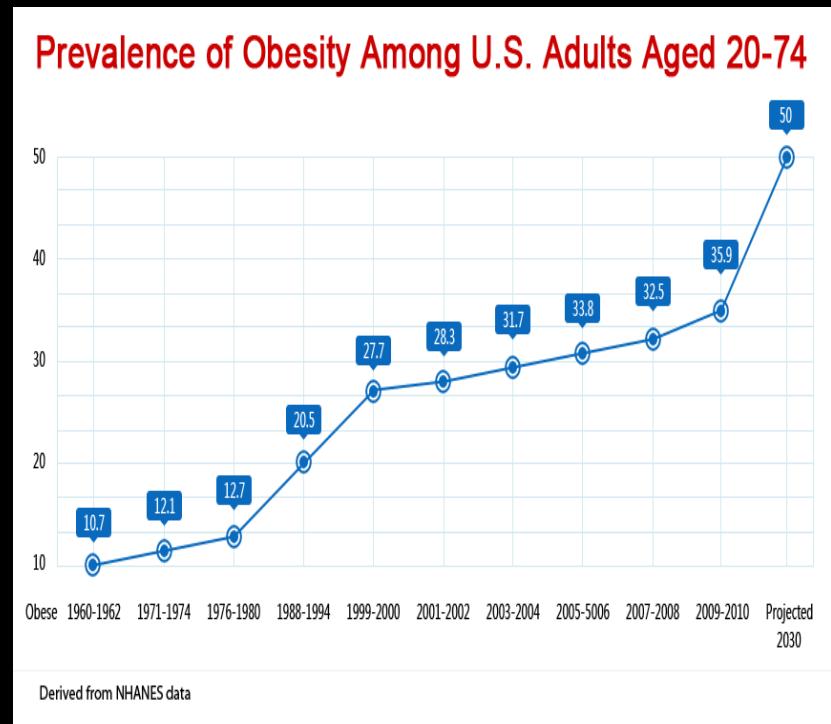
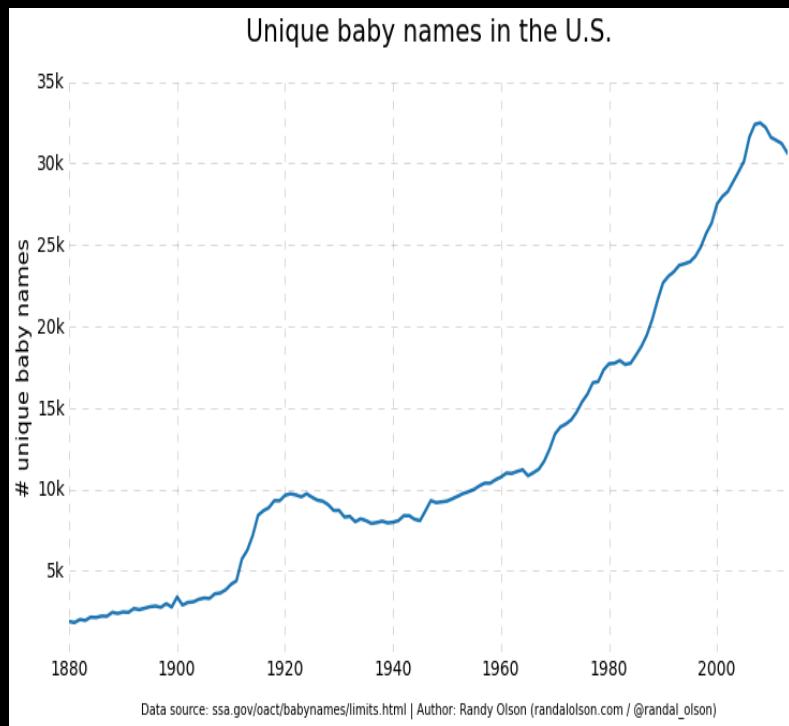


Tightness-Looseness: A Fractal Pattern of Cultural Variation

Michele J. Gelfand
University of Maryland, College Park



What ties these examples together?



Social Norms

- Humans ability to develop, maintain and enforce social norms
- The *glue* that keep us together



Tightness



Strong norms and
punishments for deviance

Narrow range of behavior

Looseness



Weak norms and high
degree of permissiveness

Large range of behavior

Ecological factors and historical events influence the social organization of a country, which in turn affects the characteristics of social situations and associated psychological processes (Triandis, 1972)

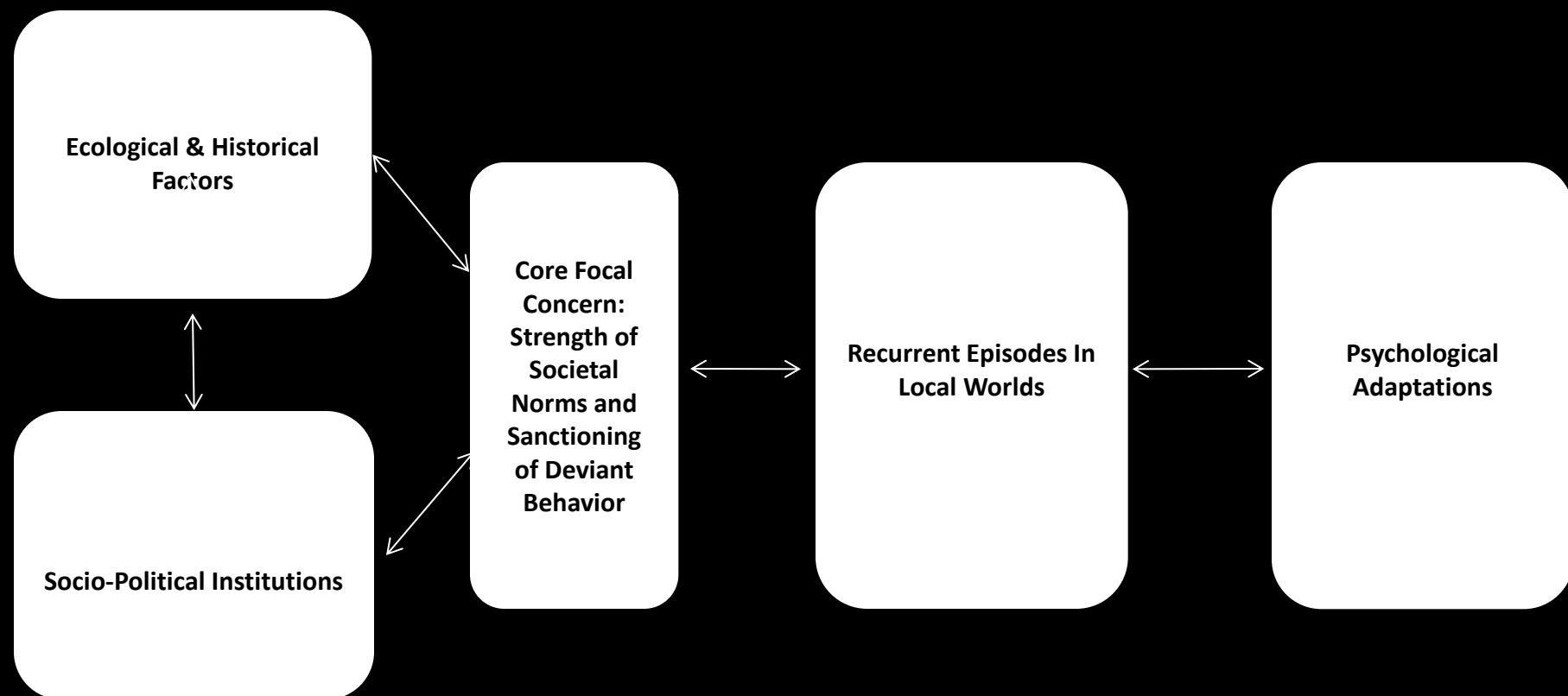


The Multilevel System of Tightness-Looseness

(Gelfand et al. 2011)

