

Wisdom and Culture

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Acknowledgement: Work on this chapter was supported by an Insight Grant (435-2014-0685) from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, the Ontario Ministry of Research, Innovation and Science (Early Researcher Award # ER16-12-169), and the Emerging Scholar Mentorship Grant, UW Network on Aging Research to Igor Grossmann. We thank Dov Cohen, Michael Ferrari and Andreas Fischer for fruitful comments on the earlier drafts of this chapter.

Citation:

Grossmann, I., & Kung, F. Y. H. (in press). Wisdom and culture. In S. Kitayama & D. Cohen (Eds.), *Handbook of cultural psychology* (2nd Edition). New York: Guilford Press.

Abstract

Wisdom is often considered to be the pinnacle of human development. Though it is universally cherished, it is unclear whether the concept of wisdom can be applied similarly across cultures. We review the emerging research on this topic, exploring extant scholarly definitions, portrayals of wisdom in the world's philosophies, folk beliefs concerning wisdom and its development, and empirical insights evaluating expression of wisdom-related characteristics. There appears to be a large amount of convergence in scholarly and cross-cultural folk concepts, suggesting that wisdom involves certain aspects of pragmatic reasoning, with less clarity concerning emotion regulatory and prosocial aspects of wisdom. Folk beliefs about wisdom vary across cultures in the degree to which they emphasize social components and characterize development of wisdom as an incremental ability (vs. an immutable entity). Cultures also vary in the likelihood of expressing wisdom. We conclude by calling for a culturally-grounded understanding of the distribution and function of wisdom-related psychological phenomena.

Keywords: wisdom, maturity, reasoning, essentialism, folk beliefs, emotion regulation, prosociality

For millennia, people have discussed wisdom as one of the most cherished human characteristics (Assmann, 1994). Various philosophical traditions have connected wisdom to the notion of a good life (Kekes, 1995), orientation towards the greater good (Jeste & Vahia, 2008; Sternberg, 1998), and a virtuous life (Dahlsgaard, Peterson, & Seligman, 2005). What is wisdom? This concept can mean many things, similar to the definition of culture applied across various chapters of this handbook. For instance, wisdom can refer to a particular type of culturally-situated literary genre described as the “wisdom literature” (e.g., Solomon’s Book of Proverbs or Confucian Analects). At the same time, it can also refer to specific practices and ideals – a set of behavioral patterns and individual attitudes through which people commonly define virtuous individuals and actions as well as strive to employ such actions in their lives.

In the present chapter, we start integrating different perspectives on wisdom and its relationship to culture. To this end, we first review several common definitions of wisdom. We will reflect on three major themes of wisdom scholarship in humanities and social sciences: 1) ancient wisdom literature, 2) folk beliefs about wisdom and its development, and 3) expression of wisdom-related psychological characteristics. We also review scholarship corresponding to each theme, combining etic and emic approaches (Berry, 1990; Grossmann & Na, 2014). Within the etic approach, we will focus on cross-cultural expression of specific psychological characteristics. Within the emic approach, we will reflect on the culture-specific meanings and utility of these characteristics. Throughout the chapter, we will build on existing empirical evidence and theoretical insights in cultural psychology.

Defining Wisdom

In many cultures, the notion of wisdom concerns the application of knowledge for judgment about various life situations. For instance, in English the word wisdom refers to

“Knowledge that is gained by having many experiences in life; knowledge of what is proper or reasonable; good sense or judgment” (Merriam-Webster, 2016). In traditional Chinese, an equivalent term “智慧” refers to knowledge, but also intelligence, wit and brightness (Schroeter & Uecker, 2016). And in Russian, the standard thesaurus refers to “мудрость” as the ability to apply one’s knowledge and experience in a way that results in reasonable decisions and actions (Dmitriev, 2003).

Since the onset of empirical study on wisdom, scholars have proposed a distinct set of definitions that was built on historical traditions and contemporary folk theories. Notably, these “explicit theories” can be distinct from the classic and folk characterizations of the construct. This is mainly because wisdom scholars aimed to define a scholarly standard for wisdom, as a tool for the development of generalizable methods for capturing the psychological characteristics attributed to this quality. This approach stands in contrast to the frequent emphasis on norms and ideals in folk theories of wisdom (see next section). Reviewing past definitions, Bangen and colleagues (Bangen, Meeks, & Jeste, 2013) have identified several major components (see Table 1).¹

¹ Bangen et al. (2013) have also included the underspecified themes of “knowledge/decision-making” and “self-reflection,” which were omitted from Table 1 due to insufficient detail. For instance, self-reflection can be adaptive or maladaptive (Grossmann & Kross, 2010) and knowledge can be theoretical or practical (Ardelt, 2004; Baehr, 2012; Baltes & Kunzmann, 2004; Fischer, 2015).

Table 1. Contemporary Scholarly Definitions of Wisdom: Common Components

Author(s)	Recognizing Uncertainty and Change	Perspectiv e Taking and Integratio n	Intellectual humility	Benevolenc e/ Prosociality	Emotion Regulatio n	Spirituali ty	Other
1. Kekes (1983)	X						
2. Taranto (1989)	X			X			
3. Baltes & Staudinger (2000)	X	X	X				
4. Achenbaum & Orwoll (1991)	X	X	X	X	X	X	integrity
5. Denney, Dew, & Kroupa (1995)				X			specific skills related to business, politics, etc.
6. Ardelt (1997)	X			X	X		
7. Hershey & Farrell (1997)		X		X	X	X	enlightened
8. Wink & Helson (1997)	X	X		X		X	
9. Sternberg (1998)	X			X			
10. Levitt (1999)			X	X			honesty, efficiency
11. McKee & Barber (1999)	X			X			
12. Olejnik (1999)	X						biographical perspective
13. Jason et al. (2001)	X	X	X	X	X	X	reverence for nature
14. Yang (2001)			X	X	X		modesty/ unobtrusiveness
15. Montgomery, Barber, & McKee (2002)				X			moral principles
16. Perry et al. (2002)	X			X	X	X	reverence for nature
17. Takahashi & Overton (2002)				X	X		
18. Webster (2003)		X	X		X		
19. Glück, Bluck et al. (2005)	X	X		X	X		
20. Brown et al. (2006)	X			X	X		
21. Jeste & Vahia (2008)				X	X		
22. Meeks et al. (2009)	X	X		X	X		
23. Grossmann et al. (2010; 2012)	X	X	X				
24. Jeste et al. (2010)	X	X	X	X	X		maturity
<i>N</i> definitions with component	16	10	8	19	13	5	

Note. Modified from Bangen, Meeks, & Jeste (2013). In contrast to Bangen et al. (2013), we view “lifespan contextualism” (Baltes & Staudinger, 2000) as closely related to the components of perspective-taking and recognition of change (over the lifespan); we view neither Baltes and Staudinger’s (2000) nor Grossmann et al.’s (2010, 2012) definitions as including prosociality as a component of wisdom.

