

*MANUEL RAMIREZ III*

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**THE COGNITIVE  
AND CULTURAL  
THEORY OF  
PERSONALITY**



Multicultural Psychotherapy

# **THE COGNITIVE AND CULTURAL THEORY OF PERSONALITY**

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## THE COGNITIVE AND CULTURAL THEORY OF PERSONALITY

In her book *Neurosis and Human Growth*, Karen Horney (1950), the psychoanalyst and pioneer feminist psychologist, introduced the idea that a person becomes neurotic because of his or her attempts to live up to the *tyranny of the shoulds*. That is, the neurotic person develops a self-image based on what others would like him or her to be, an idealized image, instead of developing a "true self." The person becomes neurotic, developing a false self based on the shoulds of parents, societal institutions, and important others. This false self is an idealized image that forces the person to conform to certain imposed idealized standards and results in the disavowal and suppression of the true or real self.

The "different" in society are most vulnerable to the tyranny of the shoulds because it is they who are most often targets of conformity and assimilation pressures. The autobiography of Richard Rodriguez (1983), *Hunger for Memory*, is a good example of how the tyranny of the shoulds works. Rodriguez tells a story of when he was in elementary school in Sacramento, California. The primary language of his family was Spanish, and he struggled in school because he did not know English very well. One day his

teachers visited his parents and implied that if they wanted Richard to succeed in school, they would have to start speaking English at home. Convinced of the validity of this, his parents began speaking to Richard only in English. However, they continued to communicate with each other in Spanish. The change resulted in academic success for Richard at the price of his psychological disorientation and emotional alienation from his family. He remembered that, "once I spoke English with ease, I came to feel guilty. I felt that I had shattered the intimate bond that once held the family close" (p. 30).

## SCHOOLS AND CONFORMITY

For the "different" the strongest agents of conformity in society are often the schools. In their book *Cultural Democracy, Bicultural Development and Education*, Ramirez and Castaneda (1974) argued that schools force conformity onto children of minority groups through their assimilationist philosophies and predominant orientation, a Caucasian, middle-class teaching style, and curriculum content. The message of the schools to minority children is very much like that given to Richard Rodriguez: If you want to succeed, you must reject your true self and be like us.

But the pressures to assimilate and to conform are not restricted to members of minority groups. Anyone whose personality, lifestyle, gender, value system, or physical characteristics makes her different from the

majority becomes the target of the assimilation and conformity pressures of society—the tyranny of the shoulds. A newspaper feature article entitled "Being Different Can Be Difficult in the Classroom" makes a strong case for the conformist trends in many schools. The article quotes Tom Yamokoski, a psychologist, who observed: "The school system is absolutely not designed for creativity. Quietness, going with the flow, keeping order—that is encouraged. It's tough to find a school system that encourages not being the same" (Austin, TX, *American Statesman*, May 25, 1997, p. E11).

## **CULTURES, COMMUNITIES, FAMILIES, AND THE UNIQUE SELF**

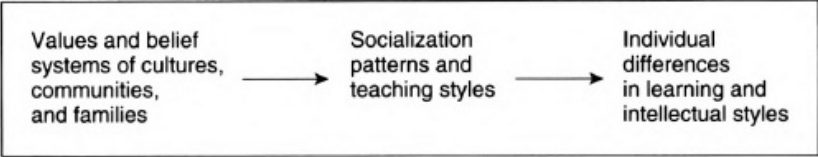
In *Cultural Democracy, Bicultural Development and Education*, Ramirez and Castaneda (1974) pointed out that people have unique intellectual strengths, abilities, and skills. Additionally, people develop learning and problem-solving styles to reflect the values and belief systems of the culture, community, and family in which they are reared. For example, Stodolsky and Lesser (1967) compared children of different ethnic groups on intellectual skills, finding that Chinese American children did better at problems involving spatial skills. Jewish American children, on the other hand, did better at tasks and problems requiring verbal ability.

Ramirez and Castaneda (1974) proposed that, in order to ensure respect for the intellectual strengths and styles of learning of all children,

schools need to adopt a philosophy of cultural democracy as well as teaching styles and approaches to accommodate individual and cultural differences in learning styles. The authors defined cultural democracy and the teaching-learning and cultural styles match as follows:

1. *Including an educational philosophy of cultural democracy.* The opposite of assimilation, cultural democracy encourages schools to respect cultural, community, family, and individual differences in values and lifestyles. Values influence socialization and teaching styles, which in turn affect the development of certain learning and problem-solving styles. Figure 3.1 summarizes the relationships between sociocultural systems and individual differences in intellectual styles.

