

Social Seminar, 4th December 2020



Emotions and Relationships in Belgium and Japan

Alexander Kirchner-Häusler

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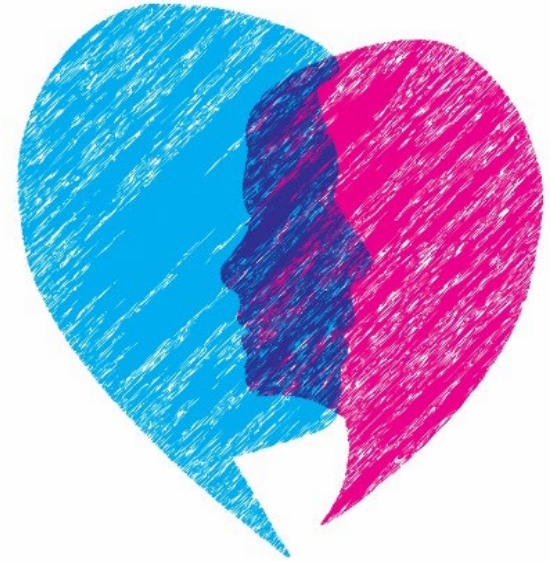
Relationships show emotions that fit cultural relationship practices.

2

These differences emerge partly between partners and over time.

3

Having more fitting emotions is related to better relationships.

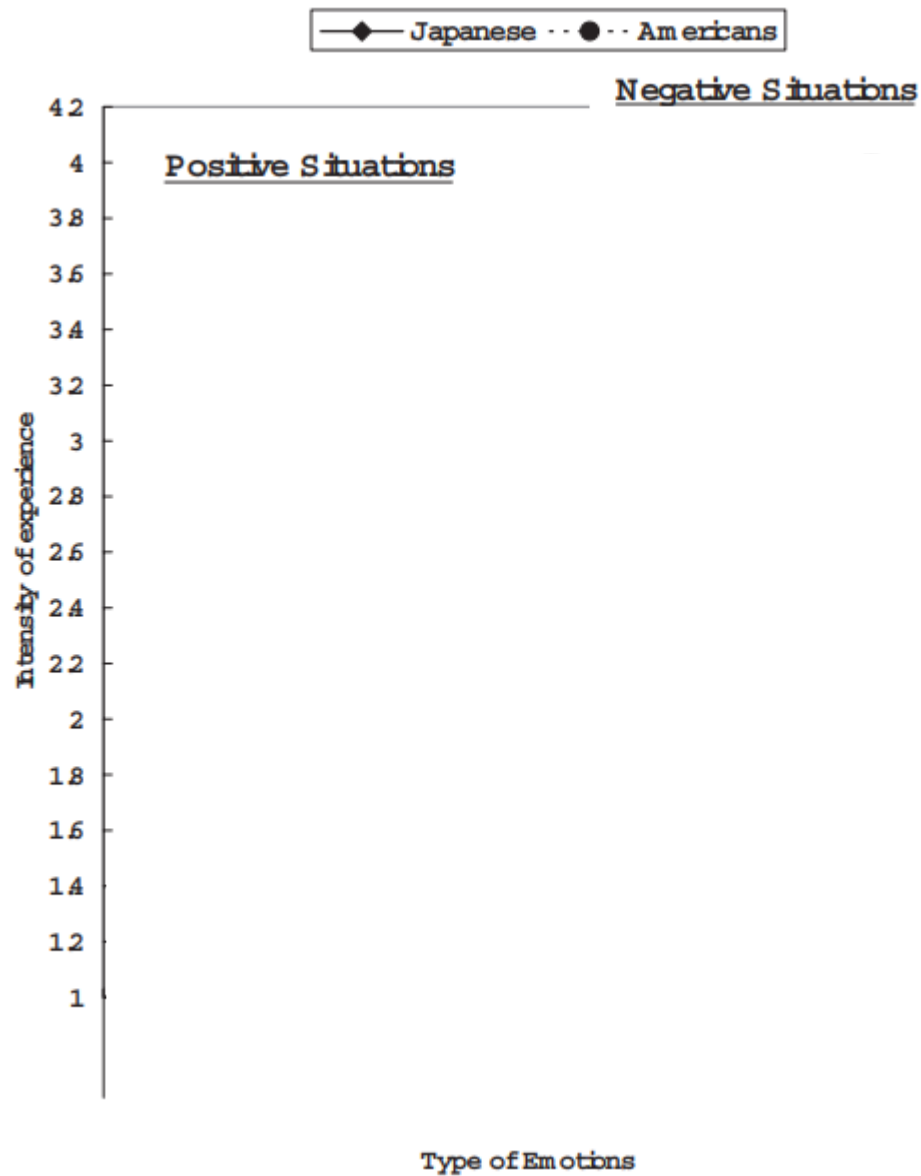


The Couple Interaction Project

Emotions and Relationships in Belgium and Japan



Emotions and Relationships in Belgium and Japan



Different emotional lives

Western individuals tend to report

- more disengaging (individual oriented) feelings,
- more positive feelings, and
- less negative feelings

compared to East-Asian individuals.

East-Asian individuals tend to report

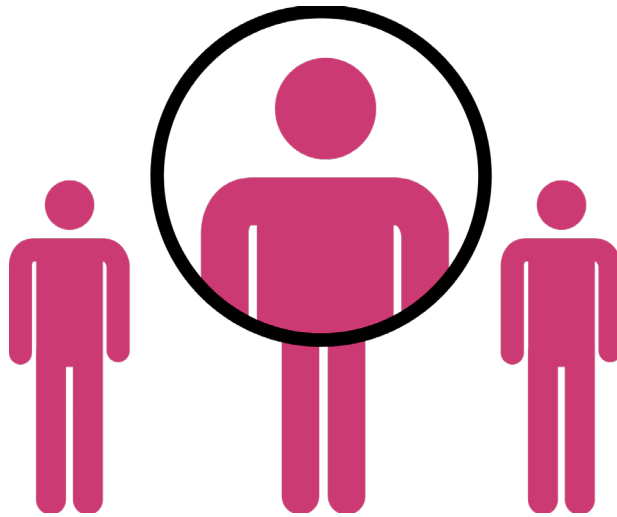
- more engaging (relationship oriented) feelings,
 - greater balance of positive and negative feelings, and
 - more emotional moderation
- compared to Western individuals.
-

Emotions as building blocks of relationships



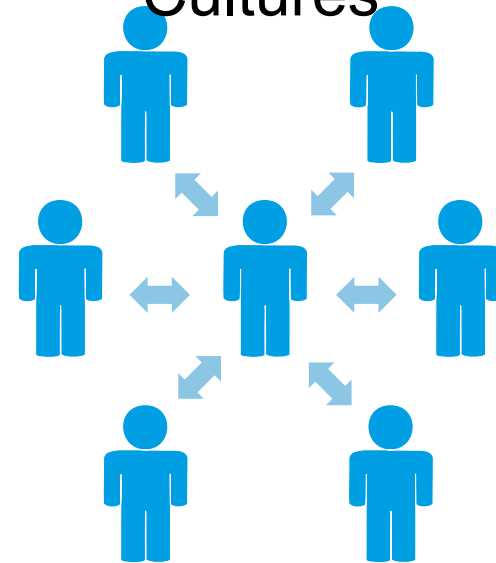
Relationship Models can differ

Western Cultures



Autonomy
Self-Worth
Self-Expression & Enhancement

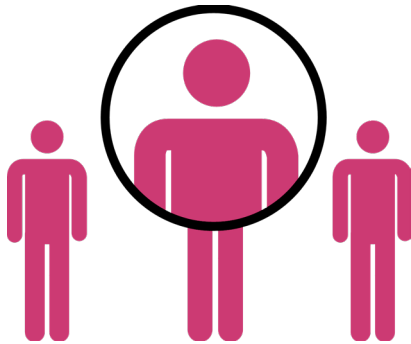
East-Asian Cultures



Relatedness
Social Harmony
Adjustment & Perspective Taking

Emotions fit cultural relationship models

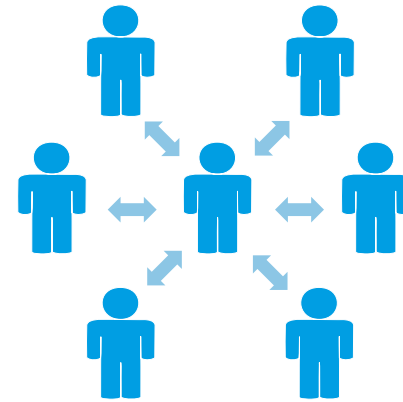
Western Cultures



Relatively greater fit of disengaging emotions

Maximization of **positive** over **negative** feelings

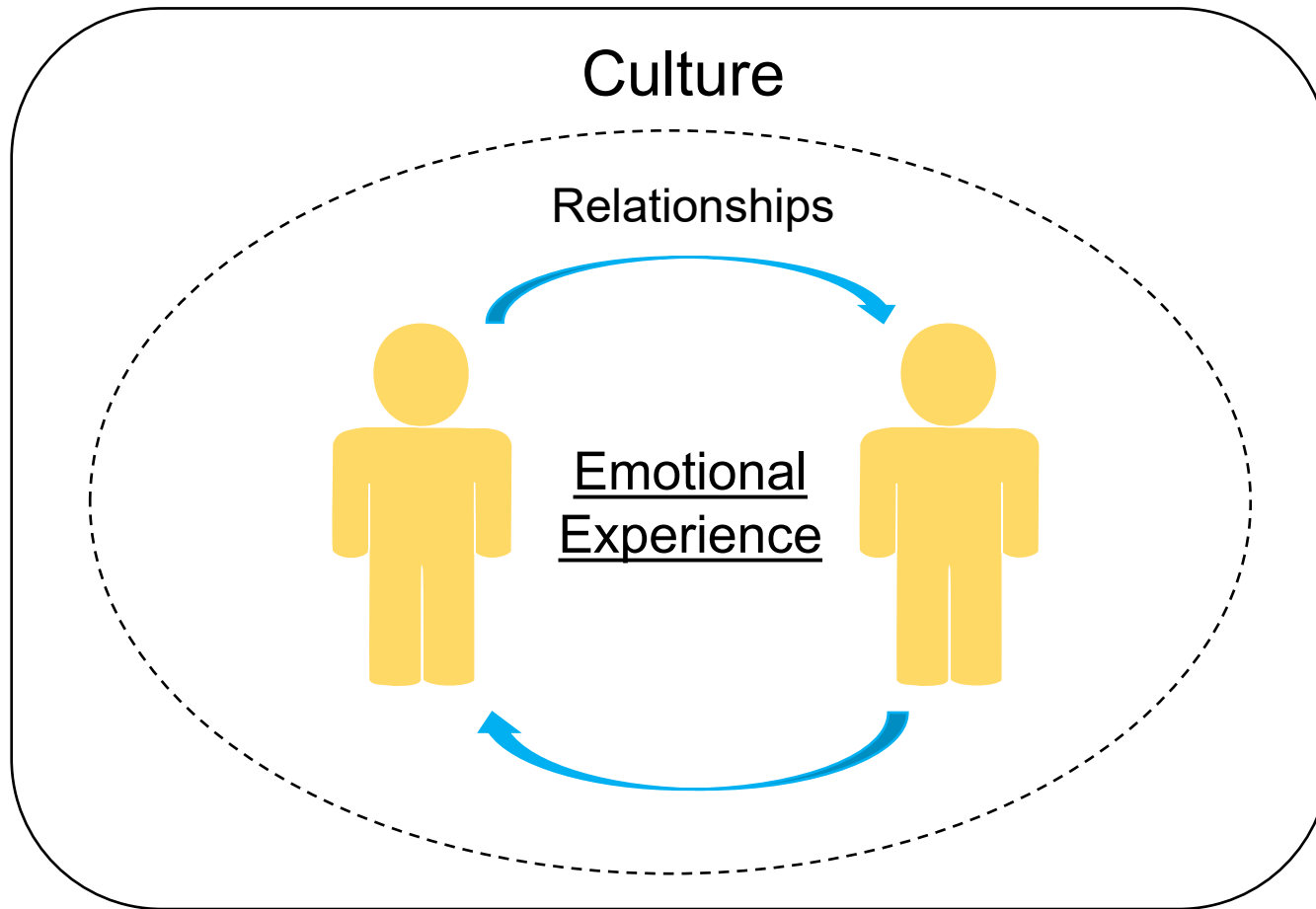
East-Asian Cultures



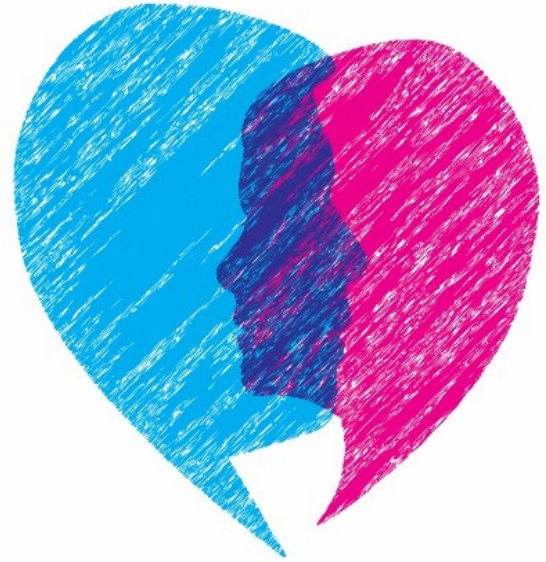
Greater focus on engaging over disengaging feelings

