Political Psychology of Individualism and Collectivism*

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The purpose of this paper is to review the previous works of political culture and cross-cultural psychology in order to establish why we need to introduce such cultural constructs as individualism and collectivism in the scientific study of cultural influences on citizens' political preference and behavior. First, this article will advance that the empirical investigation into the implications of political culture for the individual level has been largely missing. Second, it will examine previous works about individualism and collectivism in order to make a case for how we can enrich the study of political culture by taking advantage of interdisciplinary efforts. Third, this paper will propose some of the solutions for the political psychological study of individualism and collectivism.

1. INTRODUCTION

In comparative politics, we need a theoretical framework that facilitates meaningful comparisons of politics across countries. Students of political science have advanced attitudinal or behavioral, institutional, and cultural frameworks to this end. Except for the cultural approach, however, there is a significant theoretical disjuncture that might hinder identifying the implications of individual, micro-level findings for aggregate, macro-level analysis or vice versa. We have done the division of labor under both macro-level analyses and micro-level ones for a long time. This has led to successes in developing sophisticated theories based on empirical findings at each level of analysis. However, the gap between these two levels needs to be bridged to reap the fruits of such specialization. This article proposes that a political culture approach, specifically one based on individualism and collectivism, answer the call.

The purpose of this paper is to review the previous works of political culture and cross-cultural psychology in order to establish why we need to introduce such cultural constructs as individualism and collectivism in the scientific study of cultural influences on citizens' political preference and behavior. First, this article will critically review select political culture literature and argue that the empirical investigation into the implications of political culture for the individual level has been largely missing. Second, it will examine previous works about individualism and collectivism in order to make a case for how we can enrich the study of political culture by taking advantage of interdisciplinary efforts. Third, based on the critical review of the previous literature on the subject, this paper will propose some of the solutions for the political psychological study of individualism and collectivism.[1]

[1] This paper is a revised version of a part of the author's Ph. D. dissertation (Yoon, 2010).

2. BRIEF HISTORY OF THE POLITICAL CULTURE STUDIES

The intellectual interest in political culture is not a modern phenomenon. Since Plato and Aristotle, political philosophers have suggested that collective, bonding human psyches important for sustaining a political community of any form. In a similar vein, the cycle of political change explained in social psychological terms appears recurrently well into the nineteenth century. Thus, the general agreement that Almond and Verba's work (1963) is seminal in the study of political culture is attributable to the fact that they made a case for the crucial role of political culture or "civic culture" to be exact, for a successful government drawing on the empirical analysis of one of the first large scale comparative surveys.

The empirical inquiry into political culture has its share of ups and downs since its introduction to political science in the 1950s. The initial popularity was largely due to its more rigorous methodological posture, utilizing statistical analysis of survey data gleaned from random samples across multiple countries accompanied by sophisticatedly constructed interview schedules, among others. This systematic, quantitative approach to the study of political culture was a clear breakaway from a psycho-analytical and anthropological "reductionism," which had dominated the field since the turn of the century. Thus, political culture studies in the 1960s and the 1970s contributed to pioneering modern comparative politics. They aimed to construct generalizable knowledge about an individual's political behavior in different political regimes based on modern scientific methods and systematic comparisons.

The initial success of empirical political culture studies was eclipsed by academic challenges from the neo-Marxist on the left and rational choice advocates on the right. The former disputed the objectivity in general, and criticized Western ethnocentric tendencies in particular, of political culture studies. The latter discredited them for their atheoretical and frequent post-hoc approach that did not acknowledge its fundamental assumption of universal rationality. Rational choice theory began dominating in the discipline of political science in the late 1970s while the influence of the neo-Marxist criticisms waned to a point of insignificance at least in the academic community.

It is no coincidence that the popularity of modern political culture research declined in the same decades. However, the original rationale for the study was still valid as Reisinger (1995: 331) forcefully summarized by the question: "how can scholars satisfactorily explain cross-national differences in politics without attending to the subjective orientations of the societies' members?" By the late 1980s, such prominent scholars of political culture as Wildavsky (1987), Eckstein (1988), and Inglehart (1988), had led a reaction to the criticisms and attempted to redress the balance in the field that had been dominated by rational choice models and to revive it.

The signs of the times were also favorable to the movement of "the renaissance of culture." There were a series of historical developments that were not accounted for effectively by economic factors alone. The influence of religion and tradition was felt all over the world. Changes in the Catholic Church played a major role in the "third wave" of democratization. Muslim fundamentalism had become the most important political factor in the Islamic world. One cannot explain unprecedented, rapid economic development in East Asia without resorting to Confucianism. Moreover, in advanced industrial societies, religion and "post-materialist" values had been exerting not only a durable but increasing influence on electoral behavior while social class voting had declined markedly (Inglehart, 1988;

Huntington, 1991; Pye, 1997). All these social phenomena cried for a cultural explanation and students of political culture responded both with diverse perspectives and with the help of new technical and empirical capabilities.

Inglehart (1990; 1997) and Inglehart and Baker (2000), for example, first empirically reconfirmed the validity of the basic thesis of *The Civic Culture* and refuted economic determinism and "linear" modernization theory. He made a cogent argument that political culture is a crucial *intervening* variable in the long-term relationship between economic development and the emergence of mass democracy and that it is a central factor in the survival of democracy. Putnam (1993; 2000) is another successor to the tradition of *The Civic Culture* and responsible for the renaissance of the study of political culture in the recent decades. His quest for an answer for what it would take to make a good democracy led him to examine cultural variations within two countries, Italy (1993) and the United States (2000). His answer lied in the theory of social capital or "social networks and the associated norms of reciprocity," which has produced numerous policy as well as academic debates since. Huntington also made a significant contribution to the revival of political culture research, especially after the fall of communism. He summarily hypothesized, "In the post-Cold war world, the most important distinctions among peoples are not ideological, political, or economic. They are *cultural*… the most important groupings of states are no longer the three blocks of the Cold War but rather the world's seven or eight major civilizations" (1996: 21, *italics* is added). Although his broad-brush treatment of cultural zones and adversarial view based on anecdotal evidence invited much criticism from diverse disciplines, it surely enriched the field of political culture by escalating again the role of culture in world conflicts as well as in modernization or civilization to a point of scholarly contention.

