



BETWEEN INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM AND COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY: DYNAMICS OF SOCIAL SOLIDARITY IN THE AGE OF INDIVIDUALISM

Rio Saputra, Didit Darmawan

Universitas Sunan Giri Surabaya, Universitas Mayjen Sungkono Mojokerto

correspondence: dr.diditdarmawan@gmail.com

Abstract

This study explores how individualism influences social solidarity using a qualitative literature review. The analysis addresses two main questions: how individualistic orientations shape the form and intensity of solidarity, and which factors strengthen or weaken this relationship. Findings show that individualism has shifted solidarity from ascriptive bonds to voluntary affiliations, from comprehensive life-wide solidarity to segmental ties limited to specific contexts, and from moral obligation to rational cost-benefit considerations. Urbanization and high mobility weaken place-based solidarity, while within families individualistic values prioritize autonomy and personal achievement over togetherness. Digital technology creates new forms of solidarity that transcend geographic boundaries but often remain superficial and reinforce self-orientation. However, the impact of individualism is not deterministic. Its effects are mediated by economic structures and social policies, educational quality, the role of religious communities and civil society organizations, technology design and usage, cultural traditions, demographic and family structures, crisis management, and economic inequality. Societies that balance individual freedom with collective responsibility through supportive institutions can sustain social solidarity despite increasing individualism.

Keywords: individualism, social solidarity, modern society, social change, social cohesion, social policy, collective values.

Introduction

Modern society is characterized by a fundamental shift in the way individuals perceive themselves and their relationships with others. Individualism, as an orientation that emphasizes personal autonomy, self-achievement, and individual interests over collective interests, has become a defining feature shaping contemporary social life. This shift does not occur in a vacuum; it is the product of economic, political, and cultural transformations that have taken place over the past several centuries. Modern capitalism encourages competition among individuals, emphasizes personal achievement as a measure of success, and places consumption as a means of self-expression. Liberal democracy emphasizes individual rights as the foundation of freedom, while secularization releases individuals from communal bonds based on religion. In everyday experience, a person is required to be independent, to make decisions about their own life path, and to be responsible for their own success. The freedom offered by modernity brings possibilities that have never existed before for individuals to pursue their aspirations, yet it also brings a burden that is not insignificant. When individuals become the center of the narrative of life, questions about responsibility toward others and connectedness with the community become increasingly difficult to answer (Bellini, 2017).

Changes in social structures further reinforce the individualistic orientation in modern society (Halman, 1996). Massive urbanization has transformed patterns of life from relatively homogeneous rural communities where people know each other into urban environments that are anonymous and fragmented. In urban settings, a person lives side by side with thousands of people they do not know, interacting functionally without deep personal ties. Neighbors are no longer like family members, neighborhood relationships become looser, and place-based solidarity gradually weakens. High geographic mobility also means that people no longer remain in one place for long periods, preventing them from building strong roots and social networks. The family as the smallest social unit has also changed, shifting from extended families consisting of several generations to smaller and more independent nuclear families. These structural changes create conditions in which individuals become increasingly disconnected from traditional social networks that once served as sources of support and meaning. In lived experience, many people feel

that they have many connections but few relationships that are truly meaningful, possessing broad freedom yet experiencing profound loneliness. This condition creates a paradox in which the material progress achieved by modern society goes hand in hand with the erosion of social solidarity that is increasingly concerning.

Digital technology, which should serve as a tool to strengthen connections among people, in practice instead deepens individualistic orientation in a paradoxical way (Kennedy, 2017). Social media allows a person to have a very broad network of friends, yet the interactions that occur are often shallow and presentational, where everyone displays the best version of themselves for public consumption. The algorithms underlying digital platforms are designed to maximize user engagement by presenting content that aligns with individual preferences, creating echo chambers in which a person is only exposed to views that already match their own. The experience of using social media is often colored by intense social comparison, where individuals compare their achievements and lifestyles with those of others, creating anxiety and the drive to continuously improve themselves. Interaction in the digital world also tends to reduce the intensity of empathy because rich non-verbal cues are lost, making it easier to ignore the feelings of others or even hurt them with words that would not be spoken in face-to-face interactions. Thus, technology that promises connectedness instead becomes a medium that reinforces focus on the self, on the image one wishes to present, and on how one is perceived by others, rather than building authentic and caring connections.

