Roots of the Interdependent Self:
Family Size & Self-Definition in a Changing China

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Cultural Divides (Triandis)

- Complexities
- Tightness
- Individualism-Collectivism
- Power Distance
Individualism - Collectivism

- Conceptualizations, reconceptualizations and measurements
  - *Triandis, 2004*

- Individual differences
  - *Markus & Kitayama, 1991*
  - *Singelis, 1994*
Culture and the Self
(Markus & Kitayama 1991)

- **Individualism - Independent self construal**
  - Self-actualization
  - Developing one’s distinct potential
  - Autonomous, independent person
  - Focused on achievement, aspirations

- **Collectivism - Interdependent self construal**
  - Fitting in with relevant others
  - Fulfilling and creating obligations
  - Part of an encompassing social relationship
  - Focused on safety, security
US vs. China

- Individualism (Hofstede 1991)
  - US: 91
  - HK: 25

- Triandis’ Individualism score (Diener et al., 1995)
  - US: 20
  - China: 2

- Anecdotal evidence
  - English
  - Chinese
Where are you going?

- Going to the park
- Going home
Shifts in Cultural Values

- Priming culturally inconsistent self construal can bring about a temporary shift in cultural values
  - *Hong, Morris, Chiu, & Benet-Martinez, 2000*
  - *Trafimow, Triandis, & Goto, 1991*
  - *Gardner, Gabriel & Lee, 1999*
    - Schwartz (1992) values inventory
    - Social judgment task
    - Twenty Statements Task
Shifts in Cultural Values

- What about long-term socialization effects?
  - One-Child Policy introduced in 1979 in China
Shifts in Cultural Values?

- **Samples:**
  - Population: University community (students, staff, faculty)
  - Country Status: US, China, HK
  - Age Cohort: born before 1979, after 1979

- Twenty Statements Test
TST Results (mean age = 41)

- US
- HK
- China

Comparison of Independent and Interdependent responses.
TST Results (mean age = 21)
Evidence for the Siblings Effect?

- World Values Survey
  - a worldwide investigation of sociocultural and political change
  - 59,876 respondents from 44 countries
Responses from WVS

“Here is a list of qualities that children can be encouraged to learn at home. Which, if any, do you consider to be especially important?”

- Independence (v15)
- Imagination (v18)
- Tolerance and respect for other people (v19)
- Obedience (v24)

“Have you had any children? IF YES, how many?” (v90)
Analysis of WVS Data

- **Predictor** = No. of Children

  - **Independent traits**
    - Coefficient = \(-.056\), \(t = -27.70\), \(p < .0001\)

  - **Interdependent traits**
    - Coefficient = \(.026\), \(t = 12.93\), \(p < .0001\)

  - **Net independent traits**
    - Coefficient = \(-.082\), \(t = -26.94\), \(p < .0001\)
Analysis of WVS Data

- Across 44 countries, significant negative coefficient is found in 33 countries
- 10 countries showed a ns negative coefficient
- 3 showed a ns positive coefficient
# Results of the 44 Countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Argentina</th>
<th>France</th>
<th>Poland</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Australia</td>
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<td>Chile</td>
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<td>China (1990)</td>
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<td>Finland</td>
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*Negative coefficient, ns*  
*Positive coefficient, ns*
Individualism and Happiness

*(Diener, Diener, & Diener, 1995)*

- Money $\rightarrow$ Happiness
  - $\text{Corr}($Money, SWB$) = .59, p < .001$

- Individualism $\rightarrow$ Happiness
  - $\text{Corr}($Individualism, SWB$) = .77, p < .001$

- $\text{Corr}($Individualism and Money$) = .87, p < .001$
Macro vs. Micro

- Interdependence → Happiness

- Cultural homogeneity → Happiness

- Correlation between Income and SWB varies within nations (*Diener 2002*)
  - Germany .06 - .15
  - Poor areas of Calcutta .45
Two types of Wealth

- **Transactions Wealth**
  - Comfortable home, money, cars, stocks...
  - Leads to more happiness for those with an independent self construal

- **Relationship Wealth**
  - Friends and family, community, relationships...
  - Leads to more happiness for those with an interdependent self construal
Hypothesis

- Those with an independent self-construal derive more happiness from transaction wealth

- Those with an interdependent self-construal derive more happiness from relationship wealth
Study 1: How happy are you?

