

# A2.10 A Sociocultural Motives Perspective on Self-Concept and Personality



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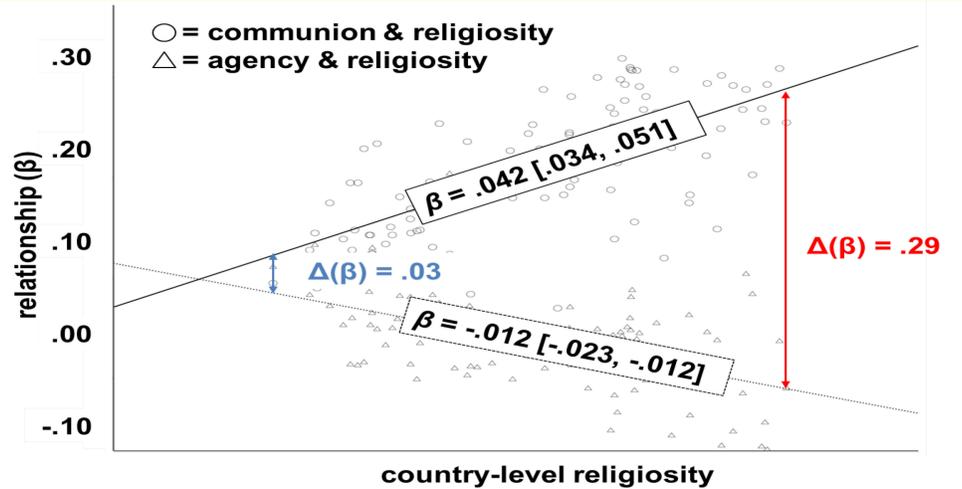
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## Background and Aims

- Across disciplines, it is assumed that people comply with sociocultural norms, values, and preferences (e.g., Bourdieu, 1982; Henrich & Boyd, 1998; Tajfel & Turner, 1986).
- The **revised sociocultural motives perspective (SMP-R)** postulates that the Big Two dimensions of the self-concept—Communion and Agency—moderate this relationship.
- Communal people are warm, moral, and agreeable; agentic people are dominant, competent, and energetic.
- Two types of norms: descriptive norms refer to what most others do; injunctive norms refer to what most others approve/disapprove (Cialdini, 2012)
- Communal-sociocultural-assimilation hypothesis:** Communal people like to swim with the sociocultural tide; they comply with both descriptive and injunctive norms.
- Non-agentic-sociocultural-assimilation hypothesis:** Non-agentic people crack under injunctive norm pressure; they comply only with injunctive norms.
- Aim 1: providing cross-cultural evidence for the SMP-R across a range of important life outcomes, such as prosocial behaviours (civil engagement, volunteering) and ideologies (religiosity, political attitudes).
- Aim 2: providing experimental evidence for the causal relationships postulated by the SMP-R

## Cross-Cultural Evidence

- Outcome: Religiosity
- Data: collected from December 1998 to December 2009 as part of the Gosling-Potter Internet Personality Project (Gosling, Vazire, Srivastava, & John, 2004)
- Participants:  $N = 2,578,427$  from 98 countries (62 % female; mean age = 25.55 years,  $SD = 10.87$ )
- Measures: *Communion* (8 items; e.g., “Has a forgiving nature;”  $\alpha = .75$ ); *Agency* (8 items; e.g., “Is original, a deep thinker;”  $\alpha = .54$ ); *Religiosity* (aggregate of three religiosity indices: (a) Fincher & Thornhill [2012], (b) Diener et al. [2011], and (c) one single-item measure [“Is very religious”];  $\alpha = .94$ )
- Statistical analysis: Random slope models in R (participant-level predictors country-mean centered)



