

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

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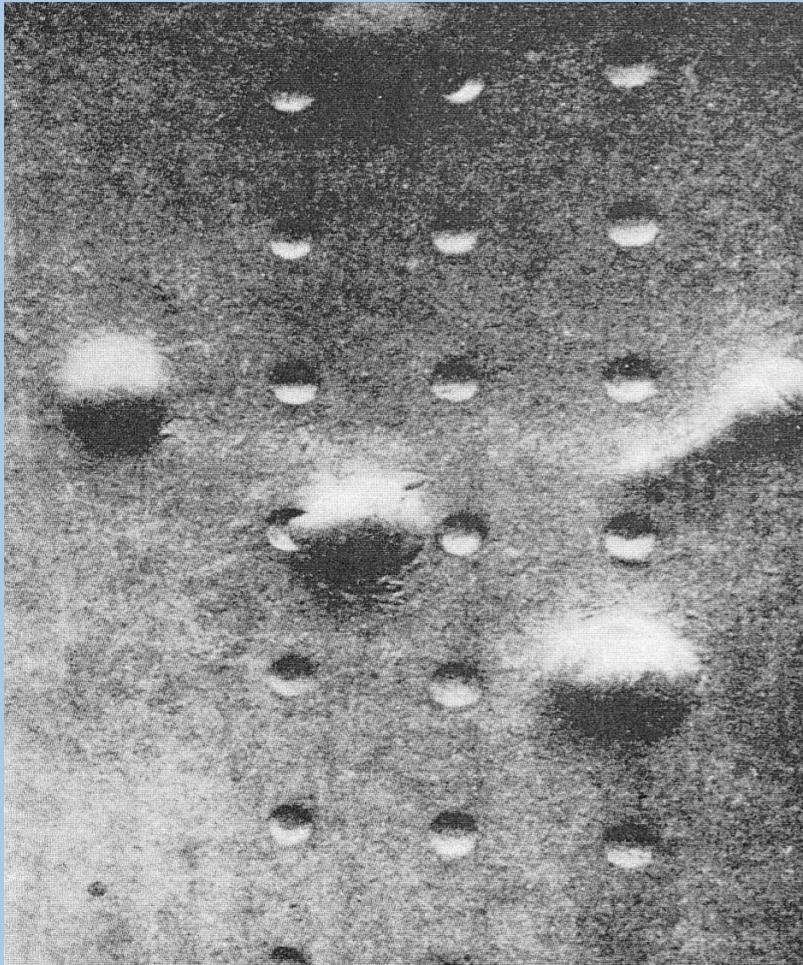
# Legacy of Cross-Cultural Psychology

- > 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.”



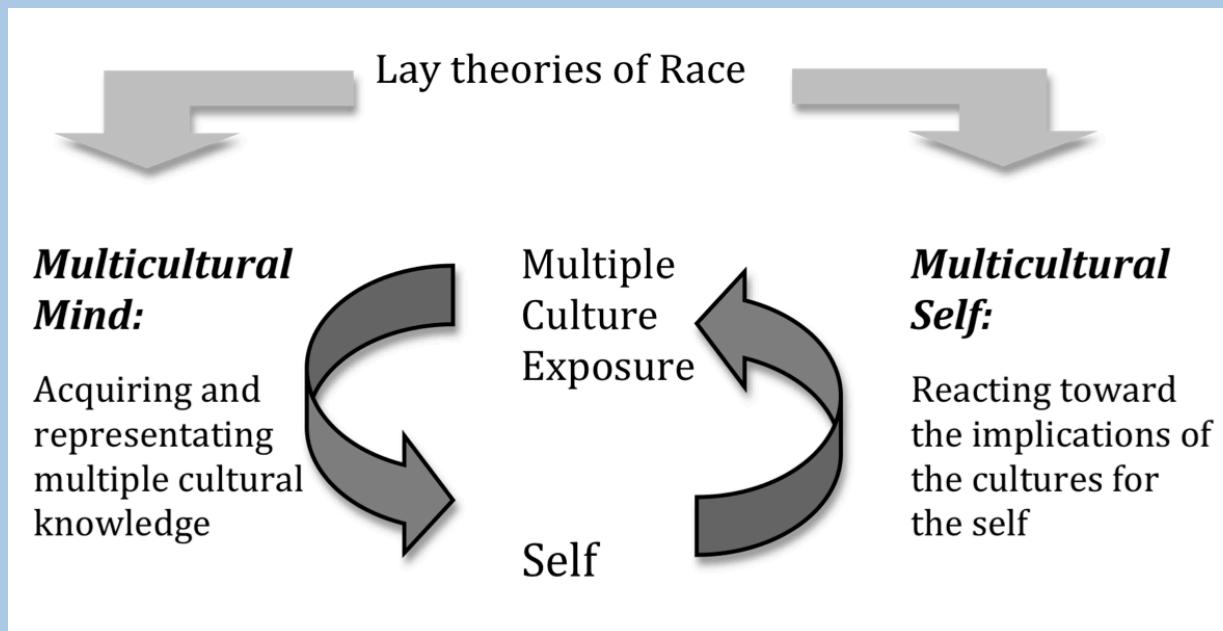
# Experimental Approach: Cultural Priming

- > 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 liveless cultural programs
  - Implicit theories have to be evaluated, integrated to form some (new) identity



