

Cultural Models and Implicit Theories of Self and World: A View from (Cross-)Cultural Psychology

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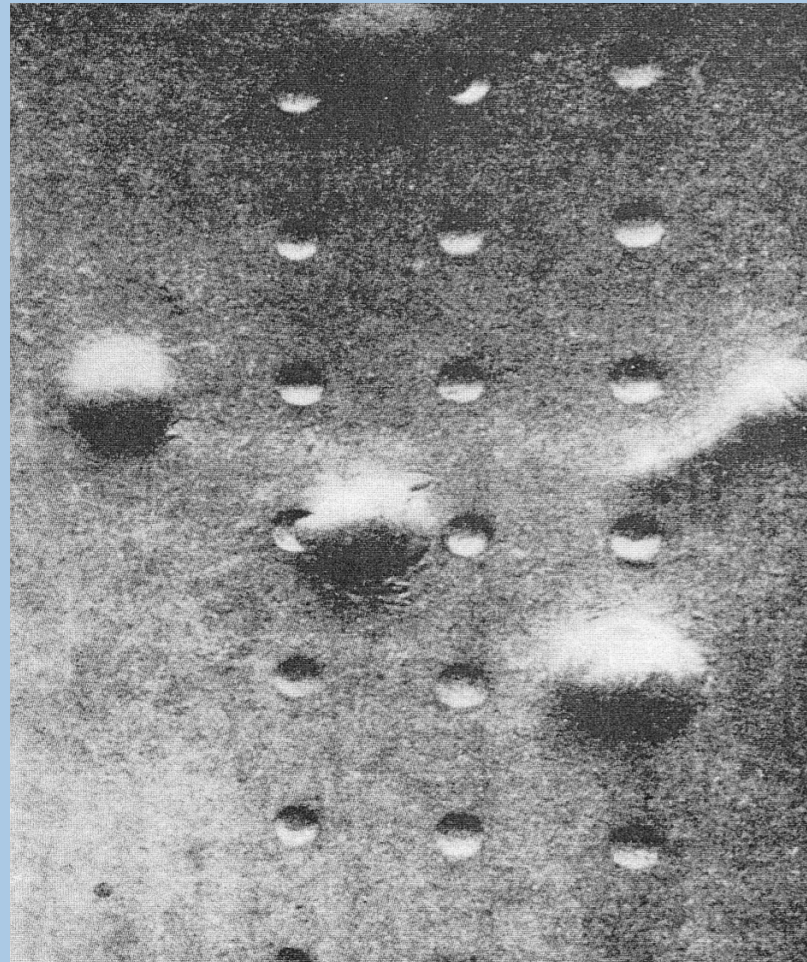
Legacy of Cross-Cultural Psychology

- > Psychology as a discipline concerned with universals
- > Cross-cultural psychology acknowledged relevance of culture
- > Emulating the experimental paradigm, culture (nations) viewed as independent variable in quasiexperimental design
 - ➔ focus on cross-cultural differences in psychological variables on the background of universalistic assumptions
- > “Peeling the onion called culture” (Ype Poortinga)
 - Analysis of Covariance with “active cultural ingredients” (values, norms etc., measured at individual level) explaining cultural differences in psychological phenomena (e.g., self-efficacy)
- > Many attempts to ensure comparability
 - Analyses of construct and measurement equivalence, control of culture-specific response styles

A More Dynamic Approach: Culture as Implicit Theories

- > Culture **not** internalized in form of a highly general structure
- > Dynamic constructivist approach: Culture as domain specific knowledge structures/ implicit theories
 - More or less accessible depending on current and chronic activation
 - Bi- or multicultural individuals may possess conflicting implicit theories (that cannot guide cognition simultaneously)
- > Frame switching
 - Individual shifts between interpretive frames belonging to different cultural contexts depending on cues in social environment
 - Bi- or multicultural individuals may possess conflicting implicit theories
- > Allows “multicultural minds”, but culture still seen as rather monolithic, knowledge structures as kind of software

A More Dynamic Approach: Culture as Implicit Theories



Experimental Approach: Cultural Priming

- > Biculturals from Hong Kong/US primed with Chinese / American / neutral icons
“Suppose you are asked about the characteristics of **American culture / Chinese culture / meteorology** by someone who knows nothing about it. How would you describe it? Write ten statements to describe American culture. Before you start, we will show you some pictures related to **American culture / Chinese culture / meteorology**. These pictures may give you some ideas. However, you need not use, describe or even mention these pictures in your answer.”



Experimental Approach: Cultural Priming

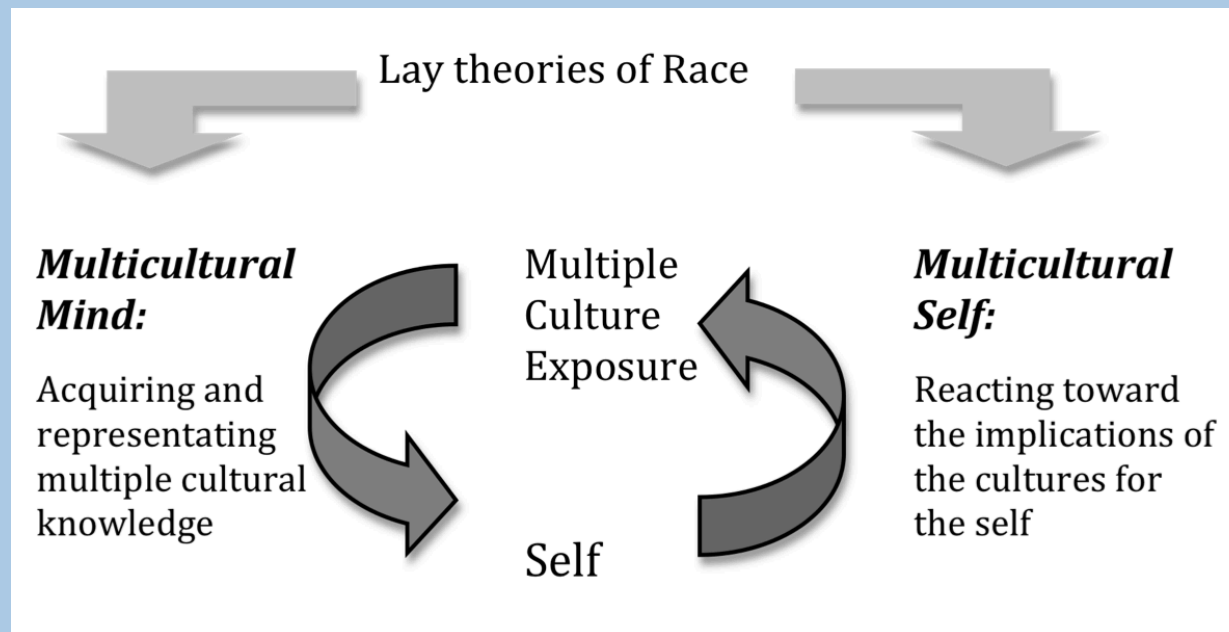
- > Cross-cultural psychology: consistent differences with regard to interpretation of social behavior
 - **Western** cultural contexts: Implicit theory that individuals are autonomous relative to group pressure → Tendency to attribute Behavior to internal dispositions
 - **(East) Asian** cultural contexts: Implicit theory that individuals accommodate to greater autonomy of groups → Tendency to attribute behavior to external forces
 - Knowledge structures of both kinds of attributions available in all context, but emphasis/salience different due to chronic activation