Greater balance of **positive** and **negative** feelings

From individuals to couples

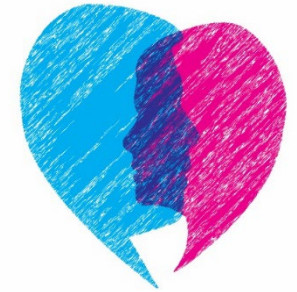


Data The Couple Interaction Project



Project Goals:

Examining cultural differences in emotions in social contexts



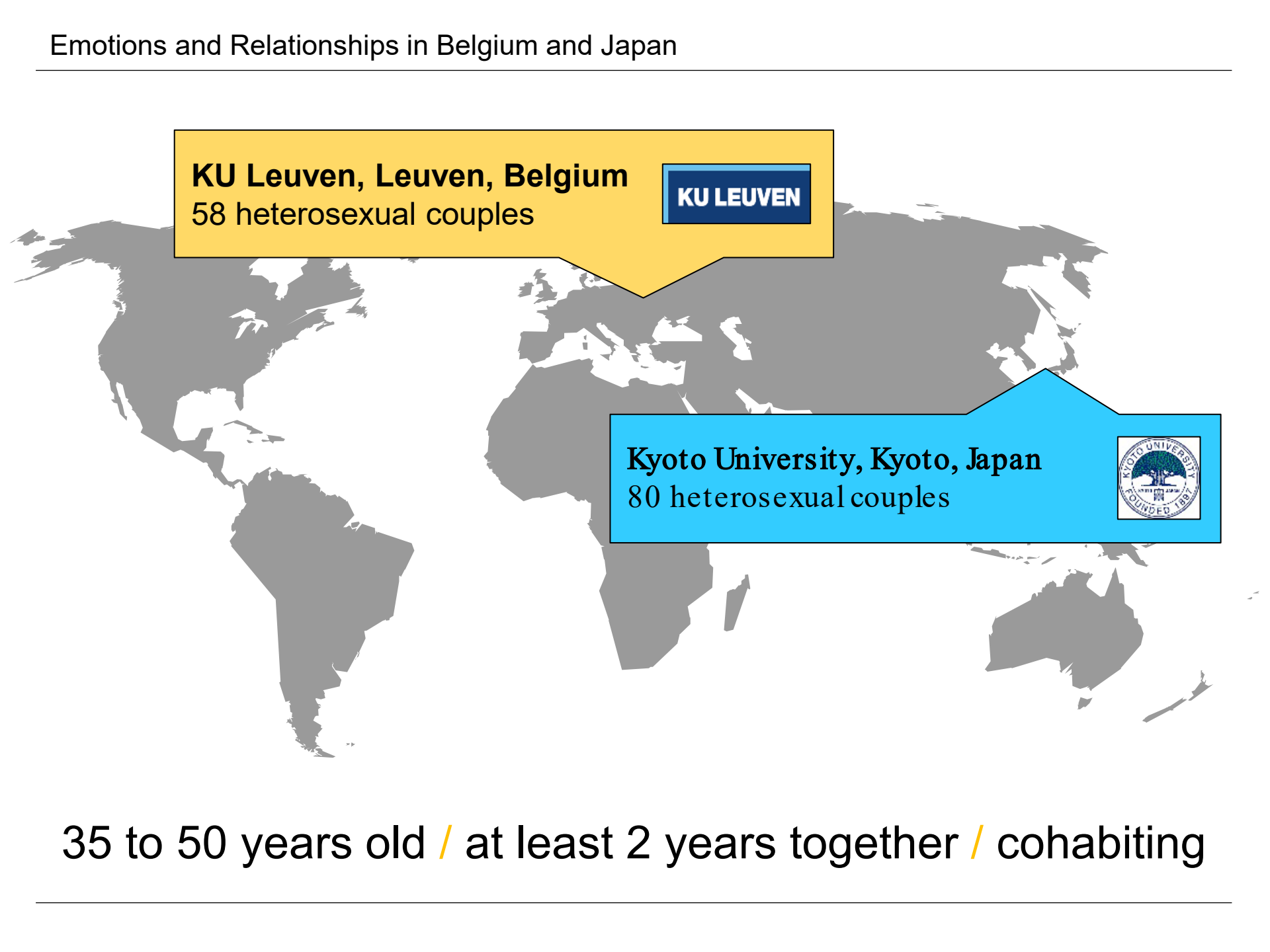
Observe emotions in the social contexts of interactions and relationships



Examine emotions as dynamic phenomena between people, over time



Explore the implications and consequences of affective patterns



KU Leuven, Leuven, Belgium
58 heterosexual couples



KU LEUVEN

Kyoto University, Kyoto, Japan
80 heterosexual couples



35 to 50 years old / at least 2 years together / cohabiting

Who are these couples?

| |  |  |
|------------------------------|---|---|
| | 58 couples | 80 Couples |
| Age | 41.22 (5.15) | 42.98 (4.33) |
| Relationship Duration | 15.55 (8.20) | 14.98 (7.20) |
| Married | 72.4% | 97.5% |
| Socio-Economic Status | 30.4% Upper Middle Class 60.7% Middle Class 6.0% Lower Middle Class | 10.0% Upper Middle Class 64.4% Middle Class 20.6% Lower Middle Class |

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Preparatory Study

1

Pre-Visit Questionnaire (online & at home)

- Current areas of disagreement in couple
- Relationship satisfaction, Self-Constraint, ...

2

10-minute disagreement interaction

- Topic chosen from list of areas of disagreement
- All interactions were videotaped

3

Emotions and Relationships in Belgium and Japan



Belgian Lab



Japanese Lab

0

Preparatory Study

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Post Interaction Assessment (VMR)

- Second-by-second affect during the interaction
- 30s segments of 12 discrete emotions and 3 actions




Move the slider to the left and the right to indicate how your feelings during the conversation were changing. You do not need to click or keep the mouse button held down.

How were you feeling?

very negative negative neutral positive very positive

Continuous Affect

“Use the slider below the video to indicate how good or bad you were feeling during that conversation.”
(-100 to +100)



Below the video is a list of feelings and thoughts that you may have experienced while you were talking with your partner. You can indicate how much you remember experiencing each feeling and thought by clicking a number between 0 (did not experience it at all) and 6 (did experience it extremely). Please answer spontaneously. There are no right or wrong answers. If you think an answer does not apply, select 'not at all'.

| During the part of the conversation that I just saw, I remember feeling... | Not at all | | | Somewhat | | | Very much |
|--|------------|---|---|----------|---|---|-----------|
| empathy for my partner | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| afraid of hurting my partner | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| resigned | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| hurt | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| guilty | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| annoyed | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| strong | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| calm | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

Discrete Emotions (30s)

“Indicate how much you remember experiencing each feeling and thought.”
(12 emotions, 3 Actions)

0

Preparatory Study

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Post Interaction Assessment (VMR)


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4

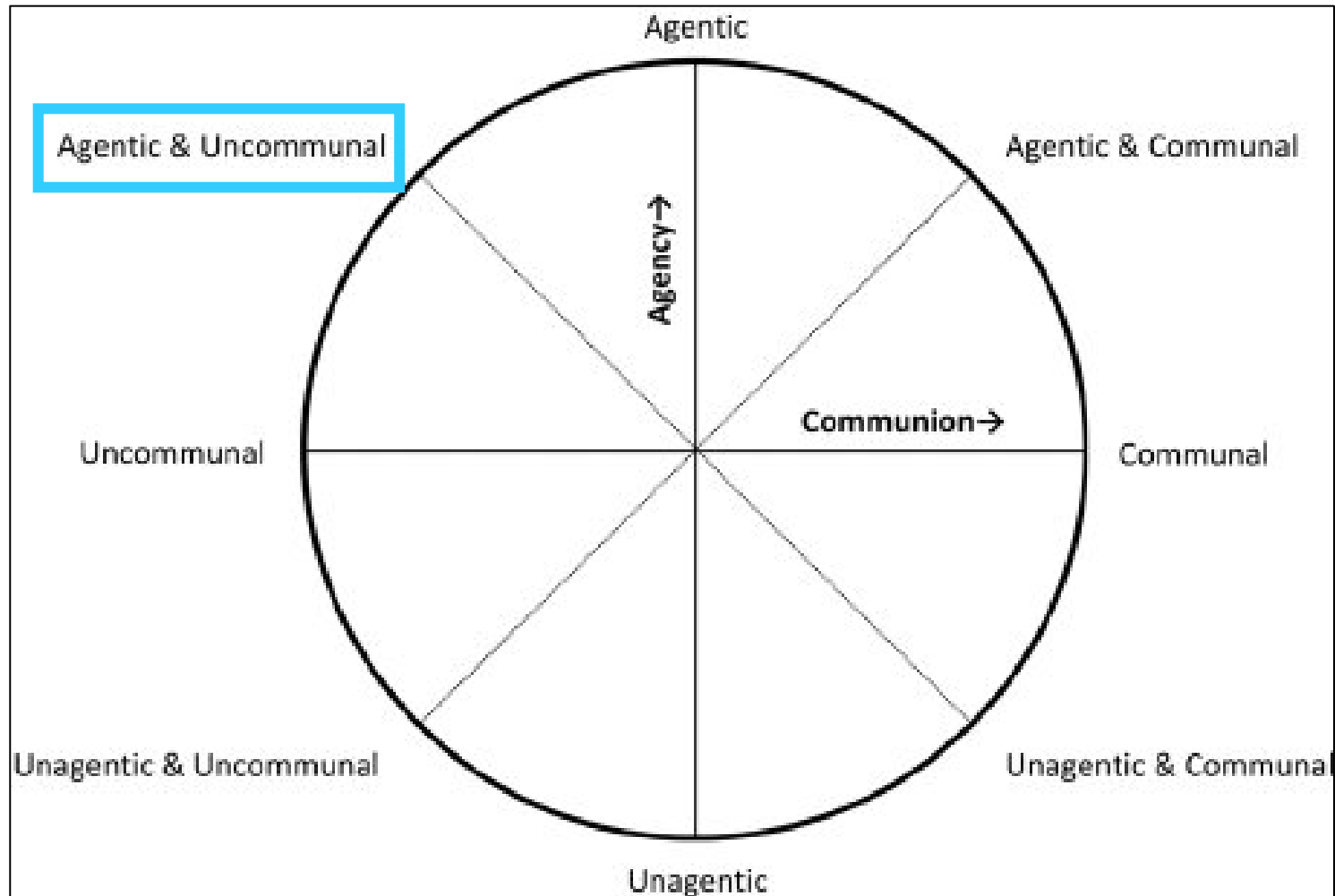
6-Month Follow Up

Different topics were discussed in the two cultures

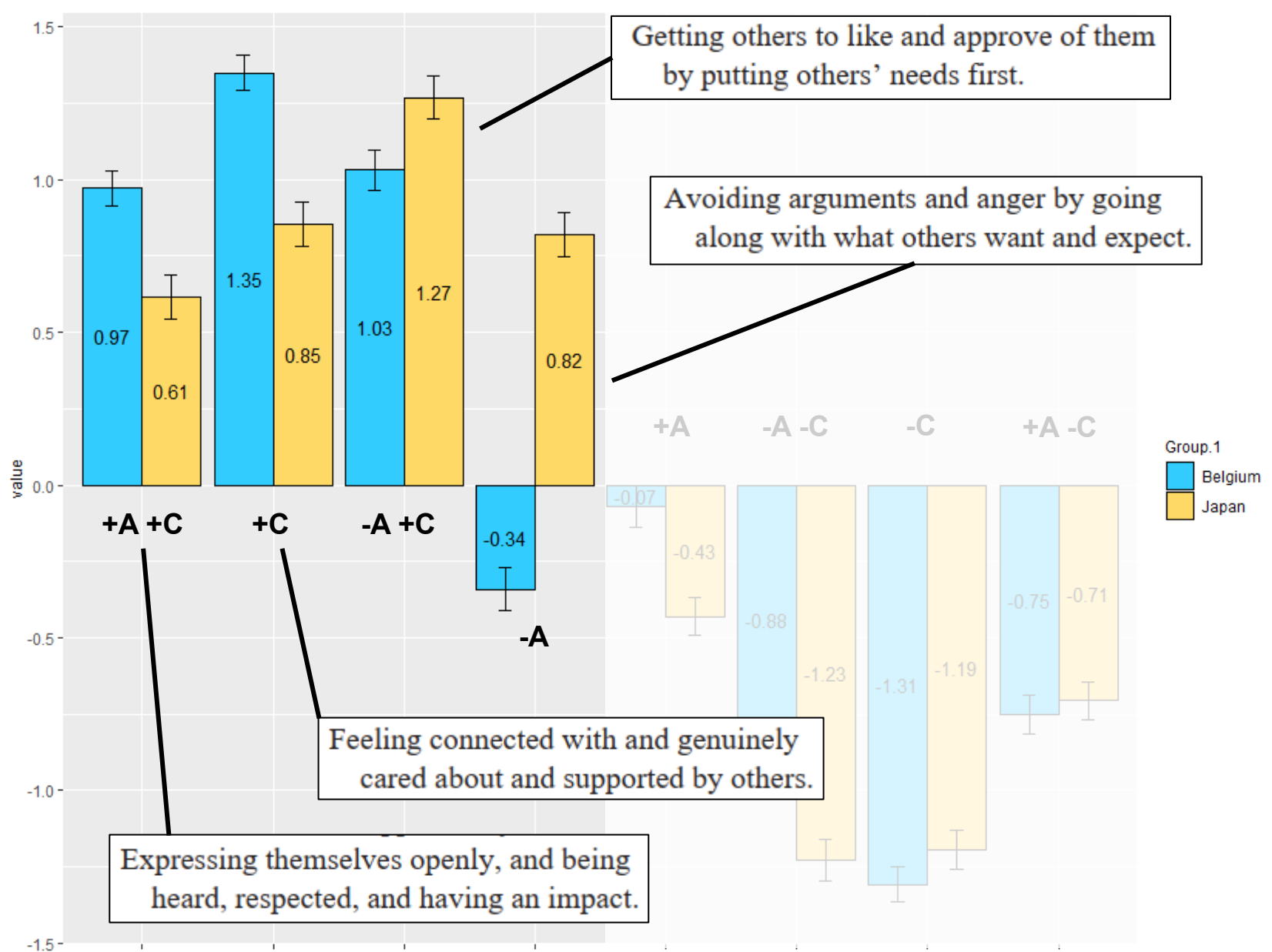
| Topic |  | Percent |
|---|---|---------|
| Relations with in-laws, family, or neighbors | | 15.52% |
| Communication (e.g. not listening to each other) | | 13.79% |
| Children (e.g. whether or not to have children, how to raise children) | | 10.34% |
| Convictions, beliefs (e.g., religion, politics, or other things believed important) | | 8.62% |
| Work (e.g. time spent at work, career decisions) | | 8.62% |