- **Happiness from Transaction Wealth**
  - “The value of my stock portfolio has increased by 2½ times since last year.” (3 items, $\alpha = .76$)

- **Happiness from Relationship Wealth**
  - “I got reconnected with my friends from high school.” (3 items, $\alpha = .82$)

- **Independence-Interdependence Scale**
Study 1 Results

- **Happiness from Transaction Wealth**
  - $b$ (indep) = -.017 *ns*
  - $b$ (interdep) = -.012 *ns*

- **Happiness from Relationship Wealth**
  - $b$ (indep) = -.005 *ns*
  - $b$ (interdep) = .041 *p < .05*
Study 1 Results

What makes you happy?

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<th>Independent Self-Construal</th>
<th>Interdependent Self-Construal</th>
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<tr>
<td>High Relationship Wealth</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Low Transaction Wealth</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>5.4</td>
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Graph showing comparisons between Relationship Wealth and Transaction Wealth for High and Low conditions of Independent and Interdependent Self-Construal.
Study 2: How happy are they?
Two Types of Wealth

- **Transaction Wealth**
  - Home Ownership, Lots of Money, Large Salary, Luxury Automobile, Investment Income, Own a business ($\alpha = .86$)

- **Relationship Wealth**
  - Friends who care, Significant Other, Time, Friends to go out with, Job they love ($\alpha = .79$)

- Independence-Interdependence Scale
Study 2 Results

Happiness from Relationship/Transaction Wealth

- High
- Low

- Independent
- Interdependent
Study 3 Objective

- To provide convergent evidence for the relationship between self-construal, type of wealth, and subjective well-being

- Design: 2 (self-construal) x 2 (type of wealth)

- DV: SWB
Study 3: Ideal life scenario

Transaction Wealth

I am *(We are)* successful in life. *(My significant other and)* I have a comfortable home in the most sought after neighborhood. I *(We)* enjoy my *(our)* house and the luxury items that make it comfortable. I *(We)* also enjoy driving my *(our)* brand new automobile – it has all the best features. I am *(We are)* able to afford these things because of the incomes from investments.
Study 3: Ideal life scenario

Relationship Wealth

I am (We are) successful in life. (My significant other and ) I have a great relationship with my significant other and I (we) enjoy a wonderful relationship with my (our) parents and family. I am (We are) also surrounded by friends who care about me (us). I (We) have time to do things that I (we) enjoy, and I (we) participate in my (our) community by volunteering and contributing to charity.
Study 3 Results

![Bar chart showing transaction and relationship scores for independent and interdependent groups in US and HK.](chart.png)

- For independent groups:
  - US: Transaction score is around 3.5, Relationship score is around 4.
  - HK: Transaction score is around 3.5, Relationship score is around 4.

- For interdependent groups:
  - US: Transaction score is around 2.5, Relationship score is around 4.
  - HK: Transaction score is around 2.5, Relationship score is around 4.
Study 4 Objective

- To extend the effect of self-construal on SWB to helping behavior

- What to do to provide “hope, strength, and joy”? 
Study 4: Helping Others...

The Wishes of Children

I wish to be...

In your community, there are children living with life-threatening medical conditions. You can help... Volunteer Give

I wish to have...

I wish to go...

I wish to meet...

The Make-A-Wish Foundation is dependent upon support to drive the wish process. More than 25,000 people and organizations worldwide ensure that all qualified children receive a quality wish. Thanks to generous people like you helping to share the power of a wish®, more than 110,000 children have experienced moments of hope, strength, and joy from a Make-A-Wish experience.

MAKE-A-WISH
Share the power of a wish
Study 4 Procedure

- Self-construal prime (trip to the city)

- Make-A-Wish Ad
  - Let’s say you plan to sign up as a volunteer. How many hours of volunteer work are you thinking of giving?
    - 1 = less than 1 hr, 11 = more than 10 hours
  
  - Let’s say you plan to donate money. How much money are you thinking of giving?
    - 1 = less than $50, 11 = more than $200
Study 4 Results

- **Money**: Independent (3.50) vs. Interdependent (2.50)
- **Time**: Independent (3.00) vs. Interdependent (4.00)
Conclusion

- Family Size matters
- Money matters
- Relationship matters