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15th Edition of the International Summer School

European Ph.D. on
Social Representations and Communication
At the Multimedia LAB & Research Center, Rome-Italy

Social Representations in Action and Construction
in Media and Society

"Cultural and cross-cultural
approaches to social representations:
The implications of the globalised/localised cultural scenario"

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Key Lectures

European Ph.D

on Social Representations and Communication

International Lab Meeting Series 2009

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Social representation of emotion: cultural context and SR of sadness

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Culture and emotional regulation

- ☞ 1) examine previous studies on culture and emotional regulation
- ☞ 2) contrast in two studies the influence of cultural indexes on reported expressive and subjective reaction, and emotional coping
- ☞ 3) examines individual level attitudes as mediators of cultural context
- ☞ 4) in the case of sadness

Culture, and correlates of the verbal expression and emotions

- ☞ Individualism is related to higher verbal expression
- ☞ Expression reinforces reported emotional mental and behavioral reaction (Rime et al)
- ☞ not only response style
- ☞ IDV related to lower secondary or self-modification coping
- ☞ IDV shows a cathartic or under-regulated style

Cultural Individualism and emotion

- ☛ Internal attributes are valued
- ☛ attention is internally focused: report higher bodily reactions (Scherer et al, 1997)
- ☛ introspection and subjective elaboration are valued: higher perceived emotional intensity (Matsumoto, 2000)
- ☛ emotional expressions is relatively more accepted (Basabe et a. 2002)
- ☛ self-disclosure and emotional display are important for social relationships

Collectivism, high power distance and emotions

- ☞ Collectivism and high power distance are related to lower feeling and verbal expression
- ☞ affective balance, self-control and constraint are valued: i) harmony in COL; b) respect and stoicism in PDI
- ☞ self-modification coping: subjects adapt to stressful and hierarchical social milieu
- ☞ COL and PDI shows a suppressive or over-regulated style

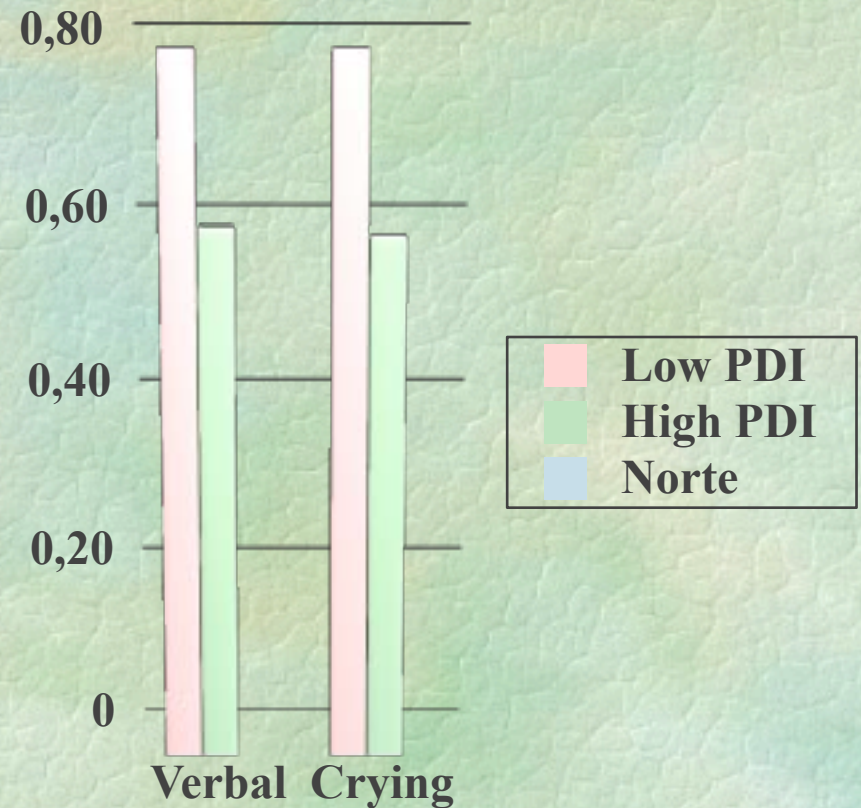
Why collectivist and hierarchical cultures are related to low emotional expression? socio-linguistic thesis (Trudgill, 1986)

