



UNIVERSITÉ DU  
LUXEMBOURG

Effects of the COVID-pandemic:

The role of family culture and  
effects on well-being

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# Introduction

# Theoretical framework – family culture

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## relationship regulation

- how individuals regulate their relationship with others
- in the parent-child relationship, this regulation takes place through a negotiation of autonomy and relatedness

(Greenfield et al. 2003; Kağıtçıbaşı i.e. 1996, 2005, 2007, 2013)

- autonomy and relatedness are two important basic needs

(Ryan and Deci 2000)

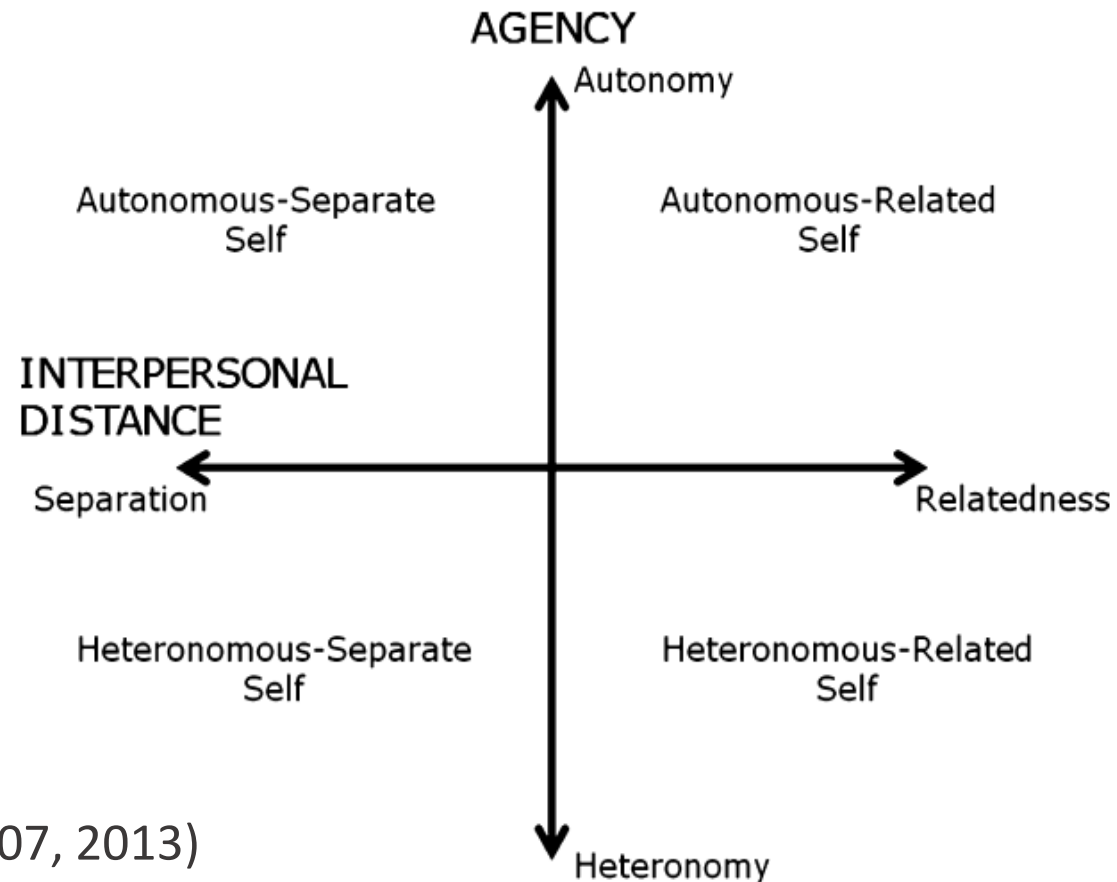
# Theoretical framework – family culture

