

# Ideologies of Individualism and Collectivism

## Chapter

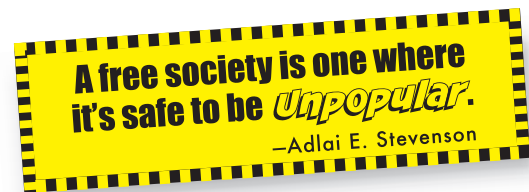
# 2

### KEY SKILL

Developing, expressing and defending an informed position on an issue

### KEY CONCEPTS

Exploring themes of ideologies  
Analyzing individualism and collectivism  
Evaluating the extent to which personal identity should be shaped by ideologies



Imagine you take a long car trip, and during the trip you observe the bumper stickers on the opposite page. What message is each bumper sticker trying to convey? Is there a sticker you would like to put on a car, or one you would oppose putting on a car? Why? What does each of the bumper stickers suggest about the individuals who chose them and the society in which these individuals want to live?

In previous chapters, you were introduced to the concepts of **individualism** and **collectivism**. When we examine ideologies, we can see that each of them is based on either individualism or collectivism, or a mixture of the two.

## Chapter Issue

We cannot escape the fact that, as human beings, we are both individuals and part of a collective. In this chapter you will explore several understandings of individualism and collectivism. Individualist ideologies tend to advocate individual rights, and freedom from government and from collective controls and restrictions. They promote principles such as autonomy, self-interest, personal achievement, and self-reliance. Collectivist ideologies endorse the idea of working co-operatively to solve problems and manage economic and social issues. They hold that collective enterprises, unions, and teamwork can accomplish more than individuals and competition can. They stress social harmony and cohesion over competitiveness. Collectivist ideologies see a positive role for government assistance and control in regard to the economy and social issues, whereas individualist ideologies usually see government as interfering and counterproductive.

You will explore the interaction of individualism and collectivism in society by considering how these two tendencies underlie different ideologies to varying degrees. Can they be reconciled? Are they opposed to each other, or do they complement each other? You will examine the impact of these dynamically linked tendencies on society as well as their influence on personal identity as you deliberate the Chapter Issue: *To what extent are individualism and collectivism foundations of ideology?*

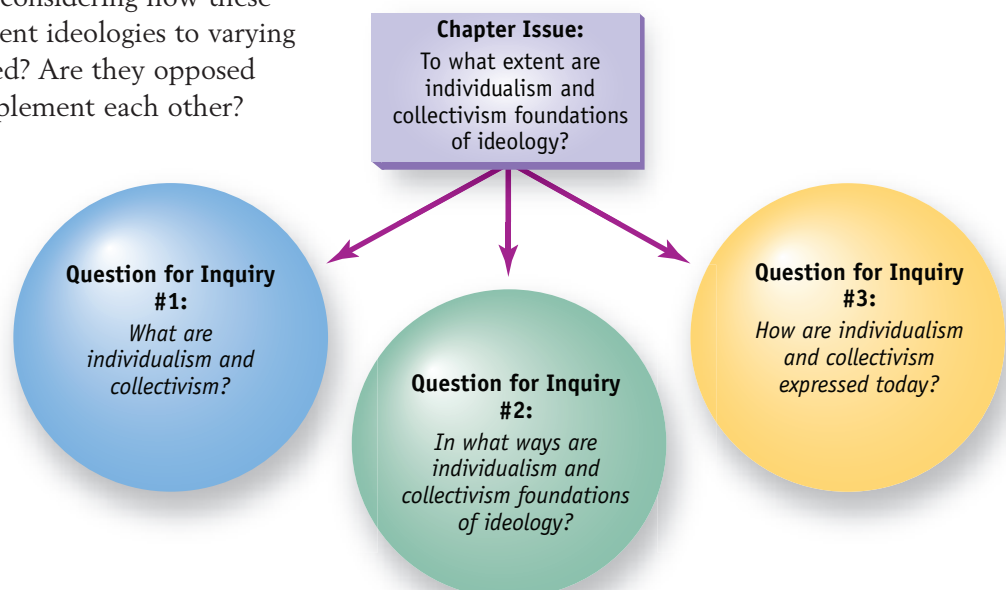
## PAUSE AND REFLECT

**Compare the bumper stickers on the opposite page. Bumper stickers can express individualist and collectivist perspectives.**

### Key Terms

- Adherence to collective norms
- Collective interest
- Collective responsibility
- Collectivism
- Common good
- Competition
- Co-operation
- Economic equality
- Economic freedom
- Individualism
- Individual rights and freedoms
- Liberalism
- Private property
- Public property
- Rule of law
- Self-interest

Figure 2-1 ▼



# Understanding Individualism and Collectivism

## Question for Inquiry

- What are individualism and collectivism?

*One of the dominant characteristics of modern culture is individualism. This individualism prevails not only in the United States but elsewhere, including Korea. In view of such a long human history, it is not easy to define individualism because as a phenomenon it is complex and varied. According to Elwood Johnson, individualism can be defined as “any mode of thought based on the faith that any person may become in himself a prime cause; he may in fact, act his way out of his own history.” Similarly, Emil Brunner sees individualism as a “Robinson Crusoe affair” in which the individual is solely important considering his own personality. In this view, society is a coalescence of individuals.*

—Yung Suk Kim (theology professor at Virginia Union University), *The Roots of Individualism*.

<http://www.youaregood.com/rootsofindividualism.pdf>

*...it is glaringly apparent that mankind finds itself at present in grave danger. I see the nature of the current crises in the juxtaposition of the individual to society. The individual feels more than ever dependent on society, but he feels this dependence not in the positive sense—cradled, connected as part of an organic. He sees it as a threat to his natural rights and even his economic existence...that which drives his ego is encouraged and developed, and that which would drive him toward other men (a weak impulse to begin with) is left to atrophy.*

*It is my belief that there is only one way to eliminate these evils, namely, the establishment of a planned economy coupled with an education geared towards social goals. Alongside the development of individual abilities, the education of the individual aspires to revive an ideal that is geared towards the service of our fellow man, and that needs to take the place of the glorification of power and outer success.*

—Albert Einstein, “An Ideal of Service to Our Fellow Man,” from *This I Believe* (essay collection). David Domine [trans.].

Essay courtesy of the Albert Einstein Archives at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. *This I Believe*,

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4670423>, May 31, 2005.1954, AEA 28-1067.

*More and more, when faced with the world of men, the only reaction is one of individualism. Man alone is an end unto himself. Everything one tries to do for the common good ends in failure.*

—Albert Camus, French novelist, essayist, playwright,  
and winner of the 1957 Nobel Prize for Literature,  
*Notebooks, 1935–1942*

Political philosophy investigates the nature of human communities in order to evaluate their aims and modes of co-operation. One of the key questions of political philosophy is: *What is the relationship between the individual and society?*

In Chapter 1, you read that an ideology can provide you with a framework of ideas about what role you should play as an individual in society and what you can expect from society in return.

There are many different ideologies based on some degree of individualism, and they do not all agree on the best means of organizing society. Nonetheless, most individualistic ideologies have a similar understanding of the individual's place in society and stress the importance of ideas such as personal **autonomy**—a state of individual freedom from outside authority—and **self-reliance**—the quality of being solely responsible for one's own well-being.

Like individualism, collectivism is not a single ideology: many different ideologies are based on collectivist ideas, and these various ideologies may differ in their methods and ultimate goals. All of them, however, stress human interdependence and the importance of a collective, regardless of size, rather than the importance of the individual. The focus of collectivists is the community and society, although families can also exemplify collectivist principles by encouraging members to be responsible for one another rather than simply looking out for themselves. Collectivism emphasizes group goals and the **common good** over individual goals or individual gain.

## Early Understandings of Individualism and Collectivism

Some of the principles of individualism have roots in ancient history. For example, Urukagina, the ruler of Lagash in Mesopotamia in the 24th century BCE is thought to have been the first to create property laws: he said that no one could seize another's property. The concept of self-interest was discussed in the 4th century BCE by the Greek philosopher Aristotle in his *Politics*: "That which is common to the greatest number has the least care bestowed upon it. Every one thinks chiefly of his own, hardly at all of the common interest; and only when he is himself concerned as an individual." Other principles of individualism, such as individual rights and freedoms, have become widely accepted only more recently in history.



### PAUSE AND REFLECT

Compare the three views of modern society expressed in these quotations. Do you think any of them is an accurate description of Canadian society? Would you prefer to see more or less individualism in our society?

Examples of collectivism can also be found in ancient cultures. Anthropological studies tell us that most, if not all, the earliest human societies were collectivist, because it was possible to survive only by working and hunting as part of a group. The sense of identity of ancient societies was largely based on membership in a group—usually an extended family.

Collectivism was also practised 2000 years ago by early Christians, as mentioned in the New Testament of the Bible. For example, Acts 2:44–45 states, “And all those who had believed were together, and had all things in common; and they began selling their property and possessions, and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need.” Compare the last part of this sentence with the collectivist maxim popularized by Karl Marx: “From each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs.”

Even today, some religious communities embrace collectivist values such as the collective ownership of property. The Hutterites are a Christian community in North America with 45 000 members in approximately 460 colonies, mostly in Western Canada. Hutterite colonies practise a “community of goods” based on an interpretation of the Bible. The members of a colony work together, and all money earned belongs to the colony as a collective. All goods are owned by the colony, rather than by any one individual, including land, houses, and vehicles. When an individual member needs an item, they ask the colony, and the item is bought for them. Members are discouraged from earning personal spending money.