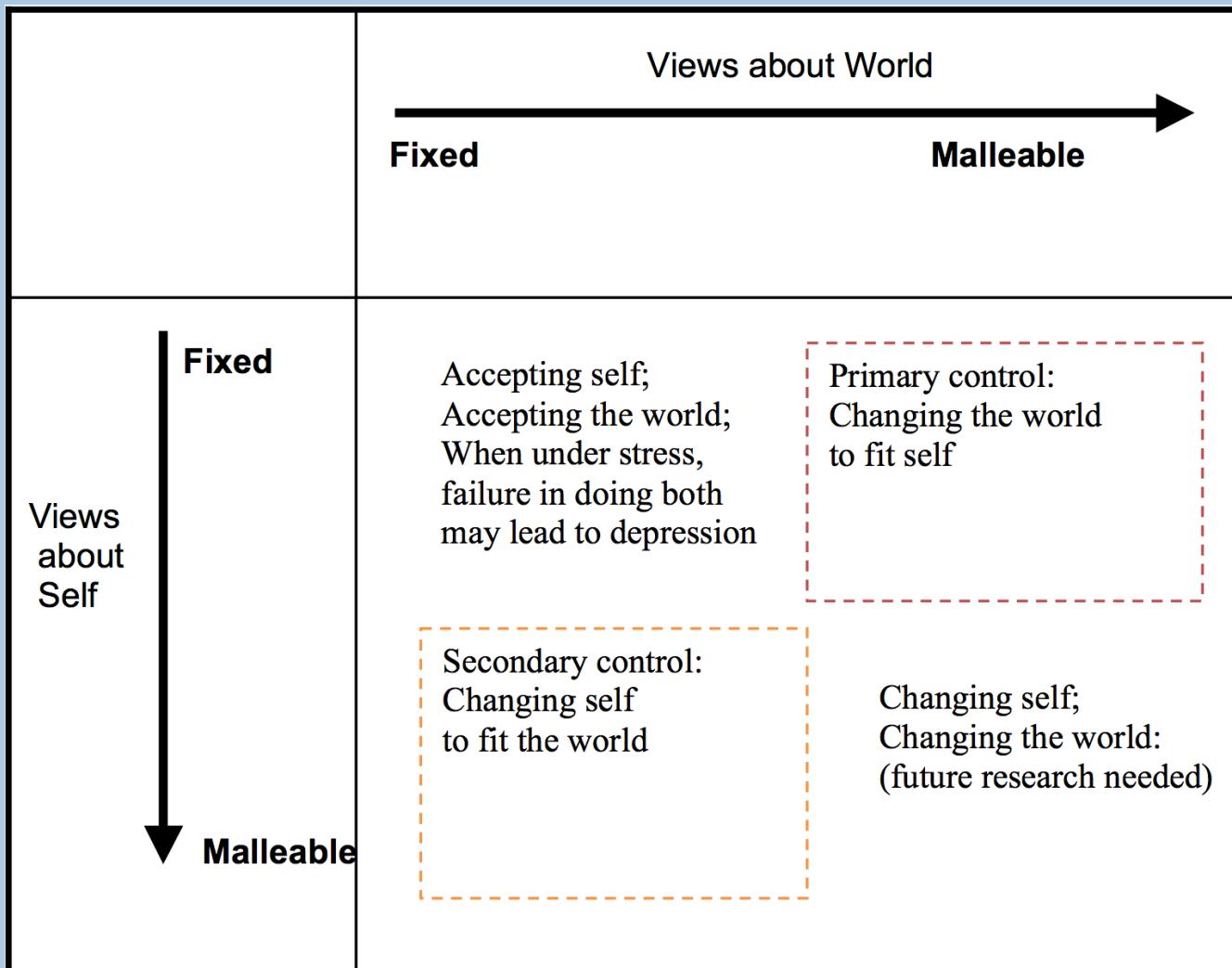
# A Broader Look at Implicit Theories

- > 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

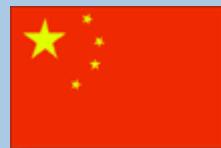
# Relation Between Implicit Theories and Control Orientation



