

Exploring Collectivism

Key Skill:

Evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of arguments and evidence

Key Terms and Concepts:

- adherence to collective norms
- collective interest
- collective responsibility
- collective will
- collectivism
- common good
- communism
- co-operation
- Crown corporations
- Crown land
- economic equality
- human interdependence
- public property
- social contract
- socialism

Key Issue:

To what extent should we embrace an ideology?

Related Issue:

Should ideology be the foundation of identity?

Chapter Issue:
Should the values of collectivism shape an ideology?

Question for Inquiry #1:
What are some key understandings of collectivism?

Question for Inquiry #2:
How are the values of collectivism expressed politically?

Question for Inquiry #3:
How are the values of collectivism expressed economically?

Question for Inquiry #4:
How are the values of collectivism expressed socially?

The Medicine Hat Skateboard Association is a group of people who share a passion for skateboarding. Not only do they love to skateboard, but they also desire to use the talents that they have been given to shine a light in some dark places of this world. They have shown that they are committed to achieving the goals they set, regardless of the sacrifice that must be made...

The greatest asset that our organization has is teenagers and leaders who are willing to make a difference in the world around them. These guys are constantly coming up with new ideas on how to do just that. They have shown that they have the passion to challenge themselves and their community, and have pushed hard to reach the goals they place on themselves.

—Source: "About Us." Medicine Hat Skateboard Association, http://www.medhatskate.com/?page_id=7.



▲ Figure 3-1 Members of the Medicine Hat Skateboard Association in Nigeria, 2007.

The Medicine Hat Skateboard Association is a group of young skateboarders who share an interest in skateboarding as well as an interest in helping others. In 2006, they travelled to Mexico to help build houses with Youth With A Mission Canada, and in 2007, they travelled to Nigeria to help build a hospital, drill wells, and build a library.

When people work together in this way, they are not thinking only of their own self-interests to contribute to the common good. They are also actively working for the good of society as a whole. How important are values of collectivism to you?

Chapter Issue:

Should the values of collectivism shape an ideology?

Generally speaking, collectivism refers to when one considers the needs of a group to further the common good, rather than focusing on the needs of any of the group's individual members. In this chapter, you will explore how values of collectivism can shape ideologies politically, economically, and socially. In doing so, you will address the Chapter Issue: *Should the values of collectivism shape an ideology?* Or, in other words, would you like to live in a society whose values focus more on collectivism?

Understandings of Collectivism

Question for Inquiry

1. What are some key understandings of collectivism?

In this section ...

Early
Collectivist
Ideas

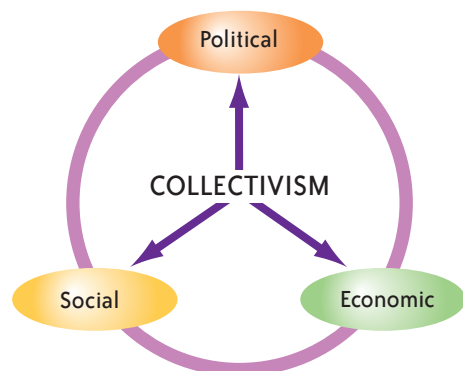


Figure 3-2 ▲ Collectivism, just like individualism, can be expressed in three different areas of society: political, social, and economic.



Figure 3-3 ▲ One of the central ideas of collectivism is human interdependence. Can you think of examples of interdependence in society today? Are there ways in which you depend on the people around you in your daily life?

A **collective** is a group of people; the term can refer to a family, tribe, group of people who work together, ethnic, cultural, or linguistic group, nation, or group of any size. **Collectivism** emphasizes the role of **human interdependence** in society: the idea that individuals do not live their lives in isolation, but rather depend on one another in many ways. Collectivism sees human beings as social creatures and emphasizes the idea that companionship and the support and approval of others contribute to our personal happiness and fulfillment.

For example, in Canada, all people of working age contribute a portion of their wages toward Employment Insurance. Unless you are laid off from a job or go on maternity leave, you may never receive any benefits from this social program. On one hand, an individualist might see this as unfair, pointing out that many people who contribute to the program will never receive anything from it. On the other hand, a collectivist might argue that everyone has at least the possibility of benefiting from the program, and that Canadians, as a group, support the program because they continue to elect governments that maintain the program.

There are many different interpretations of collectivism, but most agree that some of collectivism's central values are collective responsibility, collective interest, co-operation, economic equality, adherence to collective norms, and public property. These collectivist values will be explored throughout the chapter.

Early Collectivist Ideas

Ideas of collectivism can be found in many cultures. Anthropological studies tell us that most if not all of the earliest human societies were collectivist because they could survive only by working and hunting as part of a group.

Many Aboriginal peoples in Canada have values of collectivism in their traditional cultures. These values are reflected in a concern for the **common good** when dealing with issues such as land management, community decision making, and educating and raising children. Leroy Little Bear is a member of the Blackfoot Confederacy, an internationally respected Aboriginal writer, educator, and constitutional legal advisor, and is recognized as one of North America's leaders in Aboriginal and Indian philosophy. Little Bear comments on the importance of the community in Aboriginal societies in his essay "Jagged Worldviews Colliding."

The value of wholeness speaks to the totality of creation, the group as opposed to the individual, the forest as opposed to the individual trees. It focuses on the totality of constant flux rather than on individual patterns. This value is reflected in the customs and organization of Plains Indian tribes, where the locus of social organization is the extended family, not the immediate, biological family. Several extended families combine to form a band. Several bands combine to form a tribe or nation; several tribes or nations combine to form confederacies...

—Source: Leroy Little Bear, "Jagged Worldviews Colliding."
Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision ed. Marie Battiste
(Vancouver, BC: UBC Press, 2000), p. 79.

Some First Nations' worldviews reflect the interconnectedness among people in a society. The individual is seen as part of a collective and the strength of a community comes from the relationships among these individuals. This type of worldview can be described as holistic, meaning that the whole society is more valuable than the individual components would be if they were separate.



PAUSE AND REFLECT

To what groups or collectives do you belong? Consider all areas of your life: your immediate family, your extended family, your circle of friends, your age group, as well as the ethnic, cultural, or linguistic group to which you belong.

