

Individualism and collectivism paper



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of the of the of the Individualism and Collectivism. Individualism is a doctrine according to which society is an artificial device, whose existence is only for the sake of its members as individuals, and properly judged only according to criteria established by them as individuals. The English Philosopher Thomas Hobbs and the British Economist Adam Smith proclaimed this tenet. In their opinion the power of society is limited by the inalienable, individual rights of man. (Individualism). On the other hand collectivism refers to a political or economic system in which the means of production and the distribution of goods and services are vested in the state (Collectivism). Individualism represents a society in which individual relations are not strong and in which people are expected to fend for themselves. Individualism is the opposite of collectivism and taken together they form one of the dimensions of national cultures. Collectivism on the other hand connotes a form of society in which people from their childhood itself are integrated into strong cohesive groups; that protect them for the rest of their life in return for their unquestioning loyalty.

Individualistic cultures like those obtaining in the USA and France exhibit a greater emphasis on individual goals and people mainly on themselves as individuals. People in individualistic cultures emphasize their successes and achievements in their career or in the acquisition of wealth. In the USA the spirit of competitiveness is at its zenith.

Collectivistic cultures lay a greater emphasis on groups. In such cultures harmony and loyalty are deemed to be paramount (Individualism versus Collectivism). " Collectivism requires self - sacrifice, the subordination of one's interests to those of others" (Letters of Ayn Rand). The main consequence of individualism on self identity is the engendering of

independence and individual achievement; promotion of self expression, individual thinking and personal choice. The main attributes of individualism are egalitarianism in relationships and individual ownership of property. Collectivism brings about inter dependence, group success, adherence to norms, respect for authority and group consensus. It constitutes a system which is characterized by stability and hierarchy. It encourages an attitude of service to others and it is associated with shared property and group ownership.

In individualistic societies the parents inculcate the attributes of social and economic independence in their offspring with emphasis on self reliance. In contrast to this in collectivistic societies the emphasis is on group behaviour and a somewhat selfless service to the members of group or society and the children are expected to be actuated by these considerations (Trumbull, Rothstein-Fisch, and Greenfield, 2000).

Korean immigrants and American Indians exhibit collective values which are at a variance with the individualistic US culture. Asian - collectivist cultures like that found in China, view others with less collectivistic philosophy as selfish and unsupportive. Collectivistic cultures lay great emphasis on groups. Harmony and loyalty within a company are essential and are to be maintained at all times, further, confrontation in any form is to be avoided and dissent cannot be expressed in public. In collectivistic cultures there can be no direct confrontation.

Euphemism is resorted to in order to express a disagreement or negative statement.

This is so because disagreement is tantamount to destroying the harmony in the group. In conclusion we can surmise that in an individualistic society

interpersonal relationships are very weak and their main focus is on personal development and self enhancement. In collectivistic societies the social relationships are stronger and the focus is on the betterment of the group rather than that of the individual (Individualism versus Collectivism).

Works Cited

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