Modeling Affective Basis of Morality and Justice among Chinese

Jun Zhao

Department of Sociology

University of Georgia

ABSTRACT

Building on decades of research on how affective sentiments organize social life through social interaction and recent methodological innovation on model specification, this study offers the first investigation on how social events shift normative sentiments among Chinese. Using Bayesian Model Sampling (BMS) techniques, I estimate determinants of normative sentiments changes in social events using data collected in China in 1990s. Then, I compare the processes of impression change cross-culturally between Chinese and Americans. In modeling a set of impression-change equations using Structural Equation Model (SEM), my results suggest evidence for the cross-cultural similarity in regard to cognitive processing of impression formation. Findings also reveal culturally nuanced moral responses to transgression. While both Americans and Chinese value positively the law of retaliation, or "an eye for an eye" strategy (i.e., the effect of BeOe on Ae' and Be'), Chinese also believes that a benevolent person, as well as his/her act, is more virtuous if he/she returns good for the enemy (i.e., the negative effect of AeBeOe on Ae' and Be'). American culture, on the other hand, shows an opposite moral standard of justice that people grant more positive evaluations to esteemed actors who "return justice for evil" (i.e., the positive effect of AeBeOe on Ae' and Be'). Implications on the affective basis of morality and justice is discussed.

Integrated Impression Formation Equations for U.S.A. and China, Showing Significant Differences in Coefficients among Culture

Ae' = -.07 US + .05 Female + (.41 | .52) Ae + .62 Be - .09 Ba + .04 Op + .11 AeBe + .33 BeOe - .10 BeOp + (-.15 | -.07) BpOe + **(-.10 | +.07) AeBeOe** + .03 AeBpOp + .03 ApBeOa

Ap' = -.05 US + (.48 | .77) Ap + (0 |-.05) Ae + (0 | -.24) Be + .36 Bp - .06 Ba + (0 | .05) Aa + .04 Oe + .10 BeOe - .12 ApBp + .10 ApBe

Aa' = -.16 US + (.39 | .84) Aa + .07 Ae + (0 |-.15) Be + (.21 | .30) Ba - .06 Ap + (0 | .11) Bp + .05 Op + .03 AeBa - .08 AaBa + .03 BeOe

Be' = -.07 US + .85 Be + .16 Ae + (-.18 |-.11) Ba + .04 Op + .06 AeBe + .28 BeOe - .09 BeOp + **(-.04 |.107) AeBeOe** + .05BpOp - .02 BpOe

Bp' = -.12 US + .06 Female + (.26| .80) Bp + .24 Ap + (0 | -.33) Be + .06 Oe + .08 BeOe + .08 AeBe

Ba' = .09 Female + (.31| .72) Ba + (0 |-.07) Ap + (.14 |.55) Aa + (0 |-.08) Be+ (.05|.11) Bp + .04 Ae

Oe' =.10 Female + (.58| .91) Oe + (.06| .18) Be + .10 AeBe + (0 | .11) BeOe + .05AeBeOe

Op' = -.16 US + (.44 |.79) Op + (0 |.31) Be -.11 Bp + (-.12 | -.21) Oe + .04 Oa + (0 | .06) BeOe + .04 AeBp + .02AaOp - .02 ApBpOa + .10 Ba - .05 ApBaOp + .04BaOe

Oa' = (.38 |.87) Oa - .05 Op

Note: Significant differences on coefficient estimations between U.S. and China are shown in parentheses, with the Chinese value first, U.S.A. second, separated by a vertical pipe (|).

All coefficients are standardized.