## An Aboriginal Understanding of Collectivism

Indigenous peoples such as the Aboriginal peoples in Canada describe their traditional cultures as having a strong sense of the collective. In matters such as land-holding, decision making, and educating and raising children, many Aboriginal cultures emphasize thinking and acting collectively to achieve what is best for the common good. Many of these collectivist traditions are still practised in some Aboriginal communities.

Inuit Elder Mary Anulik Kutsiq describes some of the collectivist aspects of life in traditional Inuit communities—and how some of those traditions have been lost—in the following interview excerpts:

*In earlier times, Inuit were very close. They had strong friendships and helped each other through hard times. Today, some people have so much while others have so little and do not bother to share at all. In the earlier days, people shared food even if they didn't have much, as long as there was a little bit of extra food. Pieces of meat were cut up evenly and distributed among the whole community. Bread, bannock and tea were also evenly shared. If there was not enough tea to be divided up for each*



*household, every bit of it was brewed together in a big pot so that everyone could have a cup...*

*The problem today is that there are too many people in the communities and a lot of them are too self-centred and involved with their own problems to help others. Before this community had so many people, we were all very close and helped each other in times of need. As the population grows, so does the gap between people. We are no longer one big family. We are now separated and we each go our own way...*

—Mary Anulik Kutsiq, “An Elder Offers Advice.”

**Inuktitut Magazine 79 (Fall, 1995): pp. 11, 14–15. [www.itk.ca](http://www.itk.ca)**

## The Medieval Period (circa 476 to the Renaissance)

*Pax Romana*, the “Peace of Rome”, which had provided structure and security throughout the empire, was replaced by lawlessness and unpredictability. With the collapse of the Roman Empire in 476 CE, Europe was thrown into chaos. Over time, order was restored in small areas under the guidance of local warlords. Small pockets of structure eventually grew into larger and larger areas as warlords joined together and an aristocracy was established. Common people were provided structure and physical security in exchange for loyalty and service to their lords. But the individual life had very little worth. The common person was worth little more than the shrub or the cow on the land owned by the lord.

By 800 CE, most of Europe had converted to Christianity under the Roman Catholic Church. The people of the various European



◀ **Figure 2-2**

During the medieval period, European society had a rigidly hierarchical structure.

kingdoms became subjects of two kingdoms—the worldly kingdom and the spiritual kingdom. Security and order were provided by the earthly rulers. More important, however, was the security and promise provided by the spiritual rulers. If life here on earth was miserable, then at least life after death promised to be glorious. The spiritual ruler—the Roman Catholic Church—held immense power as the gatekeeper of heaven. One result of this situation was that people focused less on the things of the material world and more on the afterlife. Therefore developments in art, science, commerce, and progress in general were not emphasized, and the individual life here on earth mattered very little.

During the medieval period (named from the later perspective of Italian humanists), most people in Europe fit into distinct social categories—peasants, traders, craftsmen, clergy (priests, monks, and other people who performed duties in the Roman Catholic Church), and nobles. What mattered was *how* you fit into your group—*not* your individual identity. For example, if you were lucky, your family might know a stone mason and pay him to take you on as an apprentice. You would work for your master without pay while you learned the craft, then become a journeyman (who could work for pay for any master stone mason), and finally become a craftsman if you were accepted into the guild of stone masons.

During this time, cathedrals were being built all over Europe. These huge building projects, spanning decades and even centuries, would employ many different craftsmen over the years. However, the individual craftsmen were unnamed and received no fame or glory.

Politically, St Augustine of Hippo (354–430) and later Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274) argued that authority was derived from God and divinely instituted natural laws. A king held power through the will of God. This tended to allow for very little individualism in political matters.

## The Renaissance (circa 1450–1600)

In contrast to the medieval period, the Renaissance in Europe brought a greater interest in the individual. The term **Renaissance** comes from French and means “rebirth”. This period in European history was characterized by a renewed interest in classical Greek and Roman culture. European scholars revived classical ideas about the central importance of life in this world, man’s central role in the world, and the appreciation of the worth of the individual.

In 1453, Constantinople, capital of the Byzantine Empire, fell to the Ottoman Empire. Many scholars from cities such as Constantinople fled west, taking with them many Greek manuscripts. Islamic societies in Spain, North Africa, and West Asia had already been reading, translating, developing, and commenting upon Greek scholarship for many centuries, contributing to the growth of these ideas during the Renaissance.



Figure 2-3 ▲

Bronzino's *Portrait of a Young Man*, 1550



Figure 2-4 ▲

Michelangelo's *Pietà*, 1498–1499



◀ Figure 2-5

The Basilica di Santa Maria del Fiore, Florence, Italy, built between 1296–1469. Renaissance art reflected the renewed interest in classical philosophy and humanism.

Ancient Greek culture had been very humanistic and very individualistic. According to Greek mythology, the gods on Mount Olympus were anthropomorphic, behaving like people and sometimes interacting with them. In these myths, humans occasionally challenged the gods, and sometimes are depicted as being on equal terms with them. This notion of human potential led the ancient Greeks to focus on the capabilities, strength, beauty, and reason of individual humans. Humans, according to these ancient thinkers and their culture, could be like gods: they could remake their worlds and be the authors of their own fates.



These ideas took hold in the city-states of Italy and quickly changed the thinking and the focus of influential people in Europe. Painters began to study nature and the world around them. They began to use perspective in their works, creating a more three-dimensional depiction of the real world and humans in that world. Sculptures such as Michelangelo's *Pietà*, which depicts a religious scene, celebrated the individual human form. Also, individual artists became known: for example, the *Pietà* was seen as a great personal achievement for Michelangelo, who even carved his name on the sculpture.

Other works of art portrayed real individuals—patrons such as wealthy nobles, merchants, and craftsmen—instead of stylized and archetypical religious subjects. Many works also showed the growing importance of books, education, and the study of nature and natural forces.



### PAUSE AND REFLECT

From what you know now, would life in the medieval period or life in the Renaissance suit you better?

## The Protestant Reformation (circa 1500–1650)

The Protestant Reformation, partially a product of the growing influence of the Renaissance focus on the potential of the individual in this world, also contributed to the growth of individualism by challenging the authority of the dominant Roman Catholic Church. The Catholic Church interpreted religion for people through both Church tradition and the Bible, while many Protestant Churches claimed to rely on the Bible alone. After the printing press was assembled by Johannes Gutenberg around 1439, the Bible could be translated into many languages and distributed to many more people. In this way, people who could read began to explore, consider, and interpret their faith on a more personal level.

The emergence of individualism in European societies was a process that took several centuries. And while individualism eventually came to predominate in many societies, it has never supplanted collectivism entirely. The two tendencies have existed side by side in a sometimes uneasy relationship that has shaped societies in the past and continues to shape societies today.

## Explore the Issues

### Concept Review

- 1 a) Identify three examples of collectivism in history.  
b) Identify two examples of individualism in history.

### Concept Application

- 2 Research and explore understandings of individualism and collectivism other than the ones already presented in this section.
- 3 Create your own definitions of individualism and collectivism and some examples of how they are expressed by people's actions in society.
- 4 In groups, discuss whether or not the following things are individualist or collectivist in nature: schools, hospitals, government, and traffic patterns in cities.

# Principles of Individualism and Collectivism

## Question for Inquiry

- In what ways are individualism and collectivism foundations of ideology?

An ideology provides us with a framework or model for society and for the actions of the individuals in that society. In the previous section you looked at general understandings of individualism and collectivism and their respective visions of society. Now you will examine the specific principles of individualism and collectivism on which various ideologies are based.

## Principles of Individualism

Individualism is one possible foundation of ideology and is a foundation in particular of liberalism, the prevailing ideology in Western democracy. We will explore the principles of individualism in order for you to understand the roots of what you now find and act within as a citizen or resident of Alberta and Canada.

In this section you will read about the different ways in which the following principles are manifested in society:

- rule of law
- individual rights and freedoms
- private property
- economic freedom
- self-interest
- competition

## Rule of Law

A key principle in Canadian life—and in liberal democracies around the world—is the **rule of law**. The principle of the rule of the law has many applications, some of which you will read about in later chapters. In the words of former senator and Canadian constitutional expert Eugene A. Forsey,

*What does the rule of law mean? It means that everyone is subject to the law; that no one, no matter how important or powerful, is above the law—not the government; not the Prime Minister, or any other Minister; not the Queen or the Governor General or any Lieutenant-Governor; not the most powerful bureaucrat; not the armed forces; not Parliament itself,*

or any provincial legislature. None of these has any powers except those given to it by law...

—Source: Eugene A. Forsey, *How Canadians Govern Themselves*, 6th edition. (Ottawa: Library of Parliament, Public Information Office, 2005), p. 32.

In other words, every *individual* is equal before the law. Furthermore, this principle means that citizens are subject to clearly defined rules, rather than the arbitrary power of an individual or group in a position of authority.

In 2007, when Canadian-born British nobleman Conrad Black was found guilty of embezzling in the United States and sentenced in a Chicago court, “Judge Amy St Eve told the former owner of [the newspaper] *The Daily Telegraph*: ‘No one is immune from the proper application of law in the United States and that, Mr Black, includes you.’” (Andrew Clark, “‘No one is above the law’—Conrad Black gets six years”, *The Guardian* online, December 11, 2007, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/business/2007/dec/11/conradblack.media.business1>). Similarly, when Italian prime minister Silvio Berlusconi tried to use Italian immunity laws to avoid bribery charges, he was accused of trying to place himself above the law.

