
Díaz-Loving, R. (2026)

Conceptualization and measurement of culture. The Historic-Sociocultural Premises.

Cambridge University Press, pp. 78

The volume by Rolando Díaz-Loving offers a substantial and timely contribution to current debates in cultural psychology, particularly to discussions about the conceptualization and empirical study of culture. At a moment in which psychology continues to struggle with the tension between universal explanatory models and culturally situated approaches to human behavior, Díaz-Loving argues for a more historically grounded understanding of psychological processes. Rather than treating culture as a static background variable or reducing it to national categories and generalized value dimensions, the author conceptualizes it as a dynamic network of norms, beliefs, and socially transmitted premises that shape everyday cognition, emotion, and behavior.

The book is organized into ten chapters. The opening chapter revisits the persistent problem of defining culture within psychology and points to the conceptual ambiguity that has often weakened empirical research in the field. Díaz-Loving underlines that many cross-cultural approaches remain theoretically limited because they rely on broad categories while overlooking the lived psychological mechanisms through which culture becomes operative.

The second chapter traces the evolution of the concept of culture from

classical anthropology to contemporary psychological perspectives. Particularly interesting is the discussion of the shift from static and descriptive definitions toward more dynamic and interactional models capable of explaining behavioral adaptation and meaning-making.

The third chapter focuses on the clarification of central cultural constructs (including norms, beliefs, values, social axioms, and scripts) carefully distinguishing their functions while also showing their interdependence within broader sociocultural systems.

A central section of the volume emerges in the fourth and fifth chapters. The fourth chapter is dedicated to the sociocultural system and the ecosystemic foundations of culture, presenting culture as a network of interdependent elements that shape emotional, cognitive, and behavioral processes. In the fifth chapter, Díaz-Loving further differentiates sociocultural premises into norms and beliefs, showing how these dimensions can be operationalized and measured in culturally sensitive ways.

The following chapters move toward more applied and empirical concerns. The sixth chapter examines the role of schooling and gender in the transmission of historical-sociocultural premises, highlighting how institutional and social experiences contribute to the reproduction, but also the transformation, of cultural expectations.

The seventh chapter, dedicated to emerging sociocultural premises,

is particularly valuable because it acknowledges the instability of cultural systems under conditions of modernization, globalization, and social change. Rather than presenting culture as fixed or homogeneous, Díaz-Loving repeatedly emphasizes contradiction, negotiation, and historical transformation.

The eighth chapter addresses issues of construct validity and psychometric assessment. Although methodological discussions occasionally become dense, they remain essential to the broader argument of the book, especially for researchers interested in culturally sensitive measurement tools. The ninth chapter broadens the discussion by integrating sociocultural premises with wider psychological and social dynamics, while the final chapter offers a synthetic reflection on the relevance of norms and beliefs as privileged lenses through which culture can be understood and investigated.

One of the strongest aspects of the volume is precisely this capacity to connect theoretical reflection with methodological rigor without losing sight of the complexity of lived cultural experience. Díaz-Loving does not merely criticize universalist psychology from an abstract standpoint; instead, he proposes a workable framework through which cultural processes can be studied empirically while remaining historically and socially situated. The sections devoted to Mexican sociocultural premises are particularly compelling in this regard. Discussions of authority, family organization, religi-

osity, obedience, gender expectations, and assertiveness reveal how deeply psychological functioning is embedded within historically sedimented cultural structures.

At the same time, the volume avoids romanticizing culture or presenting cultural traditions as internally coherent systems. Contradictions, tensions, and processes of change remain central throughout the discussion, especially in relation to modernization and shifting gender roles. This gives the book a level of nuance that is sometimes missing in more schematic approaches to cross-cultural psychology.

Overall, the volume represents an important contribution to contemporary psychological research on culture. By combining ethnopsychological perspectives, cross-cultural theory, and methodological reflection, Díaz-Loving offers readers a sophisticated yet accessible framework for understanding how sociocultural systems shape human behavior. The volume will be of particular interest not only to psychologists working in cultural and cross-cultural research, but also to scholars in the social sciences concerned with the relationship between history, social structure, and subjectivity. More broadly, the book demonstrates the importance of developing culturally grounded approaches capable of bridging the gap between psychological theory and the complexity of social reality.

This book is an invaluable contribution to advancing research and interventions with a proactive aware-

ness to the complexity inherent in the cross-cultural approach. Expertise, an open mind, and a visionary view to addressing new challenges exude along the lines of operational scientific wisdom. Thanks to the author for this enlightening and fascinating contribution, which will enrich all

readers interested in these topics and engage them, equipping them with new insights and paths to follow and share for the advancement of studies in this area.

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