Individualism-Collectivism and Personality

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ABSTRACT This paper provides a review of the main findings concerning the relationship between the cultural syndromes of individualism and collectivism and personality. People in collectivist cultures, compared to people in individualist cultures, are likely to define themselves as aspects of groups, to give priority to in-group goals, to focus on context more than the content in making attributions and in communicating, to pay less attention to internal than to external processes as determinants of social behavior, to define most relationships with ingroup members as communal, to make more situational attributions, and tend to be self-effacing.

The individualism-collectivism cultural syndrome (Triandis, 1996) appears to be the most significant cultural difference among cultures. Greenfield (2000) calls it the "deep structure" of cultural differences. While there are a myriad of cultural differences, this one seems to be important both historically and cross-culturally. Almost 100 publications per year now use this dimension in discussing cultural differences (Suh, 1999).

This article will review the findings concerning the relationship between this dimension of cultural differences and personality. It will begin with definitions of key terms and examine differences obtained when data are analyzed at the cultural (*N* = number of cultures) and the individual (*N*= number of participants) levels of analysis. A review of the consequences of individualism and collectivism will constitute the most important part of the paper. A discussion of needed future research will complete it.

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Definitions

Culture. One way to think about culture is that "culture is to society what memory is to individuals" (Kluckhohn, 1954). It includes what "has worked" in the experience of a society that was worth transmitting to future generations. *Language, time,* and *place* are important in determining the difference between one and another culture (Triandis, 1994), since language is needed to transmit culture and it is desirable to have the same historical period and geography to do so efficiently. Sperber (1996) used the analogy of an epidemic. An idea (e.g., how to make a tool) that is useful is adopted by more and more people and becomes an element of culture.

Elements of culture are *shared* standard operating procedures, unstated assumptions, tools, norms, values, habits about sampling the environment, and the like. Since perception and cognition depend on the information that is sampled from the environment, the latter elements are of particular interest to psychologists. Cultures develop conventions about what to pay attention to and how much to weigh the elements that are sampled. For example, people in hierarchical cultures are more likely to sample clues about hierarchy than clues about aesthetics.

Triandis (1989) argued that people in individualist cultures, such as those of North and Western Europe and North America, sample, with high probability, elements of the personal self (e.g., "I am kind"). People from collectivist cultures, such as those of Asia, Africa and South America, tend to sample elements of the collective self (e.g., "my family thinks I am kind").

Personality. Funder (1997) defined personality as "an individual's characteristic pattern of thought, emotion, and behavior, together with the psychological mechanisms—hidden or not—behind those patterns" (pp. 1–2). Characteristic sampling of the information in the environment, which corresponds to the sampling that occurs in different cultures, can be one of the bases of individual differences in personality.

Another way of discussing personality is that it is a configuration of cognitions, emotions, and habits which are activated when situations stimulate their expression. They generally determine the individual's unique adjustment to the world.

Collectivism. In collectivist cultures people are interdependent within their in-groups (family, tribe, nation, etc.), give priority to the goals of their in-groups, shape their behavior primarily on the basis of in-group norms, and behave in a communal way (Mills & Clark, 1982). People in collectivist cultures are especially concerned with relationships. For example, Ohbuchi, Fukushima, and Tedeschi (1999) showed that collectivists in conflict situations are primarily concerned with maintaining their relationship with others, whereas individualists are primarily concerned with achieving justice. Thus, collectivists prefer methods of conflict resolution that do not destroy relationships (e.g., mediation), whereas individualists are willing to go to court to settle disputes (Leung, 1997).

Individualism. In individualist societies people are autonomous and independent from their in-groups; they give priority to their personal goals over the goals of their in-groups, they behave primarily on the basis of their attitudes rather than the norms of their in-groups, and exchange theory adequately predicts their social behavior.

Individualism and collectivism as ideal types. It should not be assumed that everybody in individualist cultures has all the characteristics of these cultures, and that every one in collectivist cultures has the characteristics of those cultures. Rather, people sample from both the individualist and collectivist cognitive structures, depending on the situation.

Measurement of individualism and collectivism. Measurement of these constructs has been very difficult, and while there are approximately 20 different methods, none has proven satisfactory. The reader is directed to Triandis and Gelfand (1998) for an overview of some of the measurement problems.