- Would you want to live in a society in which certain members were above the law? Why or why not?
- Are there instances in our society where the rule of law seems to be ignored?

## Individual Rights and Freedoms

**Individual rights and freedoms** are a key principle of individualism and an important feature of liberal democracies. Examples of such rights and freedoms include freedom of religion, freedom of association, and the right to life, liberty, and the security of the person.

One important individual right in liberal democracies is the right to vote. Most early liberal democracies did not extend this right to all citizens. For example, after the American and French revolutions, the right to vote was granted only to some men, mainly property owners. Here are some examples of how voting rights were granted and to whom:

- In England, middle-class men got the vote only in 1832. Working-class men waited until 1885. English women were first able to vote only in 1919—and only if they were over the age of 30.
- In France, all men received the right to vote for the first time in 1789. Various classes of men lost and regained this right until 1848, when all men in France gained the right to vote. Women were granted the right to vote in 1944.

- In the early years of some states in the United States, voters had to be both male and Protestant.
- During the apartheid era, South Africa restricted voting based on race. And Canada, for years, limited the right to vote for Aboriginal people identified as “status Indians.”
- Only in 2004 did all prisoners in Canadian prisons become eligible to vote in federal elections.

Now, however, the right to vote has extended in most democratic countries to include all citizens above a certain age, usually 18 or 21.

Guaranteeing individual rights and freedoms can have negative consequences in certain circumstances, and liberal democracies attempt to balance the rights of one individual against the rights of other individuals, the rights of groups, and the needs and goals of the society. For example, in Canada freedom of expression is an individual right protected by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. However, Article 1 of the Charter stipulates that the rights and freedoms it guarantees are subject to “such reasonable limits prescribed by law as can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society.” Therefore, we have laws that prohibit the promotion of hatred or discrimination, thus limiting freedom of expression. In one extreme case, an Alberta high-school teacher named James Keegstra was dismissed from his teaching position in 1982 for expressing anti-Semitic views in his classroom and claiming that the Holocaust did not happen. Keegstra was eventually charged with unlawfully promoting hatred against an identifiable group.

From the creation of Canada as a democracy, individual rights and freedoms have been expanded. In the 1960s, social mores were loosening, and this brought about many changes to laws and society in general.



## A Pioneer of Women's Rights

One rare European woman among the Enlightenment thinkers was Mary Wollstonecraft, who wrote *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* in 1792. Wollstonecraft's daughter

Mary Shelley was also a writer and became best known for the original tale of *Frankenstein*, published in 1818, as the Industrial Revolution was changing human lives and economies in a way never seen before. As women in England, neither was able to vote.

*The divine right of husbands, like the divine right of kings, may, it is to be hoped, in this enlightened age, be contested without danger...*

—Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, Chapter 3, 1792.

- 1** What beliefs and values are reflected in this quotation?





## PAUSE AND REFLECT

**How does the distinction between private acts and public acts support the principles of individualism? What is the importance of a charter such as the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms?**

Pierre Trudeau was asked in the late 1960s about legal changes (Bill C-150) that granted rights on the issues of sexual preference and reproductive choice. He answered,

*Well, it's certainly the most extensive revision of the Criminal Code since the new Criminal Code of [the] early 1950s...it's bringing the laws of the land up to contemporary society, I think. Take this thing on homosexuality. I think the view we take here is that there's no place for the state in the bedrooms of the nation, and I think that, you know, what's done in private between adults doesn't concern the Criminal Code. When it becomes public, this is a different matter.*

**—Pierre Elliott Trudeau, Minister of Justice  
(later Canadian prime minister), December 21, 1967,  
in response to a reporter's question**

You will examine in greater depth the application of individual rights and freedoms in ideologies such as liberalism in later chapters.

## Private Property

*The reason why men enter into society is the preservation of their property.*

**—John Locke, *The Second Treatise of Civil Government*, 1690, Section 222.**

Modern understandings of property law developed during the Enlightenment period in England. At first, property law was understood to only apply to land (real estate), but it eventually came to apply to three types of property: real estate, other forms of physical possessions, and intellectual property (artistic works, inventions, and so on).

However, the notion of **private property** is only one way of looking at land and property; there are many different perspectives regarding the significance of people's relationships with land. For example, for some First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples, land reflects a person's interrelationship with nature and all living things. Some peoples also believe that land cannot actually be owned—cannot be private property—but is rather shared. Some communities also have had a tradition of common property—shared by, worked by, and enjoyed by all. Such differences in perspective on land ownership have sometimes led to conflict among First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples, and between Aboriginal peoples and the British and Canadian governments. During the Treaty 7 negotiations among southern Alberta First Nations and representatives of Queen Victoria, prominent Blood chief Medicine Calf remarked, "The Great Spirit, and not the Great Mother [the queen of England], gave us this land." (Source: Alexander Morris, *The Treaties of Canada with the Indians of Manitoba and the North-west Territories* [Toronto: Belfords, Clarke, & Co., 1880], p. 270.)

A more recent example of the important implications of concepts of private and public property is the ongoing dispute over land and resource management between the Barriere Lake Algonquin First Nation and the federal government.

*In 1991, Barriere Lake compelled Canada and Québec to sign a groundbreaking land management and sustainable development agreement, after a campaign of civil disobedience that caught international attention.*

*The Trilateral agreement set important precedents: it would give Barriere Lake decisive say in the management of 10 000 square kilometres of their traditional territory, protect Algonquin land uses, and give them a share in the resource-revenue from logging and hydro projects on their land.*

*Praised by the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, the agreement was an alternative to the Comprehensive Land Claims process, which Barriere Lake rejected because it would force them to extinguish their Aboriginal title and rights, among other reasons.*

**—Source: “A Call for Endorsements and Solidarity.”  
Barriere Lake Solidarity Collective  
Indigenous Community News Network, August 12, 2008.  
[http://icnn.com.au/index.php?option=com\\_content&  
task=view&id=1593&Itemid=9](http://icnn.com.au/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1593&Itemid=9)**

As of 2008, the agreement had not yet been implemented, despite ongoing logging and hydro-electric projects, in part because the federal government has not recognized the First Nation’s chosen leadership.

The protection of private property can also be a source of conflict in the realm of intellectual property. For example, biotechnology companies expend large amounts of time and money developing and patenting new varieties of plants, such as drought-resistant wheat, that can benefit society as a whole. Farmers who grow these varieties pay royalties to the companies who own the patents. It is not always clear, however, whether newly created plant varieties are significantly different from the existing crops that have been grown for centuries.

In one case, Greenpeace Mexico asked the Mexican government to appeal a patent granted to the DuPont corporation in 2001 by the European Patent Office (EPO). Greenpeace claimed that the corn variety for which DuPont received the patent was too similar to existing corn varieties already grown in Mexico and that the patent could be used to prevent Mexican corn farmers from growing their crops without paying DuPont. The EPO revoked DuPont’s patent in 2003. In another case, a US patent was granted in 1999 to Larry Proctor, an American entrepreneur, for a bean variety he developed called ‘Enola’. Because ‘Enola’ is very similar to an existing variety called ‘Mayacoba’, Mexican bean farmers could no longer export ‘Mayacoba’ beans to the United States without paying royalties to Larry Proctor. Following an appeal by an agricultural research centre, the United States Patent and Trademark Office revoked Proctor’s patent in 2008.

## Intellectual Property Rights

As advances in communications technology make it easier to transmit electronic data such as music, films, and software, the definition of intellectual property and the rights consumers have to use what they purchase have become increasingly important topics of discussion. How should government balance the rights of people who create intellectual works with the rights of consumers who purchase those works?

**Something to Think About:** When you purchase a creative work such as a music CD, movie, or software program, how much control do you have over how you use it? Should you be allowed to share it with someone else? If you receive such a work from someone else, whose property are you enjoying? Are you paying for that? If so, how? If not, why is that?

The following statement is from the Center for the Rule of Law website.

*Increasingly, we live in a world where value is generated by creative work, by innovative designs, products and compositions. Especially in advanced economies, economic growth and societal well-being are tied to the incentives to generate new ideas and new technologies and to the ability to put those ideas and technologies into practice. Rights to intellectual property are the foundation for advancing idea-generated growth and the enormous range of improvements in our lives that come from new technologies. Substantial social value is created as well from the software, entertainment, and other copyright-intensive industries, and from the ability of consumers to readily identify quality goods by brand names. Protections for patents, trademarks, copyrights, and trade secrets are essential...International piracy and violations of intellectual property rights abroad present issues of critical importance to our economy.*

—Ronald A. Cass, Chairman, Center for the Rule of Law

<http://www.ruleoflaw.org/Issues.html>

**An Example:** As file-sharing becomes more widespread, news stories such as the following are more common:

*The recording industry won a key fight Thursday against illegal music downloading when a federal jury found a Minnesota woman shared copyrighted music online and levied \$222 000 in damages against her.*

*Jurors ordered Jammie Thomas, 30, to pay the six record companies that sued her \$9250 for each of 24 songs they focused on in the case. They had alleged she shared 1702 songs online in violation of their copyright...*

*"This does send a message, I hope, that downloading and distributing our recordings is not OK," said Richard Gabriel, the lead attorney for the music companies...*

*Record companies have filed some 26 000 lawsuits since 2003 over file-sharing, which has hurt sales because it allows people to get music for free instead of paying for recordings in stores. Many other defendants have settled by paying the companies a few thousand dollars.*

—Source: “Woman Faces the Music, Loses Download Case.”

The Associated Press, October 4, 2007.

