On the Relationship between Social Capital and Individualism–Collectivism
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Abstract
Both social capital and individualism–collectivism (IC) have been, and still are, popular and well-researched constructs in social sciences. Many theorists have argued that individualism poses a threat to social cohesion and communal association. Other researchers believe that growth of individuality, autonomy, and self-sufficiency are necessary conditions for the development of social solidarity and cooperation. The present article reviews the studies on the relationship between social capital and IC, using different data and different measures. We conclude that countries with higher level of social capital (where people believe that most people can be trusted) are also more individualistic, emphasizing the importance of independence, personal accomplishments, and freedom to choose one’s own goals. In societies where trust is limited to the nuclear family or kinship alone, people have lower levels of social capital. Social capital increases as the radius of trust widens to encompass a larger number of people and social networks, bridging the ‘gap’ between the family and state.

Social Capital and Dimensions of Culture

Social capital
The concept of social capital is a rising star in the social and behavioral sciences. It has been put forward by scholars in sociology, political science, and economics to provide a comprehensive solution to an age-old problem: what in a community brings people together for common purposes? Many reviewers associate its first appearance either with James Coleman (1988) who argued that social capital facilitates certain actions of actors within the social structure or with (Pierre Bourdieu, 1985, p. 248), who defined social capital as:

the sum total of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual (or a group) by virtue of being enmeshed in a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition.

Although the original theoretical development of the concept by Bourdieu and Coleman focused on the individual as the unit of analysis, the concept of social capital was later extended to a group level where it became an attribute of communities and nations (Portes, 2000). However, a real boost was given by Robert Putnam (2000) whose Bowling Alone became almost immediately a classic text in the social sciences. According to Robert Putnam (2000), the basis of social capital is that social networks have value. Collective action depends upon social networks which are based on reciprocity and trust and that facilitate cooperation and coordination for mutual benefit.
Although the nomenclature of different forms and the exact meaning of social capital are still debated most authors seem to agree that the concept of social trust or trustworthiness constitutes the core of social capital (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Paxton, 2002; Portes, 1998). This is probably the main reason why the apocalyptic message of the *Bowling Alone* that the social capital is rapidly declining, in the United States at least, found an attentive audience. This decline may result in the collapse of the society because levels of trust and civic involvement have, as many studies have demonstrated, a significant impact on human life outcomes. Social capital has a substantial link to social and economic development, effectiveness of political systems, health effects, and other beneficial societal outcomes (for a review, see Almedom, 2005; Portes, 1998). For instance, higher levels of social capital have been associated with increased charitable giving (Brooks, 2005), decreased adolescent depression (Fitzpatrick, Piko, Wright, & LaGory, 2005), reduced smoking and illicit drug use (Lundborg, 2005), decreased risky sexual behaviors (Crosby, Holtgrave, DiClemente, Wingood, & Gayle, 2003), lower incidence rates of coronary heart disease (Sundquist, Johansson, Yang, & Sundquist, 2006), lower mortality rates (Kaplan, Pamuk, Lynch, Cohen, & Balfour, 1996; Kawachi, Kennedy, Lochner, & Prothrowstith, 1997), and higher levels of innovative activity (Kaasa, 2009). The burgeoning evidence reveals that social capital is critical for societies to prosper economically and for development to be sustainable (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). This rapidly increasing list of consequences has convinced to take warnings about the decline of social capital seriously.

During the last two decades, the annual increase of articles on social capital has grown rapidly (see Figure 1). Before 1991 there were just seven papers mentioning the concept, the first one published in 1981. Ten years ago, in 1998, there were already 112 papers mentioning ‘social capital’ published in journals indexed by the *ISI Web of Knowledge*

**Figure 1** Number of articles published on ‘social capital’ in the journals indexed by the ISI Web of Knowledge from 1991 to 2008 (search made on 10 April 2009).
(Thomson Reuters Inc.). In 2008, the number of papers referring to ‘social capital’ had increased to 627 and is likely to reach 700 in 2009. Thus, there has been a steady increase in the number of publications on social capital during the last 10 years, with approximately 50 additional social capital papers being added every year. However, the interest towards social capital was not even among different fields. The division of 3968 papers published on social capital (1991 to 10 April 2009) between different subject areas was the following: 16.6% sociology, 10.8% public health, 10.6% economics, 10% management, 7.6% business, 7.4% planning and development, and 6.6% political science. All psychology areas (applied, clinical, developmental, social, etc.) together comprise 6.4% of all publications on social capital. Although one of the sections of the most-cited psychology journal, Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, explicitly focuses on the nature and dynamics of interactions and social relationships as well as on social behavior, social capital has never been mentioned either in the title, abstract, or keywords. This all indicates that psychologists have been relatively precautious in using the concept that has enjoyed popularity in other social sciences.

