

Cultural Conditioning: Understanding Interpersonal Accommodation in India and the United States in Terms of the Modal Characteristics of Interpersonal Influence Situations

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We argue that differences between the landscapes of influence situations in Indian and American societies induce Indians to accommodate to others more often than Americans. To investigate cultural differences in situation-scapes, we sampled interpersonal influence situations occurring in India and the United States from both the influencee's (Study 1) and the influencer's (Study 2) perspectives. We found that Indian influence situations were dramatically more likely than U.S. situations to feature other-serving motives and to result in positive consequences for the relationship. Yet Study 3 found that targets of influence felt no less free to decide whether to accommodate in India than the United States, but felt more concerned about the influencer. To investigate the effects of situation-scapes on people's expectations and decisions, we exposed Indian and American participants to descriptions of situations from both societies (with their origins obscured). Study 4 found that both groups of participants expected more positive consequences from accommodation in Indian situations than in American situations. Finally, Study 5 found that both groups decided to accommodate more often in Indian situations than in American situations. At the same time, Indian participants were more likely than Americans to accommodate across all situations, but both groups converged over 100 trials as they were exposed to more and more situations drawn from each other's cultures. We interpret these effects in terms of the default decisions or biases conditioned by people's recently encountered situations.

Keywords: culture, conditioning, influence, adjustment, accommodation

Suppose Lisa in San Francisco, California, and Samira in Bangalore, India, are deciding whether to take a statistics course. Their friends Emma and Ayesha are trying to convince them to enroll in the course; Samira heeds Ayesha's advice and takes the course,

while Lisa resists Emma's influence and takes a different course. What might be of the root of these diverging decisions: Lisa and Samira's personal policies or default strategies for responding to influence attempts? Features of their respective interactions with Emma and Ayesha? Their recent experiences in other influence situations? Or some dynamic combining personal dispositions, situational characteristics, and past experiences?

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Theories of societal or cultural differences in behavior can focus on internal personality traits or external social structures. Structural determinism is exemplified by Marx's (1894/1972) proposed contingency between capitalist social structures and workers' alienation and by Durkheim's (1897/1951) link between social integration and suicide. The pendulum swung toward personality determinism in the mid-20th century, with anthropologists suggesting that social and political tendencies reflect modal personality types (e.g., Benedict, 1934/1946; DuBois, 1944/1961; Inkeles & Levinson, 1954) and, more recently, cross-cultural psychologists positing that patterns of social behavior reflect culturally varying traits, value orientations, self-conceptions, and other subjective cognitive structures (Hofstede, 1980; Triandis, 1989, 1996).

While the emphasis on personal characteristics has yielded important insights, cultural theorists increasingly seek explanations of behavioral tendencies that reference broader social structural variables, such as gross domestic product, democratization,

and population density (Cohen, 2001; Henrich et al., 2004; Schwartz, 2006), as well as microstructure variables, such as the typical size and density of the social networks in which people are embedded in different societies (Chua, Morris, & Ingram, 2009; Hsee & Weber, 1999; Morris, Podolny, & Ariel, 2000; Morris, Podolny, & Sullivan, 2008; Weber & Hsee, 1998).

Interpersonal Situations and Psychological Tendencies

In a recent research program investigating the link between microlevel structures and the psychological tendencies that differ across cultures, Kitayama, Markus, Matsumoto, and Norasakkunkit (1997) studied the link between social situations and self-esteem. In an analogy to J. J. Gibson's (1979) concept of affordances as the action possibilities promoted by characteristics of the physical environment, Kitayama and colleagues suggested that societal environments differ in their *cultural affordances*, the psychological and behavioral patterns they evoke and perpetuate (see also Kitayama, 2002; Kitayama, Duffy, & Uchida, 2007; Markus & Kitayama, 1991, 2003).

Researchers have explored various ways of sampling typical situations occurring in the United States and Japan to understand psychological differences such as self-enhancement versus self-criticism (Kitayama et al., 1997), primary versus secondary control (Morling, Kitayama, & Miyamoto, 2002), and analytic versus holistic attention (Miyamoto, Nisbett, & Masuda, 2006).¹ Kitayama et al. (1997) found two kinds of effects in support of their analysis of situations as carriers of cultural patterns. Specifically, they found that typical situations from the United States, compared to typical situations from Japan, are more likely to induce feelings of self-enhancement in participants from both countries. Furthermore, perhaps because of experiencing such situations repeatedly over their lifetime, American participants are more likely than Japanese participants to self-enhance in response to any given situation. In short, situations affect behavior directly by eliciting a particular response in the moment, and also affect behavior indirectly by shaping people's response bias or default over an extended period of time.

The notion of cultural affordances, however, encompasses several distinct mechanisms through which differing situations can produce different patterns of behaviors. Much research has found that people are more likely to enact culturally conventional or traditional responses in situations that prime constructs and schemas associated with the culture (e.g., individualistic values, holistic thinking; Hong, Morris, Chiu, & Benet-Martinez, 2000; Leung, Maddux, Galinsky, & Chiu, 2008; Trafimow, Triandis, & Goto, 1991). For example, given that the first-person pronoun I is often dropped in Japanese but voiced in English (Kashima & Kashima, 1998), U.S. social situations are more likely than Japanese situations to contain this prime to individualistic values.

Whereas priming operates automatically, situations also can affect people through the deliberate thought processes they evoke, such as through people's conscious efforts to avoid social sanctioning. For example, if Japanese social structures, compared to American social structures, make it hard to replace lost relationships, then selfish decisions in Japanese social situations carry a larger risk of painful sanctions. Yamagishi and colleagues (e.g., Yamagishi, Hashimoto, & Schug, 2008) found that some decision-making tendencies attributed to Japanese individuals' interdepen-

dent self-concepts or values (e.g., aversion to unique items in choice sets; Kim & Markus, 1999) primarily arise in situations where participants assume that they are being monitored by others and thus are at risk of receiving social sanctions for deviating from societal norms.

Another mechanism through which different situation-scapes might produce different behavioral tendencies is reinforcement or conditioning (Bargh & Ferguson, 2000; Triandis, 1985). Conditioning refers to the increase in frequency of a response in a given environment as a result of the reinforcements or rewards following the response (Rescorla & Wagner, 1972). If the modal features of a particular class of situations differ between the United States and Japan, then residents of these societies may be conditioned differently. That is, if different strategies work best in different situation structures, then even without any sanctioning or fear of sanctioning, people would form different associations between particular decision strategies and positive outcomes based upon their experiences. Encountering a new situation, Americans and Japanese may bring different preconceptions, expectations, and defaults to the situation as a result of their cultural conditioning and consequently make different decisions. This reinforcement account not only explains Kitayama et al.'s (1997) direct and indirect effects of Japanese versus U.S. situations but also yields novel and distinctive predictions: If the psychological tendencies that differ across cultures are association strengths computed from past experiences, then people should update these associations as they encounter new kinds of situations, such as those from a different culture. Conditioning can occur through first-hand experience of situations as well as through observing others' decisions and simulating the consequences of one's decisions in different situations (Bandura, 1977).

Interpersonal Accommodation

The psychological tendency of focal interest in the present research is accommodation in interpersonal influence situations. While many classes of interpersonal situations can be distinguished (Kelley et al., 2003), for our purposes, an influence situation occurs when a person facing a decision is encouraged by another person to choose an option that is different from the one the decision maker originally favored. We propose that since countries differ in their social structures and their ethical traditions, their members experience different influence situations. If the influence situations that people typically encounter have different features that reward accommodation to varying extents, then members of different societies will be conditioned differently to accommodate to influence attempts. When encountering a new and ambiguous influence situation, people would thus have different expectations and make different decisions.

Much prior work has found that people from different cultures differ in their tendency to make accommodative decisions. Accommodation has been studied extensively in research on conflict-management styles (Pruitt & Rubin, 1986; Thomas & Kilmann,

¹ In within-culture analyses, Weisbuch and Ambady (2009) and Weisbuch, Pauker, and Ambady (2010) used a similar sociocultural methodology to demonstrate the role of nonverbal behaviors depicted on television shows in perpetuating bias against overweight women and African Americans, respectively.

1974), and several robust cultural differences have emerged from studies with matched samples of students and managers in different countries. For example, compared with Americans, East Asians are more likely to handle disagreements through avoidant approaches, which preserve harmony by not discussing contrasting wishes (Ohbuchi & Takahashi, 1994; Trubisky, Ting-Toomey, & Lin, 1991).

Evidence about Indians' distinctive style of handling conflict suggests that they do not share East Asians' penchant for avoidance. However, they differ from Americans on another dimension—whether they decide to compete with or accommodate to the other's wishes. A comparison of matched samples of business-administration master's degree students found that while Chinese students stand out from both Americans and Indians in being more avoidant, Indians stand out from the other groups in being more accommodating (Morris et al., 1998). Further evidence for Indians' proclivity to accommodate comes from laboratory experiments finding that priming the expectations of salient others induces more accommodation among Indians than Americans (Savani, Morris, & Naidu, 2009). In the present research, we investigated differences in the structure of interpersonal influence situations in India versus the United States that may underlie cultural differences in the propensity to accommodate.

Our account holds that targets of influence attempts make decisions to accommodate based upon the expected rewards of accommodating in the current situation, which hinge on the discernable features of the current situation as well as on people's generalized expectations shaped by their past experiences in situations of this type. In judging whether the situation rewards accommodation versus resistance, a crucial factor is the influencer's motive (Batson & Shaw, 1991; Thampapillai, Ohlmer, & Tiong, 2005, 2009): Is the influencer's motive his or her own benefit (as when a car dealer presses a buyer to get the commission) or the influencee's benefit (as when a concerned parent persuades a teen to wear a bike helmet). We assert, somewhat obviously, that situations with self-serving influence motives do not reward accommodation as much as situations with other-serving influence motives.²

In addition to inducing accommodative responses, influence situations with other-serving motives should make the influencee more concerned about the influencer's feelings; they should also be more likely to produce positive outcomes and thus improve the relationship between the influencer and the influencee. Societies featuring predominantly other-serving influence situations should condition people to expect positive outcomes from accommodation and to favor accommodating as a default decision when uncertain about a situation. This conditioning should produce a stable tendency to accommodate in people who reside in the society, a pattern that may in turn perpetuate the practice of other-serving influence. While the accommodating tendency may look like a fixed personality trait, a characteristic or essence of the people, it can be a conditioned response to the situation-scape prevalent in the society. If, for some reason, people begin to encounter more self-serving influence situations that do not reward accommodation, then people's response tendency, we argue, will gradually become less accommodating.