© The Associated Press 2007

Musicians and songwriters appear to be divided on the issue:

*Musicians hold mixed views in regards to file-sharing. While reduced CD sales worry artists, the exposure an artist receives through file-sharing can be a valuable promotional tool, especially for lesser known acts. Many feel the tactics of the recording industry are misguided, and believe working with file-sharing technology would increase industry profits.*

*A survey of 2755 musicians and songwriters on the effects of [file]-sharing was conducted between March and April of 2004. When asked what impact free downloading on the Internet has had on their careers as musicians, 37 per cent said that free downloading has not really made a difference, 35 per cent said that it has helped and 8 per cent said that it has both helped and hurt their career. Only 5 per cent said that free downloading has exclusively hurt their career and 15 per cent of the respondents answered “do not know”...*

*Some artists publicly denounce file-sharing. Canadian artists such as The Tragically Hip, Jann Arden, and the Barenaked Ladies take issue with the prevalence of music file-sharing. In 2003, Madonna took aim at file-sharers by deliberately uploading a spoofed file of her release, American Life, in response to the number of music fans sharing her music.*

*In contrast, Moby, System of a Down, Public Enemy and the Dead, frustrated with the record industry's lawsuits directed at music fans, contend that the record industry's efforts are misguided and that, to succeed in the evolving marketplace, it must work with the new technology instead of against it...*

—Source: University of Ottawa, “File-sharing.”

Canadian Internet Policy and Public Interest Clinic, June 2, 2007.

<http://www.cippic.ca/file-sharing/>

## QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- 1 Create a web diagram for each case, on which you note the individual rights involved for those enjoying the music and those creating and selling the music.
- 2 What is your own experience of hearing or sharing music online? How widespread do you think your experience is?
- 3 Use the Internet to research the subject of downloading music. Based on your research, experiences, and thoughts about the cases, take a stand on the issue of downloading music and its relationship to individualism in order to prepare and present your opinion in a form you choose.



## Economic Freedom

On a personal level, **economic freedom** is the freedom to buy what you want and to sell your labour, idea, or product to whomever you wish. Markets in which consumers and businesses have free choice to buy, sell, or trade, without government interference in those transactions, are called **free markets**. Economic freedom for free-market entrepreneurs would mean that there were no barriers to trade for products they might want to export, and that their customers would not have to pay taxes on their purchases.

The Economic Freedom Index, compiled by the *Wall Street Journal* and the Heritage Foundation, a Washington, DC–based think tank, rates the economic freedom of 157 countries according to the following 10 factors:

- business freedom
- trade freedom
- fiscal (tax) freedom
- degree of government regulation
- monetary freedom
- investment freedom
- financial freedom
- property rights
- freedom from corruption
- labour freedom

In 2008, Canada was ranked 10th on this list, below Hong Kong, Singapore, Australia, the United States, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom. The reason for its ranking is that Canada intervenes in its markets rather than leaving them free from government regulation. After the Great Depression of the 1930s, Canada implemented policies designed to create a “social safety net” for Canadians; the Unemployment Insurance Act (1940), the Canada Pension Plan (1966), the Medical Care Act (1966), and other acts transformed Canada into more of a **welfare state**. A welfare state is one in which the economy is capitalist, but the government uses policies that directly or indirectly modify the market forces in order to ensure economic stability and a basic standard of living for its citizens.

## Self-Interest and Competition

Two concepts of individualism closely related to the principle of economic freedom are **self-interest** and **competition**. Supporters of individualism see economic freedom as leading to the most efficient and beneficial economy for the greatest number of people, because it

encourages competition and they assume that people generally act in their own self-interest. These ideas were first promoted by 18th-century Scottish philosopher and economist Adam Smith, who saw individual self-interest as an “invisible hand” that guides individuals to contribute for the common good of everyone. You will read more about Smith’s views on economics in Chapter 3.

In this view, the forces of supply and demand in the marketplace work to the benefit of the majority. When there is too much supply of a product, the price drops and, eventually, so does the supply. When demand is greater than supply, the price of the product rises, and more entrepreneurs enter the marketplace to profit, eventually causing supply to meet demand once again. Considered another way, each individual buyer’s desire to find the best quality product at the lowest price ensures that sellers compete among themselves to provide a variety of products at the lowest prices.

Furthermore, individual entrepreneurs who serve the common good through honesty and reliability may also serve their own self-interest by winning more customers. Essentially, both the buyer’s and seller’s self-interest works to the benefit of the other.

In such an economy, labour is like any other commodity. If there is an oversupply of labour in a particular area, wages will fall and the workers will look for employment in a sector of the economy where there is a labour shortage. In theory, acquiring a position in politics or economics is based purely on one’s ability; the hardest working and brightest people achieve the most economic and political success. Employers will compete to hire these desirable people, and workers will compete to fill the jobs available. It is this drive of individuals working to secure their self-interest that creates economic growth and, in the long term, benefits everyone.

In contrast to this perspective, Canadian-born economist John Kenneth Galbraith argued in the late 1950s that increases in wealth in the United States were concentrated more and more among people with high incomes, and people with low incomes were not earning more. As advisor to several US presidents, he encouraged efforts to reduce this gap—a “war on poverty” and large-scale publicly funded education programs. He also noted that very few industries fit the vision of perfect competition. In Britain, in 2007 a similar gap was seen: the “gap between the rich and poor in Britain has reached its highest level in more than 40 years. Over the past 15 years, more households have become poor, but fewer are very poor—‘breadline poor’.” (Source: David R. Francis, “Yawning Rich-Poor Gap Could Hobble Economy.” *The Christian Science Monitor*, <http://www.csmonitor.com/2007/0730/p15s02-wmgn.html?page=2>, July 30, 2007.



## PAUSE AND REFLECT

**What examples in daily life have you seen that support this theory—that market forces benefit everybody? What examples contradict this theory? In October 2006, as many as 9000 people showed up at a job fair in St John’s, Newfoundland, looking for work in Alberta. Adam Smith envisioned workers moving between markets of oversupply to markets of demand. What might the impact be of such oversupply on individuals? What might the impact be on society?**

## Principles of Collectivism

The principles of collectivism are the foundation of ideologies such as communism and socialism. While the principles of individualism formed the basis of the classical liberal ideology that originally guided modern democracies, over time most liberal democracies have evolved and incorporated aspects of collectivism into their political, economic, and social systems. More information about these changes will be presented in Part 2 of this text.

The principles of collectivism you will explore are

- economic equality
- co-operation
- public property
- collective interest
- collective responsibility
- adherence to collective norms

## Economic Equality

While the principle of economic equality is common to all collectivist ideologies, its specific meaning varies from one ideology to another.

**Economic equality** can mean any of the following, depending on the person or the ideology:

- People with larger incomes should pay more taxes.
- All people should earn equal wages for work of similar value.
- There should be a guaranteed annual income (GAI).
- All people should share in the wealth of the country or the world.
- People should own the means of production (factories or companies that produce goods) collectively.
- Everything should be free. There should be no private property.

Many countries have tried to reform their economic systems to introduce more economic equality. In Canada, for example, the policy of progressive taxation could be seen as an attempt to redistribute wealth. Progressive taxation means that people who earn more money are taxed at a higher rate.

Nonetheless, some thinkers have proposed that amounts of money are not at the heart of economic equality. Mahatma Gandhi was the leader of India's independence movement from Britain in the early 20th century. He thought that economic equality depended on individual need and circumstances:

*Economic equality of my conception does not mean that everyone will literally have the same amount. It simply means that everybody should have enough for his or her needs...The real meaning of economic equality*

is “To each according to his need.” That is the definition of Marx. If a single man demands as much as a man with wife and four children, that will be a violation of economic equality...

—Mahatma Gandhi, March 31, 1946,  
quoted in “Economic Equality.” Mkgandhi.org.  
<http://www.mkgandhi.org/momgandhi/chap55.htm>



## PAUSE AND REFLECT

Do you think we need more economic equality in Canada? Would we have a better society, or would this infringe upon individual freedoms?

## Co-operation

All collectivist ideologies emphasize **co-operation**, a principle you are probably already very familiar with. Co-operation can be beneficial to individuals and groups precisely because individuals are unique and have different ideas about how to do things. Co-operation is the means through which members of a group or a collective achieve their common goals. It may involve designating roles, following certain protocols for speaking, or following guidelines for decision making.

One example of collective co-operation is a *co-operative*. Daycare centres, health-care centres, stores, and credit unions are a few examples of enterprises that can be owned and managed co-operatively. Some of the guiding principles of co-operatives include voluntary and open membership, democratic control by members, and economic participation by members.

The principle of co-operation can also influence how members of a society govern themselves. In a recent interview, the Reverend Kathryn Gorman-Lovelady, a moderator at Wolfe Island Aboriginal Interfaith Church, a National Elder on the Canadian Métis Council, a Native Inmate Liaison Officer at the Central North Correctional Centre (Penetanguishene-Lafontaine, Ontario) and an Anishinabek shaman, had this to say about decision making and the traditions surrounding speaking in Aboriginal cultures:

*Aboriginal peoples in North America have traditionally approached decisions from a collective base. Prior to contact with Europeans, we evolved an egalitarian “circle” ideology for processing both community and individual decisions. The harshness of daily living, especially in northern climates, necessitated a group of people to hunt and gather, as individuals could not adequately feed a family by themselves. It was too dangerous to hunt by oneself. Everything acquired was collectively rendered into food for present and future use. While heavy emphasis is placed on a person being responsible for their actions (or lack thereof) it was understood that one had easy access to Elders for counsel and life wisdom. The erosion of the collective process (post-contact) has driven many Elders and Aboriginal community leaders to fight for self-government. This is heralded as a return to decision-making as a democratic collective. In this way, every member of the community, young or old, male or female has a*



**Figure 2-6**

*Talking Circle* by Leah Dorion. For some First Nations, Métis, and Inuit groups and communities in Canada, there are diverse protocols for speaking. Leah Dorion was raised in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, and is a Métis artist, author, and filmmaker. In her paintings, she honours the spiritual strength of Aboriginal women and incorporates elements of traditional Aboriginal symbolism, principles, and teachings, such as that depicted here of a talking circle.



