Individual differences in the motivation to comply across cultures: the impact of social obligation

Daniel W. Barrett a,*, Wilhelmina Wosinska b, Jonathan Butner a,1, Petia Petrova a, Malgorzata Gornik-Durose c, Robert B. Cialdini a

a Department of Psychology, Box 871104, Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ 85287, USA
b Social and Behavioral Sciences, Arizona State University – West, 4701 W. Thunderbird Road, Glendale, AZ 85306, USA
c Department of Psychology, University of Silesia, ul Bankowa 12, 40-007 Katowice, Poland

Received 10 February 2003; received in revised form 30 June 2003; accepted 11 August 2003
Available online 14 October 2003

Abstract

This study investigated the hypothesis that similar behavior in different cultures may mask individual differences in the reasons for that behavior. Most previous research on culture and behavior has examined culture-based differences in overt behavior. In contrast, the present research focused on cultural variation in reasons for identical behavior (that is, individual differences in motivation), rather than cultural variation in behavior itself. Specifically, we investigated the impact of personal individual–collective primacy, personal individualism–collectivism, and nationality on social obligation-based compliance in Poland and the United States. We found that, in both nations, collectivists were more likely to be motivated to comply with the same request for other-oriented rather than self-oriented reasons and that collective-primacy persons reported a greater tendency to comply with a request to help a stranger for reasons of social obligation to their group than did individual-primacy persons. Our research (1) indicates that individual differences in motivation may underlie similar behavior in different cultures; (2) points to an important new direction for research into individual differences across cultures; and (3) demonstrates the value of circumscribed measures of cultural orientation in the prediction of behavior above and beyond a global measure.

Keywords: Individualism; Collectivism; Social responsibility; IC primacy; Social obligation; Cross-cultural differences

This research was conducted while the first author was at Arizona State University.

*Corresponding author. Address: Annenberg School for Communication, University of Pennsylvania, 3620 Walnut St., Philadelphia, PA 19104, USA.

E-mail address: dbarrett@asc.upenn.edu (D.W. Barrett).

1 Jonathan Butner is now at the University of Utah.
1. Introduction

Most investigations into the culture–behavior relationship have focused on variations in behavior as a function of culture. In contrast, the present research takes a different approach to this relationship by examining culture-based individual differences not in the behavior itself but rather in the reasons given by actors with divergent cultural orientations for performing the same behavior. D’Andrade (1992) noted, in the context of anthropology, that there is a need to incorporate the concept of motivation into the study of culture. This sentiment is also applicable to social psychology, and the current research represents an example of the type of effort D’Andrade (1992) called for. The domain of social influence is particularly apropos for research on motivation and culture in part because the impact of culture on social influence processes has not been extensively studied, and in part because social influence research has generally not examined individual differences in people’s stated reasons for compliance.

1.1. Individualism/collectivism and individual–collective primacy

Despite some conceptual and methodological difficulties regarding its precise nature and dimensionality (e.g., Fijneman, Willemsen, & Poortinga, 1996; Kagitcibasi, 1994; Rhee, Uleman, & Lee, 1996), individualism/collectivism (IC) and related constructs, such as individual–collective primacy (ICP: Chen, Brockner, & Katz, 1998) and independent/interdependent self-construal (Singelis, 1994), continue to be useful in understanding a wide variety of cross-cultural differences in behavior and cognition (Cialdini, Wosinska, Barrett, Butner, & Gornik-Durose, 1999; Hofstede, 2001; Oyserman, Kemmelmeier, & Coon, 2002; Triandis, 1995). Although initially conceptualized as culture- or nation-level variables (Hofstede, 1980), IC and related constructs have been operationalized at the individual level and have been labeled idiocentrism and allocentrism (Triandis, Bontempo, Villareal, Asai, & Lucca, 1988; Triandis et al., 1993) or independent and interdependent construals of the self, respectively (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Within any given society, regardless of whether it is broadly construed as individualistic or collectivistic, people differ in their personal level of IC and related constructs (Chen, Brockner, & Chen, 2002).

