

Considering that U.S. Americans comprise only a small fraction of the world population (around 5%), some scholars have questioned the applicability of findings to all or most people around the world based so much on a single demographic (Arnett, 2008). Some have suggested that most research to date is based on **WEIRDOS**—Western, educated, industrialized, rich, and democratic cultures—and is severely limited because **WEIRDOS** aren't representative of everyone as a whole and that psychologists routinely use them to make broad, and quite likely false, claims about what drives human behavior (Henrich, Heine, & Norenzayan, 2010).

We don't take such an extreme view; we believe that there is nothing inherently wrong with such research, and the findings obtained from American samples are definitely true for those samples at the times the studies were conducted. Those findings may be replicated across multiple samples using different methods, and many findings weather tests for scientific rigor that would normally render them acceptable as a truth or principle about human behavior. And, there are a number of universal psychological processes that can certainly be tested on **WEIRDOS** and that are likely applicable to non-**WEIRDOS**. Thus, rather than raising questions specifically about **WEIRDOS**, we believe that psychology should question the characteristics of the people in *any* study: Is what we know about human behavior true for all people, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, culture, class, or lifestyle (see Figure 1.2)?

Cultural psychology asks this question by conducting research with people of differing cultural backgrounds, and uses cross-cultural research as the primary research method that tests the cultural parameters of psychological knowledge. **Cross-cultural research** involves participants of differing cultural backgrounds and allows for comparisons of findings across those cultures. Cross-cultural research is a method that allows psychologists to examine how knowledge about people and their behaviors from one culture may or may not hold for people from other cultures.

As a method, cross-cultural research can be understood as a matter of *scientific philosophy*—that is, the logic underlying the methods used to conduct research and generate knowledge. This idea is based on a few assumptions. First, the results of

**cross-cultural research** A research methodology that tests the cultural parameters of psychological knowledge. Traditionally, it involves research on human behavior that compares psychological processes between two or more cultures. In this book, we also incorporate knowledge contrasting human cultures versus nonhuman animal cultures. This approach is primarily concerned with testing the possible limitations of knowledge gleaned from one culture by studying people of different cultures.

