
… it is very similar to the mean profile derived from 50 cultures!

To What Group of Countries Russia Belongs According to the National Character?

- **4.6%** believed that the Russian national character is similar to Western countries like United States or Great Britain

- **3.0%** believed that it is similar to Eastern countries like China or Japan

- **8.0%** believed that it is a mixture of Western and Eastern countries

- **71.2%** answered that Russians have a unique national character not comparable to anything else.

Geography of Russian Personality

Personality traits among ethnic Russians function much like traits in the rest of the world.

Sex differences replicated the known pattern in all samples, demonstrating that women scored higher than men on most of the neuroticism, openness, agreeableness and conscientiousness factos scales.

Self in Social Context

Theory of Self by KAĞITÇIBAŞI

Related Self

- In societies with a «family model of emotional and material interdependence»
- Traditional agricultural economy
- Collectivistic life style
- Members of family rely on each other

Separated Self

- Individualistic western urban environments
- Family independence: members can live separately

Autonomous-Related Self

- Urban areas of collectivistic societies
- Material independence+ Emotional interdependence

Distinction between autonomous self and relational self summarizes a broad conglomerate of East-West differences in social behavior, cognition, emotion, motivation:

- In Euro-American context the person is a unique configuration of internal attributes and behaves accordingly

- In East Asian societies personality is experinced and understood as behavior that is characterstic of the person in relationship with others

Sex Differences in Personality

Gender Differences in Personality Traits Across Cultures: Robust and Surprising Findings

Paul T. Costa Jr., Antonio Terracciano, and Robert R. McCrae
National Institute on Aging, National Institutes of Health

Secondary analyses of Revised NEO Personality Inventory data from 26 cultures ($N = 23,031$) suggest that gender differences are small relative to individual variation within genders; differences are replicated across cultures for both college-age and adult samples, and differences are broadly consistent with gender stereotypes: Women reported themselves to be higher in Neuroticism, Agreeableness, Warmth, and Openness to Feelings, whereas men were higher in Assertiveness and Openness to Ideas. Contrary to predictions from evolutionary theory, the magnitude of gender differences varied across cultures. Contrary to predictions from the social role model, gender differences were most pronounced in European and American cultures in which traditional sex roles are minimized. Possible explanations for this surprising finding are discussed, including the attribution of masculine and feminine behaviors to roles rather than traits in traditional cultures.

Sex differences in personality traits are largest in prosperous, healthy and egalitarian cultures where women have more equal opportunities with men

Social Role Explanation

- Social-role psychologists believe that both sexes' personalities have been shaped by traditional social roles. Yet, in societies where men and women occupy more similar social roles disparities in their personality traits increase!

female roles

male roles

Evolutionary Explanation

The ecological or sexual selections have favored one set of personality traits for men and another slightly different set of traits for women. Evolutionary psychologists contend that these are innate traits inherited from ancient hunters and gatherers.

As the size of the gender gap in personality varies among cultures, the existence of innate sex differences alone cannot explain the widening gap between personalities of men and women with the development of society

The Effect of Environmental Stress

- The biggest changes recorded by the researchers involve the personalities of men, not women. Men in traditional agricultural societies and poorer countries seem more cautious and anxious, less assertive and less competitive than men in the most progressive and rich countries of Europe and North America.

- Could such findings be due to the hardships of life in poorer countries?

Conclusions

Traits of the **Five-Factor Model** show very similar patterns of structure, development, reliability, and validity across a wide range of cultures.

Culture has a limited impact on personality traits!

The mean level differences in personality traits across cultures are very small in their magnitude! Typically, the means of cultures had standard deviation equal to about **one-third** of the magnitude of individual differences within culture (McCrae et al. , 2005).

Sex differences in personality traits are largest in prosperous, healthy and egalitarian cultures where women have more equal opportunities with men

Self-Conceptions

- Rosenberg (1979):

«Self-concept is the totality of the individual's thoughts and feelings having reference to her/himself as an object»

- Johnson (1985):