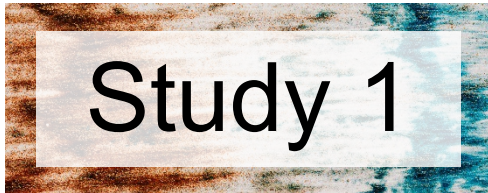
| Topic |  | Percent |
|--|---|---------|
| Money or possessions relevant to your relationship (e.g. house, mortgage, car) | | 20.00% |
| Health (e.g. alcohol, drugs) | | 12.50% |
| Personal habits, characteristics, or behavioural tendencies (e.g. looks, fashion sense, diet, always showing irritation) | | 12.50% |
| Leisure time interests or activities | | 11.25% |
| Children (e.g. whether or not to have children, how to raise children) | | 8.75% |

Partners differed in their interpersonal values



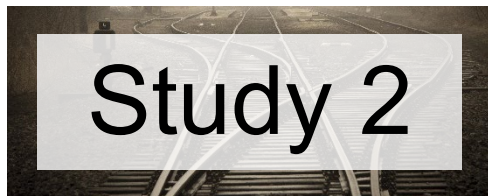
Emotions and Relationships in Belgium and Japan





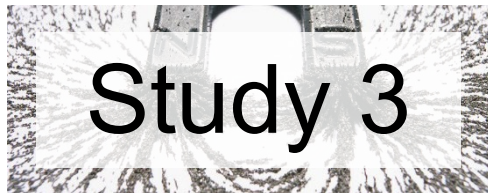
Kirchner, Boiger, Uchida, &
Mesquita, in preparation

Proportions of Positive and Negative Feelings



Kirchner, Boiger, Uchida, &
Mesquita, in preparation

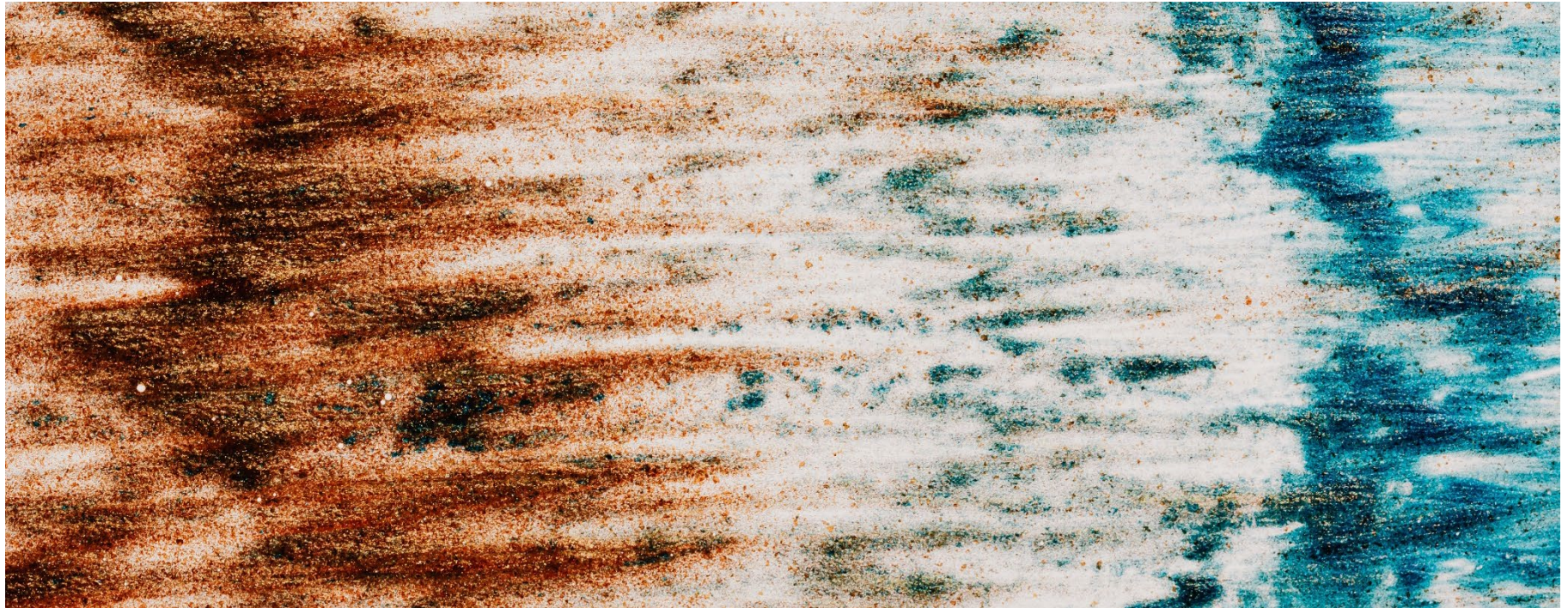
Affective Dynamics of Positive and Negative Feelings



Boiger, Kirchner, Schouten,
Uchida, & Mesquita, 2020

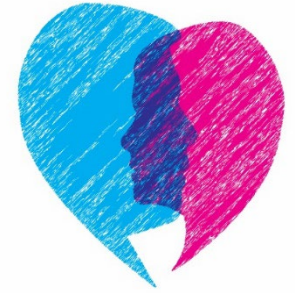
Cultural Differences in Attractor States

Study 1: Proportions of positive and negative feelings



Project Goals:

Examining cultural differences in emotions in social contexts



Observe emotions in the social contexts of interactions and relationships



Examine emotions as dynamic phenomena between people, over time



Explore the implications and consequences of affective patterns

5 TO 1: THE GOLDEN RATIO IN RELATIONSHIPS

If you want to stay together, remember this equation: Five good things for every bad one.

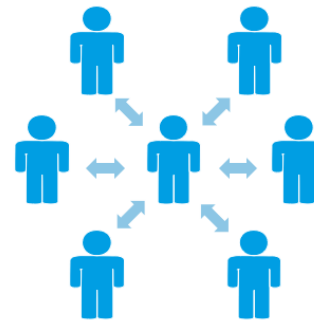


Western Cultures



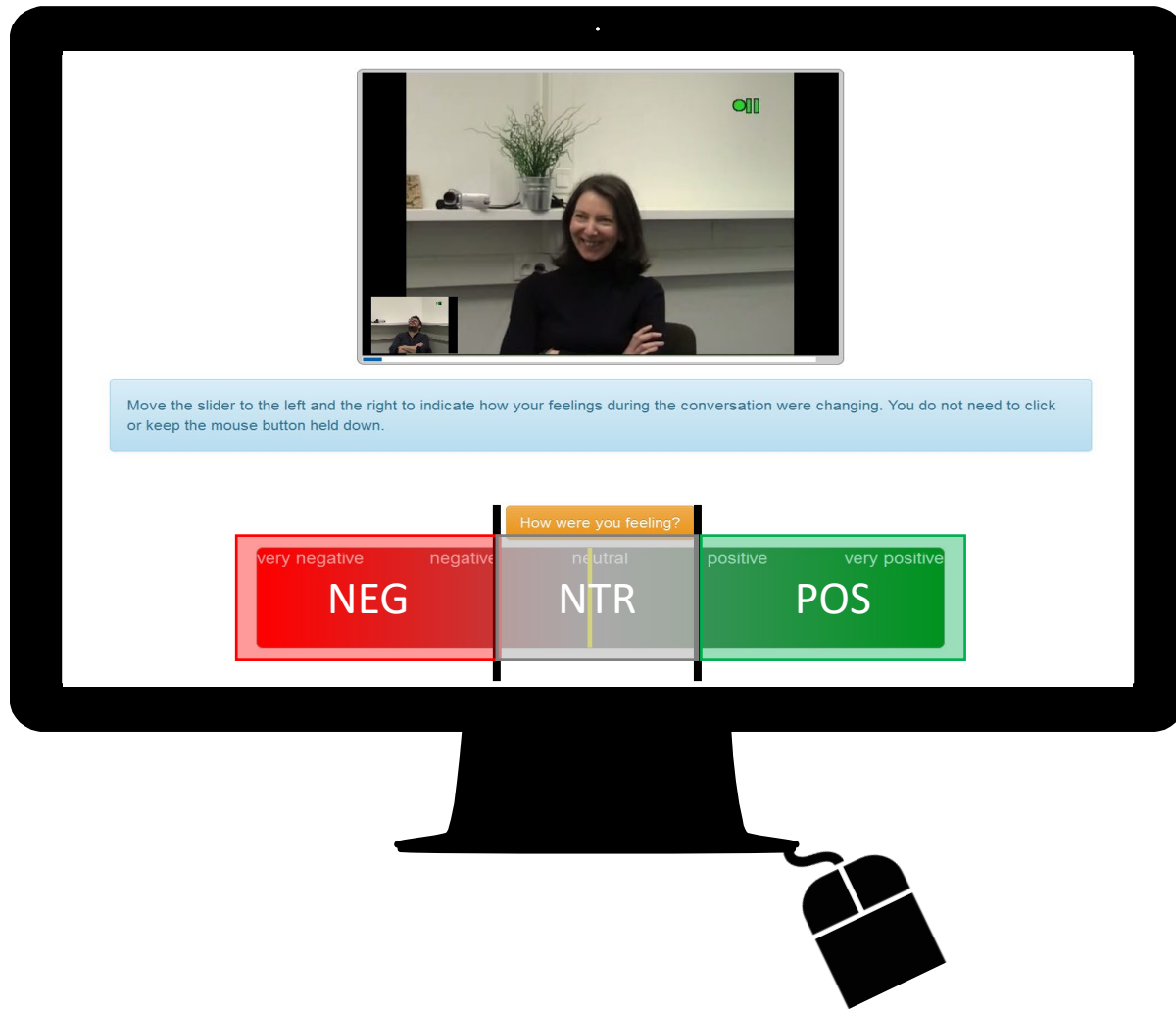
Maximization of **positive** over **negative** feelings