Recent political culture research has geared toward more global issues and perspectives, armed with even more data sources accumulated over a longer period of time across countries. Harrison and Huntington (2000), for example, gathered for the "Cultural Values and Human Progress" symposium prominent experts on such diverse topics as the link between values and progress, the universality of values and Western "cultural imperialism," geography and culture, the relationship between culture and institutions, and cultural change. According to Harrison (2000), despite the lack of consensus on the topics, the participants agreed that cultural values and attitudes are an important and neglected factor in "human progress" and hence called for "a comprehensive theoretical and applied research program with the goal of integrating value and attitude change into development policies, planning, and programming in Third World countries and in anti-poverty programs in the United States" (2000, *xxxii*).

Inglehart has also expanded his lifetime perspective on political culture to "the theory of human development" with the colleagues in psychology as well as in political science. He first formulated the theory with Welzel (2003) and elaborated on it with "the human development syndrome" with Oyserman (2004) and "the human development sequence" with Welzel (2005). His recent co-authored work addressed the relationship among development, freedom, and happiness (Inglehart et al., 2008). Based on the World Values Surveys, which now spans almost three decades and covers the majority part of the world, these authors attempt to demonstrate that socioeconomic development, emancipative cultural change and democratization constitute a coherent syndrome of social progress. This cultural pattern or "human development syndrome" as they put it, has been universal in its presence across nations and cultural zones and as a whole contributed to broadening human choice and freedom.

In sum, the history of political culture research is as old as the history of comparative politics. Since the turn of the century when modern political science began to establish itself as an independent academic field, the popularity of political culture research as one of the major approaches to understand political behavior across nations and cultural zones has waxed and waned. In the recent decades, the political culture approach has invited renewed interests with global policy concerns as well as favorable research environments. The political culture approach has now been considered one of the two viable scientific paradigms along with rational choice theory in political science (Wildavsky, 1987; Eckstein, 1988; Inglehart, 1990; Ross, 1997; Fuchs, 2007).

3. BRING THE INDIVIDUAL BACK IN POLITICAL CULTURE

There have probably been as many critics as defenders of political culture studies. This section, however, will focus only on the aspect of political culture research that has motivated an inquiry into psychological implications of political culture. That is, existing political culture research, especially in the recent decades, has not paid due attention to the implications of political culture for the psychology of the individual whose political attitude and belief system constitutes, shapes, and is affected by, political culture. I observe that the neglect of the political psychology approach in the study of political culture is reflected in the definitions and the subsequent empirical approach dominant in the empirical study of political culture.

3.1 Psychological Definitions of Political Culture without Psychology

Culture and its particular type, political culture, have been typically defined and studied as a macro-phenomenon.[2] For example, Elkins and Simeon (1979) advanced that political culture is "the property of a collectivity" such as nation, region, class, ethnic community, formal organization, and so on. According to the authors, individuals do not have cultures but attitudes, beliefs, and values. They argued that we must develop precise means of identifying the *culture-bearing unit* in different situations in order to refine its utility as an explanatory concept beyond a descriptive category. Hofstede concurred by claiming that "culture presupposes a collectivity" (2001: 5) and defined it as "the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one category of people from another" (2001: 9) and used similar definitions in his other works including the first edition of *Culture's Consequences* (1980). Triandis cited in several works a renowned anthropologist Kluckhohn's definition that "culture is to society what memory is to individuals" and elaborated that "it includes what has worked in the experience of a society, so that it was worth transmitting to future generations" (Triandis and Suh, 2002: 135).

In fact, there have existed "psychological or subjective definitions" of political culture

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[2] In this paper, I do not intend to conceptually distinguish political culture from culture except that the former involves political objects and processes while the latter human affairs in general, subsuming the former as a field of study. Almond and Verba (1963: 12) made a similar distinction: "We speak of a political culture just as we can speak of an economic culture or a religious culture. It is a set of orientations toward a special set of social objects and processes." For a comprehensive conceptual distinction between political culture and culture, see Pye (1965: 8-9) and Verba (1965: 521-525).

that draw on such psychological terms as orientation, attitude, affect, cognition, feeling, evaluation, and so forth. Almond and Verba, for example, presented that political culture "refers to the specifically political *orientations – attitudes* toward the political system and its various parts, and attitudes toward the role of the self in the system" (1963, 12, *italics added*). We can find another typical example of psychological definitions in Verba's work. He defined culture as "the system of *beliefs* about patterns of political interaction and political institutions" (1965: 516, *italics added*) and those beliefs are fundamental, usually unstated, and unchallengeable, assumptions or postulates about politics.

Even these psychological definitions, however, have not been intended to refer to psychology at the individual level but psychology of a collectivity. Almond and Verba, pioneer of the "individual-oriented" political culture approach was not an exception. Immediately after they offered a psychological definition, they elaborated on the political culture of a society as "the political system as internalized in the cognitions, feelings, and evaluations of its population" (1963: 13) and this is the working definition for the five nation comparative survey study. Moreover, Inglehart who initiated the renaissance of political culture studies in the 1980s defined political culture in a similar fashion: "the *subjective* aspect of a society's institutions, the beliefs, values, knowledge, and skills that have been *internalized* by the people of a given society, complementing their external systems of coercion and exchange" (1997: 15). Harrison and Huntington also defined culture "in *purely subjective terms* as the values, attitudes, beliefs, orientations, and underlying assumptions prevalent among people in a society" (2000: *xv, italics added*). Thus, a definition of political culture has been considered psychological to the extent that it involves psychological constructs regardless of the reference levels, that is, the individual or the aggregate.