Differences Between American and Indian Influence Situations

Previous research has suggested several reasons why the rate of other-serving motives in influence situations may be higher in India than the United States. First, the social structure of India gives rise to more pervasive interdependence. It starts with a population density that is much higher, even in cities—the population density of Mumbai, India, is 7 times that of New York City, New York, for example (Forstall, Greene, & Pick, 2004). A by-product of high density is that Indians are more likely to have the company of others while making decisions; an experience-sampling study found that while American and Japanese students were physically alone in over 50% of randomly sampled daytime situations, Indian students were alone in only 18% of the sampled situations (Oishi, Diener, Napa Scollon, & Biswas-Diener, 2004). With less affluence, there is less geographic and social mobility, so social interactions typically involve others with whom one has had past interaction and with whom one expects to interact in the future (Oishi, 2010); a recent social network survey found that students in India interact with their closest contacts much more frequently than do Americans (Savani & Morris, 2009). Purely in terms of game-theoretic equilibria, the greater expectation of future interactions and of mutual ties with the same third parties in India would make self-serving manipulation of others less likely and other-serving investment in relationships more likely to emerge as cultural norms (Cohen, 2001).

In addition to the structural differences between India and the United States, there is also evidence that ethical traditions in the two societies might produce cultural difference in the motives for influence. Indian ethical traditions emphasize particularistic responsibilities—duties to help the significant others in one's life—whereas American traditions emphasize universalistic rights and personal choice (J. G. Miller & Bersoff, 1992, 1994, 1998; J. G. Miller, Bersoff, & Harwood, 1990; Savani, Markus, & Conner, 2008; Savani, Markus, Naidu, Kumar, & Berlia, 2010). For example, J. G. Miller and Bersoff (1992) found that Indian students given moral dilemmas were more likely to choose helping a friend even at the cost of violating a more general standard of justice. Given the salience of interpersonal responsibility in Indian ethical traditions, Indian influence situations should frequently involve individuals who are actively trying to help other persons make the best decision for their own good.

On the basis of this analysis, we formulated the following testable hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Influence situations occurring in India will be more likely to feature other-serving motives, while those occurring in the United States will be more likely to feature self-serving motives.

Hypothesis 2: Influence situations in India will be more likely to result in strengthening of the relationship between the

² This is a fairly obvious generalization but not a categorical one. There are exceptions when a well-intended influencer misunderstands the influencee's interests or when the influencee's interests serendipitously match those of a self-serving influencer.

influencee and the influencer than influence situations in the United States.

Hypothesis 3: Compared with U.S. influence situations, Indian situations will be more likely to evoke (a) concerns for the influencer's feelings, (b) expectations that accommodation will be rewarding, and (c) decisions to accommodate.

Hypothesis 4: Because accommodative responses would be reinforced to a greater degree by the Indian social environment than by the American social environment, Indians should be more likely to adopt accommodation as a default decision.

Hypothesis 5: Because individuals are likely to update their default decisions in response to the reinforcements provided by recently experienced situations, exposure to situations from the other culture will gradually reduce the difference between Indian and American individuals' likelihood of accommodating.

Overview

In the present studies, we investigated the structure of interpersonal influence situations in India and the United States and tested hypotheses about the direct and indirect effects of these situations on people's decisions to accommodate. Study 1 sampled situations from the perspective of the influencee, asking participants to describe recent interpersonal interactions in which they were influenced by another person, specifying their relationship to the person, the person's apparent motive, and the consequences for the relationship. Study 2 sampled situations from the perspective of the influencer, probing their actual reasons and stated reasons for the influence attempt and the consequences for the relationship in their view. In these two investigations of how the Indian and American landscapes of influence situations differ, we tested the predictions that the rate of self-serving versus other-serving influence situations would be higher in the United States than in India (Hypothesis 1) and that accommodation would be more likely to strengthen relationships in India than in the United States (Hypothesis 2). Study 3 returned to surveying people about situations they experienced as influencees but asked different questions. This study checked whether there were difference between societies in the degree to which people felt free to choose whether to accommodate and tested the prediction that influencees would feel more concerned about influencers in India than the United States (Hypothesis 3a).

After these initial studies investigating how the American and Indian situation-scapes differ, the final studies tested three key predictions of our conditioning account. To test explicitly that the situation-scapes in India and the United States reward different responses to influence attempts, Study 4 presented Indian and American participants with a large set of descriptions of influence situations, half from the United States and half from India, with all obvious cues to their cultural origin removed. For each situation, participants' task was to imagine accommodating to the other person and to rate the expected consequences of accommodation. On the basis of the premise that Indian influence situations are more likely than American situations to have features that reward

accommodation, we predicted that participants from both countries would expect more positive returns to accommodating, on average, in the situations sourced from India as opposed to the United States (Hypothesis 3b).

Finally, Study 5 exposed participants to up to 100 influence situations to test the key predictions of the conditioning mechanism when applied to accommodation decisions. We tested whether Indian situations would be more likely to elicit accommodation than American situations (Hypothesis 3c), and we also tested whether Indian participants would be overall more likely to accommodate than American participants (Hypothesis 4), indicating different default decisions tuned to the situation-scapes of their respective societies. Finally, as participants were exposed to more and more situations from the other culture, we tested whether they would converge in their tendency to accommodate (Hypothesis 5). That is, if Indian and American situations condition different default decisions, then the effect of situation culture should remain stable over time, whereas the effect of participant culture should diminish over time with exposure to more and more situations (from the opposite culture) that challenge and change people's default decisions.

Study 1: Situations From the Influencee's Perspective

Our first study provided an initial test of the hypothesis that compared to situations from the United States, situations from India would be more likely to feature influencers with other-serving motives (Hypothesis 1) and to result in strengthening of the relationship following accommodation (Hypothesis 2). We sampled situations by asking Indian and American college students to describe recent situations in which another person had successfully influenced them, the other person's apparent reasons for doing so, and the consequences for the relationship. We then coded these descriptions for the key variables of whether the influencer's perceived motive was to benefit the influencee or the influencer and whether the influencee felt positively or negatively toward the influencer.

One concern with eliciting situations through self-report is that Indian and American participants might vary in their interpretation of the instructions. We took a number of measures to address this possibility. First, to avoid problems associated with translation, we selected Indian universities where English was the language of instruction so that we could conduct all studies in English, although it entailed a conservative test of our hypothesis. Second, we provided participants with detailed instructions to ensure that they had a clear idea of the types of situations we wanted them to recall and describe (see below).

Method

Participants. A total of 46 students (20 women, 18 men, eight unreported; mean age = 19.4 years) of various ethnicities at a university in northern California and 39 students (25 women, 12 men, two unreported; mean age = 19.9 years) at two universities in Mumbai, India, participated in the study.

Procedure. Participants were presented with a questionnaire and asked to describe recent situations in which they accommodated to another person's expectations when making a choice. The complete instructions are provided below:

In daily life, we encounter many situations in which we have to make a choice—to pick between several options. We make choices about how to enjoy, express, and develop ourselves. We do so at home, at school, when shopping, and when socializing.

Sometimes one of the “significant others” in our life (parents, friends, siblings, etc.) shares with us their expectations about a choice that we have to make, and their expectations differ from what we would prefer to choose. Such attempts to influence can be successful, as they can lead us to shift our choice towards what our significant other suggests.

Please think of situations like this, where someone’s attempt to influence you was successful because you accommodated to the other person’s suggestion and made a different choice than what you originally preferred. We are interested in situations where you had an initial preference and you *accommodated* to the other person’s suggestion, not situations where what the other person suggested was the same as your original preference.

Please recall situations that you actually experienced. It doesn’t have to be a big important choice—any occasion when you selected what to do from multiple options can be considered as a choice.

Participants were then provided space to describe up to five situations. For each situation, they were asked to specify the following: (a) What were the choice options available to you? (b) Which option did you prefer initially? (c) Who was the significant other who had an expectation? (d) What option did they want you to choose? (e) Why did this person want you to choose that particular option? (f) How did you respond to his or her attempts to influence your choice? Why? (g) How did you feel toward the significant other after you made your choice? As English was the language of instruction at both the Indian colleges, the questionnaire was administered in English in both countries. Below are two sample situations provided by two of our participants (edited for grammar and readability):

Sample Indian situation: I was at college and had to decide whether to participate in a technical competition or not. Initially I had no plan to participate but my friend insisted that I should at least send an abstract because the prize for winning the competition was very attractive. I accepted his opinion because there was not much work involved and felt very grateful towards him.

Sample American situation: I wanted to stay in and relax but my friend wanted me to go to a party because a guy she liked was going to the party and she wanted me to be the wing-woman. I caved and went out because I considered it the right thing to do as a good friend. I felt a little annoyed but not much different overall.

Coding procedure. Two trained research assistants, one European American and one African American, coded the situations provided by participants. Given that many situations included culture-specific references, the coders were not entirely blind to the culture of the situations. The goal of the coding procedure was to code the first valid situation from each participant. Coders first coded the situations for their validity: A situation was considered valid if the option that the influencer wanted the influencee to choose differed from the option that the influencee preferred initially (based upon participants’ responses to Questions b and d above). If a participant’s first situation was determined to be invalid, then the research assistants coded the second situation, and so on. The two research assistants also coded the nature of the relationship between the influencer and the influencee (response to

Question c), the person whom the influencer was trying to benefit (response to Question e), and the consequence of the situation for the relationship (response to Question g). Agreement ranged from 89% for the second question to 100% for the first and third questions. Disagreements were resolved by discussion.

Results

On average, Indian participants described 2.0 situations, and American participants described 3.2 situations. It is possible that American participants accommodate more often or had better memory for accommodation situations than Indian participants, but this difference could be due to a number of nonsubstantive reasons, such as participants’ subjective sense of how many situations are sufficient before they can leave the experiment.