Vertical and horizontal varieties of collectivism and individualism. There are as many varieties of collectivism as there are collectivist cultures. For instance, Korean collectivism is not the same as the collectivism of the Israeli kibbutz. One dimension that is especially important is the horizontal-vertical aspect. Some cultures emphasize equality (e.g., Australians, Swedes, kibbutzim), and others emphasize hierarchy (e.g., India, highly competitive Americans who want to be “the best”).

We can thus identify four types of cultures: Horizontal Individualist (HI), where people want to be unique and do "their own thing"; Vertical Individualist (VI), where people want to do their own thing and also to be "the best"; Horizontal Collectivism (HC), where people merge their selves with their in-groups; and Vertical Collectivism (VC), where people submit to the authorities of the in-group and are willing to sacrifice themselves for their in-group. Triandis (1995) argued that, in addition to the vertical-horizontal dimension, there are many other dimensions defining different varieties of individualism and collectivism.

The Cultural and Personality Levels of Analysis

When studying the relationship of culture and psychology, it is imperative to keep the level of analysis distinct, because results obtained when the number of cultures is the unit of analysis (*K* cultures) are often different from results obtained when the number of participants (*N*= participants in one culture) are the units of analysis. For example, at the cultural level, factor analysis indicates that individualism and collectivism are opposite sides of a single dimension. *Family integrity* is the only aspect of collectivism that emerges (Triandis et al., 1976). However, when data are analyzed within culture, with individuals as the units of analysis, there are usually several orthogonal factors reflecting individualism (e.g., competition, emotional distance from in-groups, self-reliance, hedonism) and collectivism (e.g., sociability, interdependence, family integrity) (Triandis & Gelfand, 1998).

Thus, it is useful to use a different terminology for findings at the cultural and individual levels of analysis. Triandis, Leung, Villareal, and Clack (1985) proposed the use of *idiocentrism* and *allocentrism* to correspond at the personality level to individualism and collectivism. Smith and Bond (1999), and many others, adopted this terminology. They used it consistently in their social psychology textbook. This allows us to discuss the behavior of idiocentrics in collectivist cultures and allocentrics in individualist cultures. The former find their culture stifling and try to escape it. The latter join groups, gangs, unions, and other collectives. There are more allocentrics than idiocentrics in collectivist and more idiocentrics than allocentrics in individualist cultures.

We can link the cultural and individual levels of analysis by noting that c*ustoms* are aspects of culture and *habits* aspects of personality. Thus, we hypothesize a correspondence between customs, norms, and values on the one hand and habits and patterns of individual behavior on the other hand.

Theoretical Perspectives for the Study of Culture and Personality

A serviceable, though overly simple, theoretical framework is that ecology shapes culture, which includes child-rearing patterns, which influence personality. Ecology includes features of the geography, resources, and the history of a society. For example, societies where fish is available in the environment are more likely to use fish as food, and to have fish-based economies. Societies that have experienced failures throughout their history are likely to be less optimistic than societies that have experienced mostly successes, and so on.

Relatively isolated societies, such as those on islands, tend to be high in *tightness* (people provide sanctions for even minor deviations from norms). In such cultures people have clear ideas about what behaviors are appropriate; they agree among themselves that sanctions are needed when people do not follow the norms and since they are less influenced by neighboring cultures, they are less likely to accept other norms. Tight societies tend to include members who are highly interdependent, and tend to be densely populated, in the sense that surveillance is high. *Tight* cultures are high on collectivism (Carpenter, 2000; Triandis, 1994, 1995).

In *loose* cultures there is tolerance of deviation. Such tolerance for deviation from norms is found in relatively heterogeneous societies (where several normative systems coexist), where people do not depend on each other much, and where population density (opportunity for surveillance) is low. The open frontier is related to looseness (Triandis, 1994, 1995).

The more *complex* the culture, the more individualist it is likely to be (Triandis, 1994, 1995). Cultures differ in complexity (Chick, 1997). The most contrast is found between hunters and gatherers on the one hand and service-information societies on the other hand. Gross national product per capita, although not sufficient, is one index of cultural complexity. Other indices include the percent of the population that is urban, the size of cities, personal computers per capita, and so forth. Obviously, in complex cultures (e.g., urban rather than rural environment), there are more choices and lifestyles. Thus, it is understandable that people in individualist cultures desire to have more choices and are motivated more when they have many choices than people in collectivist cultures (Iyengar & Lepper, 1999).