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## family differentiation

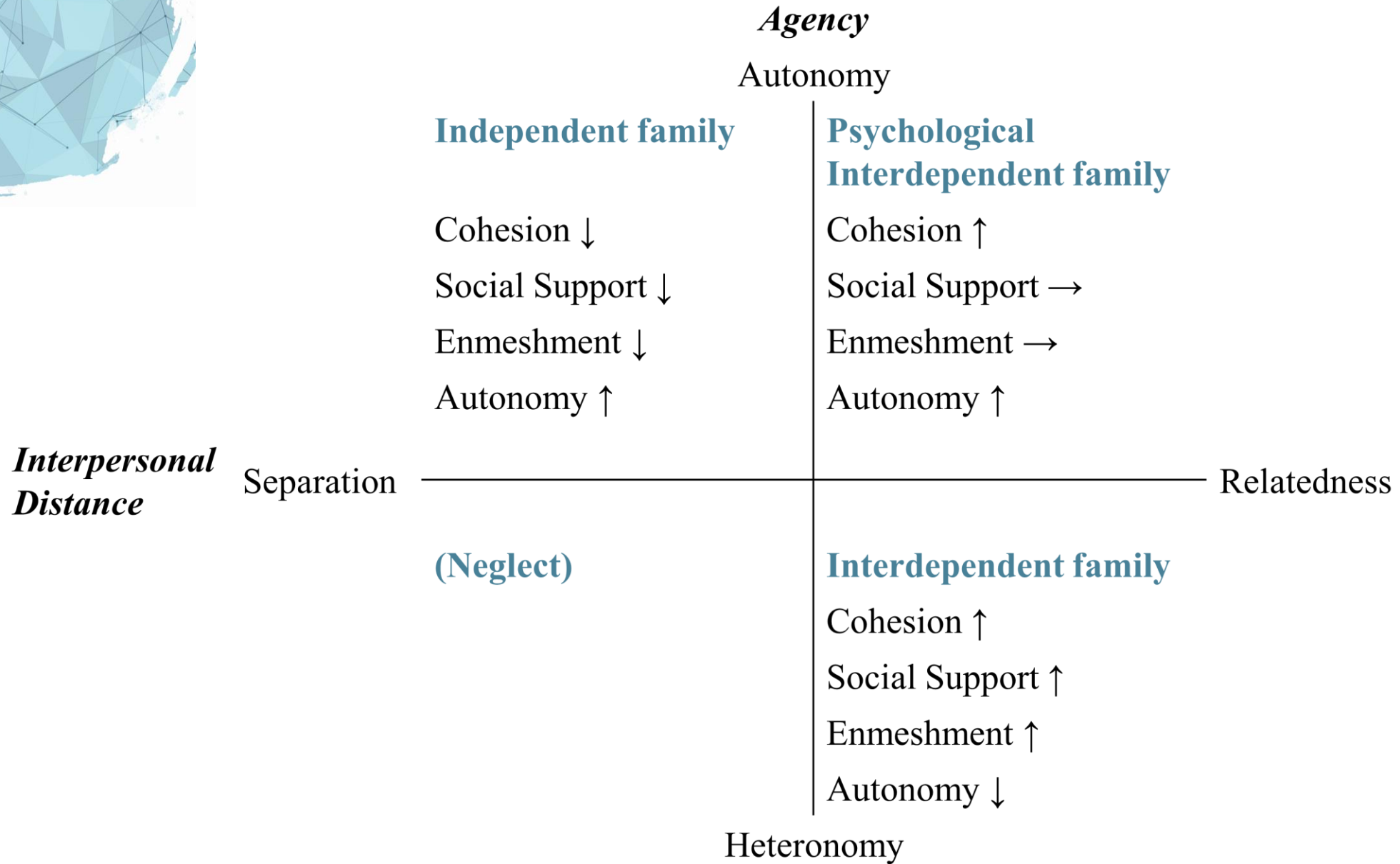
- focuses on the degree of distinctiveness and relatedness between different members of a family (Sabatelli & Mazor 1985)
- can be specified by **cohesion** and **enmeshment** (Manzi et al. 2006)
- **Cohesion**: connectedness and closeness whilst also granting autonomy to family members
- **Enmeshment**: “lack of tolerance for individuality, lack of separateness, intrusiveness, psychological control and dependence” (Manzi et al. 2006: 674)

