# Measuring European selves

*A cross-cultural investigation of self-descriptions and autobiographical memories in post-Communist Europe and Scandinavia*

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**BY**
**RADKA ANTALÍKOVÁ**

DISSERTATION SUBMITTED 2015

AALBORG UNIVERSITY
DENMARK

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## A CROSS-CULTURAL INVESTIGATION OF SELF-DESCRIPTIONS AND AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL MEMORIES IN POST-COMMUNIST EUROPE AND SCANDINAVIA

by

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# CV

I was born on 10th February 1984 in Rimavská Sobota, Slovakia. In 2009, I obtained my Master's degree in psychology from Comenius University in Bratislava, Slovakia. My Master thesis was an empirical investigation of comprehension of passives in Slovak typically and non-typically developing children and was written under the supervision of Prof. Kristine Jensen de López.

In 2011, I began my full-time position as a PhD fellow and Teaching assistant professor in cross-cultural psychology at the Aalborg University, Denmark. My main research interest has been in the cross-cultural study of self and autobiographical memory. However, throughout my years at Aalborg University, I have supervised numerous empirical projects, and several Bachelor and Master theses, which dealt with a variety of research topics. This experience, together with my collaboration with other cross-cultural researchers, has resulted in publications outside my main research area. These publications include a paper on implicit and explicit attitudes towards immigrants and Muslims in Denmark in *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology*, a short report of an investigation of empathy in pet owners and non-pet owners in *Psyke & Logos* (in Danish), and an upcoming article in *Journal of Nonverbal Behaviour*, concerning perception of smiling and non-smiling individuals across 44 cultures.

Apart from Slovakia and Denmark, I have lived in the United States, England, and Spain. I speak Slovak, English, Danish, Spanish, and some German.

# ENGLISH SUMMARY

Taking the perspective of cross-cultural psychology, the current thesis sets out to investigate self in a European context. For this purpose, the thesis first thoroughly reviews the most prominent conceptualizations of self in cross-cultural psychology, specifically focusing on disentangling the term interdependence. Thereafter, the thesis critically examines the most common measures of self and appropriates some of these measures for use in the current empirical study. More concretely, the current study compares self-descriptions and autobiographical memories of individuals from post-Communist Europe and Scandinavia. The study's results exemplify participants' interdependence, whether in the form of their relational and group self-descriptions or their autobiographical memories recalled to different interpersonal cue words. On the whole, the current thesis contributes with novel data to the field of cross-cultural psychology, specifically highlighting the utility of autobiographical memories as measures of self.

The thesis' **Chapter 1**, *Introduction*, argues for the thesis' relevance in the context of cross-cultural psychology. On the one hand, the chapter notes that cross-cultural research on self has been dominated by large-scale West (North America) versus East (East Asia) comparisons, largely inspired by the seminal paper by Markus and Kitayama (1991). For instance, within-European investigations of a similar kind have been scarce, and direct post-Communist and Scandinavian comparisons are nonexistent. On the other hand, the chapter points out that the validity of existing measures of self, in particular the Likert-type rating scales, has been questioned. The chapter concludes by stipulating the thesis' research question and defining some of the thesis' key terms.

**Chapter 2**, *Theoretical framework*, begins with a brief presentation of the field of cross-cultural psychology and of some of its central concepts, such as culture and individualism-collectivism. Thereafter, the chapter provides an overview of the most prominent conceptualizations of self in cross-cultural psychology: Markus and Kitayama's (1991) model of independent and interdependent self as well as the model's refinements, namely Brewer and Gardner's (1996) relational and collective self and Kagitcibasi's (2005) autonomous-related self. The conceptualization of self as inherently autobiographical (Wang & Brockmeier, 2002; Wang, 2001) is presented last. After summarizing all the previously presented theories in text and graphically (Figure 5), the chapter proceeds to outline the most popular approaches to measuring self in cross-cultural psychology. Likert-type rating scales, most notably the Self-Construal Scale (Singelis, 1994), are discussed in light of the extensive critique of their validity. Twenty Statements Test (Kuhn & McPartland, 1954), a representative of open-ended methodological approaches, is described next. Finally, the chapter introduces autobiographical memories as novel measures

of self and briefly mentions various accessibility, content, and form characteristics of autobiographical memories that have been utilized in this respect. The chapter ends by presenting the rationale for the current study.

**Chapter 3**, *Methodology*, outlines the design of the current study. Moreover, the chapter describes the study's participants, who based on their nationality (Slovak, Norwegian, and Danish) and age (adolescents and older adults) fall into several subsamples. While particular aspects of the data collection procedure varied across these subsamples, all participants of the current study were asked to describe themselves via the aforementioned Twenty Statements Test as well as to recall and report autobiographical memories in a written questionnaire. Thereby obtained self-descriptions as well as autobiographical memories were subsequently analysed for their content; the chapter highlights some of the issues that arose during the coding process. The last section of Chapter 3 concerns ethical considerations.

**Chapter 4**, *Results*, presents the current study's results in the form of four independent manuscripts. As a starting point, **Manuscript 1**, a theoretical book chapter, provides a concise overview of the field of cross-cultural psychology. Specifically, the manuscript introduces some of the field's key notions, namely culture, values, and self, followed by some of the field's main lines of investigation, such as research on cultural value dimensions, self-types, emotions as well as developmental issues. Next, **Manuscript 2** is an empirical article that investigates the importance of three interpersonal settings (family, school, and friends) for Norwegian and Slovak adolescents' self-development, as it is reflected in various characteristics of the adolescents' autobiographical memories recalled about these settings. **Manuscript 3** is also an empirical article, this time examining relational and collective interdependence in two generations from Slovakia and Denmark. For this purpose, the manuscript utilizes the Twenty Statements Test. Finally, **Manuscript 4** is both a theoretical as well as methodological contribution, since it proposes a new approach to the content analysis of autobiographical memories.

**Chapter 5**, *Discussion*, discusses the previously presented results of each of the manuscripts individually. Afterward, the results are combined into a general discussion, and that depending on whether they address particular theoretical or methodological issues or whether they concern the study's empirical results. While the theoretical discussion brings some of the referenced conceptualizations of self into comparison, the methodological discussion highlights the benefits of content analysis as well as the utility of autobiographical memories as measures of self. Results of the two empirical articles are combined in a separate section. Finally, the thesis' overall contributions are pointed out, followed by a reminder of the thesis' limitations and a proposal of directions for future research.

The thesis ends with concluding remarks in **Chapter 6**, *Conclusion*.

# DANSK RESUME

Inden for en tværkulturel psykologisk referenceramme ønsker denne Ph.d.-afhandling at undersøge selvet i en europæisk kontekst. Først gennemgår Ph.d.-afhandlingen de mest fremtrædende konceptualiseringer af selvet på området med et særligt fokus på begrebet *interdependence*. Derefter giver Ph.d.-afhandlingen en kritisk oversigt over de mest anvendte måleredskaber af selvet og udvælger nogle af disse til brug i den nærværende empiriske undersøgelse. Mere konkret sammenligner undersøgelsen selvbeskrivelser og selvbiografiske erindringer af individer fra det postkommunistiske Europa og fra Skandinavien. Undersøgelsens resultater eksemplificerer deltagernes *interdependence*, i form af deres relationelle og kollektive selvbeskrivelser eller deres selvbiografiske erindringer genkaldt til forskellige interpersonelle stikord. Overordet set bidrager denne Ph.d.-afhandling med ny data til det tværkulturelle psykologiske område samt fremhæver anvendeligheden af selvbiografiske erindringer som måleredskaber af selvet.

Afhandlingens **Kapitel 1**, *Introduktion*, argumenterer for Ph.d.-afhandlingens relevans i forhold til tværkulturel psykologi. På den ene side påpeger kapitlet, at tværkulturel forskning af selvet har været domineret af Vest (Nordamerika) versus Øst (Østasien) komparative undersøgelser, i høj grad inspireret af den skelsættende artikel af Markus og Kitayama (1991). Derimod er interne europæiske sammenlignende studier af selvet sjældne, og der findes på dette tidspunkt ingen direkte postkommunistiske og skandinaviske sammenligninger. På den anden side gør kapitlet opmærksom på debatten vedrørende validiteten af de nuværende måleredskaber af selvet, især Likert-type skalaer. Kapitlet afsluttes ved at præsentere Ph.d.-afhandlingens forskningsspørgsmål såvel ved at definere Ph.d.-afhandlingens nøglebegreber.

**Kapitel 2**, *Teoretisk referenceramme*, indledes med en bred afgrænsning af tværkulturel psykologi og nogle af dens centrale begreber, såsom kultur og individualisme-kollektivisme. Herefter giver kapitel et overblik over de mest fremtrædende konceptualiseringer af selvet på området: Markus og Kitayamas (1991) model af *independent and interdependent self* samt dens videreudviklinger, nemlig Brewer og Gardners (1996) *relational and collective self* og Kagitcibasis (2005) *autonomous-related self*. Til sidst præsenteres konceptualisering af selvet som selvbiografisk (Wang & Brockmeier, 2002; Wang, 2001). Efter et sprogligt og grafisk (Figur 5) resumé af alle de tidligere præsenterede teorier fortsætter kapitlet ved at skitsere de mest populære metoder til at måle selv i tværkulturel psykologi. Her diskuteres Likert-type rating skalaer, især *Self-Construal Scale* (Singelis, 1994), i lyset af den omfattende kritik vedrørende deres validitet. Dernæst beskrives *Twenty Statements Test* (Kuhn & McPartland, 1954), som er en repræsentant for den åbne metodologiske tilgang. Til sidst introducerer kapitlet selvbiografiske

erindringer som nye måleredskaber af selvet samt nævner kort de forskellige tilgængeligheds-, indholds- og formskarakteristika af selvbiografiske erindringer, der har været anvendt i denne henseende. Kapitlet afsluttes ved en begrundelse for den nærværende undersøgelse.

**Kapitel 3**, *Metodologi*, præsenterer designet af den nærværende undersøgelse. Mere konkret beskriver kapitlet undersøgelsens deltagere, som på baggrund af deres nationalitet (slovakisk, norsk og dansk) og alder (unge og ældre voksne) opdeles i flere undergrupper. Alle deltagere blev bedt om at beskrive sig selv via *Twenty Statements Test* samt at genkalde sig og rapportere deres selvbiografiske erindringer i et skriftlig spørgeskema. Særlige aspekter af dataindsamlingens procedurer varierede på tværs af disse undergrupper. Både selvbeskrivelser og selvbiografiske erindringer blev efterfølgende analyseret i forhold til deres indhold. Kapitlet sætter ydermere fokus på nogle af de spørgsmål, der opstod under denne kodningsproces. Den sidste del af Kapitel 3 vedrører etiske overvejelser.

**Kapitel 4**, *Resultater*, præsenterer undersøgelsens resultater i form af fire selvstændige artikler. Som udgangspunkt er **Artikel 1** et teoretisk bogkapitel, som giver et kortfattet overblik over tværkulturel psykologi som felt. Specifikt introducerer artiklen nogle af feltets nøglebegreber, nemlig kultur, værdier og selvet, efterfulgt af nogle af feltets hovedforskningsområder, såsom undersøgelser af kulturelle værdidimensioner, selvtyper, emotioner samt udviklingsmæssige emner. **Artikel 2** er en empirisk artikel, som undersøger betydningen af tre interpersonelle kontekster (familie, skole og venner) for norske og slovakiske unges selvudvikling, nemlig hvordan den kommer til udtryk i forskellige karakteristika af de unges selvbiografiske erindringer om disse kontekster. **Artikel 3** er også en empirisk artikel, der denne gang undersøger relationel og kollektiv *interdependence* i to generationer fra Slovakiet og Danmark. Til dette formål gør artiklen brug af *Twenty Statements Test*. Afslutningsvis følger **Artikel 4**, der udgør såvel et teoretisk såvel som metodisk bidrag, da denne artikel foreslår en ny tilgang til indholdsanalyse af selvbiografiske erindringer.

**Kapitel 5**, *Diskussion*, diskuterer først de forhen præsenterede resultaterne fra hver artikel. Dernæst kombineres alle artiklernes resultater i en generel diskussion alt efter, om de tiltaler bestemte teoretiske eller metodiske problemstillinger eller vedrører undersøgelsens empiriske resultater. Mens den teoretiske diskussion sammenligner de anvendte konceptualiseringer af selvet, fremhæver den metodiske diskussion fordelene ved indholdsanalyse samt nytten af selvbiografiske erindringer som måleredskaber af selvet. Resultaterne af de to empiriske artikler kombineres i et særskilt afsnit. Endelig fremhæves Ph.d.-afhandlingens samlede bidrag, efterfulgt af et afsnit om dens begrænsninger og forslag til fremtidig forskning.

Ph.d.-afhandlingen afsluttes med konkluderende kommentarer i **Kapitel 6**, *Konklusion*.

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# CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

In the last decades, cross-cultural research has documented systematic differences in how individuals from diverse cultures think, feel, communicate, and act. Traditional psychological theories, developed and tested in North American and West European contexts, were declared ethnocentric, and universality of various psychological phenomena became challenged (Triandis, 1996).

One of key notions in psychology, the notion of self, was not an exception in this regard. The traditional conceptualization of self as separate, stable across time, and defined by internal states, such as thoughts, feelings, and motives, became criticized as exclusively Western. Alternative conceptualizations of self have been proposed, most notably by Markus and Kitayama (1991). Apart from the Western, so-called independent view of self, Markus and Kitayama also described the Eastern (i.e. East Asian) interdependent view of self. This self was seen as always related to other selves and thus defined by thoughts, feelings, and motives of others in addition to its own. Moreover, interdependent self was described as ultimately context-bound and thus variant across situations.

Since the publication of Markus and Kitayama's paper in 1991, their model of independent and interdependent self has been utilized and tested in numerous investigations across the world, thereby promoting the West-East, independence-interdependence distinction in cross-cultural psychology. While the distinction has undoubtedly proven instrumental on many occasions, its routine application beyond the North American and East Asian contexts, that is, the contexts the model originally referred to, has been criticized too. Namely, a number of authors have argued and demonstrated that in some cases, other conceptualizations of self might be more appropriate. For example, inspired by socioeconomic developments in rural Turkey, Kagitcibasi (2005, 2007) proposed a model of autonomous-related self, and several other researchers suggested a further differentiation of interdependent self into relational and collective self (Brewer & Gardner, 1996; Cross, Bacon, & Morris, 2000), partly drawing on investigations of gender differences. Most recently, conceptualization of self as inherently autobiographical (Wang & Brockmeier, 2002) was put forward. Taken together, it has become clear that when investigating self in other than the two original contexts, the appropriateness of Markus and Kitayama's model needs to be carefully examined against its alternatives. Otherwise, the field of cross-cultural psychology might be at risk of developing a new kind of ethnocentrism, this time in terms of the West-East, independence-interdependence distinction.

For instance, it is still rather unclear whether the notions of independent and interdependent self could also be instrumental for comparative research on a

considerably smaller scale than typically adopted in the literature. In particular, only a handful of investigations have focused on exclusively within-European comparisons (e.g. Ciochină & Faria, 2009; Pouliasi & Verkuyten, 2012) or have at least included more than one European sample when studying self across continents (e.g. Lalujee & Angelova, 1995; Santamaría, de la Mata, Hansen, & Ruiz, 2010). Yet, important differences could exist in how individuals across European countries construct their selves; if for no other reason than because of some of these countries belonging to former Communist as compared to non-Communist regions (Inglehart & Baker, 2000; van Herk & Poortinga, 2011). But could possible differences between such samples be described in terms of independence versus interdependence?

In line with this argumentation, **the current thesis aims to extend the existing conceptualizations of self in cross-cultural psychology to a European context.** More specifically, the thesis focuses on two European regions—post-Communist Europe and Scandinavia—and that for two reasons. First, each of the regions has a distinct historical and sociopolitical heritage, and thus a comparison between how individuals living in these regions define themselves could shed light on a broader set of issues, namely Communism and post-Communism (Bardi & Schwartz, 1996; Klicperová, Feierabend, & Hofstetter, 1997). Second, both of these regions are rather underrepresented in cross-cultural investigations of self and hence deserve attention in a field that advocates for a more universal psychology (Berry, Poortinga, Breugelmans, Chasiotis, & Sam, 2011).

Correspondingly, **the current thesis aims to appropriate methodological tools for investigating self in a European context.** In recent years, the validity of the existing measures of self has become seriously questioned (Bresnahan et al., 2005; Gudykunst & Lee, 2003; Levine et al., 2003). For instance, the most commonly used Likert-type rating scales have been criticized for being subject to different types of response bias (Chen, Lee, & Stevenson, 1995; Heine, Lehman, Peng, & Greenholtz, 2002; Kam, Zhou, Zhang, & Ho, 2012). On the other hand, open-ended measures, such as the Twenty Statements Test (Kuhn & McPartland, 1954) and autobiographical memories (Wang, 2001, 2004), have been utilized as alternatives, yet not without problems. Taking into account the particular context of the current study, the relevance of the available methods for gauging self needs to be critically examined, and if necessary, new methodological tools or procedures need to be developed.

Taken together, the current thesis is built around the following research question:

*From the perspective of cross-cultural psychology, how can self be measured in a European context? More concretely, how can the predominant theories and methods of the field be applied to compare selves of individuals living in post-Communist Europe and Scandinavia?*

## 1.1. DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

In the current thesis, the terms **self**, self-concept, and self-construal are used interchangeably. Broadly, self-concept refers to "the ways individuals internally conceptualize who they are" (Prebble, Addis, & Tippett, 2013, p. 825), that is, to individuals' conceptual representations of themselves (Wang, 2006a). Self-construal, a key term in cross-cultural psychology, describes "how individuals define and make meaning of the self", specifically "how they see the self in relation to others" (Cross, Hardin, & Gercek-Swing, 2011, p. 143). Self-construal can thus be understood as a particular aspect of self-concept (Levine et al., 2003), namely "the degree to which they [individuals] see themselves as separate from others or as connected with others" (Markus & Kitayama, 1991, p. 226). Hence, the current thesis uses the term self to refer to a set of beliefs, perceptions, thoughts, and feelings about oneself (Leary & Tangney, 2003), placing a special emphasis on the inclusion of others therein.

**Values** are "trans-situational goals, varying in importance, that serve as guiding principles in the life of a person or group" (Schwartz et al., 2012, p. 664). In cross-cultural psychology, values have been understood both as properties of individuals and of collectives (Fischer & Schwartz, 2011; Hofstede, 2001) and have thus been investigated as both individual- as well as societal-level phenomena (Schwartz, 1992).

# CHAPTER 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

*Cross-cultural psychology*, sometimes also referred to as cultural psychology (e.g. Cross, Hardin, & Gercek-Swing, 2011; del Prado et al., 2007; Kanagawa, Cross, & Markus, 2001) or culture-comparative psychology (Berry et al., 2011), is the study of similarities and differences in psychological processes across cultures. Even though the historical roots of cross-cultural psychology can be traced well beyond the 20th century, the discipline has become institutionalized only around the 1960s (Jahoda & Krewer, 1997). In a broad sense, cross-cultural psychology emerged out of dissatisfaction with the mainstream psychology at the time, namely with how little attention it had been paying to the influence of culture on individual. A growing number of studies were documenting profound and systematic differences in psychological processes across cultures, and this variation needed to be taken into account and explained. Therefore, the aim of cross-cultural psychology has become to contribute to a more universal psychology (Berry et al., 2011; H. Triandis, 1996); i.e. a psychology that would be applicable beyond the traditionally well-researched Western cultures.

Today, cross-cultural psychology is a flourishing and highly diversified field; some overgeneralization may therefore be necessary in order to describe it in broad terms. Still, as the name already suggests, cross-cultural psychology spans across cultures and is comparative in nature. Cross-cultural studies usually employ two or more samples from divergent cultural backgrounds and aim to determine their possible similarities and differences with regards to a particular psychological phenomenon. Here, "the avowed object is to discover the causes of such cultural differences as may be encountered, and to tease out the universal psychological features underlying such surface differences" (Jahoda & Krewer, 1997, p. 28). For this purpose, the studies typically employ established methodological procedures and generally rely on quantitative methodology (Greenfield, 2000; K. D. Keith, 2011). On the whole, the comparative character of cross-cultural psychology clearly presupposes that comparisons between culturally divergent populations are possible and meaningful. Hence, the field is "rooted in the idea of universality of psychic functioning" (Berry et al., 2011, p. 12), that is, it assumes that some of the underlying psychological processes could be common for all humans, even though their manifestations might be different (U. Kim, 2000).

The key term of cross-cultural psychology is naturally *culture*. However, providing a clear and coherent definition of the term has been a challenging task, at least based on a recent review by Jahoda (2012). Having inspected definitions of culture offered by selected textbooks and texts of cross-cultural psychology, the author was

surprised to find how vague and mutually incompatible they were. At the same time, Jahoda noted that some authors of these definitions had argued that theirs was the "right one" and even proceeded to establish it empirically. This, according to Jahoda, showed "the extraordinary malleability of the construct 'culture'" and that "'culture' is not a thing, but a social construct vaguely referring to a vastly complex set of phenomena" (pp. 299–300). The author then suggested simply using the term culture without necessarily defining it, or alternatively, defining it in relation to the particular context the term is being used in.