In collectivist cultures, child rearing emphasizes conformity, obedience, security, and reliability; in individualist cultures, child rearing emphasizes independence, exploration, creativity, and self-reliance.

Thus, at least in principle, one should be able to trace links between ecology and personality. For example, in ecologies where one makes a living by acting self-reliantly, as is often the case among hunters, there is greater emphasis on self-reliance and less emphasis on conformity than in ecologies that require conformity for survival, as is more common in agricultural societies (Berry, 1976).

This theoretical framework is certainly not the only one. Church and Lonner (1998) edited a special issue of the *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology* that included papers that linked personality and culture from the perspective of cultural (Markus & Kitayama, 1998), indigenous (Ho, 1998), and evolutionary psychology (MacDonald, 1998). Church (2000) has provided an impressive model of culture and personality that integrates many of these approaches, especially the trait and cultural psychological approaches. Traits exist in all cultures but account for behavior less in collectivist than in individualist cultures. Situational determinants of behavior are important universally but are more so in collectivist than in individualist cultures. Cognitive consistency among psychological processes and between psychological processes and behavior occurs universally, but it is less important in collectivist than in individualist cultures.

The Importance of the Situation

Allocentrism and idiocentrism are best conceived as situation-specific dispositions. This is clear from studies that randomly assigned idiocentrics and allocentrics to situations that were individualist or collectivist. An interesting example is a study by Chatman and Barsade (1995) who randomly assigned participants who were either allocentric or idiocentric to simulated cultures that were collectivist or individualist. The allocentrics assigned to a collectivist culture were the most cooperative; all those assigned to the individualist culture (no matter whether they were idio- or allocentric) were low in cooperation; idiocentrics assigned to the collectivist situation were somewhat cooperative. Thus, it is clear that the situation is a powerful predictor of the level of cooperation, and cooperation is maximal when personality and situation jointly call for it.

Nevertheless, personality does include, as well, elements that are transituational. Allocentrics, even in individualistic cultures, will try to make relationships more intimate; idiocentrics, even in collectivist cultures, will be more likely to use individual goals to determine their behavior. In short, we see allocentrism and idiocentrism as having a transituational component, as well as a situation-specific component. Future research should examine the amount of variance that is determined by each of these components. At this writing it appears that the situational component accounts for more variance than the transituational one.

Correlates and Consequences of Allocentrism and Idiocentrism

Self-definitions. Allocentrics tend to define themselves with reference to social entities. Traditional samples who have acculturated to individualist cultures show this tendency less, especially when they are highly educated. For example, Altrocchi and Altrocchi (1995) found that the least acculturated Cook Islanders used about 57% social content in describing themselves, whereas Cook Islanders born in New Zealand used 20% and New Zealanders used 17% social content. Similarly Ma and Schoeneman (1997) reported 84% social content for Sumbaru Kenyans, 80% for Maasai Kenyans, but only 12% for American students, and 17% for Kenyan students. These results are quite consistent with those reported by Triandis, McCusker, and Hui (1990) who argued that the self-definitions of samples from collectivist cultures contain social content between 30% and 50% of the time, whereas those of samples from individualist cultures contain social content between zero and 20% of the time. The mode of the percent social content of the self-descriptions of 500 University of Illinois students was zero!

Internalization of norms. Allocentrics often have internalized the norms of their in-groups, so they enjoy doing what their in-groups expect them to do (Bontempo, Lobel, & Triandis, 1990). Allocentrics receive much social support and are less likely to be lonely than idiocentrics (Triandis, Bontempo, Villareal, Asai, & Lucca, 1988).

Self-esteem. The self-esteem of allocentrics is more based on "getting along" than on "getting ahead" (Whatley, submitted, whereas vertical idiocentrics are especially interested in getting ahead and being the best.

Attributions. Idiocentrics tend to use traits in describing other people (Duff & Newman, 1997) and focus on internal dispositions in making attributions (Menon, Morris, Chiu, & Hong, 1999). Compared to idiocentrics, allocentrics making attributions use the context, the situation, and group disposition (Choi, Nisbett, & Norenzayan, 1999; Menon et al., 1999), and tend to be more field dependent and to think more holistically. Norenzayan, Choi, and Nisbett (1999) make the case that dispositional attributions may be universal, but people in collectivist cultures make more situational attributions than those in individualist cultures. When collectivists make dispositional attributions, the traits they use are malleable, whereas when people in individualist cultures make such attributions they tend to use traits that are fixed. There is also evidence that idiocentrics think of the self as stable and the environment as changeable (e.g., if you do not like your job, you change jobs), whereas allocentrics think of the social environment as stable (duties, obligations) and the self as changeable (ready to fit into the environment).

