

Title: Effect of Context on the Expression of Values in Small Groups

Subject Area: intercultural relations

Keywords: individualism collectivism, values, context, small groups

Authors:

Natasha Koustova, University of Windsor, koustov@uwindsor.ca

Twiladawn Stonefish, University of Windsor, rutherft@uwindsor.ca

Dr. Catherine Kwantes, University of Windsor, ckwantes@uwindsor.ca

Ashley Percy, University of Windsor, percya@uwindsor.ca

Kareem Ellis, University of Windsor, ellis1b@uwindsor.ca

Dillon Freeman, University of Windsor, freemand@uwindsor.ca

Project Summary

Individualism/collectivism is the most frequently used cultural dimension to study cultural differences. A recent meta-analysis revealed that the construct is not operationalized the same, nor used in the same way across studies (Oyserman, et al., 2002). Among some of the challenges is that the construct is frequently used in a deterministic fashion – for example if you are from the United States it is presumed that you are individualist, if you are from China you are presumed to be collectivist. This is an issue of levels of analysis as individualism/collectivism is a societal-level construct that is frequently applied to individuals. Thus it is often ignored that variation within a culture can be larger than between cultures and that independence and interdependence at the individual level of measurement are orthogonal constructs, where an individual can be simultaneously high or low on both (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Singelis, 1994). There are also some studies that suggest that individualism and collectivism can be primed, for example in individuals who are bicultural (Hong, Morris, Chiu, & Benet-Martinez, 2000). The idea behind these studies is that whichever cultural perspective is most salient in the situation will guide people's attitudes and behaviours. So for example, participants have been shown to "act more" like their heritage culture, interpret stimuli in an individualist or collectivist manner.

The present study looks at whether situations act as a priming agent. Will joint versus individual goals in a small group setting affect identity and behaviour? Further, will situational constraints (goal type, small group setting) have different effects on behaviours and identities for individualists and collectivists?

Because this study was a pilot, findings will not be available until the full study is completed at the end of Winter 2014 semester. The pilot was used in order to work out the methodology and behaviour coding system as well as get feedback from participants. Preliminary findings do suggest that situational constraints and cultural values affect behaviour synergistically. If you are interested in our findings, visit this website in August 2014.

References

Hong, Y., & Mallorie, L. (2004). A dynamic constructivist approach to culture: Lessons learned from personality psychology. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 38, 59- 67.

- Markus, H.&S. Kitayama (1991). Culture and the self: Implications for cognition, emotion, and motivation. *Psychological Review*, 98(2), 224-253.
- Oyserman, D., Coon, H., & Kemmelmeier, M. (2002). Rethinking individualism and collectivism: Evaluation of theoretical assumptions and meta-analyses. *Psychological Bulletin*, 128 3-72.10.1037//0033-2909.128.1.3.
- Singelis, T. (1994). The measurement of independent and interdependent self-construals. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 20(5), 580-591.