For instance, the framework of *wise thinking* (Brienza, Kung, Santos, Bobocel, & Grossmann, 2017; Grossmann et al., 2010; Grossmann, Na, Varnum, Kitayama, & Nisbett, 2013, see Grossmann, 2017, for review) has included such features as (a) intellectual humility or

recognition of limits of one's own knowledge, (b) appreciation of contexts and perspectives broader than the issue at hand, (c) sensitivity to the possibility of change in social relations, and (d) *compromise or integration of different opinions* (see Figure 1). Many of these features can be described as “fox-like,” to use Isaiah Berlin’s famous classification (2000). Notably, such fox-like characteristics can be of advantage when aiming to produce accurate forecasts about the development of social and political events (Silver, 2012; Tetlock, 2005).



Figure 1. Aspects of cognitions which are frequently mentioned in contemporary scholarship on wisdom. Adopted from Grossmann (2017).

It is noteworthy that at least one aspect of wisdom-related cognition, the recognition of uncertainty and prospection on change, shares some overlap with the constructs of “naïve dialecticism” (Peng & Nisbett, 1999) or “holistic cognition” (Nisbett, Peng, Choi, & Norenzayan, 2001), as discussed in the chapter by Masuda and colleagues in the present handbook (Masuda CHAPTER this volume). Each construct hinges on facets concerning sensitivity to contextual information. At the same time, cross-cultural studies on naïve dialecticism and holistic cognition have largely concerned basic cognitive processing (attention, memory) or general beliefs about change, whereas wisdom scholarship has concerned reflections on concrete, ill-defined interpersonal issues. See Grossmann (2018) for further information about the similarities and differences in the concept of dialectical thinking in philosophy, developmental psychology and cross-cultural research.

Beyond cognition, it is also evident from Table 1 that many scholarly definitions emphasize aspects of self-regulation concerning emotional balance and prosocial orientation. In the latter sections of this chapter we reflect on the cross-cultural meaning of these constructs and their utility for psychological scholarship on wisdom.

Wisdom as a Cornerstone of Cultural Tradition

Eminent wisdom scholars Paul Baltes and Ursula Staudinger once stated that “cultural memory is the mother of wisdom” (Baltes & Staudinger, 2000). Indeed, the notion of wisdom is common to some of the oldest written cultural products describing the idealized conduct of life. Using stone, papyrus scrolls, and later paper, over millennia chief priests, kings and other moral

authorities have recorded their reflections on the optimal conduct of human life in the culture they lived. Historians refer to this genre of literary scholarship as the “wisdom literature.” This wisdom literature is not only essential for literary historians, but also for cultural psychologists. Studying such cultural products, scholars can gain insight into how cultures have developed as well as conditions promoting various forms of cultural evolution, including diversification and globalization. Understanding and comparing such artifacts can shed light on the conduct of life in Ancient Rome or China, in Mongolian steppes and Andean or Scottish Highlands, and compare it to values and norms existing in the world today. Thus, it seems that the notion of wisdom is at the very essence of understanding human culture, including its rules and virtues (Miller, CHAPTER, this volume), and helping cultural psychologists track down the specific meaning systems in a given world, as well as the way they have changed over time.

To understand how concepts of wisdom incubated in the past, some academics have discussed ancient beliefs in early civilizations and documentations of classic philosophies. This line of historical and philosophical analysis has provided some useful directions and narratives to understand the mutual influences of cultural context and the idea of wisdom (see Birren & Svensson, 2005; Robinson, 1990, for a more detailed review). One of the oldest written documentations of wisdom is believed to come from Mesopotamia (3100 B.C.), where Sumerians formed their early communities and wrote reflections and stories on clay tablets that were related to wisdom about happiness and survival (e.g., Teachings of Shuruppak) (Birren & Svensson, 2005). Other early forms of literary wisdom can be found in ancient Egypt. Egyptians recorded sayings about virtues with the aim to educate people about proper behaviors and the appropriate moral code (e.g., Chester Beatty Papyri, I). Moreover, Hebrew religious texts (e.g.,

Old Testament in the Bible) portray God as the only path to wisdom and wisdom as a precious virtue that people should actively pursue.

Western philosophy. The idea of wisdom has also been central to classic Eastern and Western philosophy. Among various traditions, the biggest influence on the concept of wisdom in Western societies was suggested to be Ancient Greek belief systems that promoted the virtue of logical reasoning and knowledge (Robinson, 1990). Most Greek philosophers shared a common notion that wisdom is about being able to understand the truth and have knowledge of the nature of the world. Socrates (470-399 B.C.), and later Plato (428-348 B. C.) and Aristotle (384-322 B.C.), provided arguably the most influential school of western philosophies on wisdom.

One common interpretation of Socrates' view is that the world is complex and can hardly be boiled down to a simple logical answer. Therefore one needs questioning to discover what one does not know and learn more about it (Durant, 1961). It is not easy to be wise; in fact, Socrates emphasized that humans' cognitive limitation is a key constraint to wisdom. He suggested that men lie in the spectrum from the ignorant to the wise; because no one, except God(s), has perfect reasoning, no one can be truly wise. Rather, people can become "lovers of wisdom" or sophists (teacher of philosophy) and keep learning (Adler, 1952). Probing the depths of one's own and others' knowledge, the lovers of wisdom can embark on the path to wisdom (as knowledge) by starting to question the world around them.

One of the key proposition attributed to Socrates dealt with the notion of intellectual or epistemic humility. According to Plato, the oracle of Delphi pronounced Socrates the wisest of men, which took Socrates by surprise, motivating him to try find someone wiser than himself among politicians, poets, and craftsmen. Yet, upon discussing various matters with each, he

realized that they either lacked knowledge or their knowledge was specific to a narrow domain (for craftsmen). After one such encounter, Socrates is claimed to have said that “so I thought, as opposed to him in this small extent I am wiser: that what I do not know, in no way I think I know” (Plato, 2000, l. 21d, Apology). This and some related passages gave Socrates’ philosophy of wisdom the name of the “humility theory of wisdom.” Having the intellectual humility to understand one’s limitation is thought to motivate thinking and questioning, and then the accumulation of knowledge that ultimately made a person wiser. Following the Socratic tradition, Plato’s disciple Aristotle is often credited with a further differentiation of wisdom into two components: *Sophia* (σοφία) – the theoretical knowledge about the universal truth or true nature of things, and *phronesis* (φρόνησις) – the practical application of knowledge through reasoning about best actions in a given context with an aim of living well (Aristotle, 1953, bk. 6).