The notion of political culture as a psychological attribute of collectivities, however, seems to have precluded its core constituent element, the individual, in subsequent research. The implications of this dismissal can be identified at least in two aspects: (1) the lack of elaboration on psychological implications (2) the preference for a macroexplanation.

First, the relationship between political culture of a collectivity and other psychological constructs at the individual level, which is a crucial part of psychological definitions of political culture, has not been well specified. The effects of political culture on the individual are frequently posited in a definition but without much elaboration. Moreover, they are rarely subject to operationalization or to rigorous empirical testing.

Since Almond and Verba, students of political culture studies have rather casually used and expanded such psychological terms as attitude, orientation, belief, affect, feeling, cognition, value, and so on, often as components of political culture. But at the same time, they have often conceptualized these psychological constructs as consequences of culture, explicitly or otherwise, even in the same work. Almond and Powell (1978: 25), for instance, defined political culture "as the set of attitudes, beliefs, and feelings about politics current in a nation at a given time" and suggested that "the attitude patterns that have been shaped in past experience have important constraining effects on future political behavior." Although they acknowledged Barry's criticism (1970) on the lack of specification of causal mechanism in political cultural analysis and introduced such psychological terms as "attitude consistency" or "issue constraint," the authors did not expound the causal mechanism between attitude and behavior, which has been one of the central problems in Western psychology.

Elkins and Simeon, who explicitly dismissed the idea of culture as a property of individual, also put forward "constraining effects" of political culture on the individual's

cognition. They presented political culture as "a short-hand expression for a "mind-set" which has the effect of limiting attention to less than the full range of alternative behaviors, problems, and solutions which are logically possible" (1979: 128) yet did not elaborate on how political culture affects our attention. Almond (1980: 26) once advanced "the explanatory power of political culture variables is an empirical question, open to hypothesis and testing." However, students of political culture have not followed up this dictum at the individual level psychology.[3]

Second, the primacy of collectivity in political culture research has facilitated *macroexplanation* that "one social pattern, structure, or entity is explained by reference to other social phenomena" (Little, 1991: 183). Fuchs (2007: 163), for example, advanced as one of the paradigmatic cores of the political culture research program that political culture must be considered as a macro-phenomenon so that it can feasibly influence another macro-phenomenon of regime persistence.

The preference for macroexplanation, as with other tendencies in the empirical study of political culture, began with *The Civic Culture*, where Almond and Verba attempted to identify political culture *congruent* with democratic political system. We can also find other types of macroexplanation in political culture research in the works of Inglehart (1990; 1997) and Inglehart and Baker (2000) that have traced cultural value changes among the people of the world from traditional, survival culture to secular-rational, self-expression culture following the system level socio-economic changes; Huntington (1996) who predicted the post-Cold War conflicts based on major civilizations; Putnam (2000) who explained the performance of the state governments of the United Stated based on the stock of social capital of each state; Welzel and his colleagues (2003) and Inglehart and Welzel (2005) that have attempted to identify human development syndrome, among others.

However, we can rarely find the empirical studies of political culture that examine the cultural implications for an individual's political attitude despite increasing accumulation of survey data across nations. Indeed, the political culture approach so far has focused on the cultural linkage with various macro-socioeconomic and political phenomena such as democratization, stability and survival of democracy, economic development, conflicts among nations, human development, and so forth, but largely neglected the cultural implications for political psychology of the individual. Hence, we do not have enough information how the individuals in different cultures think and respond to the issues relevant to politics. In other words, we have not explicitly tested the idea that political culture affects political attitude and behavior or more broadly political psychology of the individual.

3.2 Issues in the Individualistic Approach to Political Culture

Granted, there is a strand of empirical work in political culture research classified as the individual-oriented, psychological approach to political culture. Reisinger (1995: 330)

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[3] By contrast, the cultural effects on individual psychology have been extensively studied empirically as well as theoretically in cultural and cross-cultural psychology. For example, culture is conceptualized as meta-schema or foundational schema (Oyserman et al., 2002b). It is also shown that culture often determines self-construal and subsequent psychological functioning (Markus and Kitayama, 1991), emotion (Kitayama and Markus, 1994), value (Triandis, 1995), personality (Triandis, 2002), and cognition (Nisbett, 2003). However, existing literature in these fields have not addressed the cultural effects on political psychology of the individual.

observed that most of recent defenders of political culture study fall within the individualistic, survey-based approach and it grew largely from the Almond's work. One should, however, note that the dominant approach in political culture, as he conceptualized, has not been individualistic if cross-national and has been liable to make a flawed inference about the aggregate cultural groups if in fact individual-oriented as true to its name.

