

The Cross-Cultural Experience, Expression, and Function of Pride

Jessica L. Tracy

Ian Hohm

Gabrielle C. Ibasco

University of British Columbia

Please address correspondence to:

Jessica L. Tracy  
Professor of Psychology  
Department of Psychology  
University of British Columbia  
2136 West Mall  
Vancouver, B.C. V6T 1Z4  
[jltracy@psych.ubc.ca](mailto:jltracy@psych.ubc.ca)

## **The Cross-Cultural Experience, Expression, and Function of Pride**

Pride may be one of the few emotions that elicits divergent social responses depending on where one lives. For those in the Western part of the world, and especially in North America, pride is generally viewed positively; it is the emotion we strive to feel about ourselves and our children, that we celebrate in parades for stigmatized groups, and that makes us want to succeed. For those in certain other parts of the world, however, pride is a more complicated and itself stigmatized emotional experience. In these places, those who feel pride are seen as arrogant, and talking about one's pride risks violating social norms. In fact, both these conceptions of pride likely exist everywhere; even most Americans can easily name at least one person they know who shows too much pride, and East Asians, who tend to see pride more negatively, nonetheless experience and show pride after a major success (Tracy & Matsumoto, 2008). The reason for this complexity is that pride is not a unitary emotional experience; instead, it can only be fully understood as existing in two distinct facets, known as *authentic* and *hubristic* pride (Tracy & Robins, 2007a).

Pride's two-sided nature is part of what makes so interesting from a cross-cultural perspective. Cultural differences in attitudes toward confidence and arrogance are a likely cause of variation in cultural views of pride. Furthermore, pride is both a universal part of human nature and an emotion that is, to some extent, experienced and evaluated differently across cultures. In this chapter, we review the extant research on pride, focusing on evidence for its universality and the ways in which it varies by culture. We begin by discussing research on the pride experience, and, in particular, its two distinct facets. We then discuss the pride nonverbal expression, focusing on evidence for the display's cross-cultural universality. We then tie these

bodies of work together, to explain how both the experience and expression of pride function to facilitate the attainment and maintenance of social rank. In total, existing research on pride highlights the importance of this emotion for social functioning across cultures, and also illustrates how a universal and likely innate emotion can nonetheless show cross-cultural variation.

### **What is Pride?**

Most early accounts of pride emphasized its dangerous, arrogant side, but several told a different story. Aristotle (350 BC / 1925) admired the “proud man,” and saw virtue in claiming what one deserved. Like Nietzsche (2000), he despised individuals too humble to recognize their own worth, calling them “little-souled.” These philosophers condemned both undue humility and undue or excessive pride, leading to an important distinction: pride is virtuous when aligned with one’s merits, but claiming pride beyond what is deserved is considered to be vain or sinful.

Psychological scientists built upon these early accounts to postulate two distinct components of pride (Lewis, 2000; Tracy & Robins, 2004a); a large body of empirical work now supports this account (e.g., see Tracy et al., 2023 for a review; Tracy & Robins, 2007a). Studies show that, when asked to think about and list words relevant to pride, participants consistently generate two very different categories of concepts, which empirically form two separate clusters of semantic meaning. The first, authentic pride, includes words such as “accomplished” and “confident,” and fits with a prosocial, achievement-oriented, earned pride conceptualization. The second cluster, hubristic pride, includes words such as “arrogant” and “conceited,” and fits with a more self-aggrandizing, egotistical, and undeserved conceptualization. Studies asking participants to rate their subjective feelings during an actual pride experience, or the feelings that describe their dispositional tendency to feel pride (i.e., trait pride), converge with these findings,

demonstrating two relatively independent factors that closely parallel the two semantic clusters. (Tracy & Robins, 2007a).