In the context of the current thesis, culture is seen as consisting of "shared elements that provide the standards for perceiving, believing, evaluating, communicating, and acting among those who share a language, a historic period, and a geographic location" (H. Triandis, 1996, p. 408). Brewer and Chen (2007) further specify:

> Cultures provide group members with answers to fundamental questions, including questions of self and identity (Who am I, or Who are we?), questions about how the physical and social world works and how things are interrelated (beliefs), and questions about how things should be and what is the right course of behaviour (values). (p. 139).

Both definitions implicitly suggest that culture exists "out there", externally to the individual, but also that the individual can somehow appropriate or internalize it. Internalized cultural constructs like the individual's self, beliefs, and values, are fundamentally shaped by culture and are in a sense manifestations of culture at the individual level (Chiu, Gelfand, Yamagishi, Shteynberg, & Wan, 2010). Yet, it has been argued that by aggregating data on these individual-level constructs in a large sample from the same culture, characteristics of culture at the higher-order, societal (ecological, national, country-, population-) level can be established too. For instance, Schwartz (1994) stated that even though culture-level values cannot be observed directly, they can be inferred from averaged individual values held by members of that particular culture.

In this understanding, culture is a mental entity shared by a group of individuals and thus, such groups of individuals have to be identified in order to study culture, whether at the individual or societal level. For this purpose, cross-cultural research has traditionally relied on individual's country of origin as a proxy for culture. Here, participant samples have been chosen and compared on the basis of their nationality, for example, American versus Chinese. However, this tradition was recently challenged by Fischer and Schwartz (2011). Having re-analysed data sets of three large-scale value surveys, the authors found that the endorsement of cultural values by individuals within countries varied much more than between countries, that is, that the within-country value consensus was in fact very low. Fischer and Schwartz (2011) argued that "social institutions and other macrolevel variables influence the modal importance of individuals' values within societies,

but individuals internalize the modal values to different extents. Segments of the population emphasize different values because they have different experiences and interests" (p. 1137). On the other hand, in different analyses, Minkov and Hofstede (2012, 2014) showed that in-country regions of Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, the Anglo world as well as Europe *did* tend to group into national clusters on World Values Survey and European Social Survey items. Contrary to the results of Fischer and Schwartz, Minkov and Hofstede's analyses then substantiated nationality as a meaningful variable for culture-comparative research:

> Regardless of the internal cultural homogeneity or heterogeneity of the in-country regions, we . . . have to accept that the invisible force that groups together the regions of one nation and separates them from those of other nations is national culture. (Minkov & Hofstede, 2012, p. 136)

Another prominent cross-cultural researcher, Patricia Greenfield (2013) also pointed out that countries might comprise culturally heterogeneous populations. More specifically, she argued that this heterogeneity stemmed from within-country variability in sociodemographics, such as education or wealth. In other words, members of different socioeconomic strata within a country, for example, with different levels of education, would hold different cultural values. Therefore, Greenfield recommended, cross-cultural researchers should utilize these strata, rather than whole nations or countries, as group units of analysis in their investigations (Greenfield, 2013).

By emphasizing the role of sociodemographic factors, Greenfield (2009; Greenfield, Keller, Fuligni, & Maynard, 2003) can be seen as a link between cross-cultural psychology and one of its neighbouring disciplines, socioecological psychology. In short, socioecological psychology investigates how *social ecology* shapes the individual's mind and behaviour, with social ecology referring to both physical and human environment that constitutes people's habitat (Oishi & Graham, 2010). More concretely, social ecology comprises macrostructures, such as economic, political, religious, and educational systems, as well as geography, climate, or housing. As illustrated in Figure 1, socioecological psychology then complements cross-cultural psychology by focusing on objective environmental factors and their influence on the individual. While a more detailed description of socioecological psychology lies beyond the scope of the current thesis, the discipline provides some important insights for cross-cultural psychology in general and for the current thesis in particular. Namely, even though individuals of the same nationality can be argued to share the same culture (Minkov & Hofstede, 2012, 2014), it is crucial to bear in mind that these individuals also share the same socioecological environment; for instance, a political system. This is especially relevant for studies comparing groups of participants who have experienced vastly different political realities, such as Communism and democracy. These types of experiences have been shown to profoundly influence individual values (Bardi &

Schwartz, 1996; Inglehart & Baker, 2000; van Herk & Poortinga, 2011). Moreover, sociodemographic factors need to be taken into consideration in cross-cultural investigations, as argued by Greenfield and also demonstrated empirically. For instance, an association between different levels of formal education and particular types of values and self has been found in previous research (de la Mata, Santamaría, Hansen, Ruiz, & Ruiz, 2011; de la Mata & Santamaría, 2010; Dost-Gözkan & Küntay, 2014; Greenfield, 2009; Santamaría, de la Mata, & Ruiz, 2012).

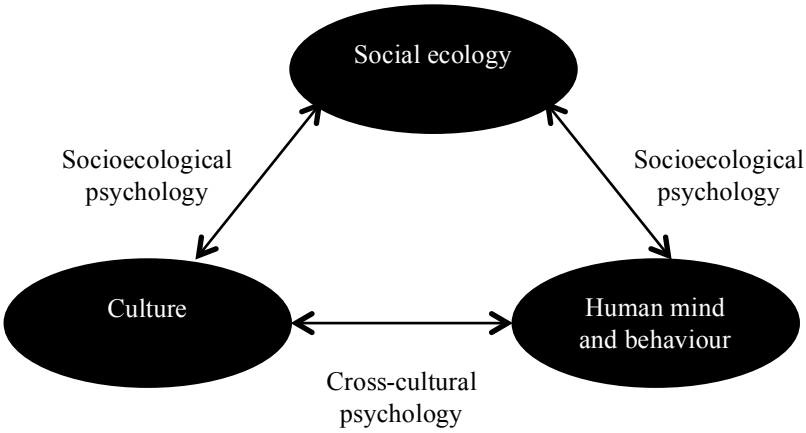


*Figure 1. The relationship between socioecological and cross-cultural psychology. Adapted from "Social Ecology: Lost and Found in Psychological Science," by S. Oishi and J. Graham, 2010, Perspectives on Psychological Science, 5, p. 357. Copyright 2010 by Sage Publications Inc. Adapted with permission.*

Therefore, socioecological factors are incorporated in the thesis's theoretical framework, schematically represented in Figure 2. Here, the factors are shown to influence culture, which in turn is seen as fundamentally shaping the individual's values, beliefs, and self. While the socioecological factors will be introduced in more detail in Chapter 3, the following section describes the most prominent way of describing culture in cross-cultural psychology, namely the cultural dimension of individualism-collectivism.


*Figure 2. Schematic representation of the thesis' theoretical framework. Inspired by Figure 1 in "Social Ecology: Lost and Found in Psychological Science," by S. Oishi and J. Graham, 2010, Perspectives on Psychological Science, 5, p. 357, and Figure 2 in "Linking Social Change and Developmental Change: Shifting Pathways of Human Development," by P. Greenfield, 2009, Developmental Psychology, 45, p. 403.*

## 2.1. INDIVIDUALISM-COLLECTIVISM: DESCRIBING CULTURE AT THE SOCIETAL LEVEL

Whether a culture is shared by a group of individuals of the same nationality or educational background, something about this culture should explain how this group of individuals differs from other groups of individuals, that is, members of other cultures (Hofstede, 2001). In order to describe this *something* from a culture-comparative perspective, cross-cultural researchers have developed "meaningful and relevant dimensions of cultural variability" (Matsumoto & Yoo, 2006, p. 234), that is, cultural dimensions. Cultural dimensions characterize cultures relatively to each other, ordering them on a continuum from high to low. As culture is a theoretically multifaceted phenomenon, various cultural dimensions have been identified. By far the most popular cultural dimension is the one of *individualism-collectivism*. Hofstede (1984), who introduced this dimension to psychology, defined it as follows:

> Individualism stands for a preference for a loosely knit social framework in society wherein individuals are supposed to take care of themselves and their immediate families only. Its opposite, Collectivism, stands for a preference for a tightly knit social framework in which individuals can expect their relatives, clan, or other in-group to look after them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty . . . The fundamental issue addressed by this dimension is the degree of interdependence a society maintains among individuals. It relates to people's self-concept: "I" or "we". (p. 83)

The definition conveys a few important characteristics of this cultural dimension. First of all, individualism and collectivism are cultural attributes, that is, they describe culture at the societal and not the individual level. This is how they are understood in the current thesis too, even though the quite common use of terms *individualists* and *collectivists* in the literature, referring to people who live in

individualist and collectivist cultures, respectively, could easily suggest otherwise[1]. Second, individualism and collectivism stand on the opposite sides of a single continuum and are thus incompatible with each other. Finally, and most relevant to the current thesis, people who live in an individualist, as compared to a collectivist culture, are more likely to define themselves in terms of *I* as compared to *we*.

A similar link between individualism and collectivism on the one hand and self on the other is apparent in Triandis' (1996) description of individualism and collectivism along four distinct attributes summarized in Table 1. The first attribute relates to whether a particular culture employs individual or collective as its primary unit, resulting in this culture valuing independence over interdependence, and vice versa. The second attribute concerns goals. In collectivist cultures, individual's goals are typically in agreement with the goals of his or her in-group, and in case they are not, individual will prioritize in-group goals over his or her own; the opposite will be the case in individualist cultures. The third attribute describes whether individual's behaviour is in a particular culture seen more as a function of norms or of attitudes. Finally, the fourth attribute highlights that in collectivist cultures, relationships are evaluated based on how desirable they are for the in-group, while in individualist cultures, relationships are evaluated based on how advantageous or costly they are for the individual.

| | **Individualism** | **Collectivism** |
|---|---|---|
| The meaning of the self | Individual as a unit of analysis | Collective as a unit of analysis |
| The structure of goals | Priority of individual goals | Priority of collective goals |
| Determinants of behaviour | Attitudes rather than norms | Norms rather than attitudes |
| Type of relationships | Exchange relationships | Communal relationships |

*Table 1. Description of individualism and collectivism based on Triandis (1996).*

While the above definitions of individualism-collectivism do mention self, this societal-level dimension as such cannot be used to study an individual-level

[1] In fact, such application of a higher-order construct, for example individualism, to a lower, individual level, is in the literature referred to as a construct-disaggregation fallacy (van de Vijver et al., 2008).

construct. For this purpose, the model of independent and interdependent self by Markus and Kitayama (1991) was put forward instead.

## 2.2. INDEPENDENCE-INTERDEPENDENCE: DESCRIBING CULTURE AT THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

The model of independent and interdependent self by American Hazel Markus and Japanese Shinobu Kitayama was inspired by the authors' personal experience with each other's native culture (Markus & Kitayama, 2003). Indeed, most of the studies cited in their seminal paper "Culture and the Self: Implications for Cognition, Emotion, and Motivation" (Markus & Kitayama, 1991) feature data from the United States and Japan, with the latter occasionally alternated by China, India, Hong Kong, or Taiwan. Hence, the distinction between independent and interdependent self has been in the cross-cultural literature often associated with the United States on the one hand and East Asia on the other, and even more broadly, with the demarcation between West and East. Precisely which geographical areas West and East according to Markus and Kitayama (1991) refer to is however not entirely clear in. While on page 226, the authors only briefly mention that more individuals in Western than in non-Western cultures would hold an independent view of self, on another page, they specify that the independent view of self is:

> Most clearly exemplified in some sizable segment of American culture, as well as in many Western European cultures. The interdependent view is exemplified in Japanese culture as well as in other Asian cultures. But it is also characteristic of African cultures, Latin-American cultures, and many southern European cultures. (Markus & Kitayama, 1991, p. 225)

Nevertheless, this stance presupposes that, put simply, living in a Western culture leads its members to adopt an *independent view of self*, while living in a non-Western culture leads its members to adopt an interdependent view of self. An individual with an independent view of self sees himself or herself as independent and separate from even his or her closest others. Hence, this individual's behaviour is mainly organized by what he or she thinks, feels, and believes rather than what others around him or her think, feel, believe, or do. Furthermore, an individual with an independent view of self sees himself or herself as a unique person, and expression of this uniqueness is important for him or her (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). In contrast, an individual with an *interdependent view of self* sees himself or herself as ultimately interdependent with and connected to others, and thus, this individual's behaviour is mainly organized by thoughts, feelings, and actions of other people. Moreover, in order to ensure fitting in and connecting with others in all situations, this individual sees his or her defining characteristics as context-dependent and thus regulable rather than stable across contexts (Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

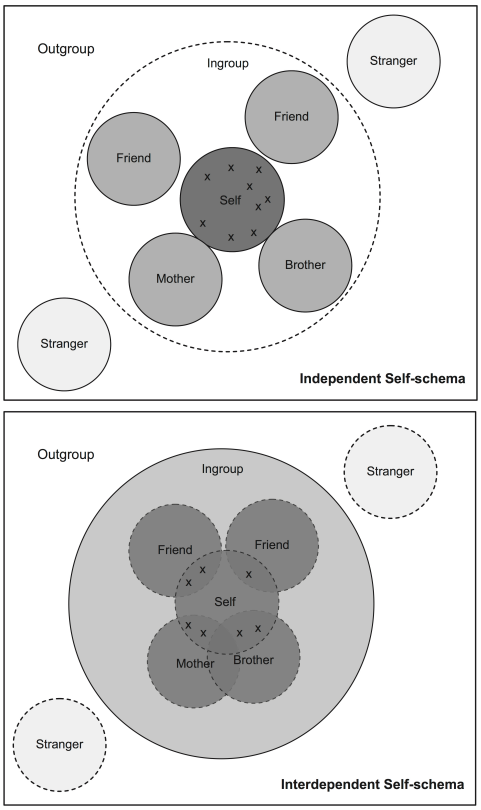


*Figure 3. The structure of the independent and interdependent self. Reprinted from "Cultures and Selves: A Cycle of Mutual Constitution," by H. Markus and S. Kitayama, 2010, Perspectives on Psychological Science, 5, p. 424. Copyright 2010 by Sage Publications Inc. Reprinted with permission.*

Figure 3 graphically highlights the differences between the two types of self. While the independent self is here displayed as having clear boundaries, indicated with a solid line, the interdependent self is seen as permeable, suggested by the dotted line. Additionally, even though both types of self are shown as belonging to in-groups, the in-group's dotted line in the top part of the figure illustrates that independent individuals enter and leave their groups more easily than interdependent individuals; these are instead relatively bound by them (Markus & Kitayama, 2010).

Importantly, Markus and Kitayama (1991) proposed that the two types of self could be used as explanatory constructs for cross-cultural differences in psychological processes, such as cognition, emotion, and motivation. For example, the authors referred to a study, in which Indian and American adults were asked to describe two prosocial and two deviant behaviours, as well as to explain why such behaviours would be undertaken (Miller, 1984). These explanations were then coded for dispositional and situational references, revealing that Americans used significantly more dispositional explanations than Indians, while Indians used significantly more situational explanations than Americans. Markus and Kitayama (1991) interpreted these results as evidence for the American participants holding an independent and Indian participants an interdependent view of self, respectively.

Since the publication of the 1991 paper, numerous investigations have utilized the model of independent and interdependent self (for a review, see Cross et al., 2011), thereby making it exceptionally popular in the field of cross-cultural psychology (Berry et al., 2011). Nevertheless, a considerable amount of critique has been raised

against the model as well, and that on various grounds. Some of this critique and the refinements that followed it are outlined in the next section.

## 2.3. CRITIQUE AND REFINEMENTS OF INDEPENDENCE-INTERDEPENDENCE

Some of the critical points that have been directed at Markus and Kitayama's model of independent and interdependent self can be attributed to how these notions had been utilized by other researchers in the field rather than to possible fundamental problems with the authors' original work. A case in point is a study by Kolstad and Horpestad (2009) that investigated self in Chile and Norway. Based on Hofstede's (1980) classification of Chile as collectivist and Norway as individualist, Kolstad and Horpestad hypothesized that Chileans would be interdependent and Norwegians independent. However, the results revealed that the Chilean sample was both more interdependent as well as more independent than the Norwegian sample. Based on these results, Kolstad and Horpestad concluded that the classification of Chile as collectivist and Norway as individualist had been inadequate and that the dichotomy of independent and interdependent self was unsuitable for investigation in most cultures. Instead, the authors suggested that each culture and each individual maintained a unique mixture of individualism-collectivism and independence-interdependence, respectively.

Kolstad and Horpestad's conclusion, along with the entire study, can be challenged on various grounds. First, the authors confounded the individual and societal level of analysis, assuming that their data on independence-interdependence could provide an indication of the degree of individualism-collectivism in the two countries, and vice versa. Correspondence between these individual- and societal-level scores has in fact been largely disputed (Hofstede, 1980, 2001; Oyserman & Uskul, 2008; van de Vijver, van Hemert, & Poortinga, 2008) [2]. Indeed, Kolstad and Horpestad's study is an individual-level investigation with only two groups of participants, while Hofstede's study featured responses of more than 117,000 participants that were compared nation-wise. Second, the authors decided to simply extend Markus and Kitayama's model to a set of novel samples without any precaution. Even though in their original paper, Markus and Kitayama categorized several cultural regions as either favouring independence or interdependence (see the quote in the previous section), they have also repeatedly stated that their aim

[2] In this respect, the term ecological fallacy has been utilized to describe instances "when an association among nation-level variables (ecological indices) is assumed to apply to individuals" (Bond, 2002, p. 75); for example, when a country's high score on individualism is used to predict high independence in a population sample from the country. Reverse ecological fallacy refers to the same inference, only in the opposite direction.

was *not* to describe the two only possible types of self (Markus & Kitayama, 1991, 2003):

> Our goal was and still is to describe at least one other way of being. To this end, we used being in East Asian contexts because we knew something about it. The point of this comparison was not to describe two fixed and separate ways of being or to suggest that people everywhere had either an independent or an interdependent sense of self. Our point was simply to suggest that if there was at least one other mode of being, then the one that we knew well in European American contexts was not "the human way" to be, but instead a way of being that emerges primarily in middle-class European American contexts, and one that bears the stamp of Western individualism with its particular normative models of human nature and how to be a self. (Markus & Kitayama, 2003, p. 282)

Hence, having alternated between somewhat contradictory positions, Markus and Kitayama can be seen as partly responsible for the fact that many researchers, Kolstad and Horpestad (2009) among them, had routinely extended the model of independent and interdependent self to numerous and fairly diverse cultural contexts. The above citation as well as the surprising results of the Chilean-Norwegian study indicate that such extensions are rather problematic.

A more systematic critique of the model of independent and interdependent self came from David Matsumoto (1999). Matsumoto decided to assess the empirical evidence behind the model by reviewing studies that Markus and Kitayama (1991) themselves referred to as well as a few other relevant investigations of his own choice. Matsumoto wanted to specifically verify whether in the reviewed studies, independent and interdependent self really served as explanatory constructs for cross-cultural differences in cognition, emotion, and motivation, as the authors had originally claimed. However, he discovered instead that in most of the investigations, the particular type of self was not even measured, but just automatically assumed based on participant's nationality; for example, American – independent; Japanese, Chinese, Indian, etc. – interdependent. Matsumoto later referred to this phenomenon as the cultural attribution fallacy, that is, "the inference that something 'cultural' about the groups being compared produced the observed differences when there is no empirical justification for this inference" (Matsumoto & Yoo, 2006, p. 235). Matsumoto's point and in particular the cultural attribution fallacy can be illustrated by a study from Varnum and colleagues (Varnum, Grossmann, Katunar, Nisbett, & Kitayama, 2008). Relevant to the current thesis, the study compared Western and Eastern Europeans, and that with respect to their performance in a set of cognitive tasks, such as categorization (Study 1), change blindness, and the framed line test (Study 2). The authors hypothesized Western Europeans to be independent and thus to employ a more analytic cognitive style,

that is, to categorize thematically rather than relationally, to detect focal rather than contextual changes, and to be more accurate in replicating absolute rather than proportional length. The opposite was expected of Eastern Europeans, as these were hypothesized to be interdependent, and thus to employ a more holistic cognitive style. Even though the results largely supported the expected differences in cognitive performance, the role of independent and interdependent self in causing these differences was not empirically established. Hence, both Markus and Kitayama as well as many authors adhering to their model have been guilty of not always verifying the hypothesized cross-cultural variation in self.

To summarize, it is possible to distinguish between two types of critique raised against Markus and Kitayama's model of independent and interdependent self. The first type of critique is due to the inaccurate interpretation and/or application of the model by other researchers. This can be evidenced in the model's routine extension to almost any cultural context, in the frequent inference of individual-level independence-interdependence from societal-level scores on individualism-collectivism and vice versa, and in the frequent absence of the actual measurement of independent and interdependent self. The second type of critique pertains to the model per se, more specifically to its weak empirical evidence and to the ambiguity regarding the scope of its application. In an attempt to resolve these issues, both theoretical and methodological arguments have been put forward. The theoretical refinements of the model will be outlined in subsequent sections, while the methodological arguments, relating to the use of Likert-type rating scales, will be addressed in section 2.4.1. of this chapter.