Furthermore, the high level of generality of the IC construct can weaken its ability to successfully predict behaviors in specific domains (Levine, Norenzayan, & Philbrick, 2001; Smith & Bond, 1999). Therefore, researchers have been spurred to develop constructs and measures that examine specific aspects of IC or that focus on specific domains. For example, instruments have been developed for the assessment of independent and interdependent self-construals (Singelis, 1994), aspects of personhood in Israeli society (Oyserman, 1993), and likelihood of participation in rehabilitation services (Thompson, 1999). Similarly, Chen et al. (1998) constructed a circumscribed measure of IC, called individual–collective primacy, which taps the extent to which a person is willing to sacrifice personal benefits or interests to further the interests of the ingroup when the two sets of interests clash. In principle, specific attitudinal and dispositional measures should more closely relate to actual behavior than should more general ones. In fact, one of the reasons that early research on attitude–behavior relationships found weak correlations was that attitude measures were often vague and/or diffuse in nature, whereas the paired behavioral measures were more specific (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980).
The present research focused on the impact of two cultural constructs on the reasons of individuals to comply with a request: (1) IC as a broader construct underlying cross-cultural differences, and (2) ICP as a specific construct focusing on group vs. self-benefits. We selected ICP for inclusion in the present study of the reasons people comply with a request because we believed its more specific focus on group vs. self-benefits would better predict willingness to help a stranger—one of the behaviors of interest in the present study—than would a more general IC measure. That is, we sought to test the hypothesis that ICP would more clearly reflect this willingness than would IC.

1.2. Culture and reasons for compliance

Despite the veritable explosion of research demonstrating the impact of culture on human behavior, relatively little attention has been devoted to the relationship between culture, on the one hand, and social influence and persuasion, on the other (Cialdini et al., 1999; Han & Shavitt, 1994; Wosinska, Cialdini, Barrett, & Reykowski, 2001). The limited extent research has uncovered both similarities and differences across cultures in the conditions under which people may accede to a request (Bond & Smith, 1996; Cialdini, Wosinska, Barrett, Butner, & Gornik-Durose, 2001; Han & Shavitt, 1994; Kilbourne, 1989). Although this research may be informative regarding people’s reasons for complying, these reasons have not been explicitly examined. The purpose of the present research was to investigate the nature of one such reason to comply with a request: the pressure of social obligation.

Although research regarding the effects of culture on social influence processes has been relatively sparse (see Smith & Bond, 1999, for a summary), Cialdini et al. (1999) examined the effects of IC on compliance with a request to participate in a consumer preference survey resulting from two social influence principles: (1) social proof (a tendency to use others’ prior responses as the standard for one’s own future responding) and (2) commitment/consistency (a tendency to use one’s own prior responses as the standard for one’s future responding). Cialdini et al. (1999) found that individualists’ decisions to comply with a survey participation request were based primarily on information regarding their own history of compliance with similar requests: the more they had agreed in the past to such requests, the more they were willing to agree again. Collectivists’ decisions, in contrast, were based primarily on information regarding the prior compliance of their peers: likelihood of compliance rose with the percentage of classmates who had previously complied. In general, Cialdini et al. (1999) found support for the central distinction of the IC concept: the tendency for individualists to consider the personalized self in their decision-making more than collectivists, who tend to consider others relatively more. This distinction manifested itself in the tendency of individualists to use their own compliance histories as the basis for subsequent compliance decisions, whereas collectivists tended to use their peers’ histories.

This fundamental distinction between orientation toward the self versus toward others can be seen to manifest itself in other ways within the compliance process. For instance, in keeping with the inclination to consider the personalized self more than others in decision making, individualists’ motivations to help should be more egoistic, whereas collectivists’ motivations should be more other-oriented. Suggestive evidence in this regard comes from research by Moorman and Blakely (1995) indicating that collectivist tendencies were related to greater citizenship behaviors in an organizational setting. Similarly, Oyserman, Sakamoto, and Lauffer (1998) found a positive
relationship between collectivism and sense of social obligation. To explicitly test this hypothesis regarding the relationship between IC and reasons for providing assistance, we examined the stated motivations of individualists and collectivists for complying with a request for aid. Our prediction was that the motives of individualists and collectivists for exhibiting the identical behavior would be different: individualists’ motives should be more self-oriented, whereas collectivists’ motives should be more other-oriented.