The two pride facets are different not only in their content but also their nomologic networks. Authentic pride is positively related to the socially desirable and psychologically adaptive Big Five traits of extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability, and openness to experience. Hubristic pride, in contrast, is negatively related to agreeableness and conscientiousness (Tracy & Robins, 2007a). People who tend to feel authentic pride also tend to have high self-esteem, at both an explicit and implicit level, whereas those who tend toward hubristic pride are more likely to have low implicit and explicit self-esteem, and to be prone to shame, along with vulnerable or dysfunctional (as well as grandiose) forms of narcissism (Tracy, Cheng et al., 2009; Tracy & Robins, 2007a). Authentic pride is also positively associated with narcissism, but only with the grandiose, generally more psychologically adaptive form. Together these findings suggest that authentic pride is the pro-social, achievement-oriented facet of the emotion, whereas hubristic pride is the more anti-social and aggressive facet, which is related to narcissistic self-aggrandizement and may, in part, be a defensive response to underlying feelings of shame (Tracy & Robins, 2003).

Several studies suggest that the two pride facets are elicited by distinct cognitive appraisals. Pride occurs when individuals appraise a positive event as relevant to their identity and their goals for their identity, and caused by the self (Ellsworth & Smith, 1988; Lewis, 2000; Roseman, 1991; Tracy & Robins, 2004a; Weiner, 1985). Authentic and hubristic pride may be further distinguished by additional attributions; authentic pride is more likely to result from attributions to internal but unstable, specific, and controllable causes, such as effort (e.g., “I won because I practiced”), whereas hubristic pride is more likely to result from attributions to internal

but stable, global, and uncontrollable causes, such as ability (e.g., “I won because I’m great”; Tracy & Robins, 2007a). However, several studies failed to replicate these distinct relations (Holbrook et al., 2014), and factors beyond attributions, such as stable individual differences in personality, also play a role in the distinction. In a study examining how observers judge which form of pride targets are likely to be experiencing, perceptions of a proud target’s attributions were found to influence these judgments, but perceptions of the target’s arrogance were also relevant (Tracy & Prehn, 2012).

### **Does the pride experience generalize across cultures?**

Although studies have examined cross-cultural variation in the meaning and experience of pride (e.g., Eid & Diener, 2001; Scollon et al., 2004; Stipek, 1998), little research has tested whether the two-facet model of pride generalizes across cultures. The most comprehensive set of studies to do so was led by Shi and colleagues (2015), and included participants from mainland China and South Korea. Chinese participants were presented with a series of word-pairs, in Chinese, denoting lay conceptions of pride. Using the same procedure as Tracy and Robins (2007a), Shi et al. used a cluster analysis of participants’ similarity ratings to determine how participants conceptualized pride-related words, and found two clusters of words that mirrored the authentic and hubristic pride clusters found among Americans. In subsequent studies, Chinese and South Korean participants rated their trait and state levels of pride using scale items derived through both emic (i.e., subjective content generated by the Chinese and Korean samples) and etic approaches (i.e., using the existing scales developed by Tracy & Robins, 2007a, translated into Chinese and Korean, respectively). Supporting results from the semantic similarity analyses, participants’ self-ratings consistently loaded on two distinct factors, each representing one of the two previously found pride facets.

Shi and colleagues (2015) also found that the Chinese-derived scales of authentic and hubristic pride produced a similar nomological net as did the American-developed scales in American samples. Among Chinese participants, those high in trait authentic pride tended to show a prosocial and psychologically adaptive personality profile; they were extraverted, agreeable, conscientious, open to experiences, and emotionally stable. Chinese participants high in trait hubristic pride, in contrast, were more likely to be neurotic, disagreeable, and unconscientious. Also replicating prior US findings, authentic pride was positively, and hubristic pride negatively, correlated with guilt-proneness, an emotion found to motivate prosocial and reparative action (Tangney & Dearing, 2003). Supporting Tracy and Robins' (2004, 2007a) attributional distinction between the facets, Chinese participants high in hubristic pride were more likely to make stable, global attributions for their successes, whereas those high in authentic pride were more likely to make unstable and specific attributions for successes. These findings indicate that, in at least one other cultural context, individuals asked to rate their own experiences of pride spontaneously differentiate between authentic and hubristic facets.