# Theoretical framework – family models



Kağıtçıbaşı (1996, 2005, 2007, 2013)

# Integration of family models



# Family-model and well-being

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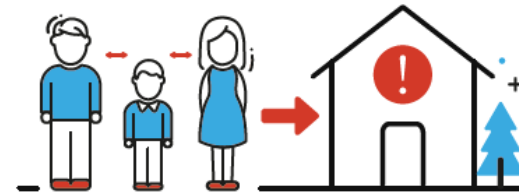
- Across cultures: when basic needs (autonomy & relatedness) are met, this contributes to better health and well-being (Ryan & Deci 2000)
- Manzi and colleagues (2006)
  - high cohesion associated with better well-being
  - high enmeshment associated with low well-being?
  - UK: high levels of enmeshment are associated with low levels of well-being
  - Italy: this relationship could not be established

If personal needs for autonomy and relatedness are in line with the family model experienced → beneficial for the experience of well-being

# COVID-19 Pandemie

- COVID pandemic as an external shock, with an impact on well-being

→ Restrictions prevent the preferred family model from being pursued



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# Research aim and questions

# Research Aim:

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Investigate consequences of COVID pandemic restrictions and the role of different family model and their effect on well-being

- How: quantitative, person-orientated approach – online questionnaire
- Where: Luxembourg & Greater Region



# Research questions:

## Relationship between family models and well-being

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- Which family models do we find in Luxembourg?
- What is the relationship between family models and well-being **before** the pandemic?
- What is the relationship between family models and well-being **during** the pandemic – when restrictions imposed prevent the preferred model to be lived?
  
- Is there a **change** in well-being before and during the crisis?
- If there is change, how is this related to aspects of family culture?



# Method

# Structure - online questionnaire

April – Mai 2020



N = 244

Age = 35 years ( $SD = 12.2$ )

73 % female

80.7 % lived in Luxembourg

# Well-being

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- PWI-A (International Wellbeing Group, 2013) – 9 items
- supplemented by specific items already used in the Luxembourg context (Intergenerational Relations in the light of Migration and Ageing (IRMA); Albert & Barros Coimbra 2017)
  - five-point rating scale ranging from (1) "very dissatisfied" to (5) "very satisfied"
- Cronbach's alpha of  $\alpha = .82$

# Family culture

## Enmeshment

5 items,  $\alpha = .62$

Example: *"In our family, everyone expects to know about each other's affairs."*

## Cohesion

4 items,  $\alpha = .87$

Example: *"There is a strong sense of togetherness in our family"*

## Independence

3 items,  $\alpha = .59$

Example: *"In our family, everyone deals with their own problems."*

## Expectations for mutual social support

6 items,  $\alpha = .74$

- *support from parents (2 items)*

Example: *"In our family, it is taken for granted that grandparents help take care of grandchildren."*

- *support from children (4 items)*

Example: *"In our family, it is expected that support is offered to elderly parents."*

- *six-point rating scale*  
*(1) "strongly disagree" to (6) "strongly agree"*
- *questionnaire specially designed for the IRMA study*

# Results



# Family models in the Luxembourg context

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- z-standardised scales for cohesion, autonomy, social support, and enmeshment (ratings before the pandemic)
- hierarchical cluster analysis using squared Euclidian distances and Ward's algorithm
- to improve the cluster membership: non-hierarchical K-mean cluster analysis