As Assmann (1994) pointed out, there is lots of similarity in the main ideas about the conduct of virtuous life across Abrahamic traditions. Christianity, in particular, exerted a dominant influence on both religious and cultural systems in the West. In line with Socrates’ humility theory of wisdom, Christian traditions since the Old Testament (and especially in the New Testament), have proclaimed that humility is associated with wisdom. This is not surprising, given that medieval Christian scholars at least since Aquinas incorporated Aristotelian ideas into their ethics scholarship. In Christians’ view, whereas humans are sinners and hence limited in comprehending the ultimate truth, God is perfect and can hold the ultimate truth. Therefore, the path to wisdom is seeking and being humble before God. Because of the divine nature of wisdom, it is common to observe people speaking of wisdom as in part supernatural and related to moral perfections, ideals, and self-transcendence (Birren & Svensson, 2005).

Overall, Western traditions of philosophy highlight knowledge about universal truths as well as the cognitive ingredients of wisdom (e.g., practical reasoning). In the next section, we will explore cultural similarities and differences in the ideas of wisdom from non-Western societies.

Non-Western philosophy. Non-western traditions from the Near East, South Asia, and East Asia also include cognitive components when characterizing wisdom, but the concept of wisdom as a whole is less coherent, more dynamic and diverse (Ferrari et al., 2016; Jeste & Vahia, 2008; Khan, 2013; Takahashi & Overton, 2002). Take India as an example. Back in the fourth and third millennia B. C., an ancient civilization in India, called Mohejo-daro, left what is believed to be the most ancient Hindu scriptures called Vedas (Durant, 2011). Vedas means both “wisdom” and “knowledge.” It contains philosophy, hymns, and guidance for ritual scarification, and placed a strong focus on nature. Unlike many other scriptures that were written based on recollection of events and experiences of particular saints or sages, Vedas is an anonymous collection of knowledge. It is believed to be direct revelations from sages through intense meditation (Scharfe, 2002). The emphasis on unbiased knowing (of the truth) is similar to Western ideas of wisdom. In fact, the word Vedas came from the root “vid” which means to know and understand. However, different from the Socratic traditions that knowing comes from proactive reasoning, the Vedic traditions emphasized a “more intuitive, personal experience,” which does not necessarily involve logical questioning (Takahashi & Overton, 2002).

Later in India, another socio-religious belief system emerged that has exerted immense influence on local and neighboring cultures – Buddhism. There are many streams of Buddhism, yet many of them highlight the search for higher truth through enlightenment (Dyer, 2009), which is achieved not through worship and ritual, but through conduct (Birren & Svensson,

2005). A wise person would act wisely, observing the context, listening to advice, having the knowledge to decide what is reasonable. The initial teachings of Buddhism mostly come from conversations, lectures, and stories taught by Buddha (Birren & Svensson, 2005).

Besides India, China has been another cradle of humanistic and non-theological philosophies of wisdom. From Tao-Te Ching, or The Book of the Way, Lao-Tzu taught that non-interference to the natural courses of things is the basis of wisdom (Durant, 1935). “To be wise is to realize one’s harmony with nature and to live in conjunction with nature’s rhythm,” Lao-Tzu once said (Bierly III, Kessler, & Christensen, 2013). Like Western philosophical conceptions of wisdom, Taoism placed high values on knowing via self-reflection. In addition, Lao-Tzu emphasized the value of inaction and unobtrusiveness. For example, such inaction may be valuable in interpersonal conflict scenarios, where the optimal solution often relies on not engaging and letting matters naturally unfold. Interestingly, in Taoist beliefs, not to engage in conflict resolution is not necessarily an act of indifference, but an act of acceptance and compassion.

Similar to Taoism’s humanistic notion of wisdom, Confucian ideas of wisdom have focused heavily on insights about humans and how to promote virtues (Fischer, 2015), including benevolence or *ren* (仁). In Analects, one of the most widely known books in East Asia, Confucius described *ren* to be natural, something people are born with; however, *ren* can be inhibited by environmental factors. Therefore, Confucianism promotes moral cultivation, or practicing benevolence, as a way to sustain and build people’s *ren* (Li, 2003). Through practicing, wise people can extend their love from close relationships, such as parent-child relationships, to broader social relationships like to leaders and to the nation. More generally,

Confucius is claimed to have suggested that wisdom is acquired through listening to others and following the good of what one hears (Confucius, 2000, v. VII, 27).

In general, similar to the Greek concepts of wisdom, non-Western concepts of wisdom in Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, or Confucianism highlight knowledge and reasoning. At the same time, they appear to orchestrate other experiential and more socio-emotional components into the wisdom concept (Takahashi & Overton, 2002).

Folk Theories of Wisdom

Until this point, we have discussed some historical insights into what classic philosophers and religious authorities believed to be wisdom across cultures. These notions guide scholars in understanding how people from different cultures may be similar or different in what they traditionally believe wisdom to be. However, to understand the extent to which these traditional concepts are maintained or have evolved in current societies (Varnum & Grossmann, 2017), one needs to examine the contemporary population and assess people's beliefs about wisdom – unpacking what people think wisdom is.

To answer this question, researchers have utilized a wide range of methodologies. Some scholars have focused on descriptor-based ratings of attributes of wisdom, generated by one group of people and rated by another one (Bluck & Glück, 2005), subsequently using multidimensional scaling or factor analysis techniques to identify common dimensions/factors underlying people's ratings (Clayton & Birren, 1980; Judith Glück & Bluck, 2011; Holliday & Chandler, 1986; Sternberg, 1985). Other scholars have focused on identifying lay exemplars or “prototypes” of wisdom by testing people nominated for their “wisdom” (Orwoll & Perlmutter, 1990; Weststrate, Ferrari, & Ardelt, 2016) or examining what acts from their or others' lives people would describe as wise (Bluck & Glück, 2004; J. Glück et al., 2005; Oser, Schenker, & Spychiger, 1999). Lay beliefs perspectives have not only been critical in informing ideas about scientific theories of wisdom, but also in helping scientists, psychologists in particular, understand potential cultural and individual differences (Sternberg, 1985).

Empirical Studies in Western Cultures. In one of the first empirical studies on lay beliefs about wisdom, researchers collected a set of wisdom-related words (e.g., experienced, pragmatic, empathy) in a pilot study (Clayton & Birren, 1980). Then they recruited Southern

California residents and asked them to rate how similar each unique pair of words was to each other. Using multidimensional scaling, they discovered that lay people viewed wisdom as a composite that has three main elements: cognitive (e.g., knowledgeable), affective (e.g., empathy), and reflective (e.g., introspective).

