



Intercultural Communication: Success Comes From Within

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Before we begin...



Before we begin...



Before we begin...



Before we begin...



Outline

- What is Culture?
- Cross-Society Understanding
- Cross-Community Understanding
- Cross-Person Understanding
- Intercultural Communication?

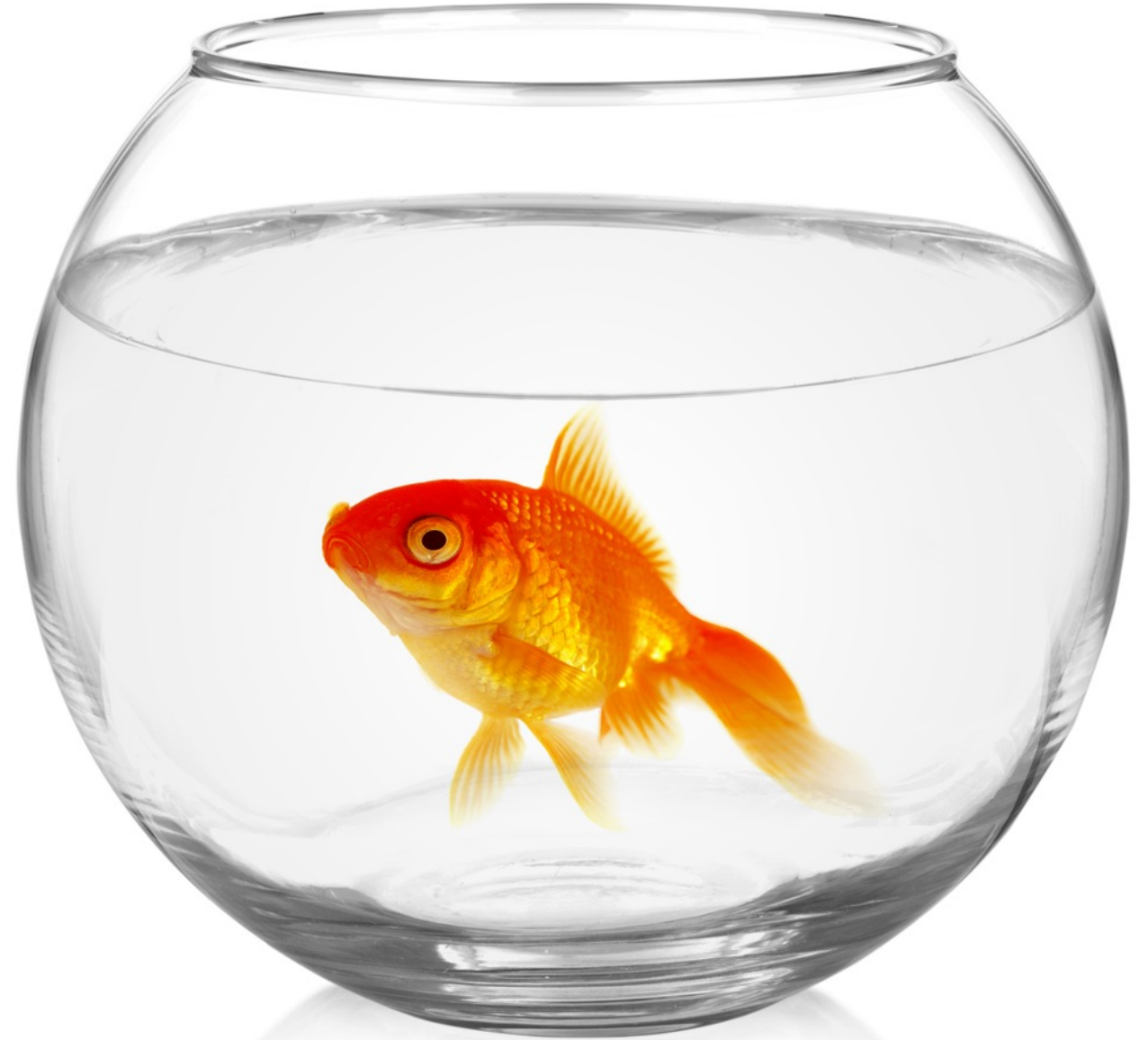
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What is Culture?

“The choice of a point of view is the initial act of any culture.”

— José Ortega Gasset





What is Culture?

- 1) The arts and other manifestations of human intellectual achievement regarded collectively.
- 2) The cultivation of bacteria, tissue cells, etc., in an artificial nutrient medium.

