Expanding the map: Self-Construal and Well-being in the Mediterranean Region

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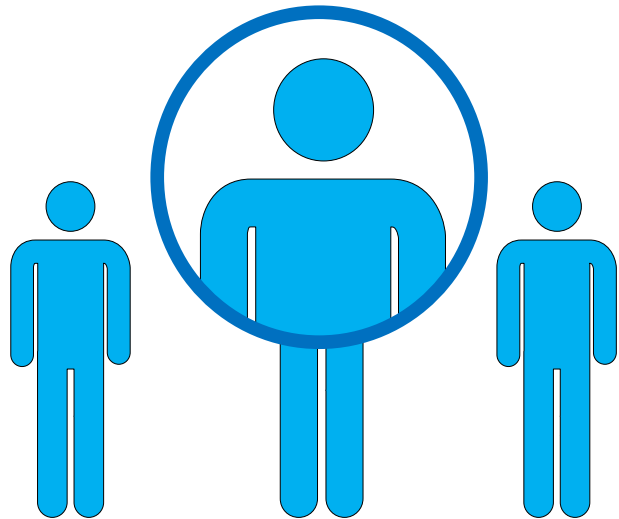
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SPSP Symposium: Culturally Shaped Selfhood:
Distinct Forms, Antecedents, and Consequences
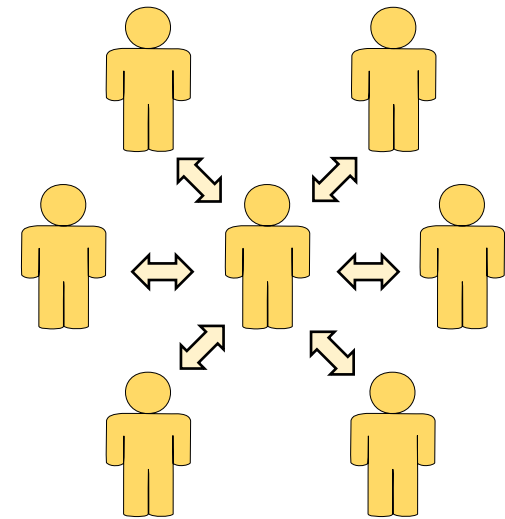
The Cultural Self: Different Ideas

Western / Dignity Contexts

East-Asian / Face Contexts

The self as **independent** and separate from others.

The self as **interdependent** and connected.

Cross, Hardin, & Gercek-Swing, 2011; Markus & Kitayama, 2010

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Honor represents "[…] one's own self-worth, but also one's worth through the eyes of others." It combines elements typically associated with

❖ **independence** (*distinguishing yourself positively, personal autonomy, strength, self-reliance*)