Although these results suggest that the two-facet model of pride may be universal, several cultural differences also emerged (Shi et al., 2015). Whereas prior research on American samples found that hubristic pride was positively correlated with shame-proneness (Tracy & Robins, 2007a)—a psychologically maladaptive emotion associated with withdrawal and avoidance (Tangney & Dearing, 2003)—among Chinese participants, no such relation emerged. This difference might be due to cultural differences in shame, which tends to be a more psychologically adaptive and socially accepted emotion in East Asian cultures (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Sznycer et al., 2012). If, in North American contexts, those who feel the painful emotion of shame tend to respond with defensive feelings of hubristic pride (i.e., they cope with

their lowered self-esteem by self-aggrandizing; Tracy et al., 2011; Tracy & Robins, 2003), this defensive response may be less necessary in cultural contexts where shame is considered appropriate. That said, Shi et al. (2015) also failed to replicate the finding that Americans high in hubristic pride tend to be narcissistic but have low-self-esteem (Tracy et al., 2009), pointing to additional cultural differences in the experience of hubristic pride.

**Other cross-cultural research on the pride experience.** Although little work has examined the two facets of pride across cultures, several studies have examined cross-cultural differences in the meaning and experience of pride more generally (Eid & Diener, 2001; Scollon et al., 2004; Stipek, 1998; Sznycer et al., 2017; Van Osch et al., 2013). One of the first to do so found a difference between Chinese and American participants in the elicitors of pride. For both groups, pride was elicited by achievements, but whereas Chinese individuals anticipated feeling greater pride if their child was accepted to a prestigious university than if they themselves were accepted, Americans anticipated equal levels of pride in both situations. In addition, Chinese participants reported more negative views of those who express pride in personal achievements, compared to Americans (Stipek, 1998). Other studies have found that those belonging to collectivistic cultures tend to report less pride in general (Eid & Diener, 2001; Scollon et al., 2004), but not when it is experienced in response to the achievements of others (Neumann et al., 2009). Several studies thus point to cultural proscriptions against individual-level pride in more collectivistic cultures (e.g., Eid & Diener, 2001; Markus & Kitayama, 1991), possibly due to a stronger association between “pride” and hubristic pride, as opposed to authentic pride.

Alternatively, this difference may be due to the fact that, in collectivistic cultures, the self is generally viewed as embedded within a broader social structure, and defined in terms of interdependence with others, or relational ties (Heine et al., 1999). Individualistic cultures, in

contrast, tend to emphasize the independence of the self, such that taking pride in one's personal achievements is more normative. For those with a more interdependent sense of self, feeling pride in one's own accomplishments may be transgressive, given the need to emphasize the role of others in one's achievements (see Neumann et al., 2009).

Building on this work, recent studies have examined cross-cultural variation in pride at different levels of the self: personal, relational, and collective. Moving beyond vicarious or relational pride, which entails feelings of pride in the achievements of others, group-based pride emerges in response to the actions or achievements of one's broader collective group, such as their country (De Hooze & Van Osch, 2021). Through an analysis of news and blog corpora, Liu and colleagues (2021) found that Chinese media tend to use more relational pride language and less individual pride language compared to American media, but outlets differed in how they discussed national pride specifically. Chinese news outlets tended to use words indicating greater national pride compared to American news outlets, but the opposite was true for language used in blogs (Liu et al., 2021). Future research is needed to understand these differences.