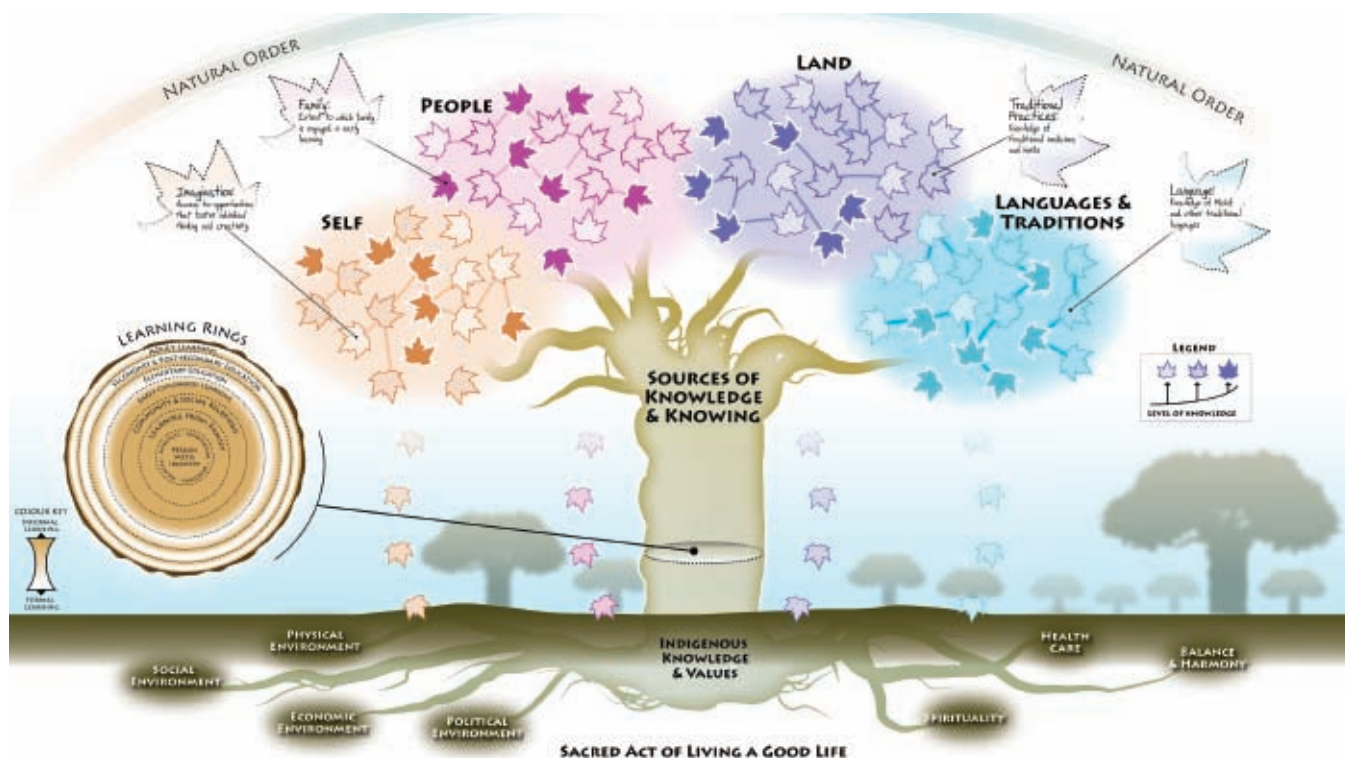


Figure 3-4 This is an illustration of one Métis worldview. The Métis Holistic Lifelong Learning Model represents a link between lifelong learning and community well-being, illustrating a “view of lifelong learning as a part of a regenerative, living system—the ‘Natural Order’ that governs the passage of seasons and encompasses a community (or forest) of learners. Within this organic system, relationships are interconnected, and balance and harmony are maintained.”

Source: Métis Holistic Lifelong Learning Model, 2007, Canadian Council on Learning, http://www.ccl-cca.ca/pdfs/RedefiningSuccess/CCL_Learning_Model_MET.pdf.

PAUSE AND REFLECT

Keep this diagram in mind while reading this chapter. How does this worldview relate to other views on collectivism?

Summary

Collectivism is based on the idea that individuals do not live their lives in isolation, but rather depend on one another in many ways. Collectivist ideas have been around for a very long time. For example, many Indigenous peoples in North America followed collectivist values by focusing on the importance of the needs of the community to achieve the **common good**, rather than focusing on the needs of the individual alone.

Have you ever done something because you knew that it would benefit everyone else in the group and not necessarily benefit you alone? Do you ever feel that you have a sense of obligation to society by doing such things as recycling, carpooling, or obeying the law? If you answered yes to either of these questions, then you may have been influenced by a sense of collectivism.

Examples of collectivism can be seen from many perspectives and be expressed in different ways in political, economic, and social areas. These different areas and how they relate to collectivism will be explored in the remaining sections of this chapter.

Knowledge and Understanding

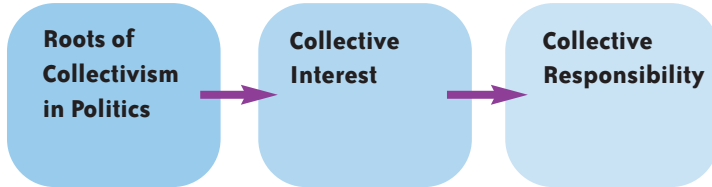
- Using the Métis Holistic Lifelong Learning Model (see Figure 3-4) as an example, create a diagram that illustrates your own worldview. Make sure your diagram captures your views on the values of collectivism and individualism in your identity.

Political Expressions of Collectivism

Question for Inquiry

2. How are the values of collectivism expressed politically?

In this section ...



▲
◀ **Figure 3-5** The Métis Nation of Alberta Association is one of several Métis organizations in Canada who are members of the Métis National Council's Board of Governors. The Métis National Council (MNC) elects a National President at its annual assembly and, together with the Board of Governors, collectively represents the interests of the Métis Nation in Canada at a national and international level. In the photograph, Métis citizens and leaders announce the details of a historic lawsuit filed against the Alberta government regarding Métis harvesting rights. Can you think of other groups that also demonstrate political expressions of collectivism in Canada? Explain.

Roots of Collectivism in Politics

An early example of a political theory of collectivism can be found in the work of Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778), an Enlightenment thinker from Geneva, Switzerland. In his essay *The Social Contract*, he explains the idea that each individual living in a society has a **social contract** with all the other members of that society. According to Rousseau, individuals voluntarily give up their own self-interests to follow the **collective will** of society. This general will aims to promote the common good of society, and it encourages liberty and equality among individuals. It applies to everyone equally, because everyone has chosen it. These basic ideas have become the political foundations for many collectivist values. Rousseau's thinking influenced the development of the concept of modern democracy, and the ideologies of **socialism** and **communism**.

PAUSE AND REFLECT

Based on Hobbes' view of human nature, what form of government do you think he might have wanted? Why?

Like Rousseau, English philosopher Thomas Hobbes believed that individuals living in a society had a social contract with one another. Unlike Rousseau, who thought that people were good by nature, Hobbes had a pessimistic view of human character. He argued that people lived as a society and gave power to a strong government to govern in everyone's interests and to avoid constant conflict with one another. He described the life of the individual in a world without government as "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short." He also wrote,

...during the time men live without a common power to keep them all in awe, they are in that condition which is called war; and such a war as is of every man against every man.

—Source: Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Chapter XIII, "Of the Natural Condition of Mankind as Concerning Their Felicity and Misery," 1651. *Great Voyages: The History of Western Philosophy*, <http://oregonstate.edu/instruct/phl302/texts/hobbes/leviathan-c.html>.

In 1848, political philosopher Karl Marx published *The Communist Manifesto* with fellow socialist Friedrich Engels. *The Communist Manifesto* eventually became one of the most influential political documents in the world. Throughout his life, Marx studied the capitalist system. He believed that capitalism created poor living and working conditions for working-class people. Marx proposed a classless society, which could be achieved if the workers united and took collective control of industries and property. Marx believed that all property should be shared for the common good, and not for the good of a select few. Marx's beliefs are explored further in the section on economic expressions of collectivism (see page 78).

PAUSE AND REFLECT

Who do you think should decide what is in the best interest of the group?

Collective Interest

Today, these ideas on the role of the collective are still visible in our society. For example, one of the fundamental ideas in most collectivist ideologies is the concept of **collective interest**. Collective interest can be thought of as a goal or ideal that all members of a group pursue that benefits the group as a whole, rather than benefiting any one individual in the group. In this situation, individuals base their decisions and actions on the common goal of the group, even if this means that they must sacrifice their personal goals and interests. In this type of thinking, individual excellence is encouraged only if it benefits or does not harm the group. An individual's efforts for the sake of his or her own self-interest may be looked down on and, in some cases, punished.

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

The OIF's Charter and missions are based on the importance of the French language to the identity and heritage of the world's Francophone

countries and peoples, and as a tool of communication, thought, and creativity that encourages the exchange of experiences between peoples.

The OIF has the following four missions:

- *promouvoir la langue française et la diversité culturelle et linguistique*
- *promouvoir la paix, la démocratie et les droits de l'Homme*
- *appuyer l'éducation, la formation, l'enseignement supérieur et la recherche*
- *développer la coopération au service du développement durable et de la solidarité*

Translation:

- *promote the French language and cultural and linguistic diversity*
- *promote peace, democracy, and human rights*
- *support education, training, higher education, and research*
- *develop co-operation in order to serve sustainable development and solidarity*

—Source: “L’OIF.” **Organisation internationale de la Francophonie**, <http://www.francophonie.org/oif/missions.cfm>.