In another study on lay beliefs about wisdom in the U.S. (Sternberg, 1985), 17 adults generated characteristics that they think a wise person would have. Next, another 30 adults from New Haven rated these characteristics, allowing the researcher to narrow the list to the top 40. Afterward, 40 undergraduates sorted the characteristics into piles according to similarity between characteristics. Multidimensional scaling revealed three bipolar dimensions: reasoning ability/sagacity, learning from ideas and environment/judgment, expeditious use of information/perspicacity. The results in general supported the idea that wisdom is a multifaceted construct, even though the sample was likely too small to yield robust results from multidimensional scaling analyses. Importantly, lay people's concepts of wisdom are distinct from intelligence and creativity, and a later study replicated this result using a large sample of North American undergraduate students ($n = 486$; Study 2 in Paulhus, Wehr, Harms, & Strasser, 2002). In contrast to intelligence, people associated wisdom with sagacity. People further associate wisdom with reflection and integration of perspectives, whereas they link creativity with impulsive free-spiritedness. These lay beliefs about wisdom are also in line with current scientific theories and empirical evidence about the relationship between wise judgment and intelligence (Grossmann, 2017; Sternberg, 1998). Though abstract cognitive abilities such as propositional logic (Inhelder & Piaget, 1958) are well suited to master clearly defined problems and are beneficial for good judgment, such abilities are not sufficient for successful navigation of the ill-defined situations which call for wisdom (Clayton & Overton, 1976; Grossmann, 2017).

Indeed, wise thinking is only weakly related to measures capturing domain-general cognitive abilities (Grossmann et al., 2010, 2013; Grossmann, Sahdra, & Ciarrochi, 2016; Staudinger, Lopez, & Baltes, 1997).

More recently, researchers examined the dimensions of wisdom via ratings of wise exemplars and prototypes (Weststrate et al., 2016), presenting 202 participants from Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) a list of wise exemplars generated from a pilot study. Researchers asked participants to provide three or more adjectives to describe the prototypes and rate how similar they are. Using a multidimensional scaling approach, they discovered that people see three major groups of wise exemplars: those who have practical wisdom (i.e. who are pragmatic and strategic; e.g., Churchill), benevolent wisdom (i.e. who are prosocial and loving; e.g., Mother Teresa), and philosophical wisdom (i.e. who are intelligent and rational; e.g., Socrates).

Beyond the U.S., researchers also explored lay beliefs about wisdom in Canada, asking 150 individuals to generate a list of 123 descriptions associated with wisdom (e.g., perceptive, experienced) (Holliday & Chandler, 1986). They then invited another 150 Canadians from diverse age groups to rate how characteristic each attribute was of wise people. Using multidimensional analysis, their results suggest that there are five factors for wisdom, including judgment and communication skills, exceptional understanding, general competencies, interpersonal skills, and social unobtrusiveness.

Some research on folk theories about wisdom was also conducted in Germany, observing that Germans characterize wise acts as: (a) paradoxical, unexpected, i.e. acts that are unique from or contrary to most people's choice of actions; (b) moral (c) selfless; (d) agentic, i.e. acts that overcome internal and external dictates; (e) balancing different interests and trade-offs; (f) implying risk and uncertainty in the situation; (g) striving towards improving the human

condition (Oser et al., 1999). These underlying features seem to suggest that wisdom involves certain cognitions, as well as components capturing benevolent/prosocial motives. More directly supporting this notion are results from another study conducted on a large, well-educated sample of Germans (Glück & Bluck, 2011). These results indicate that adult Germans' lay views of wisdom include a cognitive component (e.g., knowledge, life experience), as well as a prosocial component (e.g., empathy and benevolence), with both components being central to the definition of wisdom.

Overall, Westerners' lay beliefs about wisdom appear to be distinct from intelligence or creativity (Paulhus et al., 2002; Sternberg, 1985). Moreover, people tend to view wisdom as a multidimensional construct, which involves cognitions, prosocial motivations, and balancing of different interests, opinions, and uncertainties (e.g., Oser et al., 1999; Weststrate et al., 2016). Though classic philosophical texts from this region emphasize theoretical knowledge and cognitive processes, it appears that Western contemporary folk beliefs about wisdom concern both cognitions as well as prosocial orientation.

Extension to Non-Western cultures and cross-cultural comparisons. Comparing Western and non-Western traditions of wisdom scholarship, some scholars have suggested that there is likely a great deal of similarity in the concepts of wisdom across cultures. For instance, Jeste and Vahia (2008) compared contemporary Western conceptualizations of wisdom with those in the classic Hindu texts of Bhagavad Gita, pointing out such components of Gita-wisdom as knowledge of life, self-detachment/contentedness, self-regulation/equanimity, compassion and sacrifice, and integration of these practices for the benefits of one's social environment. Arguably, similar ideas appear in various Abrahamic traditions of the West and the Middle East, as well as Confucian and Buddhist scholarship. In the Himalayan region of India, Levitt (1999)

interviewed 13 Tibetan Buddhist monks to ask what wisdom is to them. Quite similar to the framework of wisdom ideas in the West, the monks described wisdom as involving a cognitive component such as recognizing the truth (i.e. “emptiness”), a reflective component like transcending the self (i.e. “nonself”), and a social-emotional component that is about understanding suffering and feeling compassion. In Taiwan, Yang (2001; Study 2) surveyed 616 Chinese and discovered that Chinese also viewed wisdom as involving cognitive/analytic (i.e. “competencies and knowledge”), reflective (i.e. “openness and profundity”), and prosocial components (i.e. “benevolence and compassion”). In addition, Yang suggested that “modesty and unobtrusiveness” may potentially be a unique factor in cultures where people emphasize collectivism and social harmony.

It is still unclear whether and to what extent conceptions of wisdom are culturally specific or universal (Curnow, 1999). The major reason is that empirical evidence comparing folk beliefs of wisdom *across cultures* is scarce. Most of the scholarship on folk beliefs was either conducted in Western societies or within a single culture. Also, although there are advantages to using descriptors generated by lay people, there are issues with assuring equivalent translation of these descriptors across cultures. One notable exception is the set of studies by Takahashi and Bordia (2000). The researchers recruited 53 U.S. Americans, 50 Australians, 59 Indians, and 55 Japanese to evaluate which personality descriptors most closely match the descriptor “wise.” Their subsequent multidimensional scaling analyses revealed that Indians and Japanese were more likely to cluster “wise” with “discreet,” whereas Americans and Australians were more likely to group “wise” with “knowledgeable” and “experienced.” Takahashi (2013) proposed that these differences are rooted in distinct cultural traditions of the ancient East vs. West: Whereas the analytical tradition of the West emphasizes cognitive skills, differentiating them from social

skills, this split may be absent in the East. In other words, Japanese and, to some extent, Indians (as compared to Westerners) are more likely to believe that wisdom involves social processes, consistent with corresponding cross-cultural differences in emphasis of collectivistic values and interdependent self-orientation (Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

In our view, such interpretation should be considered with caution. First, empirical evidence for cross-cultural variability is very preliminary, as it comes from a single, underpowered study. Second, without actual measures of values or cultural belief systems, it is possible that any difference observed across samples will be due to sample-specific idiosyncrasies rather than macro-level cultural differences (Grossmann & Na, 2014). Third, other studies indicate that Western conceptions of wisdom include both cognitive/reflective and social processes (e.g., Glück & Bluck, 2011). Therefore, it is possible that the singular observation of cultural differences in emphasis on social (e.g., “discreetness”) vs. cognitive aspects (e.g., “knowledge”) of wisdom represents a sample-specific anomaly. More evidence, including evidence from a wider range of cultures, is needed to further our understanding of the cultural difference in the beliefs about the core components of wisdom.