Distal Ecological and Historical Factors and Societal Processes

Proximal/Contemporaneous Processes





International Investigation

6 Continents

22 Languages

33 Nations

6823 Participants

Ecological & Historical Data

Surveys

Unobtrusive observations



Tight-Loose Trade-Off

- **Tight: Greater Order**
 - Less crime
 - More security personnel
 - More cleaning personnel
 - Less Graffiti
 - Less parking out of the lines
 - More uniforms, more uniformity in cars
 - More synchronous clocks



Tight-Loose Trade-Off

- **Loose: Greater Openness**
 - Less cultural superiority and ethnocentrism
 - More acceptance of immigrants
 - More positive reactions to stigmatized identities



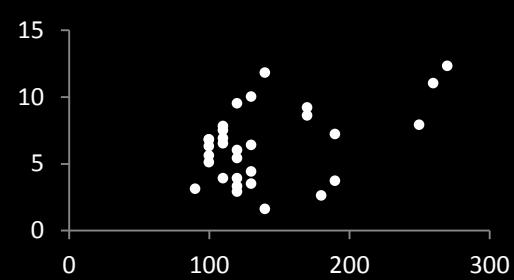
What predicts TL?

- No effect of GDP
- No common language
- No common religion
- No common geographical location

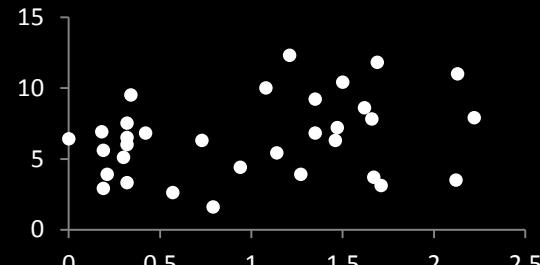


Evidence

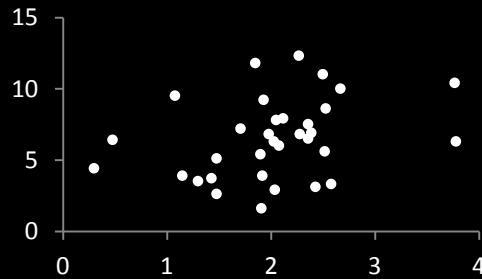
Food Deprivation



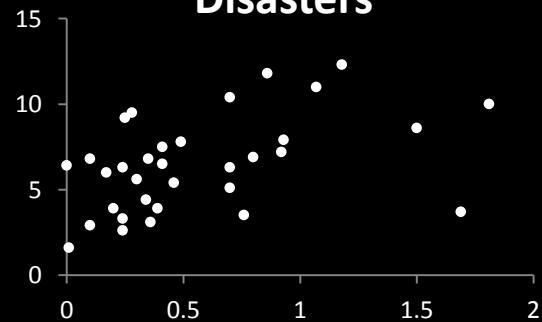
Pathogen Prevalence



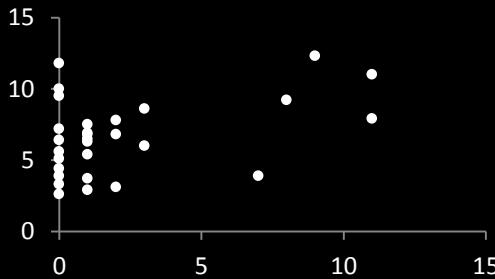
Pop Density



Disasters



Territorial Threat



Situational Affordances

Ecological and Historical events influence the social organization of a country, which in turn affects the characteristics of social situations and associated psychological processes

Strong situations

Library



Funeral



NAS Lecture



Weak situations

Public Park



Own Room

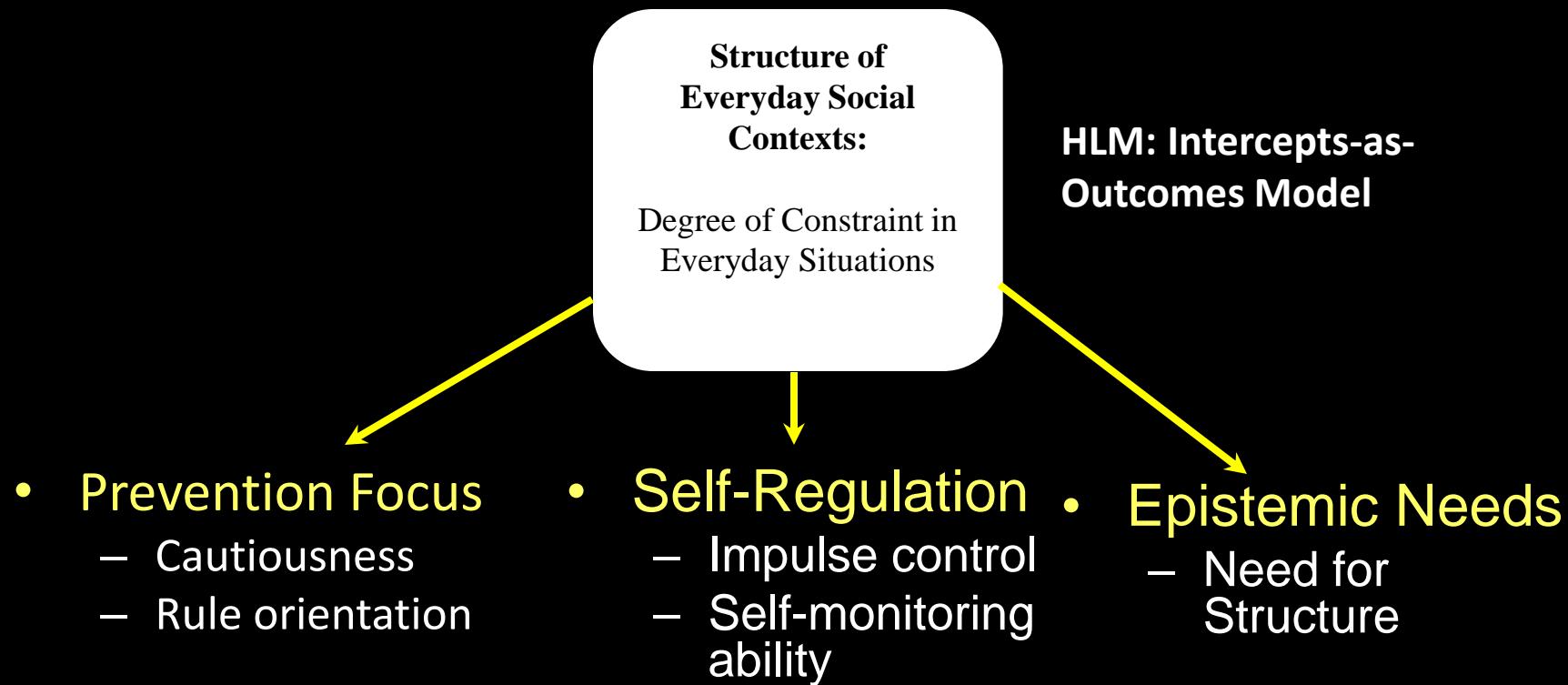


Drinks in DC



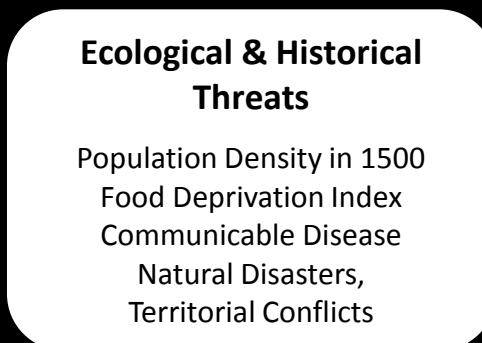
Historical events influence the social organization of a country, which in turn affects the characteristics of social situations and associated psychological processes