- > Nontransparent task for interpreting individual/group behavior
 - Explaining a single fish's behavior in terms of 1) leading a group of fish
2) being chased by a group of fish
 - Biculturals primed with Chinese icons chose/described more external attributions (chased by group of fish) than those in the neutral and American condition



A More Dynamic Approach: Culture as Implicit Theories

- > Who am I? Who are we?
 - Knowledge structures alone stay lifeless cultural programs
 - Implicit theories have to be evaluated, integrated to form some (new) identity



A Broader Look at Implicit Theories

> Implicit Theories of Self: Intelligence and personality

Entity theory: Performance goals (validate self); when setbacks occur
→ tendency to accept self → primary control, or helplessness when NOT changeable

Incremental theory: Learning goals (improve self); when setbacks occur
→ tendency to exert more effort to change self

> Implicit Theories of the world

Monolithic view: self and world as either changeable or unchangeable

Complementary view: fixed self – malleable world and vice versa

> **East Asian cultures:** Tendency to “individual self fits the world”
Individuals seen as malleable, adapting to social structure

> **Western cultures:** Tendency to “world accommodates individual self”
Social structure seen as changeable (by self)

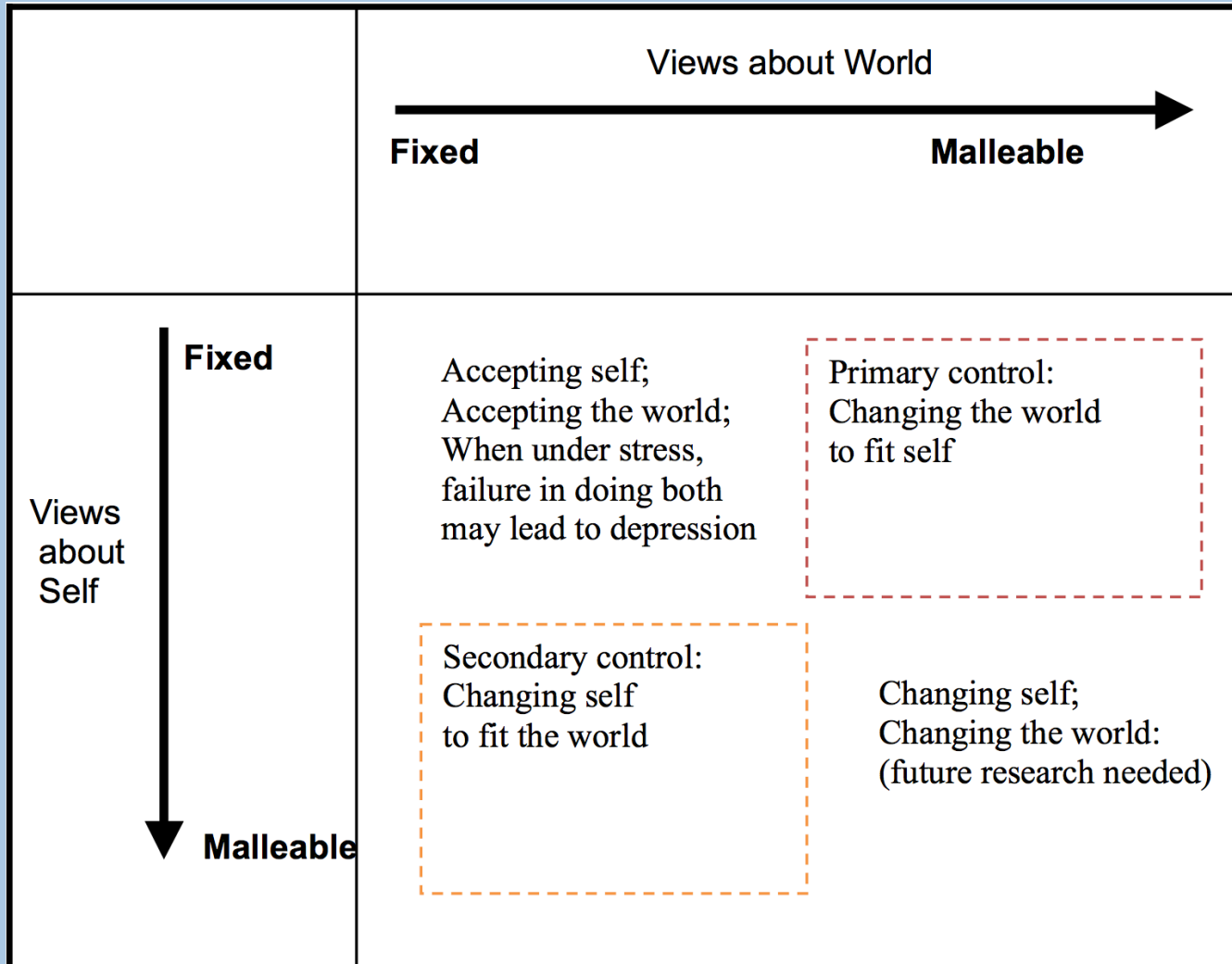
Primary/Secondary Control Orientation

- > **Primary Control:** what used to be called **Control**
 - changing the world in such a way that it is adapted to the self's needs; Self as agent, change in social and physical environment as outcome