The impact of individualism on social solidarity is not only visible at the macro level but also permeates the most personal relationships in everyday life (Krause & Krause, 2019). Within families, an orientation toward personal achievement often shifts the values of togetherness and responsibility among family members. Children are encouraged to compete from an early age, pursuing academic and extracurricular achievements as investments for their own future, while time for family togetherness becomes increasingly limited. In friendships, there has been a shift from long-lasting solidarity toward relationships that are more transactional and oriented toward reciprocal benefits. When someone moves to another city or changes jobs, old relationships are often severed without serious efforts to maintain them. Within neighborhood communities, interactions are

increasingly limited to brief greetings in the morning, while informal gatherings that once served as spaces for mutual cooperation are becoming increasingly rare. Life in modern urban environments is often marked by extraordinary busyness, where everyone is too occupied with their own affairs to simply ask about a neighbor's well-being or help someone who is experiencing difficulty. The accumulation of these changes in everyday relationships creates a society that is paradoxically becoming materially richer yet relationally poorer.

The emergence of an individualistic orientation does not mean the total disappearance of social solidarity, but rather a transformation in its forms and manifestations. Solidarity in modern society is no longer primarily based on primordial bonds such as family, ethnicity, or religion, but rather on choices and deliberate affiliations. Individuals can build solidarity with people who share similar interests or values, even if they do not have geographical or kinship ties. Communities based on hobbies, activism, or particular identities become new spaces where solidarity is formed. However, solidarity based on choice has different characteristics from traditional solidarity. It tends to be more fluid, easier to form and easier to dissolve. It also tends to be more exclusive, as it only includes those who share certain similarities, while those who are different are ignored. In the experiences of many people, modern solidarity is often sectoral in nature, where individuals care about their own group but remain indifferent to those outside the group. This condition creates social fragmentation, where society is divided into narrow pockets of solidarity, while solidarity that transcends group boundaries becomes increasingly difficult to build. The question of how to build inclusive solidarity within an increasingly individualistic society becomes a major challenge faced by contemporary societies.

In an increasingly individualistic society, a fundamental question arises regarding how social solidarity can be maintained when the values underlying human relationships shift from collective responsibility toward the fulfillment of personal interests. Social solidarity requires individuals to be willing to sacrifice part of their own interests for the common good, to care for others without expecting equivalent rewards, and to feel connected with others even when there is no direct benefit gained. These values become increasingly difficult to sustain when the dominant orientation in

society emphasizes personal achievement, efficiency, and benefits that can be measured quantitatively. When individuals are constantly reminded that they must be the best, must maximize their own potential, and must be responsible for their own success, the question of why they should care about others who may not contribute anything to their personal achievements becomes increasingly difficult to answer. Furthermore, when the social system gives greater rewards to those who focus on themselves compared to those who sacrifice for others, a selection process occurs in which individualistic values become increasingly dominant while collective values become increasingly marginalized. This problem is not only theoretical but also has very real practical implications: when social solidarity weakens, society loses the ability to address collective problems that require cooperation and shared sacrifice, ranging from poverty and inequality to climate change and pandemics.

Another issue that is no less complex relates to the tension between individual freedom, which has become a central value in modern society, and the need for social solidarity that requires certain limitations on individual freedom. Individualism emphasizes the right of each person to determine their own life path, to pursue happiness in their own way, and to be free from external interference. Social solidarity, on the other hand, demands shared obligations that limit individual freedom within certain boundaries. Every society must find a balance between individual freedom and collective responsibility, yet this balance becomes increasingly difficult to achieve when individualistic orientations grow stronger. In contemporary public debates, this tension appears in various issues, ranging from vaccination policies that question the boundary between the individual freedom to choose and the collective responsibility to protect public health, to economic redistribution policies that question the extent to which someone is obliged to share the results of their labor with others. When individualistic orientations dominate, arguments emphasizing personal freedom tend to be more easily accepted than arguments emphasizing collective responsibility. As a result, policies that require shared sacrifice become difficult to implement, while those who are most vulnerable in society find it increasingly difficult to obtain protection and support. Without the ability to manage this tension effectively, societies risk losing the social cohesion that forms the foundation for healthy collective life.

The study of individualism and its impact on social solidarity becomes highly relevant amid the multidimensional crises currently faced by global society. Various social studies show that changes in global conditions often influence how individuals perceive the relationship between personal interests and collective interests in everyday life (Issalillah, 2021; Khayru, 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic that struck the world a few years ago became a very real test of the extent to which societies are willing to set aside individual interests for the common good. In many parts of the world, responses to the pandemic were largely determined by the strength of social solidarity within society: societies with strong solidarity tended to comply more readily with policies requiring individual sacrifice for collective safety, while societies with strong individualistic orientations experienced difficulties coordinating collective responses. The pandemic situation also revealed how changes in work patterns, consumption behavior, and discipline in adhering to shared regulations became important parts of society's efforts to confront crises collectively (Mendrika et al., 2021; Hariani et al., 2021). The increasingly urgent climate crisis also demands collective behavioral changes that require individuals to be willing to modify lifestyles that were previously considered personal rights. Without strong social solidarity, efforts to address these crises will continue to be hindered by conflicts between individual interests and collective interests. A systematic study of how individualism influences social solidarity is therefore important to understand why some societies are more capable of responding to collective crises than others, and to formulate strategies for strengthening solidarity amid increasing pressures of individualism.

