



Individualism vs Community

Resolving Dilemmas from Conflicting Values in Cultural Diversity

Based on: Hampden-Turner & Trompenaars

Individualism

- ◆ Individualism strengthens the idea that each person progresses through his own efforts, based on dedication, focus, effort, and the personal decisions that are made.



Community

- ◆ Community confirms that personal achievements come from shared knowledge, common values, and mutual support. Society is responsible for the success of all.



Measuring Individualism

- ◆ Two people are discussing how one can improve a person's quality of life.
 - ◆ A. The first person says, "It is clear that if a person is given the liberty and opportunity to develop, the quality of his or her life will improve."
 - ◆ B. The second person says, "If each person were to focus on taking care of others, the quality of life would improve for everyone. This is true even in instances where personal liberty or opportunity is impeded."
- ◆ Which do you find yourself agreeing with more, Option A or Option B?

The Best of Individualism

- ◆ Allows people of extraordinary capacity to have the opportunity to take advantage of existing resources.
- ◆ Allows the expression of counter opinions
- ◆ Allows the eagles to soar
- ◆ Opens philanthropic opportunities
- ◆ Opens new frontiers, e.g., the moon

Exaggeration of Individualism

- ◆ Difficult to free oneself from dictators
- ◆ Easy to blame the victims
- ◆ Justifies egotism “If another wants what I have, tell him to go work for it.”
- ◆ Disproportionally uses the world’s resources

The Best of Community

- ◆ Everyone shares equally to resolve problems
- ◆ There is an incentive to create a legacy for society, family, company
- ◆ There is a sense of “esprit de corps” to increase productivity and quality
- ◆ Encourages coordination among government, education, businesses, and workforce
- ◆ Observes well the successes of others, which are then adopted and incorporated into new situations.

Exaggeration of Community

- ◆ Continues to uphold weak entities (e.g, weak companies)
- ◆ Sacrificial pyramid
- ◆ Prevents an individual from escaping the shared misery of the group
- ◆ The necessity of achieving consensus creates a slow process

Resolving Dilemmas

- ◆ Dilemma: “Two lemas” We are forced to choose between two opposing options.
- ◆ Supposition: There is a reason why people have the cultural norms that they do. If they are different from yours (i.e., if there is a dilemma), discover the reason behind those norms and identify the best of what those norms have to offer.
- ◆ Strategy Options:
 - ◆ a. Focus on one extreme (and ignore the other option)
 - ◆ b. Focus on the other extreme (and ignore the other option)
 - ◆ c. Continue without integration (appease both with no advantage)
 - ◆ d. Integrate the best of both options by resolving conflicting values

Business Examples

- ◆ Global Footprint <http://earthday.net>
- ◆ Go Green Footprint <http://www.go-green.ae/footprint/countries.php>
- ◆ Earnings vs. Market Share
- ◆ Competition vs. Cooperation (General Motors)
- ◆ Competition + Cooperation = Co-opetition
- ◆ Rivalry vs. Complementary (Coke-Pepsi, GM/Insurance)
- ◆ The role of government: Coach or Referee?
- ◆ Sales executives at IBM

Examples from Movies

◆ Individualism

◆ Casablanca

◆ Community

◆ Ikiru

Reference:

Hampden-Turner, Charles and Fons Trompenaars. 2002.
*Building Cross-Cultural Competence: How to Create Wealth
from Conflicting Values.* New Haven & London: Yale
University Press.