- > **Secondary Control**
 - people not always try to influence their social and physical environment, but often flexibly adapt to existing realities
 - positive conceptualization of seemingly dysfunctional behavior like passivity; used to be viewed as compensatory, until primary control is possible again
 - emphasizes functionality of flexibility in a (Western) culture that prioritizes determination and autonomous behavior
 - emphasizes the „need to fit in with social realities“

- > **Cross-Cultural Comparison:** stronger tendency to primary control in Western cultures and to secondary control in (East) Asian cultures

Relation Between Implicit Theories and Control Orientation



Cross-Cultural Study

China

N = 100 (M = 50 & F = 50)
Age $M_M = 20.41$ $M_F = 20.76$



Switzerland

N = 33 (only females up to now)
Age $M_F = 21.73$



USA

N = 60 (M = 20 & F = 40)
Age $M_M = 19.15$ $M_F = 19.29$



India

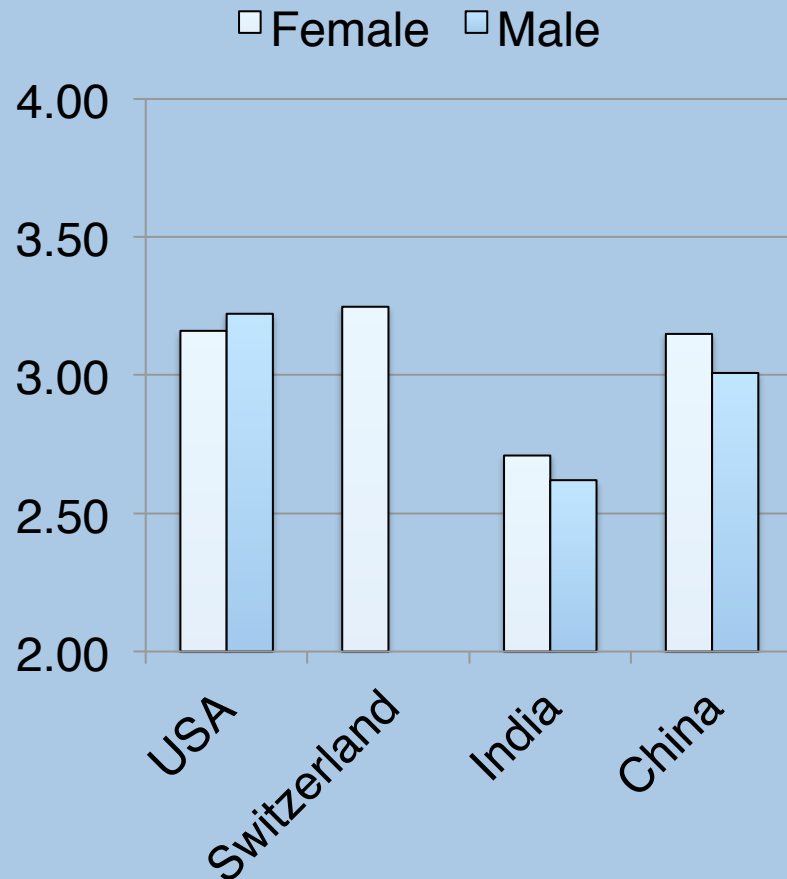
N = 100 (M = 50 & F = 50)
Age $M_M = 20.86$ $M_F = 20.36$



Scenarios for Primary/Secondary Control

- ❑ 13 concrete situations with concrete behavioral options
- ❑ Situations especially relevant for youths/students
 - University / College
 - Living together / Friendship
 - Work
 - Partnership
- ❑ Behavioral options for primary vs. secondary control
 - (Forced) distribution of percentages to response options
 - prevents problems of (differential) acquiescence
 - nevertheless allows differentiated response (e.g., equally strong tendencies)
- ❑ For both response options additionally: perceived difficulty to carry out the respective behavior (Likert-scale)

Entity Theory



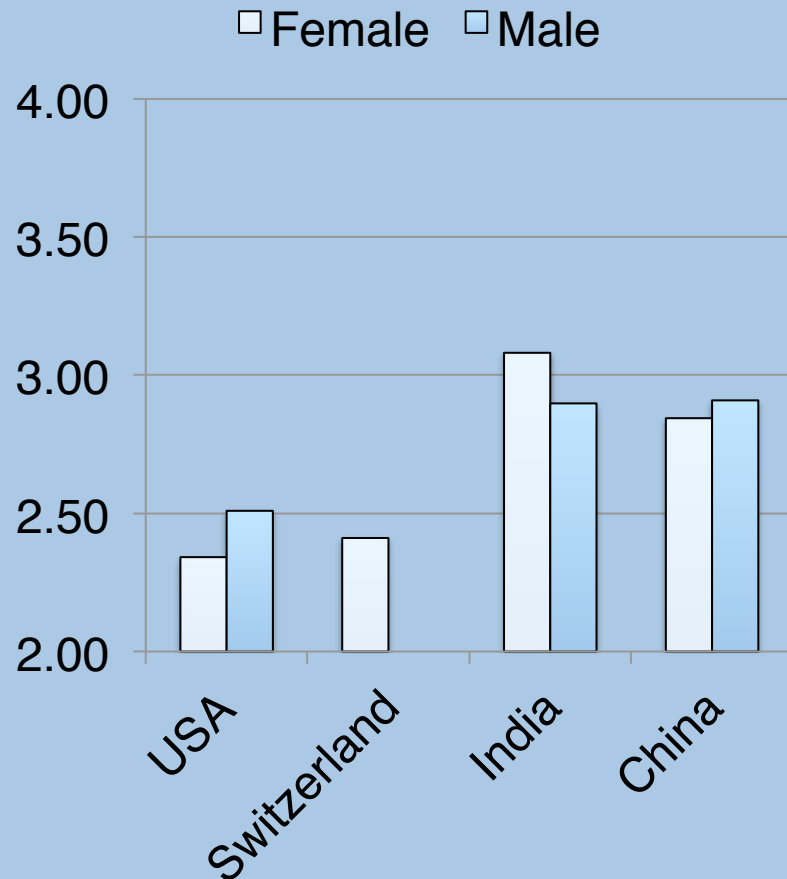
> **Culture**
 $F = 8.90, p < .001, \eta^2 = .09$
 (USA = CH = China) > India

> **Gender**
 $F = 0.33, ns$

> **Culture x Gender**
 $F = 0.35, ns$

“I am a certain kind of person, and there is not much that can be done to really change that.”