# Cross-Cultural Study

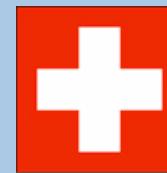
## China

N = 100 (M = 50 & F = 50)  
Age M<sub>M</sub> = 20.41 M<sub>F</sub> = 20.76



## Switzerland

N = 33 (only females up to now)  
Age M<sub>F</sub> = 21.73



## USA

N = 60 (M = 20 & F = 40)  
Age M<sub>M</sub> = 19.15 M<sub>F</sub> = 19.29



## India

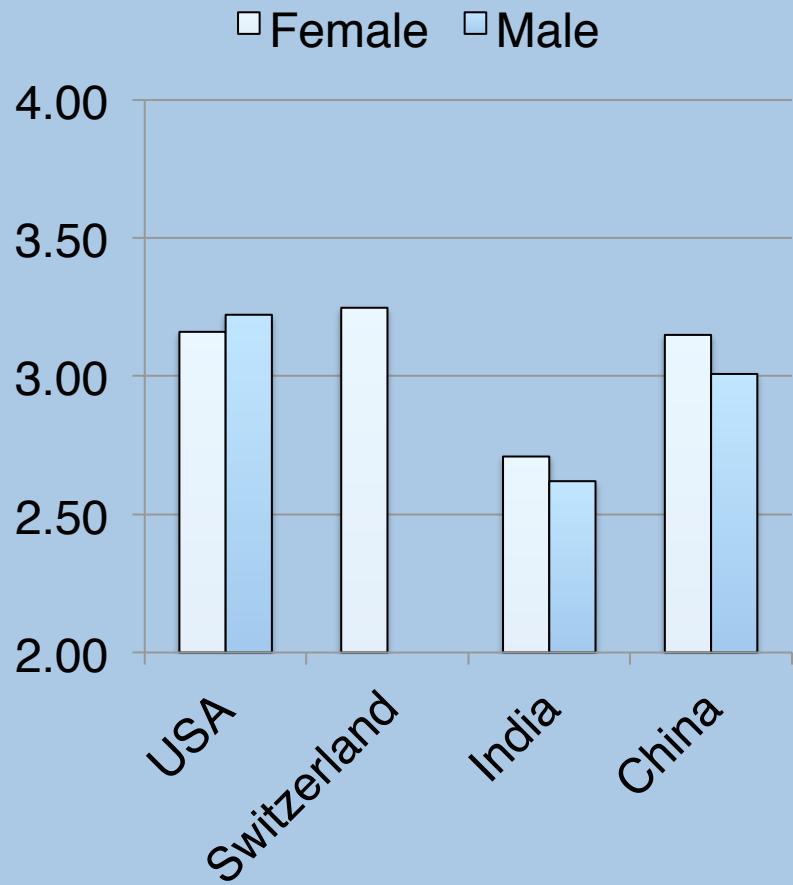
N = 100 (M = 50 & F = 50)  
Age M<sub>M</sub> = 20.86 M<sub>F</sub> = 20.36



# 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

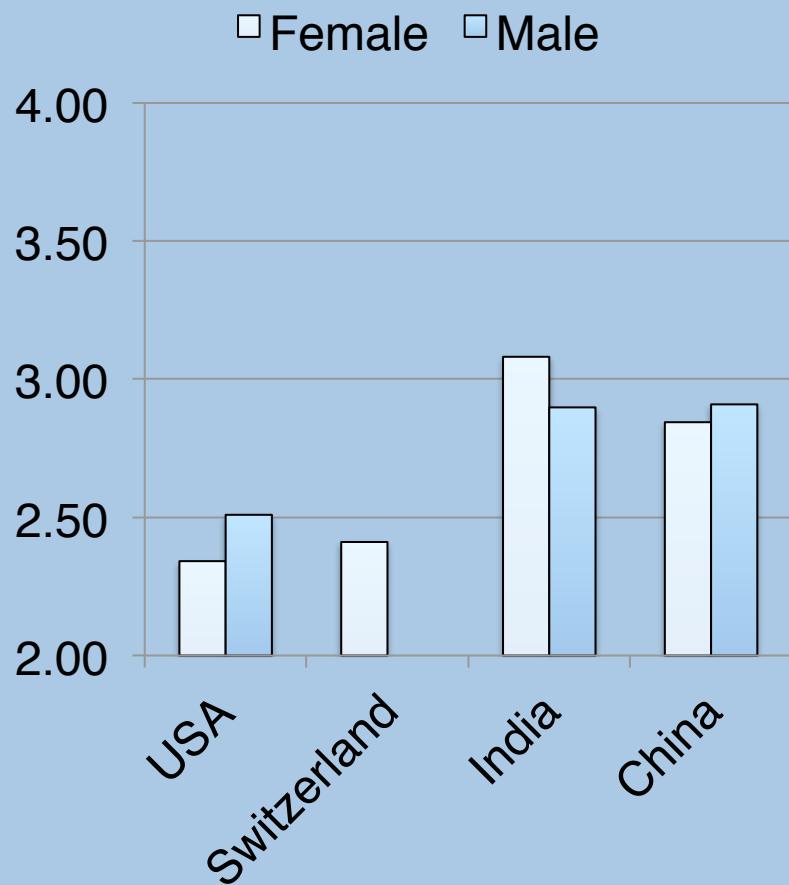
$F = 0.33, \text{ns}$

## > Culture x Gender

$F = 0.35, \text{ns}$

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

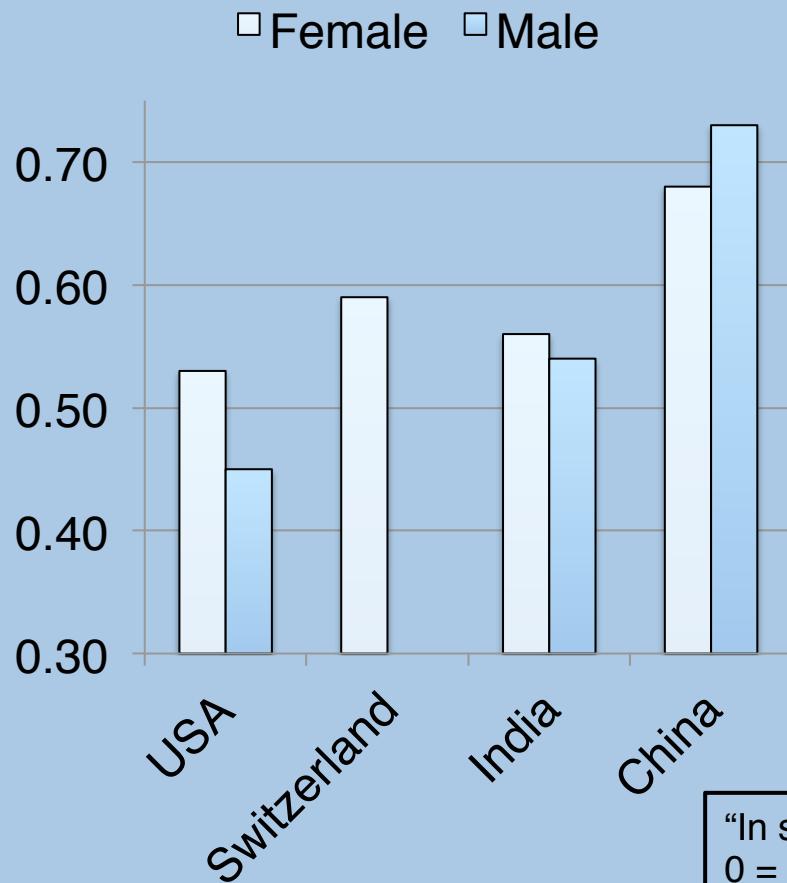
# Fixed World (Domain Specific)



