

# Preferences Don't Have to Be Personal: Expanding Attitude Theorizing With a Cross-Cultural Perspective

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Attitudes, theorized as behavioral guides, have long been a central focus of research in the social sciences. However, this theorizing reflects primarily Western philosophical views and empirical findings emphasizing the centrality of personal preferences. As a result, the prevalent psychological model of attitudes is a *person-centric* one. We suggest that incorporating research insights from non-Western sociocultural contexts can significantly enhance attitude theorizing. To this end, we propose an additional model—a *normative-contextual* model of attitudes. The currently dominant person-centric model emphasizes the centrality of personal preferences, their stability and internal consistency, and their possible interaction with externally imposed norms. In contrast, the normative-contextual model emphasizes that attitudes are always context-contingent and incorporate the views of others and the norms of the situation. In this model, adjustment to norms does not involve an effortful struggle between the authentic self and exogenous forces. Rather, it is the ongoing and reassuring integration of others' views into one's attitudes. According to the normative-contextual model, likely to be a good fit in contexts that foster interdependence and holistic thinking, attitudes need not be personal or necessarily stable and internally consistent and are only functional to the extent that they help one to adjust automatically to different contexts. The fundamental shift in focus offered by the normative-contextual model generates novel hypotheses and highlights new measurement criteria for studying attitudes in non-Western sociocultural contexts. We discuss these theoretical and measurement implications as well as practical implications for health and well-being, habits and behavior change, and global marketing.

*Keywords:* attitude, culture, East-West, collectivism-individualism, independence-interdependence

Consider the following scenarios:

In Japan, an American woman is shopping for prints in a public market. After carefully comparing and selecting just the right ones, she goes to pay the cashier. The cashier smiles approvingly and says, "All the American women like these ones." Although the cashier intends her remark to be a compliment, the customer is crestfallen.

A young girl in the United States is shopping with her mother for clothes to wear to an important family event. The mother asks her repeatedly which styles and colors she prefers. Meanwhile, on the other side of the world in China, another young girl and her mother are involved in a similar decision process. Yet this mother does not consult her daughter about preferred styles or colors. Instead, she asks the clerk what the current trend is and what most other people are buying.

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A group of Korean executives are taking a certification course in brand management at a U.S. business college. The professor describes the importance of extolling the uniqueness of a brand and its users when advertising to American consumers. One older executive seems to resist this advice and asks, "Why wouldn't consumers need to know that this is the brand most people choose?!"

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The Coca Cola company is considering introducing a line of popcorn under its flagship brand name. Their global market research reveals, however, that brand acceptance of "Coke popcorn" is strikingly different across world regions. Although attitudes toward this brand extension are quite positive in Asia, in Western countries they are negative to the point of disgust. Apparently, Western respondents assume that any popcorn with the "Coke" name will be cola flavored and therefore unappetizing.

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An *attitude*, commonly defined as an individual's favorable or unfavorable predisposition toward a target, is one of psy-

chology's most important constructs (see Eagly & Chaiken, 1995; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; McGuire, 1969; Petty, Ostrom, & Brock, 1981). Indeed, in 1935 Gordon Allport wrote that "attitude is probably the most distinctive and indispensable concept in contemporary social psychology" (Allport, 1935, p. 798), and today it remains at the core of behavioral research (Zanna, 2012). Attitudes are functional for guiding behavior, for coping with uncertainty, and for understanding and predicting behavior and decisions. As conceptualized in the West by Western theorists, attitudes are viewed as stable and consistent properties of individuals, and the stronger the attitudes and the greater the certainty with which they are held, the better they predict behavior (Gross, Holtz, & Miller, 1995; Petty & Krosnick, 1995). Moreover, attitudes are conceptualized as self or identity expressive (Katz, 1960; Smith, Bruner, & White, 1956).

The growing cross-cultural literature reveals, however, that although attitudes everywhere serve to guide behavior, their other functions, formation, and characteristics may be strikingly different in cultural contexts where personal preferences are not construed as the main drivers of individuals' actions. Reflecting these findings, we offer an additional model designed to expand current attitude theorizing by complementing the existing attitude model. The goal is to account for findings from non-Western sociocultural contexts and thus to enhance the validity of attitude theorizing. In so doing, our proposed model identifies new research directions and domains, and guides the development of a broader set of measurement tools.

The opening scenarios highlight important distinctions between attitudes in Western and non-Western contexts.<sup>1</sup> The attitudes of the American shopper in the first scenario serve to express her unique personal preferences. The response of the well-meaning Japanese cashier serves to affirm the shopper's choice with the assurance that her choice is normative and therefore good. This clash in the function of attitudes confounds both parties in the transaction. The diverging approaches of the two mother-daughter pairs of the second scenario also reflect this difference. The American mother models the importance of developing and expressing one's own defining personal preferences to guides one's choices. The Chinese mother, in contrast, models the importance of developing attitudes that take into account the social consensus. In the third scenario, the North American professor emphasizes that the best way to position a brand is to stress how it can help the consumer to be unique and distinctive. The Korean executive has difficulty reconciling this advice with his own branding experiences, which suggest instead the effectiveness of highlighting how a brand allows the consumer to fit in with what others are doing. In the final scenario, the contrasting assumptions of Western and non-Western consumers about a new product bearing the Coke brand name reveal culturally grounded differences in default thinking styles, which have powerful implications for responses to new attitude objects. Whereas the Western consumers used formal logic to infer that the popcorn will share a key feature (flavor) associated with its category (Coke products), the non-Western consumers looked at objects more relationally (e.g., Coke beverages and popcorn can be consumed together at the movies).

## The Cultural Boundaries of Current Attitude Theorizing

The attitude construct evolved over the twentieth century. Various definitions of attitudes were proposed over that time (see Table 1 for a representative collection of attitude definitions). Already in the 19th century, Darwin (1872) suggested that an attitude was "the physical expression of an emotion" (see Petty et al., 1981, p. 7). Allport (1935) defined attitudes as "a mental and neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive and dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related" (p. 810). Krech and Crutchfield (1948) wrote, "an attitude can be defined as an enduring organization of motivational, emotional, perceptual, and cognitive processes with respect to some aspect of the individual's world" (p. 152). Half a century later, Eagly and Chaiken (1993) defined an attitude as "a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favor or disfavor" (p. 1). These definitions have in common the view that an attitude represents a readiness to act—a feature we propose as characteristic of attitudes in all cultural contexts.

At the same time, many aspects of these classic definitions of attitude reflect primarily Western philosophical commitments (Petty et al., 1981; Zanna & Rempel, 2007) and, as such, are unlikely to characterize attitudes in most cultural contexts outside the middle class West. For instance, in a number of important research traditions, attitudes are linked to habits and to personality traits, which implies stability of attitudes (e.g., Ajzen, 1988; Hovland, 1951; Katz & Allport, 1931; Smith et al., 1956). Eagly (1992), in her comprehensive review of the attitude literature, pointed out that, "like other hypothetical constructs that psychologists invoke, attitude is defined as a tendency or state *internal to the person*" (p. 694, italics added). This view is based on earlier definitions of attitudes as ". . . an *integral part* of personality" (Smith et al., 1956, p. 1, italics added). As we describe, these premises, and indeed most attitude theorizing, imply a strong link between *personal preferences* and *attitudes*, to the extent that these two constructs are considered as interchangeable. This theoretical view is rooted in pervasive sociocultural assumptions about the centrality and desirability of personal preferences. Yet a growing volume of research reveals that in many cultural contexts, personal

<sup>1</sup> Westerners and non-Westerners are distinguished here on a national or geo-regional basis. In addition, when we refer to non-Western contexts, we also include situations or settings in Western contexts that commonly activate an interdependent frame of mind—one in which the predominant focus is on others and their expectations or on relationships between self and others and that foster a holistic style of thinking. Such contexts may include those in the West that are outside of the majority mainstream, middle class (e.g., predominantly working class settings, predominantly non-European American settings, i.e., African American, Latino American, Asian American or Native American settings). When we refer to Western contexts, we include situations or settings—including those in non-Western contexts that activate an independent mindset—in which the predominant focus is on the individual and the individual's attributes and that foster an analytic style of processing. Lacking a fully satisfactory and appropriate label for this distinction and for efficiency of communication, we refer to these cultural or situational distinctions as "Western contexts" or "non-Western contexts." Consistent with the dynamic view of cultural influences, tendencies associated with Western or non-Western contexts are more pronounced in some situations and conditions than in others.

Table 1  
*Attitude Definitions in the Social Psychology Literature (With Emphasis Added)*

References	Attitude definition	Specific emphases
Darwin (1872)	"The physical expression of an emotion." (see Petty, Ostrom, & Brock, 1981, p. 7)	An internal state that guides behavior
Katz & Allport (1931)	"While no sharp line of demarcation can be drawn between attitudes and personality traits, the latter should in general be distinguished as denoting characteristic forms of behavior, whereas attitudes are more frequently regarded as sets of certain kinds of verbal response expressing value." (pp. 354–355)	Attitudes are linked to personality, and therefore stability is implied
Allport (1935)	"A mental and neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive and dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related." (p. 810)	Learning process ("through experience"), which implies an enduring nature Guides behavior
Murphy & Likert (1938)	"Dispositions toward overt action." (p. 28) "The attitude is a habit sufficiently compact and stable to be treated as a unit . . . not an inflexible and rigid element in personality (if, in fact, any such elements exist), but rather a certain <i>range within which responses move.</i> " (p. 27, italics in original)	Emphasis on dispositions, habits, and stability Guides behavior
Krech & Crutchfield (1948)	"An attitude can be defined as an enduring organization of motivational, emotional, perceptual, and cognitive processes with respect to some aspect of the individual's world." (p. 152)	Stability ("enduring organization") Internal consistency (" . . . emotional, perceptual, cognitive") Drives behavior ("motivational")
Hovland (1951)	" . . . attitudes are viewed as internalized anticipatory approach or avoidance tendencies toward objects, persons, or symbols (cf. also Doob, 4). They are habits, and the general principles of learning should be of aid in understanding their acquisition and modification." (p. 427)	Attitudes are viewed as tendencies and habits
Smith, Bruner, & White (1956)	"Opinions . . . are part of man's attempt to meet and to master his world. They are an integral part of personality." (p. 1) "An individual's opinions are but one of a number of consistent and regular forms of behavior which characterize him." (p. 29)	Attitudes as a coping mechanism Linked to personality, and thus implies stability
Insko & Schopler (1967)	"Evaluative feelings of pro or con, favorable or unfavorable, with regard to particular objects." (pp. 361–362)	Valence ("pro to con") of feelings linked to an object
Bem (1970)	"Attitudes are likes and dislikes." (p. 14)	Valence/direction ("likes and dislikes")
McGuire (1985)	"Responses that locate 'objects of thought' on 'dimensions of judgment.'" (p. 239)	An evaluation linked to an object
Ajzen (1988)	"An attitude is a disposition to respond favorably or unfavorably to an object, person, institution, or event." (p. 4) "[This definition] emphasizes the similarities of the trait and attitude concept." (p. 7)	Linking the concepts of attitudes and traits implies stability
Eagly & Chaiken (1993)	"A psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favor or disfavor." (p. 1)	Attitudes as tendencies characterized by valence ("favor or disfavor")
Hogg & Vaughan (2005)	"A relatively enduring organization of beliefs, feelings, and behavioral tendencies towards socially significant objects, groups, events or symbols." (p. 150)	Stable ("enduring") Internal consistency ("beliefs, feelings, and behavioral . . .") Drives behavior ("behavioral tendencies")

preferences are not the primary drivers of behavior. Thus, we propose, in such cultural contexts a different kind of attitude drives behavior, attitudes that are significantly shaped by social norms and that are context-dependent. These attitudes are rooted in preferences, but the preferences can be normative and need not be personal.

The influence of cultural perspectives on attitude theorizing is surprisingly limited. There is no evidence of it in recent reviews of the attitudes literature (e.g., Bohner & Dickel, 2011). The 800-page *Handbook of Attitudes* (Albarracín, Johnson, & Zanna, 2005)

provides comprehensive coverage of the current state of knowledge in the attitude domain. The role of culture is mentioned only a few times in the entire volume (e.g., Prislin & Wood, 2005), primarily as a moderator or as an individual difference that predicts the persuasiveness of message content (Briñol & Petty, 2005), the presence of dissonance-induced attitude change (Olson & Stone, 2005), and the presence of the Socratic effect (Wyer & Albarracín, 2005). Hence, the time is right to significantly expand attitude theorizing in a way that addresses the multiple implications of cultural differences in values and thinking styles. To this

point, attitude theorizing as developed in the West is an incomplete account of the nature of attitudes. It has yet to address how attitudes function in contexts where maintaining relationships, fulfilling social roles, and perceived normative appropriateness are often more central than the expression of personal preferences.

Our effort to expand attitude theorizing beyond specific Western cultural assumptions about personhood and the personal sources of behavior is motivated by the accumulating evidence of cross-cultural variations in attitudinal phenomena. For example, in India product choices are less associated with personal preferences than are the choices of North Americans (Savani, Markus, & Conner, 2008). In Japan, unlike in the United States, people do not justify their choices with their preferences or show dissonance effects unless others are salient (Kitayama, Conner Snibbe, Markus, & Suzuki, 2004). For Asian Americans, achieving social goals is considered to be important for subjective well-being, whereas for European Americans, the key to well-being is achieving personal goals (Oishi & Diener, 2001; Suh & Diener, 2001). In Japan and China, personal preferences for a “greener” world do not predict green behavior, yet such preferences are strong predictors in the United States (Chan & Lau, 2001; Eom, Kim, Sherman, & Ishii, 2014). For Asian American children, choosing according to the preferences of close others is more satisfying and more likely to motivate behavior than choosing according to personal preferences, whereas the reverse is true for European American children (Iyengar & Lepper, 1999). Similarly, Indian employees are more likely than Americans to make choices consistent with what is expected by authority, irrespective of their personal preferences (Savani, Morris, & Naidu, 2012).