Furthermore, there may be social influence implications of a specific dimension within the general IC concept. As we discussed earlier, Chen et al. (1998) have constructed an index of individual–collective primacy, which measures the extent to which persons are willing to sacrifice their own interests or goals for the sake of furthering the interests or goals of their group, when the two are in conflict. The ICP concept maps on to one of the fundamental features of IC as described by Triandis (1995, 1996): the difference between the relative importance assigned to group and personal goals by individualists and collectivists. Within certain contexts, ICP may more precisely predict compliance with a request for assistance when group interests are consistent with the request. For example, if the group’s reputation is at stake, and failure to comply with a request would adversely affect it, then collective-primacy persons should be more willing to comply than should individual-primacy persons. Providing such assistance to others—that is, helping them—is one way in which people can manifest other-orientedness. As a result of its (1) greater specificity and (2) its stronger emphasis on choosing between group and self interests, ICP should better predict such behavior.

1.3. Culture and pro-social action

In general, existing research suggests that collectivists help more than do individualists (Bonforno, Lobel, & Triandis, 1990; Clark, Oullette, Powell, & Milberg, 1987; Moorman & Blakely, 1995). Nevertheless, since the former tend to make sharper ingroup/outgroup distinctions than do the latter (Brewer & Gardner, 1996; Triandis, 1995), and may apply different distributive rules to each (e.g., Leung & Bond, 1984), collectivists should be less willing than individualists to help strangers who might be considered outgroup members. However, given that collectivists tend to identify more closely with ingroups than do individualists, they may be more prone to helping strangers when their ingroup reputation depends upon such helping. In particular, those collectivists for whom ingroup identification is especially salient—persons high on ICP—should be more willing to help under these conditions.

1.4. The present study

The overall purpose of the present research project was to examine the role of social obligation in reasons for compliance with a request across cultures. First, we examined how agreement to comply with a request would be differentially related to specific individual differences in motivation (i.e., self-oriented vs. other-oriented motivations). We asked participants to indicate whether they would comply with a request for survey participation (1) in order to learn something for yourself vs. learn something for your friends; (2) in order to have fun vs. to be a good citizen; and (3) in order to feel good vs. to help the interviewer. The first item of each pair reflected self-oriented reasons for complying, whereas the second indicated other-oriented reasons. We hy-
pothesized that collectivists would place greater emphasis on pro-social or other-oriented reasons for complying with a request than would their more individualistic counterparts, and thus the latter would favor self-oriented reasons. Although we believed it possible that ICP would similarly predict responding, we focused primarily on IC for this set of dependent measures. We reasoned that the more global IC construct would be related to self- vs. other-focus more generally, whereas ICP’s greater specificity and closer association with choosing between competing goals weigh against such a relationship. Finally, we expected that Poles, because they tend more toward collectivism than do Americans, would more frequently depict their compliance as due to other-oriented reasons. Consistent with Cialdini et al.’s (1999) findings, we predicted that nation differences would be accounted for by IC differences.

Second, we assessed the extent to which feelings of personal obligation to help a complete stranger would vary with IC primacy, and how those feelings would be impacted when the reputation of one’s ingroup is contingent upon whether or not assistance is proffered. We expected that feelings of personal obligation to comply with a request from a stranger would be lower for collective-primacy persons than for individual-primacy persons. However, feelings of personal obligation should be greater among collective-primacy persons than among individual-primacy persons if helping this person would uphold the reputation of the ingroup. The latter’s compliance with a request from this person should be less sensitive to the manipulation of ingroup reputation. We further expected that the more circumscribed ICP measure—because of its conceptual closeness to group membership—would predict differential responding better than would IC when group reputation depended on such compliance than when it did not. Finally, we predicted that ICP would be more strongly related to responses on the personal obligation with group reputation items than to responses on those not mentioning group reputation.

Although we did not include hypotheses explicitly dealing with national differences in the obligation to help a stranger dependent measures, we suspected that some would be found. Based upon the findings of Cialdini et al. (1999), we expected that much of this difference, if discovered, would be explained by underlying differences in IC or ICP. However, it is also possible that other national cultural factors, such as culture-bound norms of social obligation, may impact participants’ responding, independent of IC. Since we were not aware of any existing, relevant data regarding such cultural differences between the US and Poland, we refrained from generating specific hypotheses.

