# Considering Cultural Dimensions

## A cultural framework for behavioural science applications

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# OUTLINE

**1** — **2** — **3** — **4**

**The Problem**

The lack of cross-cultural BeS applicability

**Short-term Solution**

Binary framework that considers cultural differences to guide what will make stronger/weaker BeS interventions

**Long-term Ideology**

Ethical Relativism & Empowering cultures to develop BeS as they see fit

**Questions?**

Ask questions

# What does culture mean to you?

*"A set of shared values, beliefs and practices that are influenced by the environment and transmitted to others"*
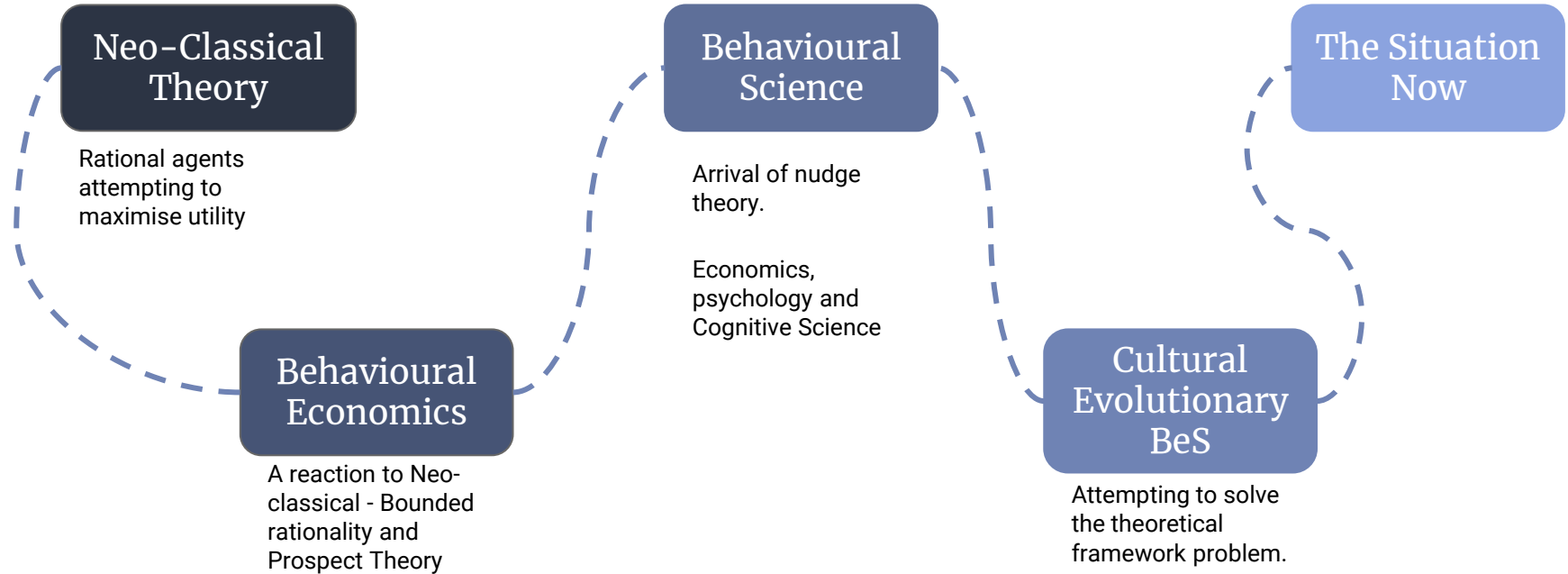
*(Kitayama & Cohen, 2007, Markus & Hamedani, 2007)*

Culture is something that unites people.

— ANASTASIYA O., RUSSIA

Culture like language requires translation in order to be understood in terms of another culture
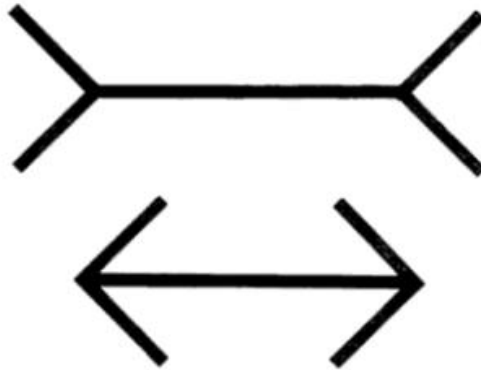
Culture is characterised by individual private thoughts (beliefs) and public behaviours (practices) if they are (1) affected by environment, (2) shared by a group and (3) transmitted to new members.

# Behavioural Science Evolution

**Neo-Classical Theory**

Rational agents attempting to maximise utility

**Behavioural Economics**

A reaction to Neo-classical - Bounded rationality and Prospect Theory

**Behavioural Science**

Arrival of nudge theory.

Economics, psychology and Cognitive Science

**Cultural Evolutionary BeS**

Attempting to solve the theoretical framework problem.