The sources of these cultural differences in attitudes and their consequences are multiple and diverse. Some stem from differences in parenting and schooling practices (e.g., Ji, 2008; Trommsdorff, 2009; Wang, 2013). East Asians, for example, are not only less prone to behave according to their personal preferences, they may even be discouraged from nurturing personal preferences in the first place (Dumont, 1970; Menon & Shweder, 1998; Miller, 2003; Miller, Bersoff, & Harwood, 1990). Instead of asking children about their subjective emotional experience (“did you like it?”), parents inquire about and direct children’s attention to normative understandings of particular events (“what were the children doing?” e.g., Wang, 2013). Other contributing factors include ongoing and pervasive differences in patterns of social interaction, institutional policies and practices, and media products, as well as historically derived differences in foundational religious and philosophical ideas. The development and expression of personal preferences and choices rooted in these preferences are foundational in Western contexts. In contrast, an emphasis on awareness and understanding of obligation, duty, others’ expectations and norms is foundational in many non-Western contexts (for reviews, see Gelfand et al., 2011; Heine, 2010; Kitayama & Cohen, 2007; Markus & Kitayama, 2010; Miller, Das, & Chakravarthy, 2011). These robust findings, which are well established in the psychological literature, have yet to impact theorizing about attitudes.

Indeed, according to Zanna and Rempel (2007), the current model of attitudes “has a strong historical precedent, not only in attitude theory but in *Western philosophy* as a whole” (p. 10, italics added). The assumptions of current theorizing have emerged from Western perspectives about individual agency and the normative imperative to freely pursue one’s personal goals (see Fiske, Ki-

tayama, Markus, & Nisbett, 1998; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Relying on such Western philosophical assumptions, the defining feature of the traditional view of attitudes is the focus on the individual. We call this, therefore, the *person-centric model* of attitudes. Here attitudes are equivalent to personal preferences.

We develop an additional model of attitudes that complements this person-centric model. The defining feature of our proposed model is a focus on the specific normative context. We call it therefore the *normative-contextual model* of attitudes. This model is designed to capture the distinct features of attitudes in many non-Western cultural contexts (i.e., contexts outside North America, North Central Europe, Australia and New Zealand), as well as the features of attitudes in situations or contexts that activate interdependent (as opposed to independent) frames of thinking (e.g., Briley, Wyer, & Li, 2014; Markus & Conner, 2013; Oyserman & Lee, 2007; Weber & Morris, 2010). As such, the proposed model suggests new ways of measuring attitudes and conceptualizing their role in persuasion processes. In the normative-contextual model, an attitude is defined as *a readiness to act—a positive leaning toward or a negative leaning away from a target—that derives from and is responsive to one’s immediate social context*. In contrast to the person-centric model, in the normative-contextual model the focus shifts from the individual alone to the individual responding to the norms of a particular situation, and from stable personal predispositions to contextually afforded inclinations. In non-Western contexts, normative expectations and role obligations are fundamental to shaping and reshaping attitudes. As a result of these processes, normative information becomes integrated into the attitudes themselves. In such cases there is a confluence between what is normatively appropriate or what others expect, with what one wants or prefers. Norms then become a fundamental part of attitudes, not merely exogenous inputs to which people adapt only when they must or when they have no personal behavioral guide.

In expanding attitude theorizing so that it includes two perspectives on the source of the readiness to act (person-centric and normative-contextual), we go beyond reviewing known cross-cultural differences. We seek to enhance basic theory about the functions, the formation, and the characteristics of attitudes through an integration of the existing attitude literature with the burgeoning field of cross-cultural research, and to draw practical implications from this integration. For example, current knowledge about marketing phenomena (e.g., persuasion, satisfaction, loyalty) has emerged from a traditional approach to attitudes. Most perspectives assume, for example, that personal preferences are key to achieving and predicting desired marketing outcomes (e.g., brand choice, brand loyalty). Our conceptualization highlights other factors that should be emphasized in persuasion and behavior-change efforts in non-Western cultural contexts, as well as in many Western contexts (such as workplaces) where non-Western ideas and practices are increasingly prevalent and interdependent mindsets are commonly invoked (e.g., Bloom, Genakos, Sadun, & Van Reenen, 2012; Markus & Conner, 2013).

Cultural differences in attitudinal phenomena can be addressed through two alternative perspectives: An *emic* approach assumes that constructs are culture-specific, and an *etic* approach assumes universality (Berry, 1969). An emic (culture specific) perspective might suggest that people in non-Western cultural contexts do not have internal guides for their behavior and rely instead on external

guides—on social norms. This view implies that people do not routinely form, possess, or use entities such as attitudes, because they are unnecessary, and that the construct of attitudes does not transcend sociocultural contexts. This view would suggest that theorizing should focus on norms and roles, which are more central to decision making. An etic (universal) view, on the other hand, would suggest that the construct of attitudes does translate across sociocultural contexts and that its core elements are universal (Berry, 1969; Triandis, 1995). According to this view, the degree of impact of these core elements on attitude processes may differ across cultures.

Our conceptualization of the person-centric and normative-contextual models combines both emic and etic perspectives. At the most abstract level, attitudes are universal. The notion of attitudes as evaluative or affective responses that have primacy (Zajonc, 1980), that predispose behavior (Rosenberg & Hovland, 1960), and that can be captured using a good-bad continuum (Thurstone, 1928), can be said to hold across cultural contexts (etic). Thus, in both models—the person-centric and the normative-contextual—attitudes are regarded as essential behavioral guides. This premise is the basis of functional theories of attitudes, and we consider it universal. Our conceptualization proposes, however, that when the field “zooms in” to generate specific theories—about additional functions of attitudes, attitude formation and change, and attitude characteristics—it is essential to use a culture-specific (emic) perspective. Current theories about attitudes are inflected with cultural assumptions that highlight the role of attitudes as catalysts of personal agency. Yet we propose that theorizing about attitudes will provide better insights to the extent that it is culture-specific. Differences between person-centric and normative-contextual attitude models are briefly outlined next and are further developed throughout the article.

### Person-Centric Versus Normative-Contextual Models of Attitudes: The Models in Brief

Our analysis of attitudes demonstrates some similarities—but also some sharp differences—in attitudes across cultural contexts. These are summarized via comparison of the person-centric and normative-contextual models (see also Figure 1 and Table 2).

### The Role of Personal Preferences

The person-centric model views attitudes as personal preferences. This reflects an unstated culture-centric assumption, that what people personally want is what is natural and desirable, and that this is what attitudes should encapsulate—and then help people to achieve. Indeed, where this model prevails, people’s attitudes are strongly tied to their own hedonic imperatives or rewards. This is not to suggest that people in other cultural contexts do not have personal preferences. Most people in most contexts are likely to have personal preferences (e.g., to prefer sweet to bitter). But cultural context shapes the role of these personal preferences. In Western contexts, personal preferences are central to attitudes (“I like it, because it makes me feel good”) and are used as behavioral guides. By contrast, in many non-Western contexts, given the emphasis on connections with others and with ingroups as constitutive of self, as well as the emphasis on contextually and situationally appropriate behavior, the prefer-

ence of others and normative information may assume equal or greater weight in attitudes than do personal preferences (“I like it because others I am connected to like it”).

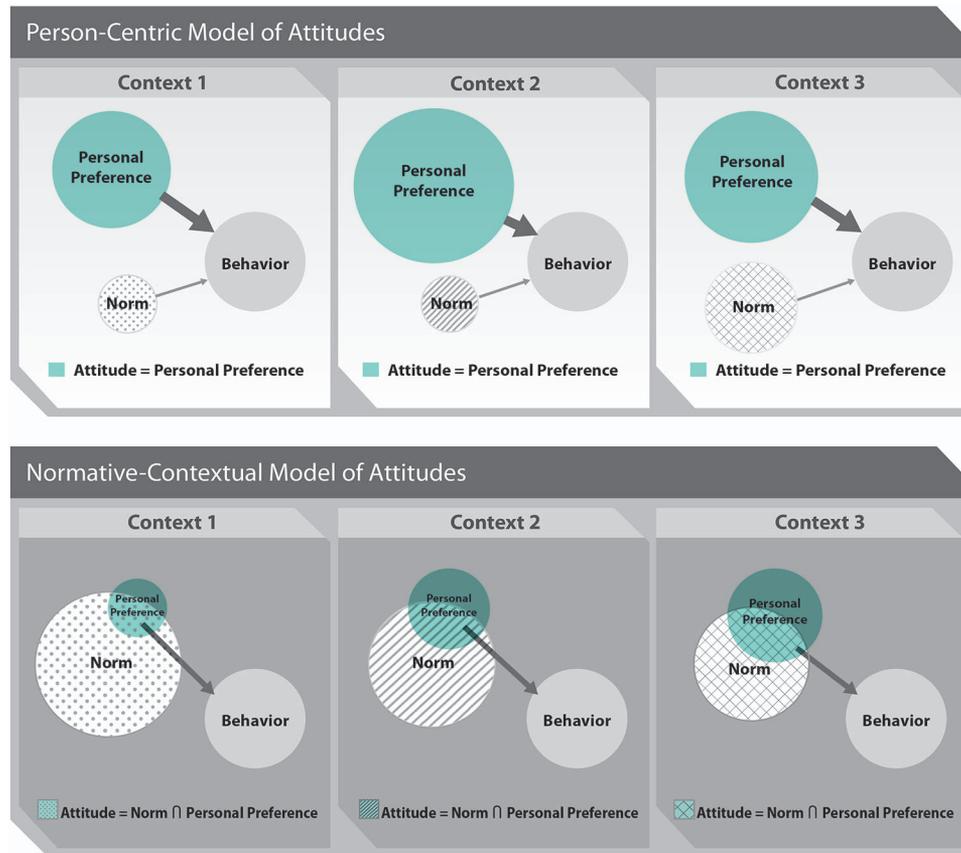
### The Role of Norms

In contexts where the normative-contextual model of attitudes prevails, normative pressures, structured through cultural practices, are foundational to the shaping and reshaping of attitudes. Here, it is “the eyes of others” (D. Cohen & Gunz, 2002) rather than personal preferences that play a greater role in attitude formation and change. Cultural differences in meta-norms (i.e., norms about norms) reflect and reinforce these differences. In Western contexts that emphasize independence, the meta-norm is often not to follow the norm but to instead follow one’s personal preferences, whereas in many other contexts that emphasize interdependence with others and the context, the meta-norm is to ascertain and to follow the local norms. Normative-contextual attitudes are thus derived from, grounded in, and integrated with normative and contextual information. That is, instead of the question of “what is my personal preference?”—“what do I want?” the default question is what is appropriate or normative—“what do most other relevant people want?” The answer to this latter question is not separate from the attitude; it is embedded in the attitude (“I like it, because I think that others like it”). Such an attitude does not imply inhibiting one’s self or mindless conformity but rather the confluence of personal and normative preferences.

Norms, of course, affect the behavior of people in Western cultural contexts as well; all people are influenced by norms. However, in many non-Western contexts, norms are integrated within attitudes and exert a greater influence on behavior. This difference is not merely a quantitative difference in importance or weight attached to normative information. It is a qualitative difference in the nature of the attitude or preference. In non-Western contexts, normative adjustments are foundational to attitudes. They are not exogenous influences effortfully applied to personal preferences via secondary or System II processes (Kahneman, 2003; Sudman, Bradburn, & Schwarz, 1996; Tourangeau & Rasinski, 1988). In the normative-contextual perspective, norms are on the same plane as personal preferences because they are naturally always in consideration. They are integrated with preferences because relatedness to others is expected and desirable. People actively seek to adjust themselves to the preferences of others because their overarching goals are to be in sync with others and with the context. In normative-contextual terms, “true” or “real” attitudes serve such goals.<sup>2</sup>

Our model posits, for example, that normative adjustments become automatic in the sense that they are intuitive, sponta-

<sup>2</sup> Kelman (1958) suggested three processes for attitude change: compliance (when hoping to achieve a favorable reaction from others), identification (when seeking to establish self-defining relationships with others), or internalization (when accepting influence because of an intrinsic reward). All these processes are rooted in person-centric assumptions. Normative-contextual attitudes are different in the sense that they begin with the foundational fact of connection to others and the imperative to maintain the connection. The assumption is that people align their preferences with others not to look good or feel good or define themselves but, instead, to be part of and connected to significant others and important ingroups.



*Figure 1.* Conceptual representation of the Person-Centric (P-C) and the Normative-Contextual (N-C) models of attitudes. In the P-C model, personal preferences are the foundation of attitudes and are the typical drivers of behavior. Norms are exogenous to attitudes, and their importance can vary by context, but they are typically less important than personal preferences (as depicted above, although the sizes of the circles for norms and for personal preferences may vary across contexts, the circle for norms is always smaller and the arrow connecting norms to behavior is thinner than the one connecting personal preferences to behavior). The context is often given little or no consideration (context background is lighter than in the N-C model). In Western cultural contexts, where the P-C model of attitudes applies, personal preferences are granted legitimacy and are of greatest importance in defining attitudes and, in turn, in influencing behavior. By contrast, in the N-C model, behavior is responsive to the particular context and norms (context background is darker). Consideration of the context is necessary and legitimized. Personal preferences and norms can be more or less important in certain contexts than in others (therefore the sizes of the circles change across contexts), but the imperative is to take account of and adjust to the relevant norms in the context (therefore the circle for norms is always larger than the one for personal preferences). Attitudes are depicted as the intersection of personal preferences and norms (the shaded areas where norms and personal preferences overlap).

neous, and effortless (as opposed to similar adjustments in Western contexts, which are deliberate and effortful; Kahneman, 2003; for evidence, see Riemer & Shavitt, 2011). Similarly, whereas in Western contexts suppression of personal preferences may take place though an effortful process requiring cognitive resources, in non-Western contexts such adjustments may be quite automatic.

### Implications for Attitude Theorizing

Differences in the roles of personal preferences and normative factors have fundamental implications for theorizing about the functions, formation, and characteristics of attitudes. First, in contexts where the person-centric model prevails, and attitudes are

equivalent to personal preferences, accessible personal preferences are shown to ease decision making and enhance postdecision satisfaction (Fazio, 2000; Katz, 1960). In many non-Western contexts, however, accessible personal preferences may be a liability, especially if they are inconsistent with prevailing norms. Thus, attitudes as conceptualized according to a person-centric approach are less likely to help people in non-Western cultural contexts to cope with the demands of making decisions. In non-Western cultural contexts, accessible attitudes can ease decision making and enhance postdecision satisfaction only if they reflect normative and contextual input.