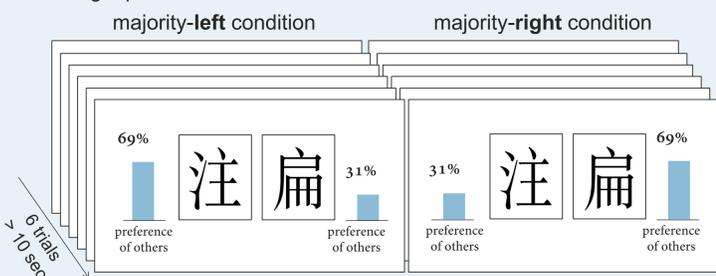
## Experimental Evidence

- Development of a minimalist experimental paradigm in which descriptive and injunctive norms can be manipulated.
- Participants: 578 U.S. citizens (48% female; mean age = 34.37 years,  $SD = 11.20$ ) recruited via Amazon Mechanical Turk
- Measures: *Communion* (20 items; e.g., “I am a harmonious, agreeable person;”  $\alpha = .91$ ); *Agency* (20 items; e.g., “I influence others’ lives;”  $\alpha = .87$ )

### Procedure

#### Phase 1: Learning

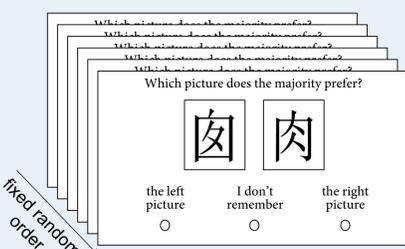
Descriptive norm: “...memorize whether the majority of U.S. citizens prefer the left or the right picture ...”  
Injunctive norm: “...memorize whether the majority of U.S. citizens expect sensible people to prefer the left or the right picture ...”



- 6 blocks à 6 trials
- pictures of Chinese characters and ornaments
- majority condition as a within-subjects factor

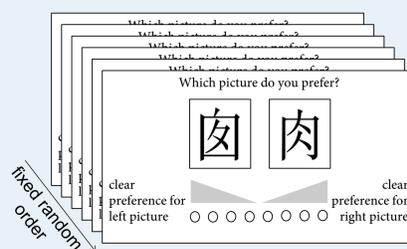
#### Phase 2: Recall

“You have seen all 6 picture pairs... Now, please indicate for each of those picture pairs which picture the majority of U.S. citizens prefer.”



#### Phase 3: Personal Preference

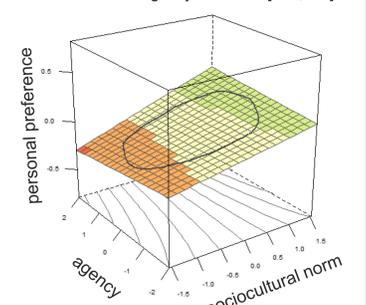
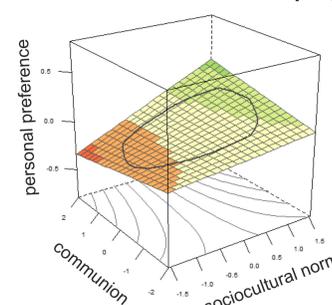
“Next, please indicate for each picture pair which picture you prefer.”



### Results

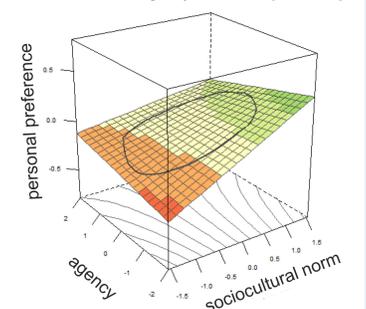
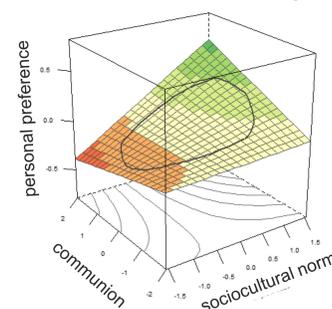
#### Descriptive Norm

Sociocultural Norm x Communion:  $PE = .04 [.004; .08]$  Sociocultural Norm x Agency:  $PE = .02 [-.02; .06]$



#### Injunctive Norm

Sociocultural Norm x Communion:  $PE = .07 [.03; .10]$  Sociocultural Norm x Agency:  $PE = -.04 [-.08; -.01]$



## Conclusion

The tendency to comply with sociocultural norms, values, and preferences is dependent on Communion and Agency—the Big Two dimensions of the self.