2. Method

2.1. Participants

Participants were 355 undergraduates in several psychology classes at Arizona State University in the United States (N = 166) and in education, management, and history classes at the University of Silesia in Poland (N = 189). They were told that the experimenters were studying (a) willingness to participate in a survey, (b) helping someone who you (the participant) do not know at all, and (c) perceptions of social relationships (this section consisted of the IC and ICP measures). The US sample included 34 males and 130 females (two participants did not specify their gender), whereas the Polish sample included 35 males and 154 females. The unequal gender
distribution only reflected course enrollment. As no main or interaction effects involving gender reached statistical significance, this factor will not receive further consideration.

2.2. Procedure

Participants completed the study in group sessions. The study was briefly introduced and participants read a scenario in which they imagined being approached outside their university student union and asked to participate in a consumer preference survey for the Coca Cola company (see Cialdini et al., 1999, for the actual text). They were told that this survey would take about 40 min and would involve taste-testing and answering questions.

After reading the scenario, participants responded to a series of items incorporating the major independent and dependent variables. First, they indicated their willingness to comply with the survey request. Next, items assessed motivations to comply with this survey request, feelings of personal obligation for helping a stranger, and the impact of group reputation on personal obligation for helping a stranger. Finally, participants completed the Bierbrauer, Meyer, and Wolfradt (1994) Cultural Orientation Scale (COS) as a measure of personal IC and the Chen et al. (1998) IC primacy items. All materials were translated from English to Polish by a bilingual native Polish speaker and then independently backtranslated into English by a second bilingual native Polish speaker. The back translation was checked against the original in collaboration with a native English speaker, and modifications were made to the Polish version as needed.

2.3. Measures

2.3.1. Nation

Participants’ nation of origin was varied by administering the experimental materials to native students in the United States and Poland.

2.3.2. Personal IC orientation

Participants’ personal IC orientation was measured by the Bierbrauer et al. (1994) COS. Bierbrauer et al. (1994) reported a Cronbach’s alpha reliability of 0.86 for this scale. We selected this scale for two reasons. First, the scale had been validated as a measure of personal IC on European respondents. Second, the scale was effectively used by Cialdini et al. (1999) for a related study.

The COS consists of 13 pairs of items designed to assess both the perceived presence of individualistic/collectivistic tendencies in a culture and the respondent’s evaluation of those tendencies. The first question in each pair measures the participant’s perception of the frequency of specific behaviors in the participant’s native country, such as consulting one’s family before making an important decision. Responses were made on a 7-point scale ranging from 0 (not at all) to 6 (always). The second question in each pair assesses the individual’s evaluation of this be-

---

2 Although the COS treats IC as if it were a single dimension, we recognize that there are many divergent yet valid tools and methods for measuring IC and IC-like constructs. We do not wish to imply that the COS captures the totality of the construct or that it is appropriate for all studies and populations.
havior, using a 7-point scale ranging from 0 (very bad) to 6 (very good). The average of the responses to all 26 items served as the measure of overall IC.

2.3.3. IC primacy
The 8-item individual–collective primacy measure was borrowed from Chen et al. (1998). The scale is designed to assess how willing a person is to sacrifice his or her own interests to those of the group when the two are in conflict (Chen et al., 1998). Two sample items are “I usually sacrifice my self-interest for the benefit of the group I am in” and “I will stay in a group if they need me, even when I’m not happy with the group”. Responses were provided on a 7-point scale ranging from 0 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree).

2.4. Dependent measures

2.4.1. Willingness to comply with the survey request
Participants indicated their willingness to comply with the consumer preference survey on a 9-point scale ranging from 0 (no likelihood) to 8 (very high likelihood).

2.4.2. Reasons for compliance
Three items assessed respondents’ reasons for agreeing to comply with the request to participate in the survey. Each item was presented as a graded choice between two possible motivations, with participants indicating the extent to which the two options represented reasons why they might want to participate. For each item, one anchor reflected an ego- or self-focused reason (such as to have fun) for agreeing to comply, whereas the other anchor indicated an other-oriented reason (such as to help the interviewer). The first item was anchored with to learn something for yourself and to learn something for your friends, and the midpoint of the 9-point scale was labeled both equally important. Thus, participants, in effect, assigned weights to the two options. The anchors for the second and third items were to be a good citizen by helping to create better products for society/to have fun and to feel good about yourself/to help the interviewer to meet his/her job responsibilities, respectively. We created these three measures so that they would tap the same self-versus other-oriented compliance dimension. That is, we expected the three measures to be correlated with one another and we planned to combine them into a single measure prior to analysis.