Second, in Western cultural contexts, attitudes serve as a means of individual self-expression (Katz, 1960; Smith et al., 1956) and

Table 2  
*Differences Between the Person-Centric and the Normative-Contextual Models of Attitudes*

Variable	Person-Centric model	Normative-Contextual model
Conceptualization		
Conceptual definition	Attitudes as predispositions. The focus is on the individual alone ( <i>personal</i> preference).	Attitudes as context-specific inclinations. The focus is on the individual responding to a particular environment.
Components	Affective, cognitive, and behavioral.	Personal, social, and contextual.
Functions of attitude		
Behavioral guidance	Regardless of culture, attitudes are essential as behavioral guides.	Regardless of culture, attitudes are essential as behavioral guides.
Coping	Accessible personal preferences ease decision making and lead to greater post-decision satisfaction.	Accessible personal preferences can be a liability. Accessible normative-contextual attitudes ease decision making and lead to greater post-decision satisfaction.
Self-expression	Attitudes manifest personal identity.	Attitudes manifest norms of the social context.
Group-level functions	Not addressed in this model.	Attitudes function to achieve group-level goals such as social order, harmony, trust, and cohesion.
Formation of attitude		
The attitude object	Objects are perceived as separate from the context, and thus remain unchanged.	Objects are perceived as embedded in a context, and thus are expected to change with the context.
Determinants	Evaluation is more dependent on the object's attributes.	Evaluation is more dependent on contextual-normative information.
Characteristics of attitude		
Internal consistency	Affective, cognitive, and behavioral aspects of one's attitude, as well as various facets within each of these categories, are expected to be consistent. Inconsistency within attitude components and facets leads people to experience cognitive dissonance and to seek resolution.	Inconsistency within attitude components and facets does not necessarily lead people to experience cognitive dissonance and to seek resolution, unless their behavior is inconsistent with components that impact ingroup members. Instead, personal, social, and contextual components of attitudes are expected to be consistent.
Stability	Unless changed, attitudes remain stable over time and situations.	Attitudes are malleable and tuned to the context.
Measurement		
Contextual variability	Contextual variability in responses to attitude measures is considered problematic.	Attitudes toward an object are expected to differ across social contexts. Measuring this variability and giving focal attention to contextual malleability can explain attitudes more comprehensively.
Normative/ingroup information	Attitudes are measured at the individual level.	Attitudes can be measured at the ingroup level.

thus are indeed person-centric. In non-Western cultural contexts, on the other hand, the self is defined by relationships with important others. People in these cultural contexts are likely to assign greater value to expressing social embeddedness and less value to expressing unique attributes, preferences, needs, goals, beliefs or opinions (e.g., Kim & Markus, 1999; Kwan, Bond, & Singelis, 1997). This results in attitudes that are tightly connected to the social-normative context. In other words, instead of using attitudes as a means of self-expression, normative-contextual attitudes function to promote social embeddedness.

Third, person-centric attitude formation is more focused on the attributes of the target object. If it is considered at all, social-contextual information (e.g., information about popularity) is considered as a peripheral cue, primarily under low involvement conditions (e.g., Maheswaran & Chaiken, 1991; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). By contrast, in non-Western cultural contexts attitude formation relies on social and contextual in-

formation to a greater extent, regardless of level of motivation (Aaker & Maheswaran, 1997; Ji, 2008). The normative-contextual model addresses in detail the ways in which attitude formation takes account of such information. Moreover, in non-Western cultural contexts, information is initially processed more holistically (Nisbett, Peng, Choi, & Norenzayan, 2001; see also Lalwani & Shavitt, 2013). Among other things, holistic processing means that objects are likely to be perceived as embedded in their context and thus to be constantly changing. Therefore, in the normative-contextual model of attitude, both the *judgment of the object* and the *object of the judgment* are context-dependent.

Fourth, within the person-centric model, attitudes consist of affective, behavioral, and cognitive aspects of personal preferences, and internal consistency is anticipated (Eagly & Chaiken, 1995; Eiser, 1987). However, non-Westerners' greater comfort with contradictions (compared to that of Westerners; see, e.g.,

Peng & Nisbett, 1999) means that they feel less compelled to hold or express internally consistent attitudes (Spencer-Rodgers, Williams, & Peng, 2010; Wong, Rindfleisch, & Burroughs, 2003). Instead of consistency among affective, behavioral, and cognitive aspects of attitudes, in the normative-contextual model of attitudes the focus is on consistency among personal, social, and contextual factors.

Finally, in order to fulfill their functions, person-centric attitudes are theorized as being enduring and stable over time and situations (Allport, 1935; Hogg & Vaughan, 2005; Hovland, 1959). Normative-contextual attitudes, on the other hand, are theorized as malleable and adaptive. Being tailored to distinct contexts, they exhibit lower attitude stability across self-reporting occasions and situations.

To support the development of an expanded and cross-culturally relevant theorizing of attitudes, we first review the person-centric attitude model. Next, analyzing the accumulated knowledge on cross-cultural differences reveals the Western philosophical assumptions underlying current attitude theorizing. Leveraging insights from this research, we then outline the normative-contextual model designed to address non-Western cultural contexts.

### The Person-Centric Model of Attitudes

According to the traditional person-centric model, an attitude is generally defined as an individual's evaluative disposition toward an object (Ajzen, 1988; Eagly & Chaiken, 1995; Hovland, 1951; Katz & Allport, 1931; Krech & Crutchfield, 1948; Murphy & Likert, 1938; Smith et al., 1956). This psychological disposition drives one's evaluatively consistent responses toward the object—responses that may be affective, cognitive, and/or behavioral (Rosenberg & Hovland, 1960).

### The Functions of Attitudes

Attitudes exist because they are functional for meeting a variety of psychological goals (see functional theories proposed by Katz, 1960; Kelman, 1958, 1961; Smith et al., 1956; for coverage of later refinements, see Eagly & Chaiken, 1998; Maio & Olson, 2000; Pratkanis, Breckler, & Greenwald, 1989; Shavitt, 1990, 1992). In the person-centric model of attitudes, attitudes serve as behavioral guides. When accessible, attitudes provide knowledge that assists individuals in coping with the large number of decisions that need to be made in their daily lives. Attitudes also serve as a means of self-expression, by symbolizing one's personal values or social identity. Although a variety of functions and labels have been proposed, these three main functional categories are the focus of our discussion.

**Behavioral guidance.** The person-centric view assumes consistency between attitudes and behavior. Favorable attitudes are expected to lead to approach behaviors and unfavorable attitudes to avoidance (DeFleur & Westie, 1963; Wicker, 1969). For this reason, attitude measures are widely used in an effort to predict behavior. Yet widespread findings of low attitude-behavior correlations raised significant questions about this assumption (e.g., Corey, 1937; LaPiere, 1934; Vroom, 1964; Wicker, 1969). In response, some researchers focused on identifying moderators of the attitude-behavior relationship (for reviews, see J. B. Cohen & Reed, 2006; Crisp & Turner, 2010; Fazio & Roskos-Ewoldsen,

1994). A number of the resulting findings suggest that the person-centric model is not sufficiently contextual. For example, when social norms are inconsistent with one's attitudes, these attitudes are less likely to predict behavior (see Wellen, Hogg, & Terry, 1998). Further, people who dispositionally tend to focus on the environment or social context (rather than on themselves; e.g., individuals with low locus of control, with low levels of moral reasoning, or with high self-monitoring; e.g., Ajzen, Timko, & White, 1982; Shavitt & Fazio, 1991; Snyder & Kendzierski, 1982; Snyder & Swann, 1976; Zanna, Olson, & Fazio, 1980; see Fazio & Roskos-Ewoldsen, 1994) or individuals who anticipate interacting with others about their views (Schlosser & Shavitt, 2002) tend to exhibit behavioral responses that are less consistent with their attitudes.

The most influential theoretical response to the dilemma of attitude-behavior inconsistency, the theory of reasoned action (TRA; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975), emphasized that behavior is better predicted by a combination of one's attitude toward an act and one's subjective norm (i.e., what one believes to be others' attitudes toward the act). This classic theory has been extended into the theory of planned behavior (TPB; Ajzen, 1988, 1991), which incorporates a detailed consideration of perceived behavioral control. Although the predictive validity of subjective norms is still a matter of debate (see Armitage & Conner, 2001), a number of moderators may play a role, including type of behavior (e.g., Trafimow & Finlay, 1996), type of norm (e.g., descriptive, what most people do, vs. injunctive, what most people approve or disapprove of; see Cialdini, Reno, & Kallgren, 1990), and the relation of one's behavior to normative standards (Schultz, Nolan, Cialdini, Goldstein, & Giskevicius, 2007).<sup>3</sup>

The TRA, the TPB, and other important perspectives in the attitudes literature (e.g., Campbell, 1963) addressed normative and situational factors as moderators that constrain the relation between attitudes and behavior. Incorporating such important normative-contextual factors as separate and exogenous moderators in behavior prediction addressed the reality that attitudes do not always predict behavior, while at the same time preserving the person-centric concept of attitudes. This view affirmed the implicit assumption of consistency between attitudes and overt behaviors, without fully incorporating normative features into theorizing about the nature of *attitudes themselves*.

**Coping.** Attitudes provide knowledge that can assist in managing and coping with a multitude of decisions, what Katz (1960) referred to as the *knowledge function*. The notion is that simply having accessible attitudes toward objects that people encounter can provide a reassuring sense of understanding, facilitating the task of making decisions, while reducing the pressure or stress that may accompany such tasks (Fazio, 2000; Shavitt, 1990). Smith et al. (1956) similarly proposed an *object-*

<sup>3</sup> Recent work has addressed differences between descriptive versus injunctive norms (Cialdini, Reno, & Kallgren, 1990) and intersubjective versus statistical norms (Chiu, Gelfand, Yamagishi, Shteynberg, & Wan, 2010). These distinctions reflect the effort to theorize various forms of normative information and the recruitment conditions and consequences associated with each form. The burgeoning literature on normative typologies, coming mainly from cross-cultural psychology, illustrates how crucial normative constructs are to the contemporary understanding of culture. These distinctions among types of norms are significant, but addressing them is beyond the scope of the current article.

*appraisal function* that highlights the role of attitudes in classifying objects in order to make responses available that maximize one's benefits.

According to the person-centric model, attitudes fulfill this function to the extent that they are easily accessible in memory such that they spontaneously come to mind in the presence of the attitude object (Fazio, 2000; Fazio, Powell, & Williams, 1989; see also J. B. Cohen & Reed, 2006). Indeed, accessible attitudes have been shown to ease the stress of decision making (Blascovich et al., 1993; Fazio, Blascovich, & Driscoll, 1992) and to increase the quality of decisions made (Fazio et al., 1992; Wilson & Schooler, 1991). People with more accessible attitudes tend to be more satisfied with their choices (Fazio et al., 1992). Moreover, as attitude accessibility increases, the autonomic reactivity of the cardiovascular system (a signal of emotional arousal) decreases, indicating greater contentment and less stress (Blascovich et al., 1993). For instance, attitude accessibility regarding academic issues is associated with better health among college freshmen (Fazio & Powell, 1997).

**Self-expression.** Attitudes also serve a symbolic function associated with *value-expression* or *social adjustment* (Katz, 1960; Smith et al., 1956). By holding and expressing certain attitudes, individuals can establish and convey information about the self, an important goal from a person-centric perspective. This can explain, for example, why the American woman in the opening scenario was disappointed to discover that her choice did not express a unique preference, but rather reflected a preference common among others in her demographic group. Attitudes toward a host of products and social topics may serve such *social identity* goals (Shavitt, 1990; Shavitt, Lowrey, & Han, 1992), and their expression and interpretation may be socially strategic. Further, observers draw conclusions about consumers from learning about their tastes in certain products (Shavitt & Nelson, 2002). Consumers also abandon tastes and preferences in order to connect themselves to desired identities and disassociate themselves from undesired ones (e.g., Berger, 2013; Berger & Heath, 2007; Berger & Rand, 2008). In other words, in the person-centric model, attitudes are freely chosen and strategically displayed to others, who in turn read these attitudinal signals as meaningful markers of their owners' identities.

## The Formation of Attitudes

In the person-centric model, attitude formation is based on beliefs and on the evaluative weights associated with these beliefs (Ajzen, 1988; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). These beliefs are typically based on the object's attribute information, and the more elaborate the processing that accompanies attitude formation, the more this is the case (e.g., Petty, Cacioppo, & Schumann, 1983; see Petty & Cacioppo, 1986; Petty et al., 1981). Normative-contextual factors are seen as separate from the attribute information. According to dual-process models of persuasion (e.g., Eagly & Chaiken, 1995; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986), such normative and contextual factors receive less weight in high elaboration conditions (Maheswaran, 1994) because they are not central to forming a thoughtful evaluation (Fiedler, 2007). Indeed, a tradition of bias-correction research (e.g., the set/reset model [Martin, 1986], the inclusion/exclusion model [Schwarz & Bless, 1992], and the flexible correction model [Wegener & Petty, 1997])

treats contextual information, such as the characteristics of an endorser, as a separate, biasing, and contaminating source of input for which perceivers may need to correct when evaluating an object (see also Wilson & Brekke, 1994). Similarly, a long tradition of research on interpersonal influences treats normative and informational influences as separate and qualitatively distinct processes (Deutsch & Gerard, 1955; see Fiedler, 2007, for a review).

## Characteristics of Attitudes

**Internal consistency.** According to the person-centric model, the three components of attitudes—cognitive, affective, and behavioral—tend toward evaluative consistency (Eagly & Chaiken, 1995; Eiser, 1987; Ostrom, 1969). Indeed, research on acceptance of duality suggests that individuals generally favor consistency in their attitudes and view their attitudes as univalent (Thompson, Zanna, & Griffin, 1995). States of conflict and ambivalence are accompanied by feelings of discomfort (e.g., Has, Katz, Rizzo, Bailey, & Moore, 1992). Classic attitudinal theorizing has emphasized the drive toward reestablishing consistency and addressed the psychological dynamics of that process (e.g., dissonance theory [Festinger, 1957], congruity theory [Osgood & Tannenbaum, 1955], balance theory [Heider, 1958]; for a review, see Greenwald et al., 2002). For example, according to the theory of cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957), dissonance between attitude elements (e.g., unfavorable beliefs and favorable emotions) or between different related attitudes is aversive and drives people to seek resolution. In cases of inconsistencies, individuals feel tension and thus tend to modify their attitudes in order to bring the attitudinal relations into balance (Woodside & Chebat, 2001). This pressure toward consistency was also demonstrated by research on the spreading of alternatives—the tendency to justify choices by focusing on their merits and on the shortcomings of unchosen options, which in turn shifts preferences in the direction of the options that were chosen (for reviews, see Harmon-Jones, Harmon-Jones, Fearn, Sigelman, & Johnson, 2008; Olson & Stone, 2005).