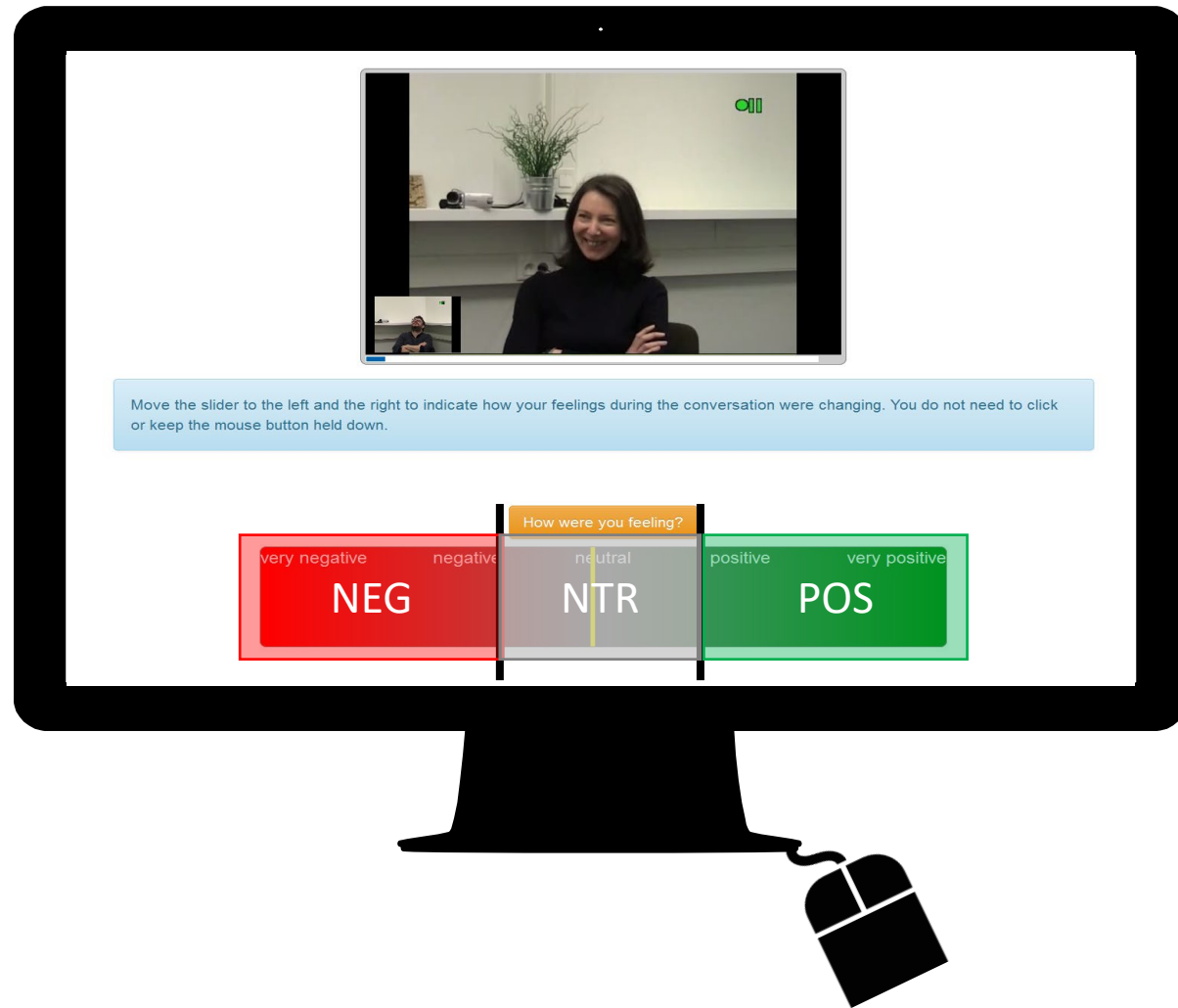
East-Asian Cultures



Greater balance of **positive** and **negative** feelings

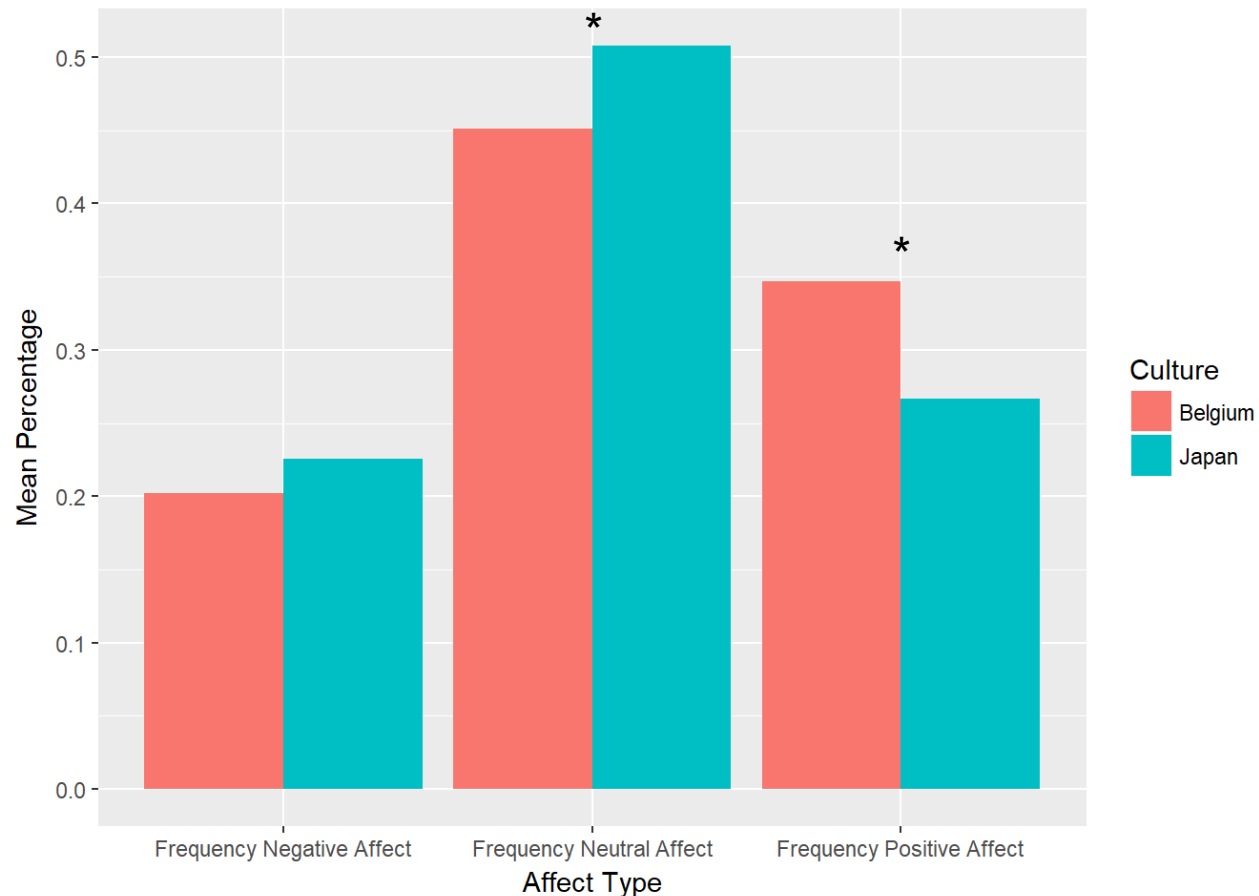
Emotions and Relationships in Belgium and Japan

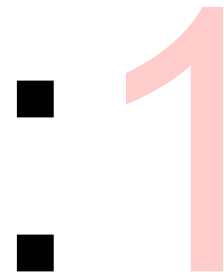
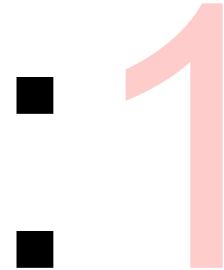
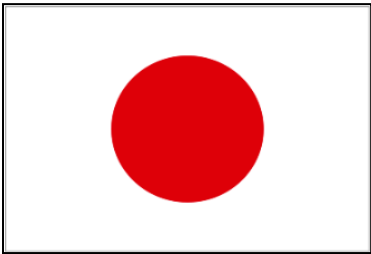
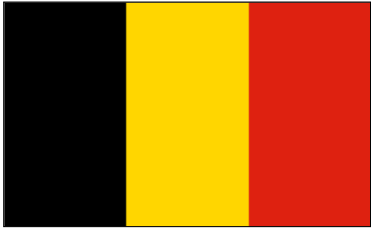




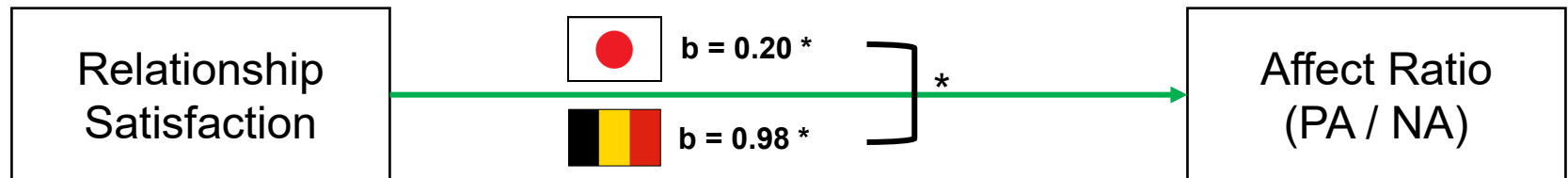
Couple Affect Ratio

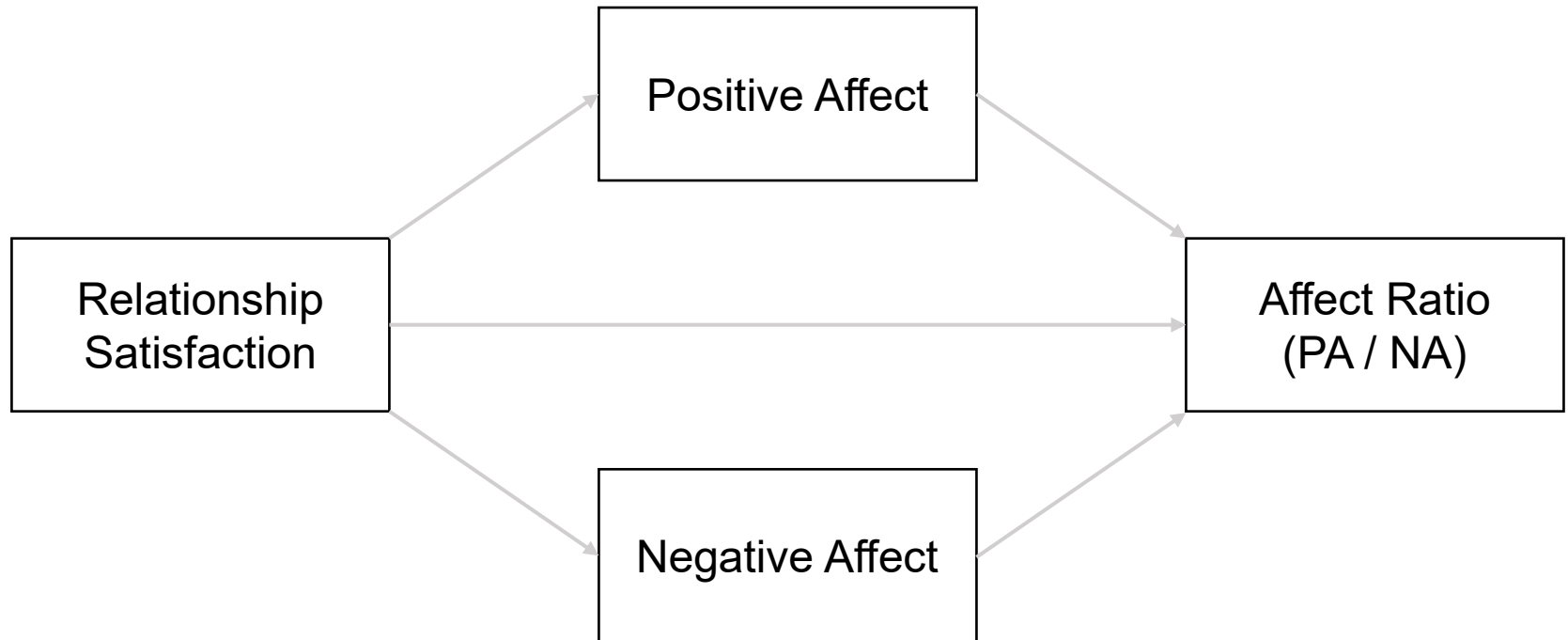
Belgian couples reported more positive,
Japanese couples more neutral affect



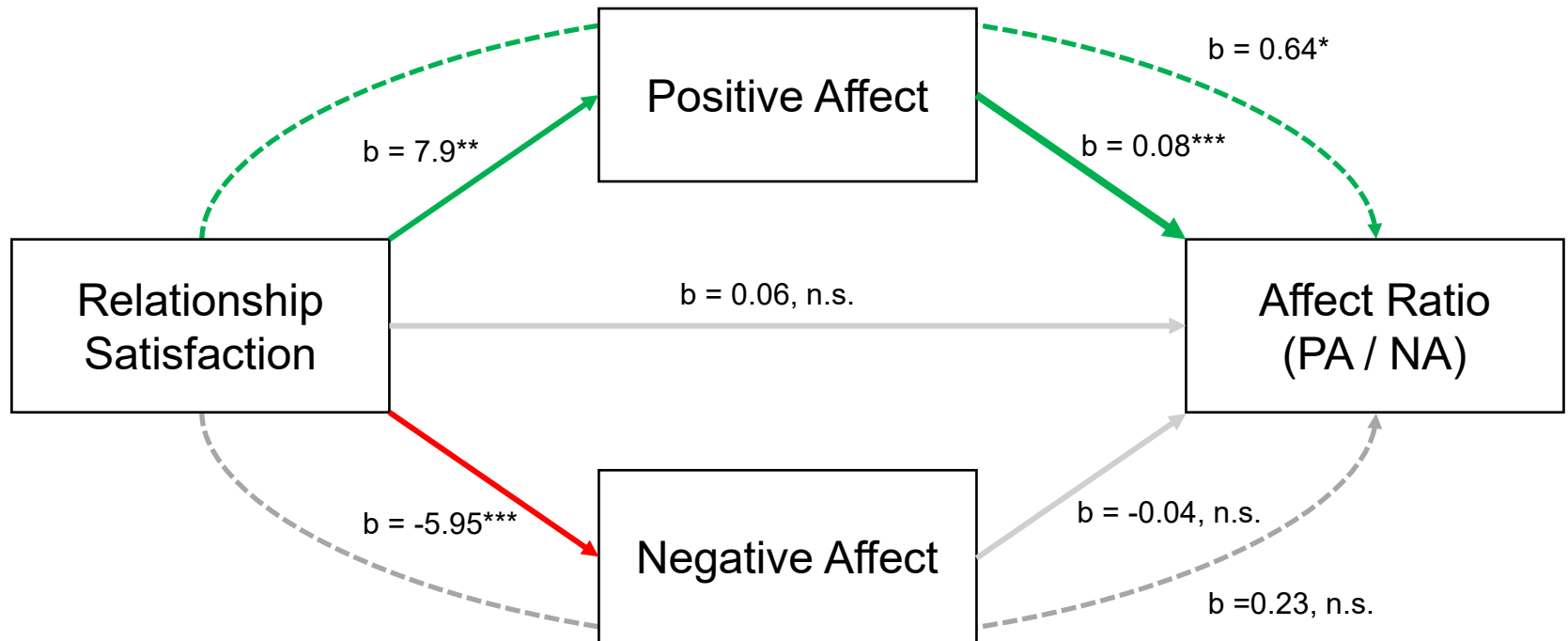


More satisfied couples show more positive affect ratios, but more so in Belgium than in Japan

