Abstract

The goal of this chapter is to offer an institutional approach to analyzing culture as a self-sustaining system of beliefs. Cultural psychologists examine the mutual constitution of the mind and culture (cf., Markus and Kitayama, 1991). For example, Kim and Markus (1999) argue that preferences shared by a majority of people in a culture come to constitute social norms for that culture, and that social norms in a culture are internalized as preferences. While agreeing with the idea of the mutual constitution of mind and culture, we argue in this chapter that this process is not a simple aggregation of individual preferences into social norms and subsequent internalization by individuals; rather, the process of mutual constitution of mind and culture is mediated by social institutions.