We first coded for the relationship between the influencee and the influencer based upon participants’ responses to the question, “Who was the significant other who had an expectation?” Friends were far more likely to be the influencers in situations from the United States (United States = 67%, India = 38%), whereas parents and elder family members (e.g., uncles, aunts, and grandparents) were more likely to be the influencers in situations from India (United States = 28%, India = 54%); siblings, dating partners, and others were the influencers in the remaining situations (United States = 5%, India = 8%). The greater frequency of parents and family as influencers in this Indian sample most likely reflects different residential patterns: Indian students and young adults are much more likely than their American counterparts to continue living with their parents while studying and working in their hometown.

The influencer’s motives. To assess the influencer’s motive, the coders classified participants’ responses to the question, “Why did this person want you to choose that particular option?”, under one of three categories: for the influencer’s own benefit, for the influencee’s benefit, and for both the influencer’s and the influencee’s benefit. A two-way chi-square test of independence revealed that the perceived beneficiary of the influence attempt differed by cultural context, $\chi^2(2, N = 85) = 12.58, p = .002$. Self-serving influence was about twice as frequent in the United States (59%) as in India (28%; see Figure 1).

To test whether cultural differences in the perceived beneficiary of the influence attempt were similar across the two major types of influencers, friends versus family members, we conducted separate chi-square tests of independence for situations from India and the

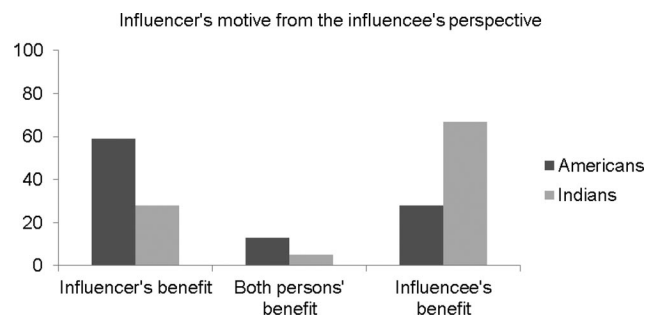


Figure 1. Influencer’s motive from the influencee’s perspective: percentage of situations in Study 1 coded under the respective categories.

United States, comparing the perceived beneficiary across the two types of significant others. We did not find a significant difference in self-serving versus other-serving motives across the two types of influencers in Indian situations, $\chi^2(2, N = 39) = 1.34, p > .51$, indicating that Indian family members and Indian friends were highly and similarly likely to be perceived as having the influencee's benefit in mind (74% vs. 56%). In contrast, there was a significant effect for situations from the United States, $\chi^2(2, N = 46) = 10.73, p = .005$; while the likelihood of American family members being perceived as having other-serving motives (61%) approached the Indian levels, the rate of American friends being perceived as other-serving (15%) was only a fourth as much. Stated differently, the rate of other-serving influence from friends was over 3 times higher in India than in the United States.

Consequences for the relationship. The coders also classified participants' responses to the question, "How did you feel toward the significant other after you made your choice?", under three categories: influencee felt closer toward influencer, influencee felt the same toward influencer, and influencee felt further away from the influencer. A two-way chi-square test of independence revealed that the influencee's feelings toward the influencer differed by cultural context, $\chi^2(2, N = 77) = 6.14, p < .05$.³ As shown in Figure 2, influencees in situations from the United States were distributed evenly between feeling closer (39%), the same, or more distant from the influencer, as revealed by a chi-square test of equality of proportions, $\chi^2(2, N = 44) = 2.17, p > .30$. However, a large majority of Indian influencees (64%) felt that the situation made them feel closer to the influencer, $\chi^2(2, N = 33) = 14.36, p = .001$. These results suggest that interpersonal influence is more likely to have positive consequences for the relationship in Indian contexts than in American contexts. Participants' feelings toward the significant other did not differ by friends versus family for either Indian participants, $\chi^2(2, N = 33) = 4.30, p > .16$, or for American participants, $\chi^2(2, N = 44) = 1.23, p > .53$.

Test of mediation. We next tested whether cultural differences in the influencer's motives mediate cultural differences in the consequences for the relationship. To obtain a binary variable coding for the relationship, we combined situations coded under the categories influencee felt the same toward influencer and influencee felt further away from the influence. The resulting relationship variable was coded 1 if the influencee felt closer toward the influencer and 0 if the influencee felt no different or less close. A binary logistic regression confirmed that the influence

interaction was more likely to have positive consequences in India than in the United States ($\beta = 1.02$, odds ratio = 2.77, $z = 2.15, p = .03$). When we added the variable coding for the influencer's motive in the regression (with other-serving motives = 1, both other-serving and self-serving motives = 0, and self-serving motives = -1), the effect of culture became nonsignificant ($\beta = 0.49$, odds ratio = 1.63, $z = 0.91, p > .36$), while the influencer's motive was significant ($\beta = 1.07$, odds ratio = 2.32, $z = 2.91, p < .001$), thus demonstrating mediation.

Discussion

Study 1 reveals that typical influence situations in India versus the United States dramatically differ in their features and consequences. The influence situations that Indian students encounter are much more likely to feature parents and other familial figures. While family influencers are predominantly other-serving in both societies, nonfamily influencers starkly differ in this respect; over half in India are other-serving, while less than a sixth are so in the United States. In India, the modal situation involves an other-serving influencer, whereas in the United States, the modal situation involves a self-serving influencer.

U.S. and Indian influence situations also differed in their consequences for the relationship—accommodating to influence was associated with more positive feelings in India. Mediation analysis suggests that cultural differences in motives driving influence attempts account for cultural differences in the consequences. That said, participants' response to the question about the influencer's motive might have influenced their subsequent judgment about the relationship and thus exaggerated cultural differences in the consequences for the relationship. Furthermore, these features and consequences were elicited from the perspective of the influencee, and it is important to check whether influencers see the consequences in the same way. Influencees are likely to be quite sensitive (and perhaps unforgiving) about influencers who act from self-serving motives, while influencers may not realize that their self-serving motives affect the downstream consequences of influence.

While Study 1 focused on situations in which the influencee did accommodate to the other person, there are also influence attempts that are unsuccessful. This restricted sample could distort our picture of Indian and American situation-scapes. Suppose, for example, that Indians primarily accommodate when the person has their own benefit in mind, whereas Americans accommodate even when the other person does not have their benefit in mind. Such a pattern could produce the above results without necessarily involving a cultural difference in the modal features of influence situations. Our second study explored this possibility by adjusting the sampling method.

Study 2: Situations From the Influencer's Perspective

While Study 1 surveyed American and Indian participants about situations that they experienced as influencees, Study 2 sampled situations that people experienced as influencers. Also, Study 2 did

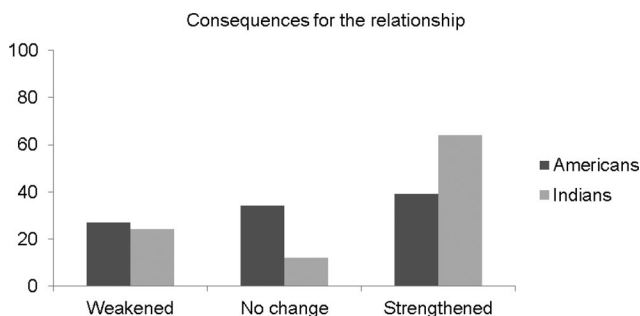


Figure 2. Consequences for the relationship from the influencee's perspective: percentage of situations in Study 1 coded under the respective categories.

³ Eight participants did not respond to the question about how they felt toward the significant other after accommodating.

not limit the sample to successful influence attempts. That is, we asked participants to describe the most recent situations in which they attempted to influence someone irrespective of whether the attempt was successful. Participants were queried about both their actual reason and their stated reason for the influence attempt, to assess how each of these align with influencees' perceptions of the influencers' motive. Finally, instead of measuring the consequences of the incident by assessing changes in the influencee's feelings, we explicitly asked participants about how the described situation affected their relationship. We predicted again that situations from India would be more likely to feature other-serving motives (Hypothesis 1) and to strengthen the relationship (Hypothesis 2) than situations from the United States.

Method

Participants. A total of 98 students at a university in northern California (60 women; mean age = 19.0 years) and 79 students from a university in Jalandhar, India (37 women; mean age = 21.8 years), participated in the study.

Procedure. Participants were presented with instructions asking them to recall the two most recent situations in which they tried to influence someone else, irrespective of whether their attempt to influence was successful. All participants complied with the instructions and described two situations. The complete instructions are provided below:

In daily life, we often try to influence other people's choices or decisions for various reasons. Some of their decisions that we try to influence might be quite minor, while other decisions might be more important. Sometimes the other person acts according to our wishes, other times they don't.

In this study, we want you think of the *two most recent incidents* in which you *tried to influence another person's decision*, irrespective of whether your attempt to influence was successful or not.

DO NOT describe incidents in which you were simply giving advice without trying to influence the other person or in which you suggested the person to do what they were already planning to do. So please think of incidents in which you tried to *actively convince the other person to make a decision that was different from their original preference*.

For each of the two situations, participants were asked the following questions: (a) Who was the other person you were trying to influence? (b) What were the options that the other person was deciding between? (c) Which option did they originally prefer? (d) Which option were you trying to influence them to choose? (e) What was the actual reason why you were trying to influence them? (f) What did you say was the reason why you were trying to influence them? (g) What did the other person end up deciding? (h) Was the other person influenced by you at all? If yes, in what way? (i) How did his or her decision affect your relationship?

Below are two sample situations generated by two of our participants (edited for grammar and readability):

Sample Indian situation: My friend was going to buy a motorbike but was confused between two models. He initially preferred the more expensive bike but I was trying to influence him to purchase the better mileage, less expensive bike because he is my true friend and I want to make sure that he does not buy a motorbike that has fewer features

and more price. I also want to save his money. He decided to purchase the bike that I suggested.

Sample American situation: I was with my little brother, who was deciding between leaving his girlfriend or staying with her. He wanted to stay with her but was undecided. I was trying to influence him to leave her because she makes him feel guilty about paying attention to his own emotions over hers. So I said that she was not good for him because she is constantly asking for full attention in the relationship. He told me that he would leave her but it sounds like he wants to still stay with her.

