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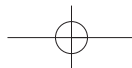
## Introduction to the Special Issue on Culture and Social Psychology

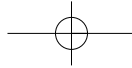
*Introduction au numéro spécial Culture et Psychologie Sociale*

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This special issue of the International Review of Social Psychology includes a series of articles studying the relation between sociocultural factors, attitudes and beliefs. These articles illustrate the growing strength of interest in explorations into the cultural relativity of social psychological phenomena. They also demonstrate the ranges of ways in which contemporary researchers seek to build links between the fundamentally individualistic focus of much psychological research and the essentially collective nature of the cultural contexts within which social behaviours occur. Hofstede's (1980) pioneering definition of culture as 'the collective programming of the mind' and his attempt to characterise nations as cultures has had a lasting effect upon the research agenda. Hofstede's work focused only on nation-level comparisons. Subsequent researchers have struggled with the difficulty of linking these dimensions to individual-level variability. To what extent can nations and other large collectivities or cultures be defined in ways that make clear that they are more than a mere aggregation of the attributes of the individuals that comprise them? Conversely, how can nation-level variability help us to explain individuals' behaviour? Hofstede's identification of differences between individualistic and collectivistic nations has proved particularly attractive. Another of the dimensions of variance that he identified was between nations with what he termed masculine and feminine cultures. Several of

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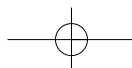


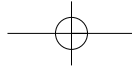
the papers in this issue focus on possible confusion between later researchers' interpretations of these two dimensions of cultural variability.

Five of the present papers present analyses of individual-level data, while three focus on nation-level differences and one analyses the same dataset at both levels. By presenting this broad range of perspectives, we seek to encourage to emphasise the complementarity of analyses at different levels. Rather often, variables relate to one another in different ways at different levels of analysis. Failure to recognise this can lead one into the 'ecological fallacy' (Hofstede, 2001; Smith, in press). As the papers that follow illustrate, different levels of analysis methods are appropriate to the answering of different types of questions.

In the first article, Green focuses on the concept of individualism. Drawing on data from 25 nations, she compares individual and nation-level analyses of Triandis et al's scale of individualistic attitudes. After controlling for possible cultural differences in response bias by using within-subject scores, she shows that emphasis on competition ('success is the most important thing in life') differs from beliefs in self-sufficiency and autonomy at both levels of analysis. This provides a useful clarification of the way in which Hofstede's concept of individualism has often been interpreted. Success orientation was found highest in collectivist and high power distance nations rather than in those that Hofstede found to be most individualistic.

In the second article, Fernandez, Paez and Gonzalez, explore a similar theme and another aspect of the same dataset, but focus on individuals' self-construal. Singelis et al's scales of Interdependent and Independent self-construal were applied in 29 nations. An individual-level pan-cultural factor analysis provided evidence only for a six item cross-culturally stable six-item Interdependence dimension, confirmed by multisample confirmatory factor analysis. Interdependence was shown to separable into factors loading on 'Relational Interdependence' and 'Group Loyalty'. Scores on these measures were linked to existing characterisations of nations by use of individual-level regressions. Relational Interdependence was found to be associated with nations that Hofstede identified as feminine, while Group Loyalty with nations identified by Hofstede as collectivist. This study too



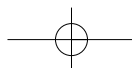


suggests a clarification of the way that researchers have interpreted Hofstede's concepts, but we do not know whether the results would have been the same if the more usual procedure of aggregating the data to the nation-level had been used.

While the first two studies illustrate alternative approaches to linking individual- and nation-level analyses, the third article concerns individual-level explanations for national identity. Smith, Giannini et al. provide what amounts to a parallel series of single-nation studies. They confirm that, in Europe, individuals with an interdependent self-construal show a higher national identification. They also test predictions that where a national autostereotype is negative, self-construals may predict the strength of identification with alternative identities. Results suggest the need to take into account the distinctive attributes of different European nations, rather than providing cultural-general results.