Oxford English Dictionary (1995)

What is Culture?

...Patterns of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, ideas and especially their attached values...

...Culture systems may be considered as products of action, and as conditional elements of future action...

Kroeber & Kluckhohn (1952)

What is Culture?

- Culture, mind, and brain “make each other up.”
- Culture is both “in the head” and “in the world.”
- Unit of analysis: The *person-in-context*.



What is Culture?

Culture is the taken-for-granted.

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Cross-Society Understanding

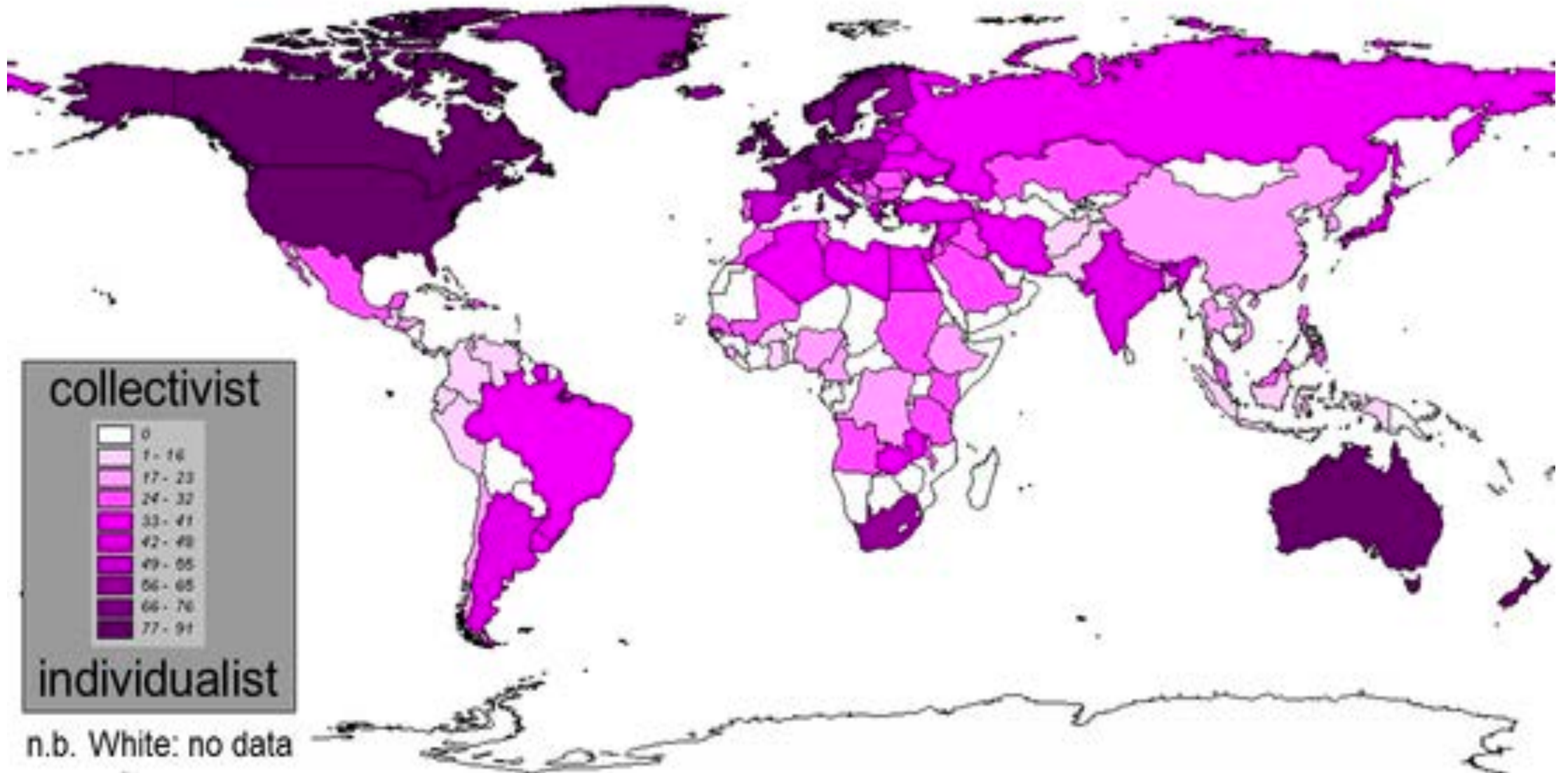
Individualistic

- Multiple ingroups
- Lower commitment
- Less cohesive
- Voluntaristic
- Ingroups and outgroups are less distinctive

