



ELSEVIER



# Culture and social behavior

Joseph Henrich<sup>1,2</sup>

Comparative research from diverse societies shows that human social behavior varies immensely across a broad range of domains, including cooperation, fairness, trust, punishment, aggressiveness, morality and competitiveness. Efforts to explain this global variation have increasingly pointed to the importance of packages of social norms, or institutions. This work suggests that institutions related to anonymous markets, moralizing religions, monogamous marriage and complex kinship systems fundamentally shape human psychology and behavior. To better tackle this, work on cultural evolution and culture-gene coevolution delivers the tools and approaches to develop theories to explain these psychological and behavioral patterns, and to understand their relationship to culture and human nature.

## Addresses

<sup>1</sup> University of British Columbia, Department of Psychology, Canada<sup>2</sup> University of British Columbia, Department of Economics, CanadaCorresponding author: Henrich, Joseph ([henrich@psych.ubc.ca](mailto:henrich@psych.ubc.ca))**Current Opinion in Behavioral Sciences** 2015, **3**:84–89This review comes from a themed issue on **Social behavior**Edited by **Molly J Crockett** and **Amy Cuddy**For a complete overview see the [Issue](#) and the [Editorial](#)

Available online 16th February 2015

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.cobeha.2015.02.001>

2352-1546/© 2015 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

## Introduction

Social behavior varies dramatically across human populations and throughout history. This applies to many of the domains that psychologically oriented researchers typically consider, including cooperation [1,2,3<sup>\*\*</sup>], trust [4,5], fairness [6,7<sup>\*</sup>], in-group favoritism/cheating [8,9], costly punishment [10], aggressiveness [11], morality [12], and competitiveness [13]. Let's begin with three examples.

## Cooperation and punishment

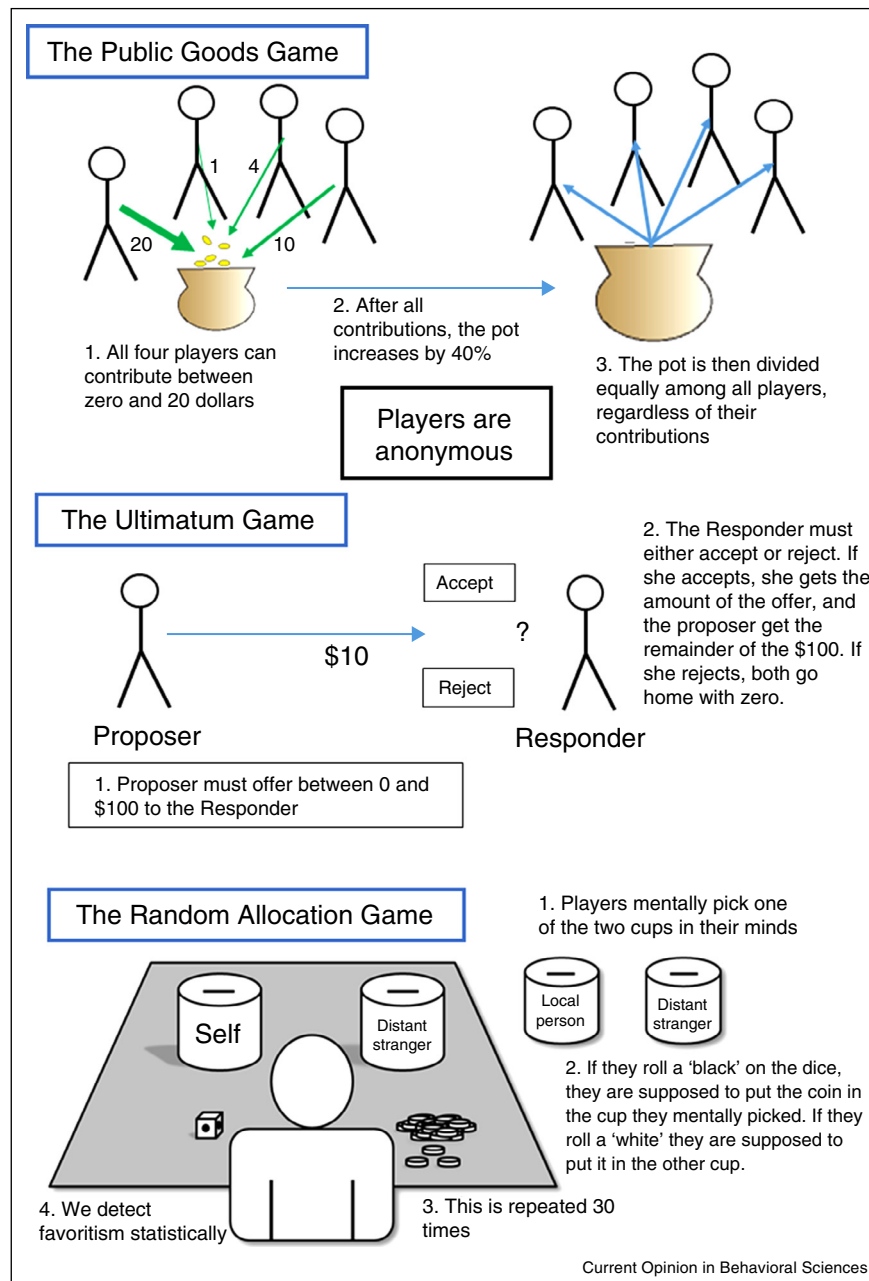
To study cooperation and punishment, Herrmann and his colleagues [3<sup>\*\*</sup>] performed repeated public goods games (see [Figure 1](#)) among university students in 16 different populations around the globe, ranging from Boston and Melbourne to Seoul and Minsk. In the standard repeated game, mean contributions (a measure of cooperativeness) in round one were nearly twice as high in Copenhagen (at ~80% of the maximum)