Coding procedure. A trained research assistant of Indian background who grew up in Venezuela and the United States coded the situations. Given that many situations included culture-specific references, the coder was not entirely blind to the culture of the situations. Situations were considered invalid if the option that the influencee originally preferred and the option that the influencer was trying to convince the influencee to choose were the same. If a participant's first situation was invalid, the coder proceeded to the second situation. The coder classified the influencer's actual reason (response to Question e) and stated reason (response to Question f) under the same three categories as in Study 1, for the influencer's own benefit, for the influencee's benefit, and for both the influencer's and the influencee's benefit.⁴

The coder classified the influencer's responses to the relationship question (response to Question i) under the categories strengthened the relationship, weakened the relationship, and did not affect the relationship. The coder also coded whether the influencer claimed to have successfully influenced the influencee (response to Question h) and noted the nature of the relationship between the influencer and the influencee (response to Question a). A secondary coder of European American ethnicity who grew up in the United States coded our two key variables (the influencer's actual reason and consequences for the relationship) for 46% of the situations. The secondary coder agreed with the primary coder on 85% of the situations for the influencer's actual reason and on 84% of the situations for the consequences for the relationship, thus establishing adequate interrater reliability.

Results

Assessing the match of samples. In both cultural groups, the most common targets of influence were friends and roommates (United States = 69%, India = 66%), followed by parents (United States = 3%, India = 11%), siblings (United States = 5%, India = 11%), dating partners (United States = 12%, India = 3%), and others (United States = 11%, India = 9%). Therefore, the targets of influence were similar across both cultural groups.

Influencers' claims about the success of the influence attempt differed slightly across cultures, $\chi^2(1, N = 173) = 6.13, p < .02$, with 87% of Indian influencers and 71% of American influencers

⁴ In 2.3% of the situations, the influencer intended to benefit a third party whom the influencee did not have any apparent reason to help, so these were classified along with situations in which the influencer's motive was to benefit him- or herself. In 7.3% of the situations, the influencer intended to benefit a third party whom the influencee would also want to help, so these were classified along with situations in which the influencer's motive was to benefit the influencee.

claiming to have successfully influenced the influencee. While this difference suggests support for our hypothesis that Indian situations would be more likely to elicit accommodation from influencees than American situations (Hypothesis 3c), it is obviously the case that influencers are not as well positioned as influencees to know what influencees ultimately decided, so we tested Hypothesis 3c subsequently with data from influencees.

Influencer's motives. Our key hypotheses, to review, are that the modal influencers' motives and the modal consequences of the influence attempt for the relationship differ across cultures. Upon submitting the coded variable for influencer's actual reason to a two-way chi-square test of independence, we found a highly significant cultural difference, $\chi^2(2, N = 177) = 46.07, p < .001$. In 72% of the situations from the United States, influencers had their own benefit in mind when trying to influence another person, but in the situations from India, only 19% of influencers had their own benefit in mind, supporting Hypothesis 1 (see Figure 3). As from the influencee's perspective, the influencer's perspective suggests that Indian situations are much more likely than American situations to feature influencers driven by other-serving motives.

The difference in influencers' actual reasons is even more interesting in light of their stated reasons. Submitting the coded variable for the influencer's stated reason to a two-way chi-square test of independence, we did not find any cultural differences, $\chi^2(2, N = 171) = 3.21, p = .20$. In both cultures, the vast majority of influencers—70% of Americans and 81% of Indians—told the influencee that they had the influencee's benefit in mind, whereas nearly all of the remaining influencers said that they had both persons' benefit in mind (see Figure 4).

Putting together the results about actual and stated reasons, we can surmise that American influencers were more prone to using cover stories: They professed that they had the influencee's benefit in mind, but in fact, they did not. To test this deduction, we computed a dummy variable that equaled 1 if participants' actual reason and stated reason were coded under the same category and 0 otherwise. Submitting this variable to a chi-square analysis revealed that 14% of Indian participants but 69% of American participants stated a reason that differed substantively from their actual reason, $\chi^2(1, N = 171) = 51.60, p < .001$ (see Figure 5).

Consequences for the relationship. Our other primary hypothesis concerned differences in the consequences of influence for the relationship. Submitting the variable coding for the relationship to a two-way chi-square test of independence, we found a significant effect, $\chi^2(2, N = 174) = 33.49, p < .001$; 61% of

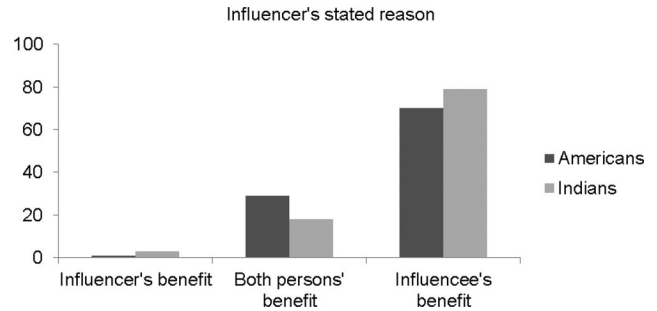


Figure 4. Influencer's stated motive from the influencer's perspective: percentage of situations in Study 2 coded under the respective categories.

Indians but only 18% of Americans said that the influence incident strengthened their relationship with the influencee, whereas the remaining participants indicated that it did not affect their relationship or worsened the relationship, supporting Hypothesis 2 (see Figure 6). Once again, the cultural difference from the influencer's perspective mirrored the cultural difference from the influencee's perspective.

Test of mediation. We again tested whether cultural differences in the influencer's motives mediated cultural differences in the consequences for the relationship. To obtain a binary dependent variable, we combined the category weakened the relationship with the category did not affect the relationship as in Study 1. A binary logistic regression confirmed that the interaction was more likely to have positive consequences in Indian situations than in American situations ($\beta = 1.98$, odds ratio = 7.24, $z = 5.50, p < .001$). When we added the variable coding for the influencer's motive in the regression (with other-serving motives = 1, both other-serving and self-serving motives = 0, and self-serving motives = -1), the effect of culture remained significant ($\beta = 1.77$, odds ratio = 5.87, $z = 4.23, p < .001$), while the influencer's motive was nonsignificant ($\beta = 0.20$, odds ratio = 1.22, $z = 0.88, p > .35$), thus failing to show mediation.

Discussion

Study 2 replicated the two clear differences between influence situations from India and the United States indicated by Study 1. First, sampling situations from the influencer's perspective, we found that Indian influencers tend to have the influencee's benefit

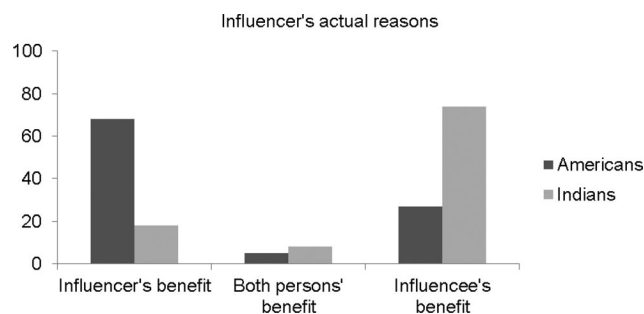


Figure 3. Influencer's actual motive from the influencer's perspective: percentage of situations in Study 2 coded under the respective categories.

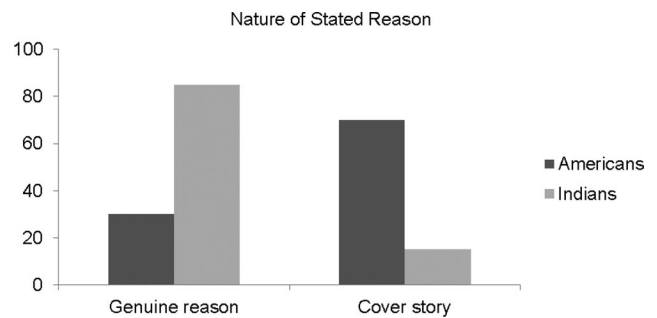


Figure 5. Nature of influencer's stated reason: percentage of situations in Study 2 coded under the respective categories.

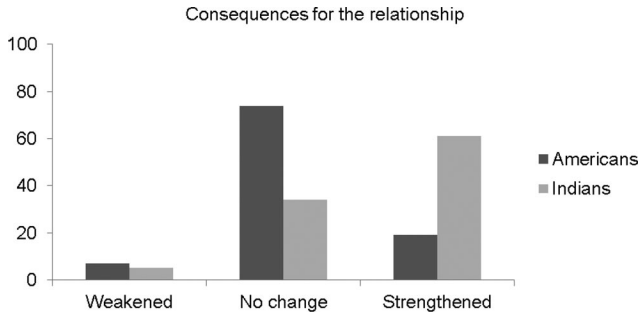


Figure 6. Consequences for the relationship from the influencer's perspective: percentage of situations in Study 2 coded under the respective categories.

in mind when trying to influence, while American influencers tend to act from self-serving motives, supporting Hypothesis 1. Again, the magnitude of the cultural difference is truly striking—the rate of self-serving motives is more than 3 times higher in the United States (72%) than in India (19%).

Second, Indian influence situations were more likely than American situations to strengthen the influencer's relationship with the influencee, supporting Hypothesis 2. This finding concurs with Study 1's finding that Indian influencees feel closer to the influencer after the influence interaction.

While cultural differences in the influencer's motives mediate cultural differences in the consequences for the relationship from the influencees' perspective, they fail to do so from the influencer's perspective. It is possible that influencees' feelings toward the influencer are significantly shaped by the influencer's motives but that influencers are less likely to consider their own motives when estimating how the relationship fared. This would be the case, for instance, if influencers thought that their falsely stated reasons were believed by the influencee. Notably, a substantial proportion of influencees (23%) said the relationship worsened, but only a few influencers said so (6%), suggesting that in situations from both cultures, influencers might be more likely than influencees to evaluate the consequences for the relationship in self-serving terms.

Our samples of influence situations from both the influencee's and the influencer's perspectives support our general thesis that Indian and American societies differ in the typical characteristics and consequences of their influence situations. Some of the cognitive and behavioral tendencies associated with Indians versus Americans may in fact be responses to these different situations. In our next three studies, we explored this possibility by examining influencees' subjective responses to influence situations.