The TL Mindset: Felt Accountability

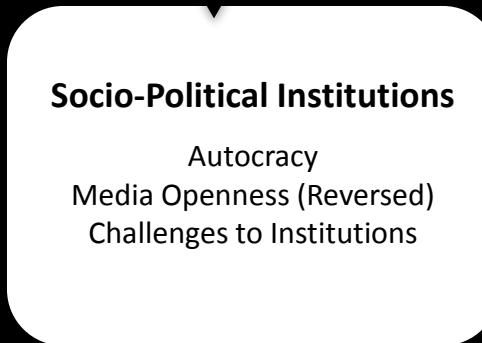


Multilevel SEM

Distal Ecological and Historical Factors

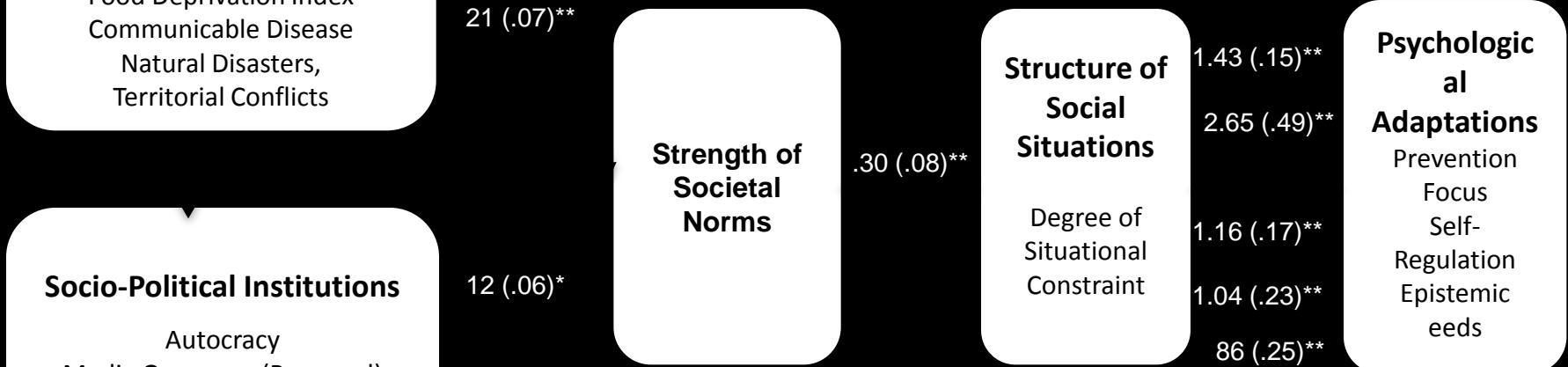


21 (.07)**



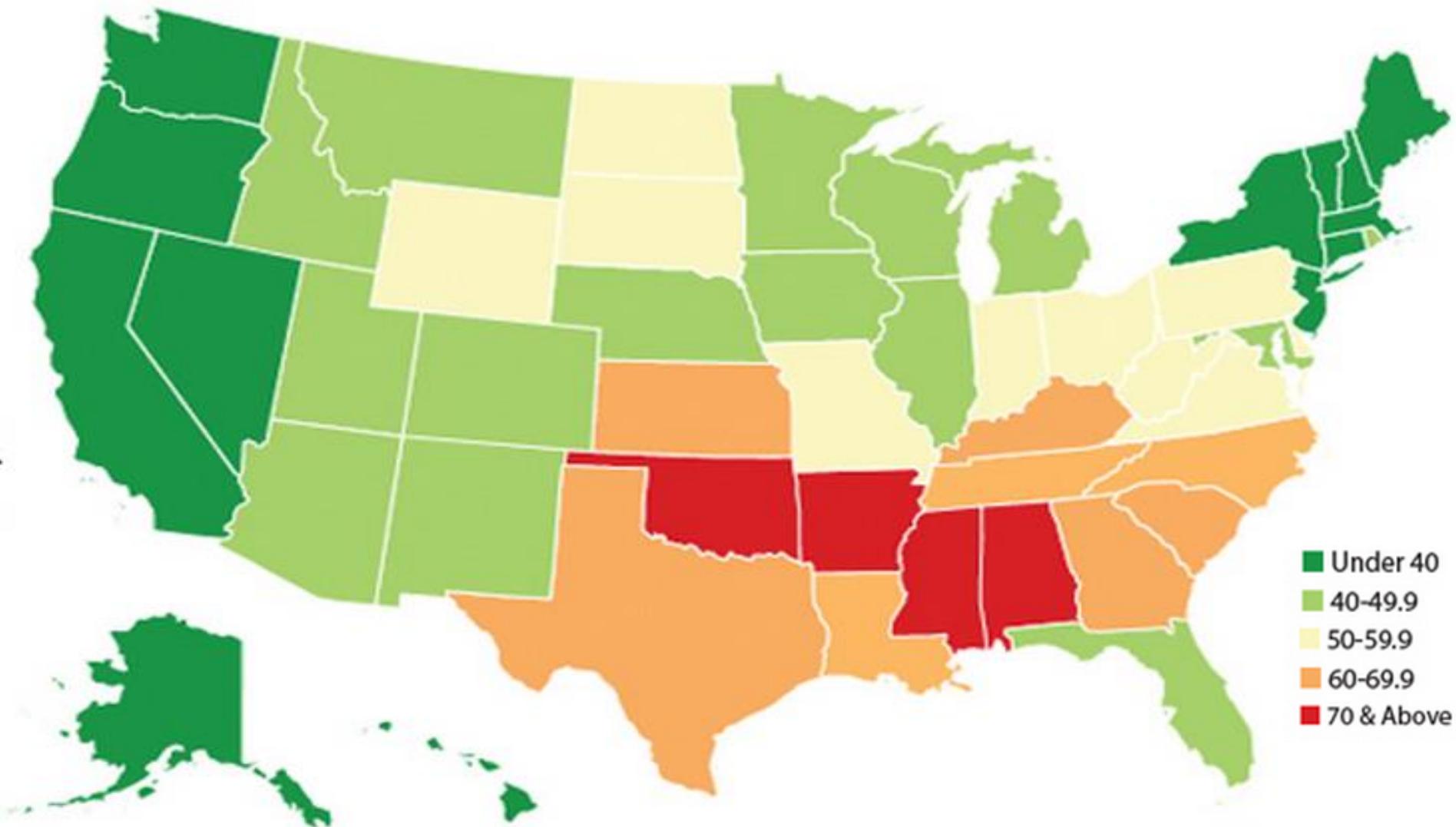
12 (.06)*

Proximal/Contemporaneous Processes



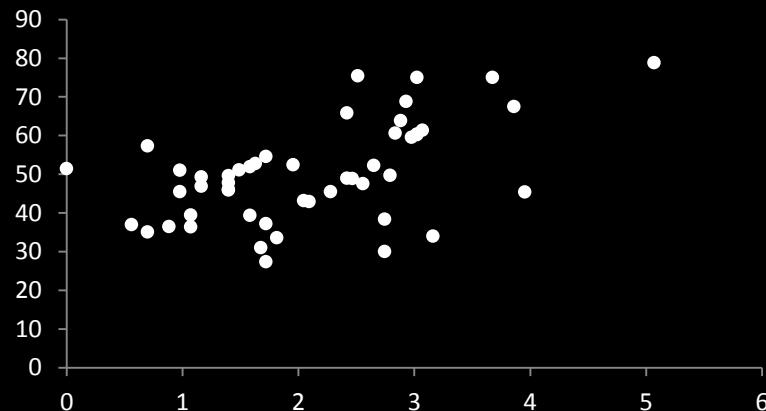
II. Other Levels

Tightness-Looseness in the US

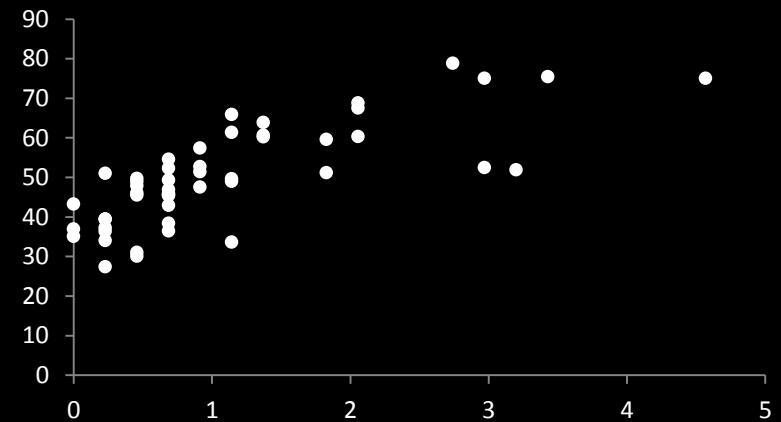


State Tightness-Looseness and Ecological Threat

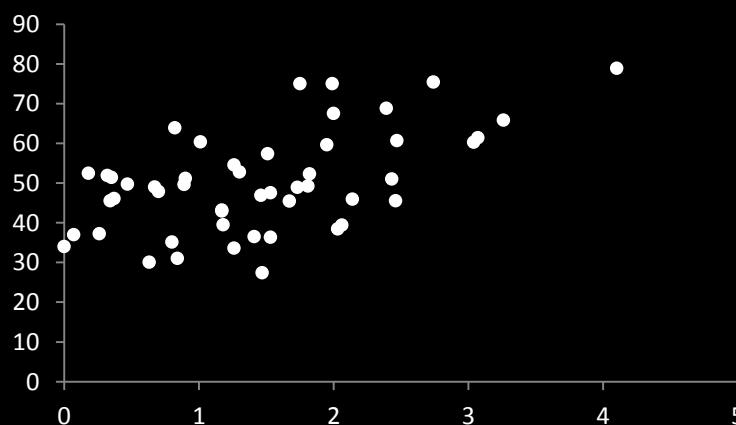
Food Insecurity



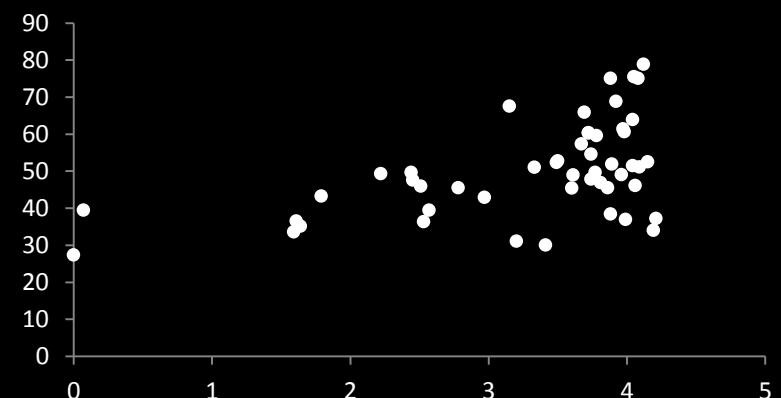
Storms and Floods



Disease Stress



Rural to Urban



State Tightness



Personality Conscientiousness

Social Organization

- More Law Enforcement
- Less Homelessness
- Less Divorce

Self Control

- Lower Drug Use
- Less Debt



State Looseness



Personality Openness

Creativity

- More Patents
- More Fine Artists

Equality

- Fewer EEOC claims
- More Minority-owned Businesses

SES:
Working and Upper Class

- Survey of 300 Working and Upper Class
 - MC: Higher general, childhood, and workplace tightness, situational constraint and desired tightness
 - Meaning of Rules
 - 5 words for: “rules”, “following rules”, “breaking rules”:
 - MC more positive valence, UP more negative valence
 - Threat
 - MC live in more threatening environments (zip code data, poverty and unemployment) and have higher self-reported threat
 - Individual Differences
 - MC higher conscientiousness and higher need for structure; lower creativity
- DDB Survey (N=31,104 from 1985-1998)
 - Perceptions of threat, strong norm enforcement, conscientiousness and ethnocentrism
- Children
 - 30 MC and UP brought to the lab
 - Reaction to “Max the Norm Violating Puppet”
 - MC greater amount of protest greater amount of protest No common language

Neural Level

Are there cultural differences in ERPs related to social norm violations?

Do they predict the TL trade-off (self control, ethnocentrism, creativity)?

Are they distinct from semantic violations



Mu, Kitayama, Han, Gelfand , 2015,
*Proceedings of the National
Academy of Sciences*