Article 1 of the AFN’s Charter includes the following text:

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, April 2003**.
Assembly of First Nations, <http://www.afn.ca/article.asp?id=57>.

Collectives represent people with common interests and goals who come together to press for change and reform. One example of a political expression of collective interest can be found in recognition of collective rights; in Canada, there are some specific legal collective rights guaranteed in the Charter and Constitution for Aboriginal peoples and official language groups. Collective interest can also have major economic and social effects, such as when labour unions pursue the collective interests of their individual members to achieve more favourable contracts or working conditions.

Collective Responsibility

As well as pursuing the collective interest for their members, labour unions also have a duty to ensure that the members of the union are doing the best job possible. They often have rules of conduct that members must follow. This is also known as collective responsibility. **Collective responsibility** has two different aspects. The first aspect involves the group’s responsibility for the actions of all its individual members. In other words, the group may be rewarded for an individual’s accomplishments, or it may be punished for an individual’s wrongdoing. The other aspect deals with the notion that individuals have a responsibility to the group rather than to themselves.

Figure 3-6 ►

The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) is an organization that represents First Nations citizens in Canada on a national level; it currently represents over 630 communities in Canada. As an organization representing collective interests, the AFN includes representation from First Nations Chiefs and Regional Leaders in Canada and elects a National Chief every three years. The AFN could be seen as a political expression of collectivism that works to address common issues and improve the quality of life of First Nations citizens in Canada.



Figure 3-7 ▲ Edmonton’s Local 488 United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices of the Plumbing and Pipefitting Industry has more than 10 000 members and is the largest construction trades local union in North America. During a recent election (March 2008), Local 488 ran a series of public ad campaigns in an effort to influence how its members should vote in the provincial election. One issue highlighted by the union was Bill 26, which prevents Albertans in certain jobs, such as, ambulance workers, from being able to strike legally. In this situation, the provincial government’s perspective could be seen as focusing on its collective responsibility to maintain public health and safety for all citizens. Local 488’s perspective could be seen as emphasizing its collective responsibility to protect the rights of workers.

Both of these ideas are important to the value of collective responsibility because they reinforce the idea of the group taking precedence over the individual.

A supporter of collectivist thinking might point to environmental policies as an example of the positive impact collective responsibility can have on society. Many special interest groups lobby the government to enact stronger environmental laws. If we, as Canadians, do not adopt practices such as recycling, reducing energy consumption, using cleaner fuel sources, or carpooling, our actions will affect not only ourselves but the entire world. Do we have a collective responsibility as a society to ensure that the world can sustain life for generations to come?



Collective Responsibility in Aboriginal Communities

The idea of collective responsibility and its impact on future generations in some Aboriginal communities is explained by

Calgary Community YMCA Aboriginal Programs and Services Director, Jesse Halton:

“Collective responsibility is an innate character in Aboriginal cultures. If one person in the community is suffering, the whole community suffers. Aboriginal communities traditionally strive to maintain the balance of the whole and rectify the broken harmony. It is our responsibility as Aboriginal people to ensure the well-being of future generations. Every step and decision an individual makes in their personal life journey must ensure the well-being of the next seven generations. This is the Seventh Generation philosophy.”

—Jesse Halton (Aboriginal Programs and Services Director, Calgary Community YMCA), email exchange with Laura Phui (author), October, 2008.

- 1 Explain why some Aboriginal peoples believe that decisions today must consider the well-being of the next seven generations.
- 2 Identify the main idea being shared in the source about collective responsibility. Do you consider the effects of your decisions and actions on future generations? If so, provide examples. If not, how might your life be different if you did?

Collective Responsibility and the Legal System

Aspects of collective responsibility are expressed in Canada’s legal system in several ways. For example, restorative justice programs are one way in which Canada’s justice system incorporates relationships with the community and collective responsibility in its treatment of criminal acts.

According to the website of the Department of Justice Canada,

Restorative justice programs involve the voluntary participation of the victim of the crime and the offender and ideally members of the community, in discussions. The goal is to “restore” the relationship, fix the damage that has been done and prevent further crimes from occurring.

Restorative justice requires wrongdoers to recognize the harm they have caused, to accept responsibility for their actions and to be actively involved in improving the situation. Wrongdoers must make reparation to victims, themselves and the community.

—Source: Department of Justice Canada,
<http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/pi/pcvi-cpcv/res-rep.html>.



Sentencing Circles and Conferencing

Examine the examples provided about sentencing circles and community conferencing. In what ways do these programs reflect collective responsibility and the values of collectivism and individualism in the Canadian justice system?

Sentencing circles were introduced into the Canadian justice system in part because of a perceived bias in the justice system against Aboriginal people. Aboriginal youth and adults make up a disproportionate amount of federal and provincial prison populations. The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples addresses this in its statement:

The current Canadian justice system, especially the criminal justice system, has failed the aboriginal people of Canada. The principal reason for this crushing failure is the fundamental different world view between European Canadians and aboriginal peoples with respect to such elemental issues as the substantive content of justice and the process for achieving justice.

—Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, Aboriginal Peoples and the Justice System. (Ottawa: Canada Communication Group, 1993).

The following is an example of a sentencing circle process in action in Canada, the Tsuu T'ina First Nation's Peacemaker Court, developed by the Tsuu T'ina/Stoney Corrections Society in Alberta in collaboration with Department of Justice Canada:

The Tsuu T'ina Peacemaker Court has two aspects. First, a provincial court was established on the Tsuu T'ina Reserve... The judge, the prosecutor, the court clerks, the court worker, and the probation officer are Aboriginal people. Some of the defence lawyers who appear are Aboriginal.

The protocols of the Court reflect Tsuu T'ina traditions... These measures are taken so that the Tsuu T'ina will see the Court as their court, their system of justice, and their wish for peace and order in their community.

...Peacemaking was made an integral part of the court process. A Tsuu T'ina peacemaker sits across from the Crown prosecutor. When a person charged with an offence is willing to enter into peacemaking, the case is adjourned while the Peacemaker

Coordinator assesses the case and decides whether to take it into peacemaking.

The Tsuu T'ina...asked the elders what offences could be dealt with by peacemaking. After deliberating, the elders advised that any offence could be considered for peacemaking except homicide or sexual assaults. The Tsuu T'ina also decided that they would do peacemaking only if the victim of the offence agrees to participate. The Peacemaker Coordinator also considers other factors before deciding to accept the matter into peacemaking.

If a case is accepted into peacemaking, the Peacemaker Coordinator assigns the matter to a community peacemaker. He chooses a person who will be seen as being someone who will be fair to both sides. The peacemaker then takes charge of the process.

The Tsuu T'ina chose their peacemakers from the community by asking the members of every household on the Reserve who they trusted to be fair in peacemaking. By this process they identified people who could be peacemakers for the community.

—Honourable L.S. Tony Mandamin, in consultation with Ellery Starlight and Monica Onespot, Native Law Centre of Canada, "Peacemaking and the Tsuu T'ina Court," Justice as Healing newsletter, vol. 8, no. 1 (Spring, 2003), http://www.usask.ca/nativelaw/publications/jah/2003/Peace_Tsuu_Tina_Ct.pdf.

This court focuses on restorative justice rather than on justice of retribution. It follows carefully Tsuu T'ina traditional values and beliefs and has as its main objective "...to make peace between the victim, the wrongdoer and the community," and "The idea is to forgo attaching blame and instead concentrate on the action and its consequences, with the primary goal of restoring the health of the community and restore spiritual harmony."