First, drawing on the individual level survey responses does not make the political culture approach individual-oriented or psychological as Reisinger and others suggested. As discussed above, the preference for macroexplanation in political culture research has led to using survey data aggregated to a country, which is the major unit of analysis in the field. Thus, survey-based cross-culture studies that these authors referred to as examples of the individualistic approach would be, in fact, better understood as aggregate, especially if these studies made cross-national comparisons. Second, the individualistic approach that aims to make a "cross-level" inference without utilizing information at the aggregate level is vulnerable to "individualistic" fallacy, as Inglehart and others have pointed out. Individualistic fallacy refers to the *incorrect* assumption that one can draw aggregate-level conclusion from individual-level findings because an individual level relationship represents similar strength and direction at the aggregate level. Welzel and Inglehart (2007) advanced that the danger of making the fallacy pervades the entire political culture literature as *most* political culture studies examine the individual level determinants of attitudes that are assumed to have an impact at the societal level. In other words, aggregating individual level responses for cross-cultural comparison does not constitute individualistic fallacy but making a fallacious inference about properties or relationships at the aggregate level solely based on the individual level data does. This has often been the case in political culture research (Peters, 1998; Inglehart and Welzel, 2003; Welzel and Inglehart, 2007).

In sum, political cultural effects on the individual have frequently been posited in a theory of political culture without proper elaboration or being subject to empirical testing. And the relationship between political culture and other macro socio-economic phenomena has been the dominant subject of the field. Furthermore, the individual-oriented approach to political culture has been incomplete in the sense that it has been either in fact a society-centered study if comparative or a series of within-country studies if individualistic.

I do not claim that we should redefine or approach culture as the psychological attribute of the individual nor the psychological definition and the comparative individualistic approach is superior to other society-oriented definitions and approaches. In addition, I do not intend to develop the microexplanation that culture must be explained by the individual, as advocates of methodological individualism would advance (Lukes, 1973). I maintain, however, that a study of political cultural implications at the individual level is long overdue, despite increasing accumulation of survey data across nations. Fortunately, we have a body of research in cultural and cross-cultural psychology we can draw on for this purpose.

4. WHY INDIVIDUALISM AND COLLECTIVISM?

Culture is usually reserved for societies – e.g., nations, ethnic or regional groups within or across nations, and various social organizations, as discussed above. In contrast, political attitude, preference, beliefs, and behavior are often reserved for the individual. Thus, in order to understand the way culture relates to the individual, we first need to specify *dimensions* of cultural variation (Triandis et al., 1988: 323 *italics added*). In fact, the identification of

dimensions of culture has been suggested as a major goal in cross-cultural psychology. According to Leung and Bond (1989), one must first be able to link observed cultural differences to specific dimensions of culture that are hypothesized to have produced the differences in order to build a truly universal theory in psychology that takes into account the influence of culture.

Psychologists who are interested in the cultural implications for the individual's psychological functioning seem to have agreed upon the most important dimensions of cultural difference, that is, individualism and collectivism. According to Oyserman and her colleagues, a major thrust of cultural psychology in the past two decades has been based on modeling culture in terms of differences across groups in levels of individualism and collectivism (Oyserman et al., 2002b: 111). Indeed, Triandis and his associates' work (1988) "Individualism and Collectivism: Cross-cultural Perspectives on Self-Ingroup Relationships" has been chosen as one of the studies that changed the discipline of psychology (Hock, 2001).

Then, how could students of political culture who attempt to analyze the cultural effects on the individual benefit from the academic achievements by the neighboring discipline? To answer this question, I will critically review select psychology literature, both theoretical and empirical, on these important cultural dimensions in the following section.

4.1 Utilities of Individualism and Collectivism as Cultural Dimensions

Among several potential cultural dimensions that help us organize such diverse psychological constructs as attitude, behavior, affect, cognition, values, and so forth, of the individuals, what is so special about individualism and collectivism?

For practical reasons, one should begin with Huntington's observation. Huntington (1996) predicted, as discussed above, that the major world conflicts after the Cold War would occur along the "cultural fault lines separating civilizations" and suggested that the difference between *individualist* Western cultures and *collectivist* non-Western cultures would constitute major cleavages. Triandis (1995: 13-15) concurred and elaborated. He claimed that about 70 percent of the world population is collectivist and many in these groups disagree with individualism of Western civilizations. With the end of the Cold War, the contact between these two adversarial cultural groups has been increasing as the former Communist countries began to open their borders and changed from totalitarian, command economies, supposedly favorable to collectivism, to market economies, supposedly favorable to individualism. In addition, ongoing rapid globalization that has been making the world smaller and smaller with unprecedented technological development in mass communication and transportation has facilitated the interaction, virtual as well as actual, between individualists and collectivists. Thus, the potential for different kinds of world conflicts has risen, too. Based on these down-to-earth observations of the socio-economic, political transformation in the world, culturalists has demanded a better understanding of those opposing cultural frames.

Theoretically, culture-oriented psychologists has advocated individualism and collectivism as essential for scientific development of the field of cross-cultural and cultural psychology. For example, cultural psychologists have maintained that individualism and collectivism clarify fuzzy constructs of culture and facilitate a direct linkage of psychological mechanism at the individual level to a cultural dimension at the aggregate level by conceptualizing and operationalizing parallel constructs at both levels of analysis. In addition, they have argued that individualism and collectivism offer more parsimonious, coherent, and

empirically testable dimensions of cultural variation by providing the field with an organizing theme and focus for prediction and investigation. These cultural constructs also allow productive integration of knowledge accumulated in diverse fields of studies including anthropology, psychology, and political science, among others (Triandis et al., 1988; Kim, 1994; Hofstede, 2001; Oyserman et al., 2002b; Oyserman and Uskul, 2008).

In sum, the world after the Cold War has called for the renewed interests in individual and collectivism, two opposing cultural frames deemed as a major new source of the world conflict in the future. With rapid globalization and the regime change of the Soviet system, the interaction between two cultural views is ever increasing and a proper understanding of individualism and collectivism is needed. Theoretically, these dimensions have been advanced as the basic organizing principles of cultures that should be utilized in scientific model building in psychology.