The importance of this review is also driven by growing concerns about increasing loneliness and social isolation in modern society. Various studies show that although societies have become more materially prosperous, levels of loneliness and life satisfaction in many countries show worrying trends. People have more digital connections yet feel more isolated, possess greater freedom yet feel less meaningful, and have more choices yet experience greater anxiety. This phenomenon cannot be separated from the erosion of social solidarity that occurs alongside increasing individualism. When social bonds that once served as sources of meaning and support weaken, individuals are left alone to face the pressures and uncertainties of life. This condition not only affects individual mental health but also

impacts overall social cohesion. Societies characterized by individual isolation tend to be more vulnerable to polarization, conflict, and social disintegration. Understanding the relationship between individualism and social solidarity becomes key to formulating policies and interventions that can strengthen social networks and rebuild a sense of togetherness in increasingly individualistic societies.

This study aims to systematically analyze the relationship between the phenomenon of individualism and social solidarity in modern society, focusing on two main dimensions: how individualistic orientation influences the form and intensity of social solidarity, and what factors strengthen or weaken this relationship within the context of contemporary society. The theoretical contribution of this research is to formulate a conceptual framework that maps the transmission mechanisms through which individualistic orientations contribute to the erosion of social solidarity, as well as to identify mediating factors such as social structure, public policy, digital technology, and cultural values that may strengthen or weaken this relationship. Practically, the results of this study are expected to provide better understanding for policymakers, educators, and community development practitioners regarding how to design interventions that can strengthen social solidarity amid increasing pressures of individualism, as well as how to build a balance between respect for individual freedom and the maintenance of collective responsibility necessary for healthy shared living.

Method

This study uses a library research design with a qualitative approach aimed at exploring and synthesizing various theoretical perspectives and empirical findings regarding the relationship between individualism and social solidarity in modern society. The selection of this method is based on the characteristics of the topic, which require an exploration of concepts that have developed within sociology, social psychology, and political philosophy. As explained by Creswell (2009), qualitative research in the form of library studies allows researchers to understand social phenomena through the interpretation of existing texts without having to conduct primary data collection. In this study, the main data sources consist of academic books, peer-reviewed journal articles, and research reports

discussing individualism, social solidarity, social change, and modern society. The data collection process was conducted through a systematic search of academic databases using combinations of relevant keywords. Each identified source was then evaluated for credibility by assessing the reputation of the publisher, the methodology used, and the consistency of the arguments with findings from other reputable sources. This approach enables the researcher to build a comprehensive understanding of how individualism reshapes social solidarity.

Data analysis in this study uses a thematic analysis approach developed by Boyatzis (1998), which enables researchers to identify recurring patterns in the literature and organize them into meaningful themes. The analysis process begins with open coding of all collected literature materials, followed by grouping codes with similar meanings into more abstract categories, and concludes with the formulation of major themes that address the research questions. This approach allows the researcher not merely to summarize what has been written by other authors but also to conduct a critical synthesis that generates new insights into the dynamics of individualism and social solidarity. To maintain the validity of the findings, this study applies a source triangulation strategy by comparing findings from literature with diverse disciplinary backgrounds, theoretical traditions, and geographical contexts. As emphasized by Denzin and Lincoln (2005), triangulation in qualitative research functions to enhance the credibility of findings by considering multiple perspectives that may differ. In addition, the researcher explores literature presenting differing or even conflicting perspectives to ensure that the conclusions drawn are not biased due to overly narrow source selection. The entire analysis process is documented systematically so that each step can be traced by other researchers who wish to verify or replicate the study.