compared to Muscat (at ~40%), with nearly everything in-between. In some populations, contributions declined as people played. In others, they did not. Then, when opportunities for participants to pay to punish other players were added to the basic game setup, the diversity across groups increased even more. Contributions in the first round now ranged from roughly 30% in Istanbul, Riyadh and Athens to nearly 80% in Boston, Copenhagen and St. Gallen (Switzerland). Most striking was that, unlike the usual experiments among Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich and Democratic (WEIRD) populations [14] where opportunities to punish result in the sanctioning of non-cooperators and in high rates of cooperation, the addition of punishment opportunities made things worse in several places. In these places, participants punished not only low contributors but also high contributors, which stifled any increase in the overall contributions. This 'antisocial punishment' is not some experimental oddity, and likely captures something real and important about human psychological variation since it is strongly negatively correlated with measures of 'norms of civic cooperation' and the 'rule of law' from these populations. This means that even strong treatment effects related to cooperation, like adding peer punishment, cannot be readily generalized from WEIRD samples [15].

## Fairness and punishment

My colleagues and I first deployed Ultimatum Games ([Figure 1](#)) across 15 diverse societies [16,17] from around the globe, including hunter-gatherers, horticulturalists, and pastoralists; then, a few years later we replicated and extended these findings in a second project using three different bargaining experiments. Overall, we studied multiple communities in 24 different populations, and replicated our more unusual findings from the first phase. Offers varied from 20% to over 50% in some populations. In the Ultimatum Game, non-student Americans, whether from Los Angeles or small-town rural Missouri, offered about 48% of the large stakes. On the punisher's side, Americans rejected low Ultimatum Game offers so often that even a purely self-interested proposer would have to offer 50%. Meanwhile, in some populations, no one ever rejected any positive offer, and we found everything in-between. Most notably, nearly half of our populations rejected offers *greater than half* with increasing frequency as offers approached 100%. Not caused by confusion or misunderstanding, this phenomenon is virtually unknown among WEIRD populations, but seems to be rather common elsewhere, including in both China and Russia [18,19]. Subsequent developmental studies in six diverse populations reveal that costly preferences for equality in

Figure 1



The three major economic experiments described in the text. (The Random Allocation Game image modifies on a graphic developed by Ben Purzycki.)

such experiments begin to emerge by age 7, creating substantial group differences by middle adolescence [20,21].

**In-group favoritism/parochialism**

Hruschka and his colleagues [9\*\*] developed a novel experiment called the Random Allocation Game (Figure 1) that permitted participants to anonymously

cheat to favor either themselves or their local community over a distant stranger. They administered their experiment in Bolivia, Bangladesh, Fiji, Arizona, Iceland and China and found immense variation, with Americans and Icelanders showing no favoritism toward themselves or their local groups over distant compatriots. These findings are consistent with traditional non-incentivized survey measures of in-group favoritism or parochialism, such as

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/4316389>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/4316389>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)