In another cultural difference, pride experiences seem to vary between honor and dignity cultures. Honor cultures are those in which one's worth (i.e., honor) is partly determined on the basis of their social reputation, whereas in dignity cultures individuals are seen as having inherent worth regardless of their social reputation (Nisbett & Cohen, 1996). In honor cultures, people often seek to retaliate against those who threaten their reputation, even if doing so requires violence. In addition, as in collectivistic cultures, individuals in honor cultures tend to have interdependent self-construals (Fischer 1999). Importantly, studies have shown that individuals in several countries characterized as honor-based (i.e., Spain and Turkey) reported lower levels of positive emotion in response to pride experiences, compared to those from more



dignity-based cultures (i.e., the Netherlands, the United States; Mosquera et al., 2000; Uskul et al., 2014). In addition, Fischer and colleagues (1999) found that Spanish participants, compared to Dutch, reported greater feelings of pride after enhancing the honor of an intimate close other.

These studies underscore cultural variation in the situational elicitors or antecedents of pride, but not the pride subjective experience itself. Similar to Shi et al. (2015), research on the subjective content of pride across cultures has generally found evidence for universality, with relatively small cultural differences. Through an analysis of secondary data collected across 27 countries, Van Osch and colleagues (2013) found that pride was consistently viewed as a positive emotion entailing low to neutral arousal, but with variation in the acceptability of expressing it. The authors of this work clustered different countries according to their responses to 22 pride-relevant items (e.g., “felt powerful,” “felt dominant”). Two semantic clusters emerged, mapping onto Western nations (e.g., United States, Switzerland, Germany) and East Asian ones (i.e., Japan, China, Taiwan). Compared to Western participants, East Asians tended to control their expression of pride more and viewed pride as less positive or desirable, supporting prior findings (Eid & Diener, 2001; Stipek, 1998). East Asians also tended to associate pride with more hubristic elements of pride (e.g., “wanted to show off,” “wanted to be seen, to be the center of attention”). These findings support the suggestion that pride may be less positively viewed by East Asians than North Americans because in the former societies it is more readily conceptualized in terms of its hubristic facet.

### **The Pride Nonverbal Expression**

Studies conducted over the past two decades provide strong evidence for a cross-cultural, reliably recognized nonverbal expression of pride (see Figure 1). The prototypical pride expression includes the body (i.e., expanded posture, head tilted slightly back, arms akimbo with

hands on hips or raised above the head with hands in fists) as well as the face (i.e., small smile), and is reliably recognized and distinguished from similar emotions (e.g., happiness, excitement; Tracy & Robins, 2004b, 2007b). A handful of labs have documented reliable recognition of the pride expression, with recognition rates in educated North American samples ranging from around 80 to 90%, comparable to rates found for other well-studied emotion expressions (e.g., anger, sadness; Beck et al., 2010; Brosi et al., 2016; Cordaro et al., 2020; Tracy & Robins, 2004b, 2007b; see Witkower & Tracy, 2019, for a review).

Importantly, the pride expression is reliably recognized not only by North American and European adults, but also by American children as young as 4-years-old (Tracy et al., 2005), and adults from a variety of countries and cultural contexts, including individuals living in highly isolated, largely preliterate, traditional small-scale societies in Burkina Faso and Fiji, who had almost no exposure to Western cultural knowledge (Tracy et al., 2013; Tracy & Robins, 2008). These findings suggest that the pride expression is likely to be a human universal, as it passes the “maximally divergent populations” test (Norenzayan & Heine, 2005): it is recognized by individuals with different cultural backgrounds who are geographically separated. In other words, the Burkinabe and Fijians who demonstrated reliable pride recognition are unlikely to have learned about the expression through cross-cultural exposure (e.g., to American media).

Nonetheless, it is noteworthy that the pride expression differs from other highly recognizable emotion expressions in that recognition requires visible bodily and head components as well as facial muscle movements (Tracy & Robins, 2004b). This distinction, which also characterizes the shame nonverbal expression (Izard, 1971; Keltner, 1995; Tracy, Robins, et al., 2009), may be indicative of the distinctive evolutionary origins of these two self-conscious emotion expressions; they may be homologous with non-human dominance and

submission displays, which involve similar movements (Tracy, 2016; Tracy & Randles, 2011). However, one study found that pride can be recognized at fairly high rates from the face and head alone (i.e., without visibly expanded posture) if shown as a dynamic display—that is, via video, with movement (Nelson & Russell, 2011). This finding suggests that although static images of pride expressions require visible expanded posture to be accurately recognized, the observation of a head moving to tilt upward obviates the need for postural expansion. In everyday interpersonal interactions, then, pride displays may be recognized even when bodily movements are not visible.