*right to speak on issues. This may seem to be unwieldy and slow, but ensures that everyone's voice and perspective is included in any decision. Our spiritual practices reflect the beauty of egalitarian collective process—we view all life as equal and sacred in the web of life. It is a practice we continue today.*

**—Reverend Kathryn Gorman-Lovelady,  
interview with author, January 7, 2008**

## Public Property

**Public property** is anything—land, buildings, vehicles—not privately owned by individuals. Generally speaking, public property is owned by the state or the community, and managed according to the best interests of the community.

Different ideologies support the idea of public property to varying degrees. In a Communist state, all industries could be public property—controlled by the state for the common good of the collective. According to Karl Marx's *The Communist Manifesto* (1848), “the theory of the Communists may be summed up in the single sentence: *Abolition of private property.*” Marx and thinkers like him argued that only workers should profit from their own labour, not employers or the owners of the companies. It has been argued that not only is this arrangement fairer for the workers, but it also provides a source of motivation in the absence of financial rewards: because every worker has a stake in the enterprise, they will all have a greater interest in its success.

The concept of public property is also present to a lesser extent in liberal democracies such as Canada. Parks, schools, roads, libraries,

Crown land, and Crown corporations (such as Via Rail or the CBC) are all examples of property that the government manages in the interest of all of society. These properties are maintained with public money raised through taxation.

- What other forms of public property exist in Canada? How do they represent the values of collectivism?
- How would Canadian society be different if all private property were abolished? How would your life be different?

## Collective Interest

**Collective interest** refers to the set of interests that members of a group have in common. More specifically, the principle of collective interest states that while individual members may have individual interests, these interests are often better addressed by making them a common set of interests that the group can address together.

Collective interest is the basis for the organized **labour movement**, which began during the Industrial Revolution. As members of organized trade unions, workers were able to fight successfully for better working conditions and higher rates of pay—successes that individuals could not have realized alone.

Collective interest is also the foundation for social movements and lobby groups, such as human rights groups, professional groups, or international organizations such as the *Organisation internationale de la Francophonie* (OIF) or the Assembly of First Nations (AFN).

The mission statement of the OIF is

*The OIF, conscious of the connection created among its members by sharing the French language and universal values, works toward the achievement of peace, cooperation, solidarity and sustainable development. The institutions of the OIF work towards the realization of these objectives.*

—Source: **Organisation internationale de la Francophonie.**

<http://www.francophonie.org/oif/index.cfm>

Article 1 of the AFN's Charter states, in part,

*By virtue of their rich heritage, historical experience, and contemporary circumstances, First Nations possess common interests and aspirations to exercise their political will in common and to develop a collective struggle or cause based upon the Indian values of trust, confidence, and toleration.*

—Source: **Charter of the Assembly of First Nations.**

<http://www.afn.ca/article.asp?id=57>

All of these groups represent people with common interests and goals who come together to press for change and reform.

## Collective Responsibility

**Collective responsibility** means holding the whole group responsible for the actions of individuals (or individual groups) within the group. Collective responsibility asserts that there is no individual action for which the group cannot in some way be held accountable.

In her book *Ideologies of Caring: Rethinking Community and Collectivism*, Gillian Dalley describes collective responsibility as the cornerstone of a caring society:

*At its broadest level, collectivism is about societal responsibility for all members of that society, a moral responsibility that is translated into a practical responsibility. The government is the steward of that responsibility.*

*At a narrower level, responsibility may be held by the local community—the municipality, the neighbourhood, the commune, or by an interest or a functional group such as trade unions, women's groups, or professional associations. Provision of care and support for those who are in any way dependent is clearly part of that responsibility.*

—Source: Adapted from Gillian Dalley,  
*Ideologies of Caring: Rethinking Community and Collectivism*,  
2nd edition. (London: Macmillan, 1996), pp. 52–53.

Acknowledgment of collective responsibility is often made in response to deep-rooted social problems that cannot be addressed by targeting

Figure 2-7

How do campaigns such as Mothers Against Drunk Driving denote collective responsibility?



individuals or a single group. For example, campaigns against underage drinking often state that the cure for this problem must be a collective responsibility. This is how one US government committee examining underage drinking in the United States framed its report, *Reducing Underage Drinking: A Collective Responsibility*:

*The committee reached the fundamental conclusion that underage drinking cannot be successfully addressed by focusing on youth alone. Youth drink within the context of a society in which alcohol use is normative behavior and images about alcohol are pervasive. They usually obtain alcohol—either directly or indirectly—from adults. Efforts to reduce underage drinking, therefore, need to focus on adults and must engage the society at large.*

—Source: Committee on Developing a Strategy to Reduce and Prevent Underage Drinking, *Reducing Underage Drinking: A Collective Responsibility*, Richard J. Bonnie and Mary Ellen O'Connell (eds.). The National Academies Press, [www.nap.edu](http://www.nap.edu), 2004.



### PAUSE AND REFLECT

Consider how laws are developed: age limits for drinking, voting, and so on. How are the individual's rights sacrificed by belonging to a certain age group?

On the other hand, the idea of collective responsibility does not always guarantee a caring society. Sometimes the idea of collective responsibility is used in totalitarian states such as North Korea, where a strong central government has complete control over most aspects of citizens' lives and does not allow political opposition. In such a society, if one member of a family criticizes the government or its leaders, the whole family might be punished to send a message that the behaviour is not tolerated. Authoritarian governments in particular (see Chapter 11) often claim to be acting on behalf of the “good of all” even when their actions are punitive.

## Adherence to Collective Norms

Groups usually impose norms, or standards, on their members as a condition of membership in the group. These norms can relate to conduct, values, or appearance. While they are voluntary, the group members generally see these standards as binding, which makes **adherence to collective norms** important. Sororities and fraternities, political parties, faith groups, trade unions, and professional groups all impose certain standards of conduct on their members. Living up to these standards may be considered a daily responsibility. **Censorship**—deliberately restricting information the public will see—is another example of the imposition of a collective norm. Many media censor themselves informally; however, some governments impose censorship on media.





## PAUSE AND REFLECT

**What does “protective stupidity” mean? How might the concept of “protective stupidity” apply to your life? Have you ever been in a situation where someone tried to prevent you from thinking for yourself?**

A negative view of collective norms can be found in George Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. The novel describes how rigidly enforced collective norms can extend so far as to tell people how to think:

*A Party member is expected to have no private emotions and no respites from enthusiasm. He is supposed to live in a continuous frenzy of hatred of foreign enemies and internal traitors, triumph over victories, and self-abasement before the power and wisdom of the Party... The first and simplest stage in the discipline, which can be taught even to young children, is called, in Newspeak, crimestop. Crimestop means the faculty of stopping short, as though by instinct, at the threshold of any dangerous thought. It includes the power of not grasping analogies, of failing to perceive logical errors, of misunderstanding the simplest arguments if they are inimical to Ingsoc, and of being bored or repelled by any train of thought which is capable of leading in a heretical direction. Crimestop, in short, means protective stupidity.*

—Source: *Nineteen Eighty-Four* by George Orwell  
(Copyright © George Orwell, 1949). Reprinted by  
permission of Bill Hamilton as the Literary Executor  
of the Estate of the Late Sonia Brownell Orwell  
and Secker & Warburg Ltd.

While Orwell believed in **democratic socialism**, he saw an extreme version of collectivism being created in the Soviet Union by its leader at the time, Joseph Stalin. You will read more about this period of history in Part 2.

## Explore the Issues

### Concept Review

- 1 a) List the principles of individualism. Identify an example of each of these principles in society.
- b) List the principles of collectivism. Identify an example of each of these principles in society.

### Concept Application

- 2 Choose one of the key principles of individualism and one of collectivism, and provide a personal example that illustrates each principle.
- 3 Based on what you have learned about individualism and collectivism, to what extent do you think Canada is a society based on individualist or collectivist ideologies?

# Contemporary Individualism and Collectivism

## Question for Inquiry

- How are individualism and collectivism expressed today?

Born in 1965, Jeff Skoll grew up in Montréal and Toronto. He pumped gas in a service station to support himself while studying electrical engineering at the University of Toronto. After obtaining a Master of Business Administration at Stanford University in California, Skoll became the first president and full-time employee of eBay. He created a business plan for the online auction company that would lead to its eventual success. When Skoll stopped working full-time at eBay in 1998, his fortune was worth 2 billion dollars.

He has since founded the Skoll Foundation, which encourages social entrepreneurship around the world. He has also become an influential Hollywood movie producer, backing films with socially and politically relevant themes such as Al Gore's environmental documentary *An Inconvenient Truth* (2006). Although his successful business career marks him as the epitome of the "self-made man," he has used his financial success to work toward his vision of the future: "a world of peace and prosperity and sustainability." (Source: Jeff Skoll, Technology Entertainment Design conference, March 2007.)

In reading about the principles of individualism and collectivism thus far in the text, have you come across ideas or values that you share? Do all these values come from only one of these two streams of thinking?