Why is social capital less popular among psychologists than among economists or sociologists? Looking at its content and societal implications one could expect just the opposite. Indeed, trustworthiness is one of the basic personality dispositions which obviously has consequences to community involvement, criminal activity, and political ideology at a social institutional level (Ozer & Benet-Martinez, 2006). In the Revised NEO Personality Inventory (Costa & McCrae, 1992) there is even one subscale, A1: Trust, measuring an aspect of Agreeableness. A recent study in Russia showed that the correlations of social capital with Agreeableness and the General Factor of Personality were as high as $r = 0.55$ and $0.63$ (both significant at $p < 0.0001$), respectively (Realo, Mõttus, Allik, & Rushton, 2009). One possible reason is that psychologists are reluctant to use the term preferring other denotations like social investment (Lodi-Smith & Roberts, 2007) or prosocial behavior (Penner, Dovidio, Piliavin, & Schroeder, 2005). Another reason could be that in the mental map of psychologists, social capital lies beyond the traditional domain of psychological research. Social capital “refers to connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them” (Putnam, 2000, p. 19) and therefore, one could argue that it does not treat individuals as discrete units of analysis. Yet, the studies of social capital focus on how the structure of ties affects individuals and their relationships – the latter being the primary concern of social psychology. So, the question does not seem to be about different units of analyses (individual versus networks) but more about different research traditions in different fields of social sciences.

**Decline of social capital owing to increased individualism**

As it was already mentioned, many national-level indicators of social capital – level of interactions with fellow citizens, participation in elections and voluntary organizations, prevalence of honesty and trust – have shown signs of decline during the past few decades in most Western countries, which has been interpreted as a major shift in social cohesion, the erosion of the glue that holds society together (Putnam, 2000). Also increased immigration and ethnic diversity tend to reduce social solidarity and social capital, at least in the short run (Putnam, 2007).

Although there are many indicators that apparently show a steady decline of social capital these evidences have been disputed (Delhey & Newton, 2005). A clear exception are Scandinavian countries where generalized trust and social participation have remained on
a relatively high level which has been attributed either to Protestant tradition (Rothstein, 2001), welfare state (Larsen, 2007), or the lack of underclass (Hofstede, 1980).

One often mentioned culprit in the decline of the social capital is the increasing individualism of the developed Western countries. Many theorists have seen the unlimited growth of individualism as a threat to the organic unity between individuals and community. Particularly in France, as explained by Steven Lukes (1971) in his essay about the meanings of individualism, the concept of individualism has historically carried a negative meaning, denoting individual isolation and social dissolution. For many critics, individualism mainly fosters social atomization, which in its turn leads to the disappearance of social solidarity and to the dominance of egoism and distrust. Alexis de Tocqueville, an aristocratic Frenchman who went to the United States in 1831 and later wrote Democracy in America (1835–1840), a two-volume study of the American people and their political institutions, warned that the tendency of Americans to do their own thing could very likely ruin the country (de Tocqueville, 1945). Contemporary researchers who explore the dark sides of individualism, at least in its extreme forms, have blamed obsessive self-interest for everything, from rising crime, suicide, and divorce rates to child abuse, mental illness, and urban decay (e.g., Cobb, 1976; Triandis, Leung, Villareal, & Clack, 1985).

For instance, a well-known American sociologist Robert M. Bellah has argued that individualism is a form of societal malaise that undermines communal life and is destructive of the common good (Bellah, 1985; Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipton, 1991). Such statements support a view of communitarianism, according to which the extreme individualism that prevails in America and in the West promotes excessive selfishness, alienate people and destroys vital institutions such as family and neighborhood (Etzioni, 1993, 1996; Lane, 1994). Communitarians believe that personal autonomy is even better achieved within the community than outside communal life because the community is good in itself by giving people’s lives a moral meaning. As argued by Amitai Etzioni (1993, 1996), the founding father and leading voice of contemporary communitarianism, communities in themselves are not anti-individualistic because they do not oppose individual actions that are compatible with, or contribute to the common good but they do resist excessive selfishness and social alienation. Thus, a community (society) should serve as a balancing force to excessive individualism, which endangers both individual rights and civic order.