5. THE EMPIRICAL APPROACH TO INDIVIDUALISM AND COLLECTIVISM

In a marked contrast with previous cultural research that is characterized by the relativistic, ethnographic approach among others, Hofstede's work aimed to build a scientific model of culture drawing on the empirical analysis of the extensive survey of the individuals from a large number of countries. It greatly facilitated empirical, cultural and cross-cultural research in subsequent decades by providing four overarching cultural patterns identified from the cross-national survey data.

Hofstede's empirical model of culture consists of the five dimensions identified from the factor analysis of the national average scores of employees' ratings of workplace relevant values.[4] Individualism and collectivism (IDV), a central focus in his first edition, is one of these organizing cultural dimensions and defined as follows:

> Individualism stands for a society in which ties between individuals are loose: everyone is expected to look after him/herself and her/his immediate family only. Collectivism stands for a society in which people from birth onwards are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, which throughout people's life time continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty (Hofstede, 2001: 225).

As illustrated from the definition and methodology to identify the cultural dimensions, Hofstede's analysis of culture is *ecological*. In other words, he defined those cultural frames with reference to an aggregate not individuals as he did for culture and explicitly studied the origins and consequences of these cultural dimensions at the same aggregate level (e.g., national wealth, educational and political systems). In addition, one should note that he did not view individualism and collectivism as separate dimensions. That is, low IDV means high collectivism and high IDV means low collectivism.

This path-breaking analysis has its own drawbacks: First, the definition of individualism and collectivism is simplistic, centering on the relationship between the individual and in-group, i.e., whether individual is independent of or dependent on his or her in-groups. It

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[4] The other dimensions include power distance, masculinity, and uncertainty avoidance. In the second edition (2001), Hofstede added the fifth dimension, long-term vs. short-term orientation based on the expanded dataset.

appears that it has to do with the fact that the dimension was derived empirically not theoretically. Second, as a macroexplanation, it could not explain the attitude and behavior of the individuals. Indeed, Hofstede acknowledged that his work in fact did not intend to do so, arguing that a different unit of analysis, that is, individual or aggregate, requires a theoretically distinct approach to avoid "ecological fallacy" in his case. He advanced that in general we should not confuse the within-system relationship with the ecological, between-system relationship. This amounts to the fallacy the possibility of which increases when one infers properties or relationships at the individual level solely based on the aggregate level data.

Hofstede's macro-analysis of individualism and collectivism has been followed by a host of the individual level analysis of the cultural frames, initiated by Triandis and his associates. The changes in academic focus on the level of analysis may have to do with the fact that the implementation of Hofstede's method is extremely time and resource intensive and that attention has shifted to the ways cultural frames affect individuals (Oyserman et al., 2002a).

Among the numerous contributions Triandis made to cross-cultural psychology, there are three important ones that are worthy of note. First, he refined Hofstede's aggregate-centered definition of individualism (IND) and collectivism (COL) both conceptually and empirically. He reported that the different methods of measuring these *cultural syndromes* converge (Triandis et al., 1990) and provide four defining attributes that distinguish them: (1) The definition of self is interdependent in COL and independent in IND (2) Personal and communal goals are closely aligned in COL and not at all aligned in IND (3) Cognition focus that guides much of social behavior includes norms, obligations, and duties in COL and attitudes, personal needs, rights, and contracts in IND (4) An emphasis on relationships, even when disadvantageous, is common in COL while the emphasis is on rational analyses of the advantages and disadvantages of maintaining a relationship in IND (Triandis, 1995). Triandis also conceptualized and measured collectivism independently as opposed to Hofstede and emphasized the "target-specific" nature of collectivism. He observed that collectivism is better construed as concern for a certain subset of people and interpersonal relationships – e.g., excluding strangers and foreigners – rather than as concern for the entire universe of human being (Hui and Triandis, 1986; Triandis et al., 1988). By this narrow specification, Triandis removed the normative aspect of collectivism but reminded the need for a clear operationalization of the construct.

Second, Triandis explicitly distinguished the two different levels of analysis, individual and aggregate, and tried to link them by formulating personality attributes variables corresponding to the cultural syndromes, that is, *idiocentric* for individualism and *allocentric* for collectivism, and utilizing the dimensional approach (Triandis, 1995). This methodological ingenuity is significant because it suggested the way we incorporate these cultural constructs of both levels of analysis in the same model and has facilitated the investigation of the implications of the variations in a dimension at one level of analysis for the other level, which subsequent empirical analyses on the subject need to follow.

Third, Triandis and his fellow scholars made a significant contribution to the way empirical analysis of culture chooses and frames the subjects of investigation. In a sense, he pioneered and established the psychological study of individualism and collectivism, that is, the study of how these cultural syndromes affect the psychology of the individual. Examples of the subjects include the influences of individualism and collectivism on self-concept (Triandis, 1989), social behavior (Triandis et al., 1990), well-being (Suh et al., 1998), and personality (Triandis and Suh, 2002). It is worthy of note, however, that Triandis largely

speculated the implications of these cultural syndromes for politics and that the focus was on the political system, not on the individual psychology.

Schwartz expanded the horizon of the field by putting individualism and collectivism in the context of the basic human values. His original intention to study individualism and collection was to refine the then-dominant definitions of these cultural constructs by Triandis, which are characterized by the defining attributes discussed above. In doing so, Schwartz drew on his universal values framework he had developed and has continued to do (Schwartz, 1990; Schwartz, 2006; Schwartz et al., 2010).