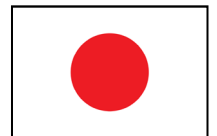
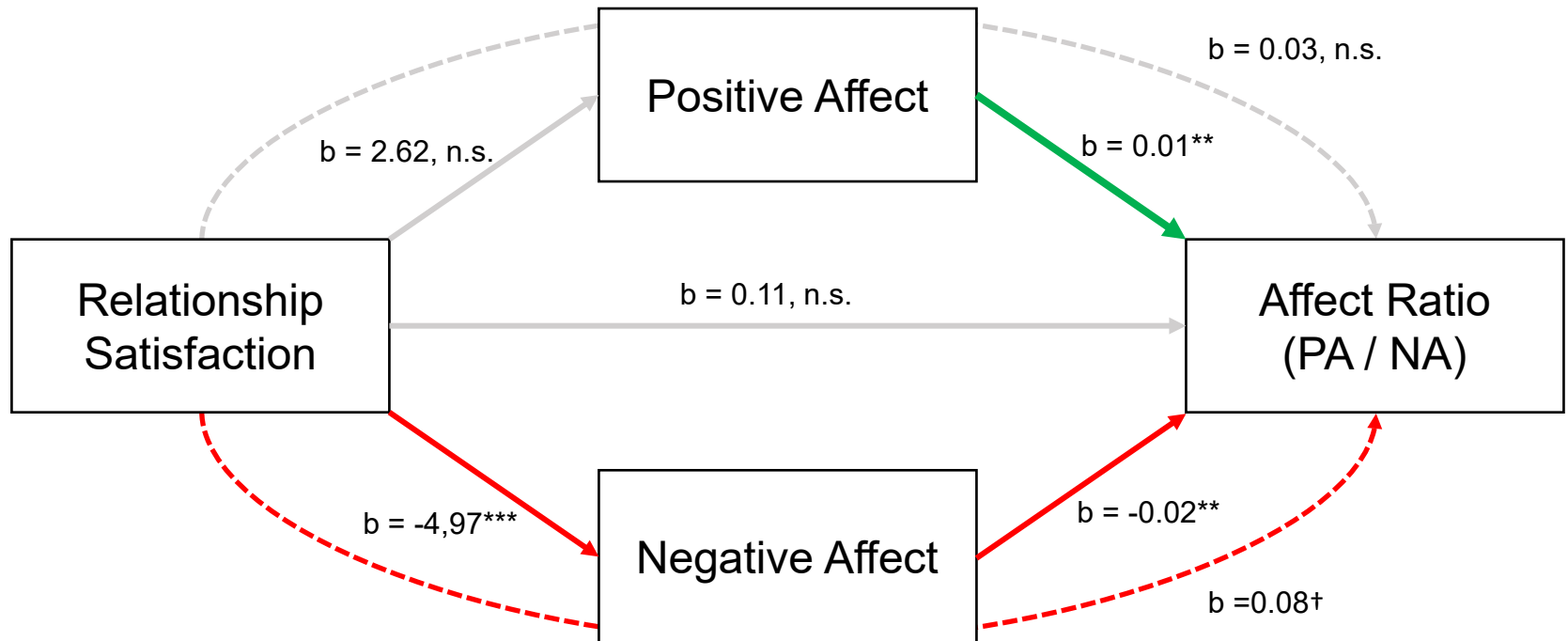




More satisfied Belgian couples show higher affect ratios due to more positive (and partly less negative) affect



More satisfied Japanese couples show higher affect ratios due to less negative, but not more positive affect

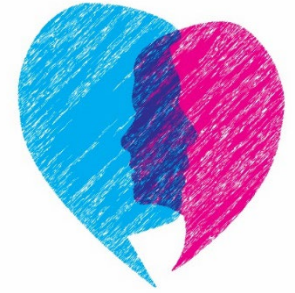


Study 2: Affective Dynamics of positive and negative affect



Project Goals:

Examining cultural differences in emotions in social contexts



Observe emotions in the social contexts of interactions and relationships

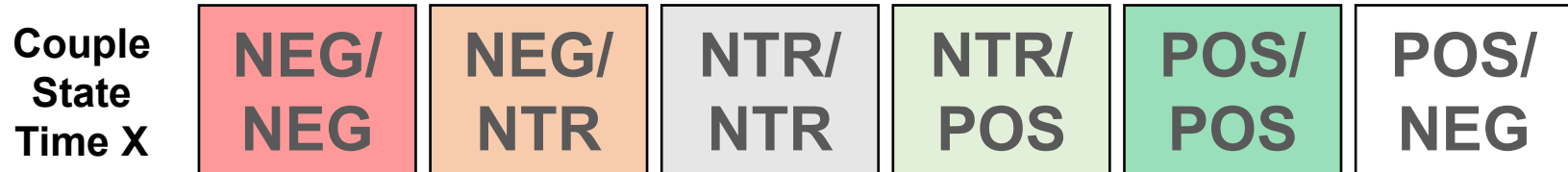
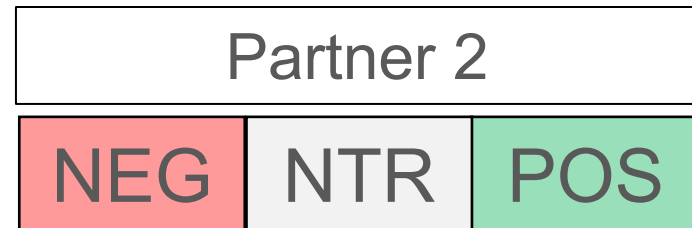
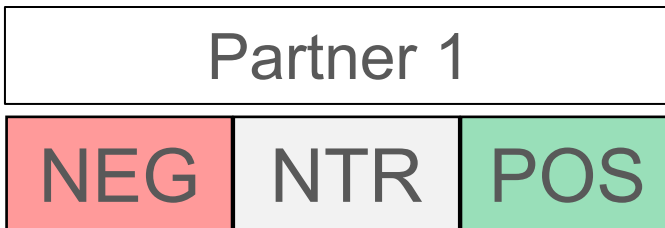
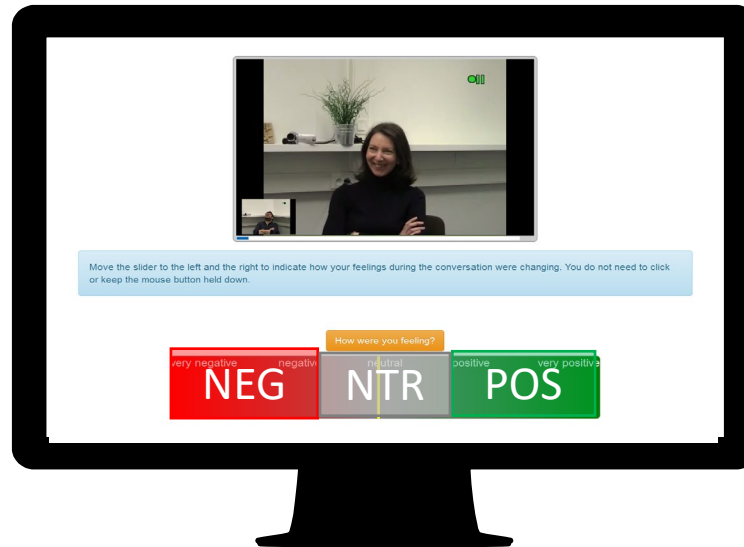


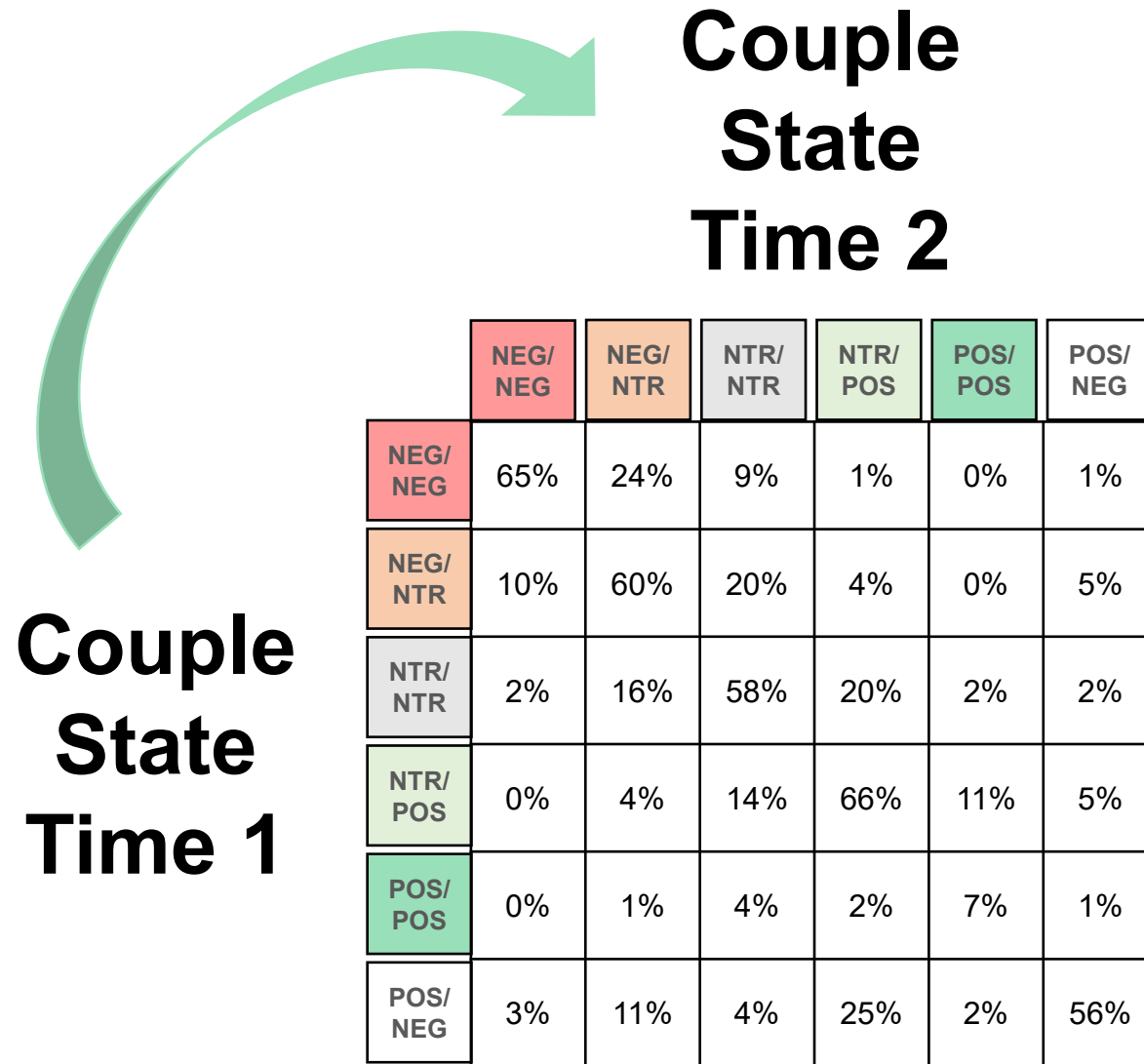
Examine emotions as dynamic phenomena between people, over time