- ☞ members of a few dense social networks (COL) are less used to being explicit about feelings
- ☞ than those loosely-knit (IDV) networks, interacting frequently with people not sharing background information

- ☞ “Positional” social structure, where interaction depends on the formal status of each member of the group as “father”, “boss”, “son”, etc. are less likely to give rise to the verbal elaboration of personal feelings and differences

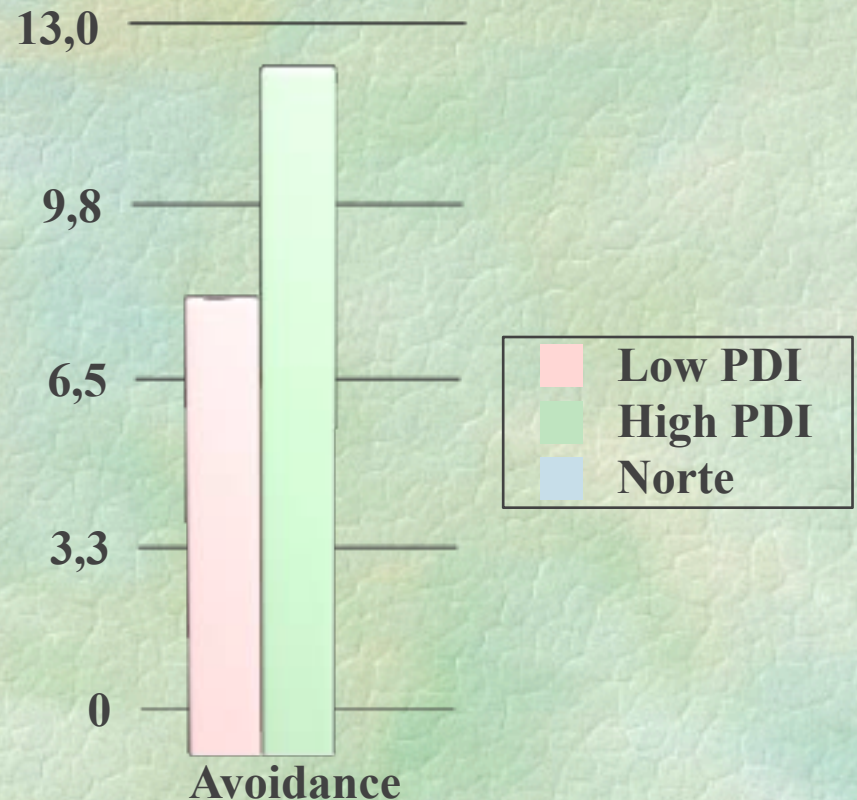
Emotional experience and culture: first study

- ☞ Scherer et al survey asked subjects to report emotional reactions (16 nations, N= 1096)
- ☞ participants living in collectivist and high power distance report low level of expressive (0=silence to 3 lengthy utterance) and nonverbal reactions on sadness (0 to 3 crying/sobbing)



Emotional experience and culture: first study

- expressive verbal and non verbal reactions were associated ($r=0,06, p<.05$)
- participants living in collectivist and high power distance report higher avoidant coping (yes=1, No=0)
- MR using sex, avoidant coping, IDH, PDI and IDV as predictors confirms individualism