Fixed World (Domain Specific)



> **Culture**

F = 29.24, p < .001, eta² = .23
(USA = CH) < (China = India)

> **Gender**

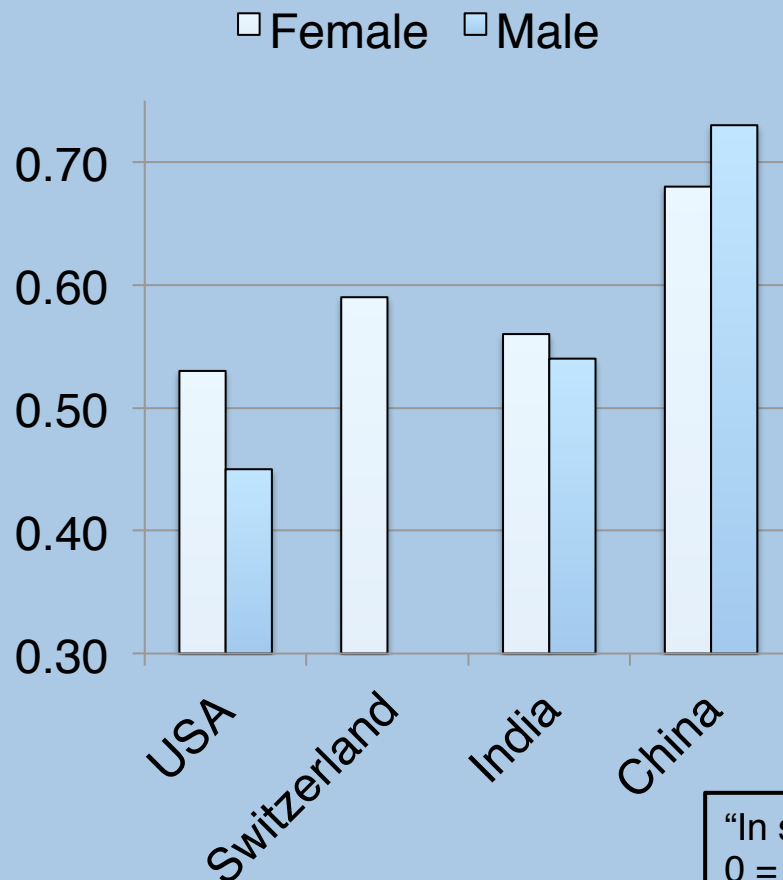
F = 0.09, ns

> **Culture x Gender**

F = 3.70, p < .05, eta² = .03

“In our society, divorce is something to be avoided under all circumstances.”

Self-Monitoring



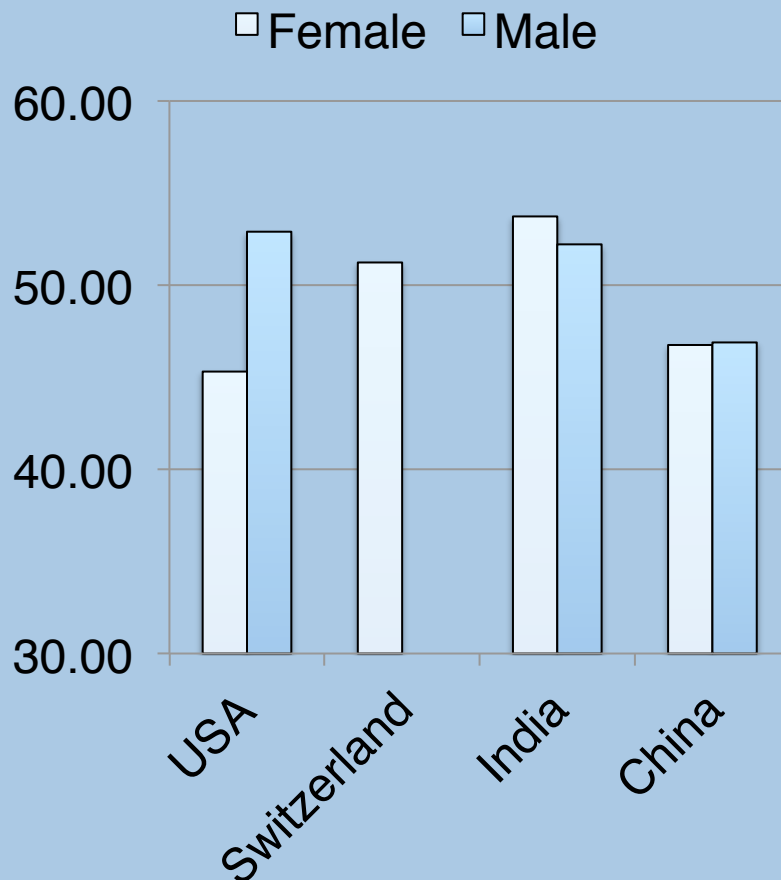
> **Culture**
 $F = 18.07, p < .001, \eta^2 = .16$
 China > (USA = CH = India)

> **Gender**
 $F = 0.29, ns$

> **Culture x Gender**
 $F = 1.74, ns$

“In social situations, I tend to:
 0 = Maintain behavior that is consistent with my personality.
 1 = Modify my behavior to fit better into the situation ”

% Primary Control (across 13 scenarios)