In addition to being widely and reliably recognized, the pride expression is also reliably displayed by individuals likely to be experiencing pride. Children as young as 3 years show components of the expression following success at a task or game (Belsky et al., 1997; Lewis et al., 1992; Stipek et al., 1992), high school students hold a more erect posture after performing well on a class exam (Weisfeld & Beresford, 1982), and adult athletes participating in the Olympic Games judo competition display the full expression after winning a match (Tracy & Matsumoto, 2008). Importantly, this last finding was observed among athletes from 30 different nations, and held across all cultural dimensions examined. It was also replicated in a separate sample of blind athletes from 20 countries participating in the Paralympic Games. Furthermore, in what is perhaps the strongest evidence for universality, pride was spontaneously displayed following success by a congenitally blind subsample of these individuals—people who could not have learned to display pride through visual modeling (Tracy & Matsumoto, 2008). Together, these findings suggest that the pride expression may be a universal and innate behavioral response to success. It is unlikely that the expression would (a) be recognized so consistently and robustly, (b) by individuals who could not have learned it through cross-cultural transmission, or

(c) be reliably and spontaneously displayed in pride-eliciting situations by individuals who have never seen others show the expression, if it were not a human universal.

Despite this strong evidence, cultural differences have been observed in the display of pride, and specifically in the tendency to express versus suppress the expression. Although expressing pride draws attention to one's achievements, it can also lead to negative outcomes and appraisals from others, who tend to envy those who show pride, like them less, and view them as high in hubristic pride (Lange & Crusius, 2015; Kalokerinos et al., 2014). As a result, pride expressions are often suppressed in contexts where individuals expect the expression to elicit negative evaluations (Van Osch et al., 2019). People also suppress pride expressions when their achievement occurs in a domain that is relevant to observers (Van Osch et al., 2019). This finding draws on the self-evaluation maintenance model (Tesser, 1988) which posits that observing others' high performance is particularly envy-inducing when that performance is highly relevant to the observer (Beach et al. 1998). Similar suppression patterns emerged in a sample of Vietnamese university students (Tran et al., 2024), suggesting that individuals across cultures suppress their displays of pride to avoid evoking others' envy.

There is also evidence for cross-cultural variability in the willingness to express pride. Van Osch and colleagues (2016) followed up on Tracy and Matsumoto's (2008) finding that athletes across cultures display pride in response to winning an Olympic judo match, by testing whether national and Olympic athletes from the US and China differ in the extent to which they express pride upon receiving gold medals. Results showed that when gold medalists outperformed outgroup members (i.e., athletes from other countries), there was little-to-no difference between Chinese and Americans in pride expressions. However, when they outperformed fellow ingroup members (i.e., athletes from the same country), Chinese athletes

expressed less pride than Americans. This cultural difference supports the suggestion that Chinese athletes, belonging to a highly collectivistic culture, place a stronger emphasis on maintaining relationships and ingroup harmony, compared to more individualistic American athletes. However, it is noteworthy that this cultural difference emerged only when Chinese athletes had outperformed an ingroup member, suggesting that the difference is likely due to intentional suppression, consistent with cultural norms, and not to Chinese athletes experiencing less pride than Americans. Similarly, openly displaying pride may have more negative consequences in honor compared to dignity cultures (Fischer et al., 1999; Mosquera et al., 2000; Uskul et al., 2014). Fischer and colleagues (1999) found that participants from Spain (a honor-based culture) associate pride with arrogance and report greater efforts to control their own expressions of pride, compared to participants from the Netherlands (a dignity-based culture).