❖ **interdependence** (*maintaining positive relationships, commitment to others' well-being, importance of group reputation*).
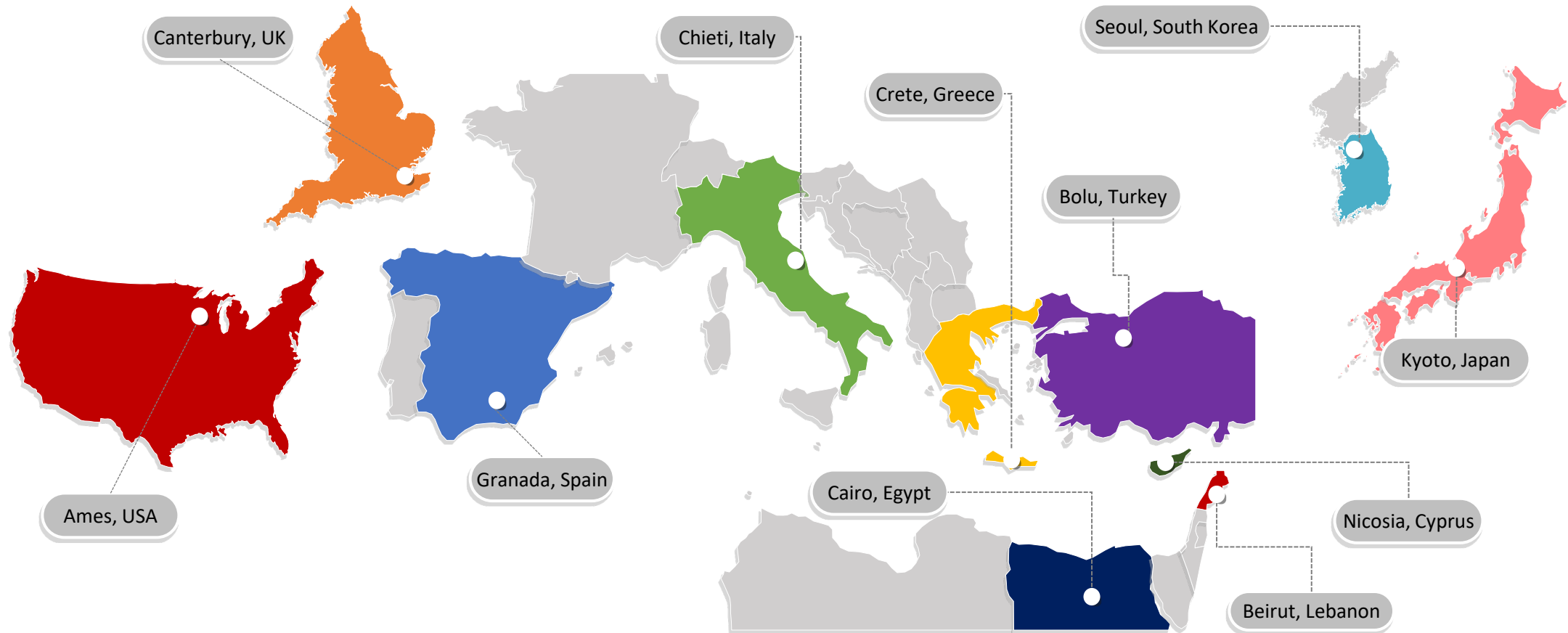
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❖ **San Martin et al. (2018):** Arab participants showed as much interdependent orientation as Japanese, but also as much self-assertion as US - Americans.

❖ **Salvador et al. (2020):** Colombians were similar to Americans in self-assertion and emotional self-expression, but more similar to Japanese in holistic cognition and relationship-focused emotions.

❖ **Vignoles et al. (2016):** Middle-Eastern countries emphasized both independent dimensions (**self-reliance** and **consistency**) and interdependent dimensions of self (**connection with others** and **harmony**).

San Martin et al., 2018; Salvador et al., 2020; Vignoles et al., 2016

1) Explore how Mediterranean and MENA countries differ from Western and East-Asian regions in their **ideas about selfhood**.

2) Test if certain ways of being are **"functional"** in a cultural context (i.e., associated with **better well-being**).

Method: Participants

Canterbury, UK

Chieti, Italy

Crete, Greece

Seoul, South Korea

Bolu, Turkey

Granada, Spain

Ames, USA

Cairo, Egypt

Nicosia, Cyprus

Kyoto, Japan

Beirut, Lebanon

N = **2942** | *Female* = **54%** | M_{Age} = **21.31** | M_{SES} = **6.03**

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Self-Construal (Vignoles et al., 2016; Yang et al., 2018)

48 statements ("*How well does each statement describe you?*") in

8 bidimensional scales (*more positive values = greater interdependent orientation*)