**Stability.** The person-centric model conceptualizes attitudes as predispositions that are relatively durable or stable across time (e.g., Allport, 1935; Hovland, 1959). Indeed, spontaneous change in attitudinal self-reports has been taken as evidence for the absence of an attitude (*nonattitudes*; Converse, 1974). According to traditional perspectives, attitudes do not tend to change spontaneously without exposure to new information (Ajzen, 1988). Even when attitudes appear to change, evidence suggests that the old attitudes persist in memory and continue to affect behavior (Petty, Tormala, Briñol, & Jarvis, 2006).

On the other hand, widespread evidence of the malleability of attitudes (e.g., Lord & Lepper, 1999; Schuman & Presser, 1981; Wilson, Lindsey, & Schooler, 2000) has been accompanied by a focus on identifying the types of attitudes most likely to manifest stability (see Petty & Krosnick 1995). This work has established that the more strongly an attitude is held, the more likely it is to remain unchanged over time (durability or stability) and to be resistant to attack by counterinformation (see Haugtvedt & Petty, 1992; Krosnick, Boninger, Chuang, Berent, & Carnot, 1993; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986; Petty & Krosnick, 1995). This identification of *attitude strength* as a key moderator of attitude stability and resistance addressed the significant theoretical challenge of atti-

tude instability within the framework of traditional person-centric attitude theorizing.

Yet findings of attitude instability led some to challenge the view that attitudes can be effectively conceptualized as stored, enduring evaluations, arguing instead that people simply construct attitude responses on the spot, rather than retrieving existing ones (e.g., Lichtenstein & Slovic, 2006; Schwarz, 2006; Schwarz & Bohner, 2001). This *constructivist* view represents one prominent challenge to the traditional conceptualization of attitudes. As we describe later, although this perspective has certainly given contexts a much more central role than has the traditional person-centric view, it was not designed to systematically address the role of cultural factors in predicting attitude stability.

In summary, in the person-centric model, attitudes, conceptualized as personal preferences, guide one's individual choices. In the West, freedom is defined as the "*exercise of [one's] preferences*" in making choices (Savani et al., 2008, p. 863, italics in original). In other contexts, personal preferences can have a different status. From some Eastern (Indian) philosophical perspectives, freedom is "*the absence of [personal] preference*" (Savani et al., 2008, p. 863, italics in original), which allows one to be open to others' preferences. Such views about the significance of personal choice differ from those in the West (see Iyengar & Lepper, 1999). Indeed, other cultural contexts nurture different models of agency. For instance, in East Asian or South Asian models of agency, actions are responsive to the expectations of others as prescribed by social roles and obligations (e.g., Han & Shavitt, 1994; Kitayama, Duffy, & Uchida, 2007; Markus & Kitayama, 2003; Miller et al., 1990; Miller & Bland, 2009; Miller et al., 2011), and personal preferences may be less central to achieving one's goals.

In the next section, we contrast Western sociocultural assumptions with those that prevail in other cultural contexts to reveal that the person-centric model of attitudes reflects a uniquely Western emphasis on agency rooted in individual preferences (Markus & Kitayama, 2010). People in Western cultural contexts inhabit environments that afford and require the expression of their personal preferences, and these contexts construct attitudes as defining features of the person. We address how these assumptions fare in other sociocultural contexts and describe the normative-contextual model, designed to address those contexts.

### Attitudes as Viewed Through a Cross-Cultural Lens

There are numerous ways to conceptualize and define culture. For instance, Triandis (2012) defined culture as "a shared meaning system found among those who speak a particular language dialect, during a specific historical period, and in a definable geographical region" (p. 35). Hofstede (1984) viewed culture as "the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or society from those of another" (p. 82). Schwartz (2009) used seven dimensions of value orientation to distinguish between cultures (see also Schwartz & Bilsky, 1990). Adams and Markus (2004) defined culture as "explicit and implicit patterns of historically derived and selected ideas and their embodiment in institutions, practices, and artifacts." Chiu and colleagues viewed culture as "an evolved constellation of loosely organized ideas and practices that are shared (albeit imperfectly) among a collection of interdependent individuals" (Chiu, Gelfand, Yamagishi, Shteynberg, & Wan, 2010, p. 1). Finally, Weber and

Morris (2010) developed a constructivist approach that emphasizes the role of socio-environmental structures in shaping culture-specific patterns of reasoning and judgment. Their approach views cultures as "traditions of thoughts and practice, and living in one imbues a person with a host of representations . . . that are discrete yet loosely associated in memory" (p. 411).

The various approaches to culture differ in where they locate culture—in the mind, in the world, or in both. They also differ in the importance they ascribe to classification—with some emphasizing cultural categories more than others, and in which comparative strategies they employ to reveal culture.

Differences in values of *individualism* versus *collectivism* and in behavioral styles of agency—independence versus interdependence—have been a primary focus of cross-cultural research (e.g., Bond & Smith, 1996; Chiu & Hong, 2006; Fiske et al., 1998; Han & Shavitt, 1994; Heine, 2010; Hofstede, 1991; Kitayama & Cohen, 2007; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1989; Zhang & Shavitt, 2003). Multiple streams of research have demonstrated a variety of ways to classify cultures based on these dimensions (Triandis & Suh, 2002). Some studies compare non-Westerners (e.g., East Asians, South Asians, Mexicans, Hispanic Americans, or global Southerners) and Westerners (e.g., Europeans, Anglo Americans, Canadians, or global Northerners) on a national or geo-regional basis. Others compare people on the basis of measured differences in cultural orientation (individualism and collectivism) or in manipulated salient self-construal (independent and interdependent; see Bond, 2002).

Both the tendency toward individualism or collectivism in organizing society and the tendency toward independence or interdependence in construing the individual, as well as their associated cognitive processing styles, are distributed differentially in Western and non-Western cultural contexts. Most previous research examined Western and non-Western cultural contexts, comparing (East) Asians and European Americans. Although other geographic regions, cultural dimensions, and socioeconomic strata have been less explored (Maheswaran & Shavitt, 2000; Shavitt, Lalwani, Zhang, & Torelli, 2006; Shavitt, Torelli, & Riemer, 2011), many of the characteristics of attitudes in non-Western contexts are relevant to a broad range of sociocultural contexts (e.g., non-middle class, nonindustrialized contexts, including much of the global south; see Henrich, Heine, & Norenzayan, 2010; Markus & Conner, 2013; Stephens, Markus, & Fryberg, 2012). For instance, research in a wide range of non-Western societies provides evidence that these contexts foster an understanding of the self as relatively interdependent and holistic thinking patterns. These non-Western populations of comparison include Russians (Grossmann, 2009); Mexicans (Lechuga, Santos, Garza-Caballero, & Villarreal, 2011); Hispanic Americans, Brazilians, and Turks (Torelli & Shavitt, 2010); Asian Australians, Chinese Malaysians, Filipinos, Malays (Church et al., 2006); Northern and Southern Italians (Knight & Nisbett, 2007); East and West Europeans (Varnum, Grossmann, Nisbett, & Kitayama, 2008); Hokkaido and mainland Japanese (Kitayama, Ishii, Imada, Takemura, & Ramaswamy, 2006); farmers in Chile and Tanzania (Norenzayan, Henrich, & McElreath, n.d.); foragers from the Arctic, Australia, and Africa; and agriculturalists (Witkin & Berry, 1975). In line with the diversity of viewpoints highlighted here, our proposed normative-contextual model of attitudes is informed by research carried out in both Western and non-Western cultural

contexts, as well as by research that compares individuals with different chronic cultural orientations or with distinct contextually activated self-construals.

People in Western sociocultural contexts, characterized as generally individualistic in values and in behavioral orientation, tend to emphasize the fulfillment of their personal goals and desires and tend to subordinate the goals of their ingroups to their own goals. In these contexts, a person is implicitly assumed to be a bounded, coherent, stable, autonomous, “free” entity who possesses a set of personal preferences, attitudes, goals, beliefs, and abilities that are the primary forces that guide action. In contrast, people in non-Western sociocultural contexts, often characterized as collectivistic, tend to emphasize their social groups and relationships and thus tend to subordinate their personal goals in order to conform to the expectations of important others (Bond & Smith, 1996; Hofstede, 1991; Triandis, 1995). In these contexts, a person is implicitly assumed to be a connected, fluid, flexible being who is bound to others and who participates in a set of relationships, roles, groups, and institutions that guide action (Fiske et al., 1998).

These fundamental differences in what a person is and should be doing has implications for most aspects of behavior including how one views the self (i.e., as relatively independent vs. interdependent), the importance placed on social norms and conforming to them, the form and function of relationships and groups (e.g., the value placed on [dis]similarity to others), and the meaning of many actions such as choice (Lalwani, Shavitt, & Johnson, 2006; Markus & Kitayama, 2003; Triandis, 1989).

One of the most significant correlates of different models of agency is thinking styles, that is, the way people tend to commonly perceive, understand, and explain their social and physical environments. Although people in all contexts can think both holistically and analytically, for people in Western contexts the default style is often an *analytic* one, which emphasizes the independence of objects (Nisbett et al., 2001). In contrast, for people in non-Western contexts the default style is a *holistic* one, which emphasizes that the world is composed of interrelated elements. The

difference in emphasis between analytic and holistic thinking means that Western and non-Western thought processes tend to differ in a number of important respects, including attentional processes, attributional processes, and (dis)comfort with contradictions (Nisbett, 2003; Nisbett et al., 2001). Figure 2 outlines a general conceptual framework for linking these cultural factors to the attitude domain.

## The Functions of Attitudes

**Behavioral guidance.** The high value that people in Western contexts attach to their personal preferences leads them to experience happiness when they achieve independent goals such as personal enjoyment (Oishi & Diener, 2001; Uchida & Kitayama, 2009). Achieving these goals means striving to present themselves as self-reliant and skillful—capable of discerning good from bad and choosing accordingly (Lalwani & Shavitt, 2009; Lalwani et al., 2006). In contrast, the high value that people in non-Western contexts place on fulfilling obligations and maintaining good relationships leads them to experience happiness when they attain interdependent goals (e.g., social approval; Oishi & Diener, 2001; Uchida, Kitayama, Mesquita, Reyes, & Morling, 2008). Achieving these goals means striving to present themselves as sociable and normatively appropriate (Lalwani & Shavitt, 2009; Lalwani et al., 2006) and not expressing personal preferences or making choices that may violate others’ expectations.

As a result, in order for attitudes in non-Western contexts to serve as effective behavioral guides, they need to incorporate social normative information along with personal preferences. Social norms often play a greater role than personal preferences in determining behavior in non-Western contexts (Chan & Lau, 2001; Eom et al., 2014; Triandis, 1989). Indeed, research shows that, compared to people with a tendency toward an independent self-construal (people in Western contexts), those with a tendency toward an interdependent self-construal are more oriented toward social goals and therefore give more weight to

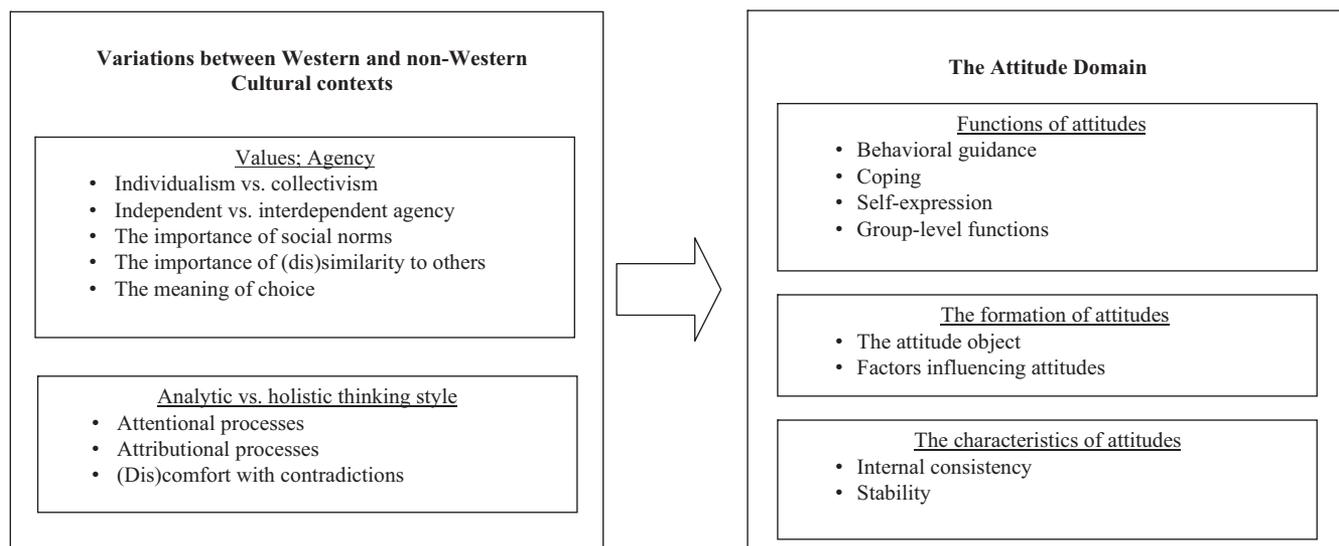


Figure 2. Differences in the attitude domain across cultural contexts.

subjective norms than to their own personal preferences when forming their behavioral intentions (Trafimow, Triandis, & Goto, 1991; Ybarra & Trafimow, 1998; Yoshida, Peach, Zanna, & Spencer, 2012, Study 2).

Inconsistency between personal preferences and behavior in non-Western contexts is in line with research suggesting that, in general, in non-Western contexts people are not only less prone to express their personal preferences and internal states (such as feelings and emotions), they may even be discouraged from doing so (Chen et al., 1998; Dumont, 1970; Ho, 1986; Miller et al., 1990; Savani et al., 2008; Tsai, Knutson, & Fung, 2006). For instance, as opposed to German children who are taught to express their frustration and anger, Indian and Japanese children are discouraged from expressing such feelings and are encouraged to be sensitive to the feelings of others (Trommsdorff, 2006, 2009). Thus, unlike the American girl in the second vignette, the Chinese girl was not encouraged to identify and voice her personal preferences. Instead, she was urged to reference the prevailing social consensus. People in non-Western contexts are more likely to engage in self-regulation, which inhibits them from acting on their personal preferences. Research on impulsive buying behavior directly supports this notion (e.g., Chen, Ng, & Rao, 2005; Kacen & Lee, 2002; Zhang & Shrum, 2009), revealing that people with an interdependent self-construal are more likely to suppress impulsive tendencies than are people with an independent self-construal. This was shown when comparing groups known to differ in their level of independence, on both cross-national and U.S. subcultural levels. This difference was also shown on a temporal level using self-construal priming. Moreover, these differences were magnified when peers were present (Zhang & Shrum, 2009), attesting to the culturally distinct norms that regulate behavior driven by personal preferences. The importance of social norms and inter-subjective perceptions of those norms (i.e., perceptions of what the normative consensus is in a given culture) has been demonstrated in a number of recent cross-cultural studies (for reviews, see Chiu et al., 2010; Weber & Morris, 2010). For example, cultural differences in blame attribution (Shteynberg, Gelfand, & Kim, 2009) and in various culturally typical behaviors (Zou et al., 2009) depend upon the degree to which individuals perceive descriptive norms to be collectivistic.