Collectivistic

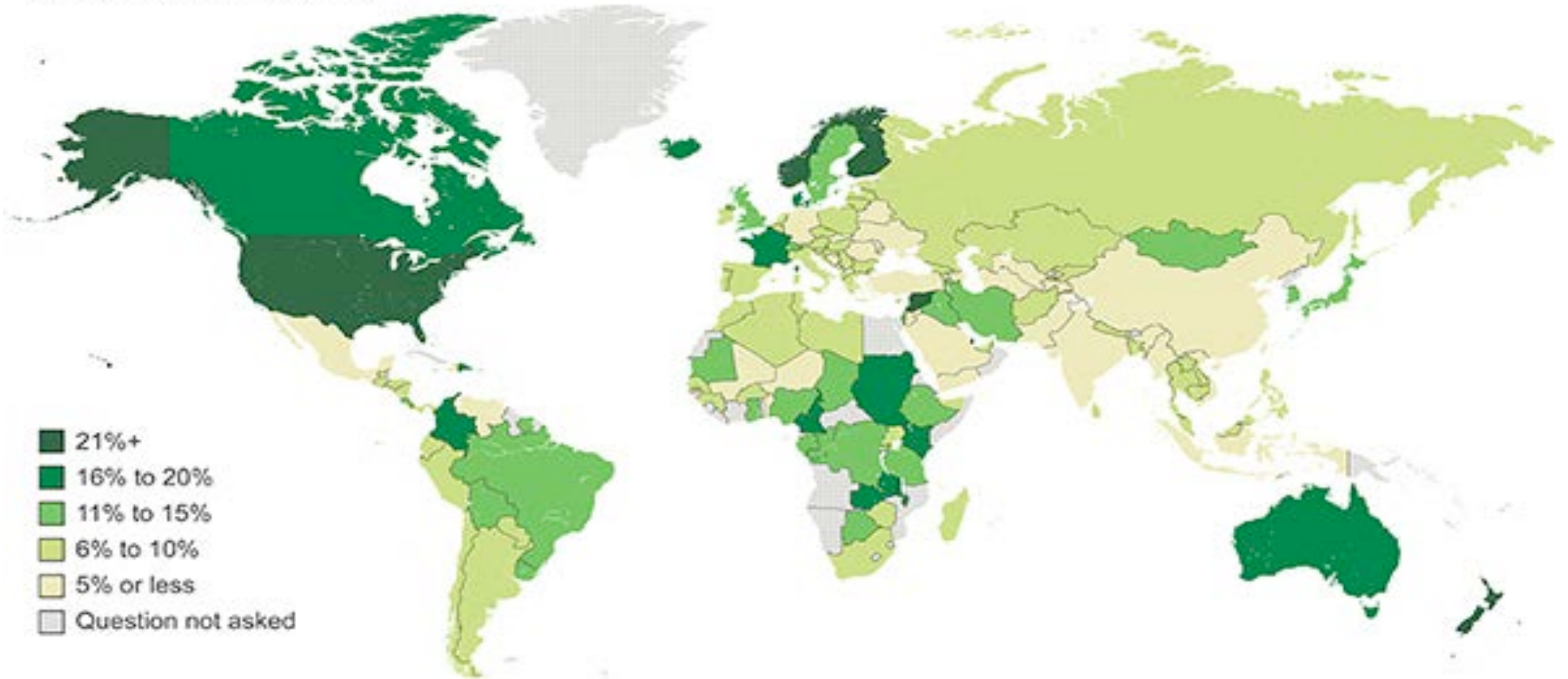
- Few ingroups
- Greater commitment
- More cohesive
- Inescapable connection
- Ingroups and outgroups are very distinctive