—Norma Large, "Healing Justice." albertaviews, May/June, 2001, <http://www.albertaviews.ab.ca/issues/2001/mayjun01/mayjun01social1.pdf>.

- 1 Describe the process used in the Tsuu T'ina First Nation's Peacemaker Court. What ideas or values are identified as being most important to the success of this process?
- 2 How are the values of both collectivism and individualism used for the common good in this Tsuu T'ina First Nation's Peacemaker Court example? Which ideas or specific quotations from the sources best support your answer? Why?
- 3 How are elements of collective responsibility and the community an important part of the restorative justice process in sentencing circles, such as the Tsuu T'ina First Nation's Peacemaker Court?

PAUSE AND REFLECT

Explain some of the reasons why a person might request being sentenced through a sentencing circle instead of in youth court.

Restorative justice programs may include the following elements:

- mediated communication between victim and offender
- family group conferencing
- sentencing circles
- sentences reached by consensus

As a part of restorative justice in Canada, sentencing circles are used to determine the sentence for an offender who has been found guilty of a crime by the justice system. Normally, a sentencing circle is only recommended when the offender has strong ties to the community where the crime was committed. The circle includes the judge from the criminal trial, the prosecutor, the defence council, the offender, the victim of the crime or a representative designated by the victim, members of the community (including elders or community leaders), and family members of the offender and the victim. After discussing the crime and the impact it has had on the victim and the community, the group comes to a consensus agreement on an appropriate sentence. Sentencing circles are intended to encourage offenders to accept responsibility for their crimes, acknowledge the impact their crimes have had on the victim and the community, and initiate the process of rehabilitation and healing. The sentencing circle is a practice from some traditional Aboriginal cultures in Canada that is now being used in some Aboriginal and in a few cases non-Aboriginal communities in Canada as a recognized part of the justice system.

Variations on the sentencing circle, sometimes called victim-offender mediation or community conferencing, are also used with youth offenders. One example is Calgary Community Conferencing, started in 1998. Referrals can be made by youth court following a plea of guilty, or by the school system if a student is facing suspension or expulsion. The mediator, the victim, the offender, and family members or supporters talk together to arrive at the best solution for reconciling the offence.

Collective Responsibility in North Korea

Different than the liberal democracy in Canada, North Korea is governed by a regime whose ideology is a form of communism. The state was run by President Kim Il-sung from 1948 until his death in 1994, at which time his son, Kim Jong-il, assumed leadership. The government exercises strict control over the North Korean people and has been accused of numerous human rights violations by various international organizations. One of the policies the government uses to maintain its control over the country's citizens is an extreme form of collective responsibility.

The North Korean government's concept of collective responsibility is demonstrated by its prison system, which holds 200 000 people, according to some estimates. In 1993, Kwon Hyok was the Head of Security at prison camp 22 in Haengyong, near the border with Russia. He defected to South Korea in 1999 and gave interviews describing what life was like for the political prisoners in these prison camps.

“[P]olitical prisoners are those who say or do something against the dead President Kim Il-sung, or his son Kim Jong-il. But it also includes a wide network of next of kin. It’s designed to root out the seeds of those classed as disloyal to North Korea.

Figure 3-8 Locations of North Korea’s secret prison camps are marked in black. Because of the North Korean government’s control of the media, it is difficult to obtain information about the camps. Why do you think the government would try to prevent people from speaking out about these camps?



Source: Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, <http://www.hrnk.org/hidden/gulag/pdf/Overview.pdf>.

There is a watchdog system in place between members of five different families. So if I were caught trying to escape, then my family and the four neighbouring families are shot to death out of collective responsibility.”

Hyok also recalled incidents of chemical experiments being performed on political prisoners and had this to say about those memories:

“I had no sympathy at all because I was taught to think that they were all enemies of our country and that all our country’s problems were their fault. So I felt they deserved to die.”

—Source: Kwon Hyok, quoted in Olenka Frenkiel, “Within prison walls.” BBC News, January 30, 2004, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/this_world/3440771.stm.

PAUSE AND REFLECT

If you were a North Korean prisoner thinking about trying to escape, and then realized that the four families surrounding your own would be put to death because of your individual action, would this make you reconsider your decision? Why?

Summary

Collectivist ideas have a long history, with expressions from many perspectives and societies. In Europe, Hobbes and Rousseau explored political expressions of the values of collectivism, and their writings influenced Western European politics in the 1600s and 1700s. These writers wrote about the **social contract** that exists between members of a society. They also wrote about the **collective will** of a society, which means that individuals voluntarily give up their own self-interest for the sake of the group. Later, Marx expanded on these ideas in his book *The Communist Manifesto*.

Collective interest has become an important aspect of collectivism in politics today. This is the idea of a goal or ideal that benefits a whole group, rather than any one individual in the group. **Collective responsibility**, another important aspect of collectivism, refers to the rules and conduct that members of a group must follow. It involves the idea that the group is responsible for the actions of all its individual members and that individuals have a responsibility to the group.

Knowledge and Understanding

- 1 Do you agree with Hobbes’s view that the life of the individual in a society without government is “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short”? Explain.
- 2 List some ways that labour unions act as a collective to promote the political interests of their members.
- 3 Reread the section on collective responsibility in North Korea. Consider the values of individualism in the context of North Korean society. Based on Hyok’s description of the prison system, do you think that collective responsibility is an effective way to “root out the seeds of those classed as disloyal to North Korea”? Do you believe that there may be other reasons behind these actions, such as use of fear or terror to maintain power and control? Explain.

- 4 Compare the three examples of collective responsibility discussed in this section (sentencing circles, the restorative justice programs, and North Korean prison camps) in a chart like the one below. Which elements of collective responsibility do you most identify with from these examples? Why?

Collective responsibility in...

Sentencing Circles	Restorative Justice Programs	North Korean Prison Camps

- 5 Explain the idea of collective responsibility in your own words. Provide examples of collective responsibility from your own experience.

“The rich will do anything for the poor but get off their backs,” is a quotation widely attributed to Karl Marx, the 19th-century German philosopher and revolutionary. Marx believed that to get rid of economic and social inequality, workers had to unite and take over industrial production by staging a revolution. He also believed that the classes of society (for example, working, middle, and upper) would eventually disappear, and people would live in communism.

In many ways, Marx was very concerned with the rights and freedoms of individuals, and this motivated his beliefs. For example, he did not believe that one individual had the right to rule over (or oppress) another. Many of Marx’s beliefs were collectivist, and he believed strongly in such ideas as working co-operatively for the common good and sharing property.

Integrating Values of Collectivism and Individualism

Have you ever heard the saying “Spend some. Save some. Give some away”? If you were a millionaire, what would you do with the money? Would you spend it on yourself? Invest it for the future? How much of it would you give away?

Not everyone in Canada earns the same amount of money or has the same quality of life. Some people get by on very little, while others make and spend millions. Most Canadians fall somewhere in between these two extremes. The gap between the two can be referred to as a disparity of incomes.

In Canadian society, there is not much **economic equality**; however, there is some limited “sharing of the wealth” in the form of government taxation that then pays for government-funded social programs. All working Canadians are expected to pay income taxes that fund government programs, such as Employment Insurance, which exist for the benefit of all Canadians should they need them. You may or may not use any of these programs during your lifetime.

Canadian society integrates the values of both collectivism and individualism when it comes to the economy. In what ways do Canadians value self-reliance, individual achievement, and competition? In what ways do Canadians “share the wealth”?