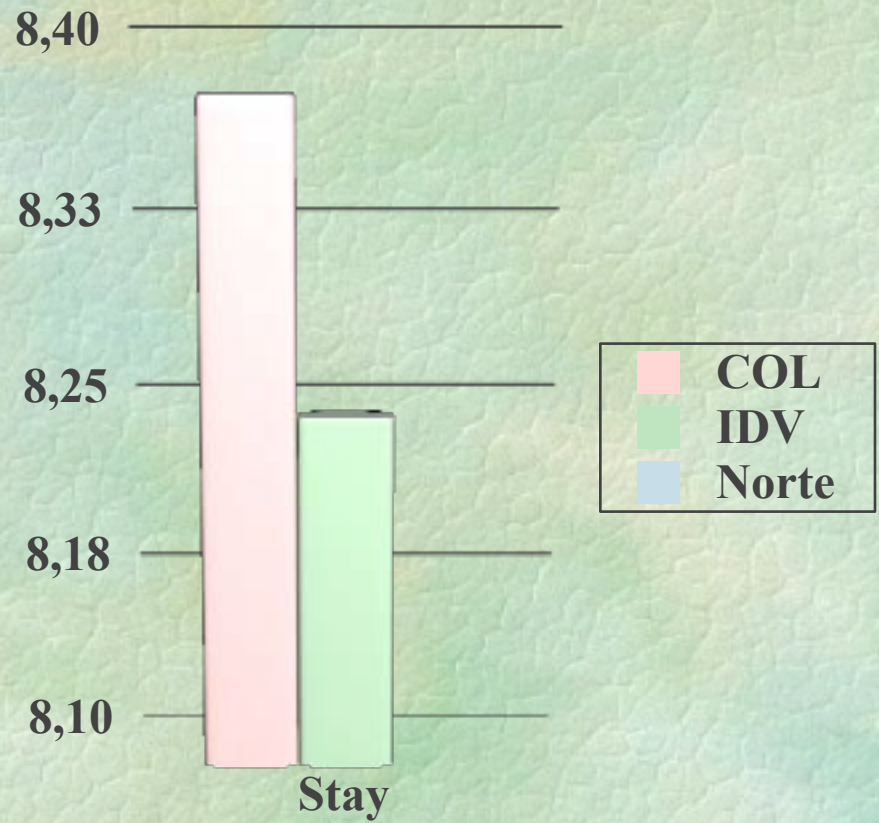


Second study

- ☛ Participants answer questions on:
- ☛ typical emotional reactions: subjective or mental, expressive reactions and coping
- ☛ also answer Triandis's scale focused on competition as individual index of culture
- ☛ PDI is related to high competitive attitudes: OCI's scale is related to PDI and PWE are also related to PDI (Hofstede, 1998)
- ☛ Hierarchical cultures emphasize competition

Collectivism and group loyalty

- ☞ Participants also answer Singelis's interdependence scale
- ☞ Group loyalty factor's score was associated to COL:i) I will stay in a group if they needed me;iv)It is important for me to respect group decisions (4-16)