Study 3: Influencee's Concerns

The goal of Study 3 was to examine the influencees' psychological responses to naturally occurring influence situations. As in Study 1, we sampled influence situations from the influencee's perspective, yet unlike Study 1, we sampled both successful and unsuccessful influence attempts. We examined the extent to which influencees were concerned about the influencer's feelings (Hypothesis 3a) and the extent to which they felt free to refuse to

accommodate. Many cultural theorists have argued that individuals in more interdependent cultures accommodate to others because they are more inclined to act on their interpersonal responsibilities and duties (J. G. Miller & Bersoff, 1992, 1998; J. G. Miller et al., 1990), while others have argued that they are not free to refuse accommodation without suffering social sanctions (Yamagishi et al., 2008). However, as J. G. Miller (2003) articulated, a tendency to act according to interpersonal responsibilities need not be accompanied by inhibited feelings of freedom:

Choice is entailed in both of these approaches to agency, although it entails somewhat contrasting forms. In particular, whereas the stance privileged in individualistic cultures is characterized by a sense of free choice, in which individuals experience themselves as acting in a purely autonomous manner, the stance given greater emphasis in collectivist cultures is characterized by a sense of freely acting to meet the perceived requirements of duty. (p. 77)

Hence, we predicted that while Indians would be more concerned about the influencer's feelings than Americans, the two groups would feel equally free in deciding whether to accommodate. Moreover, Miller's argument suggests that the correlation between concern for the other and perceived freedom should be more positive in India than in the United States.

Method

Participants. A total of 93 students at a university in northern California and 74 students at a university in Jalandhar, India, participated in the study. Participants were drawn from the same subject pool as in Study 2, but their gender and age are unavailable.

Procedure. Participants were asked to describe the most recent incident in which another person tried to influence a choice or a decision that they had to make. After describing the incident, participants were asked to rate "To what extent were you concerned about the other person's feelings while making the decision?" and "How much freedom did you have in deciding what to do?" on 7-point scales ranging from 1 = *not at all* to 7 = *very much*.

Results

Upon submitting participants' responses to the first question to an independent-sample *t* test, we found that Indian influencees felt more concerned about the other person's feelings in their most recent influence situation than did American influencees, $t(165) = 5.20, p < .001$, thus supporting Hypothesis 2a. In contrast, both groups felt similarly free to decide whether to accommodate or not in their most recent influence situation, $t(165) = 1.44, p > .15$ (see Figure 7). Correlational analyses suggested that the more American influencees were concerned about the influencer's feelings, the less free they felt in deciding what to do ($r = -.19, p = .07$), indicating a tension between interpersonal concerns and personal freedom, but there was no such relationship for Indian influencees ($r = .12, p > .30$); the difference between the two correlations was significant according to Fisher's *r*-to-*z* transformation ($z = 1.97, p < .05$).

Discussion

Study 3 showed that Indian and American influence situations evoke different responses, supporting Hypothesis 3a. Compared to

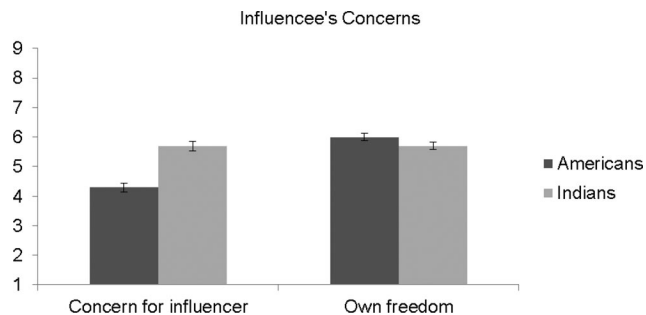


Figure 7. Influencee's concerns from the influencee's perspective: mean ratings from Study 3. Error bars reflect standard error of the mean.

American influencees, Indian influencees were more concerned about the influencer's feelings when deciding whether to accommodate to his or her expectations or not, possibly in reciprocation of the fact that Indian influencers were more likely than American influencers to have the influencee's benefit in mind. However, the greater concern for the others' feelings was not accompanied by a lack of agency among Indian influencees—even though they were more concerned about the other person, Indian influencees felt as free as American influencees in deciding whether to accommodate or not. Indeed, concern for the influencer's feelings was correlated negatively with perceived freedom for American participants (although marginally so), indicating that interpersonal concerns detract from individual agency in American contexts, but the two variables were uncorrelated for Indian participants, indicating that interpersonal concerns have no bearing on perceived agency in Indian contexts. Our findings provide empirical support for J. G. Miller's (2003) claim that in contexts where a more interdependent model of agency is prevalent, people do not necessarily experience themselves as being controlled by others or by the situation; instead, they might experience themselves as freely acting to meet interpersonal obligations and requirements of the situation (see also Iyengar & Lepper, 1999).

Study 4: Expected Outcomes From Accommodation

Thus far we have found that compared to U.S. influence situations, Indian situations are more likely to feature influencers with other-serving motives, to strengthen the relationship between the influencee and the influencer, and to elicit concerns for the influencer's feelings. Given these features, Indian situations might be more likely to reward doing what the influencer wants.

People often learn from situations that they merely observe by simulating the consequences that their response would elicit (Morris & Moore, 2000; Segura & Morris, 2005). When features of the situation lead observers to simulate that accommodation would yield positive consequences, then the situation reinforces accommodation. To test Hypothesis 3b, Study 4 asked participants to simulate the outcome of accommodation in various influence situations. We presented Indian and American participants with a sample of Indian and American situations collected in Study 2, asked them to imagine accommodating to the influencer, and then asked them to rate how good or bad the consequences of accommodation would be. We hypothesized that given the findings of Studies 1 and 2, both groups of participants would expect the

consequences of accommodation to be more positive in Indian situations than in American situations and that, across all situations, Indian participants would expect more positive consequences from accommodation than American participants.

Method

Participants. A total of 30 students at a university in northern California (24 women; mean age = 18.5 years) and 32 students at a university in Bangalore, India (20 women; mean age = 20.7 years), participated in the study.

Materials. We sampled 50 situations generated by Indian participants and 50 situations generated by American participants from the influencer's perspective in Study 2.⁵ We excluded situations that would not normally occur in the other cultural context (e.g., a situation about arranged marriage). For each situation, we presented the following information to participants: the influencer's relationship with the influencee, the options that the influencee was choosing between, the influencee's initial preference, the option that the influencer wanted the influencee to choose, the influencer's actual reason for attempting to influence, and the influencer's stated reason (if different from the actual reason).

Following Kitayama et al. (1997), we edited participants' responses to correct for grammatical and stylistic errors and to remove redundant information. We also edited all culture-specific references to make them culture general. While participants in Study 2 generated the situations from the influencer's perspective, we edited the situations so that the influencee was referred to in the second person. A sample situation is provided below:

Suppose you are with your girlfriend and you are deciding when you should arrive at her hometown for her brother's wedding. She wants you to arrive the day before the wedding, but you are influencing her to let you come the day of the wedding because you would not be able to spend much time together the day before the wedding due to the busy schedule.

Procedure. Each situation was displayed for a minimum of 30 s; participants were then asked to press a button once they had read the situation. Thereafter, participants were instructed, "Suppose you *agreed to do* what the other person wants you to do. How *good or bad* would be the result of *acting according to the other person's wishes*?" Participants were asked to make their ratings on a fully labeled 9-point scale ranging from 1 = *very bad* to 5 = *neutral* to 9 = *very good*. Situations were presented in a random order, and participants were asked to respond to as many situations as they could in 50 min. On average, participants responded to 49 situations.

Results

We first recoded the rating scale such that 0 referred to the neutral midpoint, positive values referred to positive consequences following accommodation, and negative values referred to negative consequences following accommodation. We then submitted

⁵ We sampled situations in ascending order of subject number, which was randomly assigned to completed questionnaires.

participants' ratings to a hierarchical linear model,⁶ with trials nested within participants. At the level of trials (i.e., situations), we included the cultural context in which the situation occurred as a predictor variable (dummy coded with 0 = United States and 1 = India). We included participants' culture as a participant-level predictor (dummy coded with 0 = United States and 1 = India). Here, positive regression coefficients indicate that accommodation was reinforced with positive consequences. The full hierarchical linear model is provided below:

Let i indicate trial number and k indicate participant number.

Model at the level of trials:

$$\text{Rating}_{ik} = \beta_{0k} + \beta_{1k} \times \text{SituationCulture}_{ik} + r_{ik}.$$

Model at the level of participants:

$$\beta_{0k} = G_{00} + G_{01} \times \text{ParticipantCulture}_k + u_{0k}.$$

$$\beta_{1k} = G_{10} + G_{11} \times \text{ParticipantCulture}_k + u_{1k}.$$

We found that American participants responding to American situations rated the consequences of accommodation as being neutral, $G_{00} = -.11$, $t(60) = 0.70$, $p > .48$. We found the predicted main effect of situation culture, $G_{10} = .42$, $t(60) = 4.85$, $p < .001$, indicating that participants simulated experiencing more positive consequences in the situations from India than in the situations from the United States. We also found a main effect of participant culture, $G_{01} = .86$, $t(60) = 3.85$, $p < .001$, indicating that Indian participants anticipated accommodation as yielding more positive consequences overall than American participants. Furthermore, the Situation Culture \times Participant Culture interaction was not significant, $G_{11} = -.16$, $t(60) = 1.32$, $p > .19$ (see Figure 8), indicating that the effect of situation culture was similar across Indian and American participants and vice versa. Finally, $\text{var}(u_{0k}) = .82$ was significantly different from 0, $\chi^2(df = 60) = 373.09$, $p < .001$, indicating that there was significant variance between participants in the extent to which they thought accommodation would have positive consequences, on average. However, $\text{var}(u_{1k}) = .01$ was not significantly different from 0, $\chi^2(df = 60) = 55.44$, $p > .50$, indicating that the size of the effect of the culture of the situation did not vary significantly across participants—participants seem to have encoded the difference between Indian and American situations to a similar extent.