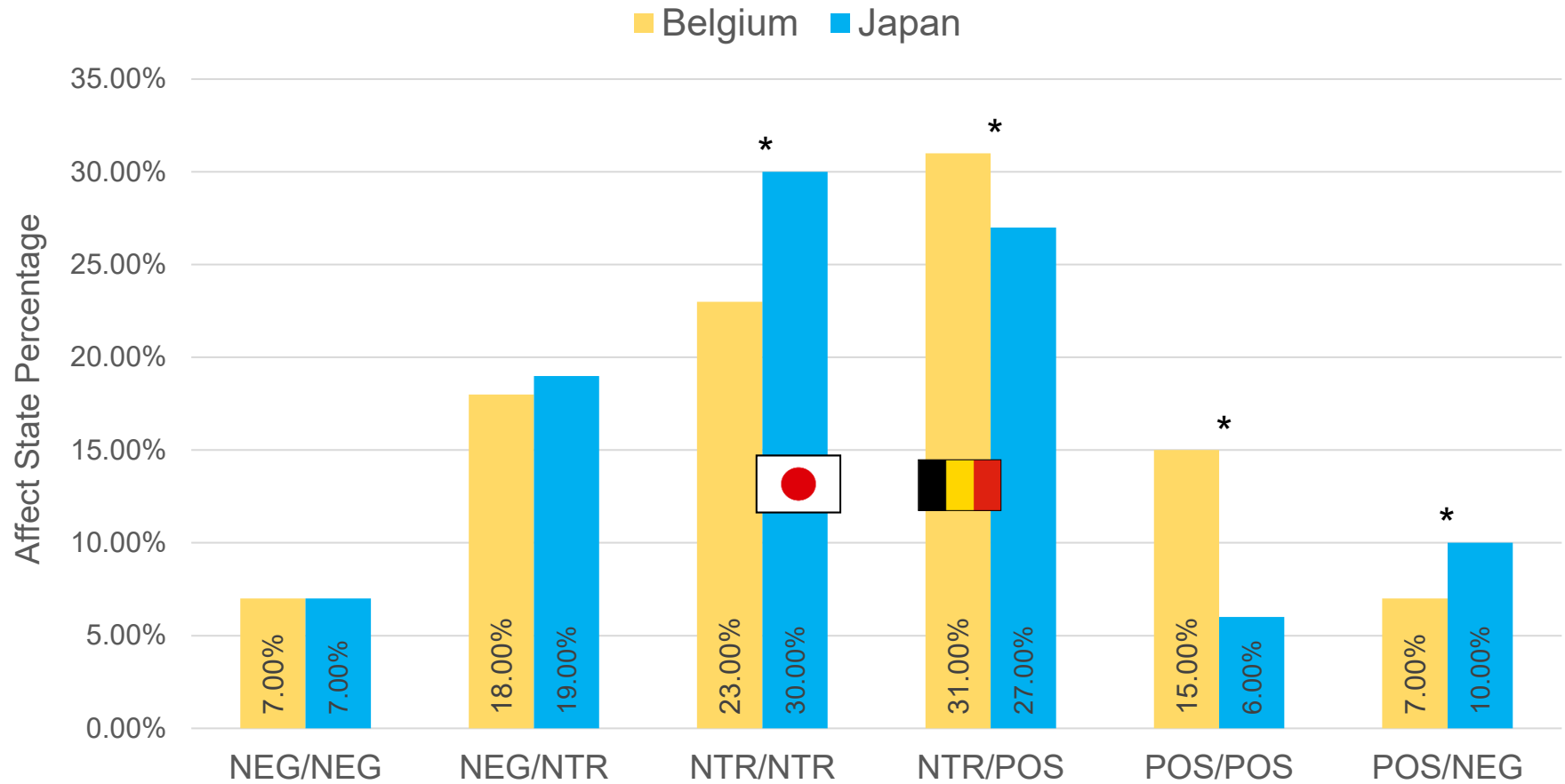
Explore the implications and consequences of affective patterns

Emotions and Relationships in Belgium and Japan

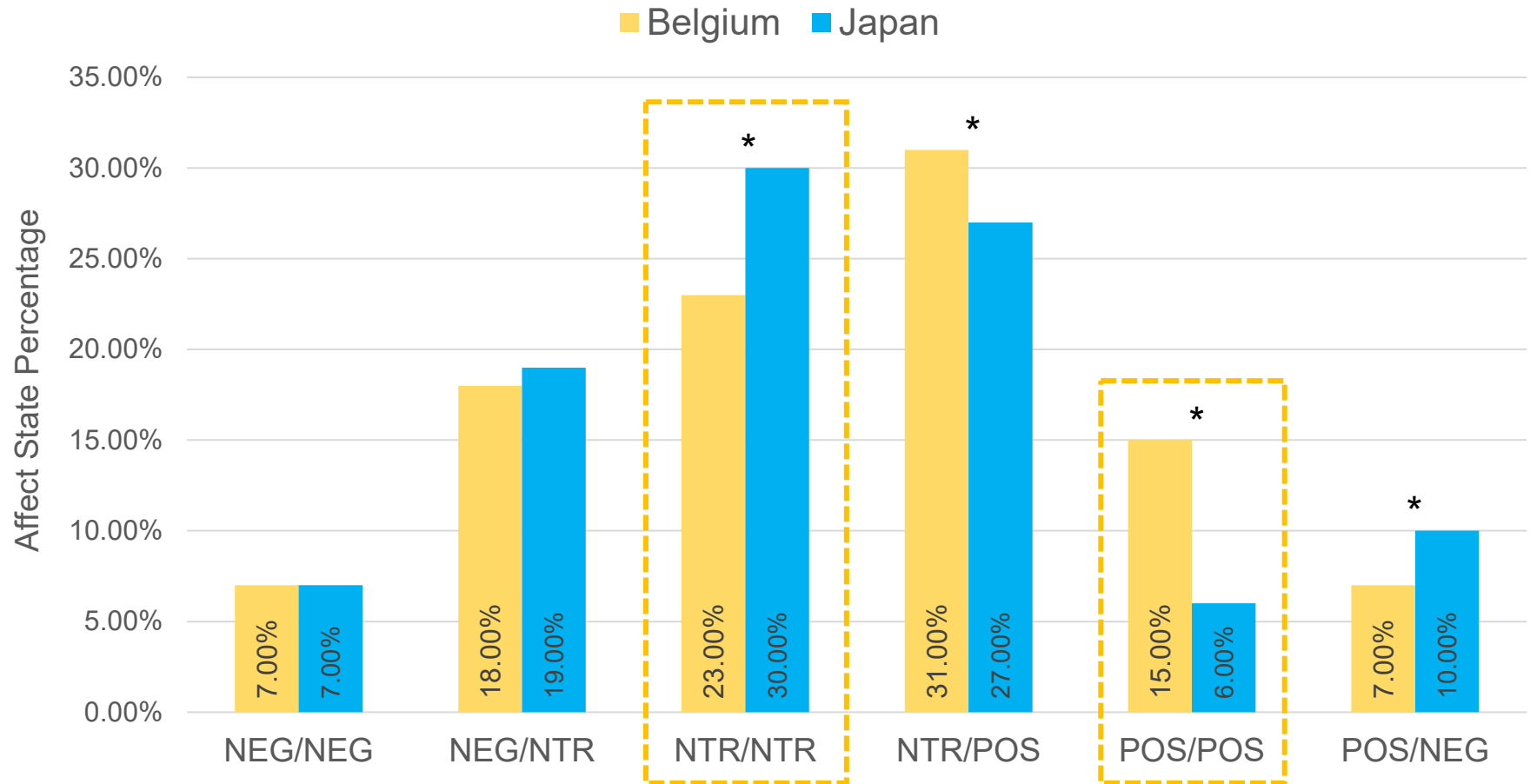


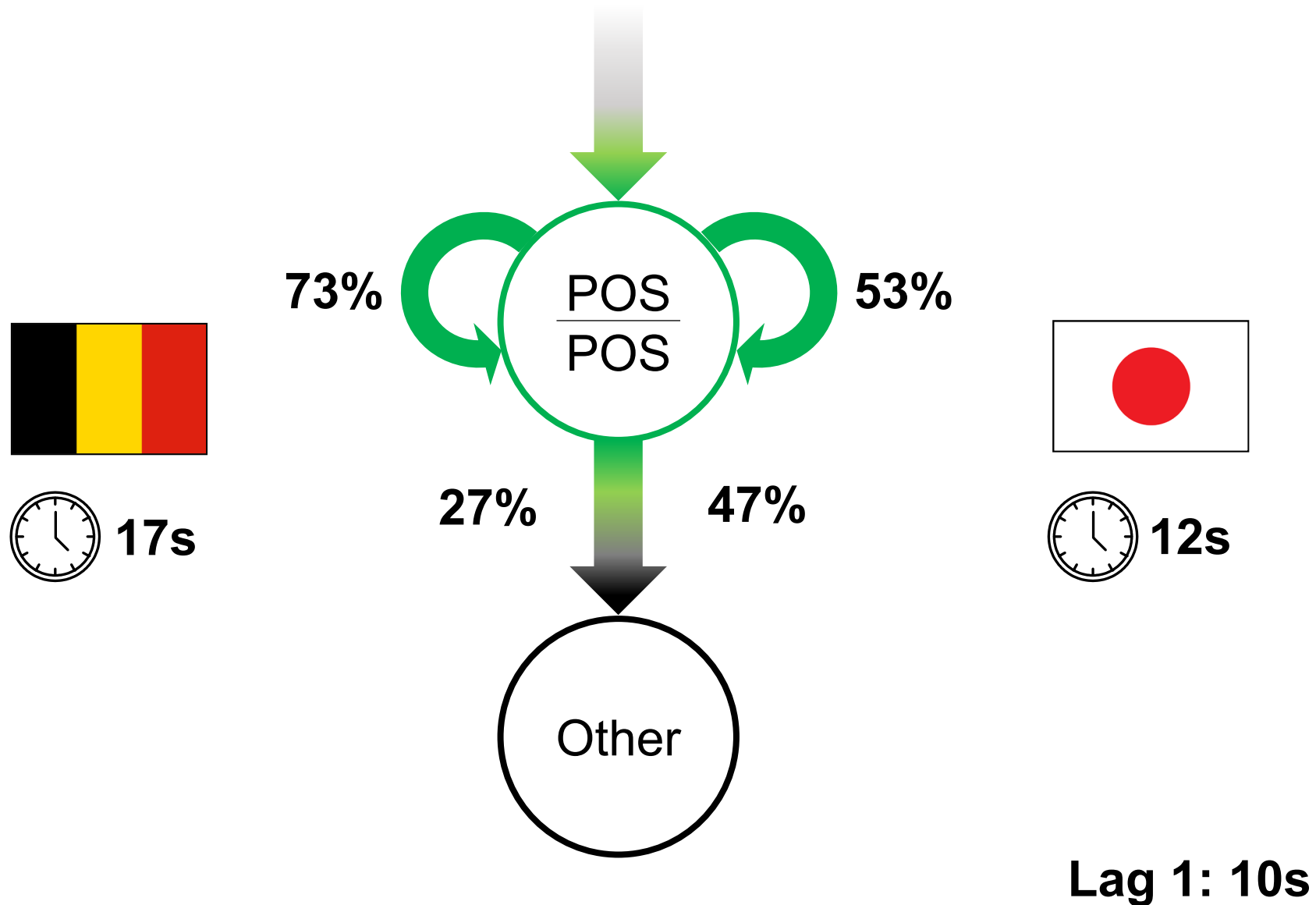


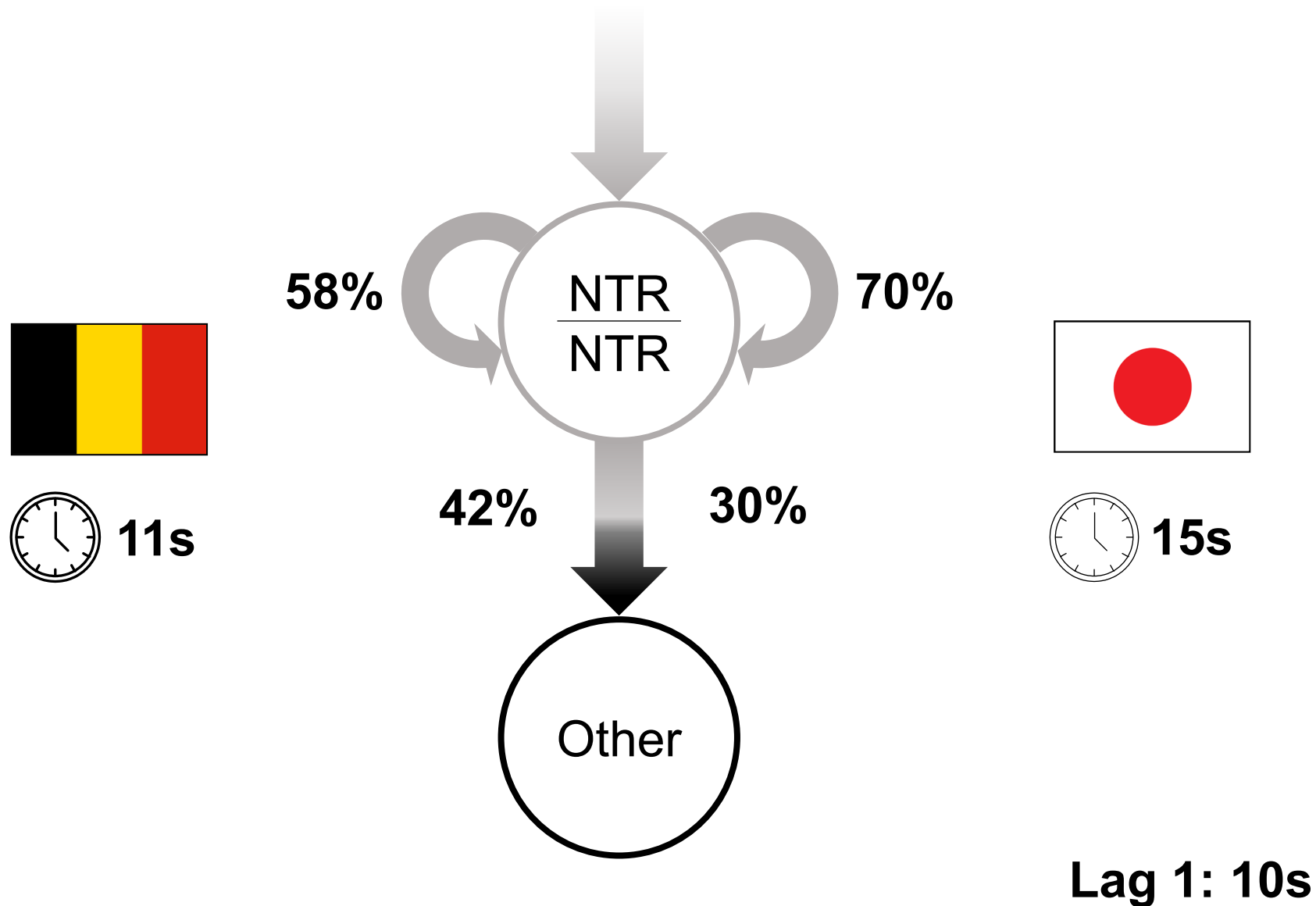
Emotions and Relationships in Belgium and Japan