# Family models in Luxembourg Before the Pandemic

*Agency*

Autonomy

**Independence**

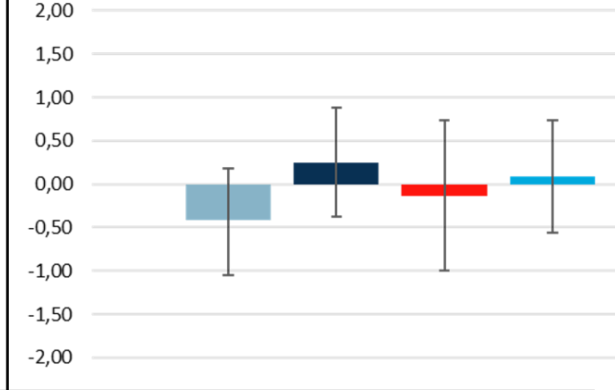
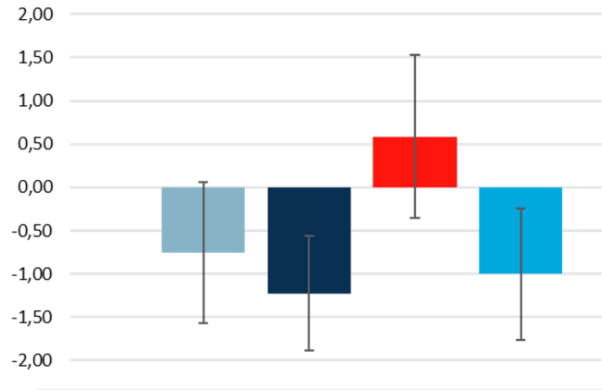
**Psychological Interdependence**

Focus:  
Autonomy

*n* = 54  
(22.5%)

Focus:  
Cohesion &  
social Support

*n* = 103  
(42.9%)



**Interpersonal  
Distance**

Separation

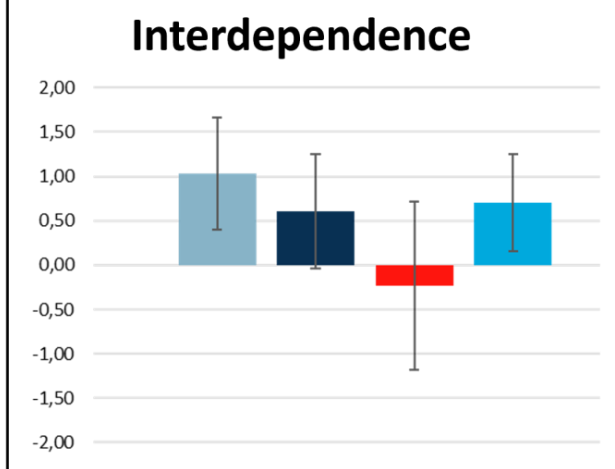
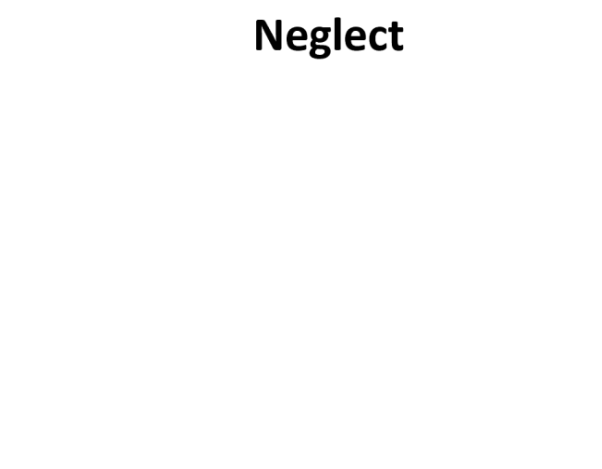
**Neglect**

**Interdependence**

Relatedness

Focus:  
Relatedness

*n* = 83  
(34.6%)



Heteronomy

- Enmeshment
- Cohesion
- Autonomy
- Social Support

# Well-being and family culture before the pandemic

	Enmeshment	Cohesion	Autonomy	Social Support
Enmeshment	-			
Cohesion	.400** <i>p</i> < .001	-		
Autonomy	-.061 <i>p</i> = .344	-.343** <i>p</i> < .001	-	
Social Support	.434** <i>p</i> < .001	.544** <i>p</i> < .001	-.151* <i>p</i> = .020	-
Well-being	-.170** <i>p</i> = .008	.235** <i>p</i> < .001	-.154* <i>p</i> = .017	.176** <i>p</i> = .006

# Well-being before the pandemic

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## Relationship between the three clusters and well-being

- one-way ANOVA (homogeneity of variance: Levene's test,  $p > .05$ )
- significant difference between the three clusters

$$F(2, 237) = 4.78, p = .009, \eta^2 = .04$$

- Hochberg's GT2 post-hoc Test:

**WB psychological interdependence > WB independence ( $p = .007$ )**

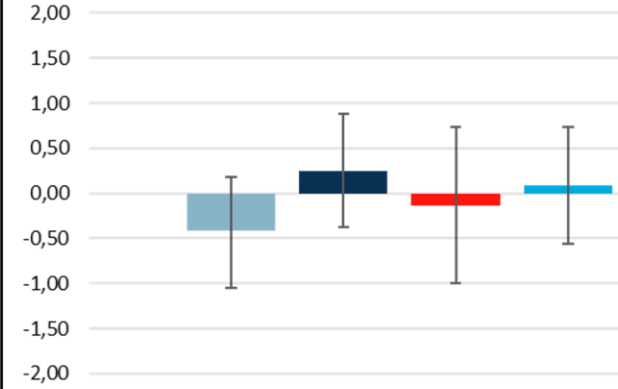
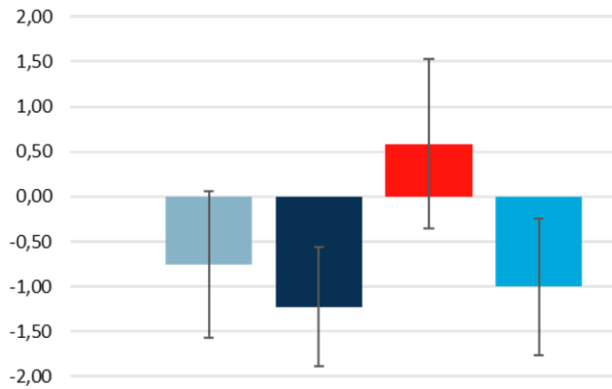
# Well-being before the Pandemic

*Agency*

Autonomy

Independence

Psychological Interdependence



Focus:  
Autonomy

Well-being  
 $M = 3.9$   
 $SD = 0.5$

$n = 54$   
(22.5%)

Focus: Cohesion  
& social support

Well-being  
 $M = 4.2$   
 $SD = 0.5$

$n = 103$   
(42.9%)

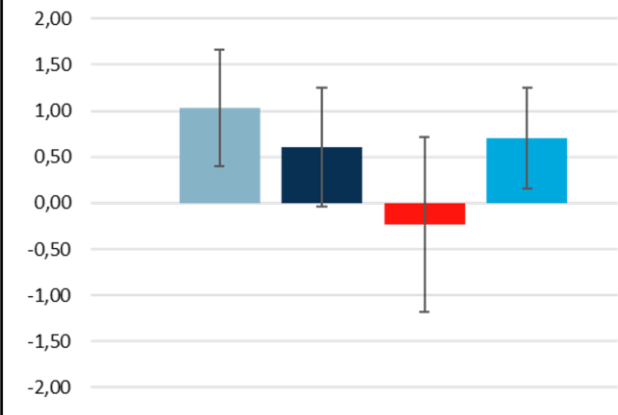
*Interpersonal  
Distance*

Separation

Neglect

Interdependence

Relatedness



Focus:  
Relatedness

Well-being  
 $M = 4.1$   
 $SD = 0.6$

$n = 83$   
(34.6%)

■ Enmeshment

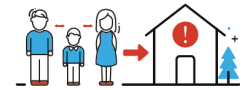
■ Cohesion

■ Autonomy

■ Social Support

Heteronomy

# Well-being and family culture during the pandemic



PLEASE STAY AT HOME.

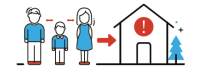
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	Enmeshment	Cohesion	Autonomy	Social Support
Enmeshment	-			
Cohesion	.466** <i>p</i> < .001	-		
Autonomy	-.001 <i>p</i> = .987	-.328** <i>p</i> < .001	-	
Social Support	.464** <i>p</i> < .001	.520** <i>p</i> < .001	-.077 <i>p</i> = .236	-
Well-being	-.160* <i>p</i> = .012	.156* <i>p</i> = .015	-.051 <i>p</i> = .428	.110 <i>p</i> = .088

# Well-being during the pandemic



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## Relationship between the three clusters and well-being