Perhaps it is not a coincidence that the concepts of (IC) are largely responsible for the growth of cross-cultural psychology over the past three decades (Realo, 2003; Schimmack, Oishi, & Diener, 2005). Question about the tension between the individual and group has a long history in the social sciences (especially in philosophical thought) that can be traced back to the ancient Greek philosophers. Individualism has played an important role in the history of ideas and ideologies also in modern Europe and the United States. Being merely a 19th-century expression, the term has a rich semantic and cultural history, comprising ‘the most heterogeneous ideas possible’ as stated by Max Weber (1958) in his book The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism in 1904. The early ideas of individualism in social and political theory included the ideas of the maximum welfare and freedom of the individual, with society existing only for the sake of its members. Individualism places high value on the freedom of the individual and generally stresses the self-directed, self-contained, and comparatively unrestrained individual or ego.

Collectivism, on the other hand, represents any of the several kinds of social organization that ascribe central importance to the groups to which individuals belong (e.g., state, nation, ethnic or religious group, family). According to Encyclopedia Britannica, the earliest
record of the term in English dictionary dates to 1857. The concept of collectivism is derived from the social theory holding that the interests and welfare of the collective group are of greater importance than the interests and welfare of any individual. The ideas of collectivism were obviously discussed long before the term made its way to the dictionaries. According to some sources, Jean-Jacques Rousseau was the first modern philosopher to discuss it in the middle of the 18th century.

In psychology, the concepts of IC were of no particular interest until 1980 when a book by Geert Hofstede was published. Hofstede (1980), in his impressive study of 40 national cultures, identified and elaborated four dimensions of cultural variation: power distance, individualism–collectivism (IC), uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity–femininity (Hofstede, 1980, 2001). According to Hofstede (1991), individualism pertains to a society in which the ties between individuals are loose and everyone is expected to look only after himself or herself and his or her immediate family. Collectivism, on the other hand, pertains to a society in which people are integrated from birth into strong, cohesive in-groups that protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty. These definitions are obviously narrower than those used in political and philosophical literature.

As expressed well by Michael H. Bond (1994, p. 68), a distinguished cross-cultural psychologist, Hofstede’s work was almost ‘a godsend’, providing the integration of cultural differences that was so desperately needed: “At last, a cross-cultural navigator had an empirically charted map to guide and inform our journey”. Because of its pivotal role in social discourse, it was IC (of the four dimensions) that overwhelmingly appealed to psychologists (see Brewer & Chen, 2007; Oyserman, Coon, & Kemmelmeier, 2002; Realo, 2003, for reviews). As a result, Hofstede’s study triggered a massive amount of cultural and cross-cultural research on IC in the ensuing three decades. By April 2009, according to the Web of Science, the 1980 edition of Culture’s consequences has been cited about 4500 times and the 2001 edition over 1100 times. It is not surprising that the 1980s were called the decade of IC in cross-cultural psychology (Kagitçibasi, 1997).

During this active period of research, the concepts of IC were elaborated further to a great extent. For example, in addition to being used as characteristics of culture, the constructs were applied at the individual level to describe individual differences within nations. It has been argued (e.g., Triandis & Suh, 2002) that at the cultural level, individualism is the polar opposite of collectivism (as it was also shown by Hofstede), whereas at the individual-level of analysis, the two constructs are often found to be orthogonal to each other (e.g., Chen & West, 2008; Realo, Koido, Ceulemans, & Allik, 2002; Rhee, Uleman, & Lee, 1996).