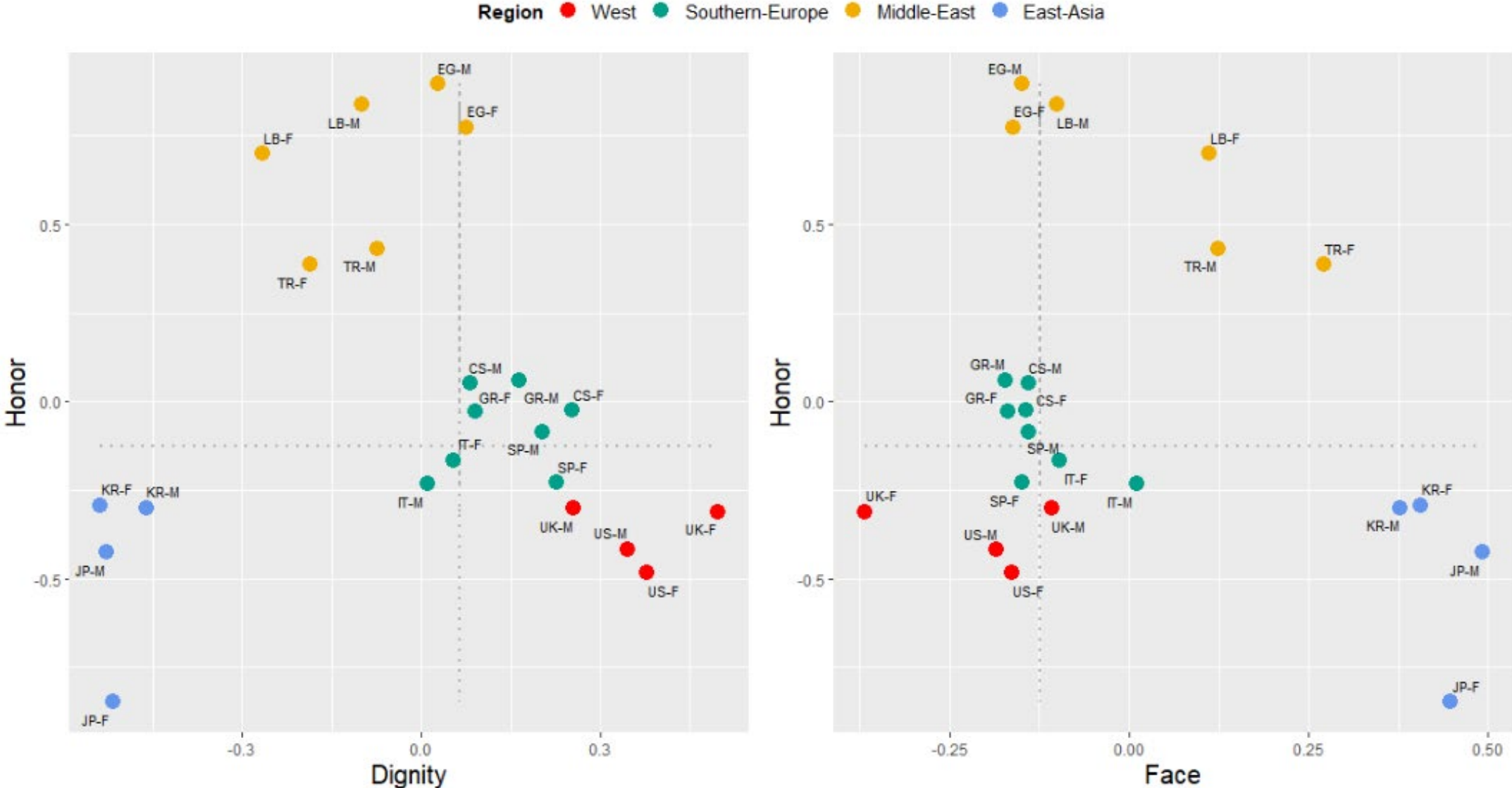| Domain of functioning	Independent way of being		Interdependent way of being
Defining the self	Difference	↔	Similarity
Experiencing the self	Self-containment	↔	Connection to others
Making decisions	Self-direction	↔	Receptiveness to influence
Looking after oneself	Self-reliance	↔	Dependence on others
Moving between contexts	Consistency	↔	Variability
Communicating with others	Self-expression	↔	Harmony
Dealing with conflicting interests	Self-interest	↔	Commitment to others
Being embedded in one's environment	De-Contextualized Self	↔	Contextualized Self