*Figure 3.1 Relationship between values and personality*



2. *Matching the teaching style with the cultural style.* Teaching styles and styles of curriculum and testing are tailored to match the cultural styles of the students. Students and teachers are encouraged to develop multicultural orientations to life in a pluralistic learning environment.



3. *Matching the teaching style with the learning style.* Teaching styles and styles of curriculum and testing are tailored to match the individual learning and problem-solving styles of the students. To achieve this, individual students and school personnel are encouraged to become flexible in their intellectual styles by learning unfamiliar teaching and learning styles in a supportive and accepting educational environment.

## THE LINK BETWEEN CULTURAL AND COGNITIVE STYLES

### Cultural Styles

Ramirez and Castaneda (1974) proposed that cultures, communities, and families can be classified on a traditionalism-modernism continuum with respect to their cultural styles. Modern lifestyles and belief systems encourage separation from family and community early in life. Modern orientations to socialization emphasize individual competition and give science great importance in explaining the mysteries of life. Traditional lifestyles, on the other hand, emphasize close ties to family and community throughout life. Traditional orientations emphasize cooperation and give spiritualism a greater importance in explaining life events. The following list describes thirteen domains within the traditionalism-modernism dimension.

1. *Gender-role definition.* Traditional environments tend to emphasize

strict distinctions between gender roles, whereas modern environments encourage more flexible boundaries between these roles.

2. *Family identity.* Family loyalty and identification are emphasized in traditional communities while individual identities are more valued in modern societies.

3. *Sense of community.* Traditional cultural styles encourage a strong sense of community while modern environments emphasize individualism.

4. *Time orientation.* People reared in traditional communities have a stronger past- and present-time orientation while people who are more modernistic are oriented toward the future.

5. *Age status.* Traditional societies associate increasing age with increasing wisdom, whereas modern societies value the vitality of youth.

6. *Importance of tradition.* Traditional environments value traditional ceremonies as a reinforcement of history, whereas modern value orientations tend to view tradition as a potential barrier to progress.

7. *Subservience to convention and authority.* In traditional societies, people are socialized to follow norms and conventions and to respect authority; in modern societies people are encouraged to question authority.

8. *Spirituality and religion.* Traditional societies emphasize the importance of spirituality and religion in life events; modern societies are characterized by an emphasis on science and secularism.

9. *Sexual orientation.* Traditional societies generally accept a literal interpretation of the Bible concerning sexual orientation and family; modern societies are more likely to view decisions about sexual orientation as part of the individual's right to choose her own lifestyle. Also definitions of what constitutes a family are less conventional.

10. *Death penalty.* Traditional values usually uphold the belief of "an eye for an eye" when it comes to meting out punishment for major crimes. The view is that the person who is believed to have committed the crime is completely responsible for his actions. Modern cultures view the death penalty as a barbaric practice. For most crimes, the view is that circumstances, such as reduced mental capacity, the influence of addictive substances, limited opportunity in society, and abuse in childhood, need to be taken into consideration when decisions about punishment are made. Rehabilitation is emphasized over payment of a debt to society.

11. *Role of the federal government in education.* Traditional belief systems usually emphasize local control over the schools, while modern values emphasize the importance of meeting national standards in

educational opportunities.

12. *Benefits to single mothers and noncitizens.* A traditional belief system emphasizes that single mothers, particularly those who are not U.S. citizens, and their children should not be eligible for economic aid because this is likely to encourage sexual behavior outside of marriage. Modern belief systems view some single mothers as likely victims of sexual abuse and rape and see payment of benefits as a way to prevent criminal behavior and addiction.

13. *Abortion.* Traditional societies view termination of pregnancy as a crime, as interference with the right to life. Modern societies view abortion decisions as part and parcel of a woman's right to decide what happens to her own body.

Even though rural environments are most commonly associated with traditional cultural orientations and urban lifestyles usually reflect modernistic orientations to life (Panday and Panday, 1985; *see also* Tharakan, 1987), research (Ramirez, 1987) has shown that some people who live in urban environments tend to adhere to traditional values and, similarly, that there are residents of rural areas who tend to be modernistic in their cultural styles.