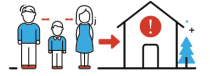
- one-way ANOVA (homogeneity of variance: Levene's test,  $p > .05$ )
- significant difference between the three clusters

$$F(2, 237) = 4.50, p = .012, \eta^2 = .04$$

- Hochberg's GT2 post-hoc Test:

**WB psychological interdependence > WB independence ( $p = .020$ )**

# Well-being during the Pandemic

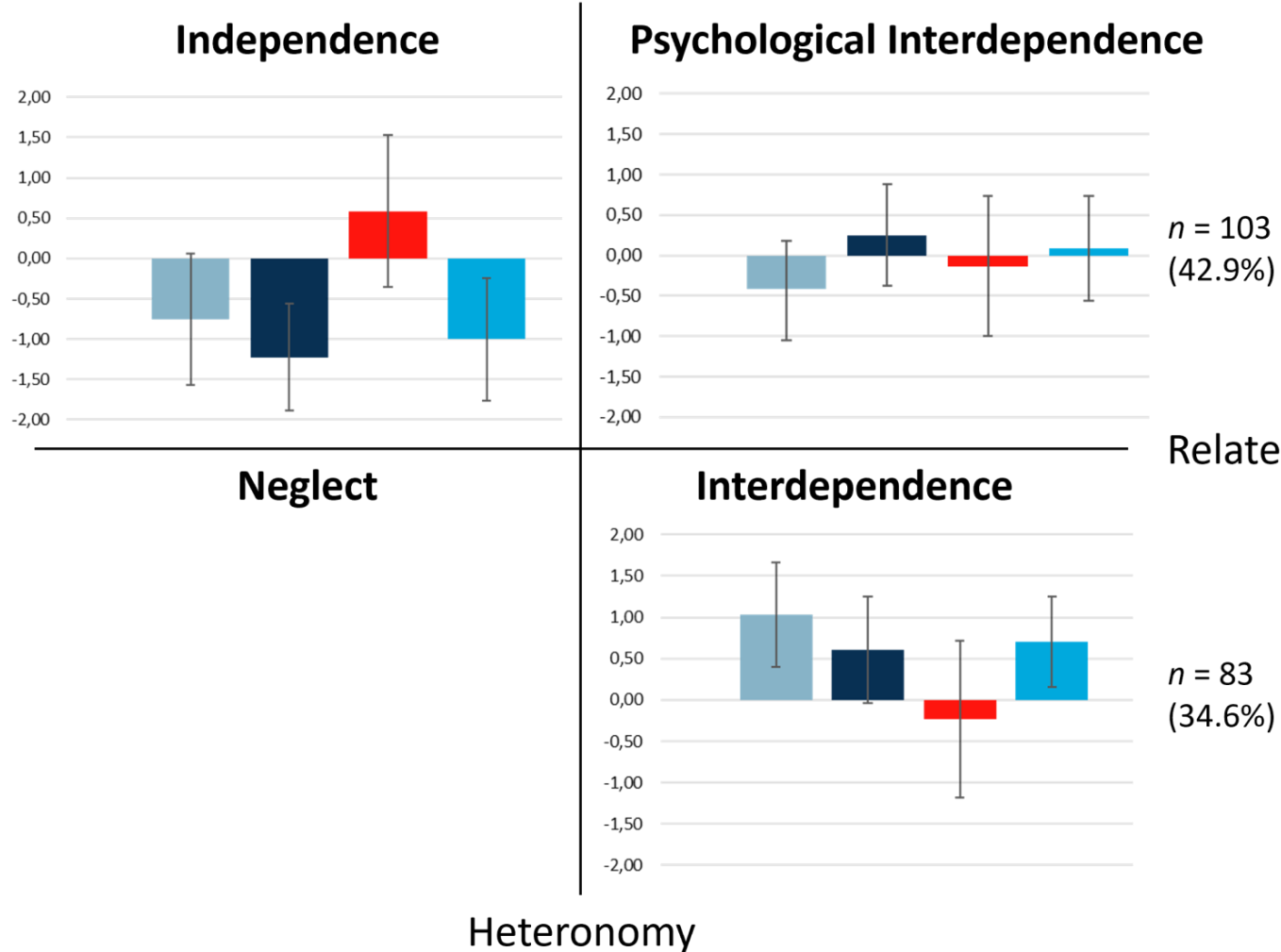


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## Agency

### Autonomy



Focus:  
Autonomy

Well-being  
 $M = 3.8$   
 $SD = 0.6$

$n = 54$   
 (22.5%)

