# Individualism and Collectivism

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Psychologists have long portrayed the mind "as a machine or computer that is the same in all times and places, while only the raw materials processed by the machinery or the data in the computer vary" (Fiske, Kitayama, Markus, & Nisbett, 1998, p. 918). This state of affairs changed dramatically over the last decade and a rapidly growing body of experimental research documents profound cultural differences in basic psychological processes. To date, much of this work has addressed the influence of individualism or collectivism, often framed in terms of independent vs. interdependent self-construals (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; for a comprehensive review, see Oyserman, Coon, & Kemmelmeier, 2002). Other dimensions of culture, which figured prominently in Hofstede's (1980) groundbreaking analysis, received less attention. In this issue's Research Dialogue, Shavitt, Lalwani, Zhang, and Torelli (2006) draw attention to one of these dimensions, namely the distinction between horizontal and vertical cultural orientations, which value equality or emphasize hierarchy, respectively. They review the importance of this distinction for understanding personal values, advertising and consumer persuasion, self-presentational patterns, and gender differences, noting that the influence of horizontal/vertical orientations is often obscured by their conflation with differences in individualism and collectivism. Commentaries by Aaker (2006), Meyers-Levy (2006), and Oyserman (2006) elaborate on their analysis and suggest additional avenues for future research. In combination, this set of papers makes a compelling case for extending the analysis of cultural differences in cognition, emotion, motivation, and behavior beyond the individualism/collectivism distinction that has captured the lion's share of recent attention.

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