- > Culture  
 $F = 29.24, p < .001, \eta^2 = .23$   
(USA = CH) < (China = India)
- > Gender  
 $F = 0.09, \text{ns}$
- > Culture x Gender  
 $F = 3.70, p < .05, \eta^2 = .03$

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

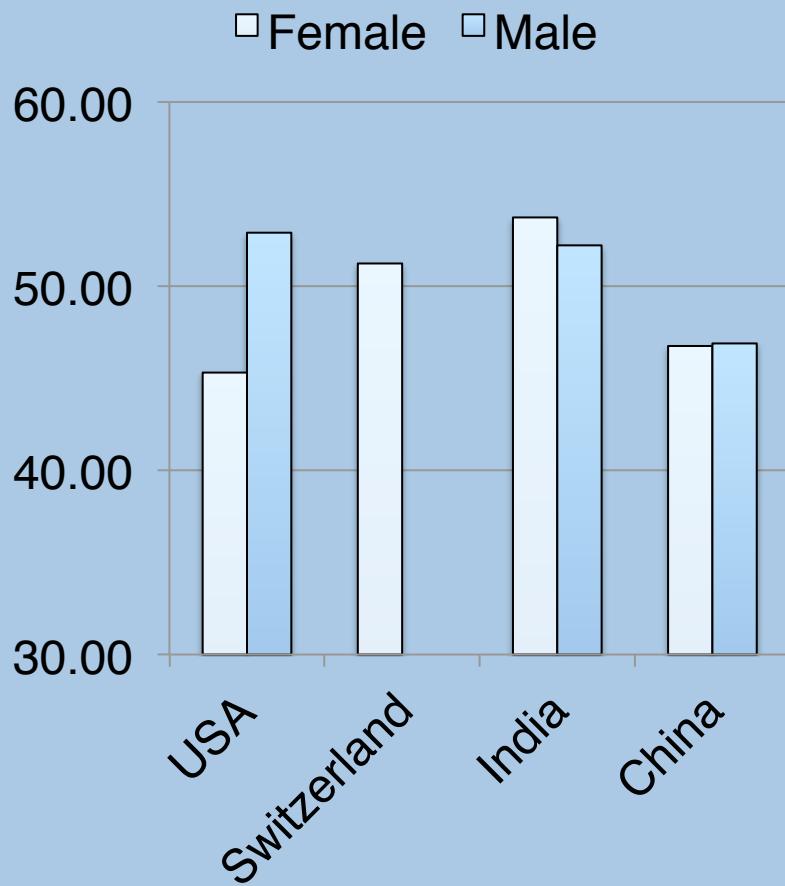
# Self-Monitoring



- > Culture  
 $F = 18.07, p < .001, \eta^2 = .16$   
China > (USA = CH = India)
- > Gender  
 $F = 0.29, \text{ ns}$
- > Culture x Gender  
 $F = 1.74, \text{ ns}$

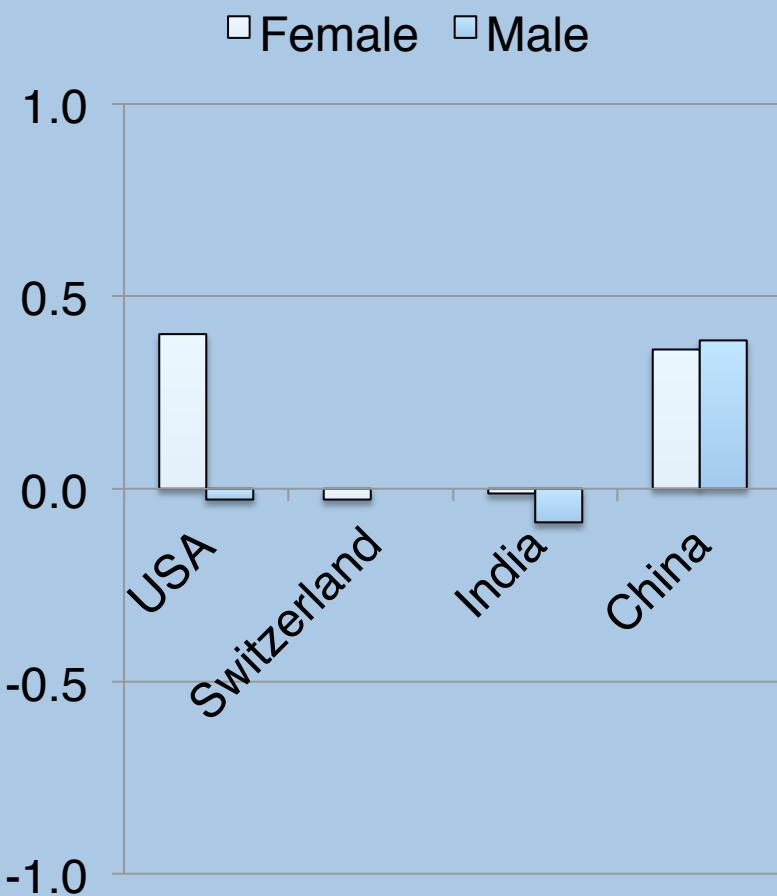
“In social situations, I tend to:  
0 = Maintain behavior that is consistent with my personality.  
1 = Modify my behavior to fit better into the situation ”