Result and Discussion

The Influence of Individualistic Orientation on the Form and Intensity of Social Solidarity

The orientation of individualism in modern society has fundamentally transformed the form of social solidarity from one based on ascriptive ties to one based on choice and deliberate affiliation. In traditional societies, solidarity was primarily formed through ties that were not chosen: family,

clan, village community, or ethnic group. A person was born into these networks of solidarity and possessed inherent obligations toward their members, regardless of whether they liked them or not. Individualism introduced change by emphasizing that social relationships should be based on the free choice of individuals rather than inherited obligations. As a result, modern solidarity tends to take the form of affinity communities, where people gather because of shared interests, values, or goals. In many modern social studies, it is explained that these changes in social relationships are also related to the growing development of civil society and the increasing participation of individuals in various forms of social activities within society (Rojak et al., 2021). Communities based on hobbies, social movements, or identity groups have become the primary arenas of contemporary solidarity. In everyday life, individuals can simultaneously belong to multiple communities: a community of fans of a particular music genre, an environmental activist community, professional communities, and so forth. This phenomenon also shows that social networks in modern society are increasingly formed based on shared interests and attractions among the individuals involved in them (Rejeki, 2021). Each community provides a meaningful sense of belonging and solidarity, yet this solidarity is fluid and easily changes (Naletova & Zhulikova, 2016). When interests shift or goals are achieved, solidarity can easily fade. This fluid nature gives individuals the freedom to explore various affiliations, yet it also reduces the stability and depth of solidarity that can be built.

The intensity of social solidarity has also undergone significant change under the influence of individualism. Solidarity in traditional societies tends to be total, encompassing nearly all aspects of a person's life. A member of a village community not only shares in economic activities but also participates in religious rituals, child-rearing, and many other aspects of life. Modern solidarity, by contrast, tends to be segmental, covering only specific aspects of life. An individual may have strong solidarity with coworkers in a professional context but may not maintain the same relationship outside the workplace. This condition can also be understood through the perspective of organizational behavior, which explains that relationships among individuals in an environment are often formed based on the interests and roles performed by each party (Darmawan, 2013). Solidarity with members of a hobby community may be very intense during shared activities but may

not extend to other aspects of life. This segmentation allows individuals to manage various affiliations without being fully bound to a single group, yet it also means that no single community provides comprehensive support across all aspects of life. The experience of many people in modern society is to have many different social “circles,” each with its own boundaries and rules, but not to have a single community that becomes the center of their lives. As a result, when facing crises that require comprehensive support, individuals often feel that there is no community they can fully rely on.

Individualism also changes the mechanisms underlying social solidarity, shifting from moral obligation to rational choice. In traditional societies, someone helps a neighbor not because they calculate the benefits they will gain, but because they feel bound by moral obligations that do not need to be questioned. Social norms, religion, and traditions provide a strong foundation for acts of solidarity, and violations of these obligations carry serious social consequences (Althammer, 2019). In modern individualistic societies, acts of solidarity tend to be based on rational considerations of costs and benefits. Individuals help others if they feel that the action is not too burdensome, or if they expect that the help will be reciprocated in the future. Solidarity becomes more contractual than communal, more based on explicit agreements than implicit bonds. Experiences in modern societies show that solidarity based on moral obligation becomes increasingly difficult to sustain when individualistic values dominate. People tend to calculate what they gain from a relationship before deciding to invest in it. As a result, those who cannot provide equivalent returns, such as the poor, the sick, or the elderly, find it increasingly difficult to obtain social support because there is no clear benefit for those who help them.

One of the most evident influences of individualism on social solidarity is the weakening of place-based solidarity. In traditional societies, neighbors were the primary source of social support in emergency situations, from birth to death. Mutual cooperation in building houses, helping with harvests, or caring for sick community members were common practices. Urbanization and high mobility have transformed this landscape. Rapid urbanization often brings changes in social structures and can create social disparities within urban environments (Mardikaningsih, 2021; Fauzi, 2021). In modern urban environments, people often do not know their neighbors

well, and interactions are limited to brief greetings or light conversations. When crises occur, such as illness or job loss, neighbors no longer come to help. Life in large cities is often characterized by social isolation amid crowds, where a person may live for years in an apartment without ever truly knowing the person living next door. The weakening of place-based solidarity not only reduces the practical support available to individuals but also removes the sense of belonging and attachment to a place that provides an important source of meaning in human life. Without roots in local communities, individuals become more mobile but also more vulnerable to feelings of loss and alienation.