Cross-Society Understanding

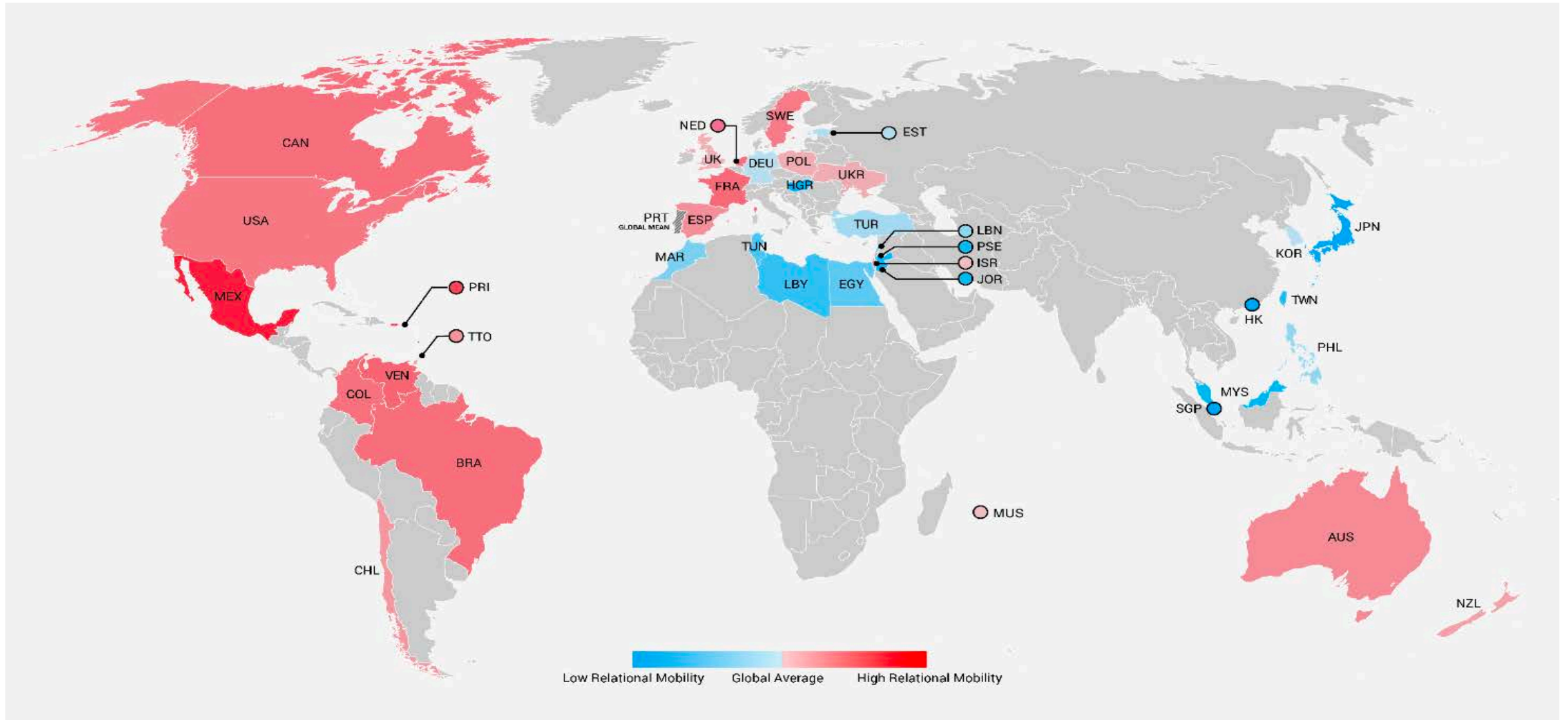


Cross-Society Understanding

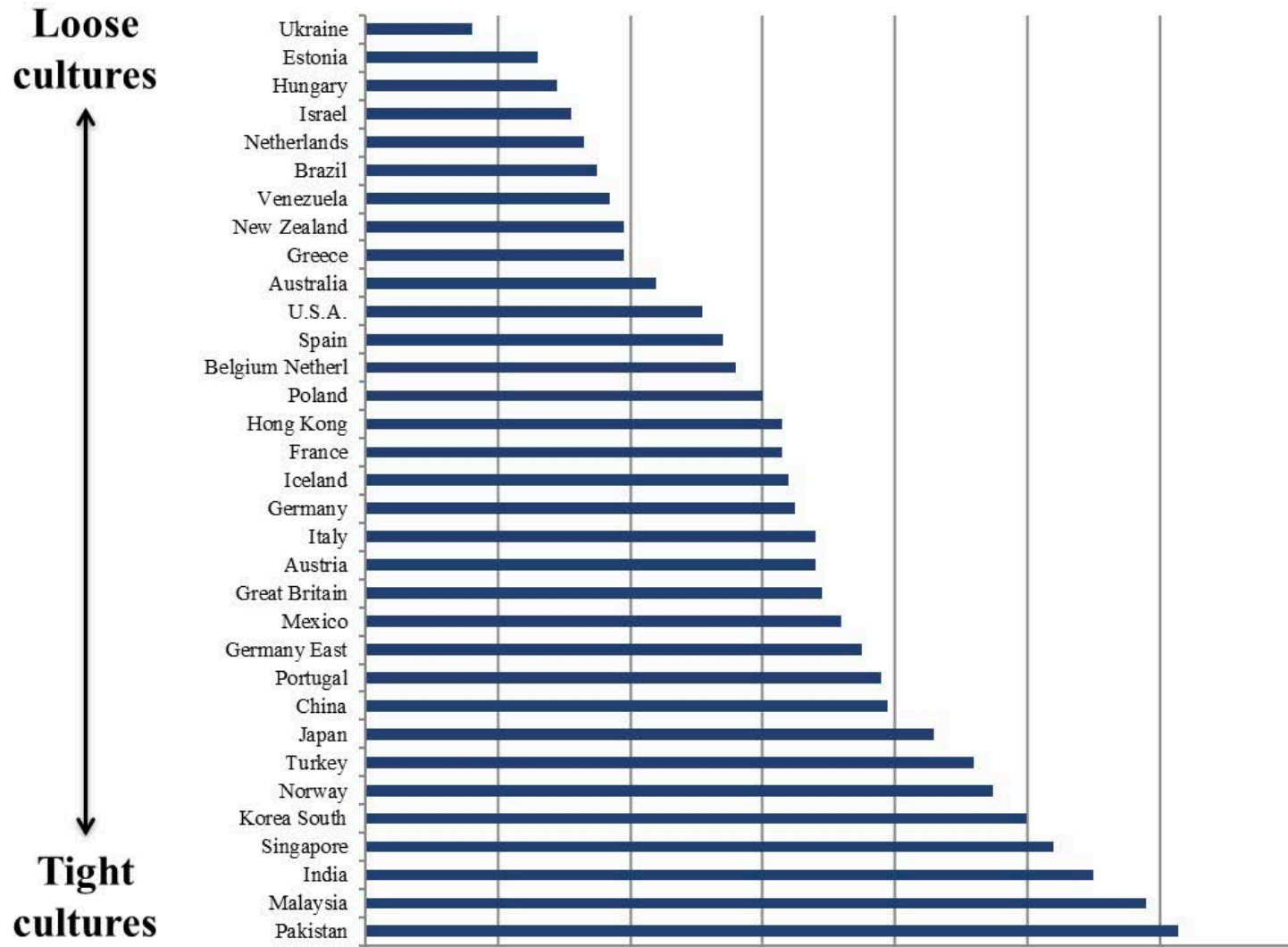
Did you move from another city or area within this country in the past five years?
Percentage answering yes