2.4.3. Obligation to help a complete stranger
Respondents answered two questions about the role of personal obligation in deciding whether to help a stranger in need. The first asked “How personally obligated would you feel to assist someone who is in need of help even if you don’t know this person at all?” Responses were provided on a 9-point scale ranging from 0 (not at all) to 8 (very much). The second asked a related question: “To what extent is the following true about you? The more someone who you do not know at all needs your help, the more personally obligated you feel to help that person”. Responses were provided on a 9-point scale ranging from 0 (not at all true) to 8 (very much true).

2.4.4. Obligation to help a complete stranger when group reputation is at stake
Participants read “If someone who you do not know at all needs help from your group, but no one in your group has yet provided it...” and then answered two questions. First they indicated,
on a 9-point scale ranging from 0 (*not at all*) to 8 (*very much*), “How personally obligated would you feel to help that person *in order to uphold the reputation of your group*?” Second, they responded to “The more someone who you do not know at all needs your help, the more personally obligated you feel to help that person *in order to uphold the reputation of your group*”. Responses were provided on a 9-point scale ranging from 0 (*not at all true*) to 8 (*very much true*).

3. Results

3.1. Correlation between IC and ICP

As expected, IC and ICP were correlated ($r(355) = 0.32, p < 0.001$) across nations, and within nations (US: $r(166) = 0.38, p < 0.001$; Poland: $r(189) = 0.28, p < 0.001$, indicating that the two constructs are indeed related to one another.

3.2. Nation, personal IC orientation, and IC primacy

Surprisingly, the two nations did not differ on IC or on IC primacy. The means for the US and Poland for IC were, respectively, 3.48 (SD = 0.46) and 3.51 (SD = 0.34), $t(353) = -0.68$ ns. For IC primacy, the means were 3.01 (SD = 0.65) for the US and 3.01 (SD = 0.78) for Poland, $t(353) = 0.083$ ns.

3.3. Willingness to comply

IC had a main effect such that more collectivistically oriented persons were more likely than more individualistically oriented persons to comply ($F(1,174) = 7.67, p < 0.01$). In addition, Poles were marginally more likely to comply than were Americans ($F(1,174) = 3.47, p = 0.06$). ICP did not predict compliance, ($F(1,174) = 1.01$ ns).

3.4. Reasons for compliance

We hypothesized that collectivists and collective-primacy persons would be motivated to comply for other-oriented reasons, whereas individualists and individual-primacy persons would be more likely to provide egoistic or self-oriented reasons. Unexpectedly, the three items used to assess reasons for compliance were not linearly correlated. However, when regressions designed to detect nonlinear relationships were conducted among the three items (each item predicted by the other two plus their squared values), the polynomial terms were significant ($p < 0.05$). Since these relationships were monotonic, a transformation which maximized the relationships among the variables was identified (using the statistical package ARC). This power transformation was applied to the items prior to further analysis ($^1.086$ for learning for oneself/one’s friends, $^1.289$ citizen/fun, and $^1.040$ for feel good/help interviewer). These items were additively combined to form a composite representing self- vs. other-oriented reasons for compliance.

We then performed a regression analysis on the composite score, with IC, ICP, and nation as predictors. For the overall analysis, $F(3, 350) = 4.66, p < 0.001$, with IC as the only significant
predictor of reasons for compliance \((t(354) = 3.37, p < 0.001; \text{ for } ICP, \ t(354) = 0.38 \text{ ns}; \text{ for } \text{nation}, \ t(354) = -0.71 \text{ ns})\).  