Well-being *(OECD, 2014)*
Life Satisfaction Ratings (1-10) across 9 life domains (e.g., *health, safety, personal relationships, future security, self-achievement*)

Honor, Face, Dignity Values (Yao et al., 2018; Smith et al., 2018)
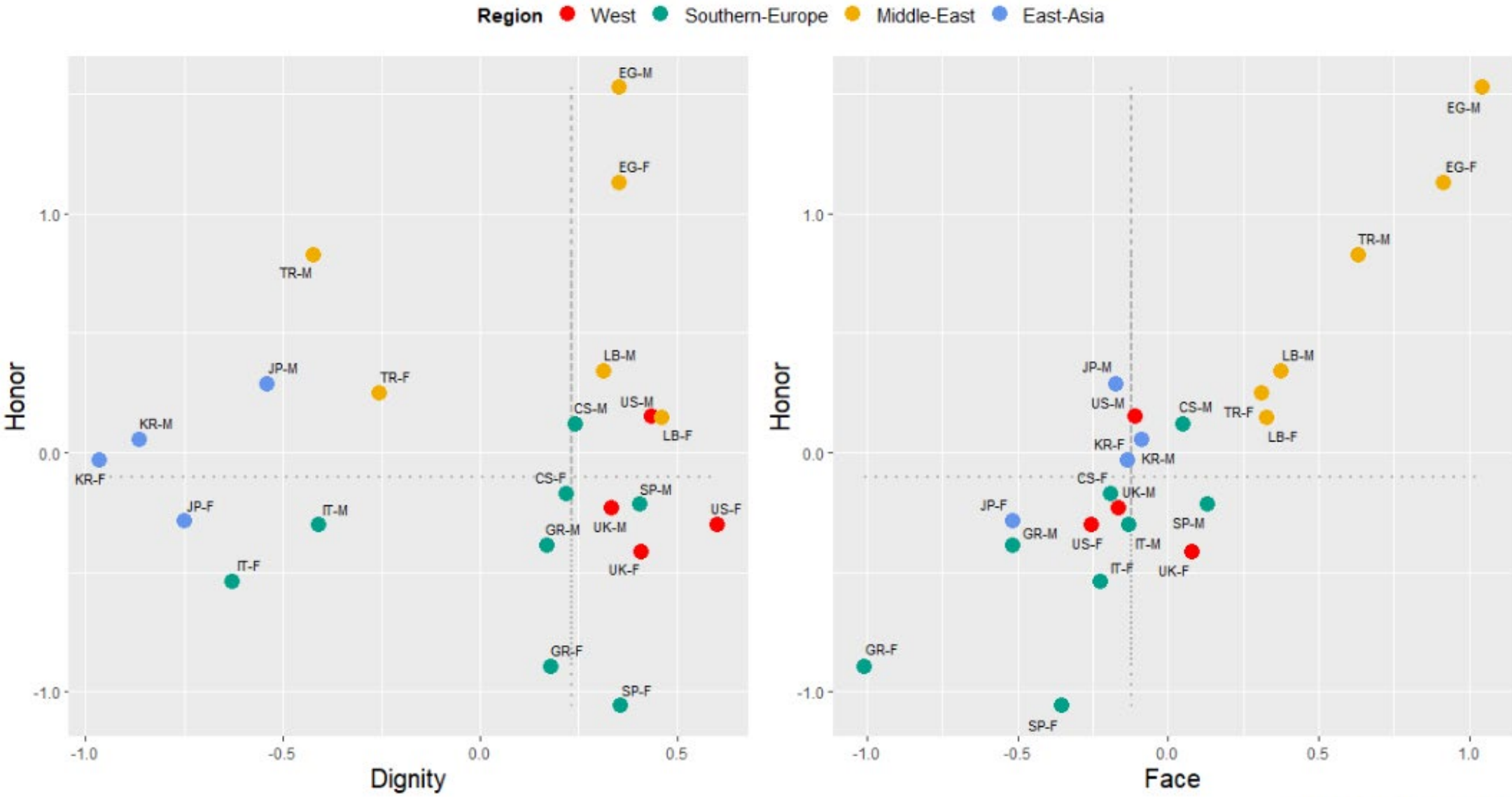Endorsement (*1 - 6*) for 24 statements, answered for (a) oneself and (b) for one's society