Notably, those in non-Western (Japanese) and Western (Australians) contexts vary not only in the extent to which their behavior is consistent with their personal preferences, but also in their beliefs regarding the extent to which personal preferences and behavior *should* be consistent (Kashima, Siegal, Tanaka, & Kashima, 1992). In non-Western contexts people demonstrate greater tolerance toward such inconsistencies (Triandis, 1989). Consistent with this reasoning, a study on what Americans call hypocrisy (Effron, Szczurek, Muramoto, Markus, & Maluk, 2014) explored reactions to people who behaved in an attitude inconsistent fashion (e.g., a teacher who urged students not to smoke in the classroom but was seen smoking on vacation). Americans made much harsher condemnations of such people—judging them to be hypocritical and insincere—than did Japanese or Indonesian respondents. In effect, the stress on attitude-behavior consistency and the search for it may reflect an injunctive norm (Cialdini et al., 1990) present in Western contexts but not in non-Western ones (Spencer-Rodgers et al., 2010). Altogether, this research supports the notion that people in non-Western contexts are less prone to

behave in accordance with their personal preferences. Instead, we suggest, they are likely to behave in line with their normative-contextual attitudes—attitudes that encapsulate social norms related to particular contexts, rather than personal preferences. This suggests, for example, that as opposed to common practice in the West, measuring attitudes as personal preferences may not be helpful when attempting to predict behavior in non-Western contexts. We return to this implication later.

**Coping.** Research reviewed earlier suggests that, in line with a person-centric attitude model, accessible attitudes, conceptualized as personal preferences, ease the choice process and lead to better decisions (Fazio, 2000). Yet we suggest that to fulfill the coping function properly in non-Western contexts, the content of the accessible attitudes should be culture-specific.

Accessible person-centric attitudes will ease decision making in Western contexts, where people tend to make decisions based on personal preferences. However, such accessible person-centric attitudes will be less beneficial in non-Western contexts, where people give more weight to norms and contexts when making decisions. Although this proposition has not been addressed empirically, some studies provide indirect evidence. Suh (2002), for example, showed that identity consistency is less crucial for the subjective well-being of Koreans than of North Americans. Thus, having clarity about one's own personal beliefs and values—something that seems central in Western contexts—appears less important for effective functioning in non-Western contexts (Cross, Gore, & Morris, 2003). As another example, recent studies show that, whereas Japanese respondents report more negative self-focused feelings than Americans, the links between these feelings and well-being are significantly weaker for Japanese than for Americans, and this holds for psychological health (e.g., life satisfaction) as well as for physical health (e.g., inflammation; Curhan et al., *in press*; Miyamoto et al., 2013). Instead, in non-Western contexts clarity about normative standards is important for effective functioning. According to the normative-contextual model, when normative and contextual inputs are inconsistent with a personal preference, a highly accessible personal preference may actually interfere with adaptive decision making. As a result, in non-Western contexts people should be less satisfied with decisions that are based on highly accessible personal preferences, especially when those personal preferences do not comport with relevant norms. To ease decision making and to achieve postdecision satisfaction, those in non-Western contexts need to develop and maintain accessible normative-contextual attitudes, which will rely heavily on normative knowledge (rather than on personal preferences).

Effective coping thus differs across cultures. In the person-centric model, the presence of the object activates the personal preference (i.e., attitude) that is linked to it (Fazio, 2000). The stronger the association between the object and the personal preference, the more effectively one copes with situations requiring decision making. Here, an object may also activate a norm that is associated with it, but this norm is less strongly related to the object than is the personal preference. By contrast, in the normative-contextual model, the context activates a context-specific representation of the object, which then activates the normative-contextual attitude. The stronger the association between the object and the normative-contextual attitude, the more effectively one copes with decision demands. Here, the context

and the object may also activate a personal preference; however, the stronger that association, the *less* effectively one copes with decision demands.

This suggests that whereas accessible personal preferences confer decision-making benefits for people in Western contexts, for people in non-Western contexts accessible personal preferences may be a liability. In the normative-contextual model of attitudes, accessible attitudes function as coping mechanisms only to the extent that they summarize relevant normative standards and facilitate socially appropriate behavior.

**Self-expression versus social embeddedness.** Whereas in the person-centric model attitudes are used to express one's own unique characteristics, in the normative-contextual model, attitudes are used to enhance relational embeddedness. People in Western contexts tend to construe themselves as relatively separate or independent from others (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). For instance, when asked "Who are you?" Americans are likely to describe themselves in terms of personal attributes such as "artistic" or "kind." In contrast, those in non-Western contexts construe themselves as interdependent and socially embedded with others. When Japanese are asked to describe themselves, they are more likely to do so in terms of their social roles, such as "daughter" or "employee" (Cousins, 1989). Furthermore, on the Twenty Statements Test (Kuhn & McPartland, 1954), those in Western cultures are more likely to include beliefs, personal preferences, and attitudes in descriptions of themselves than are those in non-Western cultures (Bond & Cheung, 1983; Cousins, 1989; Kanagawa, Cross, & Markus, 2001). As a consequence, changes in social roles across contexts lead the interdependent self to be inconsistent and situation-dependent (Cross et al., 2003; English & Chen, 2007; Kanagawa et al., 2001; Suh, 2002).

For people in Western contexts the self is defined as autonomous and distinct. Consequently, in such contexts, uniqueness in beliefs and choices is often valued over conformity. For instance, Americans are more likely to choose products that are distinct and stand out rather than ones that are common and blend in with those selected by others (Kim & Markus, 1999). The reverse is true for Koreans, who are likely to define the self as embedded within a network of roles and relationships. It should be noted that this preference for conformity in non-Western contexts is driven by relevant social norms. Cultural differences in preference for conformity are much less evident when concern about negative evaluations no longer exists (Yamagishi, Hashimoto, & Schug, 2008). Embeddedness encourages assimilation toward or adjustment to one's ingroups, whereas uniqueness is often discouraged and viewed as detrimental to social harmony (Cousins, 1989; Kim & Drolet, 2003; Kim & Markus, 1999; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1989). Indeed, expression of unique personal preferences may convey the impression that one is immature, selfish, or not willing to adjust (Chen et al., 1998). Thus, people in non-Western contexts should be less likely to possess or express unique personal preferences, preferring to maintain attitudes that are similar to those of others. In this way, their attitudes serve as a means of connecting to others and affirming their relationships and roles, rather than as a mechanism for expressing their uniqueness (Brewer & Chen, 2007).

The tendency to conform or to fit in, prevalent in non-Western cultures, does not indicate that autonomy is unimportant in these cultural contexts. Self-determination theory emphasizes the uni-

versal importance of autonomy (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2006), and research from this perspective has shown that autonomy is associated with well-being in various collectivist cultures (e.g., Chirkov, Ryan, & Willness, 2005; Jang, Reeve, Ryan, & Kim, 2009; Sheldon, Elliot, Kim, & Kasser, 2001). To the extent that social expectations and norms constitute the interdependent self, those in non-Western contexts can experience a sense of autonomy and satisfaction even when they behave according to social expectations (Miller et al., 2011). Indeed, according to the normative-contextual model, normative influence is not experienced as a struggle against the self for personal control. Instead, normative choices will often feel right and deliberate.

These cross-cultural differences in the emphasis on self versus others (D. Cohen & Gunz, 2002; Cousins, 1989; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Rhee, Uleman, Lee, & Roman, 1995; Triandis, 1989) invite a reconsideration of the self-expressive function of attitudes. In contexts where the normative-contextual model prevails and self-concepts tend to be situation-dependent (Suh, 2002), the use of attitudes for self-expression will be less effective in conveying an enduring image of the self. The fact that attitudes of people in non-Western contexts (compared to those in Western contexts) are more significantly shaped by a consideration of others' reactions (Aaker & Maheswaran, 1997) will result in attitudes that are more expressive of social consensus than of personal identities (Suh, Diener, Oishi, & Triandis, 1998; Triandis, 1989). For this reason, the Japanese cashier from the opening vignette thought that the knowledge that the chosen artwork was preferred by others in one's ingroup would be desirable, whereas the American woman thought that this diminished her individuality. Indeed, Aaker and Schmitt (2001) showed that people with an independent self-construal (i.e., Americans) tend to hold attitudes that express how distinct they are from others, whereas people with an interdependent self-construal (i.e., Chinese) tend to hold attitudes that express how similar they are to others. Escalas and Bettman (2005) showed that connections between self-concepts and brands are generally stronger when brand images are consistent with people's ingroups. However, outgroup brand associations had a stronger negative effect on self-brand connections among independent consumers (e.g., Anglo whites) compared to interdependent consumers (e.g., Asians and Hispanics). This is in line with the assumptions of the normative-contextual model: Those with an independent (vs. interdependent) self-construal have a greater focus on expressing differentiation from others through the preferences they adopt.

Furthermore, the emphasis on self-expression is culturally contingent. Research suggests that people in non-Western contexts assign less value to the very act of personal self-expression and thus are less prone to engage in it (Kim & Sherman, 2007). For example, as opposed to Americans, who perceive speech as a means of self-expression, Koreans tend to perceive it as a means of relationship maintenance. Moreover, the importance of self-expression to Americans leads them to be more committed to the preferences they verbally express (Kim & Sherman, 2007).

Finally, in contexts where the normative-contextual model prevails, because attitudes are less personally self-expressive, attitudes are less likely to be seen as stemming from personal dispositions. Inferences from attitudinal expression will instead focus on social roles and group identity. For example, in explaining what causes a person's behavior, people in Western contexts tend to pay

attention to the actor's personal dispositions and explain behaviors accordingly ("He bought an Audi because *he* is spoiled and *he* likes comfort."). On the other hand, when explaining behavior, people in non-Western contexts tend to consider a broader set of factors (Choi, Nisbett, & Norenzayan, 1999; Markus, Uchida, Omoregie, Townsend, & Kitayama, 2006; Morris & Peng, 1994), including the situation or the norm ("Driving an Audi *is expected* for someone of his *social position*."). As a result, Japanese are less likely than Americans to explain a person's behavior in terms of personal characteristics (Nisbett et al., 2001), and are less likely to infer a person's attitude based on observing their behavior (Masuda & Kitayama, 2004).

**Group-level functions.** Guided by the person-centric view, each of the attitude functions proposed by the seminal functional theories (Katz, 1960; Smith et al. 1956) address individual-level goals served by attitudes. Even with respect to functions involving the social environment (e.g., social adjustment), the focus is on individual-level goals. This may reflect the fact that group-level functioning is not a primary concern in Western cultural contexts. In non-Western cultural contexts, however, ingroup functioning is a fundamental concern. Maintaining social order, harmony, trust, and cohesion are essential in such contexts (e.g., Morling & Fiske, 1999). Attitudinally congruent social networks may be helpful not only to individuals in a group (e.g., Visser & Mirabile, 2004) but also to the group as a whole. Research has established that attitude similarity enhances interpersonal attraction (e.g., Byrne, 1961; Byrne & Nelson, 1965). In turn, interpersonal attraction, as well as perceived and actual similarity, may contribute to cohesive and harmonious relationships within the social group (Hogg, 1993; Lott & Lott, 1965) and to a sense of trust among group members (see Tajfel & Turner, 1986; see also Foddy & Dawes, 2008; Tanis & Postmes, 2005). When such ingroup goals are salient, attitudinal processes may be directed toward achieving these goals. We suggest that theorizing about attitudes would be enriched by addressing such group-level functions within a normative-contextual framework.

## The Formation of Attitudes

In cultural contexts where the normative-contextual model prevails, distinct processes of attitude formation can be expected. People in Western contexts, who tend to be analytic thinkers, "separate and distinguish" among objects or between objects and their contexts (Nisbett et al., 2001; Oyserman & Lee, 2007). People in non-Western contexts often have a relatively holistic style of attention that is oriented to the relationship between the object and the context in which it is embedded (Ji, Peng, & Nisbett 2000). Holistic thinkers tend to "integrate and connect" objects in their environment, including focal and background elements (Nisbett et al., 2001; Oyserman & Lee, 2007). For example, when asked to recall a visual scene, the memory of Japanese for focal objects in that scene was impacted by changes in the background. In contrast, Americans' memory for focal objects was independent of the background (Masuda & Nisbett, 2001). The holistic pattern of attention was also found among other non-Western populations such as Russians (Grossmann, 2009; Kühnen et al., 2001), Central and Eastern Europeans (Varnum et al., 2008), and Arabs (Zebian & Denny, 2001). Farming and fishing communities (vs. herding communities; Uskul, Kitayama, & Nisbett, 2008), Orthodox Jews

(vs. secular Jews; Varnum et al., 2010), and working-class (vs. middle-class) adults also show a more holistic pattern of attention.

Thus, in places where the normative-contextual model prevails, attitudes are more dependent on contextual information (e.g., where a product comes from, what other brands are associated with it). For instance, Gürhan-Canli and Maheswaran (2000) showed that the country of origin of a brand affected Japanese brand preferences to a greater degree than it affected American brand preferences (see also Ulgado & Lee, 1998, for a similar finding comparing Koreans and Americans).