### **The Status-Enhancing Function of Pride**

The evidence for a universal nonverbal pride display points to possible evolutionary origins, and raises the question of why humans might have evolved to display this expression and recognize it in others. In answer, a growing body of research suggests that pride functions to facilitate the attainment of social rank, an outcome with clear adaptive benefits (see also Tracy et al., 2020; 2023). High-ranking individuals tend to have disproportionate influence within a group, such that social rank can be defined as the degree of influence one possesses over resource allocation, conflicts, and group decisions (Berger et al., 1980). As a result, higher social rank tends to promote greater fitness than low rank (e.g., Barkow, 1975; von Rueden et al., 2010), but mutually accepted hierarchical relationships benefit all group members by minimizing costly conflicts, establishing order, and facilitating coordination and cooperation (e.g., Berger et al. 1980; Halevy et al., 2011; de Kwaadsteniet & van Dijk 2010; Ronay et al. 2012).

**From pride to social rank: Subjective experience.** Given that, at the experiential level of pride, there are two distinct facets, understanding the function of the pride experience requires understanding how each facet facilitates the attainment of a distinct form of social rank. A growing body of research suggests that, like pride, social rank is not a unitary construct; humans reliably use two different suites of behaviors to attain two different forms of high rank: *dominance* and *prestige* (Cheng et al., 2010; Cheng et al., 2013; Henrich & Gil-White, 2001). Whereas dominance refers to the use of intimidation and coercion to attain status based largely on the induction of fear, prestige refers to status granted to individuals who are respected for their skills, success, or knowledge. These two strategies can be thought of as coexisting avenues to attaining rank and influence, and each is associated with distinct motivations, behaviors, and patterns of imitation and deference from subordinates.

In light of evidence for two distinct but equally effective rank-attainment strategies (see Cheng et al., 2013), it becomes clear why humans might have evolved to experience two forms of pride. Authentic pride is, in many ways, ideally suited to promote the attainment of prestige, as it motivates people to achieve mastery in socially valued domains. Authentic pride is also associated with the possession of a pro-social attitude toward others who seek to learn from a prestigious individual. Hubristic pride, in contrast, seems well suited to motivate the attainment of dominance. When individuals experience hubristic pride, they evaluate themselves as superior to others, and feel a subjective sense of dominance and power (Cheng et al., 2010). Hubristic pride thus may equip individuals with the mental preparedness to assert their power, and motivate behaviors that promote a dominant reputation: overt hostility, aggression, and a tendency toward interpersonal conflict (Tracy et al., 2009).

Several lines of research support this functionalist account. First, individuals high in trait authentic pride tend to describe themselves as prestigious, whereas those high in trait hubristic pride are more likely to describe themselves as dominant. Second, this pattern was replicated in peer perceptions among individuals on varsity-level athletic teams. In this study, individuals high in trait authentic pride were viewed as prestigious but not dominant by their teammates, whereas those high in trait hubristic pride were viewed as dominant but not prestigious. Third, a longitudinal study of college students found that participants who began the year high in dispositional authentic pride showed increases in (self-reported) prestige by Term 2 (controlling for Term 1 prestige), and participants who began the year high in dispositional hubristic pride increased in (self-reported) dominance by Term 2 (controlling for Term 1 dominance; Witkower et al., 2021). Interestingly, the reverse causal effects also emerged: those who began high in prestige increased in authentic pride over time, and those who began as dominant increased in hubristic pride—suggesting that holding each rank position may be an elicitor of each specific facet of pride. Importantly, authentic pride did not lead to increases in dominance (or vice-versa) and hubristic pride did not lead to increases in prestige (or vice versa).