Defining values as "desirable, transsituational goals, varying in importance, that serve as guiding principles in people's lives" (Schwartz and Bardi, 2001: 269), Schwartz advanced that there exist ten *universal* value types on the individual level he confirmed empirically based on a series of large-scale cross-national surveys. Based on the criterion of "whose interests it serves," he classified these motivational goals into individual type values, which "serve the self-interests of the individual, not necessarily at the expense of any collectivity" and collective type ones, which "focus on promoting the interests of others" but again does not necessarily ask for individual's sacrifice. For example, values such as hedonism, achievement, self-direction, social power, and stimulation are classified into individual type values while values such as prosocial, restrictive conformity, security, and tradition, are classified into collective types. He determined that maturity values belong to both types because they "serve both individual and collective interests" (Schwartz, 1990).

Despite this largely dichotomous classification of universal value types, Schwartz made a strong case against it. The dichotomy of individualism and collectivism, argued Schwartz (1990), leads one to overlook values that inherently serve both IND and COL (e.g., wisdom), ignores values that foster the *universal* goals of collectivities other than in-group (e.g., universal values such as equality and social justice), and promote the *mistaken* assumption that IND and COL values each form coherent syndromes in polar opposition. Moreover, he did not assume that individual and collective interests necessarily conflict, as illustrated from the value type classification.

Granted, the first two rationales call for more rigorous definitions of the constructs, which Triandis appears to have agreed. As discussed above, Triandis attempted to rid normative aspects of IND and COL and emphasized the target-specific nature of the latter. In addition, Triandis (1995) recognized the third rationale, namely, the possibility of *orthogonality* of these cultural syndromes.

There are two other points that Schwartz made needs to be addressed here: First, he warns against *post-hoc* interpretation of empirical analyses of IND and COL at both levels of analysis and puts an emphasis on the theory-based, *a priori* specification of the cultural dimensions. Schwartz claimed that he derived those individual level universal values and cultural value orientations – e.g., autonomy vs. embeddedness, egalitarianism vs. hierarchy, and harmony vs. mastery – *a priori* instead of relying on ecological factor analysis as Hofstede did. One can easily agree that a barefoot, *post hoc* empirical analysis would lead us nowhere because any outcome of the analysis should be wide open to interpretation. Second, he maintained that the individual and cultural levels must be distinguished for both conceptual and empirical purposes. He emphasized that whether or not different values at the individual level or other cultural level values go together at each level would depend upon the factors operative at each level. For example, it would not be easy to find an individual who endorses the value of being humble and of authority at the same time. Yet a nation in which there is strong average endorsement for authority tends to be the one in which there is

strong average endorsement of being humble. In a nation characterized by a hierarchical culture, there should be a large number of people who value authority and a large number of other people who value being humble.

Both Hofstede and Triandis have also acknowledged the need of separate approaches depending on the level of analysis but it is Schwartz who carried them out based on a large-scale cross-cultural surveys. Schwartz extended his individual level value framework to the cultural level analysis of "prevailing value emphases" and presented a separate, *quasi-circumplex* value structure for each level of analysis. He also distinguished and confirmed empirically different factors operating at each level that affect values at the corresponding level.

In sum, Schwartz's work has allowed us to acknowledge the need to approach culture from both levels of analysis, based on *a priori* theory, in order to gain a fuller understanding of the subject. We now appreciate the fact that cultural logic is different from individual logic. The question is how we should incorporate separate analyses into a meaningful whole, utilizing the results from both levels.

Finally, Inglehart and Oyserman (2004) offered an integrative analysis of the works of Hofstede, Triandis, and Schwartz. They successfully demonstrated that Hofstede's IDV, Triandis' individualism-collectivism, Schwartz's autonomy-embeddedness, and the first author's self-expression-survival value dimension significantly overlap both conceptually and empirically. Focusing on survival/self-expression values, these authors advanced the one dimension that not only has been measured over a longer periods of time but also can help integrate all these disparate dimensions into a meaningful theoretical framework. In fact, Inglehart and Oyserman confirmed that only one dimension emerged from Principal Component Analysis (PCA) and it accounted for fully 78% of the cross-national variance of those cultural dimensions. This dimension is remarkably robust emerging with the different measurement approaches, different types of samples, and different time periods. Thus, Inglehart and Oyserman made a cogent case that these cultural dimensions, independently identified by Hofstede, Triandis and Inglehart, tap similar underlying construct that reflects the extent to which people give top priority to autonomous, individual choice over survival needs.

In sum, Inglehart and Oyserman's work made a significant contribution in the psychological study of culture in that it illustrated the way how students of culture integrate disparate works into a meaningful theoretical whole both theoretically and empirically and how we can take advantage of data resources collected over a long period of time to investigate the antecedents and consequences of cultural shift, which should constitute one of the most important research agendas in cross-cultural psychology in the future.

5.1 Oyserman's Meta-Analysis of Individualism and Collectivism

Oyserman and her associates has done so far the most comprehensive review of the empirical studies of individualism and collectivism in their "Rethinking Individualism and Collectivism: Evaluation of Theoretical Assumptions and Meta-Analysis" (2002a), which covers more than 250 different studies from 1980 to 1999. This broad, meta-analysis attempted to answer two crucial questions tackled by a wide variety of approaches and methods from existing literature in the field: Are European Americans higher in individualism and lower in collectivism than people from other societies? Are theoretically derived implications of individualism (IND) and collectivism (COL) for psychological

functioning in the domains of self-concept, well-being, attribution style, and relationally, borne out in the empirical literature?

The authors began the analysis by providing an overview of IND and COL as cultural orientations. Instead of offering alternative definitions of IND and COL, they present theoretical core elements of each construct and elaborate on the constructs based on existing operational definitions. That is, the core element of IND is the assumption individuals are independent of one another while that of COL is the assumption that groups bind and mutually obligate individuals. Based on the content analysis of the items that make up twenty seven available IND-COL scales, they identify seven components of IND such as independent, striving for one's own goals, personal competition and wining, focus on one's uniqueness, thought and actions private from others, knowing oneself and having a strong identity, and clearly articulating one's needs and eight COL components such as considering close others an integral part of the self, wanting to belong to groups, duties and scarifies, concern for group harmony, seeking advice for decision, self changes according to context, focus on hierarchy and state issues, and a preference for group work. According to the authors, these components or domains account for 88% of items across each of the scales included in the analysis, which illustrates that they are core elements of the existing empirical definitions of IND and COL.