Folk Theories about the Development of Wisdom

In various folk theories and scholarly writings (see Table 1), wisdom is often associated with the notion of maturity. Thus, understanding what people in different cultures believe they can do to develop wisdom is an important question to explore. Notably, before considering specific wisdom-enhancing strategies, it is worth considering whether there are systematic differences in beliefs concerning the malleability of wisdom across cultures in the first place.

A person's beliefs about the malleability of human attributes are highly contingent on culture (Kung, Eibach, & Grossmann, 2016; Su et al., 1999). Individualists (e.g., Americans, Canadians; Markus & Kitayama, 1991) tend to endorse more fixed, or "essentialist", beliefs about the self (Heine & Lehman, 1999). Collectivists (e.g., Chinese, Japanese), on the other hand, stress self-improvement and tend to have more malleable beliefs about the self (Chen, Chiu, & Chan, 2009; Heine et al., 2001; Morling, Kitayama, & Miyamoto, 2002). Consistent with this notion, Grossmann, Kung, Machery, & Stich (2016) surveyed participants from the U.S., Canada, China, and Russia and found that people from more individualistic cultures (Canada/ the US) held more fixed beliefs about wisdom, than people from more collectivistic cultures (China/Russia) (see Figure 2).

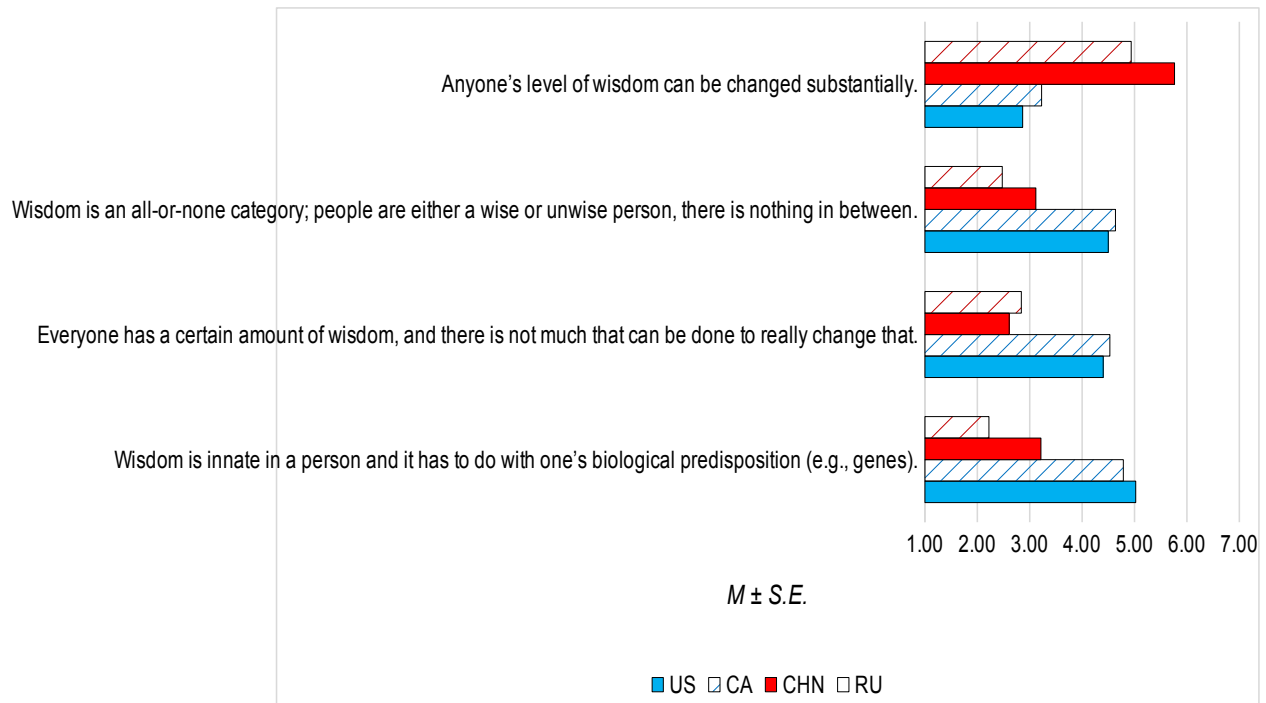


Figure 2. Malleable vs. Fixed Beliefs about Wisdom across Cultures (from 1 = *not at all* to 7 = *very much*).

Beliefs about wisdom-enhancing strategies. Furthermore, Grossmann, Kung et al. (2016) asked participants to pick three strategies that in their opinion people in their country would think are the most likely paths to wisdom. The set included 12 strategies capturing experiential (personal and vicarious) factors, the role of contemplation about the world and the self, as well as relational, structural, didactic and naturalistic factors. As Figure 3 indicates, participants from all countries emphasized active seeking of new experiences (9.8-15.6%), openness to life events (8.5-21.4%), as well as reflection on the self (6.8-16.7%) and the situation (10.9-15.9%).

At the same time, Figure 3 also reveals some cultural differences. North Americans were more likely to have a focus on first-hand inner personal experiences (6.7-15%) compared to Chinese (2.3%) and Russians (0.5%), a tendency that was associated with entity beliefs about

wisdom. North Americans were also more likely to endorse seeking vicarious experiences through advice from others (12.8-16.7%) than Chinese (6.2%) and Russians (4.2%) were. The Russian sample showed a unique pattern in that they were more likely to focus on strategies concerning openness and reflection than other countries (53.9% vs. 29.2-34.6%). The latter observation is consistent with the cultural stereotype of Russian culture as one endorsing self-reflection and brooding, including reflection on negative experiences (Grossmann & Kross, 2010). Finally, Chinese were more likely than people from the other three countries to endorse cultivation of habits (14.1% vs. 1.9-4.6%) and studying the lives of the sages (16% vs. 2.3-6.4%). It is possible to trace such beliefs to the teachings of Confucius, which are widely popular in modern China. Confucius explicitly endorsed the cultivation of habits — he once said the “easiest” way to develop wisdom is through imitation of wise people. Indeed, it is common to see this imitation approach in contemporary Chinese learning and education policies; one prominent example is that traditional national examinations in China tested students on the rote memorization of the famous writings of sages. Though playing a less central role, even nowadays biographies and writings of sages are still commonly used as part of the Chinese school curriculum (e.g., moral education) (Ho, 1994; Salili, Chiu, & Hong, 2001).

