



Are Mediterranean societies honor cultures?

**The cultural logics of Honor, Face, and Dignity in
Southern-Europe and the MENA Region**

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& The HONORLOGIC Project Team



“[Greek] Sarakatsani were deeply concerned about three things: sheep, children, [...] and honour”

- Campbell, 1964

Mediterranean societies have long been assumed to emphasize **honor** as a core social value (e.g., Peristiany, 1965; Pitt-Rivers, 1968; Herzfeld, 1980)

and often have been used as **cultural comparison groups** to Western or East-Asian societies in more recent psychological research

Dignity

e.g., Northern US, Western Europe

Internal

Everyone

No

Autonomous, independent
people

Contract among equals,
moderate tit-for-tat

Internal guilt and external
system of law

No internal compass or
sense of dignity

Honor

e.g., Mediterranean, South America

External/Both

Some

Yes

Competitive environment of
rough equals

Strong reciprocity norms,
competitive

Shame and direct retribution

No concerns for honor or
opinion of others

Face

e.g., South-East Asia

Mostly External

You have it, unless you
lose it

Yes

Hierarchy

Guided by status within
hierarchy, reciprocity

Shame, loss of face, and
ingroup punishment

No concern for face or
opinion of others

Self-Worth

Belongs to

Can it be lost?

Context

Interactions &
Exchanges

“Good” behavior

“Bad” people

Dignity

e.g., Northern US, Western Europe

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“Good” behavior

“Bad” people



1

A systematic investigation of honor endorsement in the Mediterranean is still lacking

2

Insights into the homogeneity of honor endorsement in Mediterranean societies are scarce

3

Correspondence of personal endorsement with societal perceptions of honor still an open question

Study 1

Multinational survey study with student samples from university pools

Goal:

Mapping dignity, face, and honor in Western, Eastern, and Mediterranean regions

Sample:

N = 2942 participants from 11 countries

Measures:

- » Honor, Face, Dignity **Values**
- » Honor, Face, Dignity **Concerns**
- » Various Measures of **Socio-Cognitive Orientation**

Study 2

Multinational survey study with samples from a more general population

Goal:

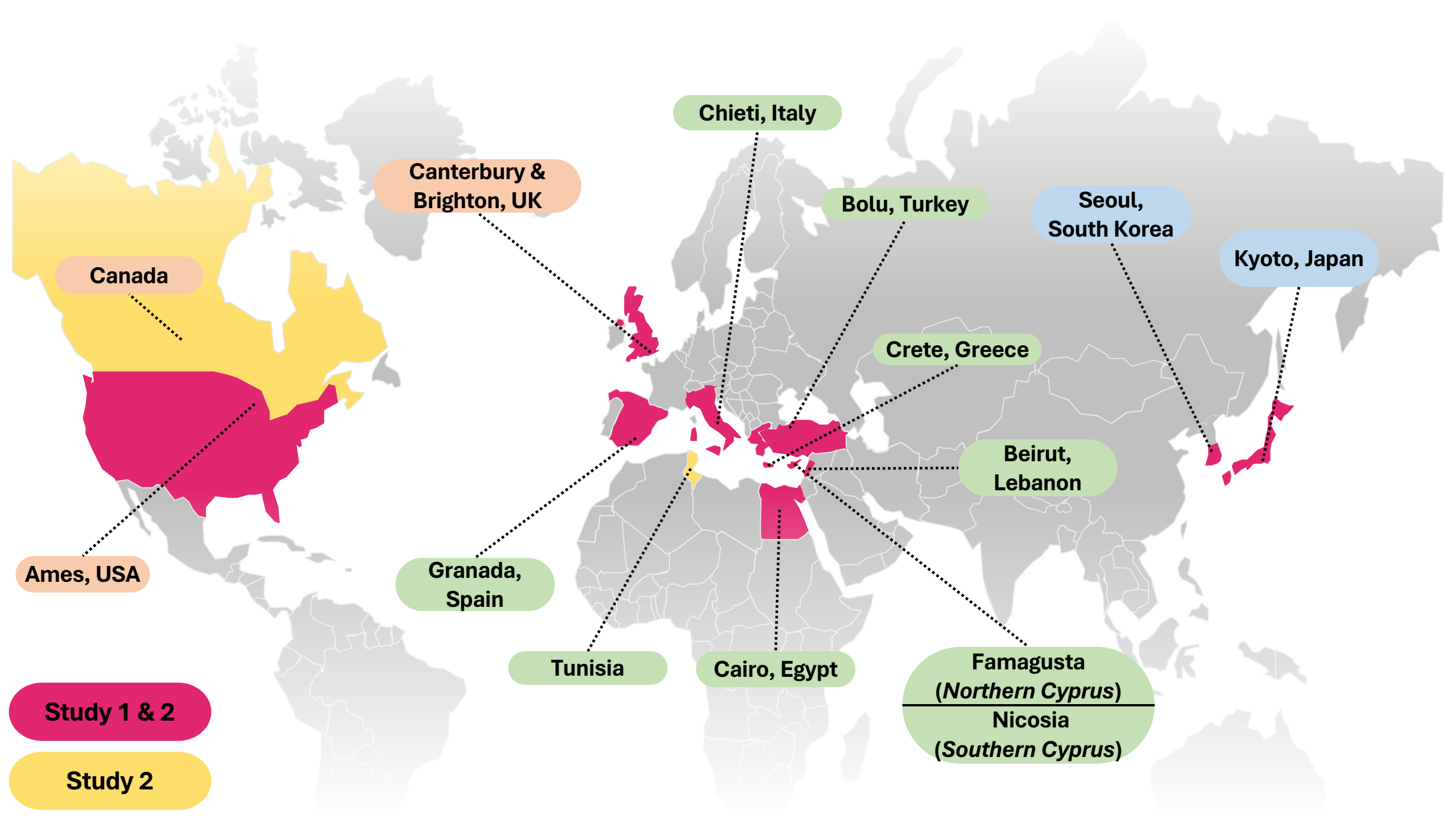
Replicating our honor value findings in a more general sample