Social Norm Violation Task

Amanda is at the
Art Museum

+

She is

Dancing

Strongly inapp-Strongly
app
1---2---3---4

Amanda is at the
Park

+

She is

Dancing

Strongly inapp-Strongly
app
1---2---3---4

Amanda is at a
Tango Lesson

+

She is

Dancing

Strongly inapp-Strongly
app
1---2---3---4

1500ms

500-1000ms

350ms +50ms blank

350ms

500ms

1000ms

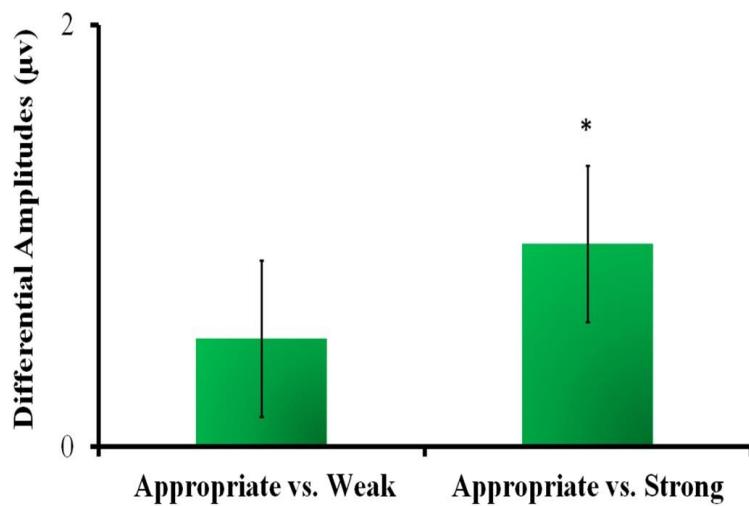
Strong

Weak

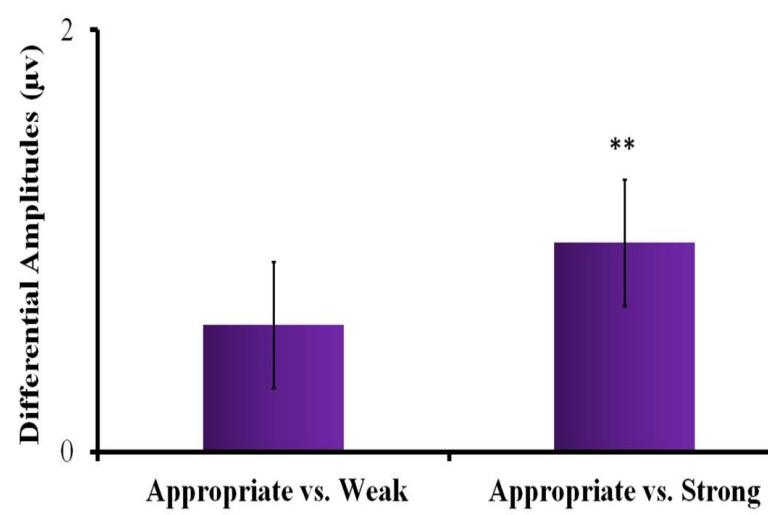
Appropriate

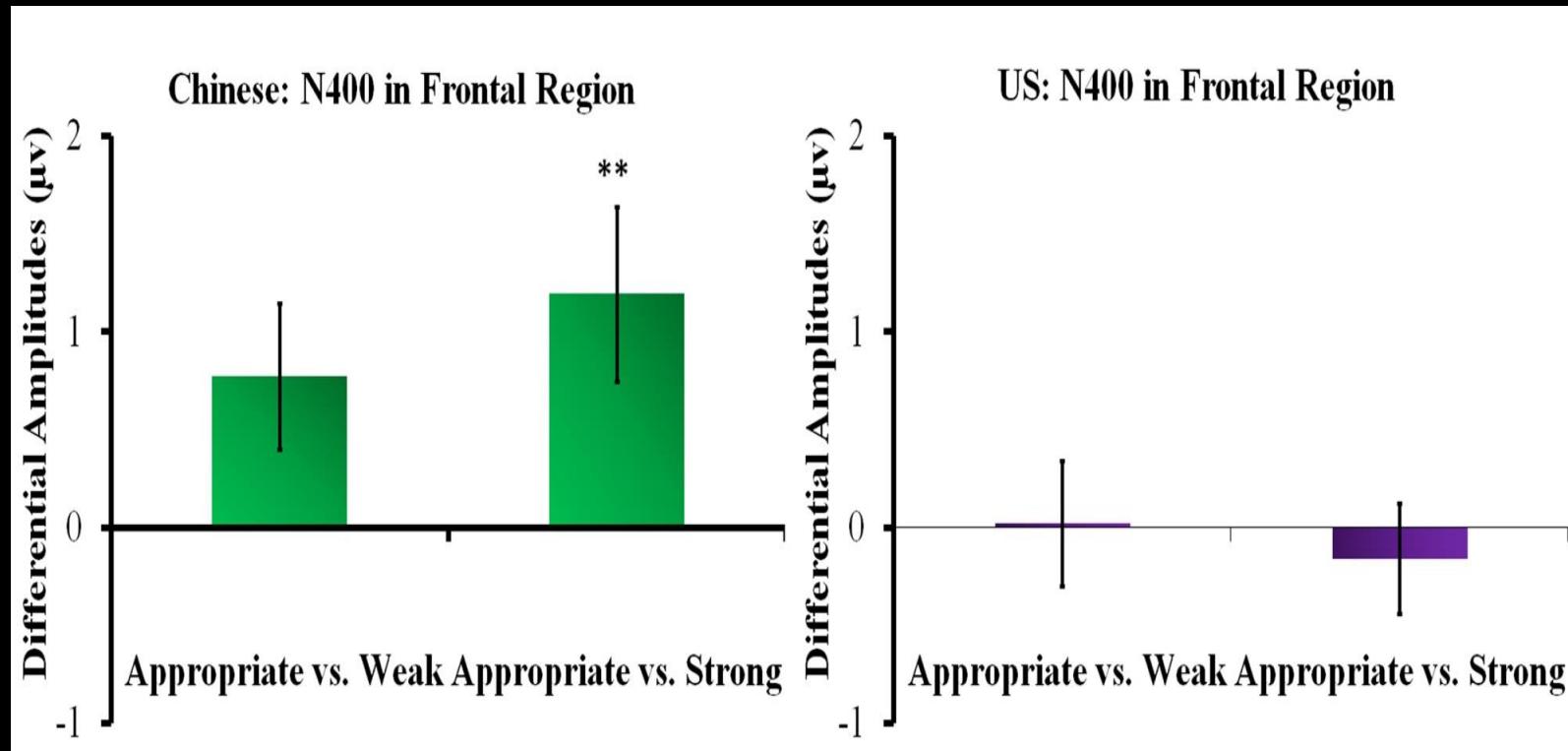
11trials x 3 conditions x 4 blocks

Chinese: N400 in Central Region