Ethnocentrism. Allocentrics are often more ethnocentric than idiocentrics, have very positive attitudes about their in-groups, and report negative attitudes toward their out-groups (Lee & Ward, 1998). Triandis (1972) observed that collectivists see more of a difference between in-group and out-group than do individualists. Iyengar, Lepper, and Ross (1999) confirmed this. They presented a behavior by the "Self," a "Friend," and an "Enemy" and asked samples from the United States and Japan whether they "couldn't say" why they did this, because, in that behavioral domain, the behavior "depends on the situation." They found that the Japanese saw the self and the friend's behavior as dependent on the situation, whereas the enemy's behavior did not depend on the situation. However, Americans saw the behavior of both friend and enemy as not depending on the situation. In short, the largest distinction in individualist cultures is between self and others; the largest distinction in collectivist cultures is between in-group and out-groups.

Other personality correlates. Idiocentrics tend toward dominance, whereas allocentrics tend to be agreeable (Moskowitz, Suh, & Desaulniers, 1994). The motive structure of collectivists reflects receptivity to others, adjustment to the needs of others, and restraint of own needs and desires. The basic motive structure of individualists reflects their internal needs, rights and capacities, including the ability to withstand social pressures (Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

Matsumoto, Weissman, Preston, Brown, and Kupperbusch (1997) developed and validated an inventory that measures these tendencies. Americans reported more positive disengaged emotions (superior, proud, top of the world), whereas Japanese reported more interpersonally engaged emotions (friendly feelings, feel close, respect). Also, Americans reported more positive than negative emotions, whereas Japanese reported more engaged than disengaged emotions (Kitayama, Markus, & Kurokawa, in press).

Grimm, Church, Katigbak, and Reyes (1999) examined the self-described personality traits, values, and moods of students in an individualist culture (U.S.) and a collectivist culture (Philippines). They predicted that the Filipino sample would rate themselves lower than the U.S. sample on individualist traits (independence, pleasure seeking, assertiveness, creativity, curiosity, competitiveness, self-assurance, efficiency, initiative, and directness) and higher on collectivist traits (attentiveness, respectfulness, humility, deference, obedience, dutifulness, reciprocity, self-sacrifice, security, traditionalism, conformity, and cooperativeness). The data were generally supportive of the differences on the individualist traits, but there were no statistically significant differences on the collectivist traits.

In studies by Dion and Dion (1996), idiocentrism was related to less intimacy and poorer adjustment in romantic love relationships. Specifically, among idiocentrics, self-actualization, which is a prototypical individualist construct, was shown to be related to more gratification with love, yet *less* love for the partner, and less caring for the needs of the partner, suggesting that idiocentrism may be a factor in the high divorce rate of individualist countries (Dion & Dion, 1996).

Watson, Sherbak, and Morris (1998) found that allocentrism was correlated with social responsibility and negatively with normlessness; idiocentrism was correlated with self-esteem and normlessness. Singelis, Bond, Sharkey and Lai (1999) found that allocentrism is related to embarrassability and low self-esteem. Yamaguchi, Kuhlman, and Sugimori (1995) found that in the United States, Japan, and Korea allocentrics show greater tendencies toward affiliation, higher sensitivity to social rejection, and a lower need for uniqueness than idiocentrics. Lay et al. (1998) found a relationship between allocentrism and depression. People who experienced a lot of hassles were more depressed. This relationship was stronger in the case of those who were low in allocentrism than those who were high in allocentrism.

People in collectivist cultures are rather shy when they have to enter new groups; people in individualist cultures are rather skilled in entering new groups and in dealing with others in superficial ways, such as at a cocktail party (Triandis, 1995).

During communication, those from collectivist cultures pay a lot of attention to the context, that is, how is something said; people in individualist cultures pay most attention to content, that is, what was said. The specific language is very important in individualist cultures, and of secondary importance than the level of voice, body posture, eye contact, and accompanying gestures that are important in collectivist cultures (Gudykunst, 1991).