Monga and John (2007) showed that consumers from India are more likely than American consumers to accept "brand extensions" (new products launched by known brands), even when those extensions seem not to fit with the parent brand's important attributes. Thus, they evaluate the prospect of Kodak filing cabinets or McDonald's chocolates more favorably. These differences are linked directly to consumers' thinking styles (Monga & John, 2007, 2010). Consider the hypothetical Coca Cola brand extension from the opening vignette, "Coke popcorn" (Monga & John, 2009). Analytic thinkers are likely to react negatively to that prospect, implicitly assuming that all items in the Coke-branded category will share a key feature—their flavor. Holistic thinkers do not make such assumptions because they assume that items that share a category may share a relationship. Because holistic (vs. analytic) thinkers are able to think of alternative ways to relate the extension to the parent brand (you could use your Sony mobile devices during your vacation at the Sony resort), they perceive such extensions to fit better, and hence they evaluate them more favorably. Indeed, consumers with an interdependent versus independent self-construal enjoy a "relational processing advantage" when evaluating such objects (Ahluwalia, 2008).

These processing differences have implications for fundamental consumer perceptions as well, such as the perceived links among product attributes (Lalwani & Shavitt, 2013). Thus, compared to consumers from the United States, those from India are more likely to believe that price and quality are related attributes and that "you get what you pay for." Moreover, although people in general evaluate expensive products better than their cheaper counterparts, consumers in non-Western (vs. Western) cultural contexts who tend to process holistically are more influenced by price cues when evaluating certain products. Indeed, Hispanic and Asian consumers are more likely than European Americans to evaluate the quality of an alarm clock or a calculator based on its price. These differences are mediated by differences in consumers' holistic thinking tendencies (Lalwani & Shavitt, 2013).

Studies comparing participants with independent and interdependent self-construals also show differences in the extent to which immediate contextual factors impact evaluations. For example, Jain, Desai, and Mao (2007, Study 3), showed that participants with an interdependent self-construal judged the fat content of snacks differently when they were placed in a taxonomic setting (e.g., placing reduced fat cookies with all other cookies) versus a goal-driven setting (e.g., placing them with other healthy foods). Those with an independent self-construal judged the fat content similarly regardless of the snacks' placement. In addition, those with an interdependent versus independent self-construal were more influenced by a retail store's reputation when evaluating the products sold there (Lee & Shavitt, 2006). For interdependent consumers, microwaves sold at a high-reputation store such as

Marshall Fields generated more favorable attitudes than the very same microwaves sold at a lower reputation store such as Kmart.

The normative-contextual model highlights the possibility that cultural factors influence not only how heavily social and contextual factors are weighted in attitude formation, they also influence the processes by which they exert their impact. This has implications for the application of dual-process models of persuasion. For people in non-Western contexts, social factors are more likely to be processed as central information than as peripheral cues. Thus, they impact attitude formation under high motivation conditions through elaborated processing. For instance, social consensus information influences Hong Kong consumers' brand evaluations regardless of their level of motivation (Aaker & Maheswaran, 1997), in contrast to American consumers, who consider social consensus cues primarily when they are not sufficiently motivated to engage in elaborated processing (Maheswaran & Chaiken, 1991). More generally, the normative-contextual model does not assign peripheral status to social and contextual information. Instead, in contexts where the normative-contextual model prevails, the distinction between central arguments and peripheral cues such as popularity or the attractiveness of endorsers may be less salient and less meaningful. Holistic thinkers are likely to see these types of information as interconnected, and as a result the normative and contextual cues they receive become integral to their attitudes and fundamental to shaping their behavior (see Figure 1).

Finally, the normative-contextual model highlights an additional implication not anticipated by the person-centric model: a need to revisit theorizing about not only the way that information is processed but also the very perception of an attitude object. People in Western contexts, who tend to be analytic thinkers, perceive objects as separate from their context. However, for holistic thinkers, objects are perceived as embedded in their context (Nisbett, 2003). For example, Zhu and Meyers-Levy (2009) showed that holistic thinkers are more likely to view a product and the table on which it is displayed as continuous parts of a larger whole, whereas analytic thinkers view the product and the display table as separate pieces of data, suggesting that holistic thinkers view attitude objects as more interconnected with their context. Evaluating an object in the abstract, something that is central to person-centric theorizing and research, may seem to people in non-Western contexts like a less meaningful exercise.

If objects are perceived as interconnected with their context, then their nature should change with the context. The normative-contextual model highlights implications for the degree to which attitudes will exhibit internal consistency versus duality, and the extent to which they will be stable across situations versus being malleable and adapted to the context, as described next.

## The Characteristics of Attitudes

**Internal consistency versus duality.** In the normative-contextual model, attitude duality is expected. Differences between people in Western and non-Western contexts in their views of contradictions (Peng & Nisbett, 1999; Wong et al., 2003) lead to variations in the reaction to contradictory arguments and attitudes. Non-Western perceptions of change, expectations of instability, and emphasis on contextual information promote beliefs that readily accept contradictions (Nisbett, 2003).

A person-centric model does not account for duality or address its role in attitudinal processes. Western thought evolved from the Greek philosophical heritage and Aristotelian logical thinking, characterized by a reliance on axioms and definitions. Three key principles are emphasized—the law of identity (“A equals A”), the law of noncontradiction (“A cannot be equal to not-A”), and the law of excluded middle (“A is either B or not-B”)—all of which rely on the assumption that there can only be one truth (Peng & Nisbett, 1999). Eastern philosophy, on the other hand, stresses that everything needs to be assessed in its context. Heavily influenced by Confucianism and Dao/Taoism, which emphasize harmony and the coexistence of opposites (as represented by Yin in Yang in the writings of Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching—The book of the way and its virtue*), these philosophies regard reality as complex, flexible, and constantly changing (Feng, 1962; King & Bond, 1985). Eastern philosophy, thus, emphasizes three principles: the principle of change (“reality is a process”), the principle of contradiction (“integration of opposites”), and the principle of relationship or holism (“everything is connected”). These distinct perspectives lead people in non-Western contexts to be more comfortable with contradictions compared to those in Western contexts (Peng & Nisbett, 1999; Spencer-Rodgers et al., 2010; Wong et al., 2003).<sup>4</sup>

Indeed, Peng and Nisbett (1999) suggested that European Americans tend to differentiate between arguments, choosing which one is true, whereas the Chinese tend to seek a “middle way” to reconcile opposing arguments. They showed that there are many more dialectical proverbs in Chinese than in English, that the Chinese express a greater preference for dialectical proverbs than do European Americans, and that the Chinese prefer dialectical solutions to social contradictions. When exposed to incongruent information in decision making, people in Western contexts focus on and rely primarily upon the more diagnostic information (Aaker & Sengupta, 2000; Feldman & Lynch, 1988; Maheswaran & Chaiken, 1991). In contrast, in contexts where a normative-contextual model prevails, people may not perceive things to be incongruous just because they differ in valence. Instead, those in non-Western contexts exhibit an integrative approach when faced with evaluatively inconsistent data, combining various informational pieces (Aaker & Sengupta, 2000; Aaker & Maheswaran, 1997).

The tendency of people in non-Western contexts to accept duality and contradiction results in distinct patterns of survey responding, such as greater acquiescence and the expression of more moderate (less extreme) attitudes (Hamamura, Heine, & Paulhus, 2008; Johnson, Shavitt, & Holbrook, 2011). People in Western and non-Western contexts also differ in their responses to mixed-worded items in scales, with those in non-Western contexts exhibiting less consistency between positively- and negatively-worded items, because they “view these items as related parts of a larger order” (Wong et al., 2003, p. 86). Further, compared to people in non-Western contexts, those in Western contexts are more affected by appeals that emphasize consistency with their

<sup>4</sup> Relatedly, Levine (1985) posited that Thurstonian notions of univocal (person-centric) attitudes do not fit across cultural contexts, because people often subscribe to logically contradictory judgments (Merton, 1968). As an example, in the Amharic culture, people not only accept but also nurture and celebrate ambiguous characteristics of language and feelings.

previously expressed attitudes (Cialdini, Wosinska, Barrett, Butler, & Gornik-Durose, 1999) and are more likely to act consistently with their prior compliance (Petrova, Cialdini, & Sills, 2007).

Studies on emotions provide further evidence along these lines. Bagozzi, Wong, and Yi (1999) and Kitayama, Markus, and Kurokawa (2000) showed that people in Western contexts experience emotions in a bipolar way, exhibiting strong negative correlations between negative and positive self-reported emotions (see also Sims, Tsai, Wang, Fung, & Zhang, 2014). People in non-Western contexts, on the other hand, experience emotions in a dialectic way, exhibiting weak correlations between negative and positive emotions (Leu et al., 2010). Schimmack, Oishi, and Diener (2002) examined which cultural aspects underlie the variations between people in non-Western and Western contexts in their propensity to express mixed emotions. Their results suggest that this effect is mediated by dialectic thinking. Williams and Aaker (2002) showed that Asian Americans' propensity to accept mixed emotions leads them to express more favorable attitudes toward appeals containing mixed emotions (as opposed to purely happy or purely sad appeals). Anglo Americans, on the other hand, express greater discomfort when exposed to appeals that contain mixed emotions.

In sum, people in non-Western contexts are more prone than those in Western contexts to express and accept duality, and to possess attitudes that, in terms of the traditional person-centric model, would be viewed as incongruent. An implication of this is that such internal inconsistencies may be more common in a non-Western than in a Western context. Indeed, people in non-Western and Western contexts react differently to cognitive dissonance. In line with classic person-centric attitudinal research (Festinger, 1957; Festinger & Carlsmith, 1959), Heine and Lehman (1997) found that Canadian participants justified decisions that were inconsistent with their attitudes through dissonance reduction. In contrast, Japanese participants showed no evidence of dissonance reduction efforts. In other words, whereas a person-centric model assumes that internal inconsistencies are aversive, for Japanese respondents, inconsistencies between various facets of their attitudes did not pose a threat, and thus were not uncomfortable. Interestingly, in a later study (Hoshino-Browne et al., 2005), non-Westerners did engage in dissonance reduction when they made suboptimal decisions for other people. Here dissonance reduction was a means of protecting the social self—an important aspect of non-Westerners' self-views. Thus, overall, people in non-Western contexts tend to be more tolerant toward inconsistencies in their attitudes and engage in dissonance reduction only when the dissonance is related to interpersonal issues or when others are explicitly implicated in the decision process (Imada & Kitayama, 2010; Kitayama et al., 2004; see Olson & Stone, 2005).<sup>5</sup>

In line with this, recent research shows that those with an interdependent self-concept (i.e., Koreans) compared to those with independent self-concept (i.e., Americans) hold less coherent preferences, and their preference judgments are more likely to violate the rules of transitivity and context independence (Park, Choi, Koo, Sul, & Choi, 2013).<sup>6</sup> However, when preference judgments were made on brands for which social norms dictate socially consensual preferences, a reverse pattern was found such that those with interdependent (vs. independent) self-concepts showed more coherent preferences. A similar tendency was demonstrated in a study by Kim and Drolet (2009), which showed that Asian Amer-

icans' greater social concerns (vs. European Americans) led them to choose more branded products (communicating high social status) over generic brands (communicating lower social status).

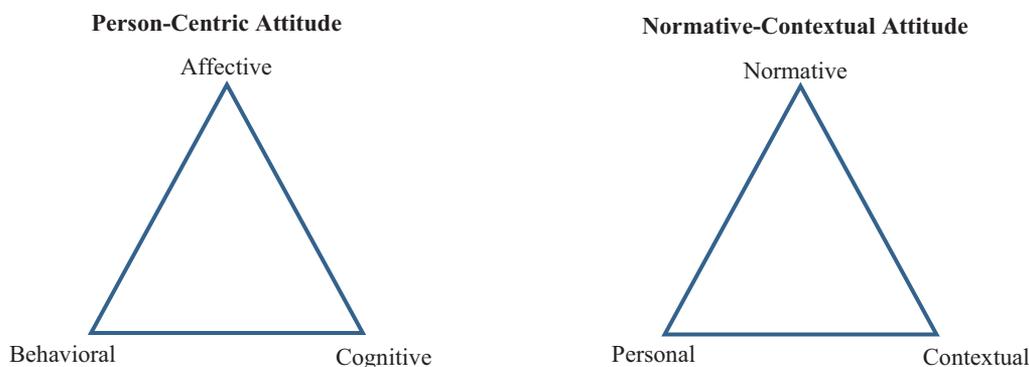
Consequently, our model emphasizes a different form of consistency: Instead of affective, cognitive, and behavioral attitude components—all of which have an intrapersonal source—the focal components of normative-contextual attitudes are personal, contextual, and normative, and there will be pressure for consistency between these components (see Figure 3).

**Stability versus malleability.** In contrast to the person-centric model of attitudes, which stresses that attitudes are predispositions and thus should remain relatively stable over time, the normative-contextual model posits malleability of attitudes. There are a number of reasons to expect instability of attitudes in non-Western contexts. First, if attitudes of people in non-Western contexts are more internally inconsistent (e.g., Choi & Choi, 2002; Ng, Hynie, & MacDonald, 2012), then attitudinal content with different evaluative implications may be sampled and retrieved in different situations (Cialdini et al., 1999; Iyengar & Brockner, 2001; Petrova et al., 2007). This would result in expressing different attitudes across occasions. Second, if as described earlier, contradictory opinions are perceived as more acceptable in non-Western cultural contexts, then people in non-Western contexts may feel more comfortable in expressing different evaluations over time. Third, the greater attention to contextual factors in non-Western settings, which may lead to a greater weighting of situational factors when forming attitudes, may also lead to attitudinal instability. For people in non-Western contexts attributions, person descriptions, and judgments tend to be relatively context-dependent compared to those in Western contexts (Ji et al., 2000; Knowles, Morris, Chiu, & Hong, 2001; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Masuda et al., 2008; Masuda & Nisbett, 2001; Miller, 1984; Morris & Peng, 1994). Indeed, contextual factors are integrated into the representation of the attitude object (Zhu & Meyers-Levy, 2009). As situational factors change, objects and their associated attitudes should also be in flux.

Fourth, attitude strength may vary across cultural contexts. The stronger the link between the object and one's evaluation of the object, the more readily the evaluation will come to mind (i.e., the more accessible it will be) and the stronger the attitude will be (Krosnick & Petty, 1995). Because attitude strength de-

<sup>5</sup> Although some cross-cultural studies have reported minimal or null effects of culture on the internal consistency of attitude scales (Cronbach's alpha; e.g., Cervellon & Dubé, 2002; Durvasula, Andrews, Lysonski, & Netemeyer, 1993), it should be noted that published research may not provide a sufficient evidence base for comparing internal consistency across cultures. Scale data reported in published articles are expected to meet high standards of measurement equivalence across cultures (Shavitt, Lee, & Johnson, 2008), giving rise to a potential file-drawer issue. Empirical tests of this normative-contextual proposition should be conducted with the goal of assessing internal consistency, rather than of establishing it in order to address a different hypothesis. It would also be important to study domains that are not associated with substantive differences across cultures (e.g., differences in attitude extremity, familiarity, or incongruity between attitude components; see Cervellon & Dubé, 2002).