Individualism also influences solidarity within more intimate spheres such as the family. Modern families tend to be smaller, more mobile, and more focused on the nuclear unit rather than the extended family. Older family members often live separately, and relationships with more distant relatives become increasingly loose. Individualistic values also influence dynamics within the nuclear family, where autonomy and personal achievement become priorities that often conflict with the collective needs of the family. Changes in roles within modern families can also be seen in the increasing involvement of family members, including women, in household decision-making as well as in various consumption choices that are more oriented toward sustainability values (Halizah & Nuraini, 2021). Children are encouraged to pursue their own dreams, even if it means moving far away from their parents. Parents feel that they should not burden their children with caregiving needs in old age. Married couples may focus more on fulfilling their individual needs rather than building a mutually supportive shared life. In the experience of many modern families, togetherness becomes increasingly difficult to achieve because each member has different schedules and priorities. Eating together, which once served as an important ritual strengthening family bonds, is becoming increasingly rare. As a result, the family which should be the most fundamental source of solidarity becomes an arena where individualistic values are most strongly manifested, weakening the supportive function that has long characterized the family institution.

The development of digital technology has strengthened the influence of individualism on social solidarity in a paradoxical way. On the one hand, social media enables the formation of new solidarities that transcend

geographical boundaries (Rippe, 1998). Individuals can find communities that truly understand their interests or experiences, which may not be found in their physical residential environment. These technological developments and social changes are also often associated with the emergence of the concept of digital society, which requires people to adapt to increasingly dynamic patterns of interaction (Darmawan et al., 2021). This digital solidarity can become a valuable source of support for those who are marginalized or who have rare interests. On the other hand, digital interactions tend to strengthen self-centeredness. Social media platforms are designed to place the user's self at the center: what I think, what I feel, what I do. Every post is a statement about the self, and the responses received become a measure of self-worth. The algorithms underlying these platforms also create echo chambers where users are primarily exposed to content that aligns with their preferences, reducing exposure to different perspectives that are essential for building empathy and cross-difference solidarity. In the experience of using social media, many people feel that they have many connections but few truly deep relationships. Digital solidarity tends to be more superficial, easier to break, and more oriented toward self-presentation rather than genuine concern for others.

Changes in economic structures also play an important role in shaping the influence of individualism on social solidarity. The neoliberal economy, with its emphasis on competition, flexibility, and individual responsibility, has created conditions in which collective solidarity becomes increasingly difficult to maintain (Lebedeva, 2020). Changes in the modern world of work also indicate that the balance between work life and personal life has become a challenge for various groups of workers in society (Eddine & Darmawan, 2021). Increasingly unstable employment, with short-term contracts and no guarantees, makes it difficult for workers to build long-term solidarity with colleagues. Social security systems that increasingly emphasize individual responsibility, by encouraging personal savings and private insurance, reduce the sense that we share collective obligations toward those who are less fortunate. In the experience of modern workers, competition with colleagues is often more prominent than solidarity among them. Companies promote work cultures that emphasize individual achievement, with rewards based on personal performance, so cooperation and mutual assistance become less valued. As a result, the workplace which

should be one of the important arenas for the formation of social solidarity becomes a space where individualistic values are most strongly manifested, strengthening self-oriented attitudes and weakening concern for others.

Although individualism tends to weaken traditional forms of solidarity, it also opens possibilities for new forms of solidarity that are more inclusive and more compatible with the complexity of modern society. Solidarity based on universal values, such as commitment to social justice, human rights, or environmental protection, can transcend primordial boundaries that often become sources of exclusion. Several studies explain that efforts to maintain social and environmental sustainability require community involvement as well as integration between local values and modern scientific approaches (Nurmalasari & Nuraini, 2021). Transnational social movements led by young people demonstrate that strong solidarity can be built upon awareness of shared interests that transcend national, religious, or ethnic boundaries (Maryani, 2018). This is also related to the importance of public policies that are capable of balancing economic, social, and environmental interests so that social solidarity can be maintained in the long term (Mardikaningsih & Hariani, 2021).

The influence of individualism on social solidarity is not deterministic but largely depends on how societies respond to the challenges it creates. Individualism can lead to the erosion of solidarity, but it can also become a foundation for new forms of solidarity that are more suitable for the complexities of modernity. In many social contexts, weak systems of protection and social support can cause vulnerable groups to become increasingly marginalized in social life (Aidan Bin Abdullah, 2021). The key question is whether societies can develop institutions and practices that allow individuals to experience connectedness with others without having to sacrifice the autonomy they value. Societies that are able to create a balance between respect for individual freedom and the maintenance of collective responsibility tend to have healthier forms of solidarity. Experiences from various countries show that strong social solidarity does not necessarily require the sacrifice of individualism but can instead emerge from the ability to balance the two. Scandinavian societies, for example, are known to have high levels of individualism in terms of personal freedom, yet they also maintain strong social solidarity through comprehensive welfare systems and high levels of social trust. This balance

demonstrates that individualism and solidarity do not have to be diametrically opposed but can reinforce one another in appropriate configurations. Understanding how such balance can be achieved remains a central challenge for contemporary societies grappling with increasing pressures of individualism.