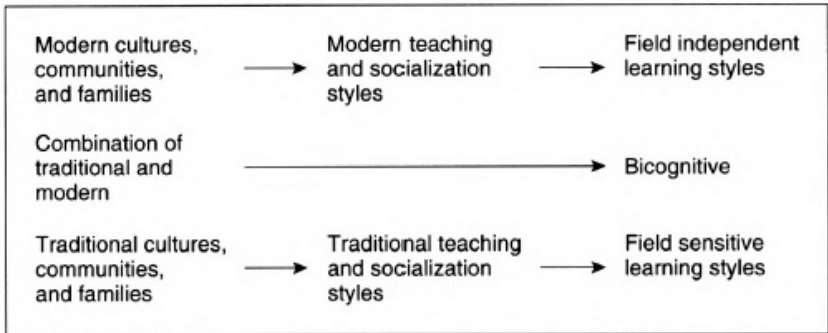
## **Cognitive Styles**

The hypothesized relationship between values and cognitive styles is summarized in Figure 3.2. Ramirez, Cox, and Castaneda (1977) identified the following learning behaviors as characteristic of children who tended to be field sensitive or field independent. These are clustered into four categories, as shown in Table 3.1.

Additional research on the relationship of sociocultural environments to intellectual styles in children and college students led Ramirez and his colleagues (1977) to expand the theory of learning styles *flex* (the ability to switch styles to conform to environmental demands) to include other characteristics of personality. They posited that a person's unique self is made up of much more than just learning and intellectual styles.

They were able to show that field independent and field sensitive styles are also reflected in the ways in which people communicate and relate to others; in the rewards that motivate them; and in the manner in which they teach, parent, supervise, and counsel others, as outlined in Table 3.1. The behaviors that differentiate field sensitive from field independent personality styles are listed in Table 3.2.

*Figure 3.2 Relationship between values and cognitive styles*



*TABLE 3.1 Characteristics of Field Sensitive and Field Independent Children*

| Domain                  | Field Sensitive   | Field Independent  |
|-------------------------|---|--|
| Relationship to Peers   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Likes to work with others to achieve common goals</li> <li>Likes to assist others</li> <li>Is sensitive to feelings and opinions of others</li> </ol>          | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prefers to work independently</li> <li>Likes to compete and gain individual recognition.</li> <li>Task-oriented; is inattentive to social environment when working</li> </ol> |
| Relationship to Teacher | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Openly expresses positive feelings for teacher</li> <li>Asks questions about teacher's taste and personal experiences; seeks to become like teacher</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Avoids physical contact with teacher</li> <li>Interacts formally with teacher; restricts interactions to tasks at hand</li> </ol>   |

|                                       |   |  |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| Instructional Relationship to Teacher | 1. Seeks guidance and demonstration from teacher  | 1. Likes to try new tasks without teacher's help   |
|                                       | 2. Seeks rewards that strengthen relationship with teacher                                  | 2. Impatient to begin tasks; likes to finish first |
|                                       | 3. Is highly motivated by working individually with teacher                                 | 3. Seeks nonsocial rewards                         |
| Thinking Style                        | 1. Functions well when objectives are carefully explained or modeled                        | 1. Focuses on details and parts of things          |
|                                       | 2. Deals well with concepts in humanized or story format                                    | 2. Deals well with math and science concepts       |
|                                       | 3. Functions well when curriculum content is relevant to personal interests and experiences | 3. Likes discovery or trial-and-error learning     |

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Ramirez, Castaneda, and their colleagues (Ramirez, Cox, and Castaneda, 1977) discovered that the personalities of most individuals are a unique combination of field independent and field sensitive elements. Nevertheless, each person seems to have a definite preference for one style or the other. Style preference at any given time was often dependent on the type of demands made by the setting or task. For example, a person might be preferred field sensitive in a learning or problem-solving situation, but be preferred field independent in a social setting.