# % Primary Control (across 13 scenarios)



- > Culture  
 $F = 11.69, p < .001, \eta^2 = .12$   
China < CH, USA < India
  
- > Gender  
 $F = 4.13, p < .043, \eta^2 = .02$
  
- > Culture x Gender  
 $F = 6.34, p = .002, \eta^2 = .05$

# Difficulty Primary vs. Secondary Control (across 13 scenarios)



- > Culture  
 $F = 15.43, p < .001, \eta^2 = .14$   
 $CH < (\text{USA} = \text{India}) < \text{China}$
- > 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
<b>Fixed World (domain-specific)</b>	<b>Overall</b>	<b>.22**</b>
	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 r / beta	Percent Primary Control	Difficulty Primary Control
<b>Fixed World (domain-specific)</b>	<b>Overall</b>	<b>-.15*</b>
	USA	-.09
	Switzerland	-.25
	India	-.08
	China	<b>-.22*</b>
<b>Self-Monitoring</b>	<b>Overall</b>	<b>.08</b>
	USA	<b>-.49**</b>
	Switzerland	<b>-.35*</b>
	India	<b>.24*</b>
	China	-.06

> **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)

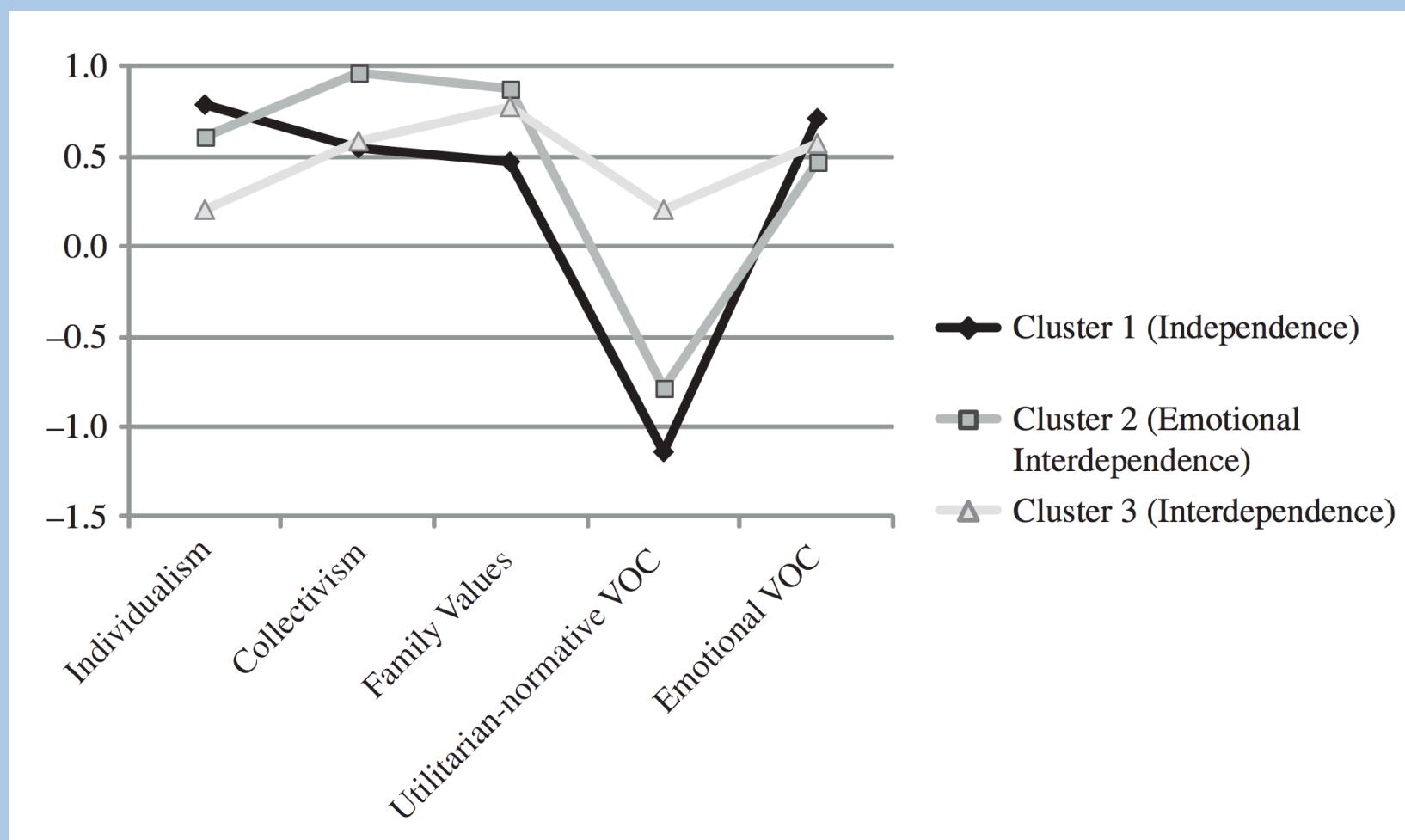
- > Family Model of Independence
  - Emotional and material **independence**  
→ industrialized Western cultures, individualistic
- > Family Model of (Total) Interdependence
  - Emotional and material **interdependence**  
→ traditional agrarian cultures, collectivistic
- > Family Model of Emotional Interdependence
  - Continuing **emotional interdependence**
  - Declining **material interdependence**
  - Rising **autonomy**  
→ modernizing cultures with collectivistic background