Factors that Strengthen or Weaken the Relationship between Individualism and Social Solidarity

One of the most significant factors that strengthens the relationship between individualism and the erosion of social solidarity is the neoliberal economic structure that emphasizes competition and individual responsibility. In an economic system dominated by market logic, a person's value is measured by productivity and the ability to compete. Individuals who are unable to compete are considered failures, not because of systemic failure but because of personal failure. This perspective creates an environment in which solidarity becomes irrational: why help those who cannot compete if they are supposed to be responsible for their own failure? Workers' experiences in the contemporary economy are often marked by insecurity that encourages them to focus on themselves. Short-term work contracts, stagnant wages, and the threat of layoffs create conditions in which solidarity with coworkers becomes a risk because it may disrupt individual productivity. Conversely, in societies with strong welfare systems and adequate worker protections, individualism does not necessarily lead to the erosion of solidarity because individuals feel that they are part of a mutually supportive system. When someone knows that if they fall into poverty or illness the system will protect them, they are more likely to care about others. Thus, economic structures and social policies function as highly determining factors in whether individualism leads to weakened solidarity or can instead be balanced by institutional solidarity (Harvey, 2007; Piketty, 2014; Standing, 2011).

The role of the state and public policy is a key factor that can strengthen or weaken the relationship between individualism and social solidarity. The state has the capacity to create institutional solidarity through social security systems, public services, and redistributive policies. In countries with comprehensive welfare systems, solidarity does not depend solely on the goodwill of individuals but is institutionalized through policies

that ensure every citizen receives basic protection (Achterberg et al., 2013). Experiences in Scandinavian countries show that high levels of individualism in terms of personal freedom can coexist with strong social solidarity because of robust safety nets. Conversely, when the state withdraws from social responsibility, as has occurred in many countries implementing neoliberal policies, the burden of solidarity is entirely borne by individuals and communities. Under such conditions, individualism tends to lead to the erosion of solidarity because individuals feel that they themselves are responsible for their own welfare, and helping others means reducing the resources available for themselves. Public policies can also strengthen solidarity by providing public spaces that allow interaction across groups, such as parks, libraries, community centers, and sports facilities. Where public spaces are available and well maintained, opportunities to meet and interact with people from different backgrounds increase, which in turn strengthens social solidarity (Esping-Andersen, 1999; Rothstein & Uslaner, 2005; Kumlin & Rothstein, 2005).

The quality of and access to education also become important factors influencing the relationship between individualism and social solidarity. Education that emphasizes only academic achievement and competition can strengthen individualistic orientations and weaken solidarity. Educational systems that measure success solely through exam scores, class rankings, and individual achievements teach students that the main goal is to be the best, to outperform others, and that failure is a personal fault. Students' experiences in such systems are often marked by anxiety and unhealthy competition, where classmates are seen as rivals rather than learning partners. Conversely, education that emphasizes cooperation, empathy, and social responsibility can strengthen solidarity even amid rising individualism. Schools that implement collaborative learning, teach social and emotional skills, and provide opportunities for students to engage in community service activities create a generation better prepared to build solidarity. Curricula that include civic education, which teaches about rights and responsibilities as members of society, are also important for building an understanding that individual freedom does not mean being detached from collective responsibility. Thus, how education is designed and implemented becomes a crucial factor in determining whether younger generations will grow up with an

individualistic orientation that erodes solidarity, or with a balance between appreciation of personal autonomy and commitment to the common good (Johnson & Johnson, 2009; Biesta, 2011).

The role of religious communities and civil society organizations in moderating the relationship between individualism and social solidarity cannot be ignored. In increasingly individualistic societies, religious communities often become one of the remaining institutions that actively teach and practice the values of solidarity. Through shared rituals, social activities, and support networks, religious communities provide spaces where individuals can experience connectedness with others beyond personal interests (Hayward, 2012). The experience of being part of a religious community often involves practices that directly challenge the logic of individualism: sharing with those who are less fortunate, caring for members who are ill, and providing emotional support in difficult times. Other civil society organizations, such as cooperatives, labor unions, and volunteer organizations, also play an important role in maintaining solidarity. They provide structures in which individuals can work together to achieve shared goals, experience that collective action is more effective than individual efforts, and develop a sense of belonging that transcends personal interests. However, the challenge is that in many societies, participation in these organizations is declining. People are increasingly less likely to join religious organizations, labor unions, or volunteer groups, choosing instead to engage in activities that are more individual or require only minimal commitment. The decline in participation in these organizations weakens one of the important mechanisms that has long served as a counterbalance to individualistic tendencies in society (Putnam, 2000; Wuthnow, 2002; Paxton, 2002).