<sup>6</sup> "Transitivity states that if one prefers A over B, and B over C, then he/she should prefer A over C. Context independence states that if A is preferred to B out of the choice set [A, B], then introducing a third alternative C, and expanding the choice set to [A, B, C] should not make B preferable to A" (Park, Choi, Koo, Sul, & Choi, 2013, p. 107).



*Figure 3.* Pressure toward consistency in the Person-Centric (P-C) versus Normative-Contextual (N-C) models. In the P-C model, internal consistency is achieved through consistency between the affective, behavioral, and cognitive components of attitude. When these components are inconsistent, the person experiences dissonance, which is aversive and thus leads to changing the components to reach consistency. In the N-C model, the focus is not on pressure toward reaching consistency among the affective, behavioral, and cognitive components. Rather, there is pressure toward achieving consistency between the personal, normative, and contextual components of attitude. See the online article for the color version of this figure.

creases with attitude inconsistency (i.e., ambivalent attitudes are weaker attitudes; Thompson et al., 1995), the attitudes of people in non-Western contexts may be weaker than of those in Western contexts. Attitude strength also predicts the extent to which an attitude is stable (Petty & Krosnick, 1995). Thus, if attitudes of people in non-Western contexts are weaker and less accessible, these attitudes will also be more malleable.

Finally, cultural differences in attitude stability may also stem from variations in self-concept consistency. Americans appear to be more consistent over time than Japanese in their preferences for things such as favorite music artists, TV shows, restaurants, hair styles, shampoos, and actors (Wilken, Miyamoto, & Uchida, 2011). Moreover, Americans' preference consistency increases with the expressive value of the product category (i.e., higher consistency for products that are highly expressive of self-concept, such as hairstyles, vs. less expressive products, such as shampoo). This suggests that preference consistency is related to self-concept consistency. Because self-concepts in non-Western versus Western contexts are more likely to be modified over time and situations, as described earlier (e.g., Cross et al., 2003; English & Chen, 2007; Kanagawa et al., 2001; Suh, 2002), the attitudes of people in these contexts should also be more malleable.

In line with our premise about instability of normative-contextual attitudes, people in non-Western compared to Western cultural contexts have a greater tendency toward impression management (Lalwani et al., 2006). In non-Western cultural contexts, such impression management adapts expressed attitudes to prevailing norms, fostering social embeddedness. This effort can be seen as a specific manifestation of attitude instability. Furthermore, for people in non-Western contexts impression management in response to attitude questions occurs more automatically and with less effort than it does for those in Western contexts, suggesting that those in non-Western contexts are more practiced in adjusting their attitudes to the normative considerations (Riemer & Shavitt, 2011). This relative automaticity of attitude adjustment is in line with the malleable nature of normative-contextual attitudes.

### The Normative-Contextual Model Compared to Other Attitude-Relevant Theories

Over the years, some attitude theories have attempted to address the role of context in much more depth than did others. Here, we discuss examples of existing approaches to attitudes and point to common ideas, as well as to ways in which our normative-contextual model differs from or expands upon the views of others.

Triandis (1989) delineated three aspects of the self—private, public, and collective—each of which has a different probability of being sampled in different cultural contexts. These different probabilities, in turn, lead to differences in the influence of each type of self on social behavior. This seminal view focused on the role of culture in the manifestation of the self. Although it did not deal specifically with the role of culture in shaping attitude characteristics and processes, Triandis's analysis implied that in contexts where the public or collective selves (vs. private selves) are sampled, different influences on social behavior will be observed. Our normative-contextual view of attitudes is informed by Triandis's insights and applies them to expanding the construct of attitudes to better address non-Western cultural contexts.

As reviewed earlier, the theory of reasoned action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) and its later extension, the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1988, 1991), are perhaps the most influential theoretical perspectives to address normative-contextual factors in the attitudes literature. According to these theories, behavioral intentions (the most proximal predictors of action) are predicted by one's attitude toward an act and the subjective norms one associates with the act. These foundational perspectives highlight the role of social norms in the understanding of attitude-behavior relationships. The normative-contextual model builds on these theoretical insights and goes a step further. Rather than conceptualizing attitudes and subjective norms as separate constructs, in the normative-contextual model, norms are conceptualized as embedded within attitudes to form a unified construct. Here one's own leaning toward or liking of a target

becomes so infused with prevailing norms that one does not separate the two. Such attitudes represent the “glad concurrence” of one’s own preference with the preferences of others (for a related idea about duty, see Miller, Chakravarthy, & Das, 2008). As suggested earlier, this conceptualization may help to explain or predict a wider range of attitude-related phenomena in non-Western contexts beyond attitude-behavior consistency.

Recent cross-cultural work provides another important perspective on normative influence. As mentioned earlier, Chiu et al. (2010) stress that intersubjective perceptions (people’s perceptions of the normative consensus) can better explain actions than do personal values and beliefs (see also Shteynberg et al., 2009; Weber & Morris, 2010; Zou et al., 2009). Our normative-contextual model is in resonance with this emphasis. In places where the normative-contextual model prevails, attitudes incorporate perceptions of the normative consensus. Our framework suggests that the effect of such intersubjective perceptions on actions will be more pronounced in certain cultural contexts (e.g., non-Western ones) than in others (see also Gelfand et al., 2011). Furthermore, whereas the intersubjective approach distinguishes between individuals’ personal values and beliefs and their intersubjective perceptions, we stress that in non-Western cultural contexts there will be a confluence between intersubjective perceptions and one’s personal preferences to such an extent that it may be difficult to distinguish between them. What is experienced as intersubjectively normative is good.

As mentioned earlier, findings of low stability in self-reported political attitudes led Converse (1974) to introduce the concept of *nonattitudes*. In Converse’s view, when asked questions about their attitudes, people may often make up responses on the spot, and largely at random, in order to avoid appearing ignorant. However, these self-reports are best understood as “counterfeit” attitudes, not genuinely felt opinions (Saris & Sniderman, 2004). This view, like ours, emphasized the role of context in driving judgments. However, Converse’s perspective cast contextual variability as a signal of attitude invalidity (and therefore measurement error). In contrast, the normative-contextual model does not view contextual variability as problematic. Rather, it emphasizes that when people construe themselves as parts of larger encompassing social wholes, the context is a primary consideration. Consequently, attitudes properly adapt to and vary with their context, such that people may possess multiple evaluations of objects, each of which references the norms and expectations of a relevant context.

Wilson et al.’s (2000) model of *dual attitudes* first proposed the idea of multiple attitudes attached to an object that are accessed at different points in time. This model emphasizes the coexistence of two different types of attitudes: an implicit attitude that is stable and an explicit attitude that changes with the context. Explicit attitudes are more conscious, and retrieving them is relatively effortful. When cognitive capacity is limited, implicit attitudes are more likely to drive responding. Thus, implicit attitudes manifest greater stability. Our normative-contextual model is consistent with this important emphasis on incorporating variability into the attitude construct. Yet in the normative-contextual model of attitudes, neither explicit nor implicit attitudes are necessarily stable. In sociocultural contexts where the normative-contextual model prevails, attitudes as a whole may be malleable and adaptable, and their adaptation to context may be relatively effortless. The model of dual attitudes (Wilson et al., 2000) anticipates inconsistency between explicit and implicit attitudes (Kar-

pinski & Hilton, 2001). At the same time, Kobayashi and Greenwald (2003) showed that the implicit-explicit discrepancy was greater for Westerners (Americans) than for non-Westerners (Japanese). This may appear to be at odds with our proposition that attitudes of people in Western contexts tend to be more stable and consistent than attitudes of those in non-Western contexts. It is possible, however, that in East Asian contexts, dialecticism has been inscribed in cultural practices and habitual patterns of thought to the degree that adjustment of implicit attitudes has become spontaneous, and thus both implicit and explicit attitudes are malleable according to social contexts, which in turn results in greater consistency between implicit and explicit attitudes.

Notably, our normative-contextual model does not propose a distinction between true and stable implicit attitudes on the one hand and malleable and less valid explicit attitudes on the other. This distinction is meaningful within a person-centric perspective, where attitudes that reflect personal preferences are seen as genuine, and attitudes that are responsive to contexts are strategic expressions that mask one’s true preferences. From a normative-contextual perspective, attitudes are often responsive to situational expectations. The normative-contextual model highlights the need to expand theorizing to address the validity of attitudes that are malleable, adaptive, and context-dependent. These attitudes are genuine and can be implicit and automatic or explicit and controlled.

In recent work, Yoshida et al. (2012) significantly expanded the implicit-explicit attitude distinction to address explicit and implicit normative evaluations (automatic associations about societal evaluations). Yoshida et al. showed that explicit normative evaluations predicted actual behavior in Asian Canadians even under depleted conditions, which was not the case for European Canadians (Study 2). Moreover, implicit normative evaluations had a direct relation with behavior for Asian Canadians but an inverse relation with behavior for European Canadians. These findings support the notion that normatively based evaluations can be automatic.

The constructivist view of attitudes emphasizes the degree to which attitudinal responses are subject to contextual influences. According to this influential perspective, attitude judgments are constructed on the spot, based on information and inference rules that are most accessible at that point in time (Schwarz, 2006; Schwarz & Bohner, 2001). This constructivist view has been supported in various domains, such as judgments of behavior (e.g., Fazio, 1987; Olson, 1990), thoughts and feelings (e.g., Chaiken & Yates, 1985; Wilson & Hodges, 1992), moods (e.g., Forgas, 1992; Petty, Schumann, Richman, & Strathman, 1993), and social contexts (e.g., Strack, 1992), as summarized by Wilson et al. (2000). The normative-contextual model shares this emphasis on malleability and responsiveness to context. The normative-contextual model, however, highlights that these contexts are made up of and delineated by specific prevailing norms and social expectations and thus are systematic and predictable. The normative-contextual model, for example, predicts that in many contexts outside the West, attitude content will be more responsive to the views of others, to norms, and to the features of the context than to object attributes and person-centric characteristics.

Finally, Weber and Morris’s (2010) dynamic constructivist approach to culture shifts the focus from differences in the values or practices of people associated with particular cultural groups to differences in culturally relevant environmental factors (e.g., the

density of social networks, the contents of media portrayals). These observable environmental factors foster the constructive processes that shape cultural styles of judgment and decision-making (including causal attributions, conflict decisions, risk perceptions, etc.; see also Briley et al., 2014). Our view is resonant with this approach. The normative-contextual model highlights the importance of incorporating the normative environment in which attitudes take shape into psychological theorizing about attitudes, and the insights afforded for conceptualizing attitudinal processes.

### The Normative-Contextual Model: Research Implications and Future Directions

#### Measurement

The normative-contextual model implies the need for new attitudinal metrics that recognize the role of social norms and contexts. Traditional measures use two main approaches to capture the evaluative property of attitudes: verbal self-reports and observational measures. Regardless of which approach is used, each of these types of measures focuses on the person's assessment of or reaction to an object's characteristics (see Ostrom, Bond, Krosnick, & Sedikides, 1994). One goal emerging from our normative-contextual model is the redesign of attitude metrics to capture contextual variability and normative/ingroup information.

**Contextual variability.** As reviewed earlier, contextual variability in attitude measurement is considered problematic in the person-centric model of attitudes. In contrast, in contexts where the normative-contextual model of attitudes prevails, attitudes toward an object are expected to differ across social contexts. For example, attitudes toward having soup for dinner with a colleague can differ substantially from attitudes toward having soup for dinner with a family member. In the normative-contextual model such differences are of focal interest. It is also worth noting that the range of situations and contexts in which norms play central roles in attitudes may vary with how tight or loose the culture is (see Gelfand et al., 2011).

*Research Goal 1:* Measure the “delta” or change in attitudes across contexts and treat the degree of malleability as a focal variable.

**Normative/ingroup information.** Situational shifting of normative-contextual attitudes is not expected to be random. Instead, its regularity will reflect the norms that prevail in different contexts. Therefore, a good measurement toolkit could incorporate indices that map social networks and (perceptions of) such normative distinctions across the networks. With social network analysis, the interactions among the network of individuals and the flow of the information can be recorded to see how attitudes are formed and influenced (Borgatti, Mehra, Brass, & Labianca 2009). Individuals in a structurally equivalent social network are expected to form similar attitudes (Burt, 1987). This should be more evident among those in normative-contextual contexts as their attitudes are heavily influenced by relevant social norms shared among network members. One would expect, therefore, that attitudes will be more distinctively clustered by social networks in normative-contextual contexts than in person-centric contexts.

More generally, the nature of attitudinal shifts across situations will be informative and diagnostic of the normative environment in which attitudes are enacted. Thus, instead of focusing on a person's reactions measured at the individual level (which is in line with a person-centric model), normative-contextual attitudes could be measured at the ingroup level. Such measurement would involve asking people to report their attitudes in various interpersonal contexts that are meaningful to them, including situations with family members, with friends, with members of their religious/social groups, or with colleagues at school or at work. This can be done similarly to Cousins's (1989) assessment of self-concept, by asking, “How would you describe yourself at home, at school, at work, etc.?” Such measures would also consider normative information, such as, “What would other people think about the attitude object?” (specifying other people or ingroups known to be relevant) or, put differently, “What is the right way to feel about this attitude object?”

*Research Goal 2:* Measure attitudes at the ingroup or interpersonal level.

Efforts to measure attitudes at the ingroup level are in line with the intersubjective approach to understanding cultural differences (Chiu et al., 2010; Fischer et al., 2009; Weber & Morris, 2010; Zou et al., 2009). For example, Fischer et al. (2009) measured individualism-collectivism from a descriptive norm perspective, with reference to the group perceived to be the most important for people. Instead of measuring personal beliefs, these researchers measured perceptions of what most people in this group thought is relevant to individualism-collectivism. Fischer and colleagues found that personal beliefs predicted self-directed behaviors, whereas intersubjective beliefs predicted traditional behaviors. Further, Zou et al. (2009) showed that cultural differences in psychological characteristics are mediated by cultural variation in intersubjective perceptions but not by personal endorsement of such characteristics. Overall, these studies acknowledge the issues in measuring cultural orientation at the individual level and recognize the need for ingroup-level measurement. However, to date, none of this research has addressed attitudes per se.