Like human beings, concepts show signs of fatigue. After a considerable period of enthusiasm, several eminent cross-cultural researchers have started to argue that IC are after all questionable constructs that often fail to explain cross-cultural differences. It has been even said that the field will soon abandon these two over-freighted constructs altogether and move toward narrower theories of culture based on more specific construct (Bond, 2002; Voronov & Singer, 2002). The critics say that for years, dimensions of IC have been too readily used as an explanation to almost every difference in values, attitudes, or behavior between the so-called individualist and collectivist cultures (Kagitçibasi, 1997). Even worse, despite the huge popularity of the constructs in psychology, cross-cultural researchers have not been able to agree upon the nature or number of attributes that are essential for defining and measuring IC. Besides the differences in definitions of IC, a conceptual leap exists between the theoretical descriptions of the concepts and the specific empirical indicators that are used to measure them. Different conceptualizations and research programs often rely on non-identical sets of measures and indicators, whose
congruence with each other has not always been established. To paraphrase what a well-known personality psychologist Oliver John (1990) once said about personality research, cross-cultural psychologists never reached a consensus on the best model of IC which would have transformed the present Babel of concepts and measurement scales into a community that speaks a common language (see also Realo & Allik, 2008).

It seems that although the critical sentiments concerning the IC research are well founded, they aim the wrong reason. We are inclined to agree with researchers who think that it is far too early to abandon the constructs altogether (Oyserman, Coon, & Kemmelmeier, 2002; Schimmack, Oishi, & Diener, 2005). On the contrary, we do believe that more research is still needed to determine the limits of IC and to answer some crucial questions about the meaning, dimensionality, basic attributes/features, and correlates of the IC constructs both at the individual and cultural levels. In this paper, we will demonstrate that the concepts of IC are indeed strongly needed if we want to understand human action in its societal context.

IC and Social Capital

Returning to the main question about the relationship between IC and social capital it is important to notice that the consequences of individualism are not always detrimental. For instance, several studies have indicated that individualism (as it is conceptualized in psychology) is associated with higher self-esteem and optimism (e.g., Diener & Diener, 1995; Kitayama, Markus, Matsumoto, & Norasakkunkit, 1997; Schmitt & Allik, 2005), individualistic cultures are higher on subjective well-being (Diener, Diener, & Diener, 1995; Kuppens, Realo, & Diener, 2008), report higher levels of quality-of-life (Veenhoven, 1999), and have historically lower prevalence of infectious diseases (Fincher, Thornhill, Murray, & Schaller, 2008; Thornhill, Fincher, & Aran, 2009). People in individualistic cultures tend to have more acquaintances and friends (Triandis, 2000), they are more extraverted and open to new experience (Allik & McCrae, 2004; Hofstede & McCrae, 2004), and they are more trusting and tolerant toward people of different races and sexual orientation (Hofstede, 2001; Inglehart & Baker, 2000). Consequently, individualism does not necessarily jeopardize organic unity and social solidarity. On the contrary, the growth of individuality, autonomy, and self-sufficiency may be perceived as necessary conditions for the development of interpersonal cooperation, mutual dependence, and social solidarity (Realo, Koido, Ceulemans, & Allik, 2002).

How is social capital related to individualism then? If we take the communitarian point of view, we see individualism as destructive of the common good – it demolishes trust and civic order in a society and alienates its people. In that sense, growing individualism inevitably leads to destruction of social capital. The same conclusion can be reached if we follow Coleman’s (1988) claim that the norm that one should sacrifice self-interest and act in the interest of the group is another extremely important form of social capital. This form of social capital almost completely overlaps with one of the defining attributes of IC in cross-cultural psychology, which says that in collectivism (as opposed to individualism), one gives priority to the goals of the group(s) over one’s own personal goals (Triandis, 1995). In other words, the growth of social capital inevitably requires a sacrifice of individualism.

On the other hand, in line with Durkheim and his followers, one might argue that individualism is a precondition for the growth of social capital – voluntary cooperation and partnership between individuals are only possible when people have autonomy, self-control, and a mature sense of responsibility. In this perspective, it is not surprising to
observe that the participation in many associations does not threaten, but rather encourages, individualism (Triandis, 1995). If there is only one in-group (e.g., family), as it is the case for many collectivistic cultures, it tends to rule social life by providing the only source of social support, identity, and norms. Individuation or the shift toward individualism, in Triandis’ view, is a consequence of multiple in-groups (i.e., numerous voluntary associations, civic organizations, church groups, etc.) that fragment social control over an individual and place more emphasis on personal responsibility. Participation in many groups and associations undermines unquestionable loyalty toward only one in-group, family, or kinsmen and promotes trust toward people of different character. Not surprisingly, there is some empirical evidence to support this point of view. As shown by Hofstede (2001) in his analysis of 26 cultures (see exhibit 4.12 on p. 191), with more individualism, there is also an increase in tolerance and trust. The Pearson correlation between Hofstede’s Individualism Index and the Interpersonal Trust Score (percentage of respondents saying “most people can be trusted”) from the 1990 to 1993 World Value Survey was highly significant \( r = 0.62, p = 0.001 \).