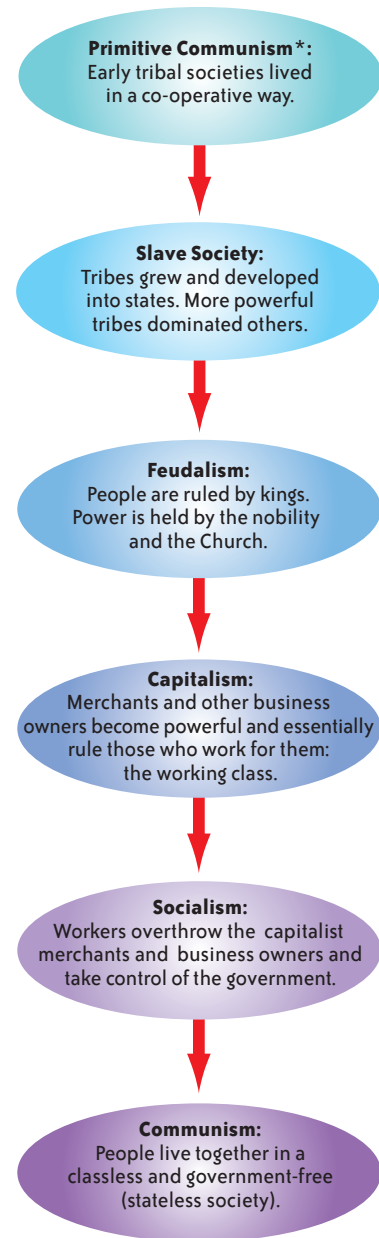
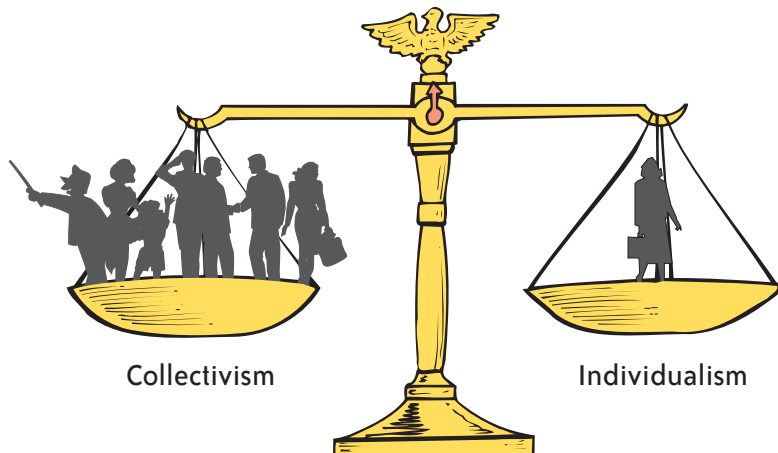


Figure 3-10 ▲ The development of society according to Marx

*Source: *A Dictionary of Sociology* ed. Gordon Marshall (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1998). Encyclopedia.com, <http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1088-primitivecommunism.html>.

◀ **Figure 3-11** Are some of the values of collectivism and individualism compatible with each other? To what extent can we balance individual interests and the interests of the common good in society? Explain your answers.

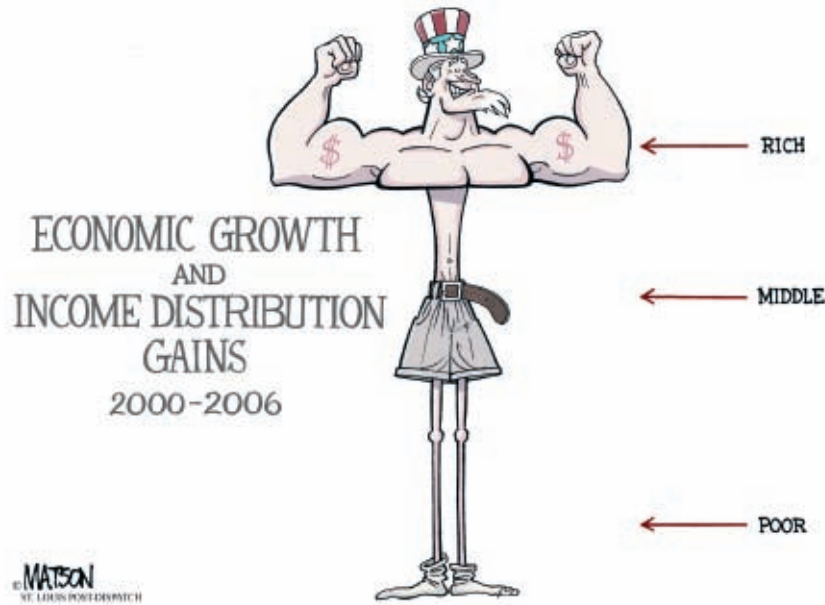


Economics in the Headlines

Consider the following newspaper headlines and the summary of the economic situation outlined in each article:

Headlines	Economic Situation
<p>The Gazette June 1919</p> <p>Unemployment leads to workers protesting: One protestor dies</p>	<p>Massive unemployment and unrest occurred when soldiers returned to Canada at the end of the First World War. Unemployed and poorly paid workers from many industries took to the streets in the Winnipeg General Strike.</p>
<p>The Herald October 29, 1929</p> <p>Stock market crashes: People lose life savings!</p>	<p>After the post-First World War economic boom, many people began to invest borrowed money in stocks. In a panic sell-off of people's stocks, companies went bankrupt overnight and banks recalled their loans. Investors were caught and could not repay their loans.</p>
<p>The Tribune September 1935</p> <p>Premier "Bible Bill" Aberhart election promise: \$25 a month for each Albertan</p>	<p>The Prairies were hard hit during the Great Depression. A combination of drought conditions and a slumping economy led to poverty for many.</p>
<p>The National January 2006</p> <p>Oil-rich Alberta issues \$400 "prosperity cheque" for every citizen</p>	<p>Worldwide supply and demand for oil resulted in increasing profits for oil-rich Alberta. The Alberta provincial government, having received billions of dollars in royalties, announced that it was going to share some of these earnings with the people of Alberta, who own the resource.</p>
<p>Reuters October 2008</p> <p>Governments bail out banks</p>	<p>Governments around the world announced plans to pay hundreds of billions of dollars to bail out banks in several countries to try to prevent the world's worst financial crisis in nearly 80 years.</p>

- 1 What messages and values do the first two headlines have in common? What points of view or perspectives do you believe are reflected by these headlines and the details provided?
- 2 How would the events that are happening in these two headlines affect how people began to view the role of government in protecting the society as a whole?
- 3 What messages and values do the last three headlines communicate regarding the role of government and the redistribution of wealth in the community? What points of view or perspectives do you believe are reflected by these headlines? Which headline and economic situation do you believe provides the strongest or most engaging argument for or against government involvement in the economy? Why?



◀ **Figure 3-12** What does this political cartoon say about economic equality, or inequality?

READING GUIDE

Political cartoons are created as a commentary on relevant issues. To effectively interpret political cartoons, make sure you read all the text in the cartoon. Begin with the title and then move to the subtitles and any other text. Then, examine the visual, and look for familiar faces or symbols. It may also be helpful to research recent news stories to find out to what situation the cartoon refers.

Public Property

As you may remember from Chapter 2, the right to own private property is a key value of individualist movements. Collectivist movements, on the other hand, often promote the idea of public property. **Public property** is anything—for example, land, buildings, or vehicles—that is not privately owned by an individual or individuals. Generally speaking, public property is owned by the state and managed according to the best interests of society. Making property public is seen as one way to address the issue of economic inequality.

Different ideologies support the idea of public property to varying degrees. In a communist state, all industries could be public property: property controlled by the state for the common good of the collective. Marx and other collectivist thinkers argued that workers should profit from their own labour, and therefore the workers should collectively own factories and businesses. According to *The Communist Manifesto*, “the theory of the Communists may be summed up in the single sentence: Abolition of private property.” (Source: Karl Marx, *The Communist Manifesto*, Chapter 2, 1848. Marxists Internet Archive, <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/ch02.htm>.)

