



Impact Factor: 1.547 | Ranking: 26/60 in Psychology, Social

Source: 2012 Journal Citation Reports®
(Thomson Reuters, 2013)

Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology

jcc.sagepub.com

Published online before print November 25, 2013, doi: 10.1177/0022022113513105

Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology January 2014 vol. 45 no. 1 30-36

From a Measurement Model to a Dynamic Causal Model Commentary on Schwartz

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Abstract

Schwartz (2013) uses the measurement model of latent aptitudes to explain why the large variance in individuals' values does not pose a problem for the use of the country mean as a proxy of the societal culture as a macro property. I propose that the multi-level causal model provides a more appropriate view of societal culture as a macro property, according to which individuals in each country are like students in a class who are taught by an instructor. The instructor's teaching effectiveness is a macro property, affecting all students' learning levels and the average test score. Within-class variance in students' test scores generated by factors independent of the instructor's teaching qualities is irrelevant to the assessment of the instructor's teaching effectiveness. Social institutions such as democratic legal systems affect all individuals under the institutions and would generate between-institution differences in people's behavior independently of factors idiosyncratic to individuals.

[institution](#) [niche construction](#) [macro property](#) [measurement model](#) [causal model](#)