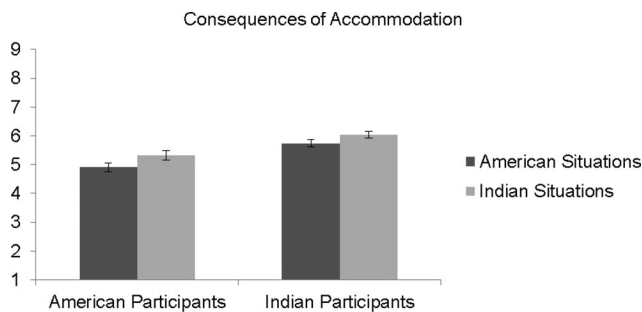


Figure 8. Consequences of accommodation: mean ratings from Study 4 by participant culture and situation culture. Higher values refer to more positive consequences. Error bars reflect standard error of the mean.

Discussion

Study 4 confirmed Hypothesis 3b that situations from India would be more likely to reinforce accommodation than situations from the United States. When asked to simulate the consequences of accommodation, participants anticipated more positive consequences in situations from India than in situations from the United States. The effect of situation culture did not vary significantly across the two groups of participants, indicating that both groups simulated the outcomes differently in Indian and American situations. While it was unlikely that participants could tell which country any given situation came from, they likely could detect many features of the situations, such as other-serving motives, that differed between the two sets of situations and that were relevant to simulating the consequences of accommodation.

We also found that, overall, Indian participants estimated that accommodation would have more positive consequences than did American participants, suggesting that the groups bring different preconceptions about the consequences of accommodation. These findings support our conditioning mechanism by providing evidence for cultural differences in the degree to which influence situations reward accommodative responses. Building on these findings about people's expectations, the final study turned to decision making.

Study 5: Accommodation Decisions

Study 5 again presented participants with a large set of situation descriptions drawn from the United States and India and assessed their tendency to accommodate or not to the other's influence. This study tested three key predictions of the conditioning mechanism: Given their features and consequences, Indian situations should be more likely to elicit accommodation than American situations (Hypothesis 4); Indian participants, bringing different experience-based preconceptions, should be more likely than Americans to accommodate to any given situation (Hypothesis 3c); and as participants experience more and more situations from the other culture, Indians should begin to accommodate less and Americans to accommodate more (Hypothesis 5). We elaborate upon Hypothesis 5 below.

How should experiencing a mix of situations—some like those to which one is accustomed and some that are different—affect people's preconceptions or biases about whether to accommodate? A priming mechanism would suggest that participants' bias would simply shift back and forth as a function of the most recent situation that they encountered. A conditioning mechanism, on the other hand, predicts that participants would be more affected by the surprising situations (e.g., Rescorla & Wagner, 1972), the ones that come from the other culture. Hence, in the same series of mixed situations, the Indian situations should affect the American participants and the American situations should affect the Indian participants. Therefore, we hypothesized that across the many trials of the session, the effect of participant culture, reflecting the preconceptions of American versus Indian participants, would diminish. However, the conditioning mechanism does not predict

⁶ Data were analyzed using the Hierarchical Linear Modeling program, Version 6.06 (Scientific Software International, 2008). We report parameter estimates with robust standard errors.

any changes in the reinforcements provided by Indian and American situations with increasing order, so we would expect the effect of situation culture to stay constant.

To test these hypotheses, we used a methodology similar to that of Study 4. We presented participants with the Indian and American situations used in Study 4 and asked them to rate the extent to which they would decide to accommodate or to resist influence in each situation. It was important that Indian and American participants interpret the dependent measures similarly; otherwise, small cultural differences in interpretation might accumulate over trials. To address this issue, we included three different dependent measure prompts that used very different wordings; convergent findings across the three measures would argue that the results were not entirely due to cultural differences in interpretation of the prompts. Specifically, we reasoned that if participants were motivated to accommodate in a specific situation, they would be more likely to welcome rather than resent the advice and would feel more supported rather than controlled by the other person. Therefore, for each situation, we measured participants' tendency to accommodate versus resist the influence attempt, to welcome versus resent the influence attempt, and to feel supported versus controlled by the other person.

Method

Participants. A total of 29 students at a university in northern California (20 women; mean age = 19.3 years) and 51 students at a university in Bangalore, India (19 women; mean age = 20.4 years), participated in the study.

Materials. We used the same 50 Indian and 50 American situations as in Study 4. As before, for each situation, we presented the following information to participants: the influencer's relationship with the influencee, the options that the influencee was choosing between, the influencee's initial preference, the option that the influencer wanted the influencee to choose, the influencer's actual reason for attempting to influence, and the influencer's stated reason (if different from the actual reason). However, this time, we presented the situations from the same perspective from which they were generated (i.e., from the influencer's perspective), and participants were asked to imagine that they were the influencee. A sample situation is provided below:

I was with my close friend X and my friend was deciding between going to a tennis match or doing homework. He preferred to do homework, but I was trying to get him to come to the tennis match because he had paid for the ticket and it would be a once in a lifetime opportunity. So I told him so and also said that it would be a good study break and a fun experience.

Suppose you are X. Imagine what would be your reaction to this incident.

Procedure. We presented participants with both Indian and American situations in a random order. We did not time the presentation of the situations as in Study 4, allowing participants to proceed at their own pace. For each situation, we asked participants three questions to measure their inclination toward either accommodating to or resisting the influence attempt: (a) Would you feel motivated to do what the other person wants or to avoid doing what the other person wants? (b) Would you welcome/like the other person's concern or resent/dislike their interference? (c)

Would you feel supported by the other person or feel controlled/pressured by the other person? Participants responded using fully labeled 9-point scales with the accommodative response option labeled 1 and the nonaccommodative response option labeled 9. Participants were requested to rate as many situations as they could within 55 min. On average, participants responded to 87 situations.

Results

We first cleaned the data by deleting responses in which participants took fewer than 500 ms to respond. We also adjusted the response scale for each of the three dependent variables such that 0 now represented the neutral midpoint, with positive values indicating a tendency toward accommodation and negative values toward resistance. The three ratings were highly correlated ($r_s = .54$ to $.73$, $p_s < .001$, in the United States; $r_s = .64$ to $.73$, $p_s < .001$, in India), so we averaged them to form a composite measure of accommodation.

Test of main effects and interactions. We submitted participants' responses to a hierarchical linear model, with trials nested within participants. At the level of trials (i.e., situations), we included the cultural context in which the situation occurred as a predictor variable (dummy coded with 0 = United States and 1 = India). We also included participants' culture as a participant-level predictor (dummy coded with 0 = United States and 1 = India). The full hierarchical linear model is provided below:

Let i indicate trial number and k indicate participant number.

Model at the level of trials:

$$\text{Accommodation}_{ik} = \beta_{0k} + \beta_{1k} \times \text{SituationCulture}_{ik} + r_{ik}.$$

Model at the level of participants:

$$\beta_{0k} = G_{00} + G_{01} \times \text{ParticipantCulture}_k + u_{0k}.$$

$$\beta_{1k} = G_{10} + G_{11} \times \text{ParticipantCulture}_k + u_{1k}.$$

We found that overall, participants tended to accommodate, $G_{00} = .31$, $t(78) = 3.08$, $p = .003$. We found the predicted main effect of situation culture, $G_{10} = .48$, $t(78) = 6.06$, $p < .001$, indicating that participants were more motivated to accommodate in situations from India than in situations from the United States, supporting Hypothesis 3c. We also found the predicted main effect of participant culture, $G_{01} = .48$, $t(78) = 2.89$, $p = .005$, indicating that Indian participants were more motivated to accommodate than American participants, supporting Hypothesis 4. Also as predicted, the Situation Culture \times Participant Culture interaction was not significant, $G_{11} = .02$, $t(78) = 0.19$, $p > .80$ (see Figure 9), indicating that the effect of situation culture was similar across Indian and American participants and vice versa.

Comparison of variances. The above findings pose the question, What accounts for more variance in accommodation ratings, the situations' culture or the participants' culture? To answer this question, we submitted the accommodation rating to a hierarchical cross-classified random model (Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002), which treats trials as nested both within participants and within situations. This analysis also partitions the total variance in the dependent variable into three components: variance across trials, variance

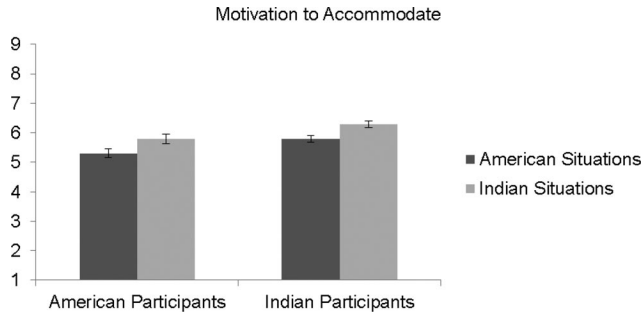


Figure 9. Mean accommodation ratings from Study 5 by participant culture and situation culture. Higher values indicate a greater motivation to accommodate. Error bars reflect standard error of the mean.

across situations, and variance across participants. Below is the initial model that we ran, without any predictors:

Let i indicate trial number, j situation number, and k participant number.

Model at the level of trials:

$$\text{Accommodation}_{ijk} = \pi_{0jk} + e_{ijk}.$$

Model at the level of situations and participants:

$$\pi_{0jk} = \theta_0 + b_{00j} + c_{00k}.$$

Here, $\text{var}(e_{ijk})$ represents variance in the mean accommodation rating across trials, $\text{var}(b_{00j})$ represents variance in the mean accommodation rating across situations, and $\text{var}(c_{00k})$ represents variance in the mean accommodation rating across participants. The results showed that $\text{var}(e_{ijk}) = 2.14$, $\text{var}(b_{00j}) = 0.60$, and $\text{var}(c_{00k}) = 0.62$, indicating that 63.5% of the variance in mean accommodation rating is across trials, 18% is across situations, and 18.5% is across participants. Notably, addressing the debate about what explains more variance in behavior, situations or individuals (Ross & Nisbett, 1991), the above analysis shows that both situations and individuals account for very similar proportions of variance in the psychological tendency of accommodation.