Someone who supports the ideas of collectivism might argue that, not only is public property fairer for the workers, but it also provides a source of motivation: since every worker has a stake, they will all have a greater interest in a project’s success.

Some critics of collectivism argue that the idea of public property is based on an unrealistic view of human nature. When the group is small, and each individual’s actions have a noticeable effect on the collective effort, it is easier to maintain people’s motivation; however, in larger groups,

PAUSE AND REFLECT

Brainstorm to make a list of all of your private property. How would your life be different if all private property were abolished?

each individual may be less motivated to contribute because his or her effort is a very small part of the collective effort, and some believe that their efforts will make little difference.

The concept of public property is also present to a lesser extent in liberal democracies, such as Canada. For example, the Canadian federal and provincial governments own large areas of land, known as **Crown land**. This land can be rented back or leased to individuals or companies as a way to economically benefit the Canadian people. Canadian governments also own companies called **Crown corporations** that are formed to serve the common good. Quite often they are infrastructure companies or essential resources, such as utilities. Parks, schools, hospitals, and roads are also examples of property that the government manages in the interest of the public, and these properties are maintained with public money raised through taxation. Can you see any advantages to government owning and managing some property in the interests of citizens?

Figure 3-13 Many parks, such as Jasper National Park, are on Crown land owned and shared by the people of Canada.



PAUSE AND REFLECT

**What other collectivist-based communities exist in Canada?
How do these communities express their collectivist values?**

Some religious communities embrace collectivist values such as public property. The Hutterites are a Christian community in North America that has 45 000 members in approximately 460 colonies, mostly in Western Canada. Hutterite colonies practise the concept of 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 any one individual, including land, houses, and vehicles. When individual members need an item, they ask the colony, and the item is bought for them. Members are discouraged from earning personal spending money.

Privatization of Natural Resources

Different governments have different ideas about whether resources should be managed by private interests or by the government. Those with more collectivist values generally prefer government ownership, and those with more individualist values usually prefer private ownership; however, some type of balance between the two may also be considered desirable by some with collectivist and individualist values. Many countries allow private enterprises to extract natural resources for commercial profit. In Canada, the extraction and production of natural resources, such as oil, natural gas, and lumber by privately owned companies forms a major segment of our national economy, and millions of people benefit economically from these activities both directly and indirectly.

Privatization is the transfer of property or resources from public or government control to private control. Some people argue that the harvesting and privatization of natural resources can have harmful consequences for society. To what extent should governments be allowed to privatize natural resource development? Explain your answer.

An International Example of Privatizing Resources

Water is an essential requirement of life, yet those of us who have easy access to it do not usually think twice about it, not seeing it as a valuable, potentially scarce resource that could be sold as a product to those who can afford it. In 1999, the Bolivian government granted an American company (Bechtel) a 40-year privatization lease to control the supply of water in the city of Cochabamba. Water rates for the citizens of Cochabamba increased dramatically. From January until April 2000, the people of Cochabamba took to the streets to riot against the privatization of this vital resource.

Oscar Olivera, the executive secretary of the Bolivian Federation of Factory Workers and spokesperson for the Committee in the Defense of Water and Life in Cochabamba, emerged as the leader of the nationwide protest movement against water privatization in Bolivia. In an interview he gave to *Democracy Now!* on October 5, 2006, Oscar Olivera said,

“The government, under a law that was passed, conceded control of the water under a monopoly to Bechtel in a certain area. So that means that Bechtel tried to charge a fee and had the monopoly power over a very basic necessity for people. The law said even that people had to ask, had to obtain a permit to collect rainwater. That means that even rainwater was privatized. The most serious thing was that indigenous communities and farming communities, who for years had their own water rights, those water sources were converted into property that could be bought and sold by international corporations.”



▲ **Figure 3-14** In April 2000, demonstrators in Cochabamba, Bolivia, wave the Bolivian flag as they participate in a strike against water utility rate increases. Why would people oppose the privatization of an essential natural resource such as water? What does this say about collective interest versus private property?

READING GUIDE

Who do you think has the more convincing argument? To evaluate an argument you need to determine its strengths and weaknesses. Ask these questions:

- Does all the evidence support the position effectively?
- Does the argument leave out any important or relevant information?
- Are appropriate and consistent facts used strategically to build a strong argument?

PAUSE AND REFLECT

Do you think there is public property that governments should not privatize because of the potential harmful effects on society?



▲ **Figure 3-15** The UFA (United Farmers of Alberta) Co-operative Limited is an Alberta-based organization committed to serving rural communities. It offers products and services in retail operations, petroleum, and construction, and has more than 110 000 members.

In confronting that situation, the people rose up, confronted Bechtel, and during five months of mobilization, managed to defeat Bechtel, breach the contract and change the law...

—Source: Oscar Olivera, quoted in “Bolivian Activist Oscar Olivera on Bechtel’s Privatization of Rainwater and Why Evo Morales Should Remember the Ongoing Struggle Over Water.” *Democracy Now!*, October 5, 2006, <http://www.democracynow.org/article.pl?sid=06/10/05/1430200>.

Gail Apps, a spokesperson for the chief executive of Bechtel, responded to the crisis in a letter.

The Bolivian government turned to Aguas del Tunari [Bechtel’s operating name in Cochabamba] two years ago for its ability to effectively manage water and wastewater systems and to deliver capital for development. The need was obvious: Cochabamba’s water systems were inadequate, unhealthful, and poorly run. The local utility had operated at a loss for years and provided ever-declining service. More than 40 percent of the population lacked water and sewage connections. The rates were inequitable—higher-volume users (mostly the well-to-do) were paying the lowest unit costs...

It was the government, however, that set the rates. It was also the government that insisted that those rates be increased to cover not only operating costs, but years of accumulated utility debt as well as certain unnecessary capital projects...

For the poorest people in Cochabamba rates went up little, barely 10 percent... Unfortunately, water bills sometimes went up a lot more than rates. That’s because as Aguas del Tunari improved service, increasing the hours of water service and the pressure at which it was delivered, people used a lot more water. Unfortunately, a campaign to inform residents of the changes and improvements to the service failed to prepare them for the shock of higher bills.

—Source: “Bechtel vs. Bolivia: Riley Bechtel’s Response.” *The Democracy Center*, <http://www.democracyctr.org/bolivia/investigations/water/bechtelresponse.htm>.

Co-operatives

One example of an economic collective is a co-operative. A co-operative is an enterprise that is owned and operated by a group of people for their mutual benefit. A co-operative provides products or services to its members. 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. Do you know anyone who belongs to a co-operative?

According to the Canadian Co-operative Association, there are over 10 000 co-operatives and credit unions (or *caisses populaires*) in Canada, and they provide products and services to 10 million Canadians. Four out of every ten Canadians belong to at least one co-operative. What advantages are there to membership in a co-operative? What might be some disadvantages? What economic values could be most important to members of a co-operative?

Summary

In response to the poor living and working conditions of the working class during the 1800s, new ideas about the economy began to develop in Western societies. Inspired by the writings of Karl Marx and others, people began to propose collectivist ideas such as a classless society, **public property**, and **economic equality**.

Today in Canada there exists evidence of some economic expressions of collectivist ideas, such as **Crown land** and **Crown corporations**; however, the values of collectivism can be difficult to apply in a society that places a great deal of importance on the individual. In some cases, however, collectivist economic ideas have been shown to work here. For example, the Hutterites share the rewards of their work among the whole community, and **co-operatives** allow groups to pool their resources and share benefits.