In a paper published in *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology* in 2004, we reanalyzed available data on the relationship between IC and social capital within one country (the United States) and across 42 countries (Allik & Realo, 2004). The United States Collectivism Index was taken from Vandello & Cohen (1999, table 1) and the Social Capital Index comes from Putnam (2000), downloaded from http://www.bowlingalone.com/data.php3. (Higher scores indicate higher levels of both social capital and collectivism (or a lower level of individualism)). In America, we found the states with a high level of social capital (higher degree of civic engagement in political activity, where people spend more time with their friends and believe that most people can be trusted) to be more individualistic (see Figure 2). According to Figure 2, high levels of both community-based social capital and individualism prevail in the states that belong to the plains region: Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Nebraska. Low social capital and collectivistic tendencies, on the other hand, can be found in the area of the former Confederacy, in the states of South Carolina, Louisiana, Mississippi, Georgia, etc. The correlation between IC and social capital remained intact \( r' = -0.76, p = 0.000 \) when controlled for the Total Gross State Product per capita in 1999 (US Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis; http://www.bea.gov).

Similar results were obtained for 37 countries for which the Hofstede/Triandis combined ratings of IC were available. The IC correlated with the interpersonal trust variable in the expected direction: \( r(42) = 0.47 (p = 0.002; \text{Allik & Realo, 2004}) \).

Figure 3 shows that the countries with the highest levels of interpersonal trust are the countries most characterized by high levels of individualism: Finland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands, Canada, and the United States of America. The truly remarkable outlier on the plot is China with the lowest rating of individualism (i.e., the highest rating of collectivism) and nearly the highest level of interpersonal trust. When China, an obvious outlier, was excluded, the correlation increased to \( r(41) = 0.61 (p = 0.000) \).

To summarize these two sets of data, in America, states that are characterized by a higher degree of civic engagement and political activity, where people spend more time with their friends and believe that most people are honest and can be trusted, are also more individualistic. People in these states prefer to live alone and to be self-employed; they avoid religious affiliations and tend to drive alone in a car to work. In other words, states with higher levels of individualism are those that have been able to build and maintain a strong system of social networks based on voluntary cooperation and
A correspondingly strong association between individualism and social capital was observed at the national level, which is in comparison with the different countries, using slightly different measures of both IC and social capital. Countries in which people believe that ‘most people can be trusted’ and where citizens belong to a larger number of different voluntary associations were also more individualistic, emphasizing the importance of independence, personal time, personal accomplishments, and freedom to choose one’s own goals (Allik & Realo, 2004; Halman & Luijkx, 2006; Kemmelmeier, Jambor, & Letner, 2006).

How to explain the seemingly conflicting relationship between individualism and social capital? This apparent contradiction may originate from the semantic breadth of the concepts: in addition to a semantic core, there are many other properties attributed to mutual trust. A correspondingly strong association between individualism and social capital was observed at the national level, which is in comparison with the different countries, using slightly different measures of both IC and social capital. Countries in which people believe that ‘most people can be trusted’ and where citizens belong to a larger number of different voluntary associations were also more individualistic, emphasizing the importance of independence, personal time, personal accomplishments, and freedom to choose one’s own goals (Allik & Realo, 2004; Halman & Luijkx, 2006; Kemmelmeier, Jambor, & Letner, 2006).