> Culture

F = 11.69, p < .001, eta² = .12
China < CH, USA < India

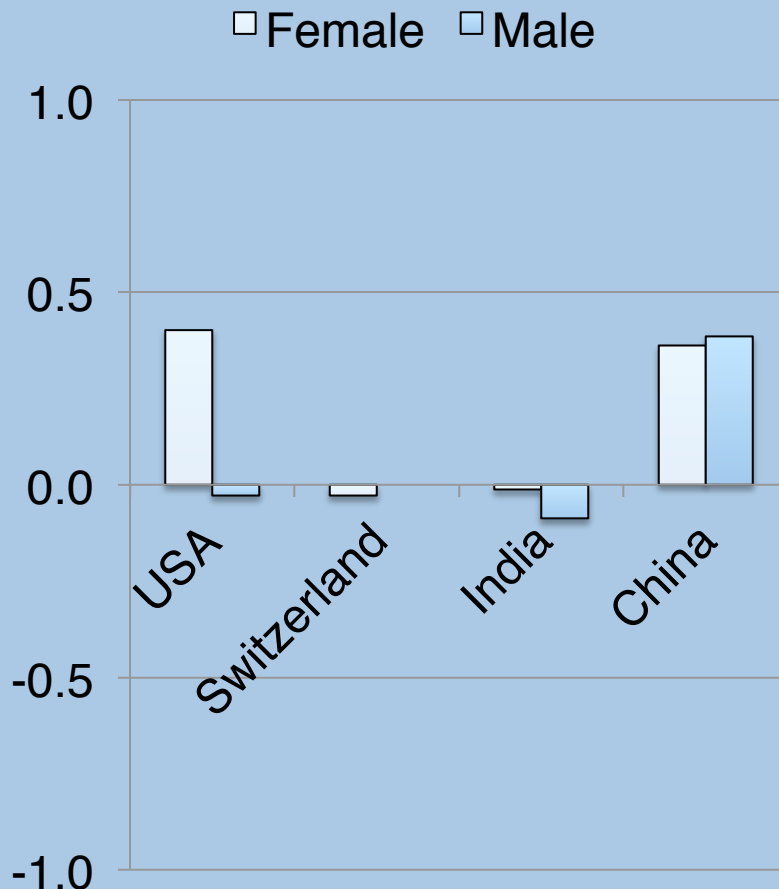
> Gender

F = 4.13, p < .043, eta² = .02

> Culture x Gender

F = 6.34, p = .002, eta² = .05

Difficulty Primary vs. Secondary Control (across 13 scenarios)



> Culture

$F = 15.43, p < .001, \eta^2 = .14$
 $CH < (USA = India) < China$

> Gender

$F = 6.30, p = .013, \eta^2 = .02$

> Culture x Gender

$F = 3.94, p = .021, \eta^2 = .03$

Correlations: Implicit Theories and Self-Monitoring

- > **Entity Theory** was uncorrelated with all other measures.

Pearson <i>r</i> / beta		Self-Monitoring
Fixed World (domain-specific)	Overall	.22**
	USA	.35**
	Switzerland	.48**
	India	.19
	China	.08

- > **Overall & USA, Switzerland:** The more the social environment is seen as fixed, the more one is adapting one's behavior to the situation.
- > Interaction: Culture x Fixed World $F = 2.11, p < .10$

Implicit Theories, Self-Monitoring, and Scenarios Control Orientation

Pearson <i>r</i> / beta		Percent Primary Control	Difficulty Primary Control
Fixed World (domain-specific)	Overall	-.15*	.21**
	USA	-.09	.22
	Switzerland	-.25	.48**
	India	-.08	.10
	China	-.22*	.14
Self-Monitoring	Overall	.08	.20**
	USA	-.49**	.59**
	Switzerland	-.35*	.18
	India	.24*	.05
	China	-.06	.15

- > **DV: Percent Primary Control:**
Interaction: Culture x Fixed World $F = 0.72$, ns
Interaction: Culture x Self-Monitoring, $F = 7.51$, $p < .001$
- > **DV: Difficulty Primary Control:**
Interaction: Culture x Fixed World $F = 1.62$, ns
Interaction: Culture x Self-Monitoring, $F = 4.73$, $p = .003$

Three Family Models according to Family Change Theory (Kagitcibasi, 2007)

- > Family Model of Independence
 - Emotional and material **independence**
 - industrialized Western cultures, individualistic

- > Family Model of (Total) Interdependence
 - Emotional and material **interdependence**
 - traditional agrarian cultures, collectivistic

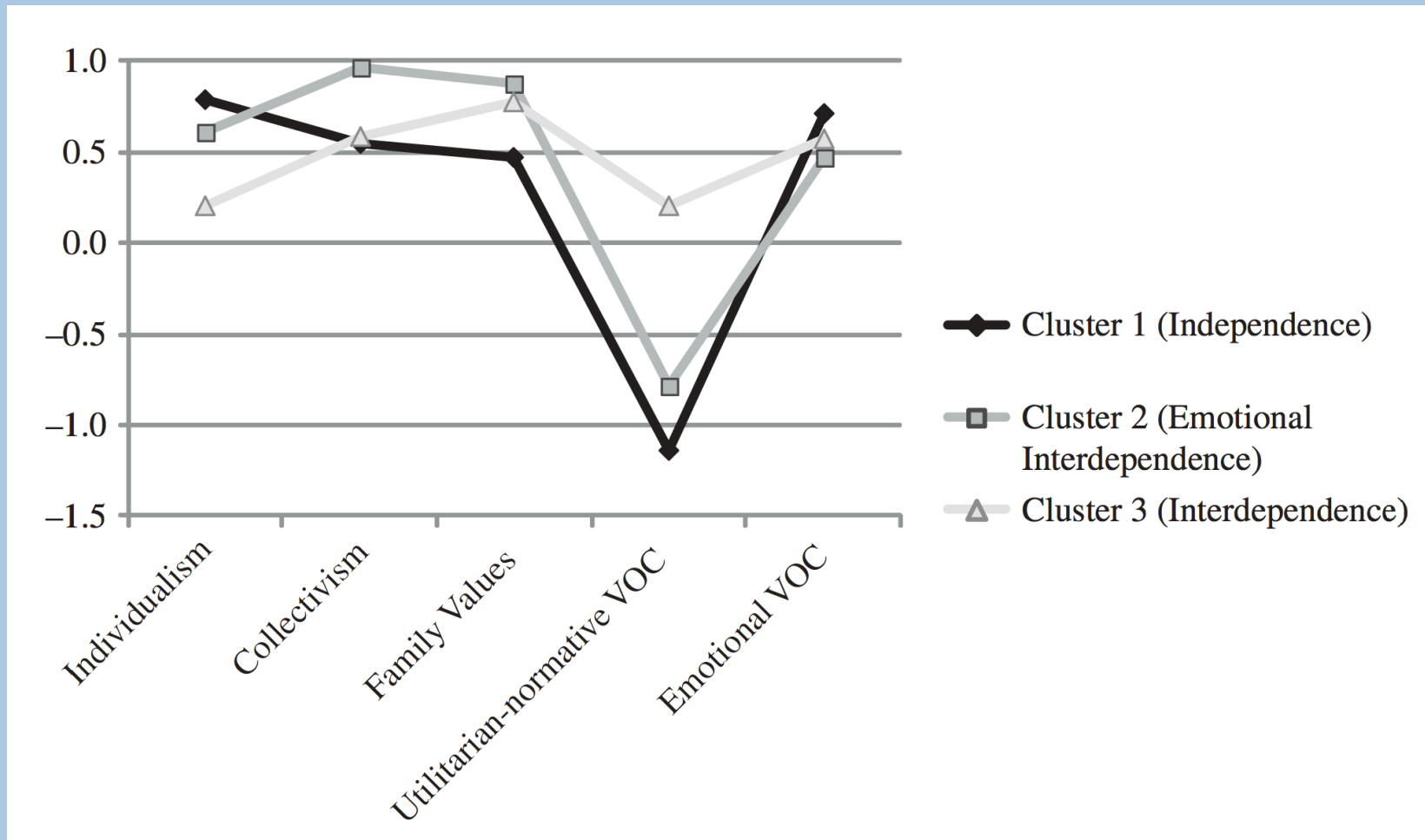
- > Family Model of Emotional Interdependence
 - Continuing **emotional interdependence**
 - Declining **material interdependence**
 - Rising **autonomy**
 - modernizing cultures with collectivistic background