*TABLE 3.2 Personality Characteristics of Field Sensitive and Field*

## *Independent People*

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| <b>Domain</b>  | <b>Field Sensitive</b>  | <b>Field Independent</b>  |
|--|---|---|
| Communications   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Tends to personalize communications by referring to own life experiences, interests, and feelings</li><li>2. Tends to focus more on nonverbal than verbal communications</li></ol>       | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Tends to be impersonal and to-the-point in communications</li><li>2. Tends to focus more on verbal than nonverbal communications</li></ol> |
| Interpersonal Relationships                                    | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Open and outgoing in social settings</li><li>2. Presents as warm and informal</li></ol>  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Reserved and cautious in social settings</li><li>2. Presents as distant and formal</li></ol>   |
| Motivation   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Values social rewards that strengthen relationships with important others</li><li>2. Motivation is related to achievement for others (family, team, ethnic/racial group, etc.)</li></ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Seeks nonsocial rewards</li><li>2. Motivation is related to self-advancement</li></ol>   |
| Teaching, Parenting, Supervisory, and Counseling Relationships | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Focuses on relations with student, child, supervisor, or client</li><li>2. Is informal and self-disclosing</li></ol>   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Focuses on task or goal</li><li>2. Is formal and private</li></ol>   |

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Research revealed (Ramirez, 1998), however, that successful children and college students tended to be more flexible in their styles as compared with their less successful peers. It was also discovered that the more successful students were flexible in both the cultural and cognitive domains; that is, these children, adolescents, and young adults could shuttle between different cognitive and cultural styles.

Life history and family and community research (Ramirez, Cox, and Castaneda, 1977; Ramirez, 1987) with students having different degrees of flex showed that those subjects who were the most flexible had been influenced by cultures, communities, and families whose lifestyles and institutions represented a mixture of traditional and modern values (see Figure 3.2). It was also discovered that in certain families, evidence of the ability to flex can be found in members of different generations (Buriel, 1981). A strong possibility exists, then, that propensity for flex is inherited.

## **Personality Flex**

Research focusing on personality flex led to the identification of its three components: (1) the degree of development of the major cognitive (field sensitive or field independent) and cultural (traditional or modern) styles, (2) the ability to shuttle between the major styles within the cognitive and cultural domains, and (3) the ability to combine these major cognitive and

cultural styles to develop multicultural cognitive (combination of field independent and field sensitive) and cultural (combination of traditional and modern) styles. All three characteristics of flex were found to be important in determining coping effectiveness: People who were found to be well developed in only one of the two cognitive and cultural styles were not as effective in coping as those who were able to shuttle between the two styles or to combine the major cultural and cognitive styles to arrive at new multicultural combinations.

## **Cognitive Flex**

Ramirez and Castaneda (1974) identified three components of cognitive flex or biculturalism: (1) the maximum development of all domains of field sensitive and field independent cognitive styles, (2) the ability to shuttle between the field sensitive and field independent styles to meet different environmental demands, and (3) the ability to combine elements of both field sensitive and field independent styles to develop new multicultural cognitive styles.

To assess the degree of cognitive flex, Ramirez and Castaneda (1974) developed observation instruments and personality inventories that assessed biculturalism. These instruments, briefly described in the following paragraphs, are presented in their entirety in the appendices. The cognitive styles Behavioral Observation Instrument is an observational rating scale that lists

field independent and field sensitive behaviors in these five domains:

1. Communications
2. Interpersonal relationships
3. Motivation
4. Teaching, parenting, supervising, and counseling
5. Learning and problem solving

Cognitive flex is defined by both degree and type. Degree can be assessed by examining behavioral ratings, which indicate how developed a person is in both of the styles—the degree of balance within the five domains listed here. Type of flex is determined in two ways: (1) the extent to which a person can combine behaviors that are characteristic of each of the styles to develop multicultural coping techniques (a composite of elements of both styles), and (2) the extent to which a person can use field sensitive and field independent behaviors in different domains. (For example, the person is competitive in a setting in which individual competition is emphasized, such as testing, and is cooperative in situations where working with others to achieve a common goal is required.)

The Bicognitive Orientation to Life Scale (BOLS) is a personality inventory composed of items that reflect the degree of preference for field

sensitive or field independent cognitive styles in different life domains. Cognitive flex is assessed by determining the degree of agreement (from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree) with items that reflect preference for either field independent or field sensitive cognitive styles. For example:

1. I have always done well in math and science courses, (field independent)
2. I have always done well in social science and history courses, (field sensitive)

Flex is also determined by arriving at a balance score, obtained by adding points (Agree = 1, Strongly Agree = 2, Disagree = -1, and Strongly Disagree = -2), and examining the difference between total field independent and field sensitive scores.