Other research provides additional support for the role of authentic pride in facilitating the attainment of prestige by motivating socially valued achievements. In one set of studies, students' authentic pride in response to performance on an exam gauged whether they had performed well, suggesting that this form of pride serves as an internal signal of success. Furthermore, those who felt low levels of authentic pride in response to poor exam performance reported stronger intentions to change their study habits for subsequent exams. This effect could not be attributed to exam score, indicating that authentic pride's impact on achievement behavior goes above and beyond that of simple knowledge of past performance. Finally, authentic pride

indirectly predicted improved future exam performance for low-achieving students; those who followed the feedback provided by their authentic pride (i.e., adjusted their studying habits) achieved greater success on subsequent exams than did those who did not listen to their pride in this way (Weidman et al., 2016). Given the importance of social achievements to the attainment of prestige, this research points to the crucial role that authentic pride plays in this process.

Several lines of research also provide support for our account of hubristic pride as functioning to facilitate the attainment of dominance. First, individuals high in hubristic pride become willing to lie about their performance on a cognitive task when doing so might help them attain higher status. Notably, these individuals did not lie to exaggerate their performance simply to show off or impress others. Instead, they lied only when they faced a direct threat to their status, in the form of having to work on a collaborative task with a partner who had just outperformed them. In contrast, when they expected to work with a partner who had previously performed poorly, hubristically proud participants were no more likely to lie than those low in hubristic pride, suggesting that hubristic pride motivates immoral behavior specifically when such acts might allow for the acquisition of increased rank (Mercadante & Tracy, 2022). These behaviors, in turn, might provide hubristically proud individuals with a distinct advantage in status competitions over others who are less willing to behave immorally.

**From pride to social rank: nonverbal signaling.** As noted above, numerous studies have documented spontaneous pride displays among children and adults across cultures immediately following success—a situation likely to boost their status, especially if it is widely advertised via automatically recognized, distinct nonverbal displays (Belsky et al., 1997; Lewis et al., 1992; Stipek et al., 1992; Strayer & Strayer, 1976; Tracy & Matsumoto, 2008; Weisfeld & Beresford, 1982). Behaviors consistent with the pride expression also have been observed in the



dominance displays shown by certain non-human primates exerting or seeking status. For example, after defeating a rival and prior to an agonistic encounter, high-ranking chimpanzees show inflated “bluff” displays, which include behaviors such as arms raised and body expanded (de Waal, 1989; Martens et al., 2010).

More direct evidence for a causal link between pride displays and rank attainment comes from the finding that observers automatically perceive pride displayers as high status (Shariff & Tracy, 2009). Pride displays are more strongly implicitly associated with high status concepts than are displays of low-status emotions, as well as other high-status emotions (e.g., happiness, anger), and emotions not theoretically relevant to status (e.g., disgust, fear). In fact, the status signal sent by pride is powerful enough to override contradictory status cues in the environment, such as clothing suggesting low status (Shariff et al., 2012).

**Cross-cultural evidence for the status-promoting function of pride.** The hypothesis that pride evolved to facilitate status acquisition does not require that pride be evoked by the same stimuli across cultures. In fact, if the emotion evolved to promote actions that lead to increased status, it should be elicited when one’s actions are valued by others in the local environment, and valued actions can and do differ across cultures. Sznycer and colleagues (2017) tested this possibility using samples of individuals from 16 countries on four continents. They found that, across 25 behaviors and traits, the extent to which individuals expected to feel pride in response to each was strongly correlated with the extent to which local audiences would value it (mean  $r = .82$ ). Furthermore, this relationship did not emerge for other positive emotions, suggesting that pride experiences are uniquely calibrated to audience valuations. This relation was replicated across ten small-scale societies (Sznycer et al., 2018), suggesting that individuals

across a wide variety of cultures, including non-industrialized societies, expect to feel pride in response to socially valued behaviors and traits.