Autonomy &
Separateness

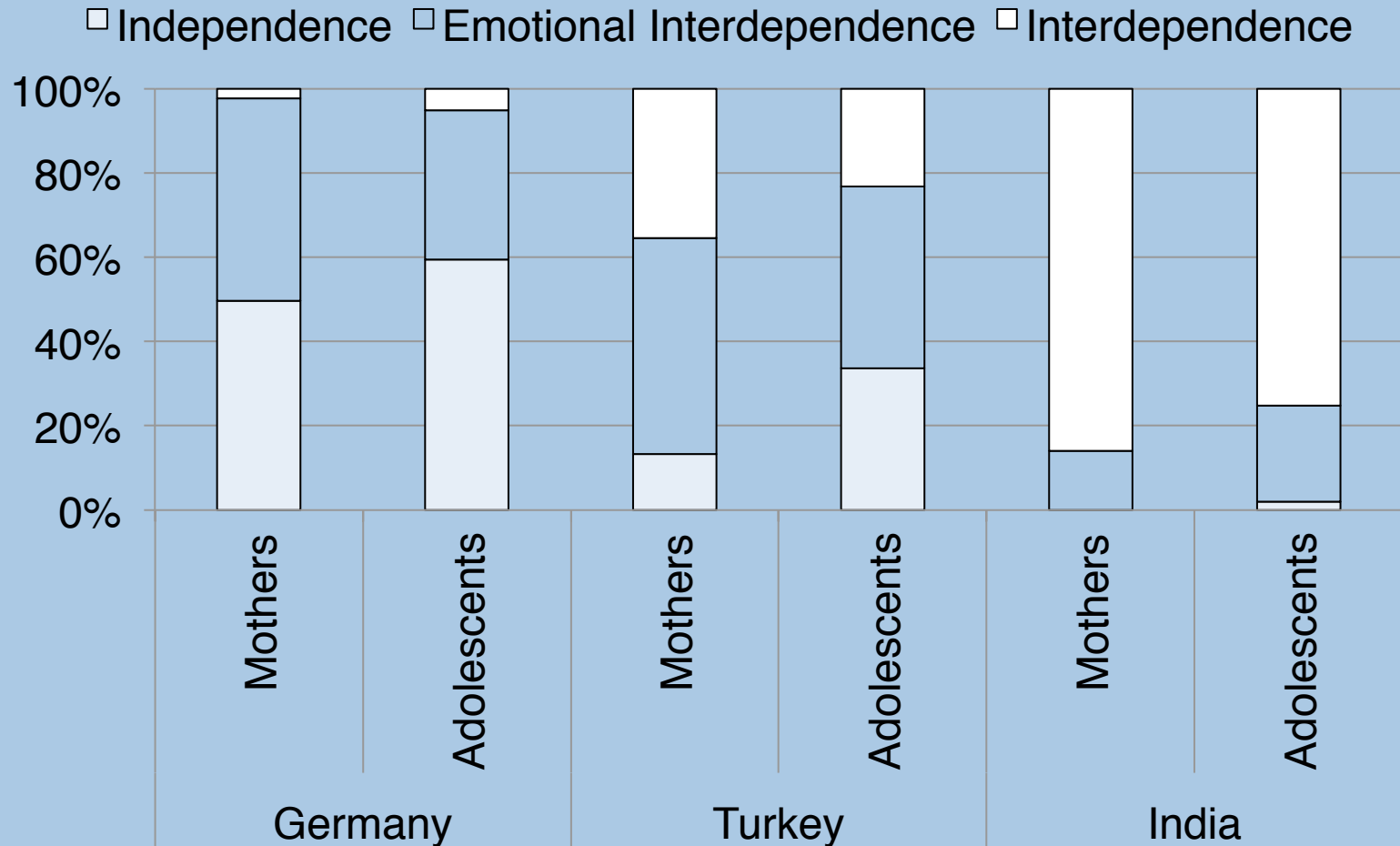
Heteronomy &
Relatedness

Autonomy &
Relatedness

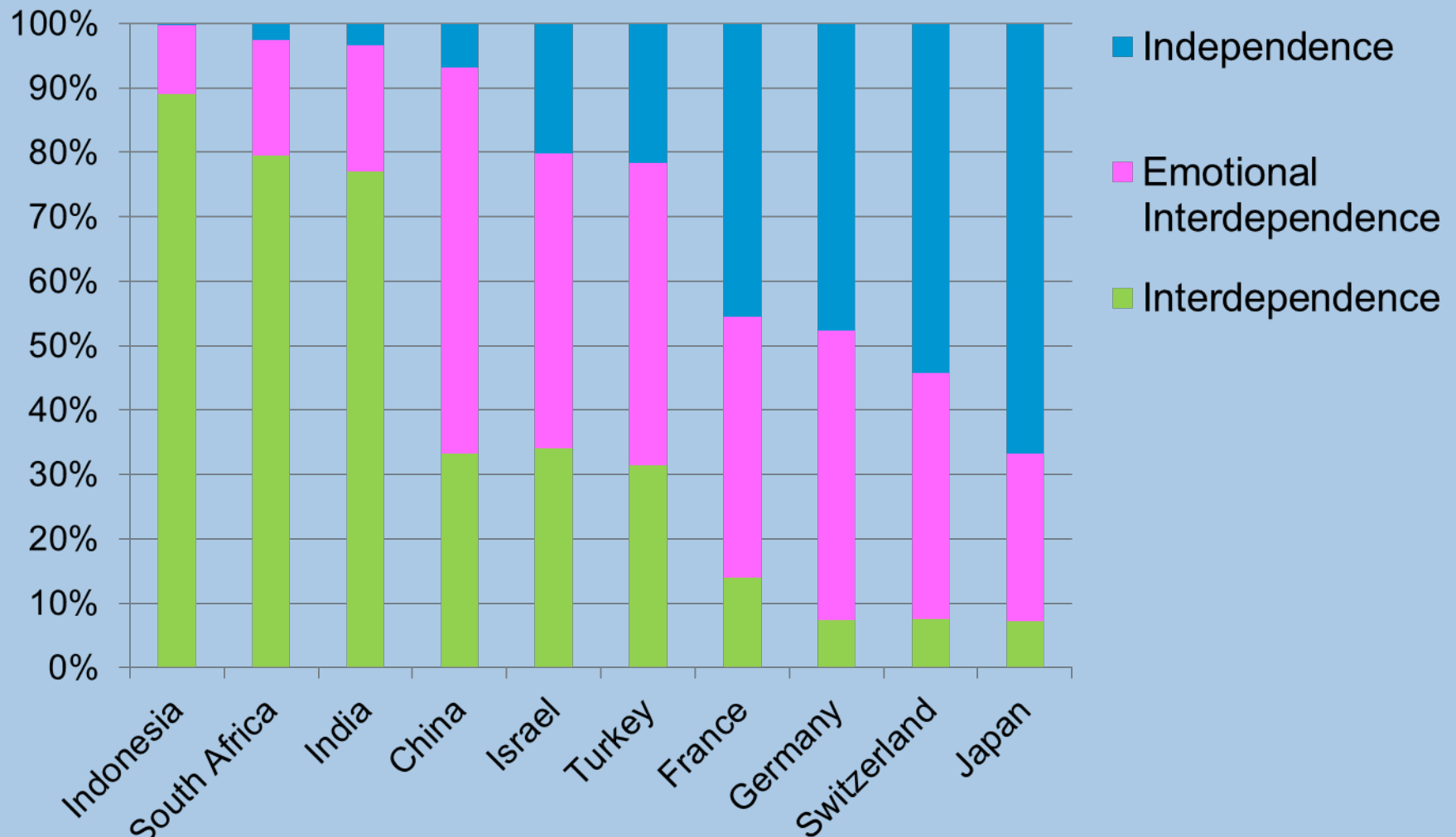