When distributing resources to in-group members, people in collectivist cultures use mostly equality; people in individualist cultures use equity. When distributing resources to out-group members, people in most cultures use the equity principle (Leung, 1997).

Morality. Collectivist cultures differ from individualist cultures in the notions of morality that are emphasized. According to Rozin, Lowery, Imada, and Haidt (1999), there are three moral codes: community, autonomy, and divinity. The first two codes are especially important in collectivist and individualist cultures, respectively, and they evoke different emotions. Violation of communal codes, including hierarchy, evokes contempt; violation of the autonomy code (e.g., individual rights) evokes anger; and violation of the divinity code (purity, sanctity) evokes disgust. Data from Japan and the United States support this theory linking morality and emotions.

Helping an in-group member is seen in duty-based terms by Indians, whereas Americans see it more as a matter of personal choice (Miller, 1997). In fact, Americans less frequently than Indians judged that they had a responsibility to help siblings or colleagues in cases involving low- as contrasted to high liking. The judgments of Indians were not affected by liking (Miller & Bersoff, 1998). Morality among collectivists is more contextual; the supreme value is the welfare of the collective. Ma (1988) has provided a Chinese perspective on moral judgment that is different from the individualistic perspective of Kohlberg (1981).

Lying is an acceptable behavior in collectivist cultures, if it saves face or helps the in-group. There are traditional ways of lying that are understood as "correct behavior." Trilling (1972) makes the point that when people have a strong sense that they themselves determine who they are, as is characteristic of individualists, they are more likely to seek sincerity and authenticity than when they feel swept up by traditions and obligations, as is more characteristic of collectivists. Triandis, Carnevale, Robert, Gelfand, Kessler, Probst, Radhakrishnan, Kashima, Dragonas, Chan, Chen, Kim, Kim, de Dreu, van Fliert, Iwao, Ohbuchi, and Schmitz (2001) found some evidence of greater tendencies toward deception among collectivist samples. However, in that study, vertical idiocentrics, who tend to be very competitive, were also high in deception, because they had to lie in order to win. Thus, everybody lied and only the horizontal idiocentrics were honest.

Many observers have emphasized the importance of face in collectivist cultures (Hu, 1944; Ho, 1976). A moral person behaves as his or her role is specified by in-group members and society. If the individual deviates from such ideal behavior, there is loss of face, not only for the individual, but also for the whole in-group. In many collectivist cultures, morality consists of doing what the in-group expects. When interacting with the out-group, it is "moral" to exploit and deceive. In other words, morality is not applicable to all but only to some members of one's social environment.

Relation to Big Five. Realo, Allik, and Vadi (1997) developed a measure of allocentrism in Estonia and tested its convergence with the Big Five. They found a negative correlation between Openness and allocentrism and positive correlations between Agreeableness and Conscientiousness and allocentrism. If indeed the Big-Five traits are substantially heritable (McCrae, 2000), this suggests that future research may find some biological bases of allocentrism and idiocentrism, over and above the environmental bases emphasized in this paper.

Comparison of This Approach to Other Approaches

It should be clear that the major thrust of the approach described above is from the perspective of cross-cultural psychology. The individualism-collectivism syndrome is itself an etic construct that will take a myriad of culture-specific manifestations across cultures, though the emphasis on individual versus group processes will be found across all manifestations.

A discussion of comparisons between fruit provides a suitable metaphor. When we compare apples and oranges, we can use etic dimensions such as price or weight. Although these etic dimensions are important, they do not provide, by any stretch of the imagination, an adequate description of apples or oranges. In fact, it is the emic dimensions (such as apple/ orange flavor) that provide the crucial information.

This observation suggests support for the ethnoscientific approach advocated by Marsella, Dubanoski, Hamada, and Morse (2000). The ethnosemantic methods include (1) the elicitation of all personality terms in the particular language; (2) the organization by research participants of the terms into naturally occurring structures; (3) the derivation of the meanings (e.g., spontaneous associations) of these structures; and (4) the linking of the terms to actual behaviors. For example, researchers might use the antecedent-consequent method (Triandis, 1972) ("If one is Y [the name of the personality structure], then "one would" or "would not" do X) to determine the link between personality terms and behaviors in different cultures. These methods are emic and do not impose any Western assumptions when the data are gathered. Yet it is very likely that the emic structures obtained with these methods will have some resemblance to the etic structures obtained by Western methods. Finding such convergence allows us to compare personalities across cultures, using the etic dimensions, and also to describe personalities with culturally sensitive elements, using the emic dimensions.