The fourth and fifth articles report contrasting ways of relating nation-level dimensions to processes of emotional regulation. Fernandez-Berrocal, Salovey et al's paper confirms that clarity in the perception and elaboration of feelings, and perceived ability to repair or regulate one's emotional state were similarly related to low depression in each of three nations. By using culture scores as a moderator of these individual-level relationships, they were then able to show that the link between Emotional Intelligence and mood was stronger in the more "feminine" nations.

In contrast, Deighton and Traue's paper analyses data at the nation-level. Self-reported emotional somatization, inhibition and expression are compared, using data derived from the previously mentioned multi-nation project. Collectivism is found to be related to emotional inhibition and to somatization, at least as measured by self-reports. They suggest that participants living in developing, collectivist and high power distance cultures share strong beliefs in success, personal reward and independence, because collectivist and hierarchical elite subjects adapt to modernization by adopting individualistic attitudes (see also the Green and Fernandez et al papers). Previous studies in cross-cultural psychiatry (the classic Kleinman studies on Chinese somatic expression of depression for instance) also suggest that collec-

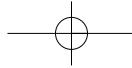


tivism stresses the somatic language of distress. On the other hand, strongly competitive attitudes could reinforce emotional inhibition and somatization because highly competitive elite subjects need to display a stoic and self-constrained emotional style.

In a further nation-level comparison, Moya, Poeschl, Glick et al. examine the association between socio-cultural factors and sexist ideology across 20 nations. Low levels of social development, high rate of female fecundity, collectivism, power distance and low scores on femininity on a shortened version of the Bem Sex Role Inventory were associated with beliefs that justify inequalities between women and men.

Returning to the individual level, Perez et al.'s study shows that Spaniards aged over 40 years share strong beliefs related to the culture of honor. Moreover, when faced with a minority message attributed to a 45 and above year old "Women's Liberation" group, by comparison to the same message attributed to a young people's Women's Liberation group, old males stress a strong belief in the culture of honor. The authors suggest that the "old" cohort of male Spaniards live in tension between traditional honor values and the modern context of ideas about women's liberation, and that this may explain why uxoricide (killing one's wife or ex-wife) is more common in this group.

Finally, Basabe and Ros' paper examines at the nation level the macro-social and macro-psychological correlates of Individualism and Power Distance. Using Hofstede's scores for Individualism and Power Distance, and Schwartz's scores for Affective Autonomy, Intellectual Autonomy and Hierarchy, they show that these scores have convergent and concurrent validity. Collectivism is related to low social development, high family size, competitiveness and group loyalty or group interdependence. Power Distance is associated with low social development, income differences, domestic political violence, corruption and competitiveness. This article confirms the relevance of these cultural dimensions and also reinforces the importance of overcoming the simplistic view of collectivism as comprising both loyalty and relationalism, and individualism as related to both competition and independence. An emphasis on achievement is not necessarily contradictory to collectivism, and affiliation is not necessarily contradictory with individualism.



This special issue includes authors from America and from Europe, particularly Latin Europe and Latin America, and tries to reinforce the expansion of cross-cultural studies in Latin speaking countries. We would particularly like to thank the postgraduate course held at Lausanne University at which some of these papers were discussed. We also thank the University of the Basque Country for Grant 109231-G56/98, which supported data collection in 29 countries and partially allowed E. Green, R. Deighton and I. Fernandez to read their doctoral dissertations at the Universities of Lausanne, Switzerland; Ulm, Germany; and San Sebastian, Spain, respectively. Finally, we would like to thank the International Review of Social Psychology for publishing this monograph on Culture and Social Psychology, and to congratulate ourselves on the enthusiastic participation of scholars from the Americas, such as P. Glick, P. Salovey, A. Vera and E. Zubieta, and from different nations of Europe, including Poland, Finland, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, Spain, and Portugal.

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