We next added situation culture and participant culture as predictors in our model:

Model at the level of trials:

$$\text{Accommodation}_{ijk} = \pi_{0jk} + e_{ijk}.$$

Model at the level of situations and participants:

$$\pi_{0jk} = \theta_0 + b_{00j} + c_{00k} + Y_{01} \times \text{SituationCulture}_j + \beta_{02} \times \text{ParticipantCulture}_k.$$

This model revealed that the effects of participant culture and situation culture were remarkably similar in size; For situation culture, $Y_{01} = .51$, $t(5099) = 3.36$, $p = .001$; for participant culture, $\beta_{02} = 0.53$, $t(5099) = 2.95$, $p < .005$. After accounting for situation culture and participant culture as predictors, the residual variances both across situations and across participants were reduced: residual variance across situations, $\text{var}(b_{00j}) = 0.53$, and residual variance across participants, $\text{var}(c_{00k}) = 0.56$, indicating

that situation culture explained 15% of the variance across situations, while participant culture explained 10% of the variance across participants. Again, it is notable that the binary variables situation culture and participant culture explain such large proportions of variance at both levels.

Analysis of order effects. To test Hypothesis 5, for each order from 1 to 100, we computed the difference between the mean ratings elicited by the Indian situations and the American situations that randomly occurred at that order (the situation differential), and the mean difference between Indian participants' and American participants' ratings of accommodation at that order (the participant differential). Upon conducting a linear regression with order as the independent variable and the situation differential as the dependent variable, we found that initially, participants were more likely to accommodate in situations from India than in situations from the United States, $\beta = 0.55$, $t(98) = 5.79$, $p < .001$, and the difference between the two types of situations stayed relatively stable with increasing order, $\beta = -0.002$, $t(98) = 1.08$, $p > .28$. This finding indicates that our results are unlikely to be contaminated by greater participant fatigue or distraction with increasing order.

Upon conducting a linear regression with the participant differential as the dependent variable, we found that initially, Indian participants were significantly more likely to accommodate than American participants, $\beta = 0.76$, $t(98) = 9.24$, $p < .001$, but the two groups of participants converged with increasing order, $\beta = -0.007$, $t(98) = 4.68$, $p < .001$ —Americans accommodated to a greater extent with increasing order, $\beta = 0.003$, $t(98) = 2.76$, $p < .01$, whereas Indians accommodated to a lesser extent with increasing order, $\beta = -0.004$, $t(98) = 4.11$, $p < .001$. Indeed, by the time participants rated the last situation, the difference between Indian and American participants' ratings was nonsignificant, $\beta = 0.10$, $t(98) = 1.22$, $p > .22$, thus supporting Hypothesis 5 (see Figure 10).

Discussion

The results supported Hypothesis 3c, that situations from India would be more likely to elicit accommodation than situations from the United States, and Hypothesis 4, that Indian participants would be more motivated to accommodate than American participants. We found that the size of the effect of situation culture on accommodation ratings and the size of the effect of participant culture on

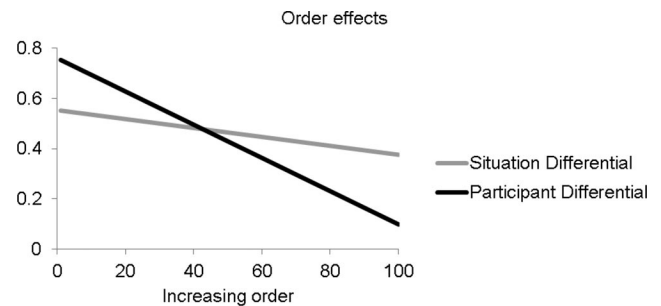


Figure 10. Mean difference in accommodation ratings by trial order from Study 5. Greater values indicate a larger differential between Indian and American situations/participants.

accommodation ratings were very similar, indicating that the influence of culture on psychological tendencies through two routes, that is, situational affordances and individual differences, is equally powerful. We further found that the proportions of variance in accommodation ratings across situations and across participants were very similar, indicating that situations and participants represent two orthogonal and equally powerful dimensions along which psychological responses are situated.

The analysis of order effects suggests that exposing participants to situations from another culture affects their default decisions. We found that while Indian and American participants initially diverged in their baseline motivation to accommodate, as they were exposed to situations from each other's cultures, their responses converged, supporting Hypothesis 5. While participants' initial responses were likely to be due to their default decision to accommodate, as they encountered more and more situations from their own and another culture, they updated their default decisions based upon the simulated rewards of accommodation in these situations. Indicating that the convergence between Indian and American participants' accommodative tendencies was not due to fatigue or distraction, we found that the difference in accommodation to situations from India versus the United States stayed stable with increasing order. In other words, what declined with time was participants' personal bias in responding, which was indicative of their default decision, not their discrimination between Indian and American situations.

These findings suggest an experiential mechanism for cultural differences in the tendency to accommodate: After repeatedly engaging with situations that are more likely to afford accommodation, people in Indian contexts adopted a default decision to accommodate, but after a lifetime of engaging with situations that are less likely to afford accommodation, people in American contexts developed a default decision to resist influence attempts. However, these tendencies were malleable—people gradually re-evaluated and adjusted their default decisions depending upon the situations that they encountered.

Priming as an Alternative Account for the Convergence Finding of Study 5

Is it possible that our convergence finding can be explained by a priming mechanism rather than a conditioning mechanism? Perhaps both groups of participants converged over time because they were exposed to the same set of Indian and American primes over the course of the study.

To begin with, our theoretical framework differs from priming in that priming involves the temporary activation of different mind-sets without necessarily involving any learning, whereas we are proposing that participants learned from exposure to different situations and updated their default decisions accordingly, without any mind-sets or other latent constructs being primed (Borsboom, Mellenbergh, & van Heerden, 2003). Furthermore, although priming appears to be a plausible explanation for the convergence findings, a closer examination suggests that priming makes very different predictions than conditioning.

While early research by Gardner, Gabriel, and Lee (1999) suggested that people are mainly primed by tasks that activate conceptions that are different from their cultural default, a recent meta-analysis with a range of different primes found that primes

related to independence and interdependence shift both North Americans and East Asians to a similar degree (e.g., Oyserman, Sorensen, Reber, & Chen, 2009). Therefore, if priming was the underlying mechanism in our study, then a mix of Indian and American situations should either have caused both groups of participants to oscillate back and forth between more accommodative and reactive responses or have had no impact because the effects of Indian and American primes might cancel out; however, we did not observe either of these patterns of responses. In contrast, our conditioning perspective claims that cumulative experience changes people's default strategies, thus predicting that Indian and American participants would converge as they encountered situations from each other's culture. Indian and American participants' convergence with increasing order thus supports the conditioning mechanism over the priming mechanism.

General Discussion

The present studies found considerable evidence that typical interpersonal influence situations in India and the United States have different features and consequences and that these situationscape directly and indirectly engender differential decision-making tendencies toward accommodation. The initial studies revealed dramatic differences in the influence situations occurring in the two societies. Whether sampled from the influencee's perspective (Study 1) or the influencer's perspective (Study 2), college students' recently experienced influence situations in India and the United States differed starkly. Study 1 found that accommodating to an influence attempt was much more likely to strengthen the relationship in India (64%) than in the United States (39%). Study 2 corroborated Study 1's finding that influence attempts driven by the influencers' self-interest were nearly 4 times more prevalent in the United States (68%) than in India (18%). Differences of this magnitude are rare when researchers measure cultural differences in attitudes and values, consistent with arguments for measuring cultural differences outside the head in public representations and social structures (Morling & Lamoreaux, 2008; Morris, Menon & Ames, 2001; Sperber, 1996).

An intriguing auxiliary finding in Study 2 is that American influence attempts typically involved cover stories. While American influencers' actual reasons were typically self-serving, they professed other-serving motives to the influencee. This finding is particularly interesting in light of Study 1's finding that American influencees perceived that most influencers (at least those outside of their family) were driven by self-serving rather than other-serving motives. Therefore, American influencers' cover stories were not fooling the influencees. In short, Americans proffered cover stories even though they tended to see right through others' cover stories. Perhaps Americans thought that their own cover stories were more convincing than the ones they heard from others. Or perhaps American influencers' use of cover stories, while failing to hide their true motives, served other functions, such as saving face for the influencee by enabling him or her to maintain a pose of autonomy even when accommodating. Given the norm of self-interest widely prevalent in American society (D. T. Miller, 1999), influencers' cover stories may provide cover to the influencee as much as they do to the influencer.

Study 3 corroborated some of the findings and assumptions of the first two studies by replicating the situation-sampling design

with different questions. First, Indians felt as free as Americans in deciding whether to accommodate. This finding indicates that Indian situations differ from U.S. situations not in the extent to which they involve coercive sanctions but in the decisions that the influencees make. Second, influencees in India tended to consider the influencer's feelings more than did influencees in the United States. This is consistent with the picture from Study 1 and Study 2 that influence attempts in India are more likely to be acts of well-wishing influence rather than attempts at self-serving manipulation.

Given the starkly different social structural realities in the United States and India, members of these societies are likely to differ in their general expectations about influence situations and their default decisions. Study 4 found that participants expected accommodation to be more rewarding in influence situations from India than the United States (even though they did not know which situations came from which country). This finding supports for our argument that different situation-scapes condition different expectations about the consequences of accommodation.

Study 5 found that participants' decisions to accommodate differed, as predicted, on the basis of situation culture and participant culture. Situations from India were more likely to elicit accommodation than those from the United States, and Indian participants were overall more likely to accommodate than American participants. The study also found that as individuals encountered more and more situations from another culture, the effect of situation culture remained stable, yet that of participant culture diminished. In other words, the difference between Indian versus American participants reduced as participants updated their decision biases to reflect their recent experiences with situations from the other culture, which rewarded different responses than did the situations from their own culture.

Implications for Understanding Cultural Differences

Situational Conditioning

While cultural psychologists typically focus on attitudes, values, mind-sets, and self-conceptions as mechanisms for cultural differences in psychological tendencies, one contribution of the current research is highlighting the oft-neglected role of conditioning in shaping cultural differences in psychological tendencies. Reinforcement learning can explain the three major findings concerning situations and decision making: (a) Not all responses to a situation yield the same outcome, so situations inherently reward or punish different responses—if key features of situations differ across cultures, then the responses they reinforce are likely to differ; (b) as people repeatedly engage with different situations, they adopt divergent default decisions based on the reinforcements provided by situations in their social environment; and (c) as the reinforcements provided by individuals' recently encountered situations change, people update their default decisions.