Sample:

N = 5493 participants from 14 countries

Measures:

- » Honor **Values**
- » ...



Chieti, Italy

Canterbury & Brighton, UK

Bolu, Turkey

Seoul, South Korea

Kyoto, Japan

Canada

Crete, Greece

Beirut, Lebanon

Ames, USA

Granada, Spain

Tunisia

Cairo, Egypt

Famagusta (Northern Cyprus)
Nicosia (Southern Cyprus)

Study 1 & 2

Study 2

Research Aim 1:

Mapping

dignity, face, and honor

in the West, East, and

Mediterranean

Cultural Values

(22 items from Yao et al., 2017; Smith et al., 2017)

Held values and normative beliefs about how people should behave

Example Items:

“People should not care what others around them think.” (Dignity)

“It is important to maintain harmony within one’s group.” (Face)

“People should be concerned about their family having a bad reputation.” (Honor)

Asked for both

» **self-endorsement:**

*How much do **you** agree or disagree?*

» **perceived-societal endorsement:**

*How much would **most people in your society** agree or disagree?*

Cultural Concerns

(24 items from Guerra et al., 2013 + face & dignity items)

Negative feelings after goals have been obstructed or reputation threatened

Example Items:

“...you made decisions based on others’ opinions and not your own?” (Dignity)

“...you lost control over your behavior in front of others?” (Face)

“...you did something to damage your family’s reputation?” (Honor)

Asked for both

» **self-endorsement:**

*How bad would **you** feel if...*

» **perceived-societal endorsement:**

*How bad would **most people in your society** feel if...*

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» self-endorsement:

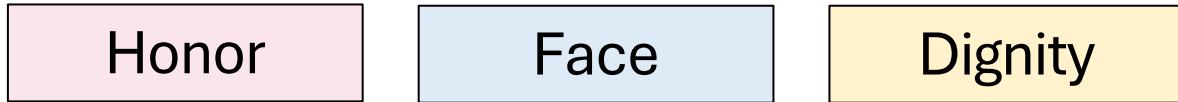
*How bad would **you** feel if...*

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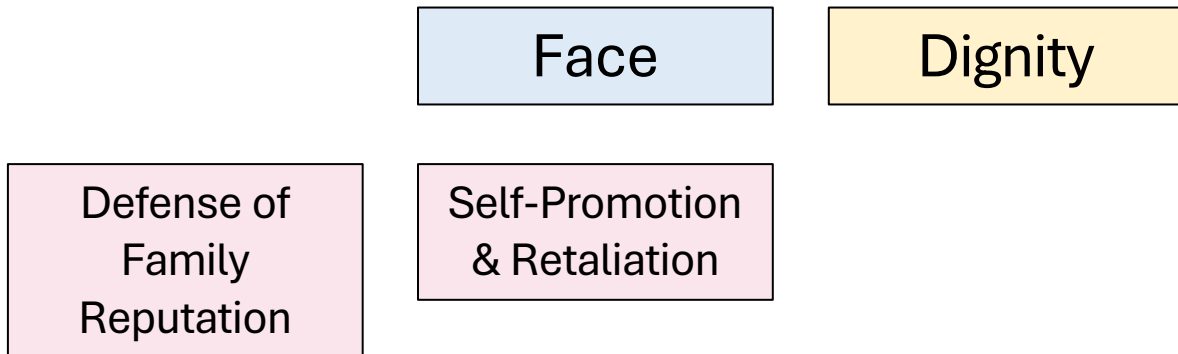
Perceived-Societal Values

Perceptions of societal values and normative beliefs about how people should behave



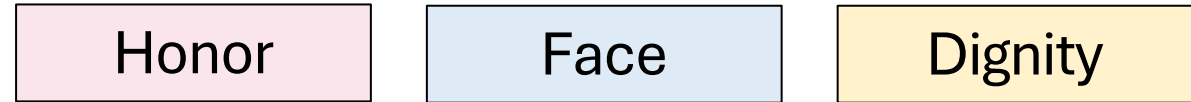
Cultures (Gender x Country)

Individuals



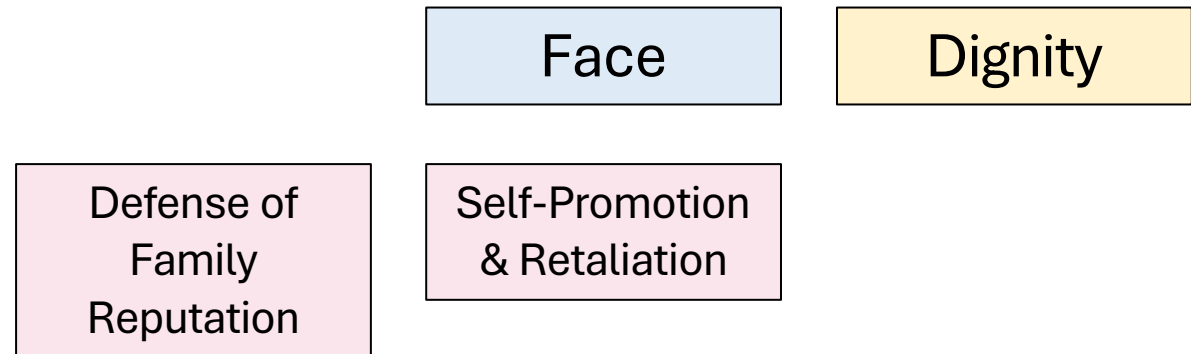
Personal Values

Personally held values and normative beliefs about how people should behave



Cultures (Gender x Country)

Individuals



Perceived-Societal Values

Perceptions of societal values and normative beliefs about how people should behave

Honor

Face

Dignity

Cultures (Gender x Country)

Individuals

Face

Dignity

Defense of
Family
Reputation

Self-Promotion
& Retaliation

Personal Values

Personally held values and normative beliefs about how people should behave

Honor

Face

Dignity

Cultures (Gender x Country)

Individuals

Face

Dignity

Defense of
Family
Reputation

Self-Promotion
& Retaliation

Mensah & Chen, 2010

Study 1: Student Samples

Study 2: General Population

Dignity

Face

Honor

Honor

Anglo-West	Latin Europe	South-eastern Europe	Middle East	East Asia	Anglo-West	Latin Europe	South-eastern Europe	Middle East	East Asia
U.S. U.K.	Spain Italy	Greece Southern Cyprus	Egypt Turkey Lebanon Northern Cyprus	Japan South Korea	U.S. U.K. Canada	Spain Italy	Greece Southern Cyprus	Egypt Turkey Lebanon Northern Cyprus Tunisia	Japan South Korea