Focus:  
Cohesion &  
social support

Well-being  
 $M = 4.1$   
 $SD = 0.5$

$n = 103$   
 (42.9%)

*Interpersonal  
Distance*

Separation

Relatedness

- Enmeshment
- Cohesion
- Autonomy
- Social Support

Focus:  
Relatedness

Well-being  
 $M = 3.9$   
 $SD = 0.6$

$n = 83$   
 (34.6%)

Heteronomy



# Change in well-being: before and during the pandemic

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- Definition: difference = well-being before and during the pandemic
- three groups:
  - SAME (n = 70; 28.7 %) well-being remained the same
  - INCREASE (n = 49; 20.1 %) well-being increased
  - DECREASE (n = 125; 51.2 %) well-being decreased
- difference in terms of their average age
  - $F(2, 241) = 3.05, p = .049, \eta^2 = .02$  Hochberg's GT2 post-hoc Test:  
age SAME (M = 37.9) > age DECREASE (M = 33.5)
- No gender differences between the 3 groups



	INCREASE (n = 49)		SAME (n = 70)		DECREASE (n = 125)	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Enmeshment	3.18	0.85	3.15	0.69	3.17	0.77
Cohesion	4.05	1.01	4.41	1.04	4.51	0.93
Autonomy	3.62 <sup>1</sup>	0.67	3.65	0.99	3.66	0.84
Social Support	4.28 <sup>2</sup>	0.76	4.45 <sup>3</sup>	0.84	4.41	0.71

Note: <sup>1</sup> n = 48; <sup>2</sup> n = 47; <sup>3</sup> n = 68.

- ANOVA (homogeneity of variance: Levene's test,  $p > .05$ )