### 2.3.1. VARIOUS FACETS OF INTERDEPENDENCE

As a matter of fact, most conceptual refinements of the model of independent and interdependent self have focused on the latter, that is, the notion of interdependence. For instance, Hashimoto and Yamagishi (2013; see also Gungor, Karasawa, Boiger, Dincer, & Mesquita, 2014) suggested that interdependence encompassed two distinct aspects, namely harmony seeking and rejection avoidance. Harmony seeking was described as a voluntary strategy of interdependent individuals, which can be evidenced in their continuous wish to adapt to and fit in their social environment. The authors argued that harmony seeking was to some extent important for adaptation in all cultures and hence could not reliably differentiate between people with independent and interdependent self. In this sense, the exclusive focus on harmony seeking in previous research could help explain the weak empirical evidence for Markus and Kitayama's model (Hashimoto & Yamagishi, 2013). In contrast, rejection avoidance was characterized as a social constraint experienced particularly by interdependent individuals in collectivist societies, and that because of the individuals' high dependence on their close circles and thus their very small freedom to leave these circles. Hashimoto and Yamagishi's Study 3 supported this argumentation, having found no

differences in the degree of harmony seeking between Japanese and Americans, but higher scores of rejection avoidance among the Japanese.

Instead of distinguishing between distinct *ways* of being interdependent, other authors have identified different *kinds of others* an individual can be interdependent with. Most notably, Brewer and Gardner (1996) made a distinction between being interdependent with specific others and being interdependent with members of larger, impersonal collectives or social categories. While the former, termed *relational self*, would be based on common bonds, the latter, called *collective self*, would be based on common identity. In line with this distinction, Brewer and colleagues (Brewer & Chen, 2007; Brewer & Gardner, 1996; but see E. Kashima & Hardie, 2000 for a different interpretation) suggested that Markus and Kitayama's (1991) interdependent self corresponded to relational but not collective self. Consequently, the weak empirical evidence for the model could once again be attributed to the ambiguous conceptualization of interdependence in the past, this time with regards to a missing differentiation between relational and collective self. In order to provide empirical support for this claim, Brewer and Chen (2007) content analysed 21 scales measuring independence and interdependence[3]. The authors discovered that 36% of items across all scales referred to specific relationships, while only 12% mentioned group memberships. Moreover, no items addressed a possible trade-off between relational and collective interdependence, suggesting "an implicit assumption in the existing literature that relational orientations and group/collective orientations are essentially equivalent or compatible" (Brewer & Chen, 2007, p. 136). Hence, the authors concluded that cross-cultural literature had traditionally emphasized specific interpersonal relationships rather than large, impersonal collectives as the context for interdependence; yet, it has done so without explicitly distinguishing between the two.

If Markus and Kitayama's interdependent self corresponded to relational self, this would imply that Japanese and other East Asians were relational- rather than collective-interdependent. But would it also imply that East Asians did not define themselves as group members? Not according to Yuki (2003), who proposed that East Asians saw their in-groups as complex networks of interrelated members and not as depersonalized entities; this was a traditionally Western view. Yuki's proposition was indirectly supported by a series of studies on depersonalized trust in Japanese and Americans (Yuki, Maddux, Brewer, & Takemura, 2005), in which

[3] Brewer and Chen (2007) used the terms individualism and collectivism as psychological, individual-level attributes, while in the current thesis, these terms are understood as societal-level constructs only (see section 2.1.). Therefore, for the sake of consistency, the terms are substituted by independence and interdependence, respectively, when describing Brewer and Chen's study.

Americans were found to trust strangers based on a shared category membership (e.g. attended university), while Japanese trusted strangers based on the likelihood of sharing direct or indirect interpersonal links with them. Brewer and Chen summarized:

> People in all cultures favour their in-groups over their out-groups to a similar extent; what differs across cultures is the meaning of in-groups versus out-groups and the basis of psychological attachment to the in-group. Whereas the meaning of in-groups in many so-called collectivistic cultures refers to direct versus indirect relationships or relational networks (e.g., friends from the same college), the meaning of in-groups in individualistic cultures refers to a categorical membership distinction between one's group and other groups. (2007, p. 147).

Following this argumentation, people living in collectivist cultures would be expected to maintain a more salient relational self, while people in individualist cultures would be assumed to be more collective. This might sound counterintuitive, but as Brewer and Yuki (2007) pointed out, collective self, concerned with abstract, categorical memberships (e.g. student), was compatible with the type of independence promoted in individualist cultures.

Interestingly, the exact opposite pattern was hypothesized by Cross, Bacon and Morris (2000), who similarly to Brewer and colleagues emphasized the distinction between relational and collective self, both theoretically and in measurement (see also Cross et al., 2011; Cross, Morris, & Gore, 2002). More concretely, the authors argued that Americans, that is, members of a prototypically individualist culture, were more likely to include close relationships rather than in-groups in their self. This was because group memberships were in individualist cultures seen as rather unimportant, casual, and voluntary; groups here generally required little loyalty and placed fewer demands on their members (H. Triandis, 1989). Hence, relational interdependence was supposed to be characteristic of American populations and collective interdependence of East Asian populations (Cross et al., 2000). Unfortunately, Cross and colleagues have yet to present data that would support this hypothesis; so far, their investigations have focused on differences within American samples only. On the other hand, these investigations have an important advantage over many studies referring to the theory of Markus and Kitayama (1991). Specifically, in contrast to these studies, Cross and colleagues have consistently demonstrated—not merely assumed—a link between self and various aspects of psychological processes. For instance, Cross, Morris and Gore (2002) showed that American individuals scoring higher on Relational-Interdependent Self-Construal scale (RISC; Cross et al., 2000) had more positive associations with and a more tightly organized network of relationship-oriented concepts; they also remembered more information about others' relationships and when provided with

a relational clustering tool; and they described and perceived themselves more similarly to their close friend, but not to their in-group member.

Finally, the distinction between independent, relational, and collective self has been in some literature paralleled to Triandis' (1989) differentiation between private, public, and collective self (e.g. Brewer & Gardner, 1996; Kashima et al., 1995). However, such parallel is not entirely fitting; in contrast to the previously stated definitions, Triandis' conceptualization of public and collective self emphasized *assessment* of self by others:

> Thus, we have the following: the private self – cognitions that involve traits, states, or behaviours of the person (e.g., "I am introverted," "I am honest," "I will buy X"); the public self – cognitions concerning the generalized other's view of the self, such as "People think I am introverted" or "People think I will buy X"; and the collective self – cognitions concerning a view of the self that is found in some collective (e.g., family, coworkers, tribe, scientific society); for instance, "My family thinks I am introverted" or "My coworkers believe I travel too much." (H. Triandis, 1989, p. 507)

Moreover, Triandis has not been very clear nor consistent in applying this conceptualization; for instance, he provided only a sketchy characterization of public self (H. Triandis, 1989) and later altered the original definition of collective self (Trafimow, Triandis, & Goto, 1991). These could be some of the reasons why his distinction has received only limited attention in the field (Cross et al., 2011). Other refinements of interdependence that similarly require further research are: the model of vertical-horizontal and relational-collective self (Harb & Smith, 2008), the Circles of Closeness (Uleman, Rhee, Bardoliwalla, Semin, & Toyama, 2000), and the differentiation between familism, companionship, and patriotism (Realo, Allik, & Vadi, 1997).

### 2.3.2. AUTONOMOUS-RELATED SELF

A more substantial modification of Markus and Kitayama's model was put forward by Turkish researcher Cigdem Kagitcibasi. Kagitcibasi (2005, 2007) argued that the model of independent and interdependent self had been constructed from a typically Western, that is, North American, perspective and was thus biased. More concretely, she maintained that the model confounded two underlying dimensions of a distinct meaning; one of interpersonal distance and the other of agency. Interpersonal distance here referred to the extent self was separate from or related to others, differentiating between separateness and relatedness. Agency, on the other hand, described self in terms of autonomy and heteronomy (dependence). Conceptualizing interpersonal distance and agency as orthogonal dimensions, Kagitcibasi's model permitted two types of autonomous self; namely, autonomous-

separate self and *autonomous-related self* (see Figure 4). While the former corresponded to Markus and Kitayama's (1991) independent self, the latter combined autonomy with relatedness, that is, characteristics that had been in many Western psychological theories considered incompatible.

Kagitcibasi's proposal of autonomous-related self was inspired by results of a nine-country research project as well as its subsequent ten-country follow-up, both of which investigated values of children (for more information, see Kagitcibasi, 2007). In short, the results showed that a profound family change was taking place in collectivist cultures, such as rural areas of Turkey. More concretely, because of increasing urbanization and socioeconomic development, parents living in these areas were beginning to value children's autonomy alongside the traditionally emphasized relatedness between them and their children. At the same time, children were becoming more economically autonomous from their parents, while remaining psychologically related to them. This way, autonomy and relatedness became endorsed simultaneously in these families (Kagitcibasi, 2007).

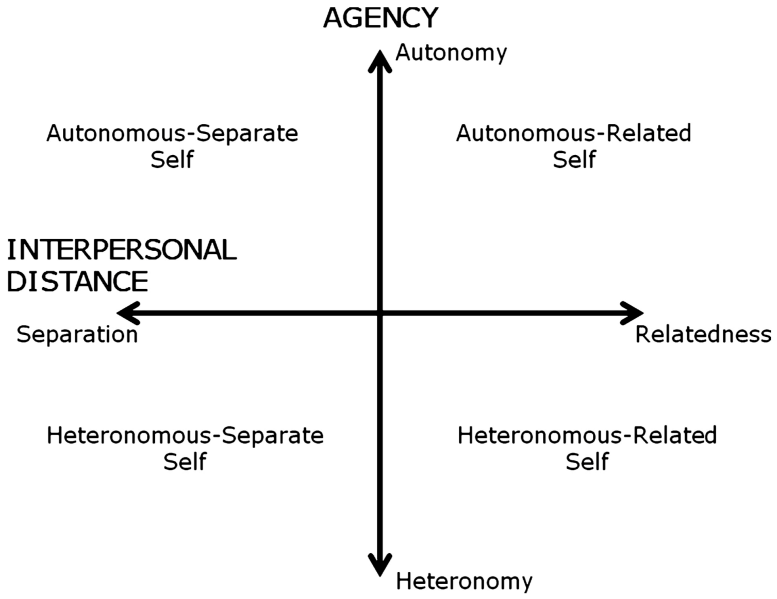


*Figure 4. Agency and interpersonal distance – two distinct dimensions. Reprinted from "Adolescent Autonomy-Relatedness and the Family in Cultural Context: What Is Optimal?" by C. Kagitcibasi, 2013, Journal of Research on Adolescence, 23, p. 225. Copyright 2013 by Cigdem Kagitcibasi. Reprinted with permission.*

Even though autonomous-related self had supposedly emerged in and was most typical for rapidly developing collectivist cultures, Kagitcibasi maintained that "any

family context that satisfies and reinforces these two needs [autonomy and relatedness] would be expected to result in this type of self-development" (Kagitcibasi, 2007, p. 186). Moreover, the author regarded autonomy and relatedness as two fundamental human needs and autonomous-related self as psychologically most optimal from all possible types of self (Kagitcibasi, 2005, 2007, 2013).

As shortly mentioned above, the research behind the model of autonomous-related self addressed issues critical to developmental psychology. Not surprisingly then, majority of investigations utilizing the model has kept a similar focus. In one study, 94 Brazilian mothers were asked to describe their children, who were between 17 to 22 months old at that time, in an interview (Seidl-de-Moura et al., 2013). The mothers' descriptions were coded into various categories, such as autonomy and relatedness[4]. For the whole sample, the proportion of descriptions in these two categories was equally high, suggesting that the Brazilian mothers valued both autonomy and relatedness in their children (Seidl-de-Moura et al., 2013). Other authors have examined parental ethnotheories, that is, "culture-specific theories of child development" (Greenfield, 2009, p. 404). For instance, Kärtner and colleagues (Kärtner et al., 2007) used a picture-based interview technique and a questionnaire on socialization goals to compare the importance of autonomy and relatedness in German, American, Indian, and Cameroonian mothers. The results showed that German, American, Indian and urban Cameroonian mothers valued autonomous socialization goals more than rural Cameroonian mothers, while at the same time, both Cameroonian samples valued relational socialization goals more than the other groups. Moreover, a similar yet slightly less pronounced pattern of results emerged when the mothers' responses during interviews were coded for various indicators of autonomy and relatedness. Taken together, the importance of autonomy and relatedness regarding child care in the study depended on whether the mothers came from an urban, middle-class, highly educated background or not, and whether they lived in developed or developing societies, that is, exactly on those variables that Kagitcibasi's model of family change would have predicted.

What both of the aforementioned studies exemplify is that most researchers referring to Kagitcibasi's work have in fact not investigated self directly, since they have not measured it. This can also be evidenced in the limited amount of investigations that have included Kagitcibasi's (2007) Autonomy-Relatedness Scale (ARS) in their designs (e.g. Celenk, van de Vijver, & Goodwin, 2011; Dost-Gözkan & Küntay, 2014). Instead, the focus has been on values embedded in parental ethnotheories, practices, or socialization goals. In these inquiries, autonomy and

[4] The authors use the terms autonomy and relatedness interchangeably with independence and interdependence, which is odd, as that essentially disregards Kagitcibasi's main argument.

relatedness have only been assumed; moreover, they have been assumed in the children of the investigated participants rather than in the participants themselves. Hence, direct empirical evidence for the existence of autonomous-related self appears rather scarce; on the other hand, Kagitcibasi's model of family change as such has been well documented (Kagitcibasi, 2007).

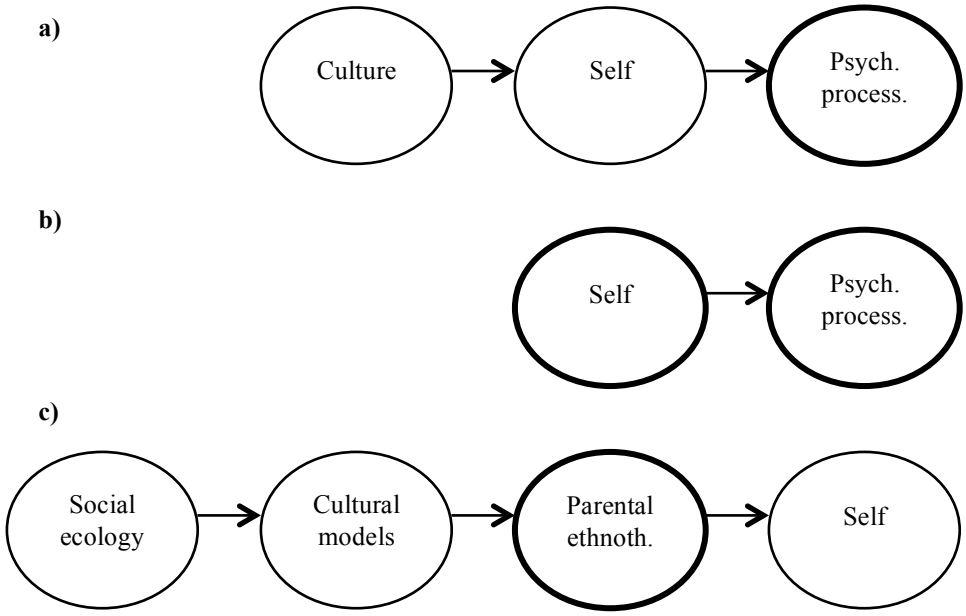


*Figure 5. Theoretical frameworks and empirical evidence (in bold) behind the conceptualizations of self as: a) independent and interdependent* (Markus & Kitayama, 1991)*, b) relational and collective* (Cross et al., 2000)*, and c) autonomous-related* (Kagitcibasi, 2005).

All in all, self in cross-cultural psychology has been conceptualized in terms of independence and interdependence, relational and collective interdependence, and autonomy and relatedness. More concretely, Markus and Kitayama (1991) proposed independent and interdependent self as explanatory constructs for cross-cultural differences in cognitive, emotional, and motivational processes; yet, most studies adhering to this model have only documented the differences rather than the link between them and the two types of self (see Matsumoto, 1999). Second, Cross and colleagues similarly maintained that self, namely relational self, was associated with individual variation in various psychological processes and demonstrated this association in a number of investigations (Cross et al., 2000, 2002; Cross & Madson, 1997). However, these investigations featured North American populations only; cross-cultural applicability of their results is therefore limited.

Finally, Kagitcibasi (2005, 2007, 2013) described autonomous-related self within her model of family change, mostly referring to traditionally collectivist, now rapidly developing, cultures. The subsequent line of research has mainly focused on parents from these cultures and specifically on documenting the appraisal of autonomy and relatedness in their parenting ideas and practices (e.g. Kärtner et al., 2007; Seidl-de-Moura et al., 2013). Taken together, all three conceptualizations of self can be seen as parts of broader frameworks for describing culture's influence on the individual, with each focusing on different aspects of this influence (see Figure 5). This way, it is also possible to note the available evidence for these frameworks (emphasized in bold) as well as its possible lack. Hence, in order to further nuance the understanding of the links between social ecology, culture, and self (see Figure 2), an additional conceptualization of self is presented in the next section, namely of self as inherently autobiographical. This conceptualization has inspired an important, separate line of cross-cultural research by offering a novel instrument for gauging self: individual's autobiographical memories.

### 2.3.3. AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SELF

Autobiographical memories are memories of "significant personal experiences from an individual's life" (Wang, 2008, p. 744). Indeed, not all memories of individual's personal past qualify as autobiographical, as that would require them to be especially self-relevant. This defining characteristic of autobiographical memories makes them central to the understanding of self, as noted by a number of authors across diverse psychological disciplines. For instance, within cognitive psychology, the so-called self-memory system model (Conway & Pleydell-Pearce, 2000; Conway, 2005) described how autobiographical memories *ground* self, that is, constrain what self has been, can be, and might become. In a similar fashion, the study of self-functions of autobiographical memories has pointed to these memories as important tools for maintenance of self-continuity, self-coherence, and self-enhancement over time (Bluck, Alea, Habermas, & Rubin, 2005; Wilson & Ross, 2003). Furthermore, personality psychologist Dan P. McAdams (2001) argued that autobiographical memories help individual to actively construct an integrative life story. In general then, self and autobiographical memories have been understood as two closely interrelated phenomena.

From the perspective of cross-cultural psychology, individual's self as well as individual's autobiographical memories are seen as ultimately embedded in culture (see Figure 6) and as particularly influenced by two macro-level characteristics of culture: the predominant cultural conceptions of selfhood and the perceived importance of autobiographical remembering (Röttger-Rössler, 1993; Wang & Brockmeier, 2002; Wang, 2001, 2006b). More concretely, it is proposed that some cultures promote a conception of independent and stable self rather than interdependent and context-sensitive; hence, these cultures will also tend to emphasize a coherent, self-focused autobiography over social aspects of memories

and remembering. Consequently, these macro-level characteristics of culture will manifest themselves in concrete micro-level cultural practices, such as family memory conversations (i.e. reminiscing; Fivush & Nelson, 2004; Nelson & Fivush, 2004). For instance, when reminiscing, parents in these cultures will accentuate some of their children's experiences, or some details of these experiences, and will thereby guide their children in interpreting and evaluating past events. This way, parents will communicate to their children how to remember as well as "how to be a 'self' in their culture" (Nelson & Fivush, 2004, p. 506).

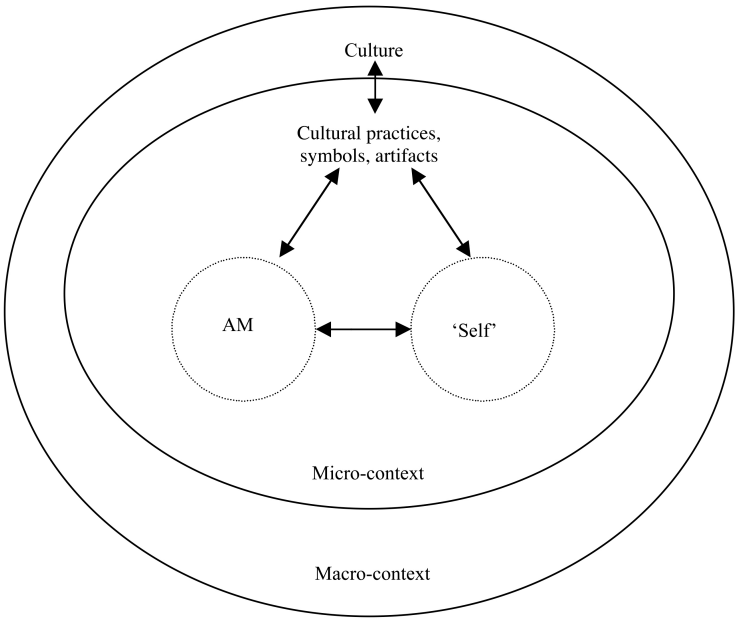


*Figure 6. Autobiographical memory and self embedded in culture. Reprinted from "Autobiographical Remembering as Cultural Practice: Understanding the Interplay between Memory, Self and Culture" by Q. Wang and J. Brockmeier, 2002, Culture & Psychology, 8, p. 51. Copyright 2002 by SAGE Publications Inc. Reprinted with permission.*

In support of the above, previous research has documented cross-cultural differences in both parent-child reminiscing and autobiographical memories. For example, American as compared to Chinese mothers have been shown to engage in more elaborative and more independently oriented conversations about the past with their children (Wang, Leichtman, & Davies, 2000). Similarly, American as compared to Chinese adults have been found to report longer, more specific, more self-focused, and more emotionally salient memories (Wang & Conway, 2004). Moreover, cross-cultural differences in accessibility, form, and content characteristics of autobiographical memories have been linked to the participants'

levels of independence and interdependence (Wang, 2001), hence establishing autobiographical memories as novel, alternative measures of self.

