Culture, Age and Self-Continuity
Old Chinese Showed Lower Continuity with Their Past and Future Self than Americans

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INTRODUCTION

- Self-continuity (SC) is defined as the sense of connection with past and future selves
- In the U.S., older age is associated with higher SC scores that vary less by temporal distance[1]
- Cultural variations in motivational priorities[2] and in styles of thinking and reasoning[3,4,5] may affect SC
- For instance, Chinese undergraduates display higher SC than Canadian undergraduates[6]
- ➔ **Do U.S. age differences in self-continuity generalize to a Chinese sample?**

METHOD

SAMPLE ➔ Table 1
- Gathered in Shangdong province, China
- Comparison sample from the U.S.[1]

SELF CONTINUITY SCALE ➔ Figure 3
- SC is visualized as overlapping circles
- Translated from Rutt & Löckenhoff, 2016[1]

RESULTS ➔ Table 2, Figures 1/2

- Consistent with the U.S., SC varies less with temporal distance among older versus younger Chinese
- In contrast to the U.S., SC in China peaks in midlife, not old age

DISCUSSION

- Age patterns in SC vary across cultures
- Further research is needed to …
  - allow for direct comparison across cultures
  - examine potential causes of the midlife peak in SC among Chinese

Age differences in **self-continuity** vary between China and the U.S.

Fig. 1 — Age & Temporal Distance on SC in China

Fig. 2 — Age & Temporal Distance on SC in the U.S.