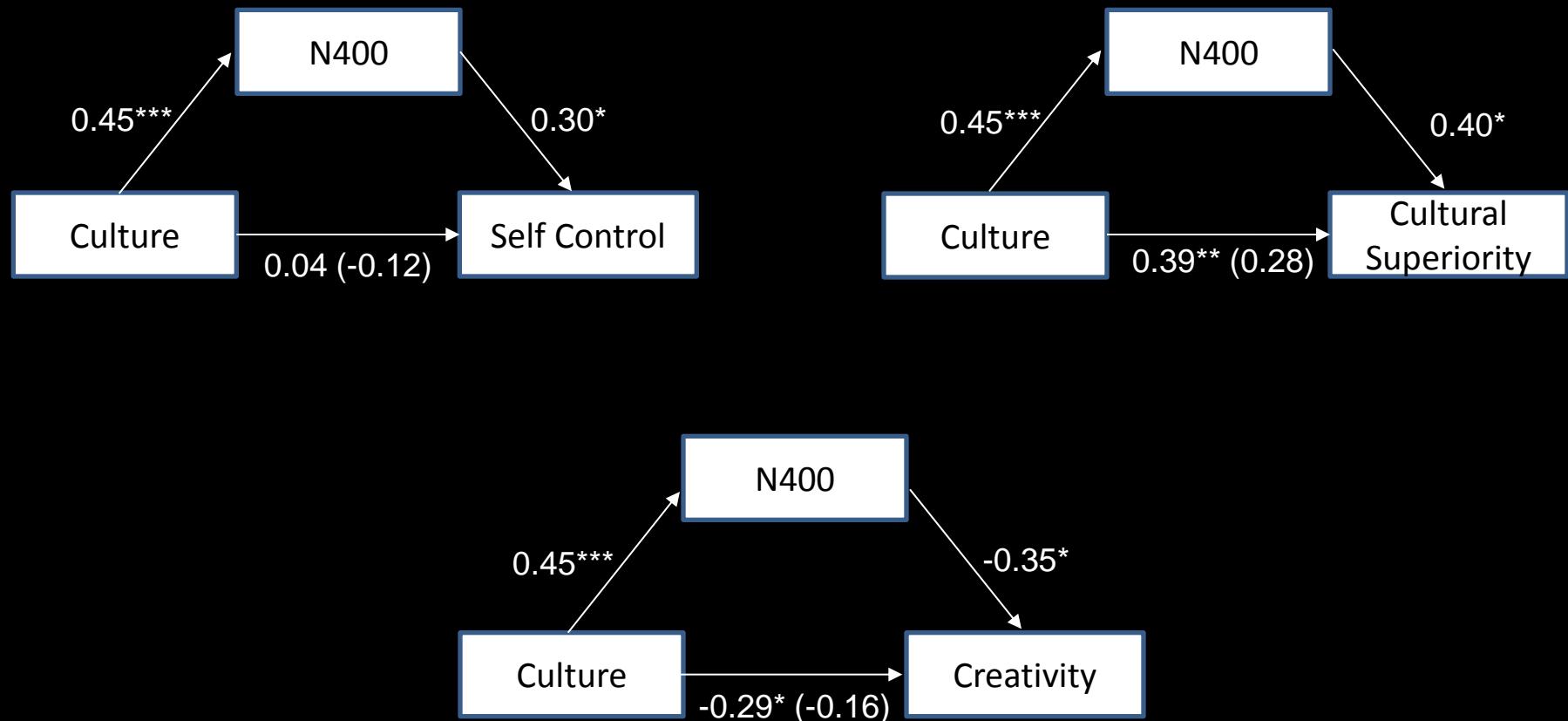


US: N400 in Central Region





Mediation Results



Threat and Brain Synchrony

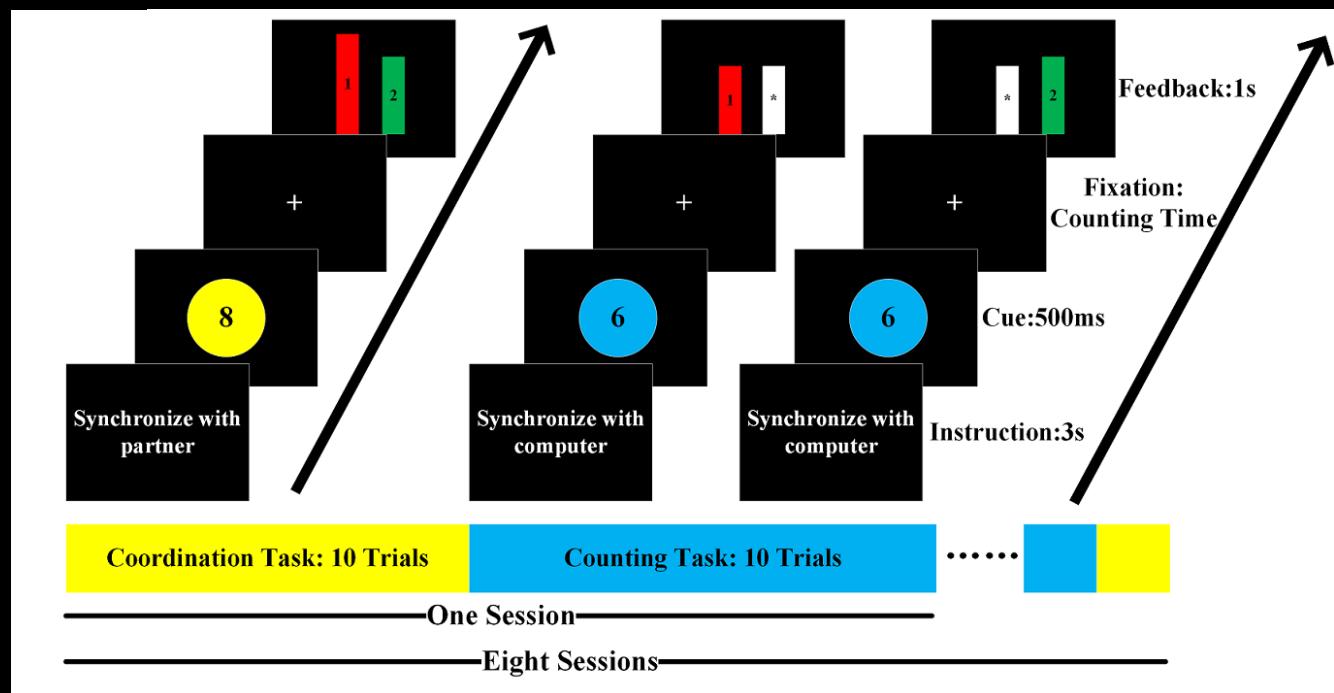
Do societal threats modulate coordination at the behavioral level?

Is interbrain synchronization (i.e. gamma oscillation) a key mechanism that helps humans to coordinate their actions in conditions of high societal threat?

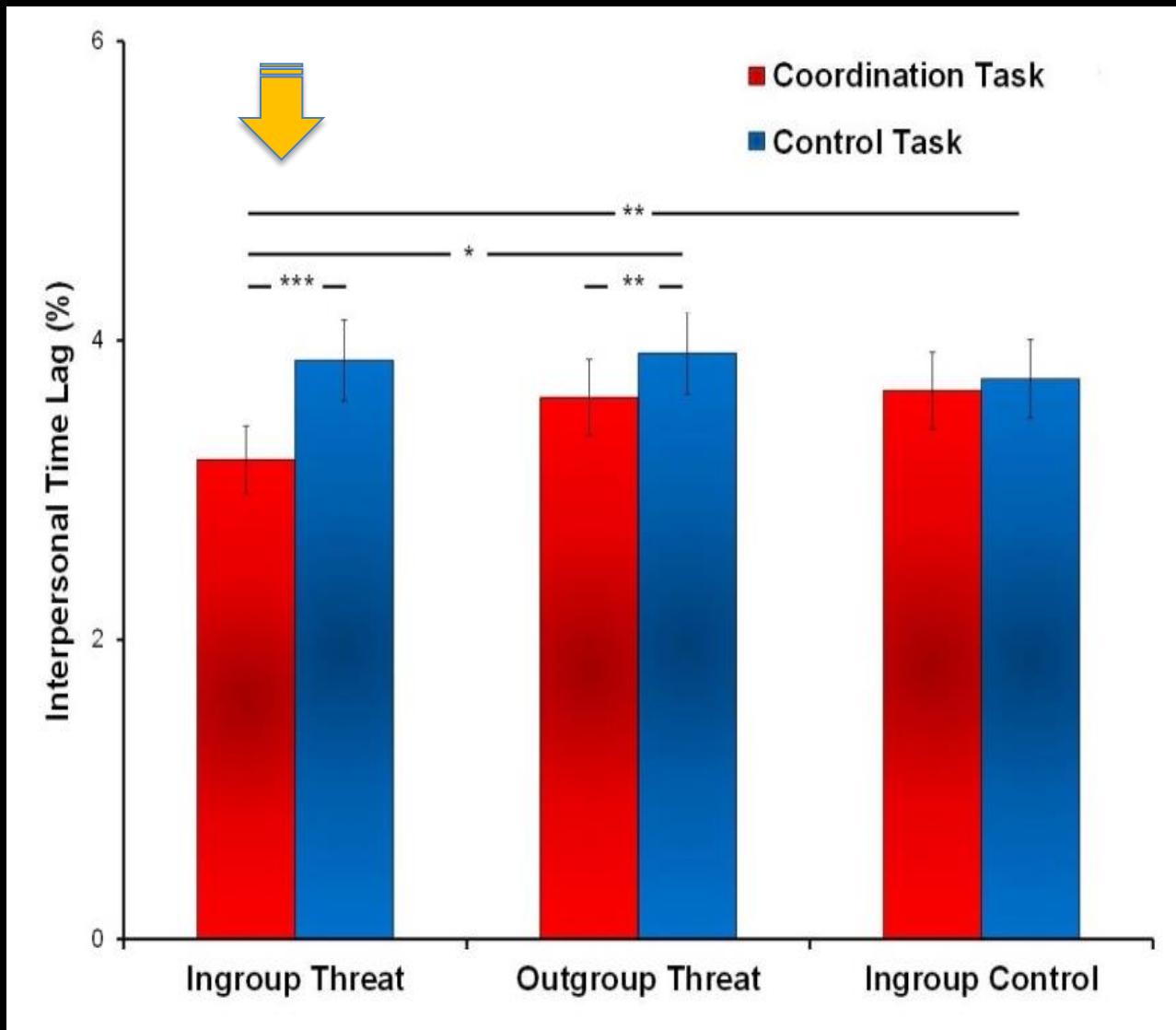


Priming conditions

Ingroup threat	Outgroup threat	Ingroup control
Coordination Task	Coordination Task	Coordination Task