Autonomy &  
Separateness

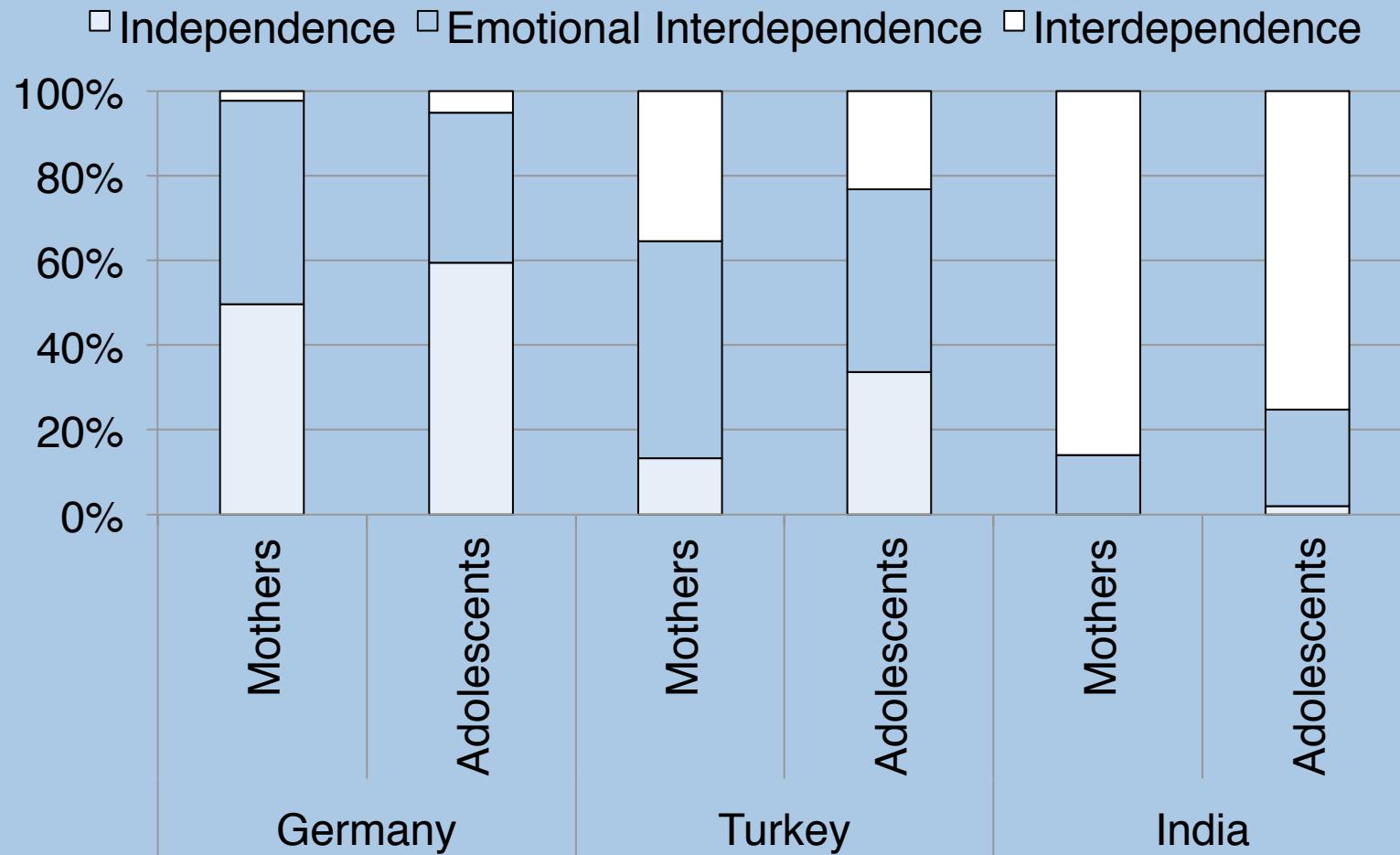
Heteronomy &  
Relatedness

Autonomy &  
Relatedness

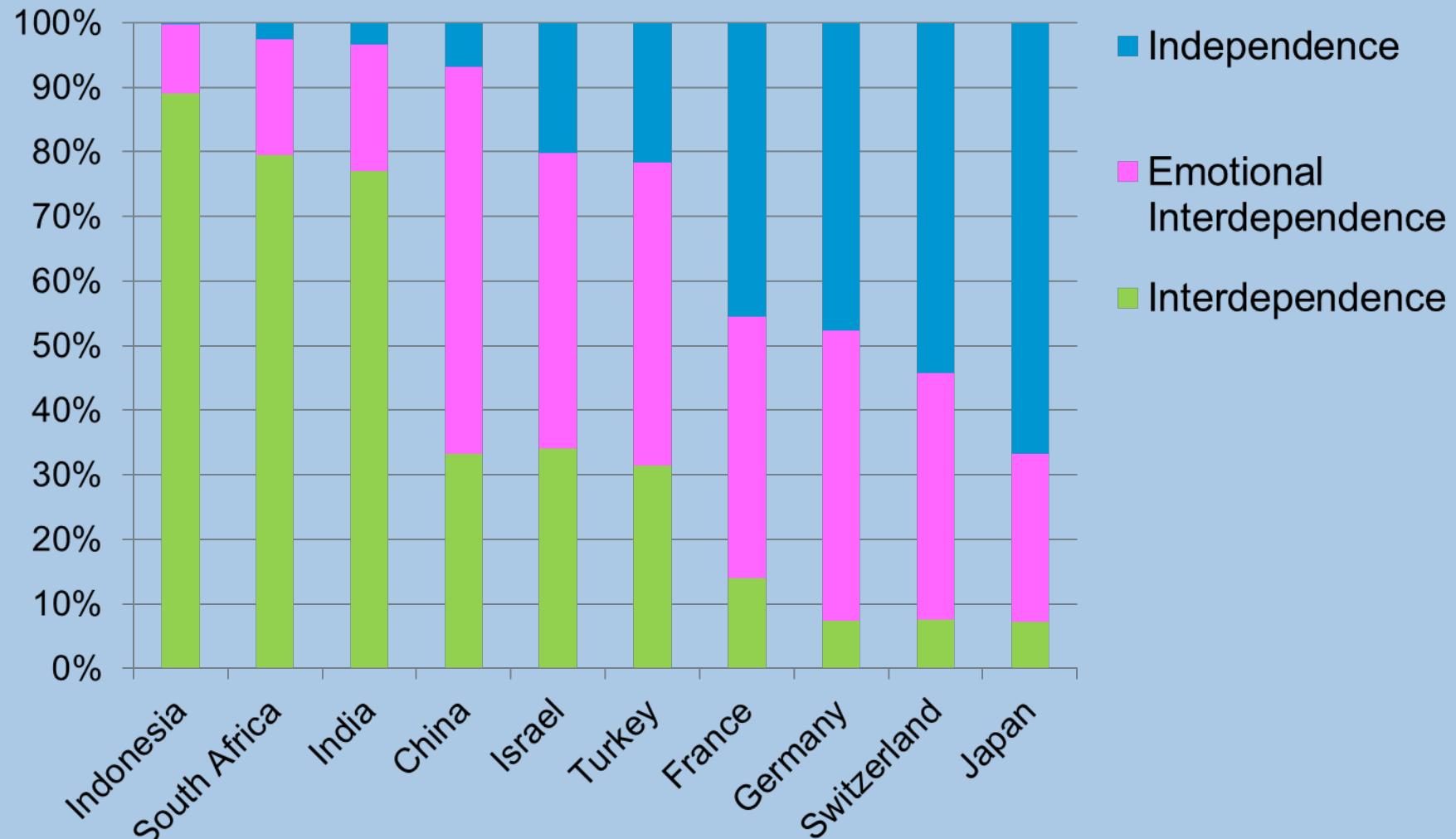
