



SONDERFORSCHUNGSBEREICH 504

Rationalitätskonzepte,
Entscheidungsverhalten und
ökonomische Modellierung

Workshop

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„Culture as Situated Cognition“

July 10, 2008, 10:00 – 18:00, B318 (in A5, Bauteil B)
Sonderforschungsbereich 504
University of Mannheim

An increasingly large number of studies suggest cross-national differences in cognitive processes that seem to suggest that people from different societies think differently. How are these results to be interpreted? One possibility is that cultural syndromes are based in distal cultural features such as philosophy, religion, or language and that these features have direct current consequences for values, relationality, self-concept, well-being and cognition. While initially plausible and certainly congruent with some approaches to cross-cultural difference, a number of studies suggest that 'distal' features such as a society's philosophical tradition do not have a direct effect in and of themselves but rather have an effect by making certain subjective construals more likely than others. Taken together, these results suggest that small and seemingly incidental features of the situation can cue different cultural syndromes and that once cued, a cultural syndrome will influence what content and process knowledge seems relevant to the task at hand. This simply would not be predicted by models focused on the predictive power of cross-societal differences in distal features because cross-societal comparisons imply stable between-group differences rather than situational malleability both within and between groups. At first glance, the idea that both an individualistic and a collectivistic cultural syndrome can be cued within a society may feel contradictory to a 'societal-level' understanding of a society's culture as either high in individualism (or necessarily low in collectivism) or high in collectivism (and necessarily low in individualism). However, I will demonstrate that this first glance assumption is unlikely to be correct and that all societies can be better considered as including multiple cultural syndromes that are differentially likely to be cued.

A relevant background paper can be found at:

<http://sitemaker.umich.edu/culture.self/files/oysermanch10.pdf>

Homepage Daphna Oyserman:

<http://sitemaker.umich.edu/daphna.oyserman>

Participation:

Interested participants are required to register by contacting Prof. Dr. Herbert Bless.

Local Organizer:

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