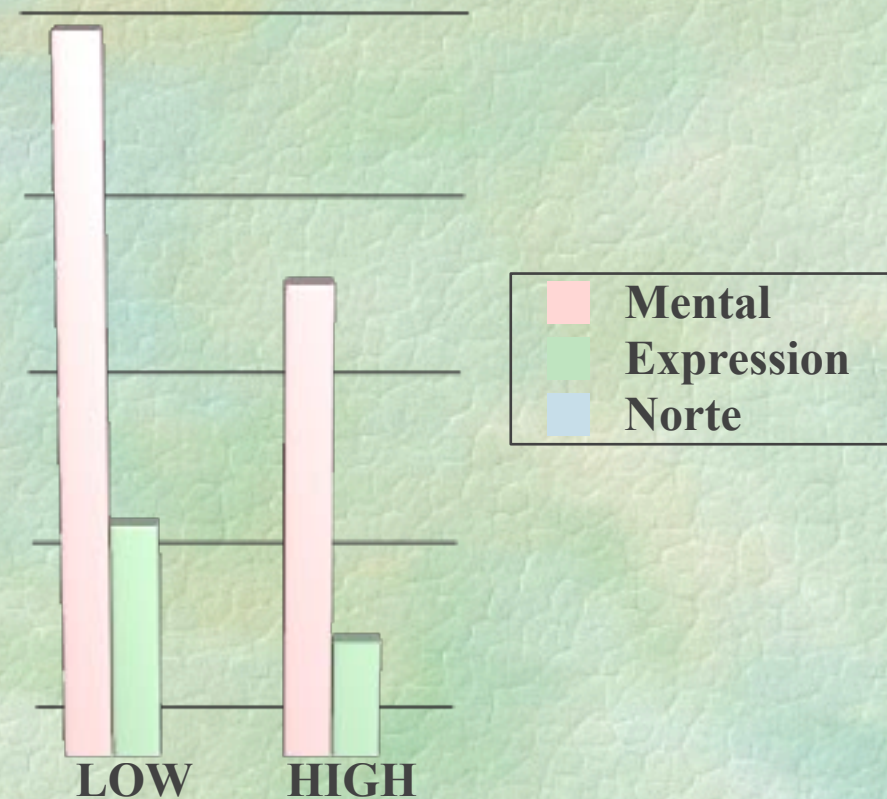


Culture and emotional regulation: sadness

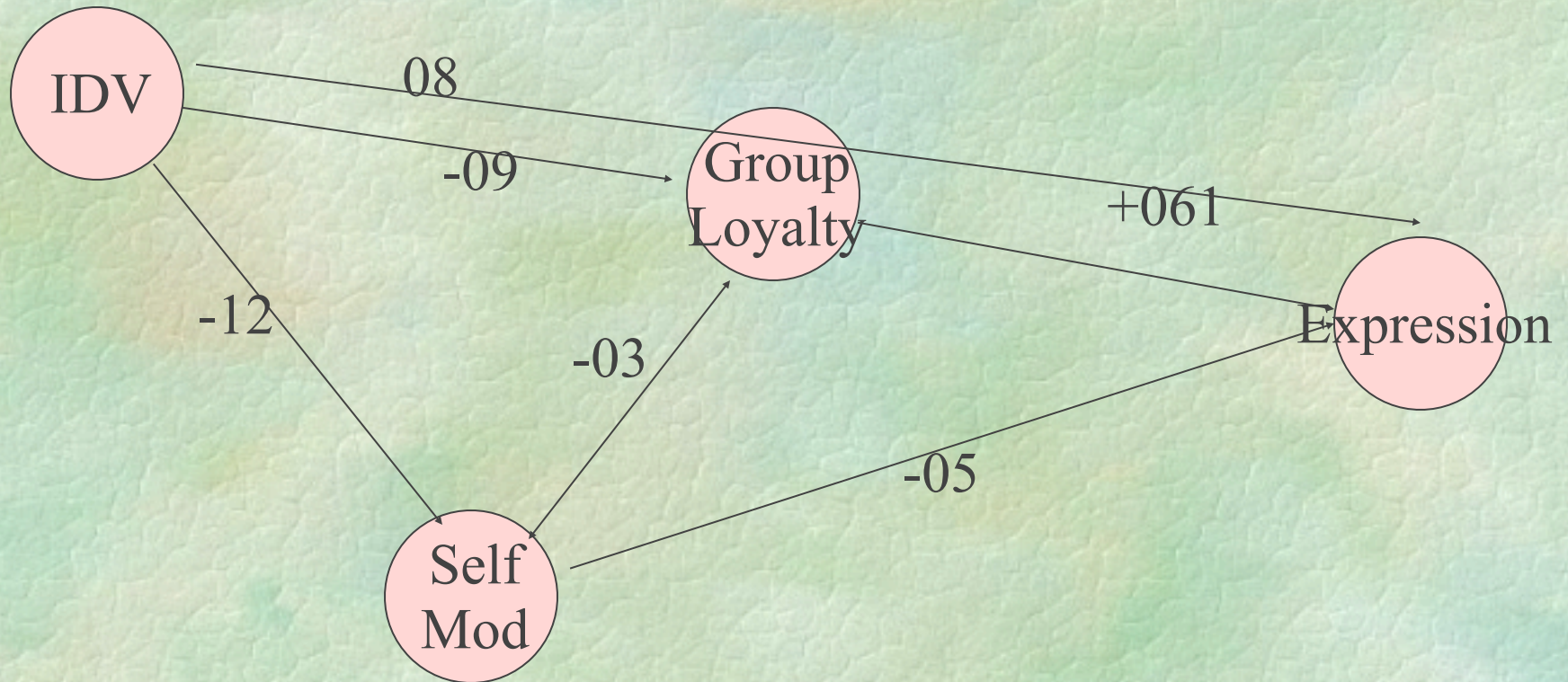
- ☞ Cultural individualism:
 - ☞ a) focus attention on internal reactions: high reported bodily reactions $r=.04$
 - ☞ b) reinforces introspection and self-consciousness :high mental reactions $r=.11$
 - ☞ c) emotional expression is relatively valued: higher reported expressive reaction $r=.07$
 - ☞ d) lower self-modification, $r=-.12$