$$F(2, 241) = 3.86, p = .022, \eta^2 = .03$$

- Hochberg's GT2 post-hoc: cohesion DECREASE > cohesion INCREASE

$$(p = .018; -0.46, 95\%-CI [-0.86, -0.61])$$



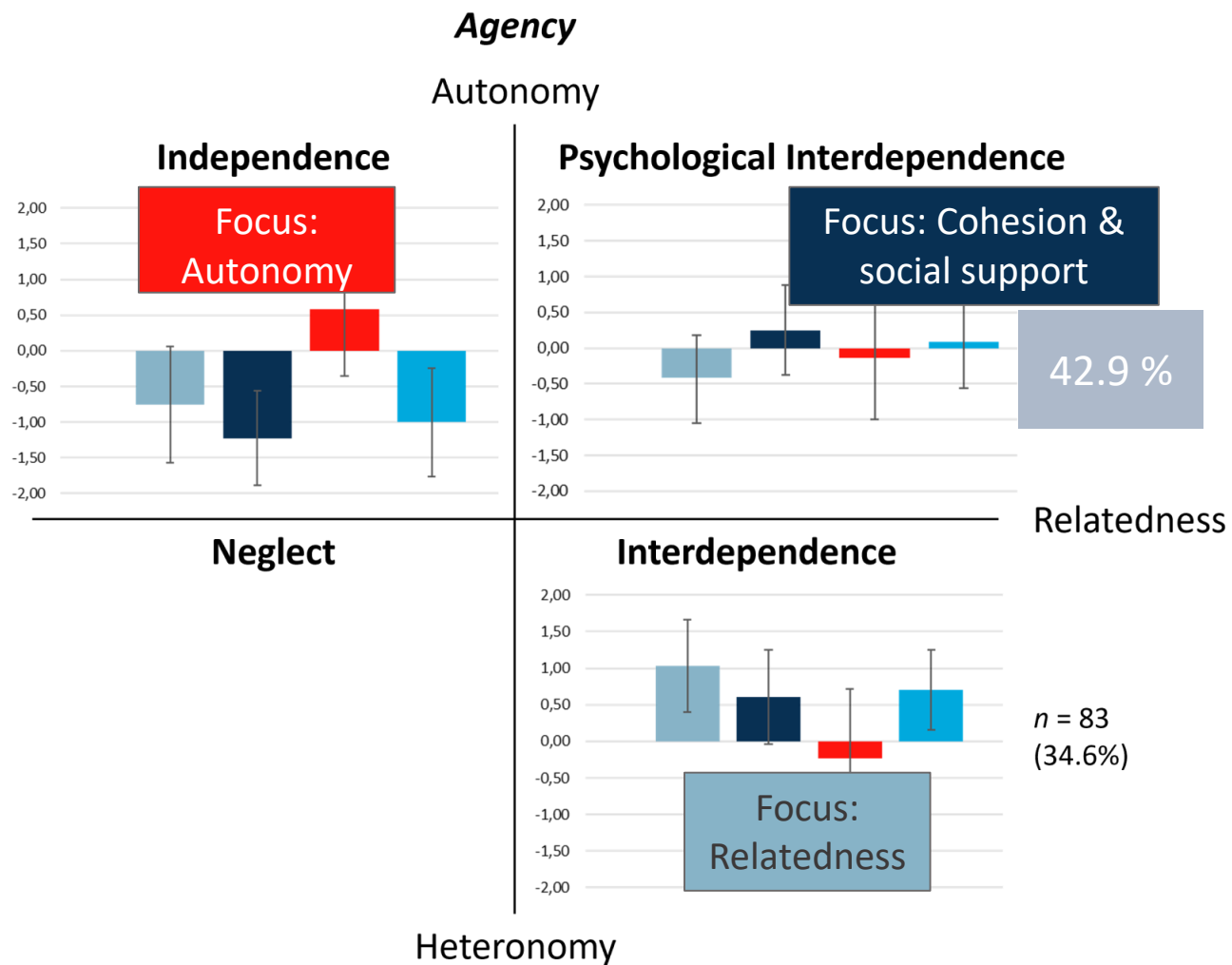
# Discussion

# Family models in the Luxembourg context

*Interpersonal Distance*

Separation

*n* = 54  
(22.5%)

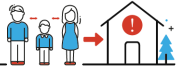


# Well-being before the pandemic

**WB psychological interdependent > WB independent**

- cohesion, prioritized by psychologically interdependent families, is associated with higher well-being
- independent families focus on autonomy
  - high autonomy seems associated with lower well-being
- Luxembourg as a moderate individualist (Hofstede)

# Well-being during the pandemic



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**WB psychological interdependent > WB independent**

For families with high cohesion, well-being seems to remain high even during the pandemic

- Might have found a way to stay in touch even in times of lockdown and social distance
- Cohesion has been linked to resilience in the face of crises (Hawkins & Manne 2004)

# Change of the well-being - DECREASE: 51.2 %

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- Families with **high cohesion** in general:
  - > lower well-being during the pandemic compared to before
- Families with high cohesion are strongly connected
  - We assumed:
    - > support could be seen as a protective factor for well-being (Hawkins & Manne 2004)
- It can be assumed that digital contacts could not fully compensate for the real ones

# Change of the well-being

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- INCREASE: low cohesion
  - feel a kind of relief through the lockdown, supposed to distance oneself anyway
- Overall, well-being changes little on average.



# Summary and outlook

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- **Cohesion** has a positive impact on well-being
- When contacts are only possible to a limited extent
  - lack of real-world contact can have potential negative consequences for well-being
- Increased need for autonomy tends to lead to lower well-being
  - in times of social distancing, it is not so much autonomy we lack
  - it is more the social contact with other people

# Limitations

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- low Cronbach's alpha in the scales enmeshment and autonomy
- questionnaire was conducted during the first lockdown
- “in general” may already have been affected by the restrictions
- situation of social restrictions may have distorted this information to some extent
- fatigue may be setting in when answering the same questions, albeit under a different focus



Thank you for your  
attention

Question?  
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