The type of flex is assessed by examining the life domains (family, education, world of work, and so on) in which agreement between field independent and field sensitive items is equally strong. The extent to which field sensitive and field independent characteristics are combined to develop new styles of coping cannot be assessed with the BOLS.

## **Cultural Flex**

Ramirez and Castaneda (1974) identified the following four components of cultural flexibility:

1. Subscribing to values and belief systems that are representative of both traditional and modern cultures, groups, and families.
2. Being able to shuttle between traditional and modern groups and situations or activities.
3. Being able to combine traditional and modern values and belief systems to evolve new multicultural styles.
4. Feeling identified with both traditional and modern families, cultures, and institutions.

Three approaches have been developed to assess cultural flex: the Traditionalism-Modernism Inventory, the Multicultural Experience Inventory, and a Life History Interview Schedule.

The Traditionalism-Modernism Inventory, developed by Ramirez and Doell (1982), is a personality inventory that assesses the degree of identification with traditional and modern values and belief systems. The instrument yields scores indicating the degree of agreement with items reflecting traditionalism or modernism, as with the BOLS. The degree of flex can be determined by examining the difference between the total traditionalism and total modernism scores, as well as by looking at the degree of agreement with the traditional and modern items in the different domains of life (family, gender roles, time orientation, and so on). Type of flex can be assessed by examining the degree of flex within each domain. For example, a

person whose personality is characterized by cultural flex in the child socialization domain could express that with both of these items:

1. Children should be taught to be loyal to their families, (traditional)
2. Children should be taught to be independent of their families at an early age. (modern)

The Multicultural Experience Inventory (Ramirez, 1983) is a questionnaire that focuses on personal history and behavior in three areas: (1) demographic and linguistic, (2) socialization history, and (3) degree of multicultural participation in the past as well as in the present. The degree of cultural flex is determined by the extent to which a person has been exposed to certain languages and value systems and the degree to which the person has participated in and is actively participating in and interacting with people of different cultures and groups in his or her social environment.

The Life History Schedule focuses on development and expressions of cultural flex in different periods of life, as well as on the extent of actual participation in both traditional and modern families, cultures, groups, and institutions. In addition, the Life History instrument also identifies the type of cultural flex by examining the degree to which a person has been able to combine modern and traditional values and belief systems to arrive at multicultural values and worldviews.

## A COGNITIVE AND CULTURAL FLEX THEORY OF PERSONALITY

Life history research (Ramirez et al., 1978) with people who scored high in both the cultural and cognitive flex domains led to the finding that socialization and life experiences were related to the development of personality flex. Socialization and life experiences are two subcomponents of life history. Information on socialization history obtained from life histories of people who scored high in cognitive and cultural flex showed that, as compared with those with low scores, they had had parents and other socialization agents (teachers, employers, coaches, peers, and neighbors) whose attitudes toward diversity had been positive.

Not only did their socialization agents tend to hold positive attitudes toward diversity, the origins of those with high scores also reflected diversity:

They were members of different ethnic, racial, religious, regional, and socioeconomic groups. In terms of the life-experiences component of their personal history, what seemed to be most important was the degree of exposure to diversity challenges. That is, situations in which the person had to learn a new language; a new way of relating to others; or a new way of solving a problem because the language, relationship style, or problem-solving approach to which they were accustomed was not effective in a new setting (Ramirez, 1983).

The people who were the most flexible were those who had lived in many different cultures, communities, or regions and had attended schools with a diverse student body and staff. In addition, the number and type of positive or negative experiences with diversity seemed to play an important role in the development of flexibility. For example, a person who had always been accepted by others different from herself tended to show more flex development than a person who had been rejected or discriminated against.

History also appeared to have a direct relationship to the second major component in flex development—motivation. Life-history data (Ramirez, Cox, and Castaneda, 1977) showed that both the degree of attraction to diversity and the degree of openness of the person's learning-experience filter were critical subcomponents of motivation. That is, people who were the most flexible also seemed to be those who were the most attracted to diversity, as well as those who were the most willing to learn from diversity when exposed to it.

Motivation appeared to be reflected in a person's degree of willingness to take risks in diversity challenges. The person whose early history had provided him with positive attitudes toward diversity, and with a basic foundation for multicultural development, was also the one most likely to seek diversity challenges and to benefit from these experiences.