High secondary coping, low expression and mental reactions: sadness

- ☞ Suppressing negative feelings, looking at the bride side, Self-comforting (positively re-evaluating one self, minimizing situation)
- ☞ physical, mental, behavioral, non-verbal and verbal expression correlates positively $M r=.51$



Individualism, High verbal expression,
lower self-modification and sadness



Individualist attitudes and

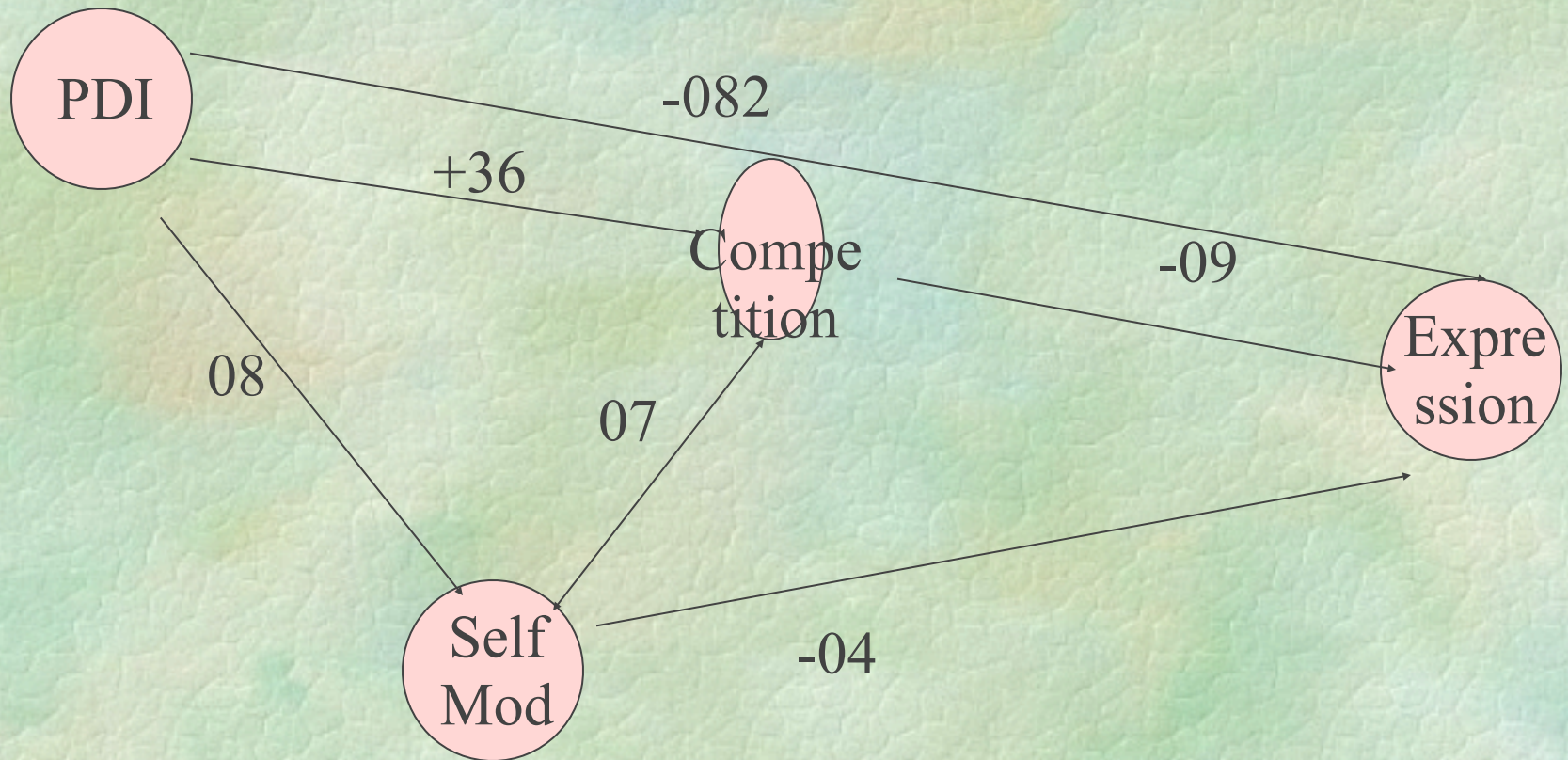
- ☛ IDV was related negatively to group loyalty score,
- ☛ however, group loyalty was related to higher expression in sadness ($r=.05$) - interdependence did not explain collectivist sadness expressive minimization
- ☛ COL was related to self-modification ($r=-.11$) and group loyalty was also associated to secondary coping ($r=.052$)- mediational variable