In sum, it appears that there is a great deal of similarity in how people in different cultures view wisdom. The existing work has so far suggested that wisdom involves cognitive competencies, particularly those concerning reflection on the self, life judgments and decisions, as well as the role of socio-emotional skills, including emotion regulation and benevolence. At the same time, we observed a range of culture-specific themes concerning the development of wisdom, which are mostly consistent with prior cross-cultural research (fixed vs. malleable view of abilities; the emphasis on deliberate habit cultivation and exemplar-driven teaching in China

and the focus on self-reflection in Russia). Before concluding this section, we should point out that the extant work on the concept of wisdom across cultures is still very limited and requires substantial unpacking in future studies. In particular, beliefs about the development of wisdom need further rigorous empirical research.



Figure 3. Beliefs about wisdom-enhancing strategies across cultures. % = likelihoods of selecting a given strategy as among the top 3.

Beyond beliefs: How variable is the expression of wisdom? The belief that wisdom is malleable, which seems more prevalent in non-Western countries, raises the question of whether the expression of qualities attributed to wisdom are indeed variable within the same person across situations. Moreover, if such qualities are indeed malleable, what are the circumstances promoting wiser judgment? Emerging empirical work has started to explore this question, targeting the cognitive processes involved in a wise judgment (see Table 2). This work largely supports the non-Western perspective of wisdom as a malleable construct, showing that people vary dramatically in their likelihood of utilizing wisdom-related cognitions from one situation to the next. In a diary study, Grossmann and colleagues (2016) asked a group of adults to fill out a 9-day diary. In the diary, the adults were instructed to reflect on the most significant challenge of the day (e.g., interpersonal conflicts, stressful situations at work, or other daily annoyances). They also answered questions measuring how they reflected on each challenge — whether they recognized limits of their knowledge, considered uncertainty and change in ways the situation might unfold, considered different perspectives on the event, and searched for a compromise between personal and group's interests (Grossmann, Gerlach, et al., 2016). By plotting the distribution of *between-person* scores — averaging participants' scores across diary days— and the distribution of *within-person* scores — i.e. daily deviations from the individual average scores across all diary days — researchers identified more variability in the degree of wise thinking *within* the same person across different situations (i.e. intra-person variability) than *between* people when averaged across their diary days (i.e. between-person variability) (Mendoza-Denton & Worrell, CHAPTER, this volume). Moreover, participants were more likely to express epistemic humility when reflecting on social situations involving other people as compared to non-social situations.

Why are non-social situations less likely to evoke wise responses? Experimental evidence suggests that the participants' greater self-focus in non-social situations is likely the key.

Grossmann and Kross (2014; Huynh, Oakes, Shay, & McGregor, 2017) asked participants to reflect on hypothetical transgressions concerning infidelity and trust betrayal. Participants were randomly assigned either to reflect on a transgression concerning a close friend or a transgression concerning them personally. Subsequently, participants were asked to describe their thoughts about the future development of the relationship. The result indicated greater wisdom — recognition of limits of their knowledge, consideration of uncertainty and change in ways the relationship might unfold, consideration of different perspectives on the event, and search for a compromise — when reflecting on a friend's vs. personal transgressions. Along similar lines, wisdom potential seems to be heightened when adopting an ego-decentering perspective on a difficult situation (e.g., viewing events from a “fly on the wall” vantage point; Kross & Ayduk, 2011) as compared to adopting an egocentric perspective (e.g., viewing events through a first-person vantage point). In two experiments, Kross and Grossmann (2012) tested how graduating college seniors reflected on their job prospects during the peak of the recent economic recession or how American college students reflected on polarized political issues in the heat of the U.S. Presidential election campaign. In both experiments, participants in the ego-decentering condition showed a greater ability to reason wisely (recognition of the limits of one's knowledge and recognition of change) compared to participants in the egocentric condition.

It appears that people in different cultures have a potential for expressing wisdom in their lives, particularly if processing information in an *ego-decentered* fashion. Why? From the first-person viewpoint, people draw attention to concrete, focal features of the environment. In contrast, the third-person viewpoint enables people to remain at the level of abstract mental

representations, with access to a wide range of meaning structures. Thus, when perceiving an event from the egocentric first-person viewpoint, people are more likely to focus on the concrete, focal features of the experience. In contrast, from the ego-decentered, third-person viewpoint, people are more apt to define that event in relation to its broader context (Kross & Ayduk, 2011; Libby & Eibach, 2011).

Expression of Wisdom in a Multicultural Context

Despite the common beliefs about the central themes of wisdom, the expression of psychological characteristics attributed to wisdom (see Table 1) can take different forms across cultures. Cultural differences in experiences people accumulate over the lifespan and social learning suggest substantial room for cross-cultural variability in wisdom expression across modern societies. That is, the expression of wisdom-related abilities likely depends on the specifics of the cultural environment, involving certain implicit or explicit cultural practices. In this section, we review emerging cross-cultural research on wisdom-related characteristics.

Wisdom-related cognitions across cultures

A number of studies indicate that some cultural groups such as Chinese, Japanese, or Russians tend to be more oriented to the social context when thinking about interpersonal experiences than other cultural groups, such as European Americans, who tend to focus on the individual when reflecting on similar experiences (Cohen et al., 2007; Grossmann & Kross, 2010). A greater focus on the social context may help individuals in non-Western countries achieve the overarching goals of relatedness and social connection, which are of higher value among these cultural groups (Hofstede, 1980; Triandis, 1989). If cultures differ in their focus on the social context and interpersonal harmony vs. the individual and personal achievement, one

may expect parallel differences in wise reasoning about social conflicts. Specifically, people from cultures that encourage a focus on social contexts (e.g., Japan) may show a greater ability to reason wisely compared to people from cultures that promote an individual-centered focus (e.g., US).

Notably, cultures also differ in the ways they approach social conflicts, providing distinct experiences they collect over the lifespan about how to approach difficult situations. Some cultures, including the Japanese culture, encourages maintenance of interpersonal harmony (Holloway, 1988) and stability in close relationships – themes that are consistent with the Japanese focus on social context (Grossmann & Na, 2014; Varnum, Grossmann, Kitayama, & Nisbett, 2010). For instance, Japanese are more likely to explicitly teach their children how to avoid and reduce conflicts than Americans are (Imada, 2012), because conflicts are viewed as more damaging in the East than in the West (Cho & Park, 1998; Friedman, Chi, & Liu, 2005; Ohbuchi & Atsumi, 2010). Other cultures, including American culture, promote themes consistent with an individual-centered focus (e.g., development of personal preferences and individuation in relationships), which may often prompt interpersonal conflicts (Keller, CHAPTER, this volume; Rothbaum, Pott, Azuma, Miyake, & Weisz, 2000). Consistent with these differences in social orientation, East Asians prefer less direct forms of social conflict management (e.g., avoidance strategies, third-party mediation), to a greater extent than Americans, who in turn prefer a direct conflict management strategy (Leung, 1988; Morris et al., 1998; Ohbuchi & Takahashi, 1994) more than Hong Kong Chinese or Japanese. Cultural differences in conflict management styles suggest that Americans experience more conflict over the lifespan, which provides opportunities to learn better ways to deal with it. It thus follows that experience-related gains in wisdom may be more pronounced in the West than in the East. In

other words, what people in Japan may be learning the “easy” way through social learning, people in the U.S. may be learning the “hard” way through personal trial and error.