Digital technology and social media have a complex dual role in moderating the relationship between individualism and social solidarity (Cladis, 2017). On one hand, digital platforms enable the formation of new forms of solidarity that transcend geographical boundaries. Someone with a rare interest or a marginalized identity can find a supportive community that might not exist in their physical environment. This digital solidarity can become a very meaningful source of support, especially for those who feel isolated in real life. In contemporary social movements, social media has proven to be a powerful tool for mobilizing cross-border solidarity, allowing

people from different parts of the world to unite in shared struggles. On the other hand, the algorithms underlying digital platforms tend to reinforce individualism by placing the user at the center, creating echo chambers that reduce exposure to different perspectives, and encouraging intense social comparison that strengthens self-focus. The experience of using social media is often spent more on self-presentation than on genuinely connecting with others. Platform designs that prioritize engagement also tend to promote provocative and polarizing content, which can weaken solidarity across differences. Thus, whether digital technology strengthens or weakens solidarity largely depends on how the technology is designed, regulated, and used. Interventions that encourage more mindful technology use, as well as regulations that compel platforms to consider social impacts alongside commercial profits, become important factors in determining the direction of digital technology's influence on social solidarity (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012; Barberá et al., 2015; Cinelli et al., 2021).

Culture and collectively inherited values also play an important role in moderating the relationship between individualism and social solidarity (Prainsack, 2020). Societies with strong collectivist traditions tend to have greater resilience against the erosion of solidarity caused by individualism. Values such as mutual cooperation, kinship, and social responsibility that have been internalized from an early age can act as a counterbalance to the increasing individualistic orientation. Experiences in Asian societies, for example, show that although individualism increases alongside modernization and urbanization, collectivist values persist and continue to influence social behavior. The family remains a primary source of support, and obligations toward parents and relatives are still considered important. However, cultural values are not static; they can change over time and may be eroded by the pressures of modernization if they are not carefully maintained and transmitted. Younger generations who grow up with intense global exposure may have orientations different from those of previous generations. Therefore, efforts to preserve and revitalize the values of solidarity within local cultures become important factors in building resilience against the erosion of solidarity caused by individualism. This does not mean rigidly preserving traditional values that may no longer be relevant to contemporary conditions, but rather reinterpreting them within modern contexts, finding new forms that fit the needs of the times while maintaining

the essence of solidarity that lies at the core of these values (Triandis, 1995; Oyserman et al., 2002; Brewer & Chen, 2007).

Demographic factors and family structure also influence how individualism affects social solidarity. Declining birth rates, increasing numbers of single-person households, and the decreasing proportion of extended families have consequences for the availability of social support networks. In societies with many extended families and children living close to their parents, family solidarity can become a strong barrier against the erosion of broader solidarity. Conversely, in societies with high levels of individualization, where young adults live alone and parents live separately from their children, individuals are more vulnerable to social isolation. The experience of living alone in large cities, without strong family networks, often means that when a crisis occurs, there is no one to rely on. However, the decline of family solidarity does not always mean the decline of solidarity as a whole; it can be replaced by solidarity based on choice that is built with friends, colleagues, or communities consciously chosen. In modern societies, the phenomenon of “chosen families,” where a group of close friends support each other like family, is becoming increasingly common. The ability to build these alternative forms of solidarity becomes an important factor in determining whether individuals who are detached from traditional family solidarity will still have adequate support networks. Thus, family structure and demography are not absolutely determining factors, but rather interact with other factors such as the ability of individuals to build and maintain alternative social networks (Bianchi & Milkie, 2010; Jamieson et al., 2006; Klinenberg, 2016).

Collective crises and threats, such as pandemics, natural disasters, or economic crises, can become factors that strengthen social solidarity amid rising individualism (Kyung-Sup, 2014). The experience of facing a shared threat often makes individuals realize that they cannot rely entirely on themselves, and that collective cooperation is necessary for survival. During the COVID-19 pandemic, for example, many societies experienced a significant increase in solidarity, with neighbors helping one another, communities organizing aid for vulnerable groups, and people willing to sacrifice personal freedoms for the common good. However, responses to crises are not always positive. In the same situations, individualism can also increase, with people focusing more on saving themselves and their families,

and distrust toward others rising. Factors such as effective leadership, clear communication, and the presence of trusted institutions strongly determine whether a crisis will strengthen or weaken solidarity. When leaders are able to convey the message that everyone is in the same situation and can only get through it together, solidarity tends to increase. When the message instead emphasizes individual responsibility and blames certain groups, solidarity tends to weaken. Thus, how crises are managed and communicated becomes an important factor influencing their impact on social solidarity (Drury et al., 2021; Bartscher et al., 2021).