- ❖ *People should not allow others to insult their family. (honor)*
- ❖ *People should be true to themselves regardless of what others think. (dignity)*
- ❖ *People should minimize conflict in social relationships at all costs. (face)*
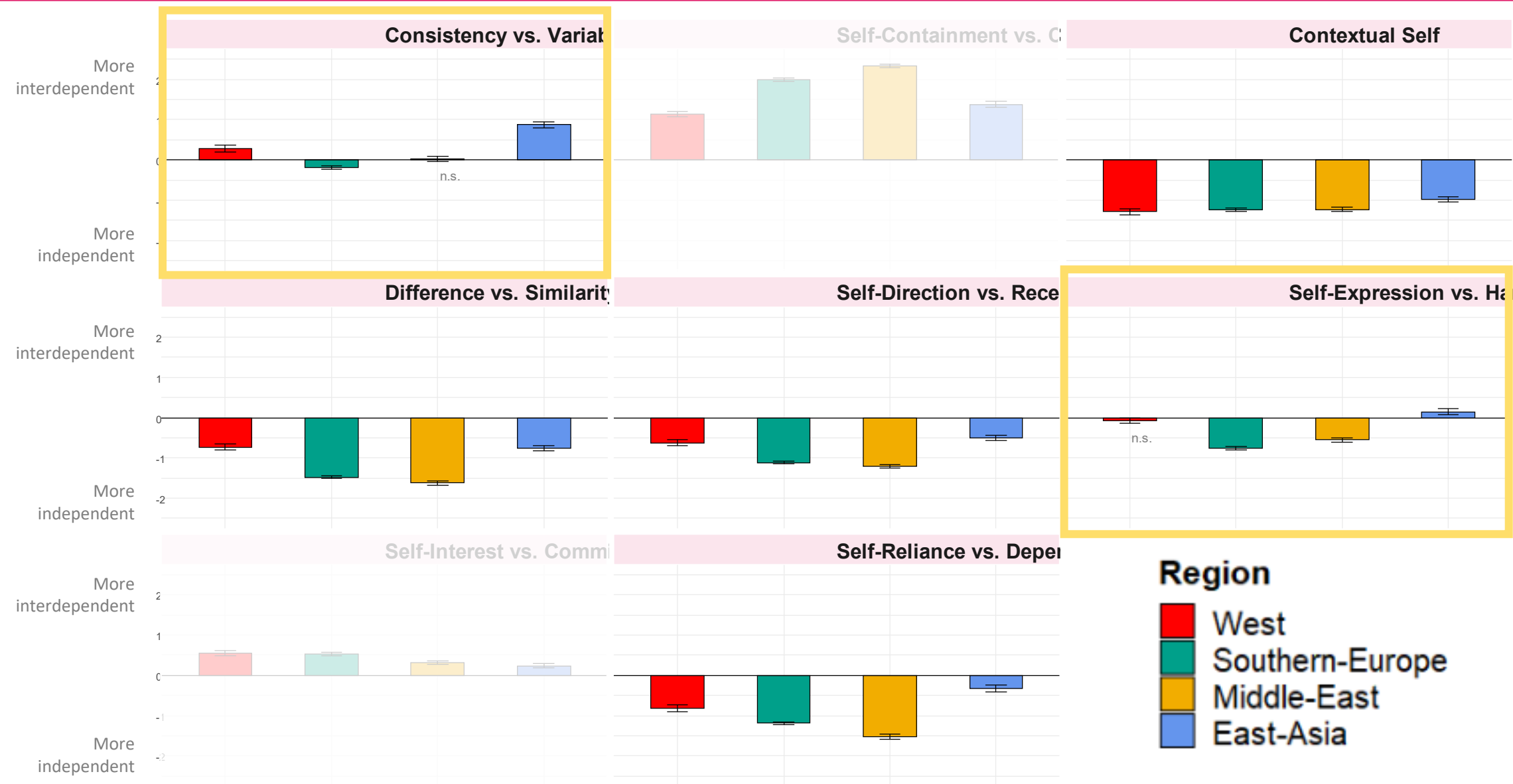
Lines represent median values.
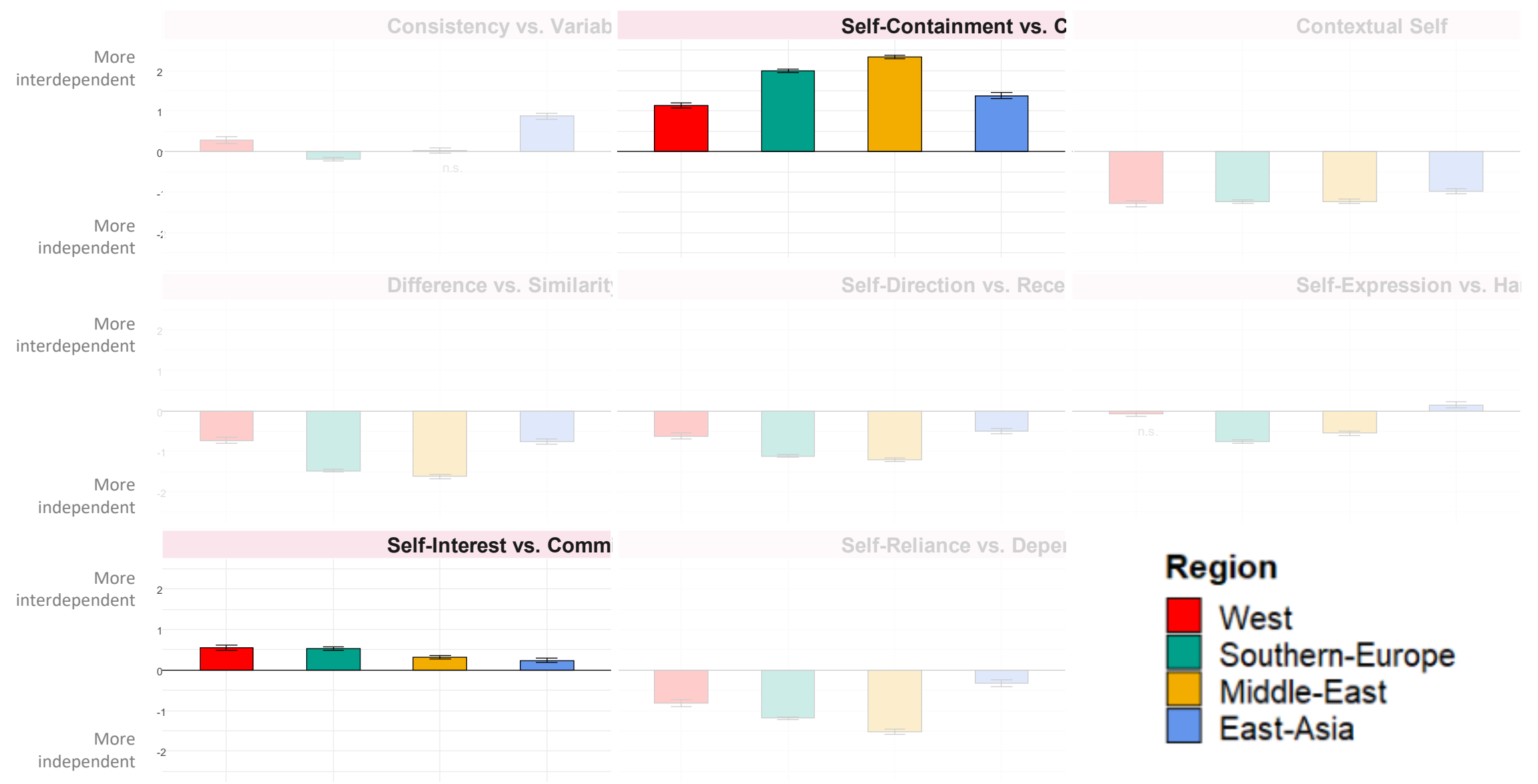
Lines represent median values.