These ideas were recently put to a test in a multi-session study involving age- and social-class-heterogeneous samples of Americans from the Midwest and Japanese from the Tokyo Metropolitan area (age range: 25-75 years; Grossmann, Karasawa, et al., 2012). Participants read newspaper articles describing a series of intergroup and interpersonal conflicts (Grossmann et al., 2010). An interviewer asked participants to reflect aloud on the future development of the issues described in the article, using such probes as “What do you think will happen next? Why do you think it will happen as you just said? What do you think should be done?” Participants’ responses were transcribed and content-analyzed by independent coders for wise reasoning, using the dimensions from Figure 1 (from 0 – no mention of the dimension to 2 – clear mention of the dimension). Results indicated that younger and middle-aged Japanese showed greater ability to reason wisely about societal and interpersonal conflicts than their American counterparts. These results held when controlling for cognitive abilities, occupational prestige, and response length.

Across countries, older participants in this study talked more, often went off on a tangent, showed lower performance on tests of fluid cognitive abilities and a similar level of crystallized cognitive abilities compared to their younger counterparts, which are all consistent with a large body of research on aging-related changes in general cognitive abilities and distractibility (e.g., Healey, Campbell, & Hasher, 2008; Schaie, 1994). Despite these limitations, older (compared to younger) Americans showed wiser reasoning about social conflicts, whereas there was no age effect in Japan (see Figure 1). This latter observation is consistent with the idea that Americans acquire wise reasoning abilities in older age in part because potential conflicts are less likely to be preempted early in their lives than they are for Japanese (Ohbuchi & Takahashi, 1994),

providing Americans with a greater opportunity to learn about conflict resolution over the lifespan. At this point, it is not clear how such cross-cultural differences generalize beyond U.S.-Japanese comparisons. Nor is it possible to separate developmental vs. cohort effects. Nevertheless, together these results paint a consistent picture that contexts promoting a focus on the self as independent from others inhibit one's ability to reason wisely.

Wisdom-related cognitions across sub-cultures. Cultural differences in social orientation are not limited to differences between countries, but can also involve different social groups within a country, for instance when comparing different social classes. Recently, many researchers started to approach social class as a form of culture (e.g., Kraus, Piff, & Keltner, 2011; Grossmann & Huynh, 2013), observing systematic social class differences in the degree to which people are attuned to others. Lower socio-economic status (SES) is associated with greater likelihood of defining one's self and personal goals through relationships with others (Grossmann & Varnum, 2011; Kraus et al. CHAPTER THIS VOLUME; Stephens, Fryberg, & Markus, 2011; Stephens, Markus, & Phillips, 2014). It is also associated with greater accuracy in discerning others' emotions and having compassion for them (Kraus, Côté, & Keltner, 2010);. Eye-tracking (Dietze & Knowles, 2016) and neuroscience studies (Varnum, Blais, Hampton, & Brewer, 2015) show that low SESs persons are more likely to be vigilant about their social environment. Drawing on these observations, Brienza and Grossmann (2017) hypothesized that lower class culture would promote wiser reasoning about interpersonal conflict situations. To address this question, researchers surveyed over two thousand adults from the U.S. who differed in their socio-economic status. To assess wise reasoning in an ecologically valid and unbiased fashion, researchers asked participants to reconstruct recent experiences from their lives (Brienza, Kung, Santos, Bobocel, & Grossmann, 2017). Subsequently, participants indicated the

extent to which they engaged in several aspects of pragmatic reasoning, including *i*) recognition of the limits of their knowledge/intellectual humility, *ii*) recognition of the world in flux and change/consideration of multiple ways a situation could unfold, *iii*) recognition of others' perspectives, *iv*) consideration of/search for compromise and recognition of the importance of conflict resolution, and *v*) application of an outsider's vantage point.

Researchers examined how individual-level indicators of social class were associated with wise reasoning. To this end, Brienza and Grossmann performed a separate set of multi-level analyses, with participants nested within states, with individual-level social class (a combination of education and income) as a predictor of wise style. Higher individual social class was associated with significantly lower wise reasoning scores. The effect of individual status on pragmatic reasoning was robust when controlling for gender and age, social desirability, and emotional intelligence. Thus, it appears that in spite of higher social class's association with superior performance on intelligence tests (e.g., Bridges & Lillian, 1917; Nisbett, CHAPTER, this volume; Witkin, 1969), higher SES culture reduces the propensity to utilize wise reasoning in interpersonal experiences.

Beyond cognition: The meaning and expression of wisdom-related emotion regulation and prosocial characteristics across cultures

As reported in Table 1, numerous psychological scientists have also characterized wisdom as an ability to successfully regulate their emotions and pursue prosocial goals. However, what does it mean to regulate one's emotions and be prosocial? Research in cultural psychology from the last few decades started to indicate dramatic cross-cultural variability in these constructs (see also Tsai, CHAPTER, this volume; Kitayama, CHAPTER, this volume).

The meaning of emotion-regulation across cultures. On a broad level, folk and scholarly notions of affective processes linked to wisdom concern the notion of adaptive emotion regulation. Affective scientists and clinical scholars often define emotion regulation as “the processes by which individuals influence which emotions they have, when they have them, and how they experience and express these emotions” (Gross, 1998). What does it mean to successfully regulate one’s emotions? To address this question, some clinical psychologists have focused on mental health outcomes of emotion regulation strategies. For instance, based on results of a recent meta-analysis, Aldao and colleagues (Aldao, Nolen-Hoeksema, & Schweizer, 2010) have suggested that reappraisal (i.e. generating benign or positive interpretations or perspectives on a stressful situation as a way of reducing stress, Gross, 1998) and acceptance (e.g., non-judgmental acceptance of emotions; Aldao et al., 2010) are adaptive for one’s mental health. Further, Aldao and colleagues (2010) have classified avoidance (including experiential and behavioral avoidance), rumination (Nolen-Hoeksema, Wisco, & Lyubomirsky, 2008) and suppression (S. C. Hayes, Strosahl, & Wilson, 1999) as maladaptive strategies. Based on such analyses, it seems tempting to conclude that reappraisal and acceptance are “wise” strategies, whereas avoidance, rumination, and suppression are “foolish,” in a sense that the former set of strategies leads to adaptive outcomes, whereas the latter list leads to maladaptive outcomes. However, such conclusion are largely based on data from North American and Western European samples. For instance, the most recent meta-analysis of the structure of emotion regulatory strategies (Naragon-Gainey, McMahon, & Chacko, 2017) included only one study conducted outside of Europe or North American cultures. Are there cross-cultural differences in the preference and utility of emotion regulation strategies?