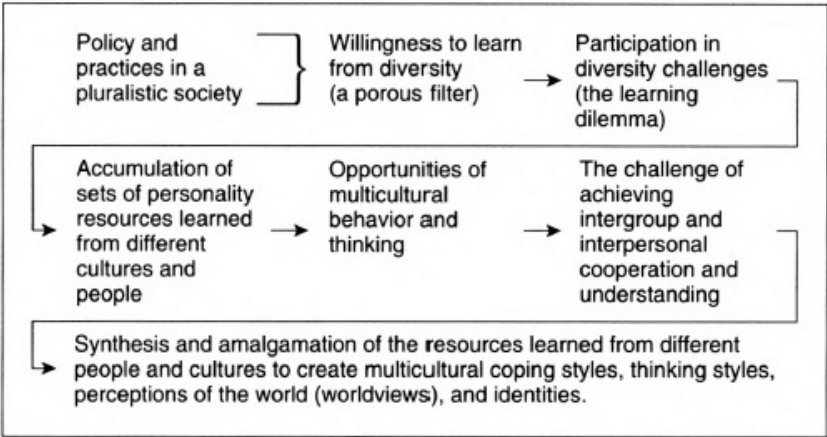
The third major component in the development of flexibility concerned the nature of the pool of resources available for personality development and for coping with the demands of life. This reservoir of resources could vary both in size and in degree of heterogeneity and diversity—the ethnic, racial, religious, age-related, regional, and socioeconomic mix. The more experience individuals had had with different peoples, cultures, groups, communities, and families, and the greater the variety of diversity challenges they had taken, the greater the size and heterogeneity of their personality resource pool.

The fourth major component of the flex theory of personality concerned multicultural patterns of behavior. That is, once a person had a heterogeneous mix of personality resources in her repertoire, she was able to behave like a multicultural person—to flex culturally and cognitively (Garza et al., 1982). In the early phases of development, personality-building elements and resources in the individual's repertoire are exclusively linked to the cultural, socioeconomic, sexual, racial, religious, political, and geographic contexts in which they were learned. Therefore, adaptation to new cultural environments and situations is an important precursor to the development of multicultural lifestyles and identities.

This sort of challenge encourages the individual to reorganize and synthesize the resources and elements in her repertoire so that efforts to

adapt involve the formation of combinations of resources and elements learned from different cultures, environments, and peoples. The resultant coping techniques and orientation to life are pluralistic. For example, to achieve consensus in a group whose members are diverse, the leader must arrive at a pluralistic perspective of the problems that is representative of the diversity that exists in the group (Garza et al., 1982).

*FIGURE 3.3 Model of multicultural personality development*



The fifth and final component of the flex theory is the development of multicultural identities. Being exposed to diversity and challenges for multicultural adaptation, a person continuously modifies both her self-picture and philosophy of life. Eventually, the person makes a definite commitment to growth by continuing to seek such challenges (Adler, 1974; Ramirez, 1998). It

is at this point that people begin to develop a multicultural identity. That is, they express a strong, lifelong commitment to the well-being of all peoples, cultures, and groups (Ramirez, 1983). Figure 3.3 summarizes this process.

### **SUMMARY**

The critical concepts of the cultural and cognitive flex theory of personality are traditional and modern cultural styles and field sensitive, field independent, and bicognitive styles of cognition. These concepts are useful in understanding multicultural personality development and functioning.

## GLOSSARY

**Attitude of Acceptance** a nonjudgmental, positive, accepting atmosphere devoid of conformity or assimilation pressures. In therapy this enables the client to express his unique, or true, self.

**Bicognitive Orientation to Life Scale (BOLS)** a personality inventory composed of items that reflect the degree of preference for field sensitive or field independent cognitive styles in different life domains. Assesses cognitive flex by determining the degree of agreement with items that reflect preference for either field independent or field sensitive cognitive styles. A balance or bicognitive score is also attained.

**Bicognitive Style** a cognitive style characterized by an ability to shuttle between the field sensitive and field independent styles. Choice of style at any given time is dependent on task demands or situational characteristics. For example, if a situation demands competition, the bicognitive person usually responds in a field independent manner. On the other hand, if the situation demands cooperation, the bicognitive individual behaves in a field sensitive manner. People with a bicognitive orientation also may use elements of both the field sensitive and field independent styles to develop new composite or combination styles.