## PAUSE AND REFLECT

In what ways do you think Jeff Skoll is an example of individualism? In what ways do his actions demonstrate collectivism?

Figure 2-8

Internet entrepreneur Jeff Skoll was an executive producer of Al Gore's environmental documentary *An Inconvenient Truth*.

In speaking about ideologies and the ideas of individualism and collectivism, people sometimes try to suggest that the two viewpoints are incompatible. They argue that the respective values of these two viewpoints are so different that there is no common ground and one must simply choose between them. While it is true that the values of individualism and collectivism are sometimes at odds, there are aspects of the two sets of ideas that can complement each other. In effect, sometimes individualism and collectivism work together for the common good of society.

In this section you will explore a few contemporary examples of individualism and collectivism at work in society. Consider how they compete and how they complement each other.

## Attitudes about Individualism and Collectivism in North America

Americans are well-known for their emphasis on the principle of individualism. According to one position, American individualism consists of a characteristic attitude of tough-mindedness toward the claims of others for assistance—not an absolute refusal to help but rather that individuals should first do everything possible before asking others for assistance. The University of Pennsylvania's *International Student and Scholar Handbook* describes one view of this individualism:

*Since childhood, Americans are encouraged to see themselves as individuals responsible for their own destiny, not as a member of any collective group. Many Americans believe that the ideal person is an autonomous, self-reliant individual. They generally dislike being dependent on other people or having others dependent on them.*

*Americans have a desire for personal success, both social and economic...Achievement is a dominant motivation in American life and this can lead to not-so-friendly competition.*

—Source: University of Pennsylvania's *International Student and Scholar Handbook*.

<http://www.upenn.edu/oip/iss/handbook/like.html>

According to a 2004 study by the Pew Research Center, Canadians and Americans have more than a few values in common. For example, almost 65 per cent of Americans and 63 per cent of Canadians think people determine their own success in life. Most Western Europeans, on the other hand, believe that people have “little control over their own destinies.” While 91 per cent of Western Europeans think their governments should provide a social safety net (government services such as employment insurance and health care), 77 per cent of Canadians and 73 per cent of Americans believe that their governments should take care of those in need.



### PAUSE AND REFLECT

The sources in this section indicate that North Americans tend to embrace the principles of individualism, viewing them through the lens of Western democracy. Other cultures and societies throughout the world, and even some within North America, may embrace the principles of collectivism or a balance of individualism and collectivism. To what extent is the ideology of a culture shaped by the physical location and shared sense of place of that culture?

What is interesting about this study is that in even North American cultures, where a prevailing individualistic point of view sees people as responsible for their own success, the majority of the population believes that government should provide help to those who need it—an idea that is essentially collectivist.

A study that examined levels of consumer spending and happiness found that rich countries, where individualism was more prevalent and consumption was higher, had higher overall levels of *subjective well-being* (that is, a person's perception of their own happiness). However, when people at different income levels within the same country were compared, it was found that, beyond the level at which a person's basic needs can be met, there was little correlation between subjective well-being and income. The author interpreted these findings as follows:

*...economic development leads to higher levels of national average [subjective well-being] not by increasing consumption...but by creating more individualistic cultures which encourage their members to pursue personal happiness over honor and meeting social obligations. Whether or not this is seen as a socially positive development depends...on the cultural values of the person making the judgement.*

—Aaron C. Ahuvia, “Individualism/Collectivism and Cultures of Happiness.”  
*The Journal of Happiness Studies* 3, 1 (March, 2002): p. 23.

In other words, it does not follow that the more money you have the happier you will be. More important is the freedom to pursue your own personal fulfillment. This freedom is what makes you happier.

Other researchers have claimed that increased individualism in a society leads to an increased sense of commitment to the collective. In a study that examined levels of **social capital**—the strength of social relationships between individuals—and individualism, the authors argued the following:

*In America, the states with a high level of social capital (higher degree of civic engagement in political activity, where people spend more time with their friends and believe that most people can be trusted) were found to be more individualistic. A correspondingly strong association between individualism and social capital was observed in the comparison of different countries. These results support Durkheim's [an early social theorist] view that when individuals become more autonomous and seemingly liberated from social bonds, they actually become even more dependent on society.*

—Jüri Allik and Anu Realo, “Individualism-Collectivism and Social Capital.”  
*Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology* 35, 1 (2004): 29–49.

Such studies seem to indicate that individualism and collectivism are not diametrically opposed concepts. In the following examples, we will look at situations where individualist and collectivist values co-exist.

## Entrepreneurialism

Maclean's magazine and the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology both agree: John Stanton is an outstanding individual. In 2004, Maclean's declared Stanton one of the year's top 10 Canadians "who made a difference." In 2006, NAIT awarded Stanton an honorary diploma "aimed at honoring outstanding individual achievement on a local, national or international level." Born in Edmonton, Stanton turned his new interest in running from a part-time job using a single room to a business of over 60 Running Room and Walking Room store locations and he supports charitable run events as well. Stanton figures he works about 360 days a year—300 of them on the road, visiting stores, giving talks and running with customers. "True success is never knowing if you are working or playing," he says. "I feel pretty successful."

—Source: Brian Bergman, "John Stanton." *Maclean's*, July 1, 2004.

[http://www.macleans.ca/article.jsp?content=20040701\\_83575\\_83575](http://www.macleans.ca/article.jsp?content=20040701_83575_83575)



Figure 2-9 ▲

Dr Muhammad Yunus won the 2006 Nobel Prize for Peace. The Grameen Bank is now used as a model for micro-credit institutions in less developed countries around the world.

John Stanton is a good example of a person who has benefited from the individualist values of economic freedom and self-interest, an entrepreneur who has achieved great success in the capitalist marketplace. But the benefits of entrepreneurship are not necessarily limited to one individual's achievement. Businesspeople also provide economic benefits for others by creating employment, and sometimes even attempt to influence others in positive ways. As well as building a profitable business, John Stanton was able to give back to the community by supporting charitable events and promoting healthy lifestyle choices.

Another entrepreneur, Britain's Anita Roddick, started her own business, selling skin and hair care products, in 1976 to create a livelihood for herself and her two daughters while her husband was away trekking in the Americas. Thirty years later, The Body Shop consisted of 2045 stores serving over 77 million customers in 51 different markets in 25 different languages and across 12 time zones. According to Roddick,

*Businesses have the power to do good. That's why The Body Shop's Mission Statement opens with the overriding commitment, "To dedicate our business to the pursuit of social and environmental change." We use our stores and our products to help communicate human rights and environmental issues.*

—Source: AnitaRoddick.com

<http://www.anitaroddick.com/aboutanita.php>

People such as Dr Muhammad Yunus use their own business expertise to help others become entrepreneurs. Dr Yunus was already a



prominent economist and successful businessman in Bangladesh when he started providing micro-loans to Bangladeshis who wanted to start small businesses, but could not secure loans from traditional banks because of their poverty. His first micro-loan was US \$27, provided to a group of 40 furniture makers. By 1983, Dr Yunus's operations had become the *Grameen* (or Village) Bank. As of 2008, Grameen Bank has provided US \$7.12 billion in loans to 7.53 million borrowers. The average loan is under US \$1000.

*I did something that challenged the banking world... Conventional banks look for the rich; we look for the absolutely poor. All people are entrepreneurs, but many don't have the opportunity to find that out.*

—Dr Muhammad Yunus, quoted in Ishaan Tharoor's  
"Paving the Way Out of Poverty," *Time*, October 13, 2006.  
<http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1546100,00.html>

How has Dr Yunus combined values of individualism and collectivism to benefit society?

## Social Programs and Public Services

*In strong and vibrant democracies, a generous social-welfare state is not a road to serfdom but rather to fairness, economic equality, and international competitiveness. [Social welfare refers to government services to help those in need.]*

—Jeffrey Sachs, director of the Earth Institute at Columbia University

A modern liberal democracy such as Canada is a good example of a society in which individualist and collectivist values are used side by side. While Canadian society is characterized by many of the values of individualism such as individual rights and freedoms, the rule of law, and economic freedom, we also benefit from a variety of social programs and public services provided by our government, such as health care, employment insurance, welfare, and public education. These programs can be considered collectivist, because all Canadian citizens pay for them through taxation, but not everyone uses them or needs them. Our willingness to pay these taxes, even though we may not use the services provided, demonstrates a commitment to the well-being of the group or collective. While these programs may limit our individual freedoms to some degree—the taxes needed to fund such programs could be seen as a limit on our economic freedom, for example—most Canadian governments have sought to find a balance between individualism and collectivism, rather than excluding one or the other.

## INVESTIGATION

### Child Care and Ideology

**Something to Think About:** To what extent is child care the responsibility of the government?

There is an African proverb that states “It takes a whole village to raise a child.” This can be interpreted as a collectivist view of child care. How relevant is this view to Canadian society today? Should government be involved in providing child care, or should the responsibility be left to parents?

#### Child Care Solutions

The demand for daycare has raised the following question: Who should be responsible for providing daycare? Some people argue, on the one hand, that the money spent by government from public taxes results in better child care, because with funding comes more of a standardized approach where all child care is expected to meet a set of criteria. They might also argue that better child care leads to fewer problems later in the child’s life; thus, a more collectivist approach is simply good economics because it benefits everyone by achieving a more harmonious society and by producing better citizens.

On the other hand, a more individualist perspective might argue that parents should be more self-reliant and assume complete responsibility for their children. Individualists might also point out that an absence of government involvement would mean lower public spending and thus lower taxes for everyone. There is also evidence that the one-on-one care of an attentive parent or guardian is for most children the best kind of child care. But is this individualistic approach possible in a modern industrialized country?