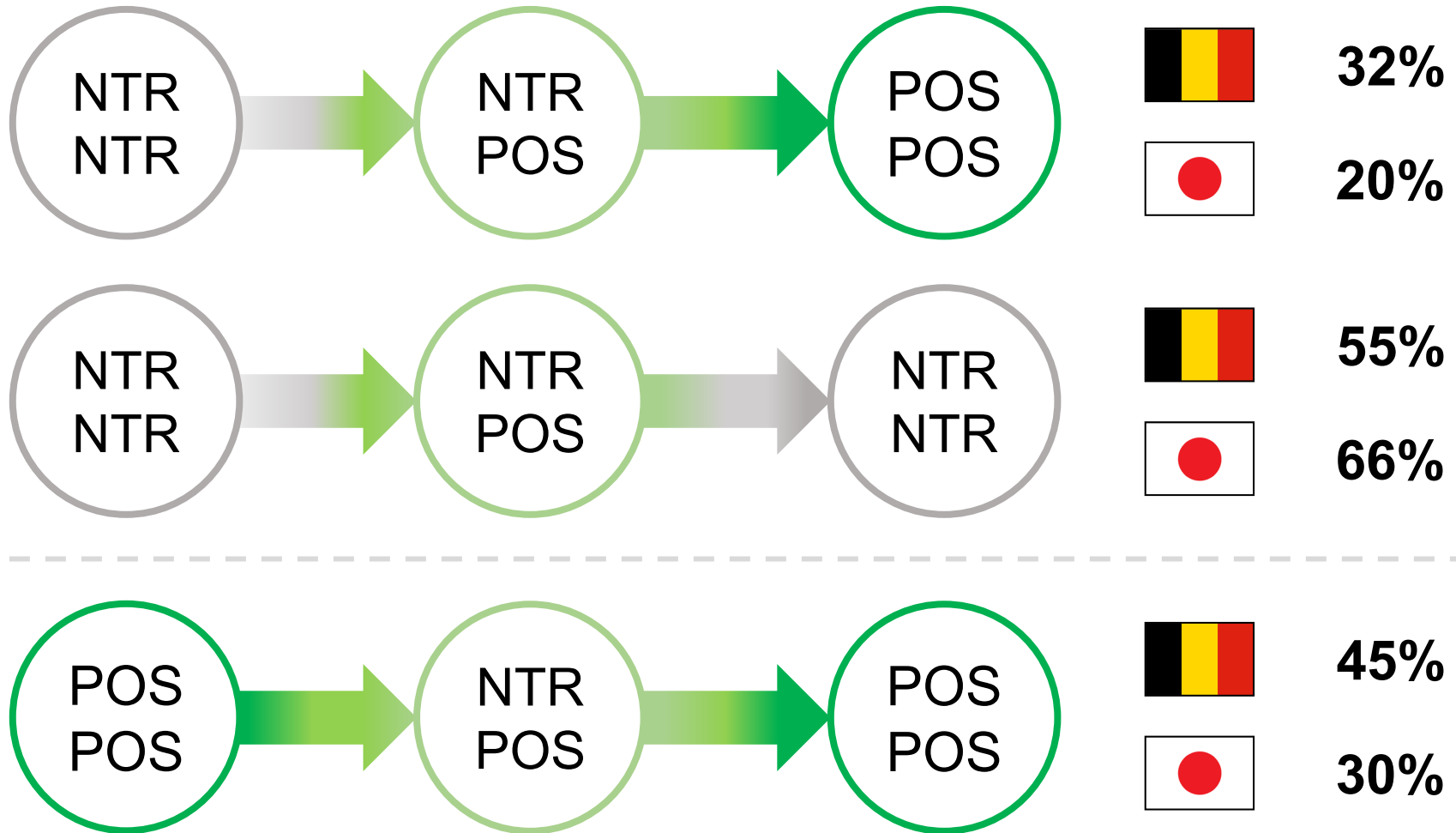
Emotions and Relationships in Belgium and Japan







Emotions and Relationships in Belgium and Japan



Lag 2: 20s

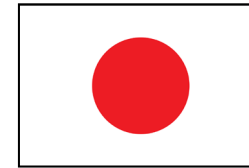
Relationship satisfaction



Less stability and transitions of negative affect states



More transitions into, and more stability of, shared positive affect

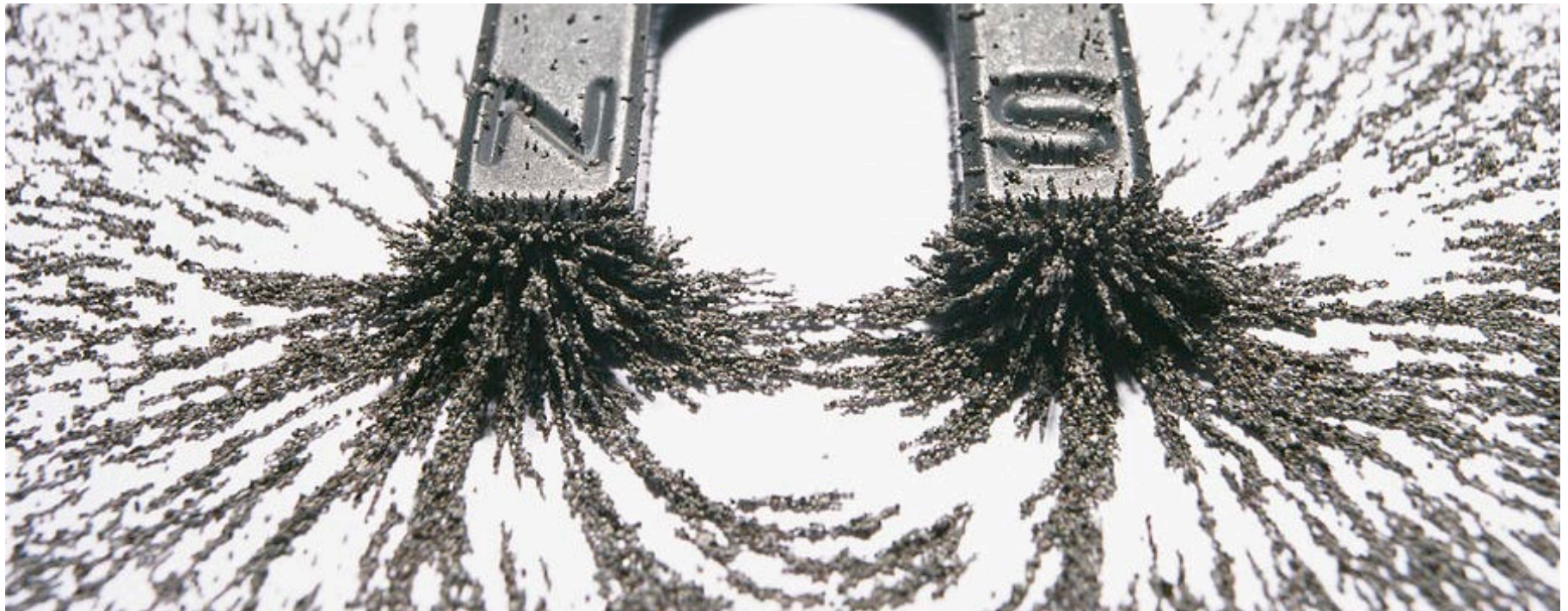


Less stability and transitions of negative affect states



More transitions out of negative affect into shared neutral affect

Study 3: Cultural Differences in Attractor States



Emotions and Relationships in Belgium and Japan



Below the video is a list of feelings and thoughts that you may have experienced while you were talking with your partner. You can indicate how much you remember experiencing each feeling and thought by clicking a number between 0 (did not experience it at all) and 6 (did experience it extremely). Please answer spontaneously. There are no right or wrong answers. If you think an answer does not apply, select "not at all".

| During the part of the conversation that I just saw, I remember feeling... | Not at all Somewhat Very much | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| empathy for my partner | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| afraid of hurting my partner | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| resigned | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| hurt | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| guilty | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| annoyed | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| strong | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| calm | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

Discrete Emotions (30s)

"Indicate how much you remember experiencing each feeling and thought."

**During the interaction with my partner,
I remember feeling / thinking that...**

empathy for my partner

strong

calm

like my partner would indulge any of my
requests (amae)