**Bicultural/Multicultural Style** a cultural style characterized by an ability to shuttle between the traditional and modern cultural styles. Choice of style at any given time is dependent on task demands or situational characteristics.

**Change Agent** a person who actively seeks to encourage changes in the social environment in order to ensure acceptance and sensitivity to all cultural and cognitive styles.

**Cognitive and Cultural Flex Theory (or Theory of Multicultural Development)** the theory that people who are exposed to socialization agents with positive attitudes toward diversity, participate in diversity challenges, interact with members of diverse cultures, maintain an openness and commitment to learning from others, and are more likely to develop multicultural patterns of behavior and a multicultural identity. People who have developed a multicultural identity have a strong, lifelong

commitment to their groups of origin as well as to other cultures and groups.

**Cognitive Style** a style of personality defined by the ways in which people communicate and relate to others; the rewards that motivate them; their problem-solving approaches; and the manner in which they teach, socialize with, supervise, and counsel others. There are three types of cognitive styles: field sensitive, field independent, and bicognitive.

**Cultural and Cognitive Flex (Personality Flex)** the ability to shuttle between field sensitive and field independent cognitive styles and modern and traditional cultural styles.

**Cultural Democracy** (1) a philosophy that recognizes that the way a person communicates, relates to others, seeks support and recognition from his environment, and thinks and learns are products of the value system of his home and community; (2) refers to the moral rights of an individual to be different while at the same time be a responsible member of a larger society.

**Cultural Style** an orientation to life related to or based on traditional and modern values or a combination of these values. Assessed by the Traditionalism- Modernism Inventory and the Family Attitude Scale.

**Diversity Challenges** a catalyst for multicultural development such as cultural and linguistic immersion experiences, new tasks, and activities that encourage the process of synthesis and amalgamation of personality building blocks learned from different cultures, institutions, and peoples.

**Empathy Projection** the process whereby a person tries to understand the point of view and feelings of others whose cognitive styles and values are different from his own.

**False Self** the identity developed as a result of attempts to conform to cultural and cognitive styles of authority figures, institutions, and majority cultures.

**Family Attitude Scale** a personality inventory to assess a person's degree of agreement with traditional and modern family values.

**Field Independent** a cognitive style characterized by independent, abstract, discovery-oriented learning preferences, an introverted lifestyle, a preference for verbal

communication styles, and an emphasis on personal achievement and material gain. People with a preferred field independent orientation are likely to be analytical and inductive and focus on detail. They also tend to be nondirective and discovery-oriented in childrearing, and in teaching, supervising, and counseling others.

**Field Sensitive** a cognitive style characterized by interactive personalized learning preferences, an extroverted lifestyle, a preference for nonverbal communication styles, a need to help others. People with a preferred field sensitive orientation tend to be more global, integrative, and deductive in their thinking and problem-solving styles, and they tend to be directive in childrearing, and in teaching, supervising, and counseling others.

**Life History Interview** focuses on the development and expressions of cultural flex during different periods of life: infancy and early childhood, early school and elementary school years, middle school years, high school years, and post- high school period. The life history interview also focuses on the extent of an individual's actual participation in both traditional and modern families, cultures, groups, and institutions. The life history identifies the type of cultural flex by examining the degree to which a person has been able to combine modern and traditional values and belief systems to arrive at multicultural values and worldviews.

**Match and/or Mismatch** refers to person-environment fit with respect to the degree of harmony or lack of harmony between cultural/cognitive styles and environmental demands. Two types are cognitive mismatch and cultural mismatch.

**Mismatch Shock** an extreme case of the mismatch syndrome.

**Mismatch Syndrome** a lack of harmony between a person's preferred cultural and/or cognitive styles and environmental demands. This occurs when people feel at odds to the important people and institutions in their lives. They feel alone, hopeless, and misunderstood; they may exhibit a number of symptoms, including self-rejection, depression, negativity, rigidity, and attempts to escape reality.

**Model** a person whom the client admires and who is dominant in the cultural/ cognitive styles the client wants to learn.

**Modeling** the process whereby people learn unfamiliar cognitive and cultural styles through imitation and observation of others, through reading and through travel.