Figure 7 highlights the key elements of the framework presented in the current section and its empirical evidence (emphasized in bold). In short, here the focus has been on the closely interrelated self and autobiographical memories as well as on culture's influence on these two phenomena, mainly through family reminiscing practices. Cross-cultural investigations inspired by this framework have in general shown that "autobiographical memories of people in different cultures can take on different forms and consist of different themes that appear to be a function of the ways in which the self is culturally conceived of" (Wang & Brockmeier, 2002, p. 49). Once again however, these investigations have measured self only rarely (see Wang, 2001, 2004, for an exception). Nevertheless, the utility of autobiographical memories as measures of self has been established and is an important point for the current thesis. Before addressing this point in more detail in section 2.4.3, the more traditional approaches to measuring self in cross-cultural psychology are reviewed first.

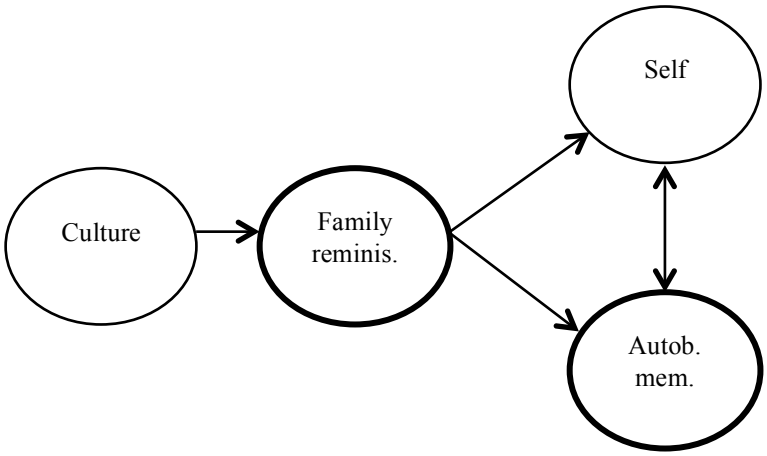


*Figure 7. Theoretical framework and empirical evidence (in bold) behind the conceptualization of self as autobiographical and culturally shaped* (e.g. Wang, 2001).

## 2.4. MEASURING SELF IN CROSS-CULTURAL PSYCHOLOGY

### 2.4.1. LIKERT-TYPE RATING SCALES

Likert-type rating scales are the most commonly used measures of self in cross-cultural psychology. While some of the scales adhere to the model of independent and interdependent self (Gudykunst et al., 1996; Leung & Kim (1997) in Levine, Bresnahan, Park, Lapinski, Wittenbaum, et al., 2003; Singelis, 1994), others gauge relational and/or collective self (Cross et al., 2000; Gabriel & Gardner, 1999; Harb & Smith, 2008; E. Kashima & Hardie, 2000), or autonomous-related self (Kagitcibasi, 2007). When filling the scales out, respondents are typically asked to indicate the degree of their agreement with a series of statements, such as "I enjoy being unique and different from others" (Gudykunst et al., 1996; Leung & Kim (1997) in Levine, Bresnahan, Park, Lapinski, Wittenbaum, et al., 2003; Singelis, 1994), "If a person hurts someone close to me, I feel personally hurt as well" (Cross et al., 2000), or "I do not like a person to interfere with my life even if he/she is very close to me" (Kagitcibasi, 2007). The respondents' agreement across all items, or specific groups of items, is then usually reported in the form of a mean value.

Parallel to the reputation of Markus and Kitayama's (1991) model as the most popular conceptualization of self in cross-cultural psychology, *Singelis' Self-Construal Scale* (SCS; 1994) has been described as the most widespread scale for measuring self cross-culturally (Cross et al., 2011; Smith, 2011). When introducing the scale, Singelis argued that individuals in every culture maintained both an independent and interdependent self, which simply became activated in different situations. Therefore, the author designed the SCS to measure independence and interdependence as two separate dimensions; the original scale included 12 items in each subscale[5]. Agreement with the items was marked on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree. The scale contained no reverse-scored items[6].

Being the primary measurement tool for independent and interdependent self, SCS came under close scrutiny once the empirical evidence for Markus and Kitayama's model had been dubbed weak (e.g. Matsumoto, 1999). For instance, a number of authors have demonstrated that SCS measures self along more than two dimensions and could thus suffer from low construct validity. Specifically, Guo, Schwartz, and McCabe (2008) found that a four-factor model of self provided a better fit for their

[5] Other researchers have later on added various extra items to the scale, which resulted in multiple versions of SCS, comprising minimum 12 to maximum 16 items in each sub-scale.

[6] Inclusion of reverse-scored items "is a standard procedure to control for simple response styles like an acquiescence bias" (Schimmack et al., 2005, p. 21).

SCS data than a two-factor one; moreover, this finding held across samples of young and old adults, men and women as well as White and Hispanic Americans. A similar result was obtained in another investigation employing the 30-items-version of the scale (Hardin, Leong, & Bhagwat, 2004), only this time a six-factor instead of a four-factor solution was proposed. The six factors were termed autonomy/assertiveness, individualism, behavioural consistency, primacy of self, esteem for group, and relational interdependence. Next, Levine and colleagues (Levine et al., 2003) conducted a confirmatory factor analysis of various sets of SCS data only to confirm the poor fit of the two-factor, independence-interdependence model, and to instead suggest six- to seven-factor solutions. Finally, Grace and Cramer (2003) discovered only one additional factor of SCS besides independence and interdependence, which they interpreted as hierarchy.

The possibly low construct validity of SCS has also been noted at face value. Levine et al. (2003) closely inspected the content of three most common scales for measuring independence and interdependence (including SCS) and observed that some of the scales' items were concerned with behaviours linked to self, while other items appeared to measure other constructs, such as altruism, face, power distance, conformity, or communication directness. Smith (2011) further showed that some SCS items describe values (e.g. "It is important to me to maintain harmony within my group"), while other refer to behaviours (e.g. "I will stay in a group if they need me, even when I am not happy with the group"); moreover, he noted that some items mention groups, while other relate to specific people. Taken together, there is reason to believe that SCS gauges a multidimensional rather than two-dimensional self and/or that it besides self also measures other, theoretically distinct concepts. These limitations of SCS could then partly explain the inconsistent empirical findings behind the model of Markus and Kitayama as well as the low internal and external reliability of SCS per se (Cross et al., 2011; Smith, 2011).

Nevertheless, SCS is not the only scale that has been subjected to critique (see Bresnahan et al., 2005; Levine, Bresnahan, Park, Lapinski, Wittenbaum, et al., 2003). In fact, Likert-type rating scales in general have been shown to generate data contaminated by substantial response bias. Response bias refers to "a systematic tendency to respond in a certain way to items or scales" (Matsumoto & Yoo, 2006, p. 244). In cross-cultural investigations, such systematic tendencies in one sample as compared to another may easily become misinterpreted as true differences in a particular variable of interest, even though they may be simply reflecting sample differences in response styles. Johnson and colleagues (Johnson, Kulesa, Cho, & Shavitt, 2005) investigated two particular types of response bias across 19 cultures, namely extreme response bias and acquiescence bias. While the former refers to a tendency to select the extreme points of a scale, the latter describes a tendency to agree with questions or statements regardless of their content. Johnson and colleagues demonstrated that both types of bias were systematically associated with

Hofstede's cultural dimensions; for instance, individual-level acquiescence behaviour was here negatively correlated with societal-level individualism. In another comparative study (Chen et al., 1995), representative samples of Japanese, Taiwanese, Canadian, and American high school students filled out a questionnaire about their school and daily life. The results showed that Japanese and Chinese students were more likely than Americans and Canadians to use the midpoint of the 7-point Likert scale, while American students were more likely than the three other groups to use the scale's extreme points. Lastly, Heine and colleagues (Heine et al., 2002) described another type of response bias called the reference-group effect. Specifically, the authors suggested that because most rating scales did not instruct the respondent to evaluate himself or herself with reference to someone in particular, each respondent would instinctively choose his or her own reference group for self-evaluation. For instance, a Japanese respondent might compare himself or herself to other Japanese, while an American might compare himself or herself to other Americans. Here, even though the perceived standards for a particular characteristic such as independence might differ between the two reference groups, the respondents' evaluations against these standards would be normally distributed in both groups alike (Fischer & Schwartz, 2011). This way, the true sample differences in independence would become obscured, which, according to Heine et al., could explain the weak cross-cultural differences in independence and interdependence found in some investigations.

To summarize, the utility of Likert-type rating scales for measuring self in cross-cultural research is controversial. On the one hand, some of the commonly used scales, especially the SCS, appear to have questionable face validity and factor structure; on the other hand, cross-cultural data obtained through rating scales have been shown to be subject to various types of response bias. Even though response bias has been by some authors seen as an important expression of cultural characteristics (Smith, 2004), other authors have emphasized the need to control for it (Schimmack, Oishi, & Diener, 2005). Also due to these reasons, open-ended measures of self have been utilized as alternatives; the Twenty Statements Test is one of them.

### 2.4.2. THE TWENTY STATEMENTS TEST

*The Twenty Statements Test* (TST; Kuhn & McPartland, 1954), in the literature also referred to as the *'I am' test* (Bochner, 1994; Realo et al., 1997; H. Triandis, McCusker, & Hui, 1990) or the *self-attitudes instrument* (Trafimow, Silverman, Mei-Tai Fan, & Shui Fun Law, 1997; Trafimow et al., 1991) has a very simple format. Namely, the test consists of 20 empty lines starting with *I am* that the participant is instructed to fill out. Participant's responses, so-called self-descriptions, are subsequently analysed according to criteria chosen by the researcher. For instance, Kuhn and McPartland (1954), who introduced the test, differentiated between self-descriptions referring to consensually defined statuses

and classes (i.e. consensual responses, such as *student* or *husband*) and self-descriptions that "would require interpretation by the respondent to be precise, or to place him relative to other people" (i.e. subconsensual responses, such as *happy* or *good wife*; Kuhn & McPartland, 1954, p. 69).

While Kuhn and McPartland's open-ended technique has emerged as a popular measure of self in cross-cultural psychology, the authors' differentiation between consensual and subconsensual self-descriptions has stayed largely ignored by the field[7]. Instead, cross-cultural researchers have chosen to make use of the field's prominent conceptualizations of self when analysing TST data. For instance, a number of investigations (e.g. Bochner, 1994; Dabul, Bernal, & Knight, 1995; Santamaría et al., 2010; but see also Eaton & Louw, 2000; Ma & Schoeneman, 1997; Realo et al., 1997; Realo & Allik, 1999; Triandis et al., 1990) have applied a categorisation by Trafimow, Triandis, and Goto (1991), which had been based on Triandis' (1989) distinction between private, public, and collective self. Other authors (e.g. del Prado et al., 2007; Eaton & Louw, 2000; Kanagawa et al., 2001; Parkes, Schneider, & Bochner, 1999; Rhee, Uleman, Lee, & Roman, 1995; Somech, 2000) have adopted Cousins' (1989) approach. Cousins divided self-descriptions elicited through TST into four main categories, ranging from the most specific, such as physical attributes (e.g. *I am tall*) to the most abstract, so-called global descriptions (e.g. *I am a human being*). Subsequent studies developed this categorization further by combining the abstract-specific dimension with the dimension of independence-interdependence (Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

TST has been praised for being less culturally biased than the previously reviewed Likert-type rating scales (Bond & Cheung, 1983), as its simple, open-ended response format "allows respondents to describe themselves in their own words, using terms that are particularly salient or accessible" (del Prado et al., 2007, p. 1124). Yet, this format has its weaknesses too: In order for results to be comparable across TST studies, precise and consistent definitions of coding criteria as well as corresponding theoretical concepts are necessary. Unfortunately, precision and consistency has been maintained only rarely in this respect. To illustrate, the aforementioned Trafimow, Triandis, and Goto's (1991) operationalization appears to correspond more to the conceptualization of self as private, relational, and collective rather than to Triandis' distinction between private, public, and collective self, as originally intended. This is due to two reasons. First, as noted previously (see section 2.3.1.), Triandis' original definition of collective self was later modified, namely, it changed from incorporating assessment of self by others (e.g.

[7] Although a few studies (e.g. Bond & Cheung, 1983; Dhawan, Roseman, Naidu, Thapa, & Rettek, 1995; Driver, 1969) did employ Kuhn's (1960) later proposal of in total five categories; these distinguished between participant's references to social groups and classifications, ideological beliefs, interests, ambitions, and self-evaluations.

*My family thinks I am introverted*; Triandis, 1989, p. 507) to simply referring to group memberships (e.g. *I am a son*; Trafimow et al., 1991, p. 649). Second, Trafimow et al.'s operationalization of public self in the form of so-called allocentric self-descriptions appears imprecise. Specifically, while public self had been originally defined as generalized other's view of self (e.g. *People think I'm introverted*; Triandis, 1989, p. 507), allocentric self-descriptions were instead to concern "a quality of interdependence, friendship, responsiveness to others, and sensitivity to the viewpoints of others . . . [e.g.] 'I am a person who wants to help others'" (Trafimow et al., 1991, p. 650).

In addition to the discrepancy that exists between studies utilizing the same coding procedures for analysing TST responses, several researchers have chosen to adjust these procedures or to develop entirely new ones based on own research interests. For example, Watkins and colleagues (Watkins & Gerong, 1999; Watkins et al., 1998, 2003; Watkins, Yau, Dahlin, & Wondimu, 1997) kept Trafimow et al.'s categorisation of TST responses into idiocentric and allocentric, but decided to further distinguish between small group and large group self-descriptions. Hence, according to this coding scheme, *I am happy* would be classified as idiocentric, *I am a sociable person* as allocentric, *I am a husband* as a small group description, and *I am a student* as a large group description (Watkins et al., 1997). Similarly, Cousins' (1989) categorisation was later expanded to include 10 (Kanagawa et al., 2001), 16 (Somech, 2000), 33 (Rhee et al., 1995), or even 40 (Eaton & Louw, 2000) subcategories in total. Alternatively, Adams, Van de Vijver, and De Bruin (2012) developed their own coding procedure through an iterative approach to TST data collected in South Africa. All in all, the heterogeneous utilization of TST coding procedures in cross-cultural investigations makes the comparison of the investigations' findings extremely difficult (Cross et al., 2011; Smith, 2011).

Finally, the assumed lack of cultural bias in the TST's response format has been questioned as well. First, it has been suggested that participants from collectivist cultures might have difficulties describing themselves without any contextual cues, as context sensitivity is an inherent characteristic of interdependent self (Smith, 2011). In this regard, Cousins (1989) demonstrated that American and Japanese participants respond differently to TST in its standard version as compared to its contextualized version, in which the participants are asked to describe themselves in particular contexts (at home, at school, and with close friends). Second, Triandis (1989) argued that individuals from collectivist countries tend to maintain fewer but more self-defining group memberships than participants from individualist countries. Following this argument, some authors (Cross et al., 2011; Dabul et al., 1995; Trafimow & Finlay, 2001) criticized TST for solely assessing the amount but not the importance of elicited self-descriptions. All in all, it appears that the field of cross-cultural psychology could benefit from alternative measures of self, such as the aforementioned autobiographical memories.

### 2.4.3. AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL MEMORIES

It is possible to identify various kinds of characteristics of autobiographical memories that have been utilized to study self in previous research. First, specific *functions* of autobiographical memories have been identified to describe ways in which individuals use their memories in everyday life. These functions have been often self-reported via Likert-type rating scales, such as the Thinking About Life Experiences scale (TALE; Bluck et al., 2005; Bluck & Alea, 2011). In TALE, participants are asked to indicate how often they think back over or talk about their life with a particular function in mind (e.g. *when I want to feel that I am the same person that I was before*) instead of recalling specific autobiographical episodes.

In contrast, several autobiographical memories were reported by participants in investigations that were to test the self-memory system model (Conway & Pleydell-Pearce, 2000; Conway, 2005). For example, Rathbone and colleagues (Chessell, Rathbone, Souchay, Charlesworth, & Moulin, 2014; Rathbone, Moulin, & Conway, 2008) asked participants to write down statements that they felt defined their identity[8], and then to recall autobiographical memories associated with these statements. Afterwards, participants noted their age at which the events described in the memories occurred, as well as their age at which the provided statements became a defining part of their identity. Analyses revealed a coincidence between the respective age estimations, that is, memories recalled to a particular identity statement clustered around the time when this statement became self-defining for the participant. According to the authors, this coincidence exemplified how autobiographical memories ground self and how self in turn organizes autobiographical experience (Rathbone et al., 2008). In line with this interpretation, *temporal distribution* of autobiographical memories has been widely studied in cognitive psychology, most notably in the form of the so-called lifespan retrieval curve (Rubin & Schulkind, 1997). The lifespan retrieval curve is thought to reflect different periods of self-development across lifespan (Conway, 2005; Rathbone et al., 2008), consisting of periods of childhood amnesia, reminiscence bump, and recency. These periods describe how individual's autobiographical memories typically emerge only at around the age of five, how their amount significantly increases between the age of ten and 30, and how it finally peaks in the most recent years of individual's life, respectively.

Instead of solely focusing on memories' temporal distribution, personality psychologists have paid attention to the *content* of autobiographical memories, that is, what the reported memories were actually about. For instance, Woike and

[8] This procedure was in one of the investigations described as "a variant of the TST" (Rathbone et al., 2008, p. 1405); later on, it was referred to as the IAM Task (Chessell et al., 2014).

colleagues (Woike, Gershkovich, Piorkowski, & Polo, 1999; Woike & Polo, 2001) differentiated between memories with agentic (e.g. accomplishment) or communal (e.g. social acceptance) themes, finding that participants with strong achievement motivation tended to recall the former, while participants with strong communal motivation tended to recall the latter. In a similar vein, McAdams et al. (McAdams, Hoffman, Mansfield, & Day, 1996) scored oral and written autobiographical memories for four agentic and four communal themes. Participants' scores on these themes were shown to correlate with corresponding measures of participants' motivation and personal strivings, suggesting a thematic coherence between personality motives and autobiographical memories' content.

Cross-cultural research has also appropriated the temporal distribution and particular content characteristics of autobiographical memories as measures of self. With regards to the former, most cross-cultural investigations have focused on the phenomenon of childhood amnesia, comparing the average age at the earliest childhood memory across culturally divergent populations (de la Mata, Santamaría, Hansen, Ruiz, & Ruiz, 2011; de la Mata, Santamaría, Hansen, & Ruiz, 2014; Fitzgerald, 2010; MacDonald, Uesiliana, & Hayne, 2000; Wang, 2001; but see also Wang, 2006b); while reminiscence bump has been investigated much less (e.g. Conway, Wang, Hanyu, & Haque, 2005). When it comes to the latter, various coding techniques have been developed for analysing autobiographical memories' content. For instance, similar to the technique employed by the aforementioned personality psychologists, memories have been assigned to one of several thematic categories, such as achievement and social content (Ivcevic et al., 2008); personal experiences, social events, and historical events (de la Mata et al., 2011; Ho, Chen, & Hoffman, 2012; Jobson & O'Kearney, 2008; Wang & Conway, 2004); individual, family, neighbourhood, and school context (de la Mata et al., 2014; Wang, 2001), or sociocultural events (Fitzgerald, 2010). An example of a non-thematic categorization is the differentiation between specific and general memories, that is, between memories of one-time as compared to recurrent events (Bender & Chasiotis, 2010; de la Mata et al., 2011, 2014; Ho et al., 2012; Ho, Chen, Hoffman, Guan, & Iversen, 2013; Wang & Conway, 2004; Wang, 2001, 2004, 2006b).