#### Views on the Situation

*The Canadian Child Care Federation (CCCCF) urges Stephen Harper...to work closely with the early learning and childcare community to resolve the childcare crisis in Canada...*

*“Currently, 70 per cent of mothers with children under six are in the workforce. All of these families require some form of childcare. At the same time, there are only enough regulated childcare spaces for 15 per cent of the children who need it,” said Barbara Coyle, CCCC’s executive director. “There simply isn’t enough quality childcare available. We will be calling on Stephen Harper’s government to work collaboratively with us to find solutions.”*

**—Source: Canadian Child Care Federation, “CCCCF Urges New Government to Work Together to Solve Child Care Crisis in Canada.” January 24, 2006.**

[http://www.cccf-fcsc.gc.ca/pressroom/pr\\_32\\_en.htm](http://www.cccf-fcsc.gc.ca/pressroom/pr_32_en.htm)



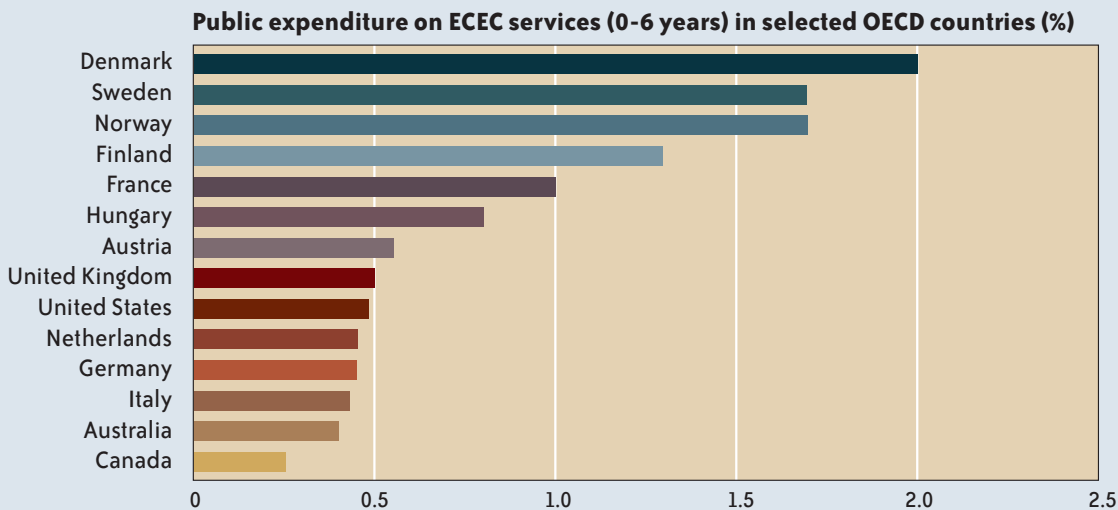
**Figure 2-10** ▲

State intervention in the care of children is relatively recent. Child care, as we know it today in Canada, began during the Second World War when many women worked in factories to produce armaments. Since the end of the war in 1945, women have increasingly worked outside the home. Women are no longer expected to single-handedly take responsibility for raising their children, and this has created a demand for daycare centres.

...in 1997, Québec introduced its own day-care system, offering spaces at five dollars a day. [In 2008, the fee was seven dollars a day.]...In October 2004, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD] released a report that described Canada's childcare system as a chronically underfunded patchwork of programs...[It] holds the Québec system up as a model for the rest of Canada, but the program has had its critics...The Action démocratique du Québec [a provincial political party] called the program a "Soviet-style" service and said the waiting lists are typical of a socialist system. The ADQ's 2003 election platform called for thirty-dollar-a-day vouchers for parents, which they could spend on public or private care. Québec's largest employers' group, the Conseil du patronat, suggested a similar plan that would give families a \$5000 allowance for each child to spend as they please.

—Source: CBC News Online, "Day Care." CBC.ca, July 5, 2006.

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/daycare/>



Source: *Starting Strong II: Early Childhood Education and Care*, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (Paris, 2006), p. 105.

Note: This figure is composed of expenditure estimates, based on replies provided by country authorities to an OECD survey in 2004. The figures provided suggest that Denmark spends 2% of GDP on early childhood services for 0- to 6-year-olds, and Sweden 1.7%. These countries—and Finland—also allocate an additional 0.3% (approximately) to the pre-school class [programs] for children 6 to 7 years.

**Figure 2-11**

This graph shows public spending on early childhood education and care (ECEC) in selected member countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). What does it indicate about Canada's child-care policy? Should the provincial and federal governments emphasize more of a collectivist approach—more public spending on child care and set standards for daycare centres and staff—or an individualistic approach—leaving child care up to the parents?

## QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- 1 How do the various forms of child-care provision and funding reflect specific principles of individualism or collectivism?
- 2 Conduct research on the child-care policies of the federal Conservative, the Liberal, and the New Democratic parties. You may also include another party's policy if you wish. Create a chart comparing and contrasting the elements of their respective policies.
- 3 What is your position on the issue? Consider the issue carefully, and outline the arguments for and against your position. Write a position paper that explores your position and explores the key influences on your beliefs and values that led you to this position.



**Figure 2-12** ▲

*Kibbutzim* (plural of *kibbutz*, meaning “gathering”) are communal settlements in Israel, organized according to socialist or collectivist principles such as collective ownership of property, social equality, and co-operation in production, consumption, and education. The kibbutzim have been described as the fulfillment of the communist idea: “From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs.”

## Kibbutz

Many modern societies founded on the traditional values of individualism have gradually incorporated some degree of collectivism over time. Similarly, some collectivist societies have come to embrace aspects of individualism. The collectivist Israeli communities known as *kibbutzim* are a good example of this.

The first kibbutzim were founded about 40 years before the establishment of the State of Israel (1948), and most were dedicated to agricultural production. Eventually kibbutzim began to engage in industrial production, building factories and other manufacturing facilities. Today, about one-quarter of kibbutz members in Israel work in agriculture and fisheries, and an equal number are working in industry; other kibbutz activities include tourism, finance, and public services. Traditionally, all property on a kibbutz, including tools and clothing, was collectively owned; meals were eaten with the entire community, rather than in the family home; and children were raised by the community. According to the Jewish Virtual Library, “Compared to the past, kibbutzim today offer their members a wider range of individual choices. Members have more latitude in all aspects of their lives, from the selection of clothing and home furnishings to where and how to spend their

vacations.” (Source: Amnon Rubinstein, “Return of the kibbutzim.” *Jerusalem Post* July 10, 2007.)

- Why might a society devoted to the principles of collectivism gradually become more open to the principles of individualism?

## Non-Governmental Organizations

*I meet people endlessly who have entered into their middle age and suddenly woken up, saying to themselves that yes, they are a success, but they feel awful because they're not doing anything that really interests them. In effect, they wake up feeling bored, which is one of the worst things to happen to a successful human being—it is a sense that you have wasted the first half of your life on the secondary activities. The smart ones get involved and act as citizens. I'm suggesting that you should be getting involved right now. I think a lot of you probably already are, if the*



*NGO involvement of students is anything to go by. In other words, time is no excuse. Get used to giving public time while you are still poor.*

—Source: John Ralston Saul, “Struggling for Balance: Public Education and Civil Society,” a speech given at the University of Calgary, March 25, 2003. Governor General of Canada.

<http://www.gg.ca/media/doc.asp?lang=e&DocID=4026>

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are another example of a structure founded on both collectivist and individualist values. NGOs are created for the purpose of addressing a social issue such as homelessness, hunger, or economic development. In this sense they are collectivist, since they work together toward a goal that serves the common good within a country or internationally. At the same time, they use aspects of individualism, since they are private initiatives. Habitat for Humanity is one such organization.

Across Canada, and indeed around the world, there are thousands of men, women, and children who are without homes. Some organizations exist to help alleviate this problem. Habitat for Humanity is a non-profit international organization that builds homes for families. In Alberta alone, there are 11 Habitat for Humanity affiliates.

*I got involved [with the Jimmy Carter Work Project] for all the wrong reasons. It was out of insecurity and fear in our neighborhood... We were concerned about the devaluation of our houses. But when I saw the whole picture, I was ashamed that I would take such a negative view. Eventually, when I saw Habitat happening, I had to make a statement. I brought biryani (a popular Indian dish) to the site and asked the local gas station to donate bread. We gave it to the [Habitat] homeowners, saying: “This is a small gesture of welcome,” because we felt that what they were going to be achieving made them heroes... The thing is, if we can get each person to embrace their neighbor, isn’t that what we’re supposed to do...?”*

—Source: Stuart Wilson (a South African from the gated community adjacent to Ethembeni, site of the 2002 Jimmy Carter Work Project), quoted on Habitat World

<http://www.habitat.org/hw/june-july04/notes.html>

*A lot of (the Not-In-My-Back-Yard attitude) has to do with people feeling like islands unto themselves. The whole basis of Habitat is that nobody is. It makes people look beyond the fence of their own homes. Our famous thing is that we break down barriers.*

—Source: Lisa Hartley (executive director, Bergen County, New Jersey, Habitat for Humanity), quoted on Habitat World.

<http://www.habitat.org/hw/june-july04/notes.html>



Figure 2-13 ▲

Stuart Wilson (background) helping to build a home in South Africa.





## Where Collectivism and Individualism Meet

We have seen that the values of individualism and collectivism are not mutually exclusive. Traditionally, many Aboriginal communities have placed greater importance on the values of collectivism than those of individualism. Today, the Osoyoos Indian Band is integrating values from both of these perspectives in their community.