Self-Concept

I
Self-as-subject

Me
Self-as-object
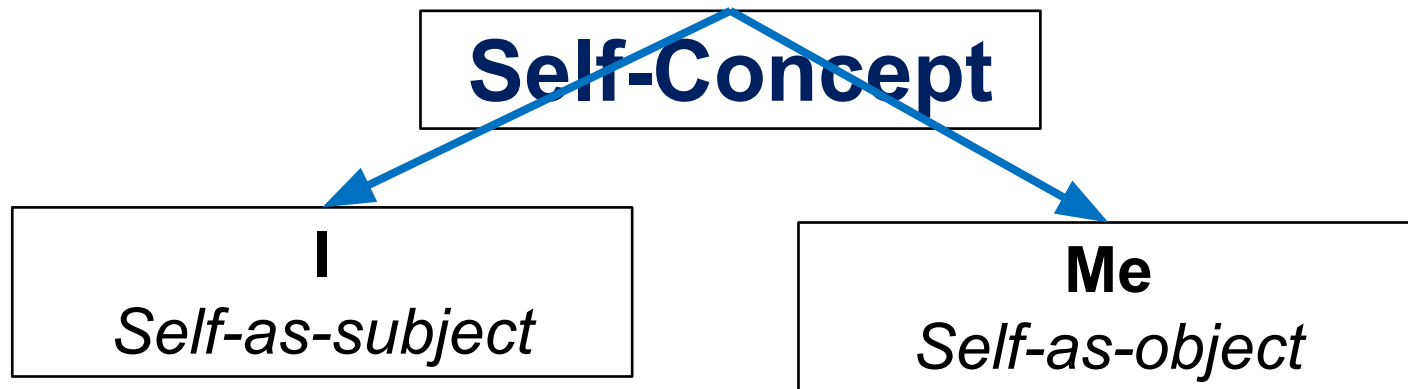
Face

- Brown & Levinson (1978):

«Face is the **public self-image** *that every member of a society wants to claim for him/herself»*

Face is a projected image of one's self in a relational situation.

A different degree of selfhood is projected into the public image known as 'face'

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06-10-2013

MY PROGRESS TOWARDS BEING A BETTER PERSON IS SLOW, BUT THIS VISUAL AID SEEMS TO BE HELPING WITH MY PUBLIC IMAGE

Face in Individualistic **vs.** Collectivistic **cultures**

Individualistic

- Consistency between private and public self-image is very important
- Face is an intrapsychic phenomena
- Self is ideally free
- Facework emphasizes perceiveing one's own autonomy

Collectivistic

- The Self is a situationally and relationally based concept
- Self is codified through the active negotiation of facework
- Self is never free

Components of Face

1. Negative Face ⟷ **2. Positive Face**

The basic claim to territories, personal reserves, rights

Negative facework is a negotiation process concerning the degree of threat or respect each gives to the other's sense of freedom and autonomy

The basic claim over the projected self-image to be appreciated and to be approved by others

Positive facework entails the degree of threat or respect each gives to the other's need for inclusion and approval

Both concepts are universals across cultures
But
Cultural values make people pursue one set of facework more than the other

Positive-Face
(Association)

Self Positive-Face
(SPF)

Other Positive-Face
(OPF)

Self-Face Concern

Other-Face Concern

Self Negative-Face
(SNF)

r Negative-Face
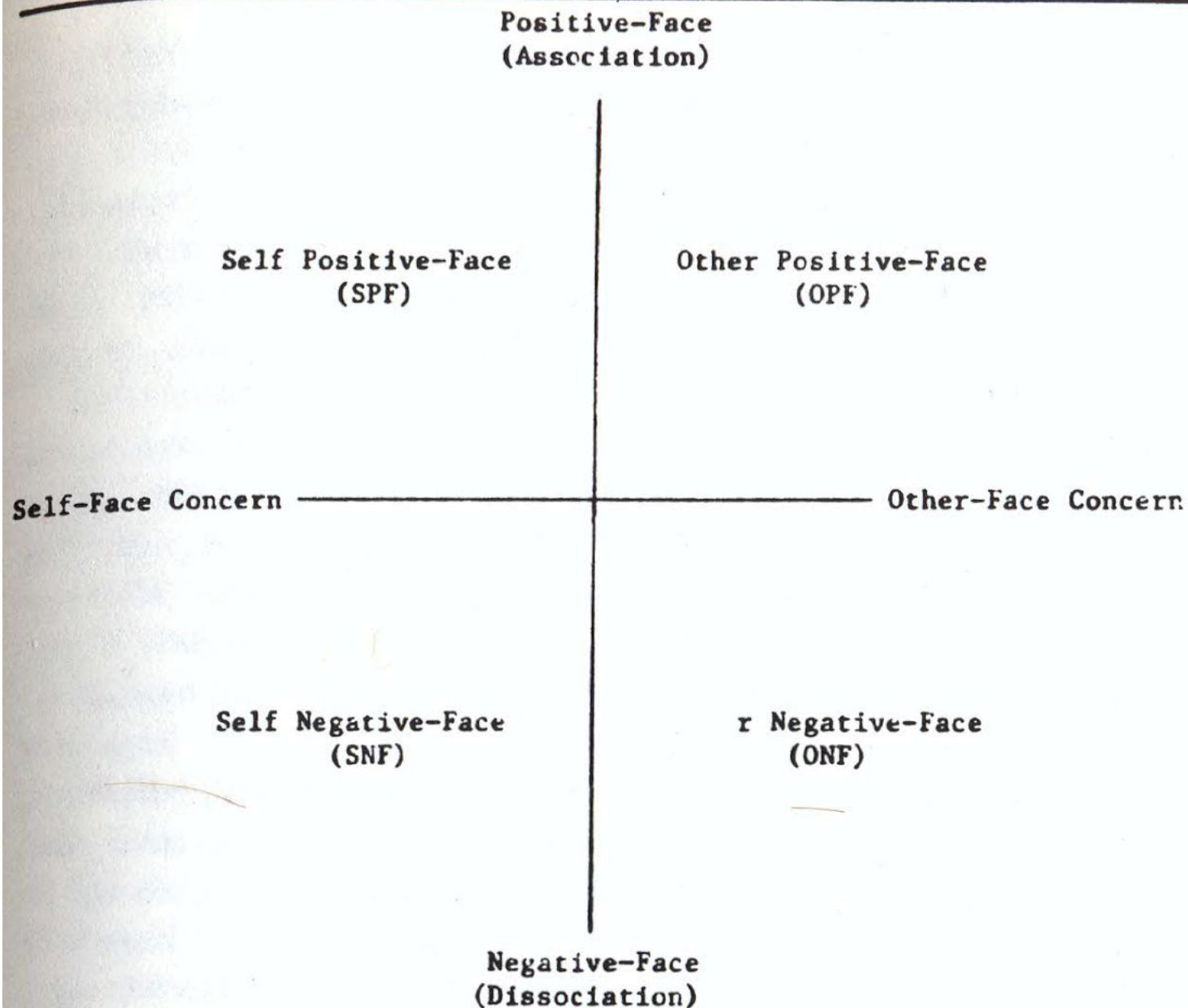(ONF)