How to explain the seemingly conflicting relationship between individualism and social capital? This apparent contradiction may originate from the semantic breadth of the concepts: in addition to a semantic core, there are many other properties attributed to
individualism that are more optional rather than fundamental. For instance, it is widely believed that individualism results in ruthless competition (Hsu, 1983; Triandis & Gelfand, 1998) and prevailing self-interests (Hui & Triandis, 1986). Although competitiveness may seem to be greater in societies in which the rights and goals of individuals are favored over those of the common good, it is certainly not an inevitable result of an individualistic way of life (Realo, Koido, Ceulemans, & Allik, 2002). A reasonable definition of a person as an autonomous and largely independent agent inevitably assumes that as an individual, he or she must accept responsibility for self and for his or her actions (Brewer & Chen, 2007; Ho & Chiu, 1994; Realo, Koido, Ceulemans, & Allik, 2002; Waterman, 1984). Thus, individualism does not necessarily jeopardize organic unity and social solidarity. On the contrary, the growth of individuality, autonomy, and self-sufficiency

Figure 3  Interpersonal trust and individualism–collectivism in 42 countries. Note: Higher scores indicate higher levels of both interpersonal trust and individualism (or a lower level of collectivism). ARG, Argentina; AUT, Austria; BLR, Belarus; BEL, Belgium; BRA, Brazil; BGR, Bulgaria; CAN, Canada; CHL, Chile; CHN, China; CZE-SVK, Czech Republic; DNK, Denmark; EST, Estonia; FIN, Finland; FRA, France; GER(W), West Germany; GER(E), East Germany; GBR, Great Britain; HUN, Hungary; ISL, Iceland; IND, India; IRL, Ireland; ITA, Italy; JPN, Japan; KOR, Republic of Korea; LVA, Latvia; LTU, Lithuania; MEX, Mexico; NLD, the Netherlands; NGA, Nigeria; N_IRL, northern Ireland; NOR, Norway; POL, Poland; PRT, Portugal; ROU, Romania; RUS, Russia; SVN, Slovenia; ZAF, South Africa; ESP, Spain; SWE, Sweden; CHE, Switzerland; TUR, Turkey; USA, United States of America (2004). Source: Hofstede-Triandis combined ratings of individualism–collectivism comes from Diener, Gohm, Suh, & Oishi (2000, table 1). Interpersonal Trust Score (average percentage of respondents saying “most people can be trusted” per country) comes from Inglehart (1997, table A2).
may be perceived as necessary conditions for the development of interpersonal cooperation, mutual dependence, and social solidarity (Allik & Realo, 2004; Realo, Allik, & Greenfield, 2008).

**Radius of Trust**

As a result of its growing recognition, the concept of social capital has undergone a series of refinement. Putnam (2000) distinguished between two forms of social capital — whether it is bonding (or exclusive) and/or bridging (or inclusive). The former may be more inward-looking and have a tendency to reinforce exclusive identities and homogeneous groups. The latter may be more outward-looking and encompass people from different social groups (Putnam, 2000). Development and modernization require that the network of trust is extended to others outside of the traditional circle of family, neighborhood, and village. A narrow radius of trust and the centrality of the family at the exclusion of broader society becomes a hindrance to the free market economy and democratic society (Harrison, 1985). The gradual widening of this ‘radius of trust’, however, cannot be accomplished without giving up unquestioning loyalty to nuclear family and kinship (Fukuyama, 1995). All authors seem to agree that the concept of social trust constitutes the core of social capital. It is also recognized that the level of trust is dependent on the social distance: not only the amount of interpersonal trust is important, but also how it is distributed along the social distance. One of the best indicators of social capital is the percentage of respondents who say that ‘most people can be trusted’. Thus, social capital is typically measured as generalized trust toward people, not only immediate family and kinfolk (Realo, Allik, & Greenfield, 2008).

In a recent study published in the *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology* (Realo, Allik, & Greenfield, 2008), we examined whether societies in which individuals highly value and are strongly attached to their nuclear and extended kin (familism) have lower levels of social capital, that is, of generalized trust and civic involvement. As for countries that encourage and reward collective action at a societal level (Institutional Collectivism), we expected to see higher levels of civic engagement, especially in those associations that deal with societal-level issues such as social welfare or political participation (Realo, Allik, & Greenfield, 2008). The scores of collectivism for 61 countries were obtained from a book by House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, & Gupta (2004) called *Leadership, Culture and Organizations: The GLOBE Study of 62 Societies*. The In-Group Collectivism (we prefer to call it familism) construct “assessed the degree to which individuals express pride, loyalty, and interdependence to their families” (Gelfand, Bhawuk, Nishii, & Bechtold, 2004, p. 463). Institutional Collectivism “focused on the degree to which institutional practices at the societal level encourage and reward collective action” (Gelfand, Bhawuk, Nishii, & Bechtold, 2004, p. 463). To measure social capital at the national level, we used two separate indices that would measure the two core aspects of social capital: interpersonal trust and civic engagement (Inglehart, Basanez, Diez-Medrano, Halman, & Luijckx, 2004).