Oyserman and colleagues' identity-based motivation model (e.g., Oyserman, 2009; Oyserman & Destin, 2010; Oyserman, Fryberg, & Yoder, 2007) further highlights the value of focusing attention on context sensitivity for predicting and (re)shaping health behaviors. These studies showed that in some cases, members of racial or ethnic minorities associated unhealthy behaviors (e.g., eating fried food) with their ingroup norms and behavior labeled as healthy (e.g., flossing teeth) with the outgroup. In effect, participants dismissed healthy behaviors as being “not something we do.” Behavior can be reshaped by drawing people's attention to aspects of their identities whose norms are congruent with healthy behavior. Put differently, attitudes depend on which group-associated norms are highlighted. Measuring and understanding the normative perceptions associated with such attitudes can stimulate more health-promoting attitudes and behaviors.

*Research Goal 3:* Map differences in perceived normative expectations across identities, interpersonal relationships, and contexts. Measure associated shifts in attitudes to char-

acterize norm-attitude covariations and to predict behavior change.

## Theoretical Implications

**Etic versus emic approaches revisited.** As discussed earlier, two approaches can be used to incorporate cultural differences into attitude theorizing: An emic approach would assume that theories and constructs are culture-specific (Berry, 1969), suggesting a need to develop theories within each cultural context. An etic approach, on the other hand, would assume that constructs and theories transcend specific cultures, suggesting that core elements of theorizing and constructs are universal (Berry, 1969; Triandis, 1995). Our perspective, as presented throughout the current article, acknowledges both emic and etic elements. We suggest that the notion of attitudes as behavioral guides is universal but that attitude theorizing as currently formulated is characterized by culture-specific assumptions consistent with a person-centric view. Our proposed conceptualization offers new theoretical insights and new measurement tools that could not have been stimulated by a person-centric model. Future research that draws upon this conceptualization has the potential to reveal new insights about attitudes by attending to their normative-contextual properties. Such insights may lead to a broader conceptualization of attitudes that has value for understanding not only non-Western cultural contexts but Western ones as well.

*Research Goal 4:* Assess normative-contextual properties of attitudes in both Western and non-Western cultural contexts.

**Attitude accessibility, coping, and self-regulation.** As previously described, the normative-contextual model has implications for characterizing effective and ineffective coping with situations that require decision-making. The model can also make predictions about other decision-related effects, such as post-choice satisfaction, dissonance, and depletion. For instance, making decisions has been shown to deplete self-regulatory resources because of the need to contemplate and weigh alternatives, which is effortful (Vohs & Faber, 2007). In the person-centric model, accessible personal preferences may ease decision demands because they facilitate evaluation of the choice alternatives, reducing the depleting effects of choosing. By contrast, in contexts where the normative-contextual model prevails, decisions should be more difficult when personal preferences are highly accessible because they can interfere with the access or use of normative-contextual information. In those cases, decisions may be associated with greater depletion of self-regulatory resources.

*Research Goal 5:* Examine the role of accessibility of various attitude elements in effective coping with decision demands, distinguishing between person-centric attitudes and normative-contextual attitudes.

**Nurturing and suppressing of personal preferences.** Through ongoing engagement with distinct culture cycles of social interactions, institutions, and ideas, people in Western contexts are encouraged to nurture and develop personal preferences. By contrast, people in non-Western contexts are often encouraged to consider the context and to tune their preferences to those of important others or in some cases not to cultivate them at all (Chen

et al., 1998; Miller et al., 1990; Trommsdorff, 2009). Western cultural contexts encourage the development of agency through the expression of one's preferences (Markus & Kitayama, 2003). Many other cultural contexts, on the other hand, encourage the development of agency through referencing and adjusting to others and fitting in with what is the appropriate, right or best way of behaving. People who insist on "going their own way," or are unable to find a compromise between their way and those of others, or fail to consider the implications of their actions for their relationships are often considered immature or unwise and are unlikely to succeed (Butler, Lee, & Gross, 2007; Markus & Kitayama, 2003; Zhang & Shrum, 2009). Future research should examine the ways in which children are reared to express or inhibit their personal preferences and how they develop preferences that are aligned with normative preferences. Such research promises to extend the understanding of socialization processes by highlighting cultural differences in the goals of such processes (the production of independent agency in Western contexts, interdependent agency in non-Western contexts). Our analysis suggests that cultural differences in meta-attitudinal processes would also be a worthwhile focus of future research. Attitudes toward one's personal preferences are likely to be more positive and protective in Western contexts (e.g., Prentice, 1987) than in non-Western ones, and efforts to form, maintain, and express preferences should differ accordingly.

*Research Goal 6:* Identify developmental milestones and mechanisms by which children in normative-contextual contexts develop normatively referenced attitudes and learn to inhibit their personal preferences. Examine methods by which agents of socialization support and reinforce this development.

**Heritability.** Finally, research in Western contexts has shown evidence for the heritability of attitudes (Olson, Vernon, Harris, & Jang, 2001). For example, studies revealed heritable effects in attitudes toward topics such as the death penalty or organized religion (Eaves, Eysenck, & Martin, 1989; Waller, Kojetin, Bouchard, Lykken, & Tellegen, 1990). It was also found that heritability scores predict within-group variance of attitudes (Bourgeois, 2002). Our model suggests that the heritability of attitudes would be weaker in normative-contextual contexts than in person-centric contexts. This is because, in contexts where normative concerns guide attitude formation, attitudes are malleable and heavily influenced by others sharing similar social norms.

## Practical Implications

**Implications for global communication.** The normative-contextual model of attitudes offers important insights for communication. For instance, when designing marketing appeals in non-Western cultural contexts, companies would do well to focus on social factors. Ideas and brands should be promoted by connecting their benefits to specific and relevant social contexts or by emphasizing social consensus (e.g., "90% of the population prefers this brand"; Aaker & Maheswaran, 1997). To increase choice likelihood, brand-image appeals directed at people in non-Western contexts should focus on social approval and normatively appropriate behavior. For example, ideas or products may be more effectively promoted through indirect discussion among people who are in relationships in specific settings rather than through a

single decontextualized advocate appealing directly to the audience. The normative-contextual model of attitudes also has implications for the persuasiveness of mixed advertising appeals. The reviewed literature shows that those in non-Western cultural contexts are more comfortable with contradictions than are those in Western cultural contexts. Marketers should therefore consider that appeals containing both positive and negative messages may be more persuasive in non-Western contexts than in Western contexts (Williams & Aaker, 2002). The greater comfort with contradictions characteristic of consumers in non-Western cultural contexts, coupled with their tendency to process information holistically, suggests that one-sided messages could seem misleading and that mixed appeals may thus be more appropriate.

The normative-contextual model of attitudes also has implications for postchoice cognitive dissonance. For instance, the traditional marketing literature advises marketers to invest effort in helping consumers to resolve postpurchase cognitive dissonance. Tactics such as placing ads to reinforce to consumers that they have made the right decision or providing a gift after the decision has been made are common (and costly) practices in marketing. However, the normative-contextual model implies that investing in the management of postpurchase cognitive dissonance need not be a high priority for marketers in non-Western cultural contexts. The tendency of people in non-Western contexts to hold inconsistent attitudes, and the relative comfort they exhibit with inconsistencies, suggests that such efforts may have less value, at least insofar as they are aimed at reducing consumers' dissonance.

In addition, the normative-contextual model of attitudes has implications for brand loyalty and repeat purchasing. The relative malleability of normative-contextual attitudes suggests that brand loyalty and repeat purchasing may be driven by different factors. In Western contexts, it is often assumed that a favorable personal brand preference increases the likelihood of brand loyalty (i.e., repeated purchases with high involvement, compared to repeated purchases due to habits under low involvement; Assael, 1987). This, however, may not be true for those in non-Western cultural contexts, where perceived normative appropriateness and suitability across a variety of social contexts may be more important to establishing brand loyalty. For example, consumers' ratings of a hotel's service quality may be less predictive of their loyalty to the hotel compared to others' views of this hotel (or even compared to the identity of the other guests in this hotel).

The normative-contextual model of attitudes also offers implications for understanding and measuring self-brand connections. Consumer researchers have suggested that when a brand can be used to construct or to communicate identity, consumers will feel more strongly connected to the brand (e.g., Keller, 1993; Park, MacInnis, Priester, Eisingerich, & Iacobucci, 2010). However, self-brand connections may take different forms in non-Western cultural contexts. Consumers' connections to brands may be based more on contextualized aspects of the self, such as the extent to which the brand facilitates enacting one's prescribed social roles. In non-Western contexts, for example, connection to the brand would tend to be based more on social benefits ("this car is suitable for executives"), and less on experiential benefits ("it is exciting to drive this car"). As such, development and measurement of brand image should specifically address the social roles through which consumers connect with brands (e.g., mother, teacher), as well as the norms that govern consumption in such contexts.

Finally, a broader set of implications concerns marketing and survey research across cultural contexts (e.g., Baumgartner & Steenkamp, 2001; Craig & Douglas, 2000; Johnson, Kulesa, Cho, & Shavitt, 2005; Steenkamp, 2001). Attitude measures have been widely used in marketing research to predict consumer behavior. Research shows that in the United States (vs. China), personal preferences (vs. subjective norms) are better predictors of behavioral intent, and behavioral intent is a better predictor of actual behavior. In line with the normative-contextual model and its measurement implications, in non-Western contexts efforts to predict actual consumer behavior should be augmented by assessing perceptions about normative constraints likely to influence consumers in decision and consumption contexts (for similar efforts in nonconsumption contexts, see Fischer et al., 2009; Shteynberg et al., 2009; Wan, Chiu, Peng, & Tam, 2007; Zou et al., 2009). One way to do this is by using scenario-based measurement approaches rooted in specific contexts (Peng, Nisbett, & Wong, 1997).

More generally, the normative-contextual model of attitudes has implications for the degree of attitudinal variation likely to be observed across individuals, particularly in domains associated with strong normative consensus. For example, when asked about one's current level of well-being, people in normative-contextual cultural contexts are likely to provide answers based on their retrieval of normative information (i.e., how they are supposed to feel as opposed to how they actually feel) or based on intersubjective consensus (i.e., how most people in their culture feel). This could lower response variance across individuals. To the best of our knowledge, no empirical research has examined this general issue in survey measurement. However, to the extent that the variance associated with attitudinal responses is restricted by normative input, it limits the value of those responses as predictors of other judgments or behaviors. To address this potential measurement issue, survey questions should be carefully worded to clearly indicate whether one's personal feelings or one's perceptions of normative feelings are the focus of the questions, emphasizing that these two are not always congruent. For example, for each question, survey respondents can be asked to indicate their level of agreement with two sets of statements, one starting with "I personally feel" and the other "Most people feel" with a counterbalanced order.

**Health, well-being, and behavior change.** The normative-contextual model of attitude also implies that to promote healthy behaviors in non-Western cultural contexts, communication strategies should focus on normative information. For example, in line with recent social influence studies (e.g., Schultz et al., 2007), instead of telling people that smoking is not good for their health, it may be better to tell them that the norm is to avoid smoking. In addition, it is important to consider which identities are activated by various communications (e.g., Oyserman et al., 2007). If a certain ingroup identity (e.g., African Americans) is not commonly linked with healthy behavior, yet another ingroup (e.g., women) is perceived to be associated with healthy behavior, then communications aimed at promoting healthy behavior should specify the health-promoting reference group. For example, instead of showing an African American person in an antismoking ad, it may be better to show a group of women of various races and say, "women like you don't smoke."

Our model also has direct implications for changing unhealthy habits. Habits are triggered by context cues that have been associated with habitual responses (Wood, Tam, & Guerrero Witt, 2005). Because these environmental cues exert considerable power, in order to

successfully break habits, one needs to change the environmental cues that elicit the particular habit responses (Wood & Neal, 2007). However, decoupling attitudes from environments may be more difficult in contexts where the normative-contextual versus person-centric view prevails, because associations between contextual factors and attitudes are likely to be stronger. This suggests that breaking habits may be even more challenging for people in normative-contextual versus person-centric cultural contexts. For example, suppose one likes to smoke, and one usually smokes with a certain friend. If one is trying to quit smoking, a meeting with this friend would trigger the positive attitudes about smoking and thus increase the temptation to smoke. Because the association between the friend and smoking would be stronger for people in normative-contextual (vs. person-centric) cultural contexts, these people may have more difficulty resisting smoking in these circumstances and may even perceive the connection between the context and habit to be uncontrollable.

The normative-contextual model of attitudes is also in line with previous research that highlighted the importance of changing social norms or contextual cues in behavioral intervention. For example, based on media analysis, Paluck (2009) demonstrated that prejudiced behavior is more likely to change when one's perception of social norms is modified rather than one's personal beliefs. Likewise, Stephens et al. (2012) emphasized mutual constitution of self-identity and structural conditions in reducing social class disparities (Stephens et al., 2012; Stephens, Markus, & Townsend, 2007). They argued that in order to promote desired behaviors, it is important for individuals to be able to link their identity to such behaviors (e.g., African American healthy eater) and, furthermore, to be exposed to particular situational contexts that support their identity.

### Summary and Conclusion

The attitude construct is at the core of social psychological research and application. Few other psychological constructs have been so robustly documented. However, when it comes to theories about attitudes, decades of empirical work on the cultural differences between Western and non-Western contexts have yet to be fully incorporated. Our aim is to broaden attitude theorizing by offering an additional model of attitudes that accounts for this rapidly accumulating cross-cultural evidence and that demonstrates that preferences do not have to be personal. The normative-contextual model outlined here is designed to better address attitude processes in non-Western cultural contexts. This model highlights distinct aspects of the functions, the formation, and the characteristics of attitudes in such contexts.

Attitude theorizing has traditionally viewed attitudes as intrapersonal entities tuned to the pursuit of individual goals. The normative-contextual model of attitudes presented here offers another view of attitudes, one designed to address evidence from non-Western cultural contexts and interdependent situations that prioritize the views of relevant others and context-specific normative information. The goal of this is to suggest an expansion in the focus of attitude theory. This means moving from a primary focus on the individual to the individual-responding-to-a-specific-environment, an expansion in the measurement of attitudes from a primary focus on personal preferences to normative preferences tuned to specific, relevant others and the context, an expansion in emphasis from internal consistency to duality, and from attitude stability to contextual malleability. Incorporating knowledge developed from a cross-cultural perspective into

theorizing about attitudes promises to enhance the understanding of both attitudinal and cultural processes.

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