Cross-Cultural (Comparative) Research

4 Types of Cross Cultural Studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Hypothesis Testing</th>
<th>No Hypothesis Testing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contextual/ Cultural Factors</strong></td>
<td>Contextual theory studies Test predictions about particular relationship between cultural variables and psychological outcome</td>
<td>Ecological Linkage Studies Meaning and cause of cultural differences with aid of contextual factors Lack of a priori hypotheses factors exploratory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No Contextual/ Cultural Factors</strong></td>
<td>Generalizability studies Little or no reference to local cultural elements</td>
<td>Psychological Difference Studies Differences in psychometric properties across cultures Post-hoc rather than contextual or theoretical explanations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Contextual theory studies

- Cultures selected in theory-guided fashion
  - Systematic sampling
- Berry (1967)
  - Agricultural vs. hunting societies
  - Agricultural – encourages conformity so… Field dependence (background)
  - Hunting – autonomous – less field dependence

Generalizability studies

- **Schwartz**
  - Universality of human value structure across many countries
  - Random sampling
Ecological Linkage Studies

- Bond (1991)
  - Relationship between health indices and values endorsed

Quantitative:
- Which variables affect voter turnout?
- Hypothesis 1: individual characteristics of people: wealth and education
- Hypothesis 2: media campaign “get out and vote”
- Hypothesis 3: institutional characteristics: +++ how easy it is to vote (compulsory, weekend) issue at hand
  - proportional representative vs. winner-take-all

Qualitative
- Comparing cases to learn something new
- Example (M.Lemont, US vs. France):
  - Which groups in society tend to be more exclusionary (“racist”)?
  - Which cultural resources are used to fight racism?

A Historical-Comparative Example

Mill’s Method of Agreement: Revolutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>CASES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsuccessful War</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiscal Crisis of the State</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior Economic Growth</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well-organized</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revolutionary Party</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Psychological Difference Studies

- Guida and Ludlow (1989)
  - Compared test anxiety in American and Chilean children and found Chilean children reported higher level of test anxiety (at least for upper and middle class children)

Comparative Research
Types of Methods

- Case-study comparative research
  - Compares small number of particular societies or units
- Cultural-context research
  - Use cases that represent types of societies or units
- Cross-national research
  - Measure variables across many nations without naming them
  - Convert unique features into variables
- Transnational research
  - Uses multination unite (e.g., third World)
  - Focuses on relations among bloc of nations

Two Broad Approaches to Cross-cultural Research

- Structure oriented
  - Relationships among variables
  - Id similarities and differences in those relationships across cultures
  - Relationship between education and tolerance only for tolerant nations
- Level oriented
  - Focus on differences in magnitude of variables across cultures
  - More tolerance in more western cultures?

What is culture?
Culture vs. Nation

Galton’s Problem
- When we compare units, units must be distinct and separate
  - If units are subparts of a larger unit – spurious relationships

Match samples on demographic variables
- Or remove as covariate (father education factor in delinquent behavior)
- Education may explain relationship between tolerance and Western countries
- Earley (1989)
  - Individualism/collectivism accounted for differences in social loafing between American and Chinese samples

Take culturally diverse perspective in design and conceptualization of study
- Schwartz – values – allowed input from researchers in other countries

Design study as culturally distant as possible from existing studies
- See if results converge with existing results
- If convergence, then cultural origin is unlikely to have biased prior studies
- E.g., test personality structure in multiple cultural samples – see if same structure emerges:
  - 5 factor model of personality in Chinese sample – missing openness but included interpersonal relatedness
Cultural Manipulation Approach

- Manipulate cultural elements to see if manipulation shows intended effects
  - Chinese – greater external attribution
  - Hong-Kong Americans primed with American icons (Superman) versus Chinese icons
  - Participants made more external attributions in Chinese icon condition
  - American culture (individualism) may cause internal attribution

Questionnaires and multiple languages

- 1. “Ask the same question” approach
  - Safari research
    - Imposing measures developed in one cultural-language context onto another culture
    - Instead, use multicultural research team
  - 2. Design new question approach

Cross-Cultural Survey Translation

- Translation and utility
  - Language 1 Questions
  - Language 1 and 2
  - Interpreters Language 2
- Single translation
  - Language 1 Questions
  - Translator
  - Language 2 Questions
  - Interview Language 2

“Enjoy life in full trains”
Cross-Cultural Survey Translation

Equivalence
- Lexicon equivalence
- Contextual equivalence
  - Correct application of terms in different historical or social context e.g., college over time
- Conceptual equivalence
  - Same psychometric properties in scales in different cultures
  - Same relationships with other variables
  - Income in noncash societies
- Measurement equivalence
  - Using same measures of the same concept in different settings (e.g., mirror test vs. use of personal pronouns)
- Scalar equivalence
  - Height and weight, ratio data, temperature

Challenges in Cross-National Survey Research
- Cultural sensitivity
- Can’t discuss extra-marital sex in all cultures
- If punishment is taboo, what does it mean to say “no punishment?”
- Communication style
- Situational sensitivity
- Courtesy bias
- Access
Comparative Research
Data in Cross-Culture Research

- Comparative field research
- Existing sources of qualitative data
  - Human Relations Area Files (HRAF)
  - Field research reports (George Murdock)
  - Useful for topics such as relationships between sexual assault and patriarchy