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

Directors/ Jochen Gebauer
Researchers/ Jennifer Eck, Theresa Entringer
Funding/ DFG

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, 1990).
- The revised sociocultural motives perspective (SMP-R) postulates that the Big Two dimensions of the self-concept—Communion and Agency—mediate 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).
- 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 behaviors (civil engagement, volunteering) and ideologies (religion, 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 = 35.56 years, SD = 10.87).
- Measures: Communion (8 items; e.g., “Has a forgiving nature,” α = .79); Agency (8 items; e.g., “Is original, a deep thinker,” α = .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,” α = .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,” α = .91); Agency (20 items; e.g., “I influence others’ lives,” α = .87).

Results

- Descriptive Norm
- Injunctive Norm

Conclusion

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