Family Models and Their Intergenerational Similarity in Germany, Turkey and India



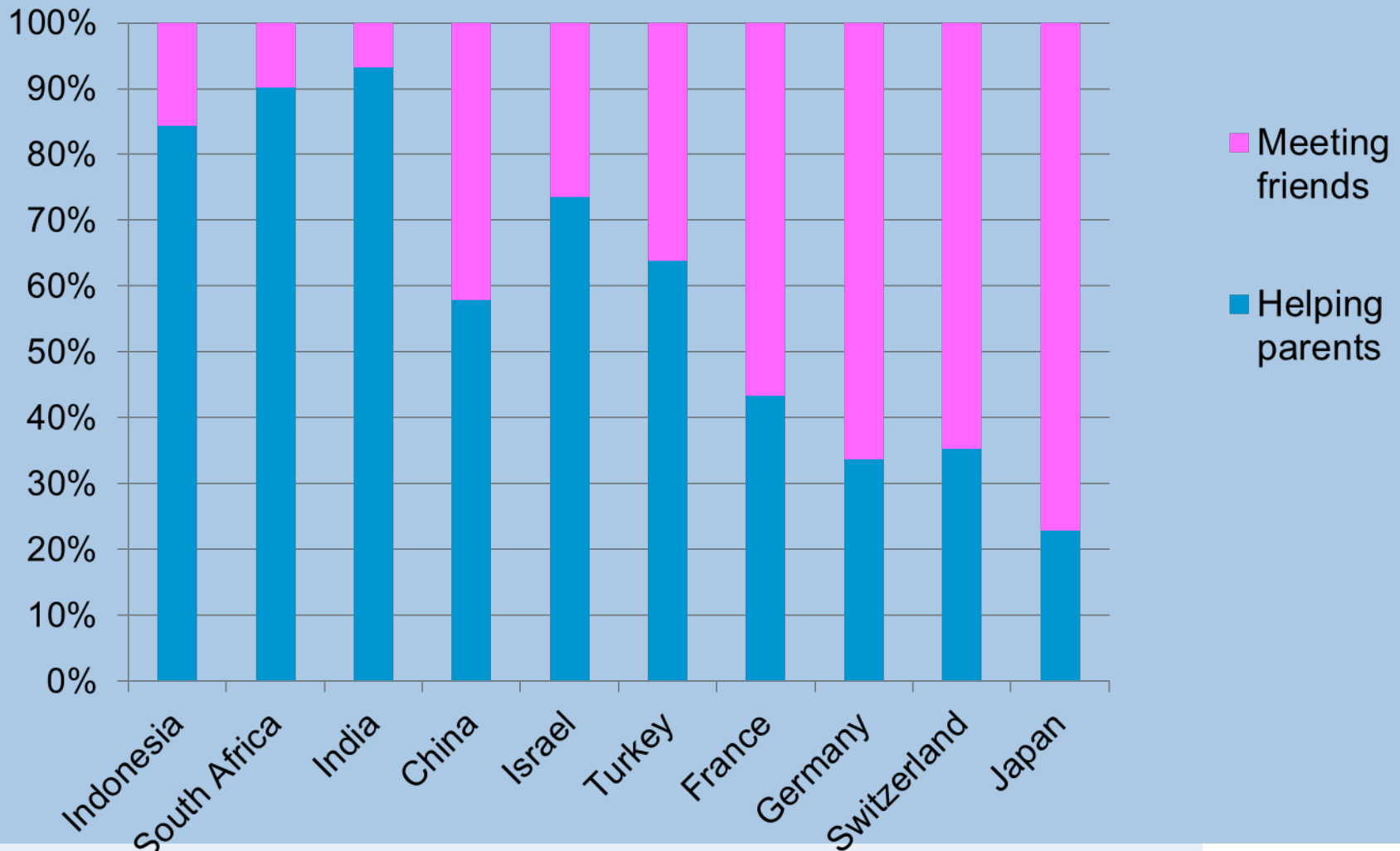
Family Models in Germany, Turkey and India