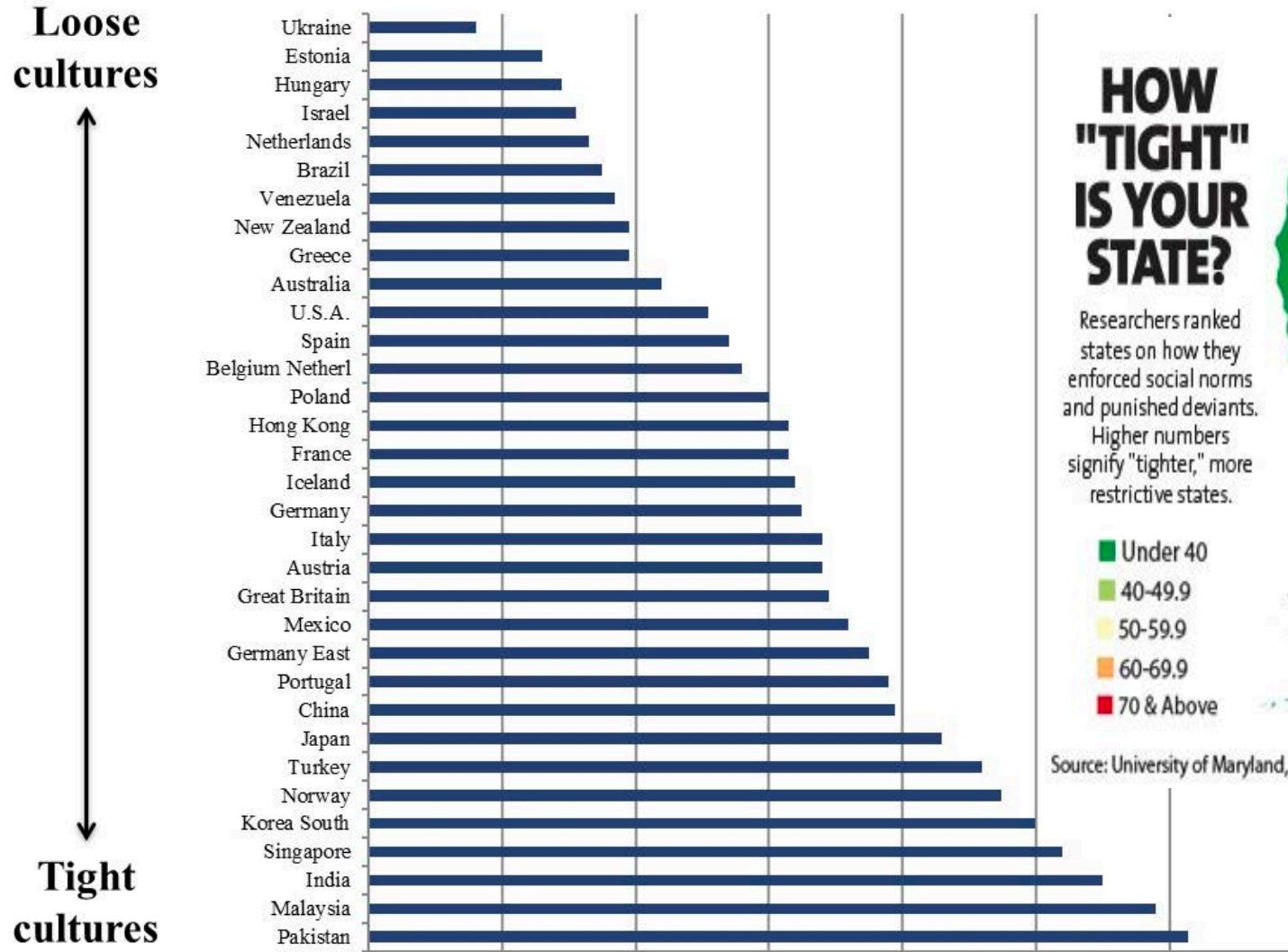
Cross-Society Understanding



Cross-Society Understanding

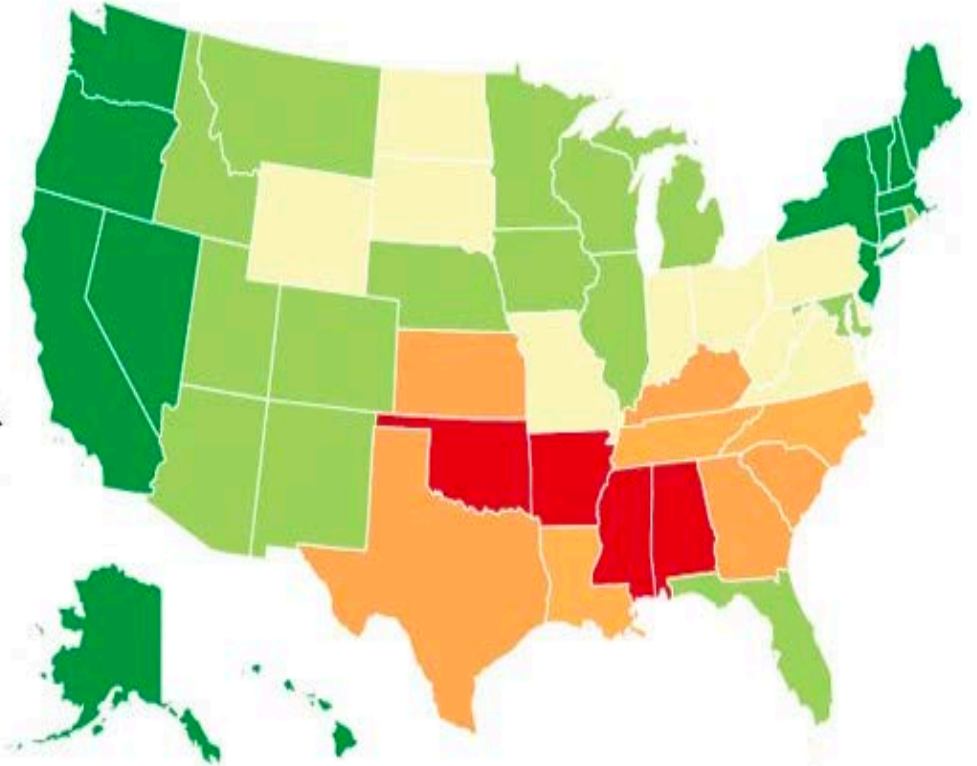


Cross-Society Understanding



HOW "TIGHT" IS YOUR STATE?