**Modern** a value orientation that emphasizes and encourages separation from family and community early in life. It is typical of urban communities, liberal religions, and of North American and Western European cultures. People who are identified as having a modern value orientation tend to emphasize science when explaining the mysteries of life; they have a strong individualistic orientation; they tend to deemphasize differences in gender and age roles; and they emphasize egalitarianism in childrearing practices.

**Multicultural Ambassador** a multicultural person who promotes the development of multicultural environments which encourage understanding (multicultural education) and cooperation among different people and groups.

**Multicultural Educator** a multicultural person who educates others about the advantages of cultural and cognitive diversity and multicultural orientations to life.

**Multicultural Experience Inventory (MEI)** an inventory that assesses historical and current experiences. It focuses on personal history and behavior in three areas: demographic and linguistic, socialization history, and degree of multicultural participation in the past as well as the present. The MEI consists of two types of items: historical (reflecting historical development pattern—HDP) and contemporary functioning (reflecting contemporary multicultural identity—CMI). Includes items that deal with degree of comfort and acceptance.

**Multicultural Model of Psychotherapy** a model of therapy that emphasizes multicultural development by maximizing the client's ability to flex between cultural and cognitive styles when faced with different environmental demands and development of a multicultural orientation to life characterized by serving as a multicultural educator, ambassador, and peer counselor.

**Multicultural Peer Counselor** a multicultural person who provides emotional support and facilitates change and development of empowerment in those of his or her peers who are suffering from mismatch.

**Multicultural Person-Environment Fit Worldview** a worldview that is based on the following

assumptions: (1) There are no inferior people, cultures, or groups in terms of gender, ethnicity, race, economics, religion, physical disabilities, region, sexual orientation, or language; (2) problems of maladjustment are the result of mismatch between people, or between people and their environments rather than of inferior people or groups; (3) every individual, group, or culture has positive contributions to make to personality development and to a healthy adjustment to life; (4) people who are willing to learn from others and from groups and cultures different from their own acquire multicultural building blocks (coping techniques and perspectives), which are the basis of multicultural personality development and multicultural identity; (5) synthesis and amalgamation of personality building blocks acquired from different people, groups, and cultures occur when the person with multicultural potential works toward the goals of understanding and cooperation among diverse groups and peoples in a pluralistic society; and (6) synthesis and amalgamation of personality building blocks from diverse origins contribute to the development of multicultural personality development and psychological adjustment in a pluralistic society.

**Preferred Cultural and Cognitive Styles Observation Checklists** observational rating scales that list field sensitive and field independent behaviors in five domains: communications; interpersonal relationships; motivation; teaching, parenting, supervising, and counseling; learning and problem solving. The checklists can be used to assess modern and traditional cultural styles and values.

**Preferred Styles** the dominant cultural and cognitive styles of a person.

**Scriptwriting** a therapy strategy used, along with role-playing, to promote cultural and cognitive flex development by matching the cultural or cognitive styles of a person or institution.

**Theory of Multicultural Development** see Cognitive and Cultural Flex Theory.

**Traditional** a value orientation that emphasizes close ties to family and community throughout life. It is typical of rural communities, conservative religions, and of minority and developing cultures. People identified as having traditional value orientations tend to have a spiritual orientation toward life, are strongly identified with their families and communities of origin, usually believe in separation of gender and age roles; and typically endorse strict approaches to child-rearing.



**Traditionalism-Modernism Inventory (TMI)** a personality inventory that assesses the degree of identification with traditional and modern values and belief systems. The instrument yields scores indicating the degree of agreement with items reflecting traditionalism or modernism. The degree of flex can be determined by examining the differences between the total traditionalism and total modernism scores (balance score) as well as by looking at the degree of agreement with the traditional and modern items across the different domains of life: gender-role definition; family identity; sense of community; family identification; time orientation; age status; importance of tradition; subservience to convention and authority; spirituality and religion; attitudes toward issues such as sexual orientation, the death penalty, the role of federal government in education, benefits to single mothers and noncitizens, and abortion. Type of flex can be determined by examining the degree of flex within each domain.

**Tyranny of the Shoulds** an individual's perception of the self based on what she believes others expect the person to be like. The pressure to conform could contribute to psychological maladjustment—the individual develops a false self based on the "shoulds" of parents, important others, and societal institutions.

**Unique Self** a person's preferred cultural and cognitive styles before he has been subjected to the pressures of conformity.

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