In addition to simply assigning memories to particular thematic or non-thematic categories, a more in-depth content analysis of autobiographical memories has been conducted in several cross-cultural investigations. This analysis entailed counting various kinds of references within the reported memories, such as references to the individual himself or herself, references to other people, to social interactions, emotional states, or autonomy. The total amount of such references was then represented in variables like number of other people, other-self ratio, interaction scenarios, emotionality, or autonomous orientation (e.g. Wang & Conway, 2004). Finally, autobiographical memories' *form* has been of interest to some researchers as well, most notably the memory volume, operationalized as the number of words

included in a memory. Memory volume has been utilized both as a variable in its own right as well as a control variable for memory content analyses (de la Mata et al., 2014; Demuth, Chaudhary, & Keller, 2011; Fitzgerald, 2010; Jobson & O'Kearney, 2008; Wang & Conway, 2004; Wang, 2001, 2004).

What all these accessibility, content, and form characteristics of autobiographical memories have been proposed to reflect is the memories' predominant focus on self versus other people. This focus has often been explained in terms of Markus and Kitayama's (1991) independent and interdependent self. Namely, an individual reporting early, specific, highly emotional memories of personal experiences with a lot of references to oneself and one's autonomy would be assumed to have an independent rather than interdependent self, and vice versa. Yet, only a few studies have in fact tested this assumption, and that by relating a more traditional measure of self, in this case TST, to autobiographical memories. Here, the difference between the amount of private and collective self-descriptions was found to correlate positively with memory specificity and other-self ratio (Wang, 2001) as well as with memory volume and autonomous orientation (Wang, 2004).

To summarize, measuring self cross-culturally is a challenging task. Both close-ended designs, that is, Likert-type rating scales, and open-ended designs, that is, TST, have been shown to have their weaknesses. While some authors (e.g. Bresnahan et al., 2005) have advocated for the use of TST, appreciating its high face validity, other authors have endorsed scales, simply because "the open-ended and qualitative nature of the TST precludes traditional psychometric assessment" (Grace & Cramer, 2003, p. 663). Moreover, the two types of measures appear to lack convergent validity, as documented in a number of investigations. For instance, Bresnahan and colleagues (Bresnahan et al., 2005) analysed TST self-descriptions of Korean, Japanese, and American participants based on the tripartite model of independent, collective, and relational self. Across all three samples, the authors found no correlations between the amount of independent self-descriptions and the independent score on SCS and neither between the amount of collective self-descriptions and the interdependent score on SCS. A significant, but small positive correlation was detected between the amount of relational self-descriptions and the overall score on the Relational-Interdependent Self-Construal scale (RISC; Cross et al., 2000). Similarly, Emiko Kashima and Elizabeth Hardie (2000) found no correlations between the relational, individual, and collective TST scores and the corresponding subscales' scores of their newly developed scale (Relational, Individual, and Collective self-aspects scale; RIC). Finally, Grace and Cramer (2003) applied Watkins et al.'s (1998) coding categories to their TST data. Apart from a positive correlation between the interdependent score on SCS and the amount of allocentric responses, no other indicator of convergence between the two measures of self was found. In light of these results, some authors speculated that the Likert-type rating scales and TST tap different constructs. Kim and Raja (2003) specifically hypothesized that "the different instruments are designed to measure

different aspects of self-representations" (p. 283); namely, that TST tapped a dynamic aspect of self, while SCS (and possibly other scales as well) tapped a stable aspect of self. Hence, the convergent validity of TST and rating scales appears to be even weaker than the convergent validity of TST and autobiographical memories. This is despite the fact that the association between particular types of TST self-descriptions on the one hand and corresponding characteristics of autobiographical memories on the other has so far been demonstrated in only two studies.

All in all, cross-cultural psychology has by now established, both theoretically and empirically, that different cultural groups construct their selves in distinct ways, not only in accordance with the Western notion of independence. Most notably, the Eastern (i.e. East-Asian) notion of interdependence was introduced as an alternative (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). However, even the popular model of independent and interdependent self was eventually challenged by contradictory and inconsistent findings, both from the standard North American and East Asian university student samples, as well as new populations. As a result, several refinements of the model were put forward, such as the distinction between collective and relational self (Brewer & Gardner, 1996) and the model of autonomous-related self (Kagitcibasi, 2005). At the same time, the utility of traditional measures of self became questioned and new instruments were developed, mainly in the form of close-ended, Likert-type rating scales (e.g. Cross et al., 2000; Kagitcibasi, 2007; E. Kashima & Hardie, 2000). Autobiographical memories as alternative, open-ended measures of self were proposed too, and that based on a conceptualization of self as inherently autobiographical (Wang & Brockmeier, 2002). In summary, the theoretical as well as methodological tools for studying self cross-culturally have become increasingly nuanced in order to encompass the diversity of ways in which self is conceived of across a wide range of cultural groups. Yet, this did not necessarily imply an enhanced focus on cultures that were supposedly extremely different from one another. Quite to the contrary, the more recent trend has been to go beyond the traditional, large-scale, West-East comparisons, and to instead investigate self in novel contexts and on a smaller scale (see, for example, Santamaría et al., 2010). For instance, some researchers have chosen to examine self in exclusively European populations (Ciochină & Faria, 2009; Pouliasi & Verkuyten, 2012).

## 2.5. THE CURRENT STUDY: SELF IN A EUROPEAN CONTEXT

Even though majority of cross-cultural investigations featuring European populations have looked at societal-level values, they provide valuable insights for the study of self in a European context. For example, in a recent multilevel analysis of the 2004 European Social Survey data from 195 European regions, van Herk and Poortinga (2011) showed that one of the most prominent antecedents of value differences across these regions is the regions' Communist history (or lack thereof).

A similar result emerged when Inglehart and Baker (2000) analysed longitudinal data from the World Value Survey collected in 65 societies between the years 1981 and 1998. Here, post-Communist countries were found to aggregate in a separate cultural zone, suggesting that the former Communist regime had left an imprint on these countries' value systems. The prominent value researcher Shalom H. Schwartz (Bardi & Schwartz, 1996; Schwartz & Bardi, 1997) also suspected and demonstrated that values endorsed in post-communist Europe differed from those promoted in other cultural areas, and that at both societal and individual level of analysis. Hence, there is good reason to suspect that the experience with Communist regime could be an equally important factor when investigating self in European populations.

For understandable reasons, cross-cultural studies featuring samples from post-Communist Europe have often focused on values, attitudes, and behaviours of political relevance. For instance, Plichtová and colleagues (Moodie, Marková, & Plichtová, 1995; Plichtová & Erös, 1998) investigated social representations[9] of democracy in three generations in Slovakia, as compared to Scotland, as well as Slovaks' and Hungarians' opinions about political changes in their respective countries. Macek and colleagues (Macek et al., 1998; Macek, Bejcek, & Vaníčková, 2007) similarly examined perceptions of political changes after the fall of Communism, this time in Czech, Hungarian, and Bulgarian adolescents. Klicperová, Feierabend, and Hofstetter (1997) went as far as proposing that in the aftermath of having lived under the Communist regime, individuals living in post-Communist countries have developed a distinct pattern of attitudes and behaviours called the post-Communist syndrome. According to Klicperová, Feierabend, and Hofstetter, the post-Communist syndrome would manifest itself in learned helplessness, immorality, and abuse of civic virtues. Other authors talked about fatalism (Goodwin, Nizharadze, Lan Anh Nguyen, Kosa, & Emelyanova, 2001), helplessness (Gavreliuc, 2012), or "an acceptance of conformity and a rejection of self-direction goals" (Bardi & Schwartz, 1996, p. 542). Lack of trust towards local communities, public institutions, or society at large was also proposed as characteristic of individuals living in post-Communist countries (Fülöp, 2005; Macek et al., 2003), corroborating the claim that "anything that undermines the normative order [such as] rapid social change . . . is likely to produce an increase in distrust and untrustworthy behaviour" (Delhey & Newton, 2005, p. 312).

[9] Social representations are "systems of values, ideas, and practices that are on the one hand the outcome of social construction by a group of people, and on the other hand the processes through which people make sense of the material and social world. In this sense, they represent an intermediate level between the individual and the culture" (Berry et al., 2011, p. 91).

In contrast, an exceptionally high generalized trust has been observed in Scandinavian countries. In one study (Delhey & Newton, 2005), more than half of the queried Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish participants stated that according to them, most people could be trusted. Such high levels of trust have been linked to various economic and political variables, such as wealth or good government, but also to cultural values. For instance, individualism was reported to correlate positively with the level of generalized trust (Allik & Realo, 2004) as well as the radius of trust, that is, "the width of the circle of people among whom a certain trust level exists" (van Hoorn, 2014, p. 270). While Scandinavian countries are known to be quite individualist (Hofstede, 2001), Gullestad (1991) argued that Scandinavia in general, and Norway in particular, had its own, Scandinavian version of egalitarian individualism. Here, while equality was highly valued, it was not understood in terms of equal opportunity, but rather in terms of sameness, that is, the absence of differences, hierarchical relations, and injustice. This understanding of equality in Norway, and also Denmark, has been sometimes in the literature illustrated by the so-called Jante law (Nelson & Shavitt, 2002; Thomsen, Sidanius, & Fiske, 2007). In short, Jante law is an unwritten social modesty code, which prescribes one not to think to be better than others. Some empirical evidence for strong egalitarian values and social modesty can indeed be seen in two investigations conducted in Denmark (Nelson & Shavitt, 2002; Thomsen et al., 2007). In the first investigation, with the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods, Danes were shown to be more egalitarian in their cultural orientation than Americans and to value social justice and equality more than Americans. In the second investigation, Danes self-enhanced significantly less than Americans, and that despite the fact that they were found to be more independent on both TST and SCS.

Taken together, a mixture of societal- and individual-level cross-cultural studies of various psychological phenomena indicates that post-Communist Europe and Scandinavia are distinct cultural areas. However, when it comes to cross-cultural research on self, previous work in these areas has been scarce (Gavreliuc, 2012; Santamaría et al., 2010; Thomsen et al., 2007), whereas direct comparison between them is non-existent. Hence, in line with the recent trend in cross-cultural psychology, the current study sets out to **investigate self in novel samples of individuals from post-Communist Europe and Scandinavia**. For this purpose, it intends to **utilize theoretical refinements of the model of independent and interdependent self**, namely the distinction between relational and collective self, the model of autonomous-related self, and the notion of autobiographical self. In accordance with these two objectives, the study aims to **adopt and possibly further develop relevant measures of self,** specifically TST and autobiographical memories. The next chapter provides a methodological overview of the current thesis. More concretely, the chapter begins by refining the current study's theoretical framework, followed by the presentation of the study's design, participants and procedure as well as materials and analyses. Finally, ethical issues relevant to the current study are discussed.

# CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

The first step in answering the current study's research question is graphically represented in Figure 8 below. Namely, by combining Figure 5 and Figure 7 presented earlier, Figure 8 integrates theoretical frameworks behind the most prominent conceptualizations of self in cross-cultural psychology. The purpose of the integrated framework is to show self as a part of a complex process of culture's influence on individual. First, this process includes socioecological factors, emphasized in the field of socioecological psychology (Oishi & Graham, 2010) as well as in the work of Patricia Greenfield (Greenfield et al., 2003; Greenfield, 2000, 2009, 2013) and Cigdem Kagitcibasi (2005, 2007, 2013). Second, the process comprises culture, which is in the current thesis understood as a psychological construct shared by a group of individuals, such as nations (Minkov & Hofstede, 2012, 2014). Third, family is recognized as an important context for culture's influence on individual (Kagitcibasi, 2007). In this respect, some cross-cultural developmental literature has focused on parental ethnotheories, goals and practices (Kärtner et al., 2007; Seidl-de-Moura et al., 2013), while other work in this area has been concerned with family reminiscing practices (Fivush & Nelson, 2004; Nelson & Fivush, 2004). The close interrelationship between autobiographical memories and self is incorporated in the framework (Wang, 2001, 2004). Finally, embedded within a particular socioecological, cultural, and family environment, self is seen as having important consequences for psychological processes (Cross et al., 2000; Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

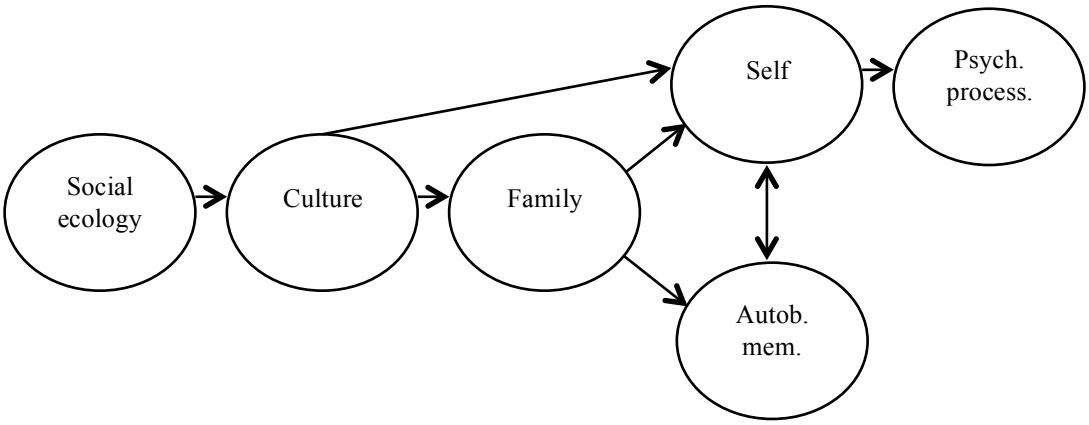


*Figure 8. Schematic representation of the thesis' refined theoretical framework.*

While the integrated framework in Figure 8 provides an overview of a complex relation between culture and self, it is beyond the scope of the current study to investigate it in its entirety. The actual scope of the current study is explicated in the next section.

## 3.1. DESIGN OF THE STUDY

To begin with, *socioecological factors* are incorporated in the design of the current study in a twofold manner. First, encompassing regions of post-Communist Europe and Scandinavia, the study acknowledges the difference between the regions' political recent past and present and examines a possible significance of this difference when comparing self in populations living in these regions. In order to capture the effect of sociopolitical change on various psychological characteristics, previous research in post-Communist countries has sampled participants from different age groups, that is, participants with varying degrees of Communist experience (Gavreliuc, 2012; Goodwin et al., 2001; Marková et al., 1998; Moodie, Marková, Farr, & Plichtová, 1997; Plichtová & Erös, 1998; Varnum, 2008). Similarly, the sample of the current study includes participants of different generations, while employing a cross-sectional cohort design. Second, Greenfield (2013) pointed out that members of different socioeconomic strata within a country might endorse different cultural values, thereby emphasizing the role of sociodemographics, such as education and urbanization, in value formation. Moreover, recent work has shown that people with different levels of formal education maintain different types of self and report autobiographical memories of different qualities (de la Mata et al., 2011; de la Mata & Santamaría, 2010; Dost-Gözkan & Küntay, 2014; Kingo, Berntsen, & Krøjgaard, 2013; Santamaría et al., 2012). Hence, there is reason to believe that participants' sociodemographic characteristics need to be considered in investigations of self as well. Therefore, the current study pays attention to individual-level sociodemographics, such as formal education and place of residence, in addition to societal-level socioecological factors, like political systems.

On the whole, the current study is conducted at the individual level of analysis, as it investigates an intrinsically individual-level phenomenon, that is, self, in a small number of cultural samples. Previous investigations of a similar kind (e.g. Kolstad & Horpestad, 2009) have used societal-level characteristics of these *cultures*, like their degree of individualism-collectivism (Hofstede, 1980, 2001), to infer prevalence of particular types of self therein. For example, if a culture had previously been characterized as individualist, participants sampled from this culture were hypothesized to maintain an independent self. However, such hypothesis would be warranted only if the within-culture variation in self was very limited, or if the study's samples were representative (Berry et al., 2011; van de Vijver et al., 2008). These requirements are due to individualism-collectivism being a nonisomorphic construct, i.e. having a distinct structure at each level of analysis

(Oyserman & Uskul, 2008; van de Vijver et al., 2008). More concretely, when analysed at the societal level, individualism and collectivism form opposite poles of a single continuum, while at the individual level of analysis, the two are usually reflected in several orthogonal factors (H. Triandis, 2001). Therefore, Hofstede's individualism-collectivism scores for cultures featured in the current study cannot be used to predict prevalence of particular types of self in these cultures and vice versa; the study's data on self cannot serve as an indication of the cultures' score on the individualism-collectivism dimension[10].

Next, Chapter 2 briefly touched upon the importance of parental values and beliefs regarding childcare (see section 2.3.2.) and of family reminiscing (see section 2.3.3.) for the development of self. Instead of documenting these *family* socialization practices in everyday life, some authors have argued that family's importance for self-development can be studied indirectly, through individual's autobiographical memories (McLean & Thorne, 2003; Peterson, Bonechi, Smorti, & Tani, 2010; Peterson, Smorti, & Tani, 2008; Tani, Bonechi, Peterson, & Smorti, 2010; Wang, 2006b). In line with this argumentation, memories of family as well as of other interpersonal settings have been used as a "reflective mirror" (Peterson et al., 2010) for changes in self and in self's relation to these settings across time. A similar technique is thus adopted in the current study's design.

The main focus of the current study is *self,* more specifically, its conceptualization and operationalization in a novel, European context. With respect to the latter, two measures of self are utilized in the study's design; namely, the Twenty Statements Test (Kuhn & McPartland, 1954) and autobiographical memories. TST is chosen due to its open-ended and straightforward format, which makes it well suited for cross-cultural research in general and for cross-cultural research in novel contexts in particular (Bond & Cheung, 1983; Carpenter & Meade-Pruitt, 2008; del Prado et al., 2007). Autobiographical memories are chosen due to their strong theoretical (see section 2.3.3.) as well as empirical (see section 2.4.3.) association with self. Moreover, the two measures are selected because of their somewhat established convergent validity (Wang, 2001, 2004).

Finally, numerous cross-cultural investigations have documented hypothesized consequences of particular types of self for *psychological processes*, namely cognition, emotion, and motivation (for a review, see Cross et al., 2011). Even though the current study investigates autobiographical memories, that is, a cognitive phenomenon, Figure 8 shows them separated from other aspects of psychological processes. This is due to the especially close interrelationship between self and

[10] While the former assumption would be a case of the ecological fallacy, the latter would be an example of the reverse ecological fallacy (see section 2.3.; also Bond, 2002; Hofstede, 1980, 2001).

autobiographical memories and the thesis' focus on how the two "make each other up".

Taken together, the above explication points to several variables relevant to the current study, whether in terms of the study's participants, such as their age, or with respect to the study's materials, such as the type of autobiographical memories solicited from these participants. The next two sections describe these two groups of variables in more detail.

## 3.2. PARTICIPANTS AND PROCEDURE

On the whole, the sample of the current study consists of several subsamples (see Table 2 and Table 3). First, the sample includes participants from post-Communist Europe and Scandinavia, specifically from Slovakia, Norway, and Denmark. Next, the sample comprises participants from different age groups, which in the case of Slovakia equals to participants with different degrees of Communist experience. In the current study, this experience is either absolutely none (adolescents born after 1989) or extensive, spanning several decades (older adults). While the Danish subsample features participants from both age groups, the Norwegian subsample consists of adolescents only. The respective cultural and age groups are further described in terms of gender distribution (Table 2) and distribution of the participants' current place of residence (Table 3). Moreover, Table 4 provides additional information about the older adults from each culture, and that with regards to their highest attained level of formal education. As all adolescents featured in the current study were in their final year of secondary grammar school, their educational levels are comparable across cultures and hence require no further consideration.

In total, 499 participants were queried in the current study. Some of these participants did not fit in the relevant subsamples, because they were, for instance, born in another culture or were too young or too old. Therefore, they were excluded from the subsequent analyses, as were participants that did not follow the given instructions; that is, left big parts of the response sheets blank, disclosed no demographic information, or did not take the task at hand seriously. Finally, some participants were chosen over others in order to keep particular subsamples as comparable to each other as possible, for example, balanced for gender or current place of residence.

| **Age group** | **Gender** | **Culture** | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Slovakia | Norway | Denmark |
| Adolescents | Female | 93 | 20 | 56 |
| | Male | 75 | 14 | 51 |
| | *Total* | *168* | *34* | *108** |
| Older adults | Female | 60 | - | 49 |
| | Male | 34 | - | 46 |
| | *Total* | *94* | - | *95* |
| **Total** | | **262** | **34** | **203** |

*Table 2. Distribution of the study's participants based on their cultural background, age, and gender.*

** Note: These rows do not add up to totals because of missing demographic data.*

Several recruitment methods were used in the current study. First, the adolescent subsamples were recruited through their secondary grammar schools. Here, headmasters of the respective schools in Slovakia, Norway, and Denmark were contacted first. Then, individual agreements were made with some of the schools' teachers with regards to the most appropriate time and place for data collection. In all instances, data collection took place in classrooms during regular teaching hours. No compensation was given for participation in the study.