Negative-Face
(Dissociation)

Figure 4.1: Two-Dimensional Grid of Facework Maintenance. From Ting-Toomey (1988).

Social Identity

Tajfel (1978):

«Social Identity is that part of an individual's self-concept that derives from his/her knowledge of his/her membership in a social group together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership»

Emergence of Social Identity

1. Social Identity begins from interactions with others

2. Comparison of in- and outgroup makes ingroups positively distinctive

3. As a result positive social identity emerges

4. Social identity is more

   Important in collectivistic cultures

Personality traits

- **Guilford (1959):**

«any distinguashable enduring way in which one individual differs from others»

- Traits relate to interpersonal communication
- And communication-based perceptions

Implicit personality theory

- Focus on how people:

1. select information about others,

2. how they generate it,

3. and how it is organized.

- **Culture** influence these processes:

Individualistic: *values, beliefs, attitudes*

Collectivistic: *social status, background*

Gathering Information

Tajfel: Social stereotypes (shared by large number of people) influence information processing.

Depend on:

1) The degree of familiarity with the group
2) The amount and quality of contact

Generalizations about stereotypes (Hewstone & Giles):

1) Illusory correlation between psychological attributes and group membership
2) Favorable information about ingroup/ unfavorable about outgroup
3) Need to confirm expectancies about others
4) Self-fulfilling prophecies

Self-Monitoring

- Snyder: *«Self-monitoring is a self-observation and self-control guided by situational cues to social appropriateness»*

- Self-monitoring person is the one who is sensitive to self-presentation of others and uses those cues as a guidelines for monitoring his/her own self-presentation

Self-Monitoring

- Relates to uncertaity reduction strategies.

4 strategies	Formal situation	Informal situation
Low self-monitors	Informative	
High self-monitors		Informative

Self-Monitring and Culture

Individualistic

- Focus on personality

- No need to know context to predict behavior of others

Collectivistic

- Focus on context

- Need to consider status and relationships

Self-Consciousness

- A tendency to direct attention inward or outward

3 dimensions

1. Public self-consciousness (general awareness with the self as a social object)

2. Private self-consciousness (introspection about the self)

3. Social anxiety (discomfort in the presence of others)

Communication Apprehension

- Personality type orientation toward a given mode of communication across a wide variety of contents

- Relates negatively to *self-esteem, self-disclosure, self-monitoring, argumentativeness, assertiveness, responsiveness, attentiveness*

- Relates positively to *loneliness, social*

Locus of Control (Rotter)