Emerging work suggests that whereas Easterners are more likely to suppress emotions than Westerners are, East-West differences in emotion regulation occur often in ends rather than means. For example, European Americans prefer to maximize their positive emotions and moods, while decreasing negative ones (Miyamoto, CHAPTER, this volume; Miyamoto, Ma, & Petermann, 2014). However, they are also likely to encourage feeling and expressing of (desired) emotions as a sign of the unique inner features of the self (H. Kim & Markus, 1999), even if such seeking may diminish their actual affective well-being (Ford et al., 2015). In contrast, people from other cultures such as China or Japan are more likely to regulate emotions in the service of interpersonal harmony, through either suppression (Matsumoto, 2006) or reappraisal (for example, focussing on the positive in negative situations and vice versa; Grossmann, Karasawa, Kan, & Kitayama, 2014; Grossmann, Huynh, & Ellsworth, 2016; also see Grossmann, 2018; Grossmann & Ellsworth, 2017, for review). Suppression and reappraisal are commonly used in societies with a strong sense of social order and hierarchy, and the two strategies are less likely to be seen as diametrically opposed in such societies (see the 23-country study in Matsumoto et al., 2008).

The relationship between emotion regulation strategies and psychological outcomes appears to vary across cultures as well. Cross-cultural studies examining effects of suppression on mental health indicate that suppression is linked to detriments in life satisfaction, higher rates of depression, and negative perceptions by others among Anglo-Americans, but not among Hong Kong Chinese (Soto, Perez, Kim, Lee, & Minnick, 2011; Miyamoto, CHAPTER, this volume) and Asian Americans (Butler, Lee, & Gross, 2007; Cheung & Park, 2010). Moreover, the study of autonomic reactivity during emotion control after anger provocation indicates a physiological signature of threat among Anglo-Americans, but a signature of challenge among Asian

Americans (Mauss & Butler, 2010). In other words, Asian Americans find it easier to control their emotions after the anger provocation as compared to their Anglo-American counterparts.

There is also evidence that the negative effect of rumination on mental health is culture-specific. Russians were found to report ruminating more than European Americans (Grossmann & Kross, 2010; Study 1), possibly because Russians are more vigilant about negative information than Anglo-Americans are (Grossmann, Ellsworth, & Hong, 2012). At the same time, greater ruminative tendencies among Russians were not linked to greater depressive symptomatology, even though ruminative tendencies were linked to depressive symptoms among European Americans. Why? In another study (Grossmann & Kross, 2010; Study 2), researchers asked Russians and Anglo-Americans to ruminate on a recent interpersonal experience involving being angry at another person and then asked them to report on the cognitive strategies adopted when ruminating and their level of post-ruminative distress. Results indicated that Russians were more likely to adopt a third-person perspective when reflecting on the experience, whereas Anglo-Americans were more likely to immerse themselves into their experience. Russians also reported less distress than European Americans, and these differences were in turn statistically accounted for by the different cognitive strategies Russians and European Americans used when reflecting on their anger-inducing experience.

Meaning of prosociality across cultures. Cultures differ in their meaning of prosociality, as well. For example, U.S. Americans see being prosocial partly as an expression of the self, and they act prosocially out of respect for the other person. In economic games with a stranger, U.S. American participants were highly cooperative at the risk of being exploited. They reported that they chose to be cooperative not because they believed their partner was trustworthy, but because they meant to show respect to the partner (e.g., Dunning, Anderson,

Schlösser, Ehlebracht, & Fetchenhauer, 2014). East Asians, on the other hand, seem to see prosocial actions as a reasonable strategy only when there is an assurance of reciprocity. Logically, assurance of reciprocity is greater among ingroup members. Indeed, compared to people in Western societies, East Asians tend to express more trust toward their ingroup than a stranger (Huff & Kelley, 2003; Yamagishi, 1988; Yamagishi, Jin, & Miller, 1998; c.f. Buchan & Croson, 2004; Yuki, Maddux, Brewer, & Takemura, 2005). This preference was not easily explained by ingroup favoritism, but by the expectation that prosociality is more likely reciprocated by an ingroup member than a stranger (Yamagishi et al., 1998). Increased expectation of reciprocity also explains why knowing an indirect contact (e.g. a common friend) increased East Asians' level of trust toward a stranger, a pattern that was not observed among U.S. Americans (Chua, Morris, & Ingram, 2009; Yuki et al., 2005). This is because an indirect contact can potentially keep the stranger's behavior in check, thus allowing East Asians to have more confidence that the stranger will reciprocate the favor in the future.

On the receiving end of prosociality, some research has shown that expectation of reciprocity also affects when and why people accept others' prosocial gestures. In Chinese, there is a concept called "renqin," meaning a benevolence debt: if people accept a favor, they expect they will need to return one in the future (King, 1989). Empirical studies have found that Chinese, compared to European-Canadians, are less likely to accept even a small gift (e.g., a coffee) from acquaintances and would have felt more uncomfortable if they did (Shen, Wan, & Wyer, 2011). Relatedly, East Asians also seem less comfortable with seeking help even from close others, being worried about the burdens they are placing on those others (Kim, CHAPTER, this volume; Kim, Sherman, & Taylor, 2008).

Overall, this work suggests that a fuller understanding of whether and how emotion regulation and prosociality reflect wisdom requires a greater understanding of the culture-specific meaning of each construct. As with wisdom-related cognitions, characterization of emotion regulatory or prosocial strategies as “wise” will likely depend on the understanding of situational demands in a given cultural context (Grossmann, 2017).

Conclusion

When the Swedish zoologist Carl Linnaeus devised the binominal nomenclature system of species, he reserved the name “homo sapiens” – the wise being – to refer to humans. How does the notion of wisdom relate to the concept of culture? In the present chapter, we reflected on several possibilities, drawing from work in philosophy and psychology. Empirical work from these fields starts to suggest a large degree of cross-cultural similarity concerning folk theories about wisdom and its development. At the same time, the niches people live in are diverse and changing, so the concept of wisdom appears to evolve and diverge across cultures as well (Varnum & Grossmann, 2017). Indeed, folk theories about the development of wisdom appear to differ across cultures. So do expressions of wisdom-related cognitions. Evidence concerning the role of emotion regulation and prosociality for wisdom is less clear, because of substantial cross-cultural variability in the meaning of each construct. Overall, cultural variations observed in wisdom-related characteristics so far appear to be informed by dominant cultural values endorsed in a given society, calling for a culturally-grounded understanding of wisdom-related phenomena.

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