As for the first question, the answer is complicated than expected. On the one hand, Americans are individualists as defined by their response to IND scales and the way they define themselves, and what evidence they find convincing and motivating. On the other hand, it is equally clear that they are relational and feel close to group members, seeking their advice, all of which represent collectivistic aspects. The answer for the second question is not so definite that there is not enough evidence for the need for *multiple psychologies* rather than a single, general psychology. In other words, observed psychological effects[5] of IND and COL tend not to be large and not to be replicated. In addition, focus on either a particular country comparison or a particular aspect of psychological functioning in a broader domain jeopardizes the generalizability of the findings of the studies.

In answering these questions, this comprehensive study highlights two problems of previous studies of individualism and collectivism. First, one cannot help notice that there has been a notable absence of the studies that examine psychological implications of these cultural constructs in the domain of political psychology. Among the large number of studies included in the meta-analysis, one can hardly find a study that either analyzes cultural influence on the individual attitude or behavior *directly relevant* to political issues or explores political psychological implications of the findings. As discussed in the section above, there have been the renewed interests in political culture for theoretical and practical reasons. Yet macroexplanation – that is, culture affects macro socio-economic phenomena – has been dominant at least in political science. This may have to do with the tendency of the discipline, especially in comparative politics, that focuses on macro political, socio-economic outcomes and choose a country as the unit of analysis. Thus, it is remarkable that a study that examines political psychological implications of individualism and collectivism is yet to be done even in the field of cross-cultural psychology, where academic focus has been on the way cultural frames influence individuals (Oyserman et al., 2002a).

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[5] The effects in the meta-analysis refer to main effect, i.e., size and direction of differences in IND-COL and moderator effects, i.e., to what extent, scale reliability, scale content, and sample composition influence size and direction of main effect differences.

Second, there is an issue of external validity in the current culture oriented psychological studies of individualism and collectivism, as Oyserman and her associates acknowledged. One would be hard pressed to justify that the findings could be generalizable to the real world when most dataset were collected from undergraduates and worse from 2-3 countries. According to Oyserman et al. (2002a: 6), over 80% of studies in the meta-analyses used undergraduates and the bulk of cross-national research comes from comparisons of American undergraduates that supposedly represent the West with undergraduates from Japan, Hong Kong, China, or Korea that supposedly represent the East. This may be attributable to the fact that they selected the studies based on such explicit keywords as individualism, collectivism, independence, interdependence, allocentrism, and idiocentrism, which should have narrowed the scope of the analysis.

6. THE POLITICAL PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDY OF INDIVIDUALISM AND COLLECTIVISM

In the final section, I will propose some of the solutions that we need to take advantage of for the study of political psychological implications of individualism and collectivism. They include multilevel analysis, rigorous conceptualization and operationalization of individualism and collectivism based on the level of analysis, and extensive use of cross-national, representative survey data.

6.1 Level of Analysis and Multilevel Analysis

Many cross-cultural psychologists since Hofstede have argued that different levels of analysis, that is, individual or cultural, need to be distinguished for theoretical as well as for empirical purposes. Hofstede who carried out the county level analysis of individualism and collectivism emphasized that his "ecological" or aggregate analysis should not be used to explain individual psychology. Theoretically, argued he, "cultures are not king-size individuals: They are wholes, and their internal logic cannot be understood in terms used for personality dynamics of individuals" (2001: 17). Empirically, he made an arguable claim to the effect that cross-level inferences would lead to a fallacy of one kind or another, that is, ecological fallacy or reverse ecological (individualistic) fallacy. In a sense, Hofstede justified the reason why he focused on the country-level cultural analysis.

Triandis agreed with Hofstede in the sense that he advanced different terminology – i.e., allocentric and idiocentric as personality attributes of collectivism and individualism, respectively – distinguish the individual level analysis from the cultural level one. Triandis, however, has focused on the individual level analysis without systematically incorporating the information at the cultural level except for review works (1989; 1995). In addition, he approached the issue of level of analysis as a "measurement" issue rather than the one of incorporating the information gained at either level of analysis (Triandis, 1995).

Schwartz also acknowledged the importance of distinguishing levels of analysis in gaining a complete perspective on culture. He conceptualized and tested empirically separate value structures at each level of analysis and then related relevant individual level universal values and cultural value orientations to corresponding aspects of individualism and collectivism. By doing separate analyses and hence focusing on the differences between two levels of analysis, however, Schwartz appears to fail to incorporate the results from different

levels of analysis more systematically despite the fact that he has used his own large scale cross-cultural survey data.

Inglehart has clarified what involves the aggregate level analysis of culture and when we need it. In doing so, he corrected the widespread misconception about ecological fallacy. According to Inglehart, the fact that culture consists of individuals does not *invalidate* any findings about political, socio-economic implications of culture without supporting evidence at the individual level. In other words, he made a convincing case that some relations are entirely ecological and *only* exist at the aggregate level as ecological *reality* and thus does not need empirical support from the individual level data. For example, democracy exists only at the aggregate level so the assumption that the beliefs of individuals affect democracy only mean that aggregations of these beliefs – i.e., cultural level mass beliefs – affect democracy (Inglehart and Welzel, 2003; Welzel and Inglehart, 2007).