The Osoyoos Indian Band is a community of 432 members with about 12 950 hectares of reserve lands in southern British Columbia. Over 80 per cent of band members live on the reserve. Through the Osoyoos Indian Band Development Corporation, the band owns and operates 10 different businesses, including a winery, vineyards, a golf course, a construction company, and a cultural centre. They employ 242 people, 89 of whom are band members, and 33 of whom are Aboriginal people from other communities.

One of the driving forces behind the band's success is Chief Clarence Louie, who is both the band chief and the CEO of the development corporation. Chief Louie has gained national attention for his direct approach and his emphasis on economic development and self-sufficiency. He is frequently asked to speak to both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal groups across Canada about the role of development in Aboriginal communities. Not everyone in British Columbia's First Nations agrees with his views, however.

*The Band does not owe its membership dependency. It owes them an opportunity and a chance to become independent.*

—Source: Chief Clarence Louie, quoted in the  
NKMIP Resort Media Kit (NKMIP is run by the Osoyoos Indian Band).

<http://www.nkmip.com/assets/files/pdf/20080228%20Nk'Mip%20Resort%20Association%20Media%20Kit.pdf>

Chief Louie made the following comments to the Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples. The committee examined the involvement of Aboriginal communities and businesses in economic development activities in Canada:

*Why the heck cannot the politicians at all levels of the federal and provincial governments, as well as all the Canadian people, see that when you spend 92 per cent of \$8 billion a year on social programs and only 8 per cent on economic development, Aboriginal poverty will always be Canada's hidden shame.*

*I always say that in Osoyoos we do not look for consensus. I do not believe in consensus; it does not exist any more. The majority rule. We make decisions. We have a vote tomorrow on a \$3-million power project going through our reserve, and for all those people who want to vote against it, vote against it. As long as the majority vote for it, this project will go ahead.*

*I do not attend most AFN [Assembly of First Nations] meetings, I do not attend most Union of BC Chiefs meetings, I do not attend most summit meetings, because in order to be an entrepreneur or businessman, you have to stay home*



Figure 2-14

Children participate in the Nk'Mip Desert Cultural Centre's Rattlesnake Research Program, launched in 2002 by the Osoyoos Indian Band in partnership with the Canadian Wildlife Service. The Rattlesnake Research Program was the recipient of the Aboriginal Tourism British Columbia "Power of Education" award in 2003. The snake pictured here is a Great Basin gopher snake, which is non-venomous. Rattlesnakes, which resemble the gopher snake, are extremely poisonous and should never be touched.

*and look after your own. I always feel you should look after your own backyard before going off to try to save all the whales, save all the trees and hug everybody. Stay home and look after the potholes in your own backyard.*

—Source: *Proceedings of the Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples. Issue 13, "Evidence," meeting on October 26, 2005.*

[http://www.parl.gc.ca/38/1/parlbus/commbus/senate/Com-e/abor-e/13evb-e.htm?Language=E&Parl=38&Ses=1&comm\\_id=1](http://www.parl.gc.ca/38/1/parlbus/commbus/senate/Com-e/abor-e/13evb-e.htm?Language=E&Parl=38&Ses=1&comm_id=1)

*Half of our businesses are run by First Nations people. Two of those are Osoyoos Indian Band members, but they had to earn those positions. They had to leave the community, go down to the States and get their degree. Even when they came back, they did not immediately get the job. They had to work under the non-Native manager for "X" number of years before they were promoted.*

—Source: *Proceedings of the Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples. Issue 13, "Evidence," meeting on October 26, 2005.*

[http://www.parl.gc.ca/38/1/parlbus/commbus/senate/Com-e/abor-e/13evb-e.htm?Language=E&Parl=38&Ses=1&comm\\_id=1](http://www.parl.gc.ca/38/1/parlbus/commbus/senate/Com-e/abor-e/13evb-e.htm?Language=E&Parl=38&Ses=1&comm_id=1)

- 1 Construct a chart with two columns: "Principles of Individualism" and "Principles of Collectivism." Identify the main ideas and corresponding evidence in Chief Louie's comments that would go in each column. Based on his comments, do you think Chief Louie favours individualism, collectivism, or a balance of the two?
- 2 Imagine that you had the responsibility of Chief Louie. What programs would you create for the Osoyoos Indian Band to motivate young people? What businesses would you try to develop in order to inspire young members of the Band to further their education, aspire to good jobs, and so on?
- 3 Choose a reserve near you, or one that you are interested in finding out more about. Research the economic development activities on this reserve. Alternatively, research a business run on a Métis settlement or an Aboriginal business not on a reserve or Métis settlement. Compare it to the situation of the Osoyoos Band. Are the values of individualism and collectivism being integrated in a similar way? What differences exist between the two situations?

## Up in Smoke: Exploring the Characteristics of Ideologies

Debate: Should the government infringe on a smoker's individual freedom in order to promote the well-being of society?

*There is no doubt that the anti-smokers are pushing very hard to prohibit the choice to smoke, many times in unscrupulous ways—and that they are using carefully “spun” techniques of instigating intolerance in order to do this.*

*Our job will be to push back with equal force.*

—Source: Forces Canada (part of the Forces International smokers' rights movement).

<http://www.forces.org/canada/canf.htm>

*Professional, dynamic advocacy based on solid research and critical thinking have been the hallmark of the NSRA [Non-Smokers' Rights Association] since its inception. Thanks to ongoing efforts in coalition-building with national, provincial and local health and community groups, the association has helped bring about a sea change in Canadian attitudes towards the tobacco industry and its deadly products.*

—Source: Non-Smokers' Rights Association, “What is the NSRA?”

<http://www.nsra-adnf.ca/cms/index.cfm>

### Questions to Guide You

Use the following questions to guide your exploration of the sources that your teacher will provide, or that you locate on the Internet, about this debate topic.

1. Who wrote the article? What are the author's qualifications to speak on this topic?
2. What is the author's or organization's perspective? What assumptions or judgments about others are being made?
3. What are the different points of view on this issue? What beliefs about the nature of society are represented in the different views? What similarities exist among the various sources?
4. What is your viewpoint on the issue? How does your viewpoint reflect your beliefs and values about the kind of society we should live in? Why is it not ethical to belittle another's position in order to support your own?
5. Now that you can compare your assumptions and beliefs about this issue with others, has your initial position changed? What other evidence might you need to alter your position, if you were inclined to do so?

## Explore the Issues

### Concept Review

- 1 a) Identify three expressions of individualist principles in modern society.  
b) Identify three expressions of collectivist principles in modern society.  
c) Identify two examples of individualism and collectivism coexisting in modern society.

### Concept Application

- 2 Compare and contrast an example of individualism from today with one from the past.

- 3 Compare and contrast an example of collectivism from today with one from the past.
- 4 Describe a personal example of individualism, and explain whether it was beneficial to you or not.
- 5 Draw a Venn diagram that shows how the principles of individualism and collectivism overlap. Think of another example, not discussed in this section, of how individualism and collectivism can complement each other, and create a second Venn diagram to show their complementary aspects.



## Reflect and Analyze

In this chapter you explored the concepts of individualism and collectivism and the principles upon which they are based. You saw the dynamic relationship between these two concepts, including the ways that they can conflict. You considered the impact of these opposing ideologies in the world as well as their influence on personal identity. You now have a good foundation for responding to the Chapter Issue: *To what extent are individualism and collectivism foundations of ideology?* You can also refine your response to the Related Issue for Part 1: *To what extent should ideology be the foundation of identity?* Think about the extent to which you want individualism or collectivism to influence your personal identity. Discuss this issue with your peers and with your parents or other significant people in your life.

### Respond to Ideas

- 1 a) A U-shape forum promotes open-ended discussions in which participants are encouraged to see the merits of all sides of an issue and to accept positions along a continuum. Use a U-shape forum to discuss the following issue: To what extent should society play a role in child care?

Set up your desks in a U-shape.

Students with strongly held views should sit at either tip of the U, while students with mixed views should sit at appropriate spots along the rounded part of the U. As an example, for the question of child care, students who believe that families should find their own solutions rather than relying on government assistance should sit on the right side of the U. Students who believe that the government should run no-fee child care centres funded by taxes should sit on the left side of the U. Students who believe in a compromise between these positions should sit along the rounded part of the U. You are encouraged to move along

the continuum during the discussion as your position on the issue changes. If you decide to move, share your reasons with the rest of the class.

- b) When you have completed the U-shape forum activity, create an essay, a poster, a poem, or a PowerPoint presentation answering the following question: *To what extent are individualism and collectivism foundations of your identity?*

### Respond to Issues

- 2 *Play It Out!* In small groups, create a card game that addresses the following issue: *To what extent should ideology be the foundation of identity?*

- a) Go back through this chapter and create “principle cards” and “example cards.”
- b) Decide what kind of card game you will create. An example might be “Go Fish!” where players must match up a principle of individualism or collectivism to an example of that principle. For example, one card of a pair might say “economic freedom,” and the other might say “free-market economy.”

This card game is intended to act as a review of what you have learned as well as an examination of the influence that ideological values have on people’s actions and the structure of societies.

### Recognize Relationships between Concepts, Issues, and Citizenship

- 3 Work in pairs to prepare a one-on-one interview between a news media host and an Aboriginal leader on the following issue: Does a Canadian liberal democratic government conflict both practically and ideologically with traditional Aboriginal worldview? Conduct research to ensure that your questions and answers are well informed.