Economic inequality and social disparities are factors that consistently weaken social solidarity and reinforce the negative impacts of individualism. In societies with high inequality, wealthy groups tend to live separately from poorer groups, not only physically but also socially. They attend different schools, shop in different places, use different health services, and have little contact with those of different social status. This lack of cross-class interaction reduces empathy and understanding of the living conditions of other groups. Wealthy groups may view poverty as the result of laziness or personal failure rather than the outcome of unjust structures. Poorer groups may feel that the system does not support them and that they have no obligation to care for others because no one cares about them. The experience of living in highly unequal societies is often marked by distrust and hostility between classes. Conversely, societies with lower levels of inequality tend to have stronger solidarity because people from different backgrounds interact more frequently, and there is a shared understanding that the well-being of each person is connected to the well-being of all. Thus, policies that reduce economic inequality are important not only for distributive justice but also for maintaining social solidarity, which forms the foundation of collective life (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009; Uslander, 2012; Lancee & Van de Werfhorst, 2012).

Ultimately, the factors that strengthen or weaken the relationship between individualism and social solidarity are interconnected within a complex system. No single factor determines the outcome; rather, what occurs is the interaction among economic structures, public policies, education, technology, culture, demography, and crisis management. Societies that succeed in maintaining social solidarity amid increasing individualism are those that are able to manage the interaction of these factors in a balanced

way. They have adequate welfare systems so individuals feel secure and do not need to rely solely on themselves. They have educational systems that emphasize cooperation and social responsibility, not merely competition. They have public spaces that enable interaction across groups. They possess trusted institutions that can mobilize solidarity in times of crisis. They maintain cultures that value togetherness and concern for others, which are transmitted and revitalized across generations. Conversely, societies that are unable to manage these factors tend to experience an increasing erosion of solidarity alongside rising individualism. Understanding this complex interaction is important for designing effective interventions to strengthen social solidarity. Approaches that focus only on one factor, for example only on education or only on economic policy, may not be sufficient. A comprehensive approach is required, recognizing that social solidarity is the product of many interrelated factors, and strengthening it requires efforts across multiple fields simultaneously and in a coordinated manner (Delhey & Newton, 2005; Stjerbo, 2009; Van Oorschot, 2006).

Conclusion

The orientation toward individualism in modern society has fundamentally transformed the form and intensity of social solidarity. Solidarity has shifted from being based on ascriptive ties that are not chosen to solidarity based on choice and deliberate affiliation, from a total form that encompasses all aspects of life to a segmental one limited to specific contexts, and from one grounded in moral obligation to a rational choice that considers costs and benefits. Place-based solidarity has weakened significantly due to urbanization and high mobility, while within families individualistic values have shifted priorities from togetherness toward autonomy and personal achievement. Digital technology creates new forms of solidarity that transcend geographical boundaries but tend to be shallow and reinforce self-focus. However, the influence of individualism is not deterministic; it is strongly mediated by factors such as economic structures and social policies, the quality of education, the role of religious communities and civil society organizations, the design and use of digital technology, inherited cultural values, demographic and family structures, the management of collective crises, and levels of economic inequality. Societies that successfully maintain social solidarity amid increasing individualism are those that are able to

balance appreciation for individual freedom with the maintenance of collective responsibility through supportive institutions and practices, demonstrating that individualism and solidarity do not necessarily have to be diametrically opposed.

Theoretically, the findings of this study enrich the understanding of the relationship between individualism and social solidarity by demonstrating that the relationship is neither linear nor deterministic, but rather strongly mediated by various structural, cultural, and institutional factors. This implication shifts the focus of analysis from normative debates about whether individualism is good or bad for solidarity toward an understanding of the conditions under which individualism has negative or positive effects on solidarity in different contexts. Practically, these findings provide direction for the development of policies and interventions that can strengthen social solidarity amid the growing pressures of individualism. For policymakers, it is important to design adequate social security systems, provide public spaces that allow interaction across groups, and reduce economic inequality that becomes a major source of solidarity erosion. For educators, it is important to develop curricula that emphasize cooperation, empathy, and social responsibility alongside academic achievement. For technology developers, it is important to design digital platforms that not only maximize engagement but also consider their impact on social cohesion. For society at large, it is important to revitalize inherited values of solidarity and create new spaces for meaningful connectedness in increasingly individualistic societies.

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