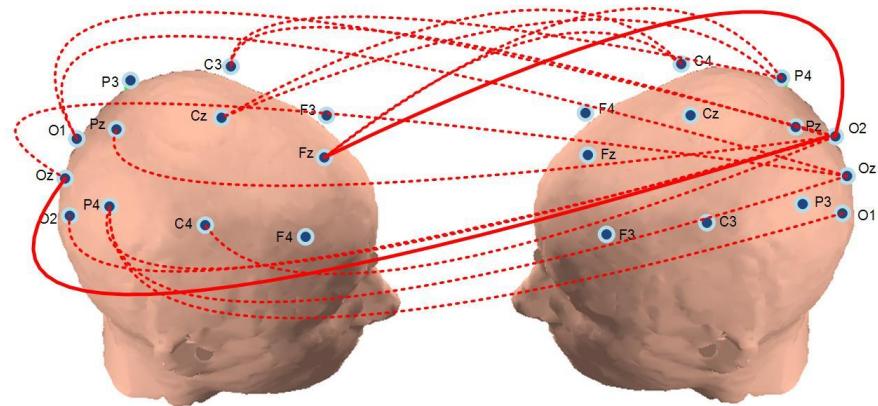
Behavioral Results



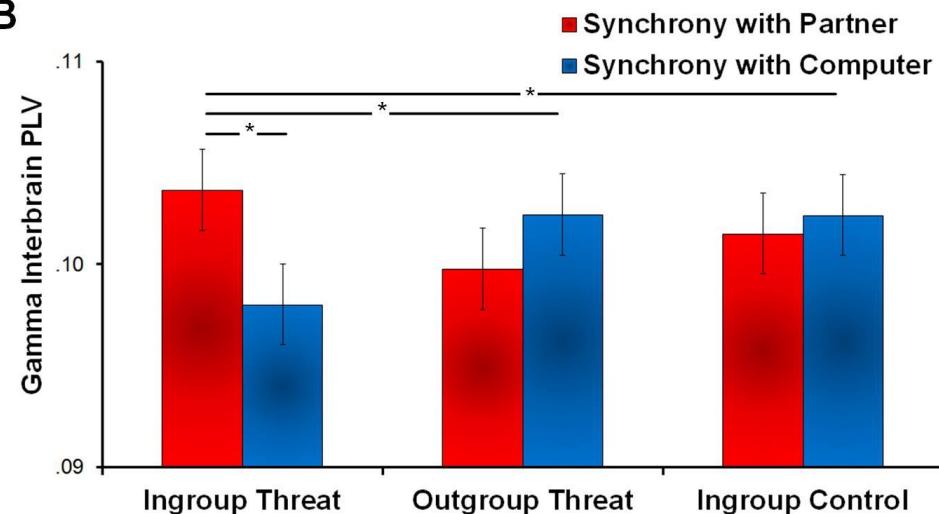
Brain Synchrony

A

Interaction of Prime and Task

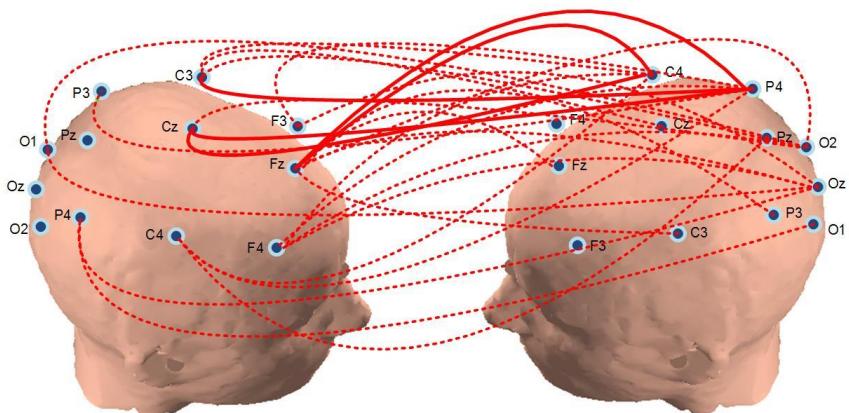


B



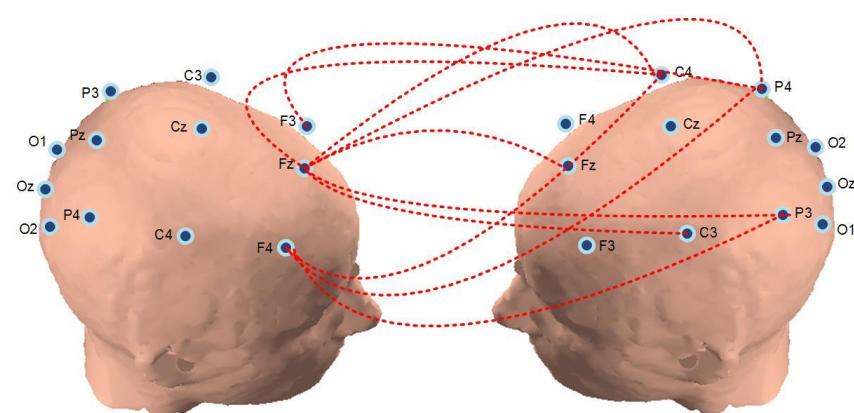
C

Ingroup Threat vs. Outgroup Threat

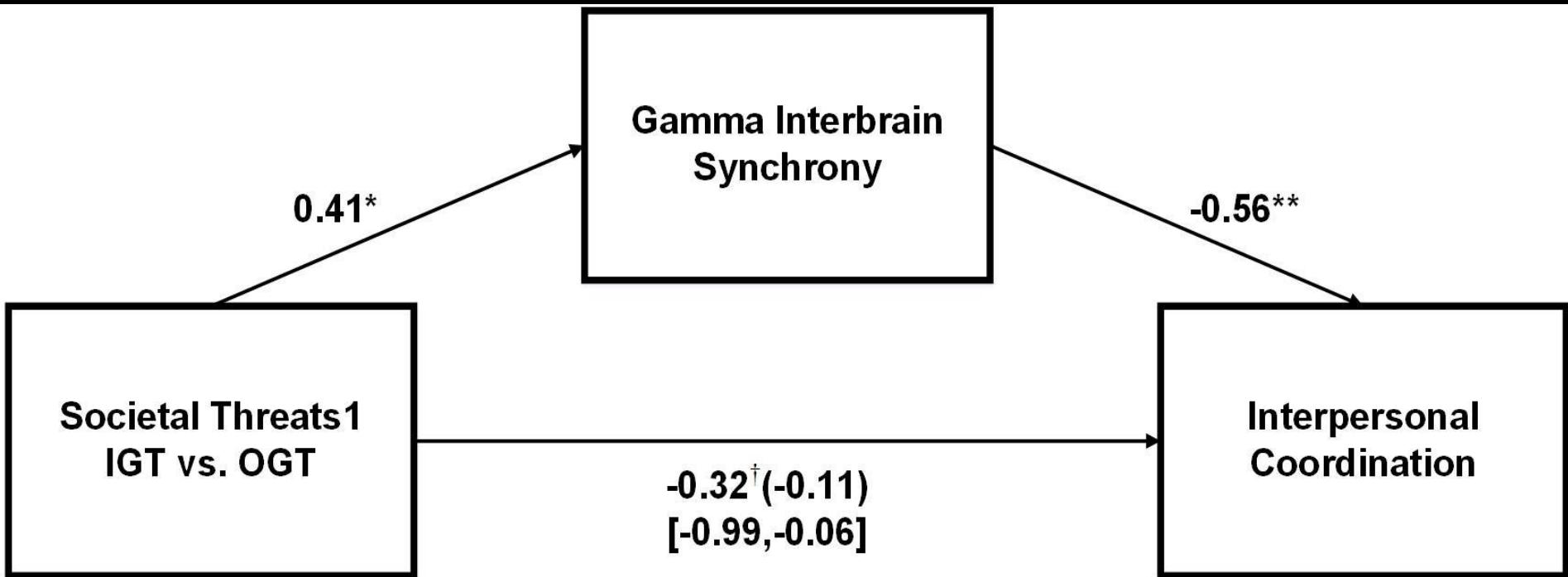


D

Ingroup Threat vs. Ingroup Control

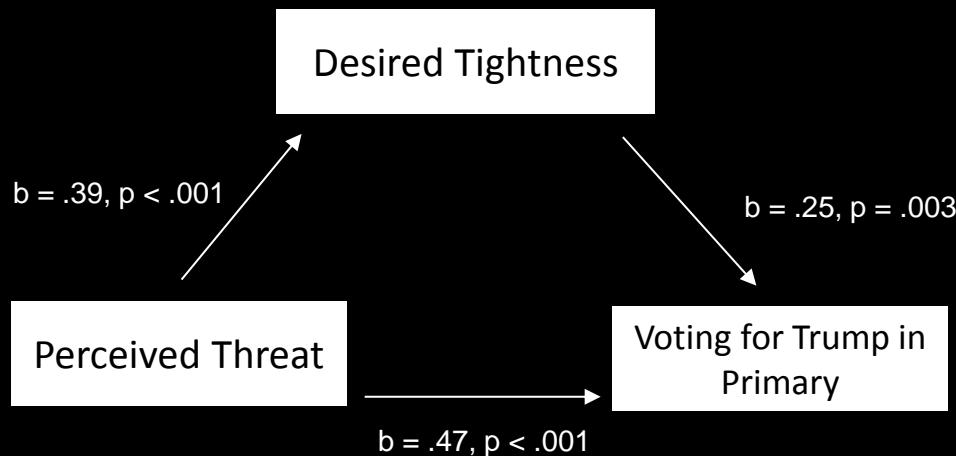


Mediation Results



How Leaders Use Threat to Tighten Groups

500 representative Americans about threat, tightness, and Trump.



Gelfand and Jackson, 2016, *Huffington Post*

POLICY & ETHICS

The Cultural Fault Line That Is Reshaping Global Politics

Research shows perceived threats from outside may be the unifying explanation behind Brexit, Trump and the strength of Le Pen in France

By Michele Gelfand, Joshua Conrad Jackson, Jesse R. Harrington, The Conversation US on May 2, 2017