Sznycer and Cohen (2021) subsequently examined whether audience valuations are also related to motivations that result from pride experiences and facilitate future pride experiences, in both the US and India. Across the two countries, audience valuations were positively related to expected pride feelings and motivations to: (a) invest in each pride-inducing behavior or trait, (b) communicate the act/trait to others, (c) demand better treatment from others, and (d) pursue future challenges. Furthermore, cross-cultural differences in the amount of pride experienced in response to particular acts and traits were related to cross-cultural differences in the extent to which those traits and acts were valued; the more that a trait or act was valued by Indian participants relative to Americans, the more pride that trait or act was expected to elicit in Indian participants relative to Americans. Overall, these findings suggest that pride experiences function to promote status across cultures, and they do so by adaptively adjusting to local values, so as to motivate behaviors that increase status in one's distinctive cultural context.

The pride expression also appears to function as a cross-cultural tool for status enhancement, as studies suggest that the automatic association between pride displays and high-status concepts generalizes across diverse populations. Several of the IAT studies reviewed above were replicated in a population of villagers living in a small-scale traditional society on a remote island in Fiji, cut off from the rest of the global population (Tracy et al., 2013). Among these individuals, the pride expression was strongly implicitly associated with high status, despite the fact that Fijians hold a set of cultural practices and rituals that suppress personal status displays by individuals of both high and low ascribed statuses. In other words, Fijian cultural rules prohibit nonverbal behaviours that communicate an individual's belief that they deserve

increased status, making Fiji a “tough test” of the question of whether pride is a universal status signal. If the pride display did not evolve as a status signal, there are few cultural explanations as to why status and pride would have become tightly interconnected in Fiji.

### **Conclusion and Directions for Future Research**

Although a substantial body of research supports the cross-cultural generalizability of the pride experience and its two distinct facets, as well as the universality of the pride nonverbal expression, a number of important questions remain. First, few studies have examined cultural differences in the regulation of pride. Although several studies indicate that individuals from East Asian cultures prioritize controlling the pride expression more than individuals from cultures that hold a strong self-enhancement motive (Van Osch et al., 2013), it is unclear how these differences play out. Those belonging to East Asian cultures may, for example, downregulate their feelings of pride, or allow themselves to feel it but express it in more subtle or socially acceptable ways. An important related question is whether individuals can and do specifically target their regulation efforts to the hubristic facet of pride, as a way to attain the status benefits of authentic pride without the social costs of its hubristic counterpart (see Tracy, 2016).

In a related vein, prior research found only a slightly smaller correlation between expected pride experiences and local audience valuations (mean  $r = .82$ ) compared to expected pride experiences and foreign audience valuations (mean  $r = .75$ ; Sznycer et al., 2017). This suggests that many of the traits and actions that people value (or devalue) are similar across cultures (Curry et al., 2019; Shackelford et al., 2005), but future research should seek behaviors that diverge in cross-cultural valuation, to better test the prediction that pride experiences are most closely attuned to local audience valuations.

Another important future direction is to explore views of pride in honor cultures. Research in this area is surprisingly sparse given the wealth of work demonstrating the importance of self-conscious emotions (e.g., shame) in motivating reputation (i.e., honor) maintenance in these cultures (Rodriguez Mosquera et al., 2008). Prior studies suggest that pride is not viewed as positively in honor cultures as in other cultures, but the mechanism accounting for this cultural difference remains unclear. Given that honor cultures are characterized by aggressive and sometimes violent defenses of one's reputation, one possibility is that individuals in these cultures associate pride with its hubristic facet, which is more strongly linked to aggression.

In summary, we hope that this chapter provides the groundwork for future research exploring these important questions. Pride may be one of the most interesting emotions to study from a cultural perspective, both because its two facets allow for a great deal of cultural variation in how pride is valued, experienced, and expressed; and because it is an emotion with strong evidence for universality and a specific evolved function, yet cultural differences necessarily influence how pride subserves that function. Studying pride across cultures is therefore a viable window into examining and understanding cross-cultural differences in rank attainment and the structure of status hierarchies.

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*Figure 1. Prototypical pride expressions. Both displays are reliably recognized at high rates in Western samples and by isolated traditional small-scale societies.*