# Family Models and Their Intergenerational Similarity in Germany, Turkey and India



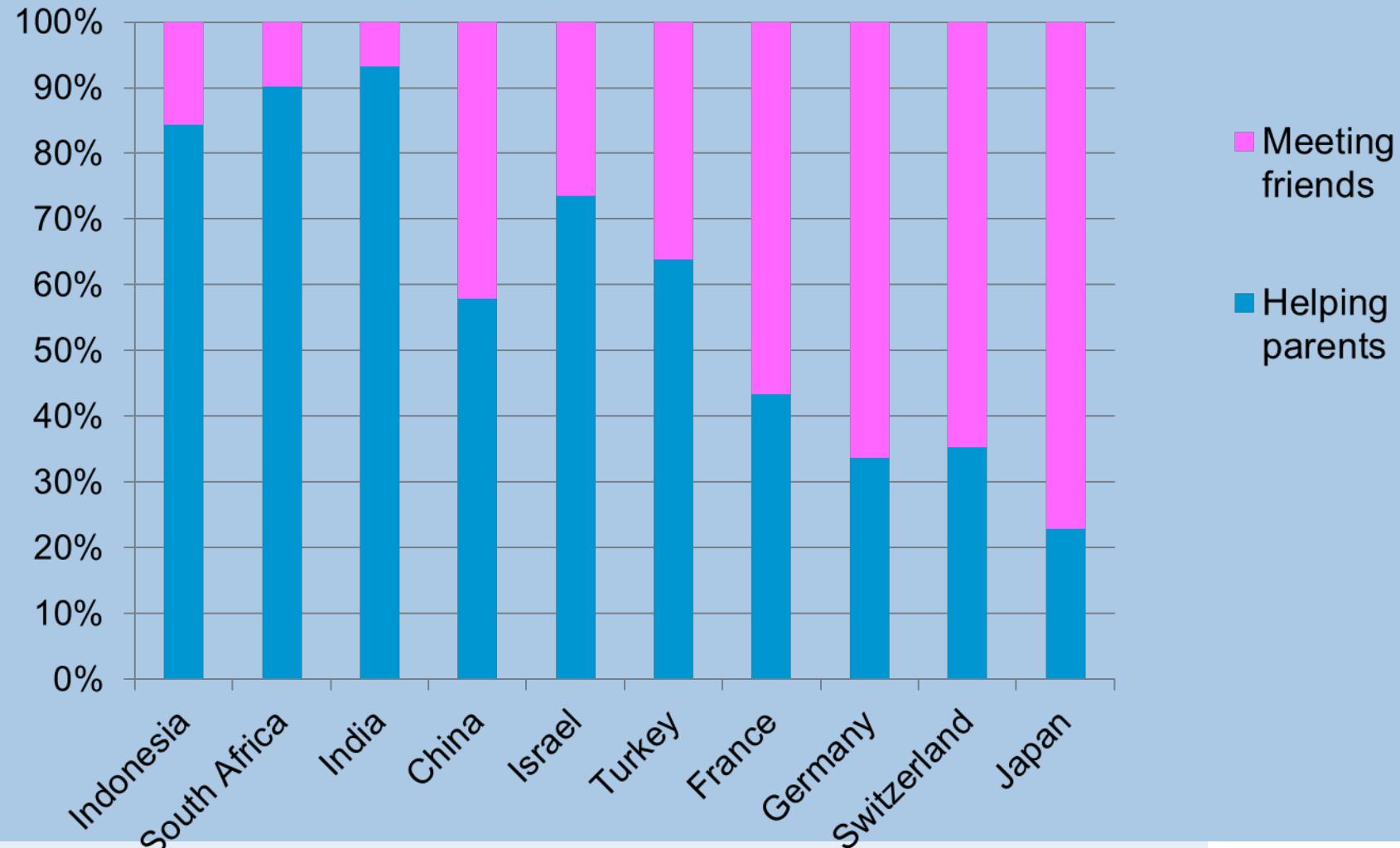
# Family Models in Germany, Turkey and India