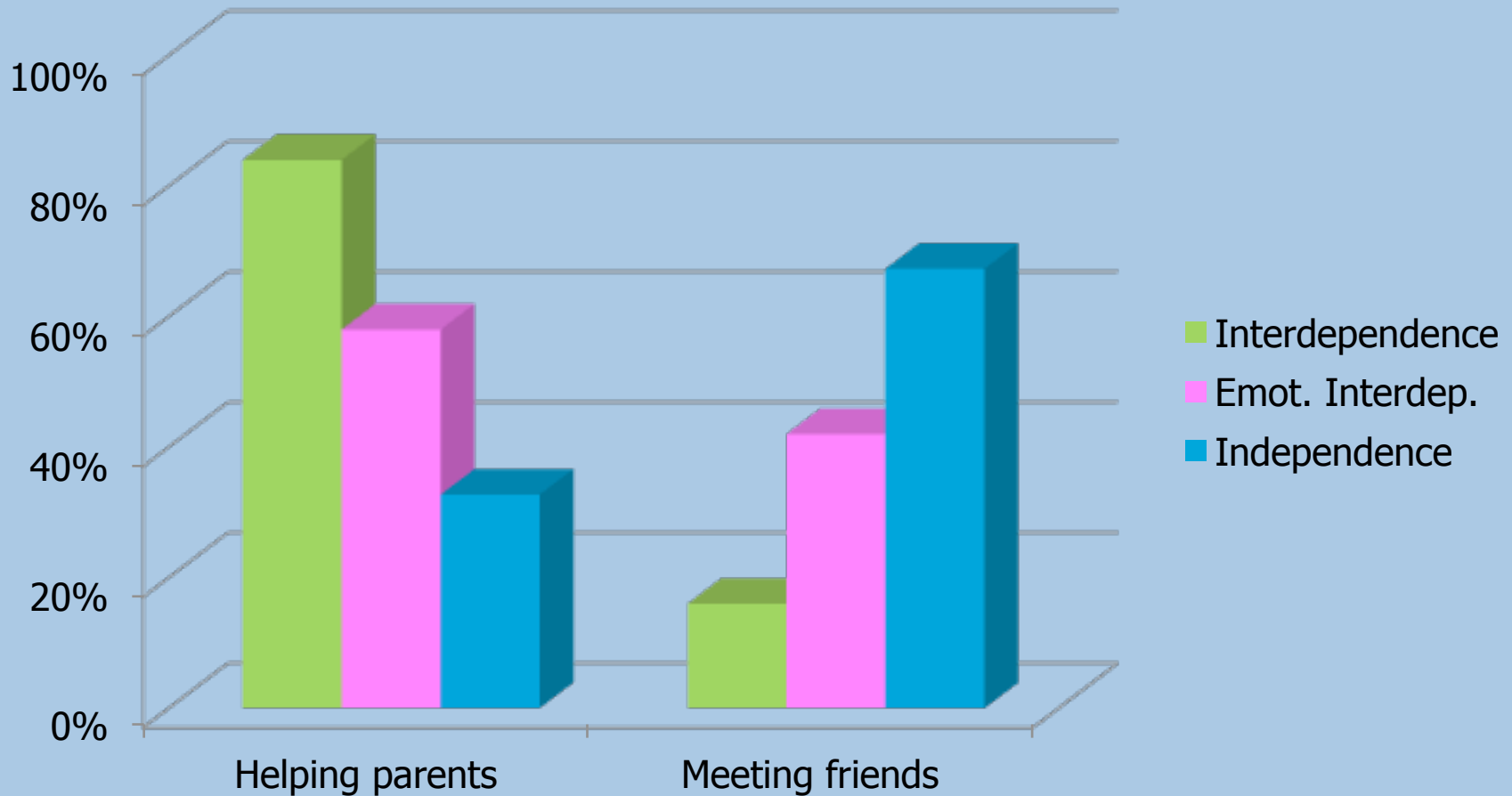
Family Models in Germany, Turkey and India



Adolescents' Familism Across Cultures



Adolescents' Familism Across Individual-Level Family Model Patterns



Interaction Family Models × Culture *ns*

→ Effect of Family Models valid also **within** cultures

Family Change Theory (FCT): Review of Recent Cross-Cultural Studies

- > Only studies with explicit reference to testing FCT included: 8 studies
- > Studies conceptualize emotional/material interdependencies very differently
- > Studies overall offer **some** support for FCT, but a straightforward evaluation of the theory's empirical status remains difficult
- > *Family model of emotional interdependence* partly identified, most prevalent in urban areas of economically developing cultures with collectivist background
- > **But:** Cultures representing the *family model of emotional interdependence* were consistently lower in emotional interdependencies than cultures representing the *family model of (total) interdependence*
- > Global shift in direction of *familial independence* in both domains - material as well as emotional – but decline may be slower and possibly weaker for emotional interdependencies