Hierarchical Culture and expressive and subjective minimization:sadness

- ☞ high power distance lower
- ☞ expressive ($r=-.081$)
- ☞ mental ($r=-.11$)
- ☞ subjective and expressive minimization
- ☞ PDI related to secondary or self-modification coping, $r=.08$

- ☞ self-modification associated to low mental ($r=-.04$) and expressive ($r=-.04$) reaction
- ☞ PDI is related to competitive attitude .36
- ☞ Attitude is related to low emotional reaction ($-.09$) and high secondary coping ($+.07$)

Power distance, competitive attitude and over-regulation:sadness



Multivariate analysis

- expressive reaction was regressed on
 - PDI
 - IDV (Hofstede's scores for countries)
 - and sex
 - R multiple .20
 - Beta sex .17, PDI -.058 and IDV .042
- Second MR analysis includes mediational variables
 - Triandis competitive attitude, Singelis and self-modification coping,
 - R multiple .213, PDI -.05, Singelis .06, Triandis -.04, sex=.17

Conclusions

- ❧ Individualist and egalitarian cultures reinforces verbal expression of negative emotions, decrease self-modification and probably by this path reinforces mental and behavioral reactions: cathartic emotional style
- ❧ Collectivist and hierarchical cultures reinforces self-modification, low expressive and emotional reactions in the case of sadness: stoic emotional style

Conclusions

- ✿ Collectivist and egalitarian cultures reinforces group loyalty
- ✿ Interdependent self-concept was related to higher emotional expression
- ✿ Interdependence did not appear as a mediational variable explaining why individualist report higher sadness
- ✿ Low power distance report higher emotional expression because of interdependence

Conclusions

- Hierarchical cultures reinforces competitive attitudes
- self-modification, and low competition mediates individualism influence on emotional reactions in the case of sadness: stoic emotional style
- also decreases but not eliminate PDI influences
- High competitive attitude: sadness means vulnerability, stoicism is expected