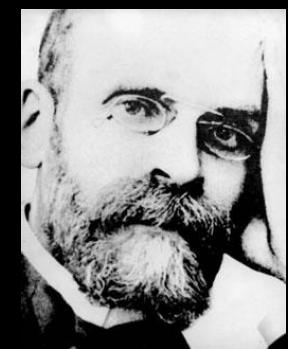
Marine Le Pen. Credit: Clement Mahoudeau Getty Images



Societal Well-Being

Does one achieve better outcomes for societies as a whole?

- Fromm: Escape from freedom
- Durkheim: Egoistic versus fatalistic suicide
- Etzioni: Balance between freedom and order

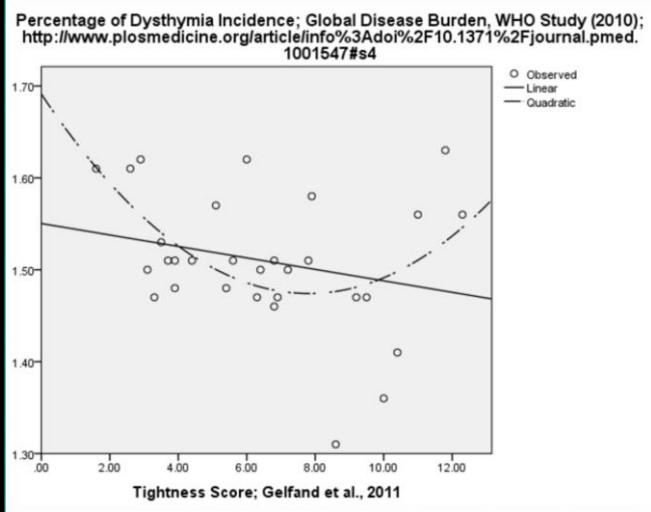


Prediction:

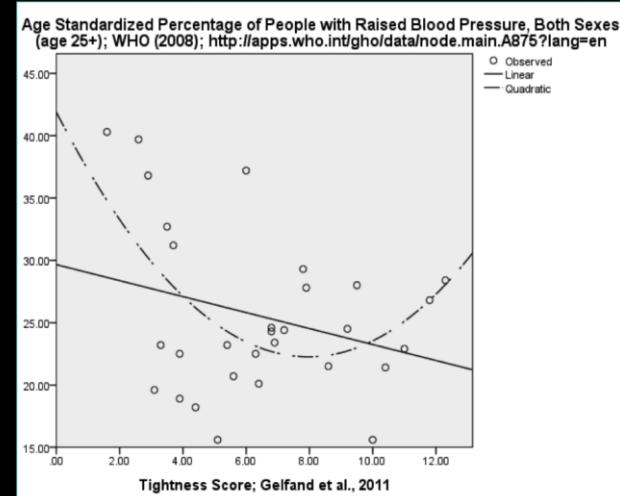
- Curvilinear effects on societal well-being: Extreme levels of tightness or looseness are maladaptive (Harrington, Boski, & Gelfand, PLOS1, 2015)



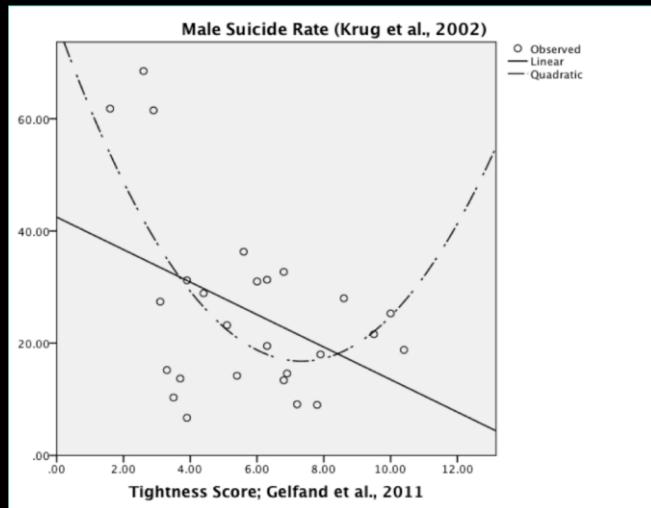
Depression



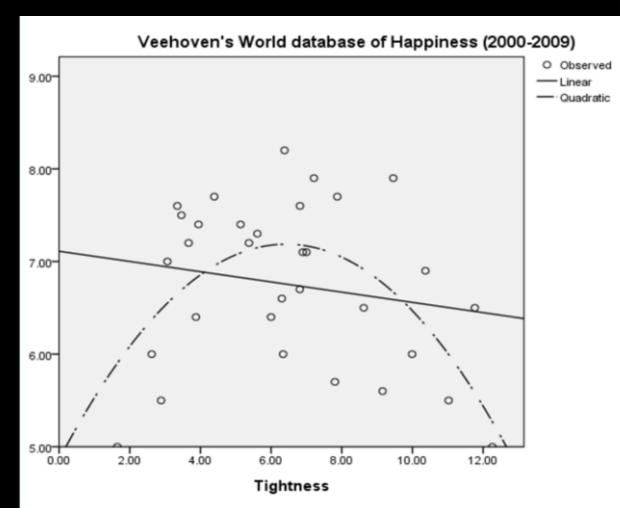
Blood Pressure



Suicide



Happiness



- TL Fractals
 - Religion
 - Work Organizations
 - Domains and Regions
- Developmental
- Clinical
- Culture change
 - Historical record
 - Rate of change
 - Pendulum shifts