Second, potential participants for the older adult subsamples were approached in different locations, including university and municipality offices, shops, libraries, and others. Moreover, by the means of snowball sampling, the researcher's social networks provided access to additional individual participants, such as friends of relatives or neighbours, as well as participant groups, like employees of a particular company. Here, the procedure of data collection varied according to the specific location, but on most occasions, the study's materials were first handed out and then, depending on the agreement with the participant, collected shortly thereafter. Again, no compensation was given for participation in the study.

| **Age group** | **Size of place of residence** | **Culture** | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Slovakia | Norway | Denmark |
| Adolescents | > 50,000 | 0 | 0 | 9 |
| | > 20,000 | 97 | 0 | 38 |
| | >10,000 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | > 5,000 | 11 | 0 | 12 |
| | < 5,000 | 60 | 34 | 47 |
| | *Total* | *168* | *34* | *108** |
| Older adults | > 50,000 | 0 | - | 44 |
| | > 20,000 | 79 | - | 5 |
| | >10,000 | 1 | - | 8 |
| | > 5,000 | 1 | - | 17 |
| | < 5,000 | 10 | - | 28 |
| | *Total* | *94* | - | *95* |
| **Total** | | **262** | **34** | **203** |

*Table 3. Distribution of the study's participants based on their cultural background, age, and place of residence.*

** Note: These rows do not add up to totals because of missing demographic data.*

Data collection in Norway was carried out with the assistance of a Norwegian Master student in psychology, and data collection in Denmark was carried out with the assistance of a group of Bachelor students in psychology, under the supervision of the thesis' author. All data was collected in years 2010-2012.

| Educational level | Culture | |
|---|---|---|
| | Slovakia | Denmark |
| Elementary | 0 | 13 |
| Secondary | 42 | 28 |
| University | 36 | 51 |
| **Total** | **94*** | **95*** |

*Table 4. Distribution of the older adult subsamples based on their cultural background and educational level.*

** Note: These rows do not add up to totals because of missing demographic data.*

## 3.3. MATERIALS AND ANALYSES

As mentioned above, the current study utilizes two measures of self, namely TST and autobiographical memories, and combines them in a written questionnaire format (similarly to de la Mata et al., 2014; Santamaría et al., 2010; Wang, Leichtman, & White, 1998; Wang, 2001, 2004). In short, the questionnaire (see Appendix A for more details) consists of a title page with a brief introduction and instruction, followed by a page for report of participant's earliest childhood memory. The third page features five questions about the just recalled memory; specifically, the questions inquire about participant's age at the time of the reported event, his or her feelings during the event, frequency of prior recollection of the earliest childhood memory in particular and of early childhood memories in general. A shortened version of TST is presented on the next page, while the demographic sheet comes last. For a small subset of participants, the questionnaire was slightly modified from its original version as seen in Appendix A. Specifically, in addition to the earliest childhood memory, participants were requested to recall and report especially meaningful memories about their family, school, and friends, and that right after the questions about the earliest childhood memory and just before the completion of the shortened TST. Description of each of the three additional memories was furthermore succeeded by five questions, similar to the ones concerning the earliest childhood memory. The questionnaire was originally constructed in English and then back-translated (Brislin, 1980) to Slovak, Danish, and Norwegian.

Even though the order of the tasks' presentation within the questionnaire was adapted from previous research, an exploratory pilot study was conducted to check for possible priming effects (Jensen, Kristensen, & Steinmeier, 2012). In the study,

one group of secondary high school students was asked to fill out the questionnaire as it is used in the current study, while another group was given a questionnaire in which the shortened TST was presented *before* the recall of the earliest childhood memory. The two participant groups were then compared on the distribution of private, public, and collective self-descriptions, as well as positive, negative, and neutral self-descriptions. Since none of the comparisons yielded significant results, the study concluded that the order in which the tasks are presented within the questionnaire should not influence the content of participants' responses.

Due to its generally open-ended format, the questionnaire employed in the current study generates predominantly qualitative text data. The data is subsequently subjected to content analysis, that is, quantified with the use of specific coding categories (Coolican, 2009). A considerable part of the study's results in Chapter 4 is dedicated to describing both previously used as well as newly developed approaches to this type of analysis, since one of the aims of the current thesis is to refine methodological tools for investigating self. A few general issues concerning the utilization of TST and autobiographical memories in the current study are however outlined in the next two sections.

### 3.3.1. SHORTENED TWENTY STATEMENTS TEST

The shortened version of TST (Kuhn & McPartland, 1954) was originally introduced by Bochner (1994). Bochner argued that after about 10 lines, participants responding to TST tend to give up or begin to repeat themselves, and therefore, solicitation of 20 self-descriptions is unnecessary. This argument was supported by Watkins and colleagues (Watkins et al., 1997), who tested whether proportions of TST statements across coding categories differed depending on if only the first seven, only the first 10, or all 20 statements, would be analysed. In a sample of 165 Hong Kong, 100 Swedish, and 100 Ethiopian students, such difference was observed only in the Hong-Kong data; namely, the more TST statements per participant were analysed, the more idiographic and the less large-group statements were found. Still, as the overall pattern of culture and gender differences remained the same across the three codings, Watkins et al. (1997; but see Schwirian, 1964) concluded that the amount of TST statements analysed per participant in a study should not have an effect on the study's results. Therefore, in line with some of previous research (e.g. E. Kashima & Hardie, 2000; Parkes et al., 1999; Santamaría et al., 2010; Wang, Leichtman, & White, 1998; Wang, 2001), the current study employs a shortened version of TST, which consists of 10 instead of 20 lines.

Another proposal that was made by Bochner (1994) was to weigh participant's self-descriptions according to the order in which the participant reports them, since "the order in which a participant completes the 'I am' sentences reflects the state or trait salience of those self-references" (p. 276). However, as this proposal was not

supported in other investigations (Wang et al., 1998; Watkins et al., 1997), the current study analyses unweighted responses, similarly to the majority of previous research.

An important task in any type of content analysis lies in identifying coding units (Coolican, 2009). In the case of TST, this task becomes relevant when participants describe themselves in multiple ways within a single line. In this respect, Bond and Cheung (1983; see also Rhee et al., 1995) distinguished between meaning units and statement units, where one statement unit (e.g. *I am a competent student*) could include multiple meaning units (e.g. *I am a student*, *I am competent*). Alternatively, Cousins (1989) defined a unit of analysis as "the independent clause consisting of no more than one verb-object, verb-predicate nominative, or verb-predicate adjective sequence, for example, 'I am usually friendly and affectionate, but can be mean to certain people' (three units) or 'I like playing cards with my friend, because I always win' (two units)" (p. 127). According to this definition, the aforementioned example, *I am a competent student,* would include just one coding unit and not two, as suggested by Bond and Cheung. This example then illustrates how different approaches to identifying coding units can lead to different findings; therefore, this particular matter has been carefully considered in the current study as well (see Chapter 4).

While some participants provide rich and diverse self-descriptions, others do not fill out all lines of TST, and that even when they are presented with the shortened version of the test. In order to control for this interindividual variation, previous research has utilized proportion scores for analysis (Bond & Cheung, 1983; Cousins, 1989; Dhawan, Roseman, Naidu, Thapa, & Rettek, 1995; Gabriel & Gardner, 1999; Grace & Cramer, 2003; Kanagawa et al., 2001; Parkes et al., 1999; Somech, 2000). Proportion scores are obtained by simply dividing the amount of participant's self-descriptions in each coding category by their total amount. Proportion scores are also used in the current study.

Finally, as noted in section 2.4.2., a great number of coding schemes for categorizing TST self-descriptions is available in the literature. Moreover, some of these coding schemes propose contradictory categorization criteria. For instance, references to family roles (e.g. *I am a son*, *I am a mother*) are sometimes considered collective (Wang, 2001), other times relational (Cross et al., 2011) descriptions. Similarly, self-descriptions like *I am friendly* are by some authors thought to implicitly express a relational orientation of the participant (Adams et al., 2012), while most authors code these statements as simply personal or independent (Rhee et al., 1995). Likewise, E. Kashima and Hardie (2000) list *I am a cricket fan* as an example of collective self-descriptions, whereas *I like hockey* is by Wang (2004) categorized as a private self-description. Hence, in the current study, a great amount of effort and time was dedicated to developing a systematic and transparent coding scheme for analysing TST data. Specifically, the scheme's development proceeded

through a number of stages. The first stages were marked by a rather exploratory and detailed approach (see Appendix B), which helped to identify self-descriptions with a possibly ambiguous meaning, as illustrated above. Afterwards, by means of continuous coding and re-coding, majority of the initial subcategories were found to be superfluous or vague and were thus gradually abandoned. Once the final version of the coding scheme was established and all data was coded by the thesis' author, two independent raters from a Danish and Slovak cultural background were involved in order to establish interrater reliability. Staying blind to the hypotheses of the study, the raters coded 20% of the total responses in the respective languages, which is the amount commonly reported in similar research (e.g. Alea, Bluck, & Semegon, 2004; Jobson & O'Kearney, 2008; Rhee et al., 1995). Inspection of discrepancies between the raters showed that majority of these regarded identification of coding units rather than the actual categorization of responses. All discrepancies were resolved through discussion.

According to Brislin (1980), all types of content analysis should fulfil two criteria, namely replicability and generality. While the former refers to employment of explicit rules necessary for analysis' replication, the latter concerns theoretical relevance of analysis' findings. These two criteria were also considered when developing the current coding scheme; namely, that the scheme was both theoretically anchored and clearly documented. Moreover, the scheme's development was guided by one additional requirement, which was the scheme's possible application across several languages.

### 3.3.2. RECALL OF AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL MEMORIES

In the current study, participants' autobiographical memory recall was promted either with the use of a temporal marker, by asking for their earliest childhood memory, or with the use of cue words, such as family, school and friends. In the latter case, participants were moreover asked to recall particularly meaningful memories. Furthermore, two types of memories' analysis were employed in the current study; the first type was strongly inspired by previous research, most notably by the work of Qi Wang (Wang, 2001, 2004, 2006b). Even though Wang provides quite specific coding instructions in her publications, these instructions needed to be further developed in order to be applied consistently across the data set in the current study. Appendix C illustrates this development with respect to one particular memory content variable, namely the other-self ratio. Other-self ratio expresses the number of times participants refer to other people, as compared to the number of times they refer to themselves, in their memories' descriptions. During the coding process, some of these references were found ambiguous and thus needed to be evaluated in a more systematic manner. Appendix C presents an overview of such references together with some examples, which were taken from both Danish and Slovak data. The second type of memory analysis employed in the

current study was specifically developed for the study's purposes and is thus described in detail in Chapter 4.

## 3.4. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

At the time of data collection, only biomedical research projects were eligible for ethical review by the Regional Ethical Committee of North Jutland. Therefore, the current study was evaluated internally and granted approval by the Human Research Ethics Board of the Faculty of Humanities, Aalborg University (see Appendix D). The study was evaluated as being of a low risk, as it neither involves biomedical intervention, relies on deception of participants, nor it is conducted with vulnerable participant groups or in unsafe geographical areas. Moreover, as the data collection did not involve processing of personally sensitive data, the Danish Data Protection Agency was not notified of the study. Nevertheless, potentially relevant ethical issues were carefully considered in designing the study. An informed consent form (see Appendix E) was prepared and attached on top of every questionnaire disseminated during the data collection. The consent form informed the participants of the title of the study, simply phrased as *Research on childhood memories and self-descriptions*, and of the researchers involved in the study. The form then emphasized that the participation in the research was voluntary and anonymous. Moreover, briefing and debriefing procedures were employed in order to further ensure the study's transparency to the participants, as well as the participants' psychological comfort.

# CHAPTER 4. RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of the current study in the form of four independent manuscripts; namely, one book chapter in print, one published and one accepted peer-reviewed article as well as one peer-reviewed article currently under review. The respective manuscripts are briefly outlined below.

## 4.1. MANUSCRIPT 1: CROSS-CULTURAL PSYCHOLOGY

The first manuscript is an invited book chapter featured in a Danish introductory book to psychology. The manuscript is therefore a theoretical contribution and is written in Danish (translation into English is provided).

**Aim and relevance:** The purpose of the manuscript is to introduce some of the key notions and themes of cross-cultural psychology to a lay reader. While the manuscript does not directly answer the current thesis' research question, it provides a broad overview of the field the current thesis adheres to and thereby situates the thesis within this field.

**Short summary:** The manuscript begins by describing culture as a complex phenomenon, which is not only hard to define but also to notice in everyday life. Here, the term culture is characterized as both external and internal, that is, as consisting of both physical elements, such as architecture, as well as psychological elements, such as social norms. It is however pointed out that psychology has mostly been interested in the internal, psychological characteristics of culture; the definition of culture adopted in the current study reflects this (see Chapter 2). Next, the origins of study of culture within psychology are briefly outlined, and the term ethnocentrism is introduced. The differences between the fields of indigenous, cultural, and cross-cultural psychology are pointed out, with the use of some examples. The first section of the manuscript concludes with a more precise definition of culture as well as of cross-cultural psychology.

Values as the most researched psychological elements of culture are discussed next. Prominent value researchers Geert Hofstede and Shalom H. Schwartz and their respective models of societal-level value dimensions are briefly described. The distinction between societal and individual level is shortly mentioned before the introduction of the individual-level concepts of independent and interdependent self. A few paragraphs are dedicated to exemplifying the hypothesized consequences of these two selves, with special focus on cross-cultural differences in cognitive styles and autobiographical memories. Afterwards, cross-cultural research on emotions is used to illustrate the main ambition of cross-cultural psychology,

namely to identify cultural universals and cultural specifics in psychological processes.

The last section before the conclusion deals with developmental perspectives in cross-cultural psychology, shortly referring to parental ethnotheories and to research on family reminiscing practices. The manuscript concludes with a few examples of practical application of cross-cultural psychology as well as some questions for future development of the field.

## 4.2. MANUSCRIPT 2: ADOLESCENTS' MEANINGFUL MEMORIES REFLECT A TRAJECTORY OF SELF-DEVELOPMENT FROM FAMILY OVER SCHOOL TO FRIENDS

The second manuscript is an empirical article published in a peer-reviewed journal and is written in English.

**Aim and relevance:** In the context of the current thesis, the manuscript represents the first attempt at utilizing autobiographical memories as measures of self. Specifically, the manuscript aims to document the importance of family, school, and friends for self-development by comparing temporal distribution, content and accessibility characteristics of autobiographical memories about these settings. Hence, the manuscript is particularly concerned with the role of important interpersonal settings in the development of self, and with the appropriation of a novel instrument for gauging self. In this respect, the manuscript draws upon Kagitcibasi's conceptualization of autonomy and relatedness.

**Short summary:** The manuscript first introduces the concepts of self and autobiographical memory and highlights the close relationship between the two. Next, empirical evidence for this relationship is exemplified by referring to previous investigations, which have documented cross-cultural differences in various characteristics of autobiographical memories. Two of these investigations are described in more detail, as they both employ a within-subject in addition to a between-subject design, namely, they show how specific qualities of autobiographical memories vary not only across distinct cultural groups, but also within the same individuals. The manuscript adopts a similar approach, but this time focusing on adolescence, and specifically the negotiation of autonomy and relatedness during adolescence. More concretely, two samples of adolescents are asked to recall especially meaningful memories about their family, school, and friends. The degree of autonomy and relatedness expressed in these memories, as well as the memories' temporal distribution and their prior recollection, are hypothesized to indicate how the roles of these settings in adolescents' lives have

changed across time. The manuscript consists of two studies, conducted with Slovak and Norwegian adolescents, respectively.

**Results and conclusion:** Coding criteria for content analysing the collected autobiographical memories were adopted from previous research. Analysis showed that in both studies, family memories were the oldest, followed by school and friend memories. Family and friend memories of Slovak adolescents were also found to express more relatedness than their school memories. Moreover, Slovak adolescents reported that they had thought and talked about their friend memories most often. The manuscript concludes by summarizing the results of both studies in a model and by pointing to the utility of autobiographical memories as measures of self.

## 4.3. MANUSCRIPT 3: COLLECTIVISM POST COMMUNISM? SELF-CONSTRUALS IN TWO GENERATIONS IN SLOVAKIA AS COMPARED TO DENMARK

The third manuscript is an empirical article currently under review in a peer-reviewed journal and is written in English.

**Aim and relevance:** The manuscript aims to establish whether and which type of interdependence is associated with the Communist experience, and that by examining the prevalence of relational and collective interdependence in two Slovak generations (adolescents, older adults) as compared to two similar Danish generations. For this purpose, the manuscript utilizes a theoretically anchored content analysis of TST self-descriptions. Hence, in the context of the current thesis, the manuscript pays special attention to the role of socioecological factors, namely political systems, in self-construction, as well as to the appropriation of TST as a measure of self. Theoretically, the manuscript draws upon the distinction between relational and collective self.

**Short summary:** The manuscript begins with a concise review of cross-cultural investigations of values and self in post-Communist Europe. The review shows that while some studies find evidence for collectivist values and interdependent self in this area, results of research on social representations point to the contrary. It is thus hypothesized that this inconsistence is partly caused by the vague definitions of collectivism and interdependence in the respective literature. Indeed, in some cases, the two terms refer to relationships with close others, while in other cases, they denote the importance of group memberships (see section 2.3.1.). Hence, in order to disentangle the possible meanings of the two terms, the manuscript introduces the societal-level distinction between relational and group collectivism as well as the individual-level distinction between relational and collective interdependence. However, as the manuscript is based on an individual-level investigation, only the distinction between relational and collective interdependence is further elaborated

and later used to guide the content analysis of the collected data. The first half of the elicited self-descriptions is obtained from two age groups of participants from Slovakia: one that was raised during Communism (older adults) and other that was born after its collapse (adolescents). The second half of self-descriptions is obtained from similar age groups from a country that has never been communist, namely Denmark.

**Results and conclusion:** In accordance with the aforementioned theoretical distinction, the employed coding scheme consisted of three main categories that differentiate between private, relational, and group self-descriptions. In addition, the relational category included two subcategories, which distinguish specific from non-specific relational self-descriptions. Application of the coding scheme to the data showed that group self-descriptions were more frequent among the young Slovaks and not among their older counterparts who had actually experienced Communism. Furthermore, relational interdependence was higher among the older than among the young generations in both countries. The results thus provided no support for the assumption that Communist experience relates to higher interdependence. Moreover, the manuscript demonstrated the importance of disentangling the different meanings of common terms such as collectivism and interdependence, both theoretically and in measurement.

## 4.4. MANUSCRIPT 4: LOCATING THE SELF IN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL MEMORIES: A NEW APPROACH TO ANALYSIS

The fourth manuscript is a theoretical article accepted in a peer-reviewed e-book and is written in English.

**Aim and relevance:** The manuscript can be seen as an extension of the Manuscript 2, as it presents a new approach to the content analysis of autobiographical memories. The approach aims to *locate* the self in autobiographical memories in a more nuanced and systematic way, and thus to be applicable in research with culturally diverse populations. Hence, the manuscript focuses on further validation of autobiographical memories as measures of self. Similarly to Manuscript 2, the manuscript draws upon Kagitcibasi's conceptualization of autonomy and relatedness.

**Short summary:** The manuscript first sketches the area of cross-cultural research concerned with the relationship between self and autobiographical memory. Earliest childhood memories are pointed to as the most frequently utilized and the most suitable memories for purposes of this research. The manuscript then briefly reviews the various, previously used content characteristics of autobiographical

memories and notes that majority of them has been based on Markus and Kitayama's notion of independence as opposed to interdependence.

The new approach to the content analysis of autobiographical memories proposes to instead employ Kagitcibasi's model of autonomy and relatedness. Moreover, the approach incorporates Bruner's distinction between landscape of action and landscape of consciousness to examine the incidence of actions, mental states, and reflections within the analysed memories. The resulting coding procedure consists of four steps. The first step is the identification of coding units. The next three steps place these units into particular coding categories, and that with regards to who the units' subjects are, what these subjects are doing or experiencing, and whether they are thereby showing any signs of agency and/or relatedness. Two concrete examples are utilized to illustrate the coding procedure in practice.

The manuscript concludes by suggesting possible applications of the presented approach in future research.

# CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION

The current thesis was built around the following research question:

*From the perspective of cross-cultural psychology, how can self be measured in a European context? More concretely, how can the predominant theories and methods of the field be applied to compare selves of individuals living in post-Communist Europe and Scandinavia?*

Each of the manuscripts presented in Chapter 4 provided a partial answer to this question. In the following, these partial answers are first discussed individually and then brought together in the General discussion section below.

## 5.1. DISCUSSION OF INDIVIDUAL MANUSCRIPTS

### 5.1.1. MANUSCRIPT 1

Manuscript 1 presented a broad overview of the field of cross-cultural psychology and hence served as a starting point for answering the thesis' research question. In this respect, the manuscript's explication of several terms was particularly instrumental. First, since the thesis' research question specifically referred to cross-cultural psychology, the manuscript's demarcation of cross-cultural psychology from cultural[11] and indigenous psychology helped to clarify the thesis' particular focus. Indeed, the three disciplines hold markedly different views on how the relationship between individual and culture should be studied (see the special issue of Asian Journal of Social Psychology, 2000, 3, on this topic). These differences have been paralleled to the distinction between emic and etic, relativist and universalist, and idiographic and nomothetic approaches (Kagitcibasi, 2007; Keith, 2011). In short, these distinctions reflect a historically recurring theme in the study of human behaviour across cultures, namely "the tension between diversity and the search for universals" (Jahoda & Krewer, 1997, p. 4), that is, between focus on what is unique and what is comparable. Here, while cultural and indigenous psychologies generally emphasize the former, cross-cultural psychology is more interested in the latter (see also Chapter 1).