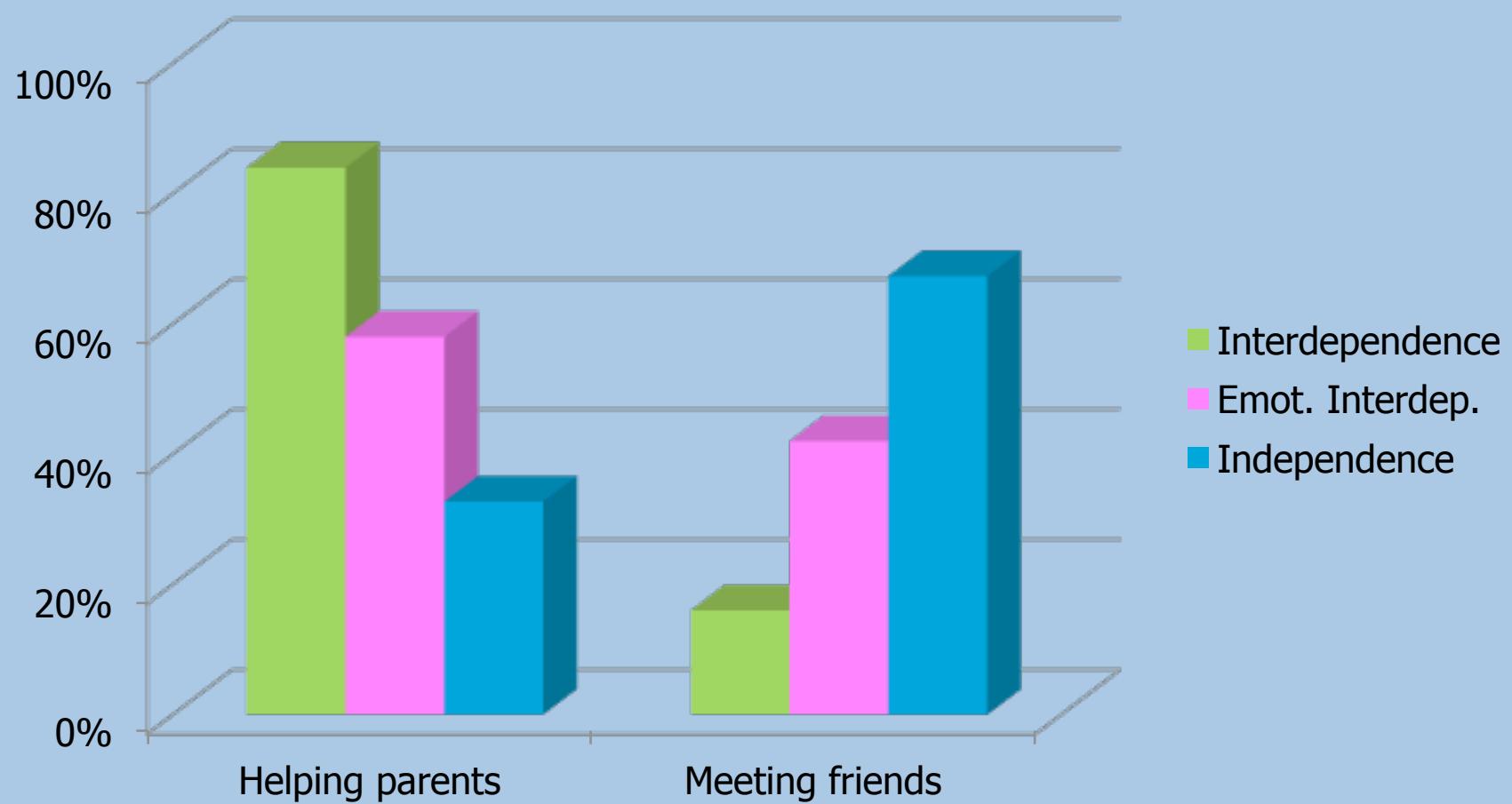
# Family Models in Germany, Turkey and India



# 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