Researchers ranked states on how they enforced social norms and punished deviants. Higher numbers signify "tighter," more restrictive states.



Source: University of Maryland, College Park, 2014.

Mother Jones

Cross-Society Understanding

- Cross-society differences shaped by historical disease prevalence:
 - More collectivism
 - More tightness
 - Less mobility
- Emerging evidence during the current pandemic:
 - Tightness predicts higher conformity to local rules
 - Mobility predicts more rapid viral spread
 - Advantages of *tight-loose ambidexterity*

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Cross-Community Understanding

- Societies are divided into many overlapping cultural communities.
- These communities can be understood as *social-cognitive networks*.
- A given network can have very different norms.
 - E.g., Who is a legitimate source of authority?
- A given network can have very different practices.
 - E.g., We must celebrate *this* holiday on *this* day in *this* way.

Cross-Community Understanding

- People in different communities have different experiences.
- Communities differ in their social standing and access to power.
- Anxiety increases likelihood of seeing 'others' as a problem.

Cross-Community Understanding

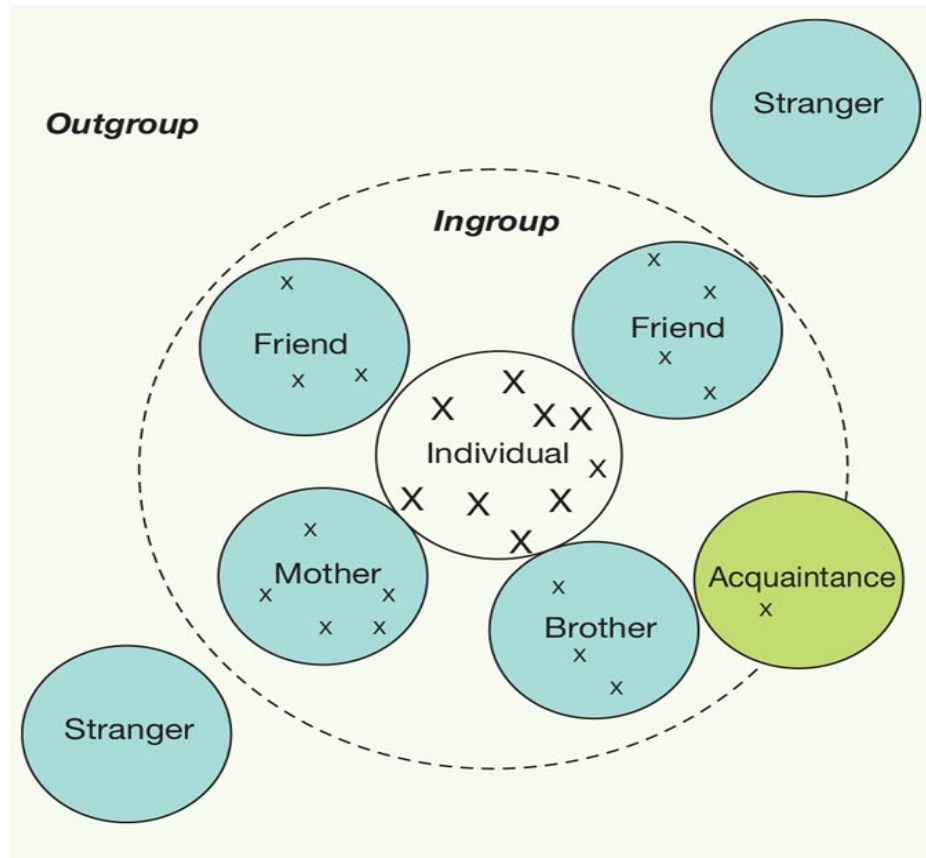
- Community differences impact pandemic outcomes.
 - E.g., Public health authorities vs. religious authorities
 - E.g., Practices that contribute to or protect against disease spread.
- But longstanding inequities also contribute to different outcomes.
- And anxieties increase discrimination:
 - Against devalued communities
 - Against communities linked in some way to the disease
 - Even to groups that are also celebrated (e.g., healthcare workers)