In sum, many students of culture agree that we need separate constructs and approaches, both theoretically and empirically, depending on the level of analysis in the study of culture. Considering the implications of the dominance of collective oriented definitions of culture for the psychological approaches, the effort of distinct, conceptual and operational definitions of culture has been in the right direction. Yet they rarely seem to have attempted to incorporate the information gained at different levels so far. In other words, it appears that the choice of analysis for the empirical study of culture has been limited to either the individual or the aggregate level, avoiding fallacies of cross-level inference, that is, ecological or individual fallacy.

That being said, I argue that students of political culture need to take advantage of the multilevel modeling (MLM), or in which the cultural as well as the individual level information is incorporated in the same model to explain individual level attitude and behavior. This is a new generation analytic technique in cross-cultural psychology that takes account of the fact that individuals within the same context – in this case, the same nation – tend to be more homogeneous or clustered to use the terminology of MLM than others within different contexts.[6] In addition, it accounts for the fact that in this type of nested data structure, the variations at the individual level should be explained by the information at the contextual level as well as at the same individual level (Oyserman and Uskul, 2008).

The multilevel approach is most appropriate for the empirical analysis of political culture since it is reasonable to assume that political values, attitudes, and behavior of the individuals in the same country are more homogenous than others in different countries considering that they are raised under the same educational system and share the same historical experiences. Hofstede in fact suggested that MLM could be used to avoid both types of cross-level fallacies and could "provide crucial insights into the working of social systems" (2001: 17).

6.2 Contrasting Constructs of Individualism and Collectivism

In the study of individualism and collectivism, one of the most important theoretical questions that has profound methodological implications is whether the concepts of individualism and collectivism is bipolar and opposite or domain specific and orthogonal (Oyserman et al., 2002a). In other words, students of culture have debated whether values,

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[6] Multilevel modeling is often referred to as Hierarchical Linear Modeling (HLM), the statistical analysis that deals with this type of the nested hierarchical data structure.

attitudes, behaviors of individualists are directly opposite to those of collectivist. Thus, bipolar opposition granted, if you know someone is individualistic then you can safely assume that he or she is not collectivistic. At the cultural level, they have debated whether knowing how collectivistic a country is allows one to predict how individualistic it is.

I propose that cross-cultural psychologists conceptualize and operationalize individualism and collectivism as multidimensional constructs at the individual level and as unidimensional and bipolar ones at the cultural level. A the individual level, the multidimensionality of the constructs have been supported theoretically by Triandis' arguments on multiple key attributes and the orthogonal classification of the constructs, Schwartz's circumplex structure of values subsuming individualism and collectivism, and Oyserman et al.'s content analysis of the existing scales. The target-specific nature of collectivism also supports the domain specific conceptualization of the construct. Thus, Oyserman and her associate observed that "it is probably more accurate to conceptualize IND and COL as worldviews that differ in the issues they make salient" (2002a: 5). In other words, individuals can hold two seemingly contrasting cultural values at the same time and the activation of either value depends on the situation and the issue content they deal with. Hofstede, who initiated the bipolar approach at the cultural level, also supported a multidimensional model at the individual level (1994; 2001: 215-216).

At the cultural level, it would be more reasonable to conceptualize individualism and collectivism as unidimensional since such collective attributes would be robust to short-term, situational cues unlike individual cultural values as the multidimensionality at the individual level suggests. In addition, the bipolar unidimensional approach at the cultural level has to do with the way students of culture have identified the dimensions of cultural syndromes. According to Oyserman and her associates (2002a: 8-9), the bipolar single dimension approach seems to have been more popular even among researchers studying psychological implications of these cultural syndromes. The majority of the 170 studies included in their meta-analysis measured only one of the constructs.

6.3 External Validity

As suggested by Oyserman et al. (2002a), the study of cross-cultural psychology has been vulnerable to the issue of external validity, that is, whether we can generalize the findings from the research to the real world.

The criticism has been valid to some extent. The vast majority of empirical studies of culture have compared samples from only two or three cultures, usually operationalized as different nations (Schwartz, 1994; Oyserman et al., 2002a). The study of comparative political behavior, where cross-cultural research of individualism and collectivism such as this paper calls for, has also had the similar issue. According to Jennings (2007), cross-national studies for investigating contextual effects have been confined to a small number of countries since the pioneering five-nation study of *The Civic Culture*. In addition, cross-national comparisons that examine individual-level effects typically involve convenience samples of college students, many of them participate in the study while attending a psychology course (Oyserman et al., 2002a). Moreover, experiment, preferred research method in psychology especially for establishing causality at the individual level, has often been subject to the similar criticism of generalizability because of its highly contrived lab settings.

The problems of the small-n countries/cultures, unrepresentative samples are inevitable

due to the limited research resources. Furthermore, since obviously cultural or national level variables cannot be manipulated, experimental methods can only be applied to the individual level analysis. One should also acknowledge the fact that these problems themselves will not make any findings of cross-cultural studies that utilize at least one of these methods not generalizable or invalid. As suggested by Oyserman and her associates' extensive meta-analysis (2002a), there is not *the* only one way but exist multiple ways, to learn the scientific truth. Any findings from one research method can be and must be verified by others from different methods. Hofstede also advocated such a pluralistic method tradition, that is, "methodological triangulation" (2001: 5).

To address the issue of the generalizability of the research findings in the spirit of methodological triangulation, I maintain that we need to take advantage of a large scale cross-national survey that is far more representative, in terms of the number of countries and respondents, and the way samples are selected. For example, we have, among others, Hofstede's IBM data expanded by Bond and his colleagues, the Schwartz Value Survey (SVS), Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness (GLOBE) research program, and the World Values Survey (WVS) available for this purpose.

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