Internal

Behavior is viewed as a function of the individual's own actions

- Individualistic

- Low uncertainty avoidance

- High masculinity

External

Behavior is not viewed as a function of individual's own actions

- Collectivistic

- High uncertainty avoidance

- Low masculinity
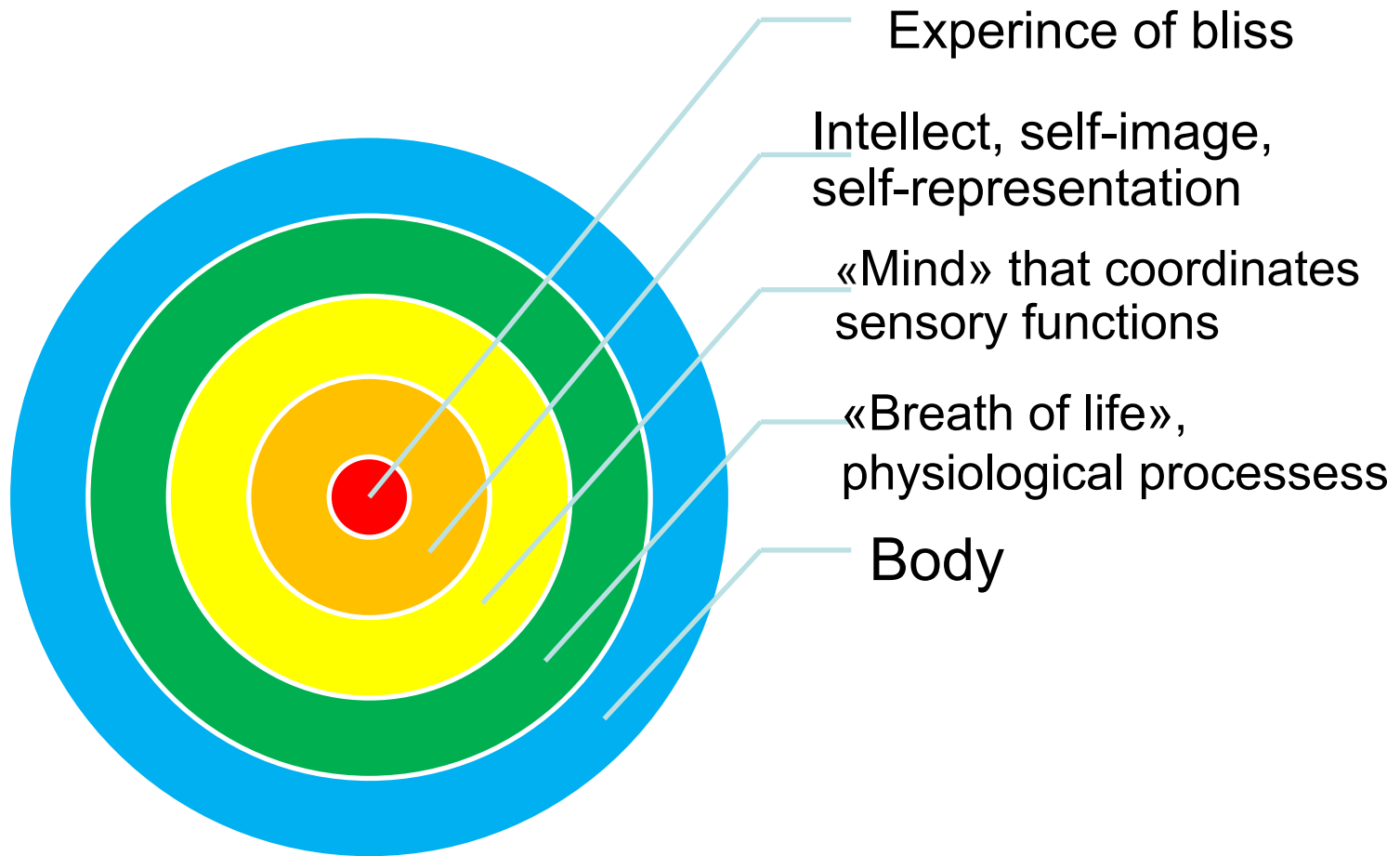
Some Non-Western Concepts
African personality

Saw (1977, 1978)

1 layer: the body (corporal envelope of the person)

2 layer: principle of vitality (in man and animals)

3 layer: another principle of vitality (only in humans – psychological existence)

4 layer: spiritual principle, which never perishes. It can leave body during sleep and trance states. It doesn't give life to body, it has its own existence, represents a sphere of ancestors in the person.

Indian conceptions

Concept of **JIVA** is similar to personality

Experince of bliss

Intellect, self-image,
self-representation

«Mind» that coordinates
sensory functions

«Breath of life»,
physiological processess

Body

Amae in Japan

Doi (1973)

Amae is a form of passive love or dependence that finds its origin in the relationship of the infant with its mother

Yamaguchi Ariizumi (2006)

Amae is presumed acceptance of one's inappropriate behavior or request