As found in our previous research, the interpersonal trust variable correlated highly with familism in the expected direction (\(r(45) = -0.62, p = 0.001\)). (The correlations did not change after accounting for the country’s wealth as measured by gross domestic product per capita in 2003.) Figure 4 shows that the countries with the lowest levels of interpersonal trust (i.e., social capital) are the countries most characterized by high levels of familism, including many Latin American and African countries, and several Asian countries. On the contrary, cultures that score low in familism (including Scandinavian as well
as several Western European and Anglo-Saxon countries) have higher levels of interpersonal trust. Unlike familism, the correlation between interpersonal trust and Institutional Collectivism practice was positive, $r(45) = 0.58$, $p = 0.001$. The relationship remained significant even after controlling for national wealth. As shown in Figure 5, countries with the highest levels of interpersonal trust also had the highest levels of Institutional Collectivism practices (e.g., China, Denmark, and Sweden). On the other hand, countries with low levels of interpersonal trust had correspondingly low levels of Institutional Collectivism practices. Examples include Greece and Latin American countries like Argentina, El Salvador, and Colombia.

It is very intriguing that familism and Institutional Collectivism practices were both related to social capital but in opposing directions. Countries with the highest levels of social capital had high levels of Institutional Collectivism practices and low levels of familism (e.g., Sweden). This does not mean that social capital or trust is completely absent in societies with high levels of familism. Instead, a different type or particularized trust seems to exist which may be centered, for example, within families or ethnic groups (Uslaner,
In societies where trust is limited to the nuclear family or kinship alone, individuals do not trust each other and do not feel obligations to larger groups like neighbors, fellow citizens, or nation (Banfield, 1958). Thus, instead of talking about trust in general it is more informative to specify the particular radius of trust (Fukuyama, 1995). The radius of trust can expand from a narrow radius limited to a nuclear family to a larger radius including the broader society, so bridging the ‘gap’ between the family and state. The World Values Survey measures generalized trust (‘most people can be trusted’), which in fact specifies a wide radius of trust that goes beyond nuclear family and kinship. Individuals with a wider radius of trust are more inclined to support Institutional Collectivism, that is, higher levels of encouraging and rewarding collective actions and interests (Realo, Allik, & Greenfield, 2008).

Conclusions
To sum up, these and our previous results support Durkheim’s view that when individuals become more autonomous and seemingly liberated from social bonds, they actually

Figure 5 Interpersonal trust and Institutional Collectivism practices in 45 countries. Higher scores indicate higher levels of interpersonal trust and collectivism. Sources: Institutional Collectivism practices (response bias-corrected scores), House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, & Gupta (2004, table B.2), the Interpersonal Trust Score (percentage of respondents saying ‘most people can be trusted’ per country), 1999–2002 World Values Survey, and Inglehart, Basanez, Diez-Medrano, Halman, & Luijkx (2004, table A165). Reproduced from Realo, Allik, & Greenfield (2008).
become even more dependent on society. So, it seems that ‘true’ individualism involves the existence of a certain amount and particular form of collectivism: despite being autonomous and independent, people realize that they would not benefit individually unless they pursued their goals collectively (Realo, 1998, 2003). As Kagitçibasi (2005) pointed out, both autonomy and relatedness are basic human needs, and although apparently conflicting, they are in fact compatible. A question of what exactly are the mechanics which connect social capital and individualism obviously needs further investigation, which is far beyond the scope of this article. However, we hope that we have demonstrated in this article that both concepts – IC and social capital – are needed in psychology if one wants to examine and fully understand human behavior within the contexts of social systems.

Short Biographies

Anu Realo, PhD, is a senior research fellow of personality psychology at the University of Tartu (Estonia). His main research interests are in the areas of personality, emotions, subjective well-being, and cultural value dimensions.

Jüri Allik, PhD, is a professor of experimental psychology at the University of Tartu (Estonia). His primary field of research is visual psychophysics, especially perceptions of visual motion. Recent research, however, is more concentrated on personality, emotions, intelligence, and cross-cultural comparison. With Robert R. McCrue, he edited The First Factor Model of Personality Across Cultures.

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Endnote

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