resigned

hurt

aloof

annoyed

worried

afraid of hurting my partner

embarrassed

guilty

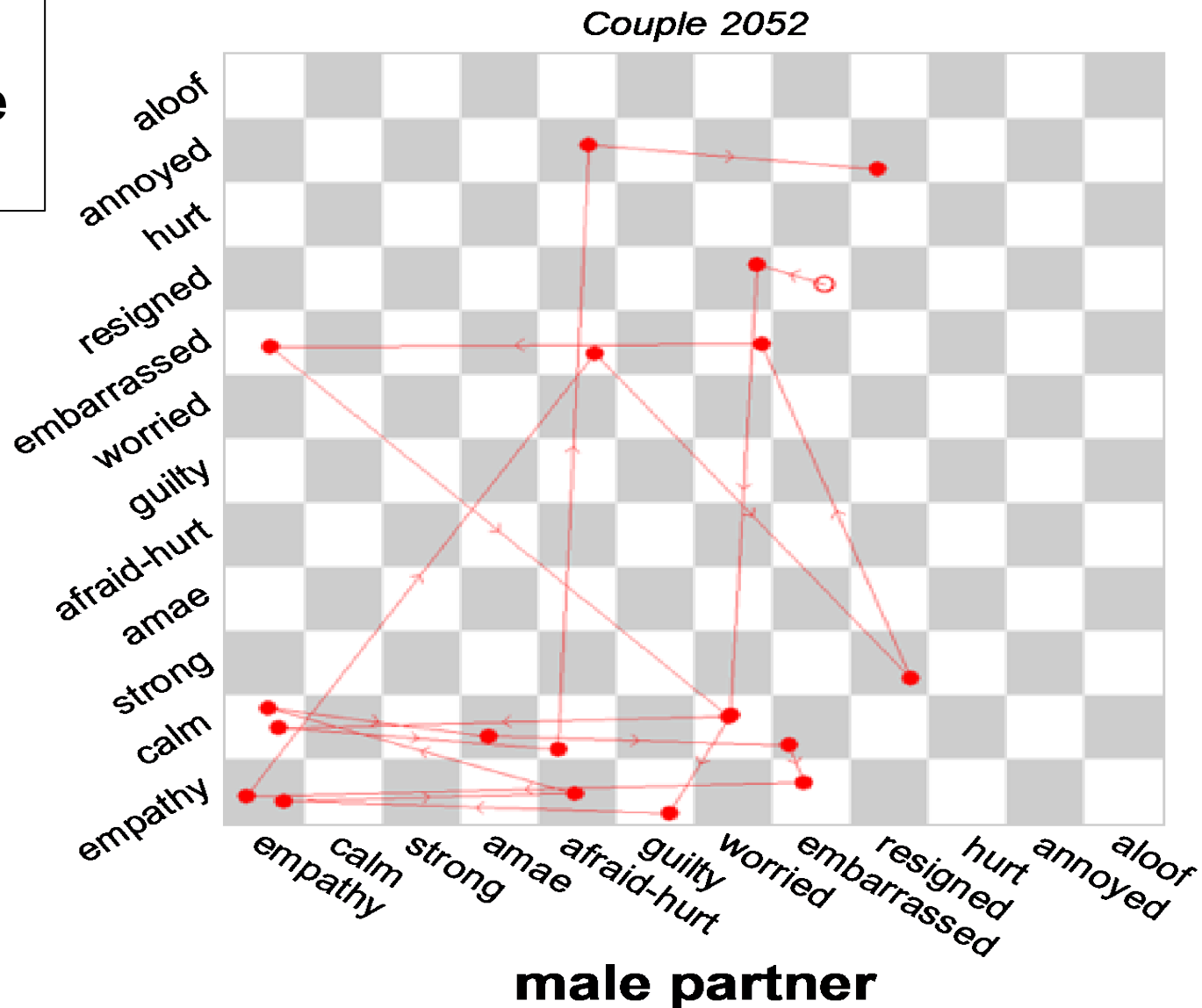
I wanted to make up with my partner

I wanted to hide my emotions

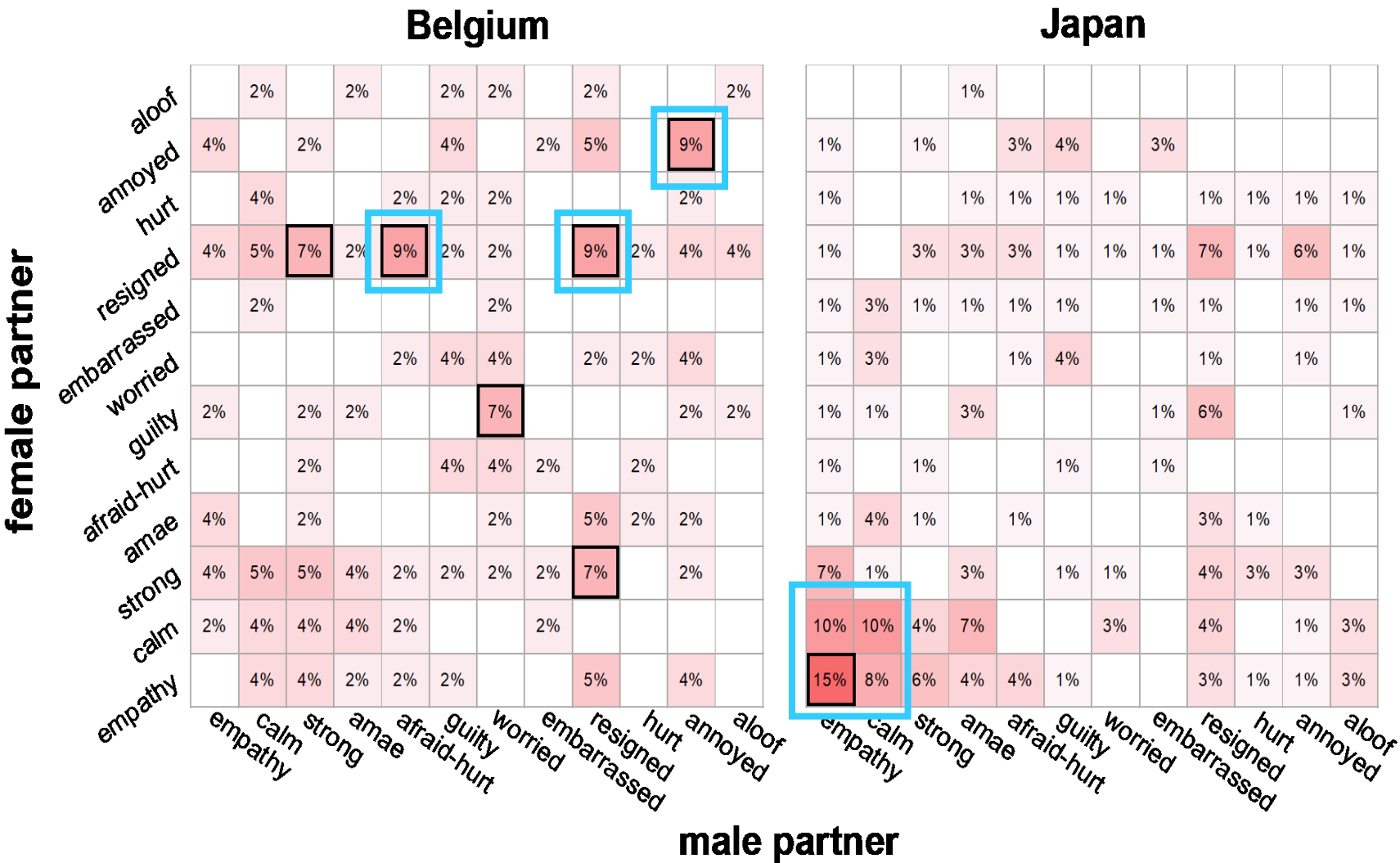
I wanted to change my partner's thoughts
and actions

State Space Grid

female partner



Emotions and Relationships in Belgium and Japan



Some other studies: What about behaviors and strategies during the interaction?



What emotions are expressed during interactions?

16

James A. Coan
John M. Gottman

The Specific Affect Coding System (SPAFF)

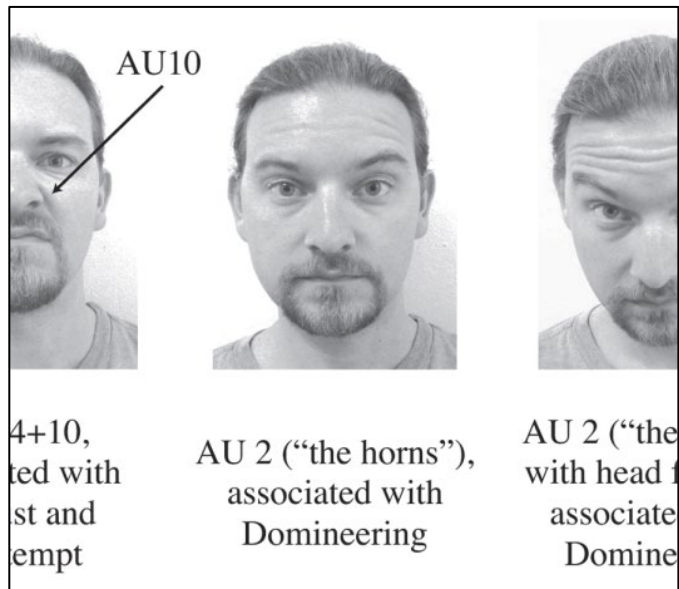
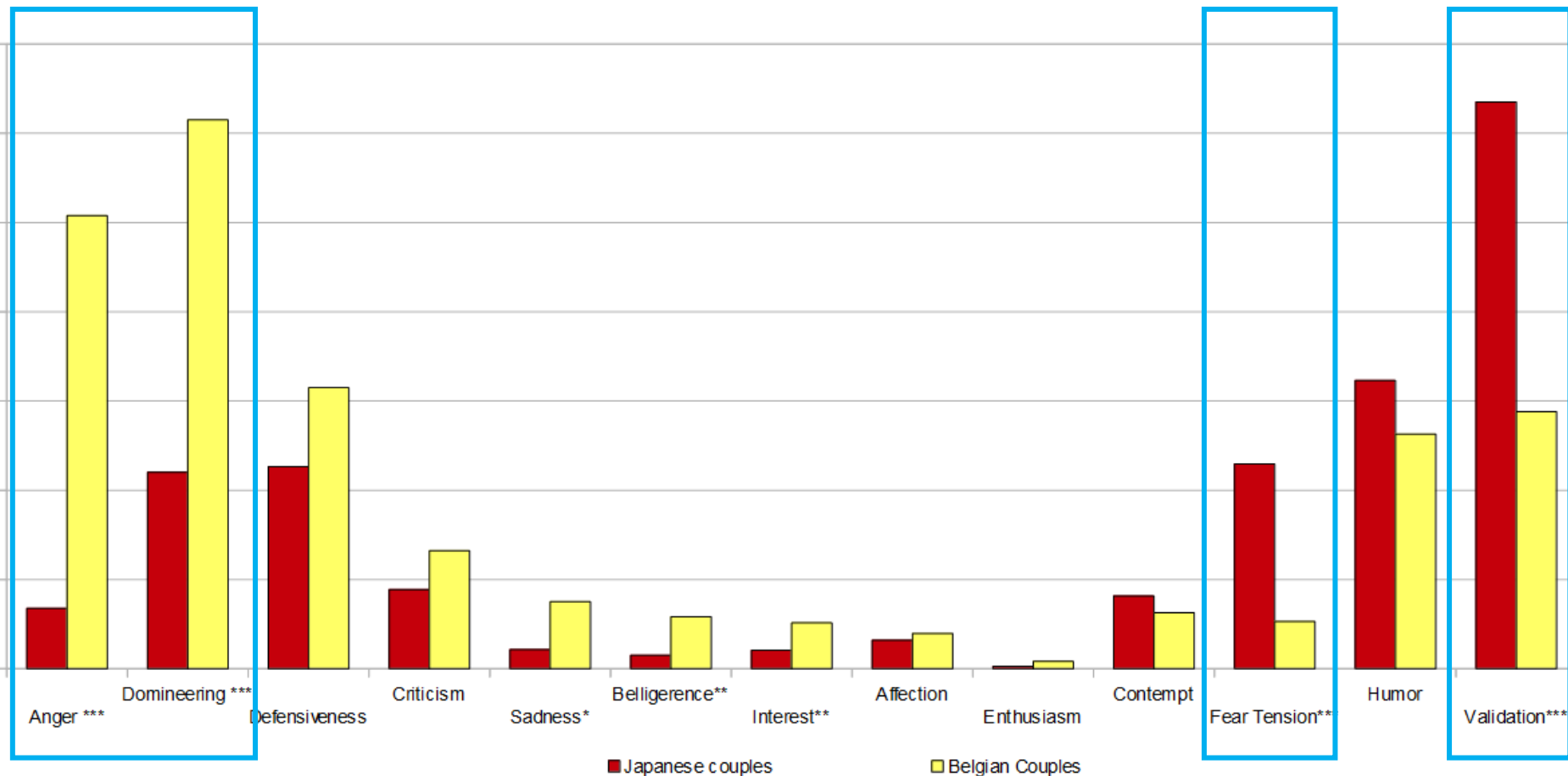


Table 16.1

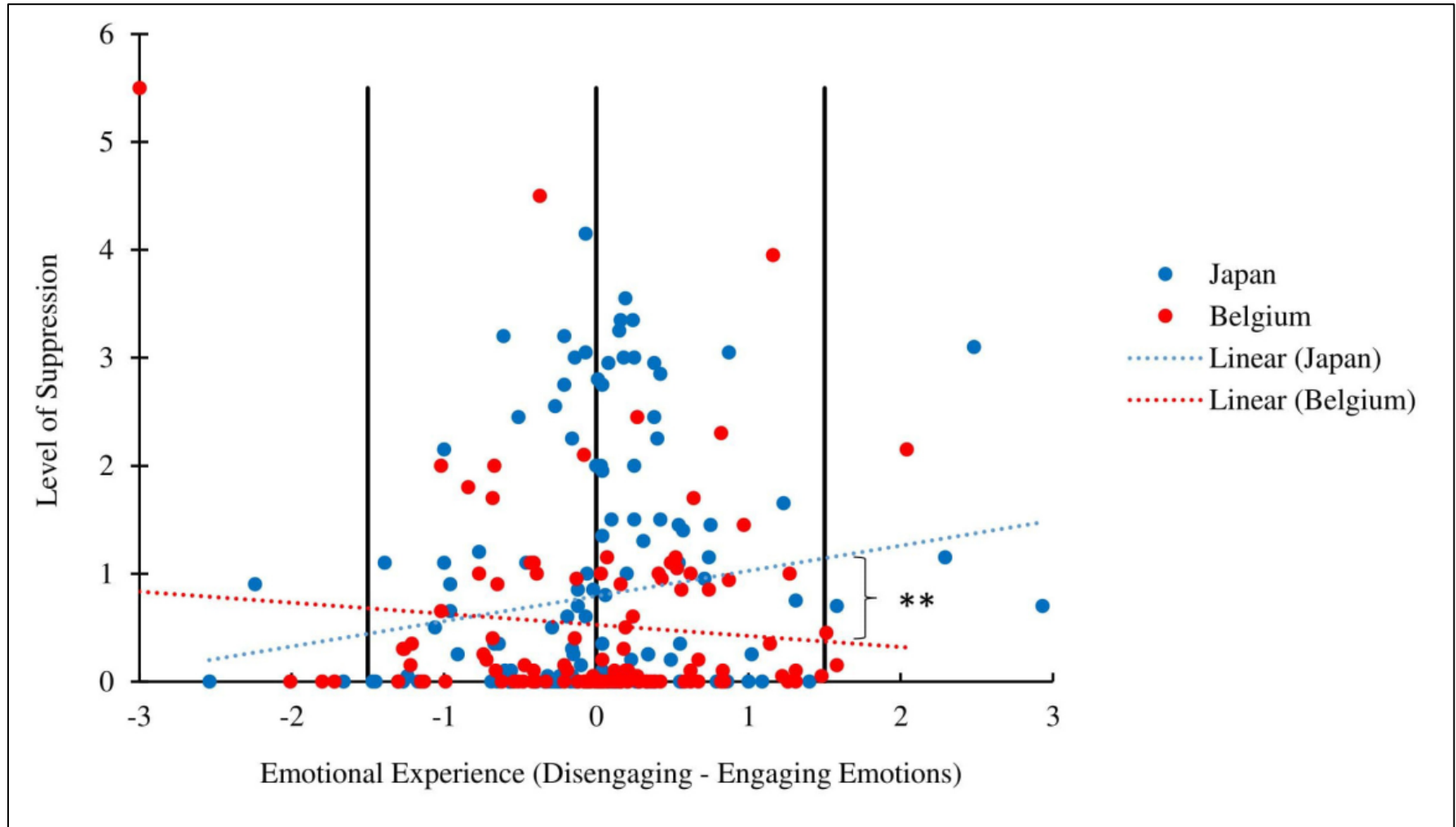
Current Codes of the SPAFF

| <i>Positive Affects</i> | <i>Negative Affects</i> |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Affection | Anger |
| Enthusiasm | Belligerence |
| Humor | Contempt |
| Interest | Criticism |
| Validation | Defensiveness |
| | Disgust |
| | Domineering |
| | Fear / Tension |
| | Sadness |
| | Stonewalling |
| | Threats |
| | Whining |
| Neutral | |

What emotions are expressed during interactions?



Japanese suppress more, but also selectively



1

Relationships show emotions that fit cultural relationship practices.

2

These differences emerge partly between partners and over time.

3

Having more fitting emotions is related to better relationships.

Thank you for your attention!

Collaborators



Michael Boiger,
UvA



Batja Mesquita,
KU Leuven



Yukiko Uchida,
Kyoto
University



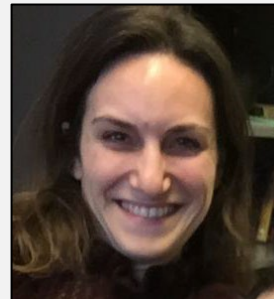
Peter Kuppens,
KU Leuven



Anna Schouten,
KU Leuven



Reiko Kawamura,
KU Leuven



Fulya Ozcanli,
KU Leuven