Fig. 3
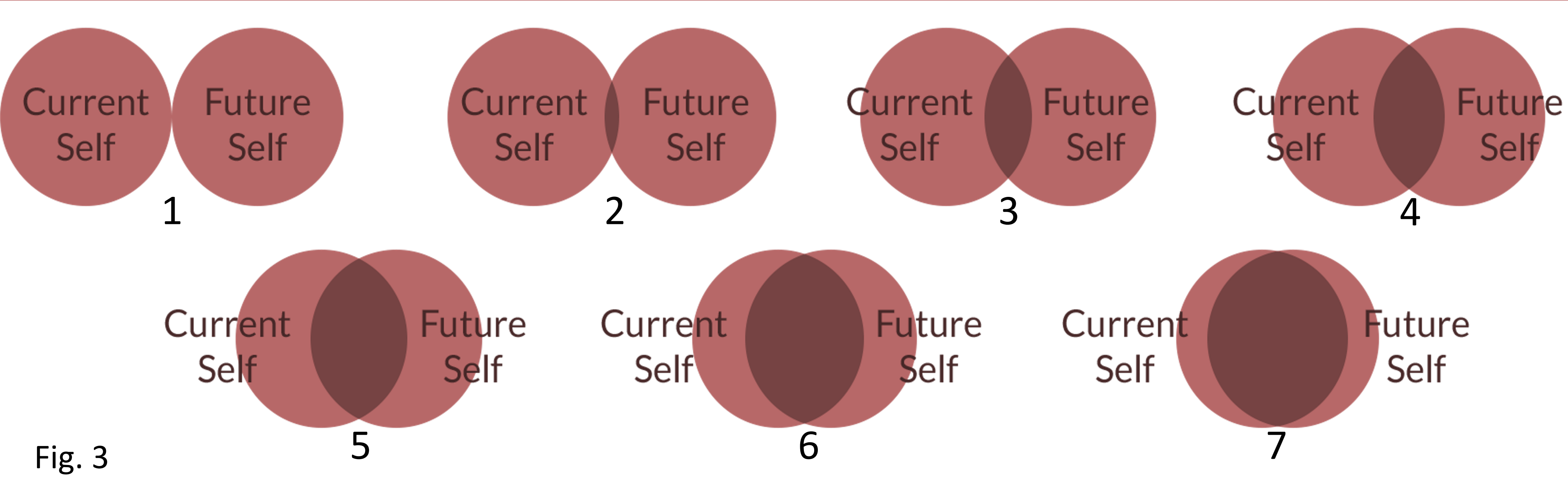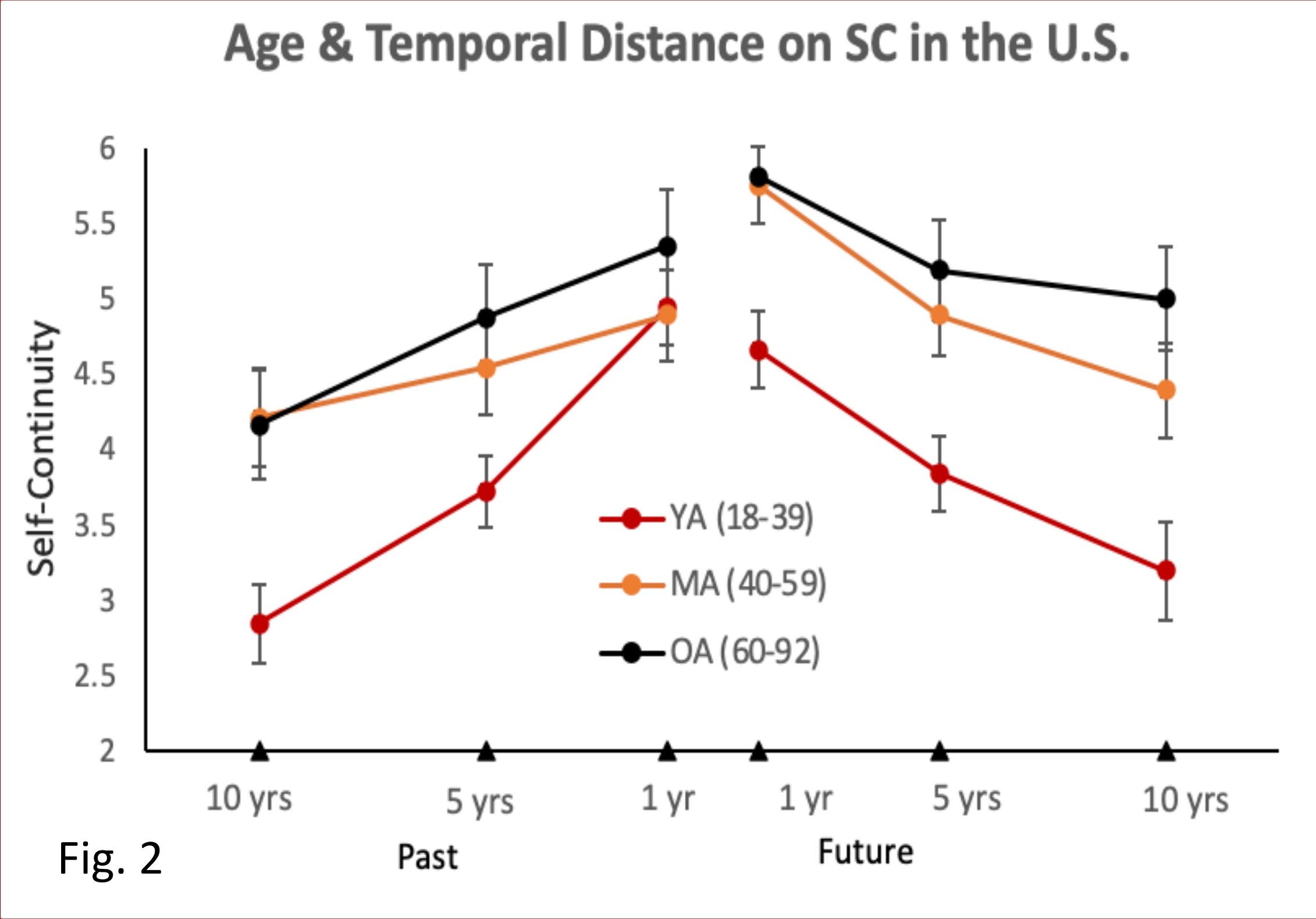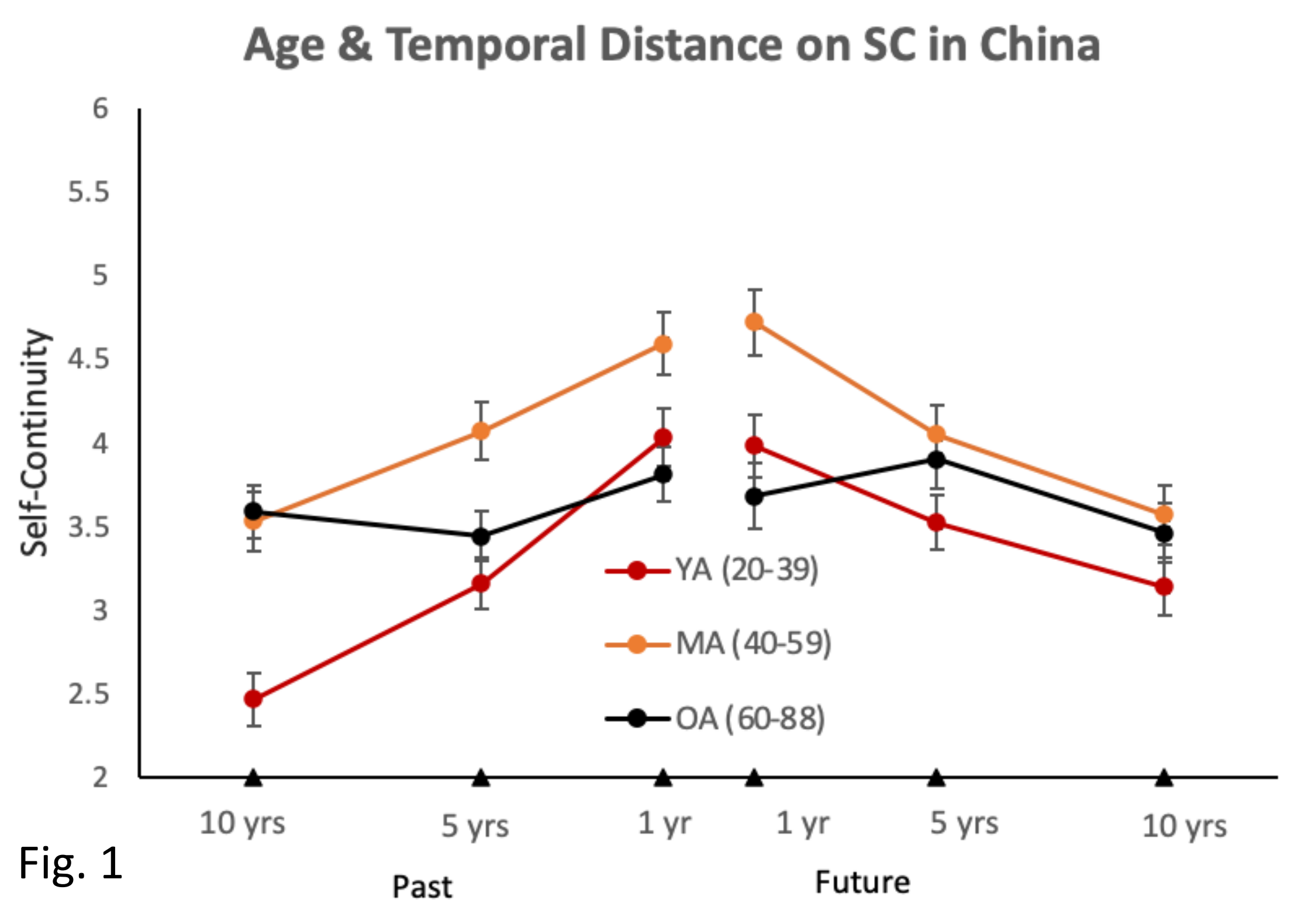
Which pair of circles do you think best describes the similarity between your current self and your future/past self in one/five/ten years? (the overlapping area represents the level of similarity)

SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

Table 1	Chinese (N = 373)		American (N = 91)	
	M(SD)	**r_{age}**	**M(SD)**	**r_{age}**
Age	49.71 (19.00)		50.15 (19.11)	
Gender (% female)**	37	.13*	56	-.03
SES***	3.40 (2.03)	.22**	2.40 (1.12)	.20

Note. Descriptive Information for Demographics and Covariates and their Correlations with Age
* $p < .05$；** $p < .01$；***$p < .001$.

- A direct statistical comparison across samples was not possible due to differences in assessment modalities, sample size, etc.
- U.S. sample was in-person
- Chinese sample was online for younger and middle-aged adults (age < 58) and in-person for older adults (age ≥ 58)

MULTI-LEVEL MODELING

Table 2	Chinese			American		
	Estimate	**SE**	**p**	**Estimate**	**SE**	**p**
Fixed effects						
Intercept*	4.999	.137	.001	5.857	.106	.001
Temporal distance	-.345	.031	.001	-.310	.012	.001
Temporal direction	.078	.030	.009	-.090	.054	.097
Age	-.033	.007	.001	.012	.006	.039
Temporal distance×Age	.010	.002	.001	.004	.001	.001
Random effects						
Variance Intercept	1.495	.135	.001	.887	.151	.001
Residual Variance	2.042	.067	.001	1.670	.069	.001

Note. The temporal distance variable was natural log-transformed to ensure that residuals fit criteria for normality.

*The intercept is centered at 1 month.

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FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE

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