Results: Cultural Profiles of Self-Construal

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Results: Self-Construal & Well-being (1)

Dimension	West	Southern-Europe	Middle-East	East-Asia
Consistency vs. Variability	-0.13 A	-0.24 B	-0.23 B	-0.25 B
Self-Containment vs. Connection with others	0.10 A	0.25 B	0.31 B	0.28 B
Self-Interest vs. Commitment to others				
Difference vs. Similarity				
Self-Direction vs. Receptiveness to influence				
Self-Expression vs. Harmony				
Self-Reliance vs. Dependency				
De-contextualized vs. Contextualized Self				

Grey estimates are non-significant. Differing subscripts indicate a significant difference.

Results: Self-Construal & Well-being (2)

Dimension	West	Southern-Europe	Middle-East	East-Asia
Consistency vs. Variability	-0.13 A	-0.24 B	-0.23 B	-0.25 B
Self-Containment vs. Connection with others	0.10 A	0.25 B	0.31 B	0.28 B
Self-Interest vs. Commitment to others	-0.09 A	0.09 B	0.06 AB	0.16 B
Difference vs. Similarity	-0.04 A	-0.1 A	-0.04 A	-0.17 A
Self-Direction vs. Receptiveness to influence				
Self-Expression vs. Harmony				
Self-Reliance vs. Dependency				
De-contextualized vs. Contextualized Self				

Grey estimates are non-significant. Differing subscripts indicate a significant difference.

Results: Self-Construal & Well-being (3)

Dimension	West	Southern-Europe	Middle-East	East-Asia
Consistency vs. Variability	-0.13 A	-0.24 B	-0.23 B	-0.25 B
Self-Containment vs. Connection with others	0.10 A	0.25 B	0.31 B	0.28 B
Self-Interest vs. Commitment to others	-0.09 A	0.09 B	0.06 AB	0.16 B
Difference vs. Similarity	-0.04 A	-0.1 A	-0.04 A	-0.17 A
Self-Direction vs. Receptiveness to influence	-0.08 A	-0.09 A	-0.12 A	-0.08 A
Self-Expression vs. Harmony	-0.04 A	-0.08 A	-0.11 A	-0.08 A
Self-Reliance vs. Dependency	-0.01 AB	0.04 A	-0.07 B	-0.01 AB
De-contextualized vs. Contextualized Self	-0.07 A	-0.09 A	-0.02 A	-0.06 A

Grey estimates are non-significant. Differing subscripts indicate a significant difference.

What have we learned?

❖ Members of honor regions **differentiate themselves in society-reported honor endorsement**, and to lesser extent also in self-reported honor endorsement.

❖ Regions of honor **more independent than dignity and face** in most self-dimensions, but also similarly / more interdependent in connection with and commitment to others.

❖ Well-being in honor regions shows a distinctly **different selfhood profile than dignity and face regions**, and again balances a strong focus on independence with a focus on connection with and commitment to others.

Thank you!