[11] It is worth noting that the terms cultural psychology and cross-cultural psychology are used inconsistently in the literature. For instance, some authors refer to cultural psychology when presenting classical cross-cultural research (Cross et al., 2011; del Prado et al., 2007; Kanagawa et al., 2001), while others use cross-cultural psychology as an umbrella term for both culture-comparative (in the current thesis cross-cultural) and cultural psychology (Berry et al., 2011).

Second, since the thesis' research question specifically referred to self, the manuscript's introduction of values and self as key terms in cross-cultural psychology pointed to the importance of differentiating between the two. More concretely, since values express what is good and desirable (Schwartz, 2006), research on values has a normative focus (Kagitcibasi, 2005, 2007). On the other hand, self is largely defined by relations to other people, and thus research on self has a relational focus (Kagitcibasi, 2005, 2007). Moreover, values have been studied both at the individual and societal level of analysis, while self has been considered as an exclusively individual-level phenomenon (see Owe, 2012, for an exception). All in all, even though the two terms are closely related (Brewer & Chen, 2007), they are represented by distinct lines of research. While the current thesis drew on both cross-cultural research on values and cross-cultural research on self, it still generated only one type of data, namely individual-level data with focus on relationality. Therefore, inferences about values, and especially societal-level values, based on this data should be exercised with caution (see also section 3.1.).

### 5.1.2. MANUSCRIPT 2

Manuscript 2 described two pilot studies that tested the utility of autobiographical memories as measures of self. Therefore, the manuscript offered a methodological answer to the current thesis' research question, namely, that self of individuals living in post-Communist Europe and Scandinavia could be measured by means of these individuals' autobiographical memories.

Moreover, the two studies' results showed that autobiographical memories cued by particular words could document self's development across time. Specifically, the cue words referred to different interpersonal settings that had supposedly shifted in their importance during participants' lives, namely family, school, and friends. By recalling memories of their family, school, and friends, and by dating these memories back in time, participants then indirectly indicated when these shifts in importance had in fact occurred for them. This way of capturing past changes in self was quite original (see also Experiment 2 in Conway & Holmes, 2004, and Wang, 2006b), since similar investigations have mostly employed temporal markers instead of cue words when prompting autobiographical memory recall. In these investigations, participants were asked to retrieve memories from specific periods of their life, such as each decade (Experiment 1 in Conway & Holmes, 2004), or preschool, elementary school, middle school, high school and university years (Peterson et al., 2010; Tani et al., 2010).

On the whole, Manuscript 2 also provided support for the high importance of friends in adolescence and thus corroborated findings of previous studies. In these studies, friend memories were shown to emphasize closeness over separation and conflict (McLean & Thorne, 2003) and to become more accessible and more

positive over time, that is, when recalled from different periods of participant's life (Peterson et al., 2010; Tani et al., 2010).

In addition, by employing a strictly within-subject design (cf. McLean & Thorne, 2003; Peterson et al., 2010, 2008; Tani et al., 2010), Manuscript 2 clearly demonstrated an intra-individual variation in characteristics of autobiographical memories across the recalled settings. Similar variation had been previously found in bilingual and bicultural individuals, who retrieved autobiographical memories of different qualities depending on the language of retrieval or on the participants' cultural background that had been primed prior to the retrieval (Marian & Kaushanskaya, 2004; Wang, Shao, & Li, 2010; Wang, 2008). This within-subject flexibility in autobiographical memories was here interpreted as a sign of within-subject flexibility in self, namely that "how the self is represented in a particularly context, that is, which aspect of the self is active, salient, and accessible, may determine which memories and which aspects of the memories are likely to be accessed and retrieved" (Wang, 2008, p. 749). In this sense, Manuscript 2 then provided support for the idea that participants' self was represented differently across family, school, and friend settings.

Finally, Manuscript 2 indicated that for the purpose of investigating self in a European context, Kagitcibasi's (2005, 2007) understanding of autonomy and relatedness could be more suitable than Markus and Kitayama's (1991) notions of independence and interdependence. This point was further elaborated in Manuscript 4 (see section 5.1.4.).

### 5.1.3. MANUSCRIPT 3

Manuscript 3 argued and demonstrated that for the purpose of comparing selves of individuals living in post-Communist Europe and Scandinavia, the distinction between relational and collective interdependence was particularly instrumental. This way, the manuscript substantiated this theoretical distinction (Brewer & Gardner, 1996; Cross et al., 2000) as well as empirical findings of a recent investigation by Mamat and colleagues (Mamat et al., 2014). In Study 1 of this investigation, participants from two ethnic groups in China, namely the Uyghur and the Han, were asked to write down five personal characteristics, five personal relationships, and five group memberships of high self-importance, that is, they were prompted to list private, relational, and collective self-descriptions. Afterwards, participants were to indicate the importance of each of these self-descriptions on a scale from 1 to 99, with higher numbers signifying more importance. The analysis revealed that the Uyghur gave higher scores to collective self-descriptions than to relational self-descriptions, while the Han did the opposite. In other words, the sampling of relational and collective interdependence varied across the two ethnic groups. This finding then resembled that of the current manuscript; only here the degree of relational and collective interdependence

differed between generations living in the same country instead of ethnic groups. Taken together, the distinction between the two types of interdependence appears generally well suited for culture-comparative research on a small scale, such as within-country comparisons. Future studies should apply this distinction with samples from other societies, for example those that had *not* been traditionally considered collectivist like China or Slovakia.

On the other hand, even though relational and collective interdependence proved instrumental for answering the current thesis' research question, a closer inspection of relevant literature shows that the understanding of the two notions requires further refinement. Namely, it appears that the two types of interdependence and their relation to independence have been understood inconsistently across different authors. Figure 9 illustrates this inconsistency by graphically representing the relationships between relational and collective interdependence with independence, based on how they have been explicitly or implicitly characterised by some of the authors. First, Singelis' SCS (1994) was intended to measure private and collective self (see Triandis, 1989) and thus considered only one type of interdependence, namely the collective one. Bresnahan and colleagues (Bresnahan et al., 2005) complied with this intention when they inspected validity of three distinct measures of self. Specifically, in order to test the measures' convergent validity, the authors correlated the amount of collective self-descriptions on the TST with scores on the interdependence subscale of SCS, and the amount of relational self-descriptions with scores on the Relational-Interdependent Self-Construal scale (RISC). The authors' choice of the particular pairs of correlates shows that they saw relational interdependence as separate from (collective) interdependence measured by SCS (see a) in Figure 9). In contrast, Kashima and Hardie (2000) argued that "the interdependent self-construal [as described by Markus and Kitayama (1991)] contains both collective and relational self-aspects, because of its emphasis on links with other individuals *and* collectives" (p. 21). Thus, according to Kashima and Hardie, the two aspects of interdependence need to be disentangled (see b) in Figure 9). Brewer and Yuki (2007; see also Yuki, 2003) agreed with this argument, but they specifically proposed that collective interdependence was compatible with independence (see c) in Figure 9). Namely, the authors hypothesized that while being a member of large, depersonalized collectives would not interfere with pursuit of individual's independence, appreciation of close, personalized bonds might. Hence, an individual could very well be high on both independence and collective interdependence. Conversely, Cross and colleagues (Cross et al., 2000) maintained that highly independent individuals, like North Americans, would be more likely to include close relationships, rather than in-groups, in their self-representation; i.e. to be more relational- than collective-interdependent (see d) in Figure 9). In fact, these authors saw relational interdependence as characteristic of

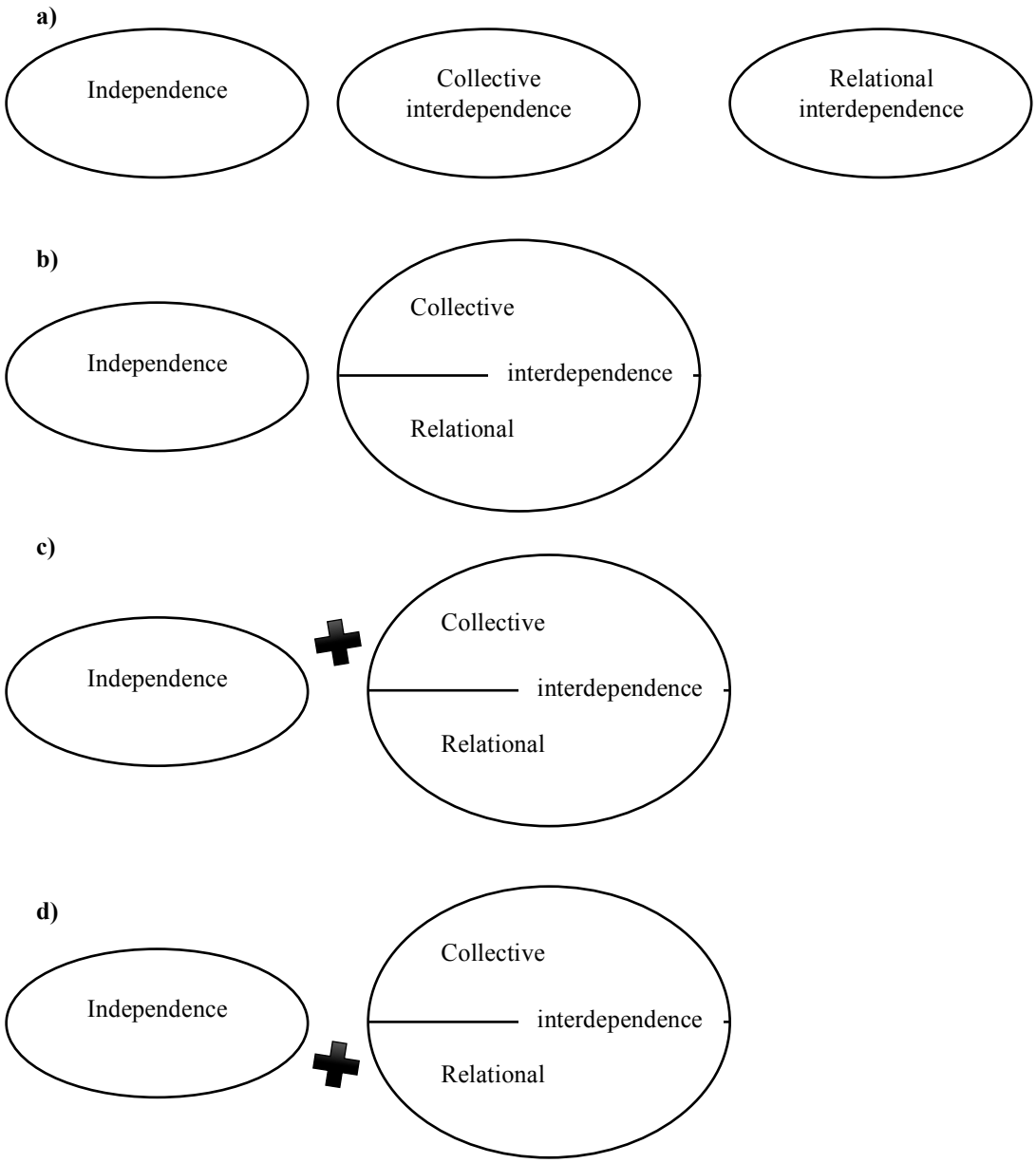


*Figure 9. Differences in the understanding of relational and collective interdependence in the literature. Schematic representations based on proposals by: a)* (Bresnahan et al., 2005; Singelis, 1994)*, b)* (E. Kashima & Hardie, 2000)*, c)* (Brewer & Yuki, 2007; Yuki, 2003)*, and d)* (Cross et al., 2000)*. Plus indicates compatibility.*

North Americans, especially North American women (Cross & Madson, 1997). All in all, researchers utilizing the notions of relational and collective interdependence in the future should be aware of this inconsistency, and potentially consider further refinements of these notions.

One such refinement was put forward by Harb and Smith (2008). Namely, the authors pointed to hierarchy as an additional aspect of how self can be seen in relation to others and proposed to incorporate this aspect into the tripartite model of independent, relational- and collective-interdependent self. This resulted in a sixfold differentiation of self into personal self, horizontal-relational self (e.g. me as a friend), vertical-relational self (e.g. me as a family member), horizontal-collective self (e.g. me as a university student), vertical-collective self (e.g. me as a member of a religious denomination), and humanity-bound self (e.g. me as a human being). Even though Harb and Smith's proposal has so far received only limited attention in the literature, the idea of hierarchy as an important aspect in conceptualizing self had been supported elsewhere. Specifically, Grace and Cramer (2003) identified hierarchy as an extra factor comprising Singelis' SCS besides independence and interdependence. In this particular factor analysis (cf. section 2.4.1.), the hierarchy factor emerged as consisting of items from both independence (*Speaking up during class is not a problem for me*) and interdependence (*I have respect for the authority figures with whom I interact*) subscales. This result then supported the importance of disentangling hierarchy from interdependence in future studies, as also advocated by Harb and Smith (2008).

### 5.1.4. MANUSCRIPT 4

Similarly to Manuscript 2, Manuscript 4 emphasized the utility of autobiographical memories in cross-cultural research on self. Moreover, Manuscript 4 explicitly argued that in order to content analyse these memories, the distinction between autonomy and relatedness was more instrumental than the distinction between independence and interdependence. This was due to two reasons. First, the latter distinction had been intended for studying Western and East Asian populations (Markus & Kitayama, 1991, 2003) and was therefore not particularly suitable for investigations with, for instance, individuals living in post-Communist Europe and Scandinavia. Second, in contrast to independence-interdependence, autonomy and relatedness had been conceptualized as orthogonal constructs (Kagitcibasi, 2005). Such conceptualization would then allow for a more nuanced examination of self in autobiographical memories, that is, examination along two dimensions instead of just one (see section 5.2.2).

When it comes to the orthogonality of autonomy and relatedness, it is important to note that independence and interdependence have also been considered orthogonal, and that by a number of authors (e.g. Cross et al., 2000, 2011; Singelis & Bond, 1999). Yet, most of these authors have mentioned this consideration rather briefly

and often referenced only one publication in this respect, namely Singelis (1994). In this publication, Singelis introduced his SCS that indeed measures independence and interdependence by two separate subscales. However, when presenting theoretical arguments for the scale's development, Singelis drew on Triandis' (1989) distinction between private, public, and collective self, and not Markus and Kitayama's (1991) model of independent and interdependent self. Moreover, Singelis provided no apparent reason as to why he then included only two, and not three subscales in the SCS; he simply stated that "Only the private and the collective selves will be considered here" (Singelis, 1994, p. 582). Therefore, it appears that the claim for the orthogonality of independence and interdependence has received only limited theoretical and empirical support. While Kam et al. (2012) recently provided some empirical evidence for this claim, Kagitcibasi's delineation of autonomy and relatedness still enables a clearer conceptualization and a more nuanced measurement of self.

## 5.2. GENERAL DISCUSSION

In the above, various partial answers to the current thesis' research question were discussed. To bring these answers together, the next three sections combine them depending on whether the answers concerned theoretical or methodological issues, or whether they drew on the current study's empirical results.

### 5.2.1. THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Cross-cultural literature on self has been dominated by Markus and Kitayama's (1991) model of independent and interdependent self. The model has been mostly applied to the two original, North American and East Asian contexts, but also to other cultural areas. In the latter case, some studies did not find the expected cross-cultural differences in independence and interdependence. This questioned the utility of this distinction in general and its relevance to the newly explored areas in particular (e.g. Kolstad & Horpestad, 2009; Santamaría et al., 2010). In light of these findings, the current thesis refrained from simply extending Markus and Kitayama's model to another novel context. Instead, the thesis first thoroughly reviewed refinements of the model and then integrated theoretical frameworks that these refinements had been based on (see Figure 8). This careful examination of the most prominent conceptualizations of self in cross-cultural psychology then lent support to the utilization of Kagitcibasi's (2005, 2007) model of autonomous-related self (Manuscript 2, Manuscript 4) as well as of the distinction between relational and collective self (or interdependence; Manuscript 3) in the current study, that is, for the purpose of comparing selves of individuals living in post-Communist Europe and Scandinavia. Since both of these theoretical proposals are refinements of Markus and Kitayama's model, they equally offer a more nuanced conceptualization of self than previously suggested. At the same time, the two

proposals differ in substantial ways. Namely, while Kagitcibasi's model is concerned with *the degree* of autonomy from and relatedness with others, relational and collective self specify *who* these others are. Moreover, autonomy and relatedness are conceived of as constituting two distinct *dimensions* (see Figure 4), whereas relational and collective self refer to two distinct *types of self*. Hence, the two proposals focus on different aspects of self and of self's relation to others, and should be utilized accordingly, depending on the particular aim of each study. For instance, in the current thesis, self-descriptions in Manuscript 3 were examined for explicit mentions of relationships to others and of group memberships. In comparison, autobiographical memories in Manuscript 2 and Manuscript 4 were coded on several variables, most of which served as indicators of participants' general degree of autonomy and relatedness.

An overarching theoretical theme of the current thesis was the disentangling of the term interdependence. Specifically, Manuscript 2 concerned interdependence with family, school, and friends, and Manuscript 3 differentiated between relational and collective interdependence. Disentangling interdependence is an important task for cross-cultural psychology, since several authors have previously argued that the term, similarly to the term collectivism, encompasses multiple meanings. For instance, Oyserman, Coon, and Kemmelmeier (2002) stated that collectivism, here used interchangeably with interdependence, "is a diverse construct, joining together culturally disparate foci on different kinds and levels of referent groups" (p. 5). Fiske (2002) concurred:

> As a construct, collectivism conflates social bonds with all kinds of groups and networks. There are many kinds of sociality, and there is no reason to believe that cultural emphasis on one kind of relationship, identity, membership, or obligation is positively correlated with emphases on other kinds. (p. 82)

One possible reason for this ambiguity is that the two terms have been primarily defined by North American psychologists, that is, psychologists from a cultural background that supposedly downplays the importance of these ideas, and thus might not know much about them: "Collectivism is an abstraction that formalizes our [North Americans'] ideological representation of the antithetical other, a cultural vision of the rest of the world characterized in terms of what we imagine we are not" (Fiske, 2002, p. 84). Levine and colleagues (Levine et al., 2003) found support for this North American, or Western bias, with respect to measures of interdependence. Specifically, the authors' meta-analysis of cross-cultural research on self showed that, overall, measures of interdependent self worked substantially worse than measures of independent self. It appears then that there is a need for disentangling interdependence, both theoretically and in measurement.

## 5.2.2. METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The current thesis relied almost exclusively on open-ended methods and employed content analysis of thereby generated data (Manuscript 2, Manuscript 3, and Manuscript 4). On the whole, the idea behind this methodological approach was to increase cultural sensitivity and hence to decrease the possibility of cultural bias (see also section 5.4.). Specifically, participants of the current study were given the opportunity to express themselves freely and thus to generate more complex and more original data than would have been the case with Likert-type rating scales, for example. This way, the study followed a recommendation by Matsumoto (1999), who in light of the weak empirical support for Markus and Kitayama's model advocated for more qualitative data in future cross-cultural research, especially from understudied cultural areas. At the same time, subsequent coding of participants' answers allowed for quantitative analyses of the generated data and for systematic group comparisons, which lie at the heart of cross-cultural psychology (Keith, 2011). Taken together, by utilizing content analysis, the current thesis combined benefits characteristic of both qualitative and quantitative methodology and thus partly of both emic and etic, relativist and universalist, and idiographic and nomothetic approaches[12]. These benefits were summarized by personality psychologist Barbara Woike in the paper "Working with Free Response Data: Let's Not Give Up Hope", which Woike had based on her own experience with content analysis of autobiographical memories (see section 2.4.3.):

> By using free response methods, we are able to study personality through both idiographic and nomothetic lenses. The nature of free responses gives individuals the opportunity to tell a story in a way that is uniquely their own. For the researcher, this leaves open the possibilities that there may be patterns in the data that were not expected and that would have gone undetected with standardized, fixed choices questions. . . . Once reliable content analytic procedures are developed, specific hypotheses can be tested through group comparison. In this sense, the free response method offers the best of both worlds: it allows us to analyse reliably the idiographic content of responses, then validate our hunches through group comparisons. (Woike, 2001, p. 158)

Furthermore, the current thesis substantiated the use of autobiographical memories as new measures of self. The need for such measures was first indicated by a review of the most common, already existing instruments for gauging self in cross-cultural psychology (see section 2.4.). Thereafter, both previously established as well as

[12] As briefly mentioned in section 5.1.1., idiographic approach "emphasises unique characteristics and experiences of the individual", while nomothetic approach "looks for common and usually measurable factors on which individuals differ" (Coolican, 2009, p. 583).

novel methodological approaches to autobiographical memory recall and analysis were implemented in the design of the current study. For instance, various kinds of autobiographical memories were queried from the study's participants, such as earliest childhood memories (Manuscript 4) and meaningful memories about different interpersonal contexts (Manuscript 2). Hence, both temporal markers (i.e. earliest) and cue words (i.e. family, school, and friends) were used to prompt autobiographical memory retrieval. In addition, several self-reported as well as coded memory variables were applied (Manuscript 2) or developed specifically for purposes of the current study (Manuscript 4). Self-reported variables were concerned with memories' temporal distribution (e.g. age of the earliest childhood memory) or accessibility (e.g. prior rehearsal). In comparison, coded memory variables regarded content characteristics of memories (e.g. other-self ratio). Here, special attention was given to the coding for autonomy and relatedness, since the degree of inclusion of others in one's self is central to the investigation of self in cross-cultural psychology (see section 1.2.). In previous research, autonomy and relatedness were coded by simply counting references to self and others (other-self ratio) or by identifying references to personal preferences, avoidances, evaluations, and agentic behaviour (autonomous orientation). Instead, the new coding procedure presented in Manuscript 4 distinguished between whether it was self, others, or both that was the subject of each coding unit (Step 2 of the coding procedure), and whether these subjects acted in an explicitly autonomous or heteronomous way (Step 4). Moreover, presence of people other than the subject in a coding unit indicated further relatedness (Step 4). This way, the procedure allowed a more nuanced identification of autonomy and relatedness in autobiographical memories, specifically, a differentiation between autonomy and relatedness of self and autonomy and relatedness of others.