Knowledge and Understanding

- 1 In groups, discuss how governments actively promote economic equality in society. Independently, write an argument for and an argument against the involvement of government in the economy. Make a list of the strongest evidence you can find in the chapter that supports each of your arguments. Which argument do you believe is stronger? Why?
- 2 Choose an example of a Canadian Crown corporation that provides a product or service that you believe is most or least beneficial to Canadians. Investigate the example, and fill in a chart like the following:

Name of the Crown corporation	
Why the government became involved in this business	
How the government has supported this business	
Different perspectives regarding the challenges and benefits of the Crown corporation for Canadians	

- 3 Choose an example of Crown land in Canada. Investigate the example, and fill in a chart like the following:

Name and/or location of the Crown land	
Why the government owns the land	
How this land is used	
How this land use benefits Canadians	
Different perspectives regarding the challenges and benefits of this Crown land for Canadians	

- 4 Brainstorm scenarios where government and private companies work co-operatively for the good of the people. For example, how could the privatization of water in Bolivia be altered to meet everyone's needs—the government, the citizens, and Bechtel?

Social Expressions of Collectivism

Question for Inquiry

4. How are the values of collectivism expressed socially?

In this section ...



Social values influence the decisions we make about the relationships we create and develop with other people. Some aspects of an individual's identity are based on unique characteristics and experiences. Other aspects of identity come from membership in groups or collectives, and the values and interests that those groups share. Sometimes an individual's continued membership and acceptance in a group depends on his or her co-operation with other members of the group, sense of collective responsibility, and his or her respect for the group's norms, or rules of behaviour. These values—co-operation, collective responsibility, and adherence to collective norms—are important social values of collectivist ideologies.

Co-operation

Co-operation means to work together to accomplish common goals. Many people are taught the value of co-operation from a young age because the success of most group activities depends on the ability of people to co-operate, whether they are playing together on a sports team, working in groups to get an assignment done, or working on community service projects such as those of the skateboarders from the Medicine Hat Skateboard Association.

Co-operation is an important value in collectivist thinking; when individuals put the goals of the group ahead of their personal goals and when public property is shared to some extent by everyone, people are demonstrating a social expression of collective values.

◀ **Figure 3-16** On page 67 you were introduced to the Medicine Hat Skateboard Association. In 2007, members of the Medicine Hat Skateboard Association travelled across Alberta and British Columbia to work on community service projects. Starting at home, the team kicked off the tour by lending a hand at the Medicine Hat Food Bank. The team then drove to Calgary, where they spent the morning working with homeless people at the Mustard Seed. There they handed out clothes, washed floors and showers, and served hundreds of lunches. To what extent do the actions of the association represent collective values of co-operation?



Social Expressions of Collective Responsibility

As described in the section on political expressions of collectivism, collective responsibility means that the group is responsible for the actions of all its individual members and that individuals have a responsibility to the group rather than only to themselves. As well as having political implications, collective responsibility can also have important social implications. 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.

How people respond to bullying can be an example of collective responsibility. For example, what if a girl were being bullied at her high school by a group of girls who have decided that she does not “fit in”? Caring enough to do something about the bullying is an example of collective responsibility. In this case, what if a group of students in the class alerted the homeroom teacher and principal of what was happening? Other students may act as a group because they see this girl as part of their peer group and class, and they feel responsible for protecting her.

In 2002, the Canadian government launched a national anti-bullying public-awareness campaign. This is what Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, the Honourable Martin Cauchon, had to say about the issue:

“Bullying is not the responsibility of one level of government or one sector of society. It requires the involvement of the individuals, schools, and the larger community... By taking a collective stand against this behaviour in our schools and communities and working early on, we can change things for the better. Intervening early in a positive and proactive manner holds the greatest promise for reducing bullying and preventing the escalation of future victimization and offending behaviour.”

—Source: Martin Cauchon, quoted in “Launch of Anti-bullying Public Awareness Campaign,” May 23, 2002. Department of Justice Canada, http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/news-nouv/nr-cp/2002/doc_30447.html.

In what other ways is collective responsibility reflected in our society? Think about the responsibilities you have as a member of a neighbourhood or community, student of a school, and citizen of a province.

PAUSE AND REFLECT

Reflect on the wisdom of the following excerpt from “All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten,” by Robert Fulghum.

All I really need to know about how to live and what to do and how to be I learned in kindergarten.

These are the things I learned:

Share everything.

Play fair.

Don’t hit people.

Put things back where you found them.

Clean up your own mess.

Don’t take things that aren’t yours.

Say you’re sorry when you hurt somebody.

Source: Peace.ca,
<http://www.peace.ca/kindergarten.htm>.

To what extent are your own values similar to those reflected in this source? Explain.

PAUSE AND REFLECT

Do you demonstrate social expressions of collective values, such as that of collective responsibility? Why?



Actions That Help the Environment

The Earth Day Canada movement promotes collective responsibility by proposing the following top 10 actions to help the environment.

1. *“Buy what you need, not what you want.”*
2. *Replace incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs.*
3. *Walk, cycle, car pool, and use public transportation.*
4. *Choose local and organic foods in season, and eat less meat.*
5. *Wash full loads of clothes in cold water and hang to air dry.*
6. *For summer air conditioning, set your thermostat to 24°C or 25°C. For winter heating, set your thermostat to 19°C or 20°C.*
7. *Vacation, travel, and work as close to home as possible.*
8. *Take short showers and turn off water when brushing teeth.*
9. *Choose natural, non-toxic cleaning products.*
10. *Donate, reuse, and recycle. Take hazardous waste, for example, batteries, to a waste depot.*

—Adapted from “Earth Day Canada’s Top 10 Actions... to help the environment.” Earth Day Canada, www.earthday.ca/pub/resources/top10.php.

- 1** Do you consider the effects of your decisions on future generations? If so, provide examples. If not, explain why and examine how your life might not be different if you did. To what extent do you believe expressions of collective responsibility about the environment reflect values that should be important in society in Canada? Explain.

Adherence to Collective Norms

In a society that embraces the values of collectivism, how can individuals be persuaded to align their self-interests with the collective interest of the group? What is the incentive to do so? There must be an effective way to convince each member of the group to commit to its collective goals. Part of the answer to these questions lies in understanding people’s personal values and worldviews and those of the society in which they live. **Adherence to collective norms** can be one specific manner in which a society or group influences the actions of its members. This can mean a devotion, support, or attachment to certain rules and traditions in society, which can be potentially empowering or limiting to people within the group.

Sometimes individuals who are members of a group will support or make a decision that respects societal expectations and values, which may or may not reflect their personal beliefs. If it does not reflect their own beliefs or values, they may have made that decision out of fear that they would be looked down on by the group. Have you ever been in a situation such as this? If you have, then you have experienced the pressure that can sometimes be felt to adhere to collective norms.

Collective norms are a set of accepted behaviours and values that are promoted by a group. Individual members of the group may feel they receive guidance from the rules of the collective norms or may feel pressured to conform to these behaviours. If their own values are reflected

in the norms, they can feel more strongly connected to the group. If their own values differ from the norms, they may not be able or willing to conform to these rules, potentially resulting in punishment or rejection by the group. These norms help reinforce the group's values and collective identity and can have both positive and negative effects on members of the collective.

Leroy Little Bear notes the importance of collective norms in Aboriginal societies in his essay “Jagged Worldviews Colliding.”

For the most part, Aboriginal societies do not have complex societal organizations such as police forces. Such organizations usually were not needed because traditional tribal society collectively agreed on acceptable forms of behaviour. The “spider web” of relations ensures that the welfare of the group is the most important thing in Aboriginal societies. The value of wholeness tells the members that, if all do their parts, then social order will be the result. It is as though everybody is a “cop” and nobody is a “cop”...

—Source: Leroy Little Bear, “Jagged Worldviews Colliding.”
Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision ed. Marie Battiste
 (Vancouver, BC: UBC Press, 2000), p. 84.