When ethnoscientific methods for the study of personality are used, we are likely to obtain emic dimensions for the description of personality in each culture. It is likely that some of these emic dimensions will have some resemblance to the etic dimensions that we discussed as allocentrism and idiocentrism. However, the fit is not likely to be excellent. The traits that we use in the West cut the pie of experience in ways that implicitly assume that individuals are autonomous entities. That assumption is not likely to be used in collectivist cultures (Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

The ethnoscientific methods were developed mostly by anthropologists and are close to the methods advocated by indigenous and cultural psychologists. They complement the methods of cross-cultural psychologists. Triandis (2000) argued that it is desirable to use all three approaches and look for convergence.

The evolutionary perspectives can also increase our understanding of the way events over a long period of time increased some trait. For example, it has been argued (Robbins, deWalt, & Pelto, 1972) that humans evolved over 200,000 years from the warm African climates to cold Northern climates, where they were required to exhibit much more self-control (a personality attribute). Thus, Africans tend to be more spontaneous and show less impulse control than people in the North (Okeke, Draguns, Sheku, & Allen, 1999; Jones, 1999) because, in that environment for thousands of years, one did not need as much self-control as in harsher climates, where a mistake such as stepping out of an igloo in –40 degree weather wearing inadequate clothing, could be fatal (Robbins et al., 1972, p. 338).

Needed Future Research

Spiro (1993) provided an extensive critique of the work of Markus and Kitayama (1991) and others who contrast individualist and collectivist cultures. He thinks that their characterization of such cultures is "wildly overdrawn." He emphasizes that culturally normative conceptions are not necessarily manifested in the behavior of individuals. This suggests the need for research that will examine how the constructs are to be conceived. Is the probabilistic conception presented by Triandis (1989) desirable? How is that conception related to behaviors?

In this article, the constructs of individualism and collectivism have been defined tentatively, since we do not know at this time which elements of the definitions are essential, account for most of the variance, and are most clearly linked to the ecology. We indicated the child-rearing and personality consequences of these constructs. But we need many studies, with structural equation modeling, to determine whether the consequences are directly linked to the elements of the constructs or to third variables that co-vary with them. Variables such as affluence, cultural homogeneity, etc. may have direct or indirect links to the consequences.

This has been a serious problem with the work on these constructs so far (Kagitcibasi, 1997). Similarly, we need studies that will unconfound the constructs from modernity, affluence, urban status, migration to a new culture, exposure to Hollywood-made TV, and so on.

A global culture is emerging, which is especially compatible with idiocentrism. However, as cultures interact, acculturation is likely to result in changes in some domains, such as job behaviors, and not in other domains, such as religious or family life. Thus, we need to study the constructs, taking the domain into account, and examining how acculturation results in different patterns of individualism and collectivism in each society.

Kagitcibasi (1997) distinguished *normative* individualism, with its emphasis on individual rights and avoidance of the oppression of the in-group, from *relational* individualism, with its emphasis on the distance between self and in-group. We do not have, as yet, specific measures of each of these aspects, or many variables, in addition to the vertical and horizontal dimensions, that may define different kinds of individualism and collectivism (Triandis, 1994). Specifically, we need to examine differences between the relationship of self to close in-group, distant in-group (e.g., the state), neutral out-group (e.g., strangers) and hostile out-group (e.g., people with whom one has a zero-sum relationship), in private and public settings, that are characterized by differing levels of tightness.

CONCLUSIONS

Changes in the ecology result in changes in culture which result in changes in personality. We reviewed attributes of individualism and collectivism and corresponding attributes of idiocentrism and allocentrism. We found several correlates of individualism, such as greater emphasis on internal processes, more emphasis on consistency, and more self-enhancement. The correlates of collectivism included more focus on contexts, less concern for consistency, and less self-enhancement.

People in collectivist cultures see themselves as interdependent with their in-groups, which provide for them a stable social environment to which they must adjust. So their personality is flexible, and their personality traits are not so clear. People in individualist cultures see the self as stable and the social environment as changeable, so they tend to shape the social environment to fit their personalities. Since personality has both genetic and environmental bases, when, in the future, we trace the links between genes and personality, we may find clearer links in individualist than in collectivist cultures.

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