3.5. Obligation to help a complete stranger

We expected the two items concerned with the participant’s feelings of personal obligation to help a stranger who is in need of assistance to be correlated, and they were \((r(353) = 0.36, p < 0.001)\). Therefore, we additively combined them into a single personal obligation scale. We hypothesized that individual-primacy persons would be more likely to feel obligated to help a stranger than would collective-primacy persons. Using a general linear model, the combined personal obligation scale was predicted from IC, ICP, and nation, and the interaction terms between IC and nation and ICP and nation. Since both interaction terms were nonsignificant in the initial analysis, the analysis was rerun without them. Whereas ICP significantly predicted feelings of personal obligation to help a stranger \((F(1, 349) = 10.43, p < 0.001)\), neither nation \((F(1, 349) < 1 \text{ ns})\) nor IC \((F(1, 349) < 1 \text{ ns})\) did. In contrast to our prediction, collective-primacy persons felt more obligated to help a complete stranger when group reputation was not mentioned than did individual-primacy persons.

3.6. Obligation to help a complete stranger when group reputation is at stake

The next two items introduced an additional motivation for helping a complete stranger: upholding the reputation of one’s group. As expected, the items were correlated \((r(354) = 0.71, p < 0.001)\), and therefore they were combined to form an overall group reputation scale. We hypothesized that collective-primacy persons would experience greater feelings of personal obligation when their group reputation was at stake than would individual-primacy persons, but that the more general IC scale would not do so. Using a general linear model, we predicted the summed scale from IC, ICP, nation, and the nation by IC and nation by ICP interactions. The interaction terms did not achieve statistical significance and were dropped from the final analysis. ICP significantly predicted feelings of obligation when the group reputation was at stake, \((F(1, 350) = 27.07, p < 0.001)\), nation did so at a marginally significant level \((F(1, 349) = 2.58, p = 0.109)\), but IC did not \((F(1, 350) < 1 \text{ ns})\).

Although collective-primacy persons were more likely to help under all of the conditions, we expected that making group reputation dependent on compliance would tap ICP more than would personal obligation without group reputation. In other words, ICP should even more strongly predict responses to the personal obligation with group reputation items than to the personal obligation items without it. In support of our hypothesis, the effect sizes were more than two times higher for the group reputation questions (for the straight personal obligation questions, \(\omega^2 = 0.029\) and for the group reputation questions, \(\omega^2 = 0.072\)). Thus, invoking group reputation provided additional motivation for collective-primacy persons to offer assistance.

---

3 We performed a parallel analysis on a nontransformed composite score and obtained similar findings.
4. Discussion

The current research explored important new social psychological territory. First, in contrast to most prior cross-cultural social psychological research, which has investigated culture-based differences in behavior, our research focused primarily on culture-based reasons for the same behavior. Psychologists and other researchers have previously uncovered innumerable discrepancies in overt behavior across cultures (for a comprehensive account, see Smith & Bond, 1999); however, we know very little about the ways in which divergent motivations impact similar behavior across individuals who vary in cultural orientation. Second, it examined the differential predictive power of a global versus circumscribed measure of cultural orientation.

The present study produced a number of intriguing results. First of all, consistent with Cialdini et al. (1999), collectivists were more likely to comply than were individualists. As expected, the more global cultural orientation construct, IC, but not the more specific one, ICP, predicted differential responding. This pattern of findings provides evidence that IC and ICP are conceptually and empirically distinct (even if partially overlapping).

Second, as expected, IC impacted participants’ stated reasons for agreeing with the request for survey participation, but neither ICP nor nation did. That is, collectivists explained their motivation to comply as other-oriented more frequently than did individualists, who typically depicted their motivation as self-oriented. The fact that nation was not significantly related to reasons for compliance may be explained by the lack of nation differences in IC. Cialdini et al. (1999) found that nation predicted differences in compliance, but that the nation differences were accounted for by IC differences. In the present study, the nations did not differ on IC or on reasons for compliance.

Third, as hypothesized, ICP, not IC, predicted feelings of obligation to help a stranger, and did so regardless of the relationship between helping and group reputation. We expected that collective-primacy persons would be less willing than individual-primacy persons to help a stranger unless that helping was somehow tied to the person’s group identity. Based on previous research, people with a more collectivistic orientation, although perhaps more willing to help ingroup members than more individualistically oriented persons, were expected to feel less obligated to assist a stranger. What we found, in contrast, was that collective-primacy persons were more willing to help this person, regardless of the salience of group reputation.