Outline

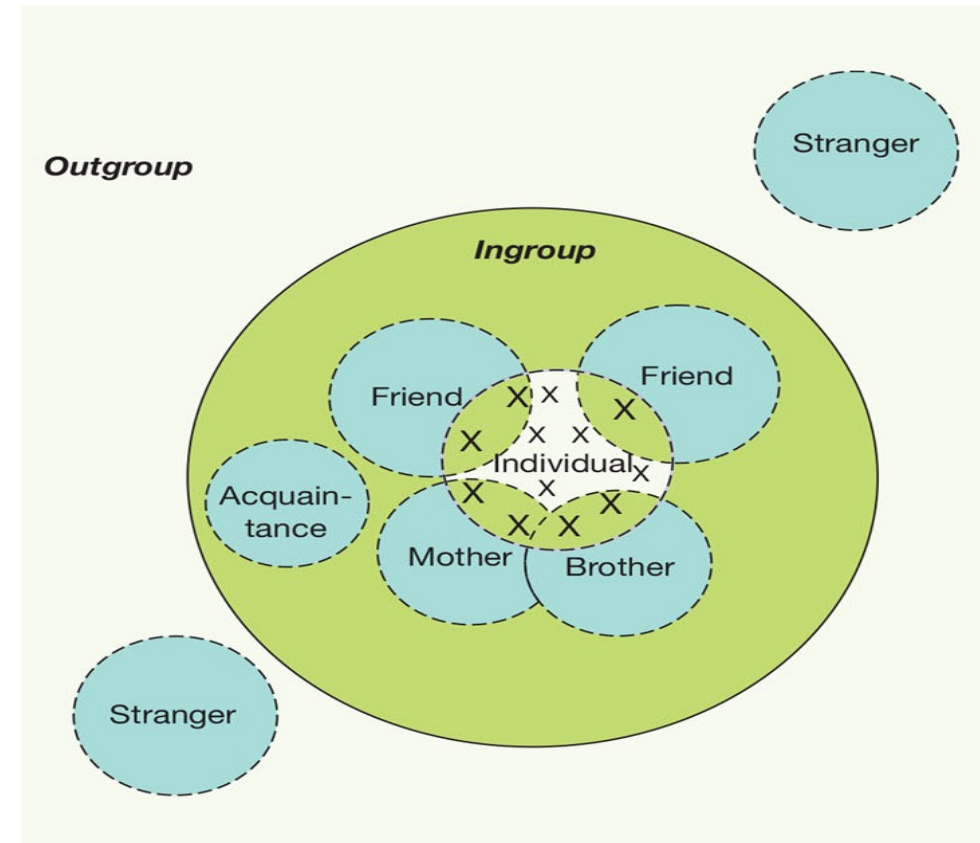
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Cross-Person Understanding

Independent view of the self



Interdependent view of the self



Cross-Person Understanding

Independent view of the self

- Linear view of optimism.
- Good luck keeps getting better.
- Bad luck keeps getting worse.

Interdependent view of the self

- Cyclical view of optimism.
- Good luck will turn bad.
- Bad luck will turn good.

Cross-Person Understanding

- During SARS:
 - Canadians more optimistic than Chinese at the start of pandemic.
 - Chinese more optimistic than Canadians at the end of pandemic.
- Defensive pessimism associated with more:
 - Endorsement of traditional Chinese values
 - Distress about SARS
 - Willingness to follow health measures, such as hand-washing

Ji et al. (2004)

Cross-Person Understanding

- Pessimistic tendencies part of a cluster of traits, *negative affectivity*:
 - Neuroticism
 - Anxiety sensitivity
 - Intolerance of uncertainty
- Negative affectivity associated with *somatosensory amplification*.
- Physical sensations become more salient and even more severe.
 - Symptom generation

Chentsova-Dutton & Ryder (2019)

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Intercultural Communication?

- Again, the unit of analysis is the *person-in-context*.
- It is potentially dangerous to reduce the person to ‘their group’.
- It is not enough to “just get to know the person”.
- How then do we proceed?

Intercultural Communication?

- Research findings, careful descriptions, even stories can be useful.
- But these are best understood as *possibilities*.
- Only probabilities in certain circumstances, and never certainties.
- We learn to consider more possibilities when encountering others.

Intercultural Communication?

- The **WEIRD**est people in the world?
 - **W**estern
 - **E**ducated
 - **I**ndustrialized
 - **R**ich
 - **D**emocratic



Intercultural Communication?

- What culture should I make it a priority to learn?
 - A locally important minority?
 - A country I frequently visit?
 - The society where my clients live?
 - ...?
- Most important to learn about your own culture, *as a culture*.
- And then seek intercultural experience, with curiosity and humility.



Intercultural Communication: Success Comes From ~~Within~~ *Between*

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