There are many examples of collective norms in high school. One potentially negative example is that sometimes there is a great deal of pressure on individuals to “fit in” and do what others are doing (or say they are doing). You may find yourself doing, or thinking about doing, things you would not otherwise do because you want to fit in with a group. Have you ever experienced this kind of pressure to fit in? How could collective norms have a positive and negative impact on some members of a collective? How could adherence to collective norms be useful in a society based on collectivism?

Summary

In a collectivist society, individuals are asked to co-operate and demonstrate **collective responsibility**. Through **co-operation**, individuals begin to see past the idea of caring only for themselves and see the larger picture of needing to work together to achieve common goals. **Adherence to collective norms** is also another way to examine to what extent individuals are adopting a similar collective behaviour, value system, and overall attitude toward the goals of society.

Knowledge and Understanding

- 1 In a short paragraph, describe two social groups of which you are a member. For each group, provide an example that illustrates the extent to which you co-operate to achieve a common goal, demonstrate collective responsibility, and have to follow a collective norm. Conclude your paragraph by offering your opinion on whether or not you think that these values help the group reach its collective goal.
- 2 Create a two-column chart with the headings “Pros” and “Cons.” List as many pros, or advantages, as you can think of for why co-operation and collective responsibility are good ways of interacting socially. Then, list as many cons, or disadvantages, as you can think of for the same topic. Complete the same task while considering the value of adherence to collective norms.
- 3 Make a three-column chart for the values of co-operation, collective responsibility, and adherence to collective norms. Brainstorm issues you have heard about in the news that are examples of these values. Write them in the appropriate column, and then explain why each issue illustrates the value that you have chosen.

Health Care: Public, Private, or Both?

An Example:

The Canada Health Act

Health insurance in Canada is regulated by federal legislation known as the Canada Health Act; however, each province must budget for and deliver health-care services. The goal of the system is to ensure that we all have reasonable access to medically necessary insured services without direct charges. Although legislation varies from one province to another, two guidelines always apply:

1. Patients cannot pay with their own money for private medical services that are already available through the publicly insured system.
2. Doctors who practise outside of the public system cannot charge more for the same services.

On June 9, 2005, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that a Québec law banning private health insurance was a violation of Canada's and Québec's charters of rights. The court argued that residents of Québec could not be prevented from spending their own money on medical services that they could not receive through the public system because of long waiting times. Although the Court's decision is binding only in Québec, it may eventually have effects on laws in other parts of Canada.

The Economics of Health Care

According to a study of 24 countries released by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), health care spending may not be the main factor affecting the health of a country's citizens. Education and social programs also determine people's health. Commenting on the study, Janice McKinnon (a former finance minister of Saskatchewan) stated,

"If you look internationally, and you look at what you're getting for health-care spending, beyond about \$600 or \$700 US per person per year, there is literally no correlation between life expectancy, infant mortality, and how much you're spending... So countries that spend \$800 to \$1,000 Canadian have pretty much the same health care indicators as we do. And we're spending four times as much."

—Janice McKinnon, quoted in "Price of care."
CBC News, September 14, 2004,

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/healthcare/priceofcare.html>.

Funding for health care is provided through federal and provincial taxation. The federal government contributes about 20 per cent of the cost of provincial health care systems. Consider the following different approaches:

1. Fund health-care costs by taxing people and businesses more.
2. Charge user fees (a small percentage of the cost) for each hospital service.
3. Sell to private owners all or some hospital services. Allow people to pay for services.
4. Reduce spending in other areas, e.g., education, and put it toward health care.

Something to Think About:

Many Canadians complain about the state of our health care system while others firmly believe in it. What do you think? Should the system change?

Questions for Reflection

- 1 Do you think that the Canada Health Act more strongly expresses values of collectivism or individualism? Explain your answer.
- 2 How might the privatization of health care affect the public health system in Canada?
- 3 Assuming that the OECD study is accurate, do you think that the Canadian government should reduce its spending on health care to either reduce taxes or spend more in other areas such as education or social programs? How do you think that Canadian citizens would react to such a change?
- 4 If public health care is such a priority for many Canadians, what values does this reflect?
- 5 Which of the four solutions presented most strongly reflects your beliefs and values? Identify the evidence that you would use to best support your argument for the solution. Consider the validity of the sources, the points of view and perspectives they provide, and the strength of their arguments. (Consult the Reading Guide on page 84 to help you evaluate the strength of arguments.) If you were writing a response, how would you organize this carefully selected evidence to best convince your reader? Create an outline that reflects this organization.
- 6 Are there other solutions that are not listed here which might work? Please explain your answer.

FURTHER EXPLORATION

- 1 Think back on your exploration of individualism in Chapter 2. What similarities are there between the roots of collectivism and those of individualism?
- 2
 - a) With a partner, choose a social group that embraces some values of collectivism. It could be a large group, such as the population of a communist state, or a smaller group, such as a volunteer organization.
 - b) Conduct research with your partner on the group you have chosen. What are its activities? What aspects of the group and its activities reflect the values of collectivism politically, economically, and/or socially?
 - c) Working separately, reflect on the extent to which this group embraces collectivism. What is your opinion of this group and its activities? Do you believe that they are working toward the common good? How do their beliefs and values resemble or contrast with your own beliefs and values? Write down your ideas.
 - d) With your partner, discuss your personal viewpoints on this example of collectivism. How are your opinions similar? How are they different? What are the reasons for the similarities or differences?
- 3 Many Canadian Crown corporations, such as the CBC or VIA Rail, are criticized for being unprofitable. If that is the case, then why do some people argue that Crown corporations promote a sense of nationhood? What values might these people hold? Explain your answers.
- 4 In a small group, discuss the impact of collective norms on your own behaviour.
 - a) Identify five norms of social behaviour that you believe Canadians encounter most on a regular basis. With your group, brainstorm reasons why these norms exist and possible benefits or consequences for adhering or not adhering to them.
 - b) As youth, how are you affected by pressure to adhere to social norms? Think about the expectations that your friends and family have of you. How does this pressure impact your identity?
 - c) Should the values of collectivism shape your ideology? Explain your point of view, giving specific examples.
- 5 Create a collage to visually express a value of collectivism with which you most or least identify. You may wish to add descriptive words to explain your images, or write a short text describing how your collage expresses your ideas, as well as your response to the question, *To what extent should you embrace the values of collectivism?*
- 6 To what degree can collectivism and individualism both be part of an identity? From print or online sources, locate news items that demonstrate a conflict between or a blending of the values of collectivism and individualism. Can both ideologies coexist in response to this issue? Choose the article you agree with the most. Analyze the strength of its argument by highlighting in different colours a) each reason, and b) the supporting evidence. Is the argument consistent with your own values of collectivism and individualism? Why or why not?
- 7 Create a list of the values of collectivism with which you most identify, and a separate list of the values of individualism with which you most identify. Consider the values on your two lists: Are the two sets of values compatible? Do any of them conflict? Construct a Venn diagram that best demonstrates the relationship between your two groups of values and any grey areas that exist.

Chapter Summary and Reflection

A core concept of **collectivism** is the idea that the group is more important than the individual alone. The skateboarders who volunteered their time to work on community service projects are an example of collectivism. Collectivists consider the following values to be essential: **collective interest** and **collective responsibility**, **economic equality**, **public property**, **co-operation**, and **adherence to social norms**. In this chapter, you have read about and explored some different perspectives and worldviews and political, economic, and social aspects of the values of collectivism. In turn, these values have helped shape

different collectivist ideologies. What you have learned about the values of collectivism should help you make an informed response to the Chapter Issue: *Should the values of collectivism shape an ideology?*

In exploring the ideas of collectivism and individualism, you may feel that the two viewpoints are incompatible and one must choose between them. While it is true that the values of collectivism and individualism can be at odds, there are aspects of these two sets of ideas that complement one another. In effect, individualism and collectivism can work together in different ways for the **common good** of society.