Finally, it is important to note that in accordance with Kagitcibasi's theoretical framework (see Figure 4), the new coding procedure presented in Manuscript 4 enabled a concomitant coding of autonomy and relatedness. Specifically, in Step 4, it was possible for the same coding unit to receive a score in both. In contrast, the coding system utilized in Manuscript 3 assigned self-descriptions only to one of the three categories: either private, relational, or group. Hence, the difference between these two approaches illustrates that orthogonality of autonomy and relatedness, and of independence and interdependence, is as much a theoretical as it is a methodological question (see section 5.1.4.).

### 5.2.3. EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

When it comes to the empirical findings of the current study, the lack of differences between older Slovaks and older Danes (Manuscript 3) stands out. Specifically, even though these two groups have spent most of their lives under radically different political systems, statistical analyses showed that they still maintained very similar types of self. How can such high degree of similarity be explained?

Indeed, some resemblance in people of the same age should be expected, and that due to the universal developmental patterns that are biologically determined, such as health deterioration (Westerhof, Dittmann-Kohli, & Katzko, 2000). Moreover, some authors have speculated that individuals living in times of social change may not necessarily become affected by this change as strongly as one would expect. For instance, developmental psychologists Martin Pinquart and Rainer K. Silbereisen (2004; see also Valsiner, 1997) argued that the individual experience of social change was mediated by changes in the individual's immediate developmental settings (microsystems) and by the interplay between them. Hence, if changes in the respective microsystems had not been large enough to pressure the individual to alter his or her old behaviour, the effects of social change on individual's everyday life would have been minimal. A study by Goodwin and colleagues (Goodwin et al., 2001) suggested this scenario to be plausible. Namely, when the authors asked participants from Russia, Georgia, and Hungary to list three changes that had occurred in their life as a direct result of the fall of Communism, only 52% of the participants were able to fulfil this task. Schwartz and Bardi (1997) concurred:

> It [value change] requires more than modifications of the political atmosphere and of prevailing ideological messages. It depends upon transformations of the actual life conditions to which people are exposed. Only as the opportunities and reward contingencies that people confront in daily life are changed, do we expect value priorities to shift. (p. 407)

An alternative explanation for the lack of differences between older Slovaks and older Danes in the current study is that the political systems these two groups of participants have lived in were not entirely different from each other. For example, Moodie and colleagues listed isolation of individuals, loneliness, and conformity as common features of totalitarian collectivism and democratic individualism (Moodie et al., 1997). Uichol Kim (U. Kim, 1994) mentioned a shift from ascribed to achieved relationships as characteristic of both communist and capitalist societies. Furthermore, some empirical support for these claims can be found in the analyses of societal-level data from the 1981-1998 World Values Survey (Inglehart & Baker, 2000). Here, one of the study's findings was that older generations in post-Communist countries endorsed values comparable to their matching generations in other societies. This surprising likeness was explained by two factors, namely drastic eradication of traditional values and religion during Communism as well as the initial rapid economic growth in former Communist countries. These societal trends, Inglehart and Baker hypothesized, had caused people in the Communist Europe to embrace at least some of the values normally promoted in advanced industrial societies, that is, values that are rather secular than traditional. All in all, while both of these explanations remain tentative, future research should test whether findings of the current study replicate with participants of similar age from other former Communist and non-Communist countries.

Another intriguing result of the current study is the pattern of independence and interdependence found in young Norwegians, Danes, and Slovaks. First, inspection of mean scores reported in Manuscript 2 indicates that across family, school and friend memories, Norwegian adolescents were more other-oriented than their Slovak counterparts. Since the other-self ratio variable counted references to others in concrete memory descriptions, it is possible to hypothesize that the variable is a better indicator of participants' relational rather than collective interdependence. On the other hand, mean scores in the expressed autonomy variable did not follow a clear pattern apart from staying somewhat elevated (cf. Wang, 2001) across memories as well as samples. Assuming that this particular variable signifies participants' independence, both Norwegian and Slovak sample then emerge as quite independent and thus comparable to the young Danes and Slovaks featured in Manuscript 3. Indeed, these participant groups provided predominantly private (i.e. independent) self-descriptions when responding to a shortened TST. On top of that, Slovaks also referred to their significant group memberships more often than Danes. Taken together, Manuscript 2 and Manuscript 3 demonstrate a high independence in young people from Scandinavia as well as post-Communist Europe, and specifically, independence that is combinable with both relational (young Norwegians) and collective (young Slovaks) interdependence (see section 5.1.). Moreover, the manuscripts point to the convergence of the two measures of self employed in the current study, namely self-descriptions and autobiographical memories, thereby corroborating findings of previous research (Wang, 2001, 2004).

All in all, it is possible to point out a number of theoretical, methodological, and empirical contributions of the current thesis. First, the thesis thoroughly reviewed the most prominent conceptualizations of self in cross-cultural psychology. Here, it specifically focused on disentangling the term interdependence, in line with recommendations by other authors. Second, the thesis critically examined the most common measures of self and appropriated some of them for comparative research in a European context. In this respect, the thesis demonstrated the utility of content analysis in general and of content analysis of autobiographical memories in particular. Finally, by investigating self in post-Communist Europe and Scandinavia, the current study generated novel data for the field of cross-cultural psychology and thereby extended findings of the field's previous research that had predominantly featured North American and Asian populations. The generational data from post-Communist Europe was particularly valuable, since it provided a unique opportunity to study the influence of sociopolitical change on self. Moreover, by being comparative on a considerably smaller scale than typically adopted in the literature, the study enabled a test of the field's central theoretical models outside their traditional scope of application, that is, East versus West. Taken together, it can be argued that the current thesis brought the field of cross-cultural psychology a bit closer to becoming universal (Berry et al., 2011; Triandis, 1996).

Nonetheless, the aforementioned contributions of the current thesis ought to be seen in light of the current study's limitations, which are discussed below.

## 5.3. EVALUATION OF THE STUDY AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

On the whole, the current study employed a non-experimental rather than experimental design, since it neither exercised control over its independent variables nor used random assignment of participants to different test conditions (Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2002). Instead, the study compared members of specific population groups, and that based on a priori defined characteristics of these groups, such as age or cultural background. Coolican (2009) referred to this type of studies as group difference studies. Understandably, group difference studies are quite common in cross-cultural research, which is why it can be more difficult to establish validity in this area of investigation as compared to others (Berry et al., 2011; Woolf & Hulsizer, 2011). Moreover, since the comparison of participant groups in the current study was carried out at one specific point in time, the study's design can also be characterized as cross-sectional. In general, cross-sectional designs do not allow causal inferences, thereby delimiting the studies' internal validity. However, some degree of internal validity can still be established in these studies, and that by controlling for potentially confounding variables, such as participants' demographic characteristics. For example, while participant groups in the current study were compared by age and cultural background, they were roughly equivalent in their distribution of gender and educational level.

Broadly speaking, external validity is "the validity of inferences about whether the cause-effect relationship holds over variation in persons, settings, treatment variables, and measurement variables" (Shadish et al., 2002, p. 38). In particular, external validity includes population validity, which refers to the extent to which study's results can be generalised from the study's sample to other people from the same population as well as to people in general (Coolican, 2009). In this respect, the samples used in the current study were not representative of their respective populations, as they came from specific regions in the three countries. Moreover, the samples were recruited by the means of non-probability-based sampling methods, namely convenience and snowball sampling (Coolican, 2009). These sampling methods then might have increased the possibility of sampling bias and thus decreased the population validity of the current study. To circumvent such limitations in future research, representative samples and probability sampling methods should be used instead.

External validity also encompasses ecological validity, which is concerned with the results' generalizability outside the specific research context (Berry et al., 2011). On the one hand, results of the current study can be argued to generalize to real-life situations, since the study's data was collected in a naturalistic setting as well as generated through tasks that presumably bear resemblance to daily life activities,

namely self-description and autobiographical memory recall. On the other hand, the studies' results might not be generalizable to other research contexts, as characteristics of the setting for data collection varied across participants in general and across young and old participants in particular (see section 3.2.). This variation could have similarly impeded the external reliability of the current study's findings, that is, their replicability. Future investigations carried out in more controlled settings are therefore recommended.

A particularly important issue in cross-cultural research is equivalence, which is "a state or condition of similarity in conceptual meaning and empirical method between cultures that allows comparisons to be meaningful" (Matsumoto & Yoo, 2006, p. 243). In this respect, it is possible to distinguish between conceptual and measurement equivalence (Berry et al., 2011). The former type can here be assumed without much difficulty, since the current study was conducted in rather similar cultural contexts, that is, within Europe. When it comes to the latter type, it is possible to argue that the open-ended format of the employed methods, their back-translation, and the careful elaboration of coding procedures contributed to the establishment of measurement equivalence.

Keeping the aforementioned limitations in mind, some recommendations for future research are proposed here. First, due to the strikingly similar levels of independence found across the study's subsamples, further theoretical and empirical disentanglement of this notion should be considered in future investigations. The same suggestion applies to the notions of relational and collective interdependence, as argued in section 5.1.3. and illustrated in Figure 9 above. Second, while the distinction between the two types of interdependence was instrumental in the current study, future comparative research on a similarly small scale should verify the general utility of this distinction. For instance, relational and collective interdependence could be compared in participants from urban versus rural areas or in participants with low versus high levels of formal education. Third, future research should test the replicability of the current study's findings, most notably the lack of differences between older Slovaks and older Danes, and that by comparing participants of similar age from other former Communist and non-Communist countries. Finally, the new coding procedure for content analysis of autobiographical memories should be applied in future investigations. In this respect, the convergence between the Twenty Statements Test and autobiographical memories coded according to this procedure should be tested as well.

# CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSION

One of the main aims of cross-cultural psychology has been to test the universality of psychological theories and concepts (Berry et al., 2011; U. Kim, 2000). This is in order to ensure that contemporary psychology moves away from being an exclusively Western psychology and that instead, its postulates and findings apply to humanity as a whole. In this respect, inclusion of novel data collected in understudied cultural areas has been crucial. The current thesis has generated such data, and that by having queried participants from post-Communist Europe and Scandinavia, respectively.

On the other hand, cross-cultural psychology has been dominated by large-scale, West versus East comparisons, encompassing cultures expected to be extremely different from one another. The more recent trend, however, has been to go beyond such comparisons and to instead test the field's central theories on a smaller scale, that is, within continents (Ciochină & Faria, 2009; Pouliasi & Verkuyten, 2012) or even within countries (Mamat et al., 2014). The current thesis has followed this trend, and that by comparing exclusively European populations.

At the same time, routine extension of the field's central theories, such as Markus and Kitayama's (1991) model of independent and interdependent self, outside their original scope of application has been disputed. Quite the contrary, different cultural groups have been shown to construct their selves in other ways than in the accordance with the Western notion of independence or the Eastern notion of interdependence (Kagitcibasi, 2007). Consequently, the utility of the existing measures of self has become questioned (Bresnahan et al., 2005; Levine et al., 2003). The current thesis has paid attention to these issues, and that by to adapting and further developing appropriate theoretical and methodological tools for use in the current study.

All in all, the current thesis can be seen as an important theoretical, methodological as well as empirical contribution to the field of cross-cultural psychology.

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# APPENDICES

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# Appendix A. Questionnaire

## Research on childhood memories and self-description

We would like to ask you to participate in this research by filling in the following tasks and answering the following questions according to the instructions.

It is important that you fill in the pages in the order they appear.

Write as much as you consider is enough for you to give an appropriate answer. In case the space set is not enough for you, use the back side of the paper.

After completion, give all the sheets you have received to the researcher.

**Thank you for your cooperation and help!**

## Earliest childhood memory

**Describe your earliest childhood memory, that is: what is the first, earliest thing (situation or event) that you remember from your childhood? Please describe as many details as you can, even if you maybe don't remember everything about the situation. Try to write only what you remember yourself and not something you have seen on photographs or what your family has told you about.**

1. **How old were you, when the given event happened?**

   **_____ years _____ months**

2. **How did you feel in this situation? (Please, circle one of the options on the scale from 1 – very bad to 7 – very good)**

| **Very bad** | | | | | | **Very good** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

3. **What specific emotions were you experiencing during this situation?**

   **----------**

   **----------**

   **----------**

4. **Have you ever thought of or talked about this memory? (Please, circle one of the options on the scale from 1 – never before to 7 – very often)**

| **Never before** | | | | | | **Very often** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

5. **In general: how often do you think of or talk about your early childhood memories? (Please, circle one of the options on the scale from 1 – never before to 7 – very often)**

| **Never** | | | | | | **Very often** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

## TST Questionnaire

**Please fill in the following ten empty lines with different sentences or words that describe you the best.**

I AM _____

I AM _____

I AM _____

I AM _____

I AM _____

I AM _____

I AM _____

I AM _____

I AM _____

I AM _____

## Personal Information

**Fill in the following information, please.**

**We are not asking for your name, your answers will stay anonymous.**

SEX_____

AGE_____

PLACE OF BIRTH_____

WHERE DO YOU LIVE NOW?_____

WHERE DO YOUR PARENTS LIVE?_____

NUMBER OF SIBLINGS_____

WHICH CHILD ARE YOU (oldest, youngest, in the middle, etc.)? _____

---

MARITAL STATUS (living with partner, single)_____

NUMBER OF CHILDREN (if any)_____

FIELD OF STUDY_____

RELIGION_____

**Thank you once again for your cooperation and help!**

# Appendix B. TST coding system, earlier version

| Category | Subcategory | Example |
|---|---|---|
| **Personal** | Personality types | I am an extrovert |
| | Hobbies, activities, preferences | I am a good cook |
| | Mood-related | I am joyful |
| | Skilled | I am creative |
| | Active | I am diligent |
| | Independent | I am self-confident |
| | Emotional | I am sensitive |
| | Responsible | I am reliable |
| | Goal-oriented | I am ambitious |
| | Passive | I am shy |
| **Relational explicit** | With people in general | I like to help others |
| | With specific people | I like company of people I know |
| | Other people say… | I am an all-rounder (at least my colleagues say that) |
| **Relational implicit** | Sociable | I am friendly |
| | Communicative | I am chatty |
| | Invested | I am caring |
| | Entertaining | I am funny |
| | Jealous | I am jealous |
| | Susceptible | I am susceptible |
| **Group small (family relationships)** | | I am a mother |
| **Group big** | Horoscope signs | I am a Leo |
| | Job positions | I am a teacher |
| | Human | I am a human |
| | References to society, authorities, institutions | I am a citizen |
| | Gender | I am a woman |

# Appendix C. Coding of other-self ratio

| Type of reference | Example | Decision |
|---|---|---|
| **Possessive** | I cut my forehead open | One reference to self |
| **All, together, alone** | I said goodbye to everybody | One reference to self, one reference to other |
| **Long description** | The neighbours'' older | One reference to other |
| **Multiple adjectives** | I was young and immature | One reference to self |
| **Infinitive** | I loved to be carried | One reference to self |
| **My, our** | My dog | One reference to self |
| | My dad | One reference to other |
| **Multiple verbs** | I was outside and was playing | One reference to self |
| | We were eating and drinking | Two references to self, two references to other |
| **Dependent clause** | The man who was marrying my parents | Two references to other |
| **Authority** | Police and ambulance arrived right away | Two references to other |
| **One of…** | One of my friends | One reference to other |
| **Indirect speech** | I told my mum she should hurry up | One reference to self, two references to other |
| **Category** | As a five-year old | No reference counted |
| **Family** | On vacation with family | One reference to self, one reference to other |
| **Indirect reference** | It was easy to breathe | No reference counted |
| **One ("man" in Danish)** | One could sit on it | One reference to other |
| **Adjective** | I, angry, kicked into it | One reference to self |

# Appendix D. Ethical approval

AALBORG UNIVERSITET

**Humanistisk Fakultets Etikudvalg (HREB)**
Tia Hansen, lektor, ph.d. (leder)
Ann Bygholm, professor mso, ph.d.
Tony Wigram, professor, ph.d.
Peter Øhrstrøm, professor, ph.d.

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Kontakt:
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Personlig henvendelse i rum 4.235 på Kroghstræde 3:
- mandage kl. 13-14
- torsdage kl. 10-11
Tlf. 9940 9078 (Tia Hansen eller Sara Mygind)

**HREB ansøgning nr. 201022**
**Betinget godkendelse**

Kære Radka Antalíková

Hermed bekræftes, at din ansøgning om etisk forhåndsgodkendelse af ph.d.-projektet "Individualism in self-construals of Danes and Slovaks"er betinget godkendt af Humanistisk Fakultets Etikudvalg ved Aalborg Universitet.

En betinget godkendelse betyder, at på baggrund af den indleverede information er din ansøgning godkendt og projektet kan igangsættes, *hvis*:

- Datatilsynets regler ikke kræver anmeldelse af denne type undersøgelser.
Hvis Datatilsynets regler kræver anmeldelse af denne type undersøgelser, skal tilladelse indhentes derfra og kopi af tilladelsen eftersendes til etikudvalget. Udvalget undersøger reglerne og videregiver informationen til dig.

Med de bedste hilsner

f. Humanistisk Fakultets Etikudvalg
Ann Bygholm

Dato: 31/5 -10 Underskrift: Ann Bygholm

# Appendix E. Informed consent form

AALBORG UNIVERSITY

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## INFORMED CONSENT FORM

**Please read the following information carefully and sign below to confirm that you understand them and give your consent to participate.**

**Project:** Research on childhood memories and self-descriptions
**Project type:** PhD project
**Researcher:** Radka Antalíková, cand. psych., PhD student
**Affiliation:** Department of Communication of Psychology, Aalborg University in Aalborg, Denmark.
**Supervisors:** Tia Hansen, PhD, Associate Professor at Aalborg University, Kristine Jensen de López, PhD, Associate Professors at Aalborg University
**Aim:** To look at how people describe themselves and what kind of childhood memories they have.
**Form:** To participate in this project, you will fill out a written questionnaire consisting of five pages. This should take about 15 to 20 minutes.
**Participation:** Your involvement in this project is completely voluntary, and you are free to withdraw consent at any time, and to withdraw any unprocessed data previously supplied without any negative consequences.
**Anonymity:** All the information you will provide by answering the questionnaire will remain confidential. Only this consent form contains your name, and it is will be separated from the questionnaire before data analysis begins.
**Outcomes:** The outcomes of this project will be presented in a PhD dissertation thesis and scientific article. Your identity as a participant will not be disclosed in these, as the results will be presented in a collective fashion.

**For the research team:**

_____ _____
Signature Date

**The participant:**

_____ _____
Signature Date

# SUMMARY

Taking the perspective of cross-cultural psychology, the current thesis sets out to investigate self in a European context. For this purpose, the thesis first thoroughly reviews the most prominent conceptualizations of self in cross-cultural psychology, specifically focusing on disentangling the term interdependence. Thereafter, the thesis critically examines the most common measures of self and appropriates some of these measures for use in the current empirical study. More concretely, the current study compares self-descriptions and autobiographical memories of individuals from post-Communist Europe and Scandinavia. The study's results exemplify participants' interdependence, whether in the form of their relational and group self-descriptions or their autobiographical memories recalled to different interpersonal cue words. On the whole, the current thesis contributes with novel data to the field of cross-cultural psychology, specifically highlighting the utility of autobiographical memories as measures of self.

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