Perceptions of Society

Own Personal Endorsement

Study 1: Student Samples

Study 2: General Population

Dignity	0.37 _a	0.12 _{bc}	0.16 _b	-0.12 _c	-0.51 _d
Face	-0.21 _a	-0.1 _a	-0.16 _a	0.07 _{ab}	0.43 _b
Honor	-0.38 _a	-0.18 _a	0.01 _b	0.62 _c	-0.48 _a
	Anglo-West	Latin Europe	South-Eastern Europe	Middle East	East Asia

Honor	-0.35 _a	-0.16 _{ab}	-0.01 _b	0.39 _c	-0.28 _a
	Anglo-West	Latin Europe	South-Eastern Europe	Middle East	East Asia

Perceptions of Society

Own Personal Endorsement

Study 1: Student Samples

Study 2: General Population

	Anglo-West	Latin Europe	South-Eastern Europe	Middle East	East Asia		Anglo-West	Latin Europe	South-Eastern Europe	Middle East	East Asia
Dignity	0.45 _a	-0.08 _b	0.19 _b	0.09 _b	-0.78 _c						
Face	-0.11 _a	-0.14 _a	-0.48 _a	0.53 _b	-0.24 _a						
Honor	-0.2 _a	-0.53 _b	-0.39 _{ab}	0.58 _c	0.00 _a	Honor	-0.37 _a	-0.17 _{ab}	-0.31 _{ab}	0.46 _c	-0.1 _b

- 1. Self-ratings often did not align with people's perceptions of societies.**
- 2. Perceived-societal ratings appeared to categorize cultural groups more sensibly and clearly.**
- 3. Mediterranean cultural groups were not homogenous in their patterns of honor endorsement.**

Research Aim 2:

**Explaining cultural
differences in
socio-cognitive
tendencies**

Study 1

Multinational survey study with student samples from university pools

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N = 2942 participants from 11 countries

Measures:

- » Honor, Face, Dignity **Values**
- » Honor, Face, Dignity **Concerns**
- » **Various Measures of Socio-Cognitive Orientation**

Study 2

Multinational survey study with samples from a more general population

Goal:

Replicating our honor value findings in a more general sample

Sample:

N = 5493 participants from 14 countries

Measures:

- » Honor Values
- » ...

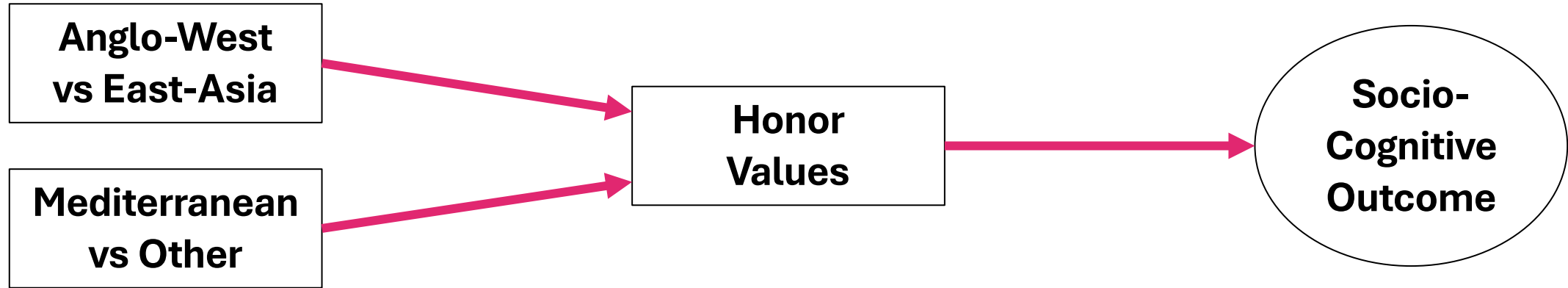
Unpacking socio-cognitive differences

- » Uskul and colleagues (2023) found cultural **differences on several socio-cognitive indicators** between Mediterranean and Anglo-Western / dignity and East-Asian / face cultures
- » **Unpacking culture: Can honor values explain differences in socio-cognitive tendencies?** (e.g., Bond & Tedeschi, 2001)