There are a number of possible explanations for this finding. On the one hand, perhaps the language we selected did not specify clearly enough that the person needing help was in fact an outgroup member. The item stated that the person was unknown to the respondent and, of course, people are often unfamiliar with many, and sometime most, ingroup members, depending on the size and nature of the group. Collective-primacy persons may have assumed ingroup membership, and thus felt more obligated to help that person. In hindsight, a manipulation check which measured perceptions of the identity of the stranger, such as perceived group membership and/or social distance from the participant and his/her group, may have uncovered the mediator(s) of this outcome. One potentially fruitful direction for future research would be to investigate differences between individualists and collectivists in their assimilation of persons of unknown identity to their ingroup: would collectivistically oriented persons be more (or less) likely to assimilate than individualistically oriented persons? A related explanation is that the phrase someone who you do not know at all was not sufficiently salient to our respondents, and its
impact obscured by the more potent term *in need*. That is, collectivists may have been more willing to help the stranger because the stranger was described as *in need*, irrespective of his/her status as a stranger. It is possible that the expected pattern of results would have occurred had we dropped this qualifier. ⁴

On the other hand, perhaps this unexpected outcome occurred because the presentation of a stranger as a person in need of help made the ingroup salient, thereby activating group reputational issues, even when they were not explicitly mentioned. That is, merely describing the person in need as a stranger may have indirectly primed group membership, leading to greater behavioral intentions toward helping among the collectivists.

Fourth, when we made group membership an explicit consideration, the magnitude of the impact of ICP on the likelihood of compliance was greatly enhanced in the expected direction. That is, the heightened salience of group reputation, along with the concomitant risk of losing group face if the social obligation to help was not fulfilled, engendered greater motivation to help on the part of collective-primacy persons. No such pattern was found for IC. Not only is this finding in keeping with the greater conceptual closeness between group membership and ICP than with the broader IC construct, it also strengthens our argument about the potential importance of employing more circumscribed measures when tapping into IC-related constructs.

Somewhat surprisingly, and in contrast to the Cialdini et al. (1999) research, the US and Poland did not differ in their levels of IC. Although we were interested primarily in individual-level differences based on cultural orientation, we expected to see nation differences as well. This lack of cross-national difference may be due to the fact that Poland is undergoing rapid socioeconomic changes as it transitions to a market-based economy (see Reykowski, 1998). Alternatively, this result may be characteristic of the particular sample drawn and not reflective of the level of collectivism in Poland as a whole (see Chen et al., 2002, for a discussion of sampling issues with respect to IC).

When we examine the overall pattern of results, we find that IC and ICP largely predicted different items. Whereas IC was most predictive of the reasons people gave for complying with a request for survey participation, ICP was the best predictor of willingness to help a stranger, whether or not group reputation was at stake. This pattern of results suggests that IC and ICP, although conceptually related, are empirically differentiable.

We draw several conclusions from this research. First, our findings demonstrate the value in going beyond analysis of cross-cultural differences in *behavior* by examining culture-based differences in the *motivations* underlying identical behavior across cultures. At least in the contexts examined in this study, collectivists were more pro-socially oriented than their more individualistic counterparts. Collectivists more heavily stressed other-oriented reasons for helping, whereas collective-primacy persons were more likely to help a stranger, than their more individualistic counterparts. Second, in keeping with earlier research examining attitude–behavior relationships (e.g., Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980), more circumscribed measures of IC and related constructs show promise of being better predictors of specific social behaviors than do more global IC instruments. Clearly, the utility of such broad constructs is limited, and researchers interested in probing culture-based differences should be judicious in their selection and use of IC-related measures. Our

⁴ We thank an anonymous reviewer for suggesting this possibility.
research suggests that within-nation variation in cultural orientation (individual differences within a culture) can be more strongly related to behavior than is cross-national variation (see also Cialdini et al., 1999).

As with most empirical work, whether it be cross-cultural or otherwise, caution is in order before attempting to generalize from the present research. The generalizability of our findings is, of course, limited in several ways. On the measurement side, we included only one global IC instrument and one more specific one out of a much larger set of possible scales. On the sample side, we recruited participants from only two nations, and these participants were largely restricted to college-age individuals. Thus, strong confidence in the extent to which our findings are representative of findings produced from other scales, other nations, and other age-groups must await further research.

References