Conditioning differs from other accounts of how situations elicit cultural tendencies. While priming can explain temporary shifts in response to a situation, it does not explain gradual adjustment of default decision biases with exposure to a series of situations from different cultures. While sanction avoidance can explain conformity to traditional norms in the presence of others, it also cannot explain the convergence in participants' tendency to accommodate

over time. Conditioning accounts also differ from the predominant analysis of cultural tendencies as expressions of cultural values or self-conceptions. Cultural values are an important device for reflectively thinking about the culture in relation to oneself, and they undoubtedly enter into conscious deliberations about important life decisions (Eyal, Sagristano, Trope, Liberman, & Chaiken, 2009), but they might not be the primary mechanism through which everyday cultural patterns are carried. In our view, behaviors might often be yoked to reinforcement schedules prevalent in the environment, not to one's self-identified values.

The idea of conditioning also provides a possible bridge between the cultural and the neural levels of analysis. As individuals repeatedly encounter culturally typical situations and engage in culturally typical decisions, their neural responses might be conditioned accordingly (Kitayama & Uskul, in press). For example, for Indians, a lifetime of regularly deciding to accommodate might reinforce the response of particular brain regions, perhaps gradually changing their structure or connectivity within the brain (e.g., Maguire et al., 2000), or their responsiveness to particular types of stimulus situations (e.g., Kobayashi, Glover, & Temple, 2007). Future research can thus use the conditioning mechanism to derive testable predictions about cultural and experiential variation in neural functioning.

Coherence Versus Fragmentation of Cultural Patterns

Broad cultural patterns such as independence versus interdependence and analytic versus holistic thinking have been operationalized with a range of tasks that differ across countries. Kitayama, Park, Sevincer, Karasawa, and Uskul (2009) provided evidence for the near-zero intercorrelation of scores on different tasks within country and argued that these tasks tap psychological tendencies that are alternative means of achieving cultural mandates, such as independence or interdependence. Because individuals feel no need to exemplify all of the tendencies related to the cultural mandate, the various tendencies that serve the mandate are not correlated (for related arguments, see Shweder, 1973). As Morris et al. (2001) argued, the distinct tendencies making up holistic or interdependent cultural patterns may arise not from individual differences in cognitive styles but from the different institutions that members of a culture are exposed to. By measuring individuals' experience histories along with their cognitive tendencies, researchers may be able to explain why individuals exhibit some of their culture's prototypical tendencies but not others.

Primary Versus Secondary Control

Our findings are also relevant to the literature on cultural variation in control (Morling & Evered, 2006). This literature centers on claims that Japanese are more likely than Americans to adjust themselves to fit the environment, whereas Americans are more likely to influence the environment to fit their wishes (Morling, Kitayama, & Miyamoto, 2002, 2003; Weisz, Rothbaum, & Blackburn, 1984). While accommodation in India bears some resemblance to secondary control in that Indians are less likely to resist other people's influence attempts, they may not be changing themselves to do so. Instead, many Indians may be making instrumental choices based on their confidence that the other person knows and wants what is best for them. Our results showing that India and the

United States have dramatically different situational ecologies highlight the need to understand the social context before interpreting behavioral tendencies: Accommodation may be closer to primary control when it occurs in the context of wishing significant others well. In general, culture researchers need to study the social structure while examining psychological tendencies, as different social contexts can change the meaning of seemingly similar acts (Bruner, 1990; Shweder, 1990).

Implications for Enculturation and Adaptation to New Cultures

First- Versus Second-Culture Conditioning

Many programs training people for immersive experiences in another culture, such as the Peace Corps, have described how learning a second culture as an adult differs from learning one's first culture. These programs use the term *conditioning* to describe the ways that new patterns of behavior and thought from the second culture come to supplant those from the first culture (Peace Corps, 2010). A key theme of the Peace Corps training program is that second-culture conditioning begins with making different decisions and engaging in different behaviors than one is used to. Peace Corps volunteers might find themselves adopting behaviors and habits common in the host culture through gradual reinforcement, but internalizing values or worldviews from the second culture is a slower process that can come later through reflection on one's changed behaviors. Consistent with this claim, the conditioning mechanism suggests that behaviors are likely to change before values because behavior is often a response to different payoff structures and thus is likely to be more responsive to the structures of the host culture. Especially in this era of transnationalism, immigrants and sojourners may acculturate behaviorally without necessarily assimilating in their values. Ethnographies of American Sikhs, for example, show behavioral acculturation without the assimilation of values (M. A. Gibson, 1988).

Sojourner Effects

While the immigration literature emphasizes the slow and deliberate nature of enculturation, some recent findings highlight that some aspects of second-culture learning happen swiftly and effortlessly. These findings come from studies of visitors or sojourners in other cultures. Heine, Lehman, Markus, and Kitayama (1999) found that Japanese individuals' self-esteem rises when they spend more time in North America, and vice versa. Similarly, Kitayama, Duffy, Kawamura, and Larsen (2003) found that Americans studying in Japan become better at incorporating contextual information, whereas Japanese studying in the United States begin to ignore contextual information. These findings suggest that as people engage with a different cultural context, they gradually acquire some psychological tendencies that are prevalent in this context. While we only studied participants living in their home country, our last study found evidence for a subtle multicultural convergence: As participants were exposed to situations of the other culture, their psychological tendencies approached those of the other culture.

While previous research has not specified a mechanism for acculturation effects in psychological tendencies, our method of

exposing participants to both Indian and American situations has allowed us to distinguish the contrasting predictions of cultural priming (which would predict that participants would either oscillate between accommodative and reactive responses when alternately primed by Indian and American situations or show no trend because the Indian and American primes cancel out) from those of conditioning (which predicts convergence over time) and supports the conditioning mechanism as a viable explanation for our experimental sojourner effect.

Fostering Trust and Cooperation

The present research has focused on the determinants of one type of trust—whether to accommodate to another's influence. Study 5 shows that people's tendency to trust can be shifted by new experiences that differ from their past experiences. This may be relevant to many important applied problems that involve building or restoring trust. For example, firms must win back the trust of customers after accidents (Grayson, Johnson, & Chen, 2008). New managers attempting to turn around failing companies need to restore employees' trust in management and each other (Whitener, Brodt, Krosgaard, & Werner, 1998). Even police and military peacekeeping forces crucially need to gain the trust of the populations they are trying to protect. In all these cases, trust-building efforts often fail because demanding or requesting the trust of vulnerable people often backfires. Our findings show that people become more trusting as a function of accumulating experiences that gradually condition them or change their expectations, suggesting that perhaps trust building should center on conditioning specific expectations by providing people with reassuring interactions and experiences rather than on persuading people to change their general values and beliefs.

Issues for Future Research

Limitations of the Sampling Method

One limitation of the situation-sampling method that we inherited is the possibility that participants were more likely to recall situations that fit with cultural scripts, so the sampled situations might not represent a random sample of influence situations that college students in the two societies encounter. While this tendency can be viewed as a bias, from the perspective of cultural constructivism (Hong et al., 2000), selective retrieval would be expected because chronically accessible constructs channel memory search and result in the retrieval of instances that are consistent with the accessible construct. We attempted to attenuate this concern by sampling situations from two perspectives, those of the influencer and the influencee. However, the problem of selective retrieval is not unique to our research but is applicable to most analyses of subjectively experienced social structures.

Another limitation of our studies is that we sampled the influence situations that college students encounter in their lives, which might differ from the situations that representative samples of Indians and Americans encounter. Given that colleges in both countries are middle-class settings, our results are limited to situations that young people in middle-class settings encounter. Furthermore, the range of relationships that college students have is limited. It is possible that even Americans might be more likely to

have other-serving motives in certain types of highly interdependent relationships, such as the relationship between committed romantic partners or between parents and children. Future research can test whether the current findings generalize to situations that are more diverse and representative samples of what individuals encounter.

In our studies, we examined one-shot influence situations. While these provided us with a sample of situations occurring in India and the United States, influence and accommodation are parts of relationships that extend over time and involve many repeated interactions, so it is possible that we might have missed many nuances of influence and accommodation in India and the United States. For example, perhaps Americans may resist up front but then acquiesce later, while Indians may concede initially but then passive-aggressively not follow through. While we did not see signs of these types of patterns in participants' responses to questions about how accommodation affected the relationship, future research could make a more fine-grained analysis of the different ways in which Indians and Americans might accommodate versus resist over successive interpersonal interactions.

Our reliance on self-report to generate the situations and to measure participants' subjective responses might have introduced a confound if Indian and American participants interpreted the situation-generation instructions and the dependent measure prompts differently. To avoid problems associated with translation, all our studies were conducted entirely in English. We also provided participants with detailed multiparagraph instructions about the types of situations we wanted to generate and included multiple dependent measure prompts in our most important study. However, subtle differences in the meaning of English words in India and in the United States might still confound our findings.

Interpersonal Versus Institutional Trust

While we identify a class of interpersonal situations likely to feature altruistic, other-serving motives in India, it is important to remember that we sampled just one class of interpersonal situations, not the entire social environment. Our results suggest that interpersonal influence situations in India are characterized by trusting accommodative behavior, which may be deserved by the influencers and instrumental for the influencees. However, Indians may possess self-interested motives and exhibit relatively low trust in some other class of social interactions. Indeed, the same ethical orientation that makes interpersonal responsibilities paramount may work against individuals' commitment to universalistic standards of fairness and justice (J. G. Miller & Bersoff, 1992). For example, while Indians tend to influence close friends and family members with other-interested motives, they might influence strangers primarily with self-interested motives. Similarly, as effective functioning of bureaucratic organizations requires a commitment to universalistic standards rather than to helping friends and relatives, Indians may have lower trust in their institutions even though they have more trust in friends and family.

Conclusion

Going back to the question of why Samira might be more likely to accommodate than Lisa, the answer is probably a combination of Samira's and Lisa's personalities, features of the immediate

situations they find themselves in, and their recent experiences with influence attempts. The idea of conditioning, gradual changes in the frequency of a response due to the reinforcements provided by recently encountered situations, offers a useful framework integrating all three explanatory factors. In this manner, cultural variation in basic psychological functioning is jointly constructed by individuals, situations, and recent experiences.

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