**The Situation Now**

(Schimmelpfennig & Muthukrishna, 2022)

# The Problem: Cross-cultural differences in perception

 American undergraduates V San forager tribe in the Kalahari desert



The Müller-Lyer illusion

The success of "Nudge" is fundamentally WEIRD (Halonen, 2022)

# Situated Action

**CONTEXTUAL INPUTS**

**INPUTS FOR VISIBLE BEHAVIOUR**

**Culture**
(Language & norms)

**Experience**

**Background**

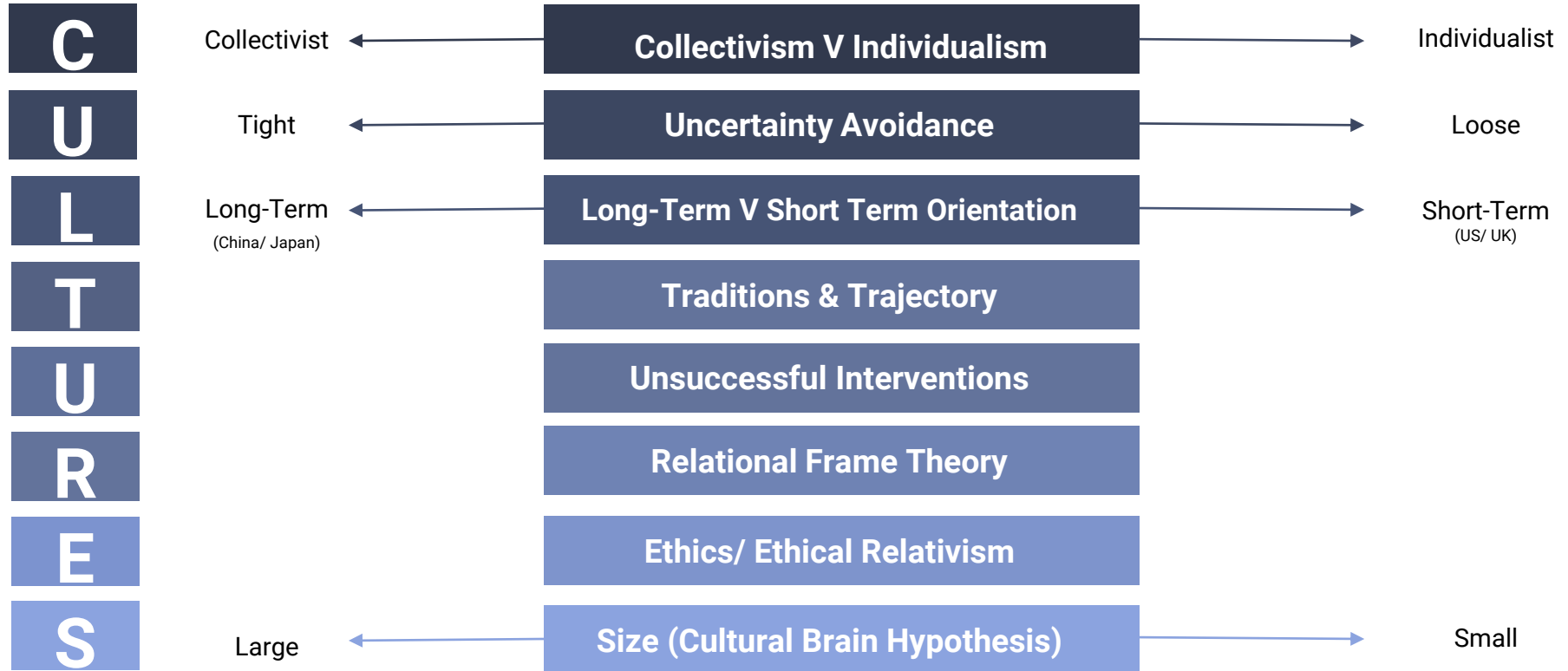**THE DECISION-MAKER**

**Biases**

**Heuristics**

**Choice Architecture**

**OBSERVED BEHAVIOUR**

# CULTURES: A BeS–Cultural Intelligence Scale

A Scale for Behavioural Scientists to consider in coming up with BeS applications

**C** — Collectivist ← **Collectivism V Individualism** → Individualist

**U** — Tight ← **Uncertainty Avoidance** → Loose

**L** — Long-Term (China/ Japan) ← **Long-Term V Short Term Orientation** → Short-Term (US/ UK)

**T** — **Traditions & Trajectory**

**U** — **Unsuccessful Interventions**

**R** — **Relational Frame Theory**

**E** — **Ethics/ Ethical Relativism**

**S** — Large ← **Size (Cultural Brain Hypothesis)** → Small

# Long–Term Ideology: A Cultural Relativist Approach

| 01 | BS is fundamentally WEIRD | • BS is a western discipline (Econ, psychology, social science)<br>• Our database draws from an extremely narrow slice of human diversity (American Undergrads)<br>• We assume that these findings generalise to other populations |
|---|---|---|

**ANSWER: A DECOLONIAL APPROACH TO BS**

LONGER TERM HORIZONS - As a discipline we should offering to teach other (non-WEIRD) cultures the tools from behavioural science and allow them to develop the discipline as they see fit within their own culture. Otherwise it is just another example of imperialism and the 'white saviour'.

**BENEFITS: (1) Diversity (2) Decoloniality (3) Respect and reciprocity**

# Questions?