Theoretical	<i>Disengaging (vs. Engaging) Emotions</i>
	<i>Personal (vs. Social) Happiness</i>
	<i>Symbolic Self-Inflation</i>
	<i>Third-Person Perspective Taking</i>

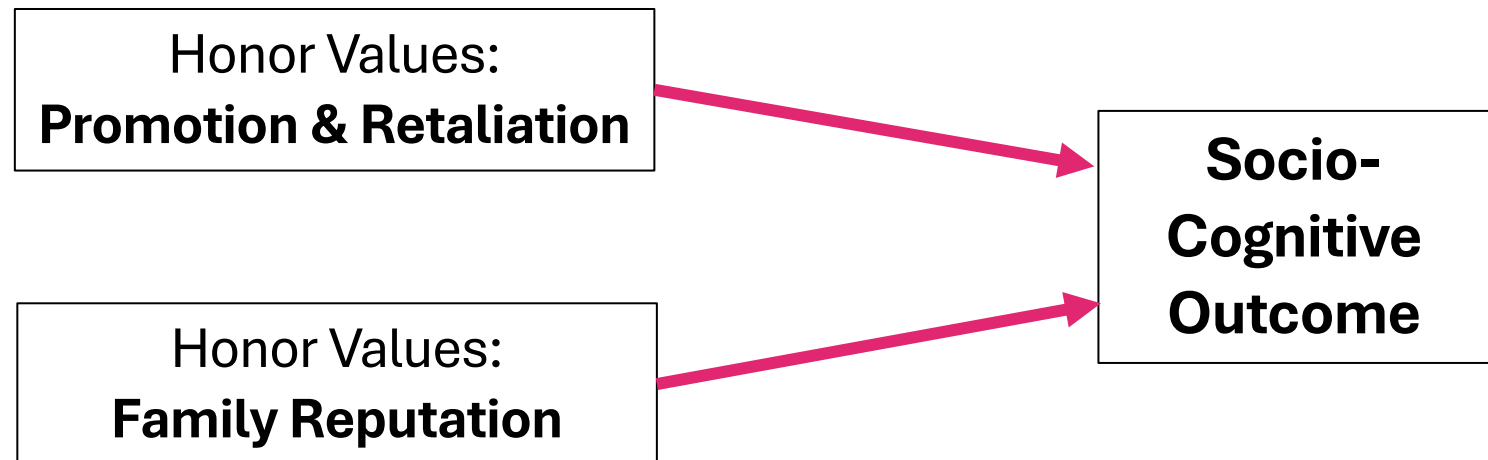
Exploratory	<i>Ingroup Closeness</i>
	<i>Nepotism in Reward Situations</i>
	<i>Nepotism in Punishment Situations</i>
	<i>Dispositional Attribution Bias</i>
	<i>Thematic Categorization</i>
	<i>Inclusion of Contextual Information</i>

Unpacking socio-cognitive orientation



Cultures (Gender x Country)

Individuals



		Perceptions of Society	Own Personal Endorsement
Theoretical	<i>Disengaging (vs. Engaging) Emotions</i>	Positive Mediation Effect	No effect
	<i>Personal (vs. Social) Happiness</i>	No effect	No effect
	<i>Symbolic Self-Inflation</i>	No effect	No effect
	<i>Third-Person Perspective Taking</i>	Positive Mediation Effect	No effect
Exploratory	<i>Ingroup Closeness</i>	No effect	No effect
	<i>Nepotism in Reward Situations</i>	Negative Mediation Effect	No effect
	<i>Nepotism in Punishment Situations</i>	No effect	No effect
	<i>Dispositional Attribution Bias</i>	Positive Indirect Effect	No effect
	<i>Thematic Categorization</i>	No effect	No effect
	<i>Inclusion of Contextual Information</i>	No effect	No effect

- 1. Perceived societal honor values explained differences in some, but not all socio-cognitive measures. Personal honor did not.**
- 2. Honor values did not explain Western vs East Asian differences in socio-cognitive orientations.**
- 3. Culture level effects of honor were not reducible to individual-level effects.**

- 1. Mediterranean societies did show an emphasis on honor but were **not homogenous**.**
- 2. The **level of analysis** as well as the **type of measure** mattered.**
- 3. Perceptions of honor in one's **environment at times performed better** than personal endorsement.**

Thank you for your attention!



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