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Designing communication for diversity in a horizontal individualist culture

Mary R. Power

After the age-defining events of September 11, 2001, in New York, the disaster of the Bali bombing on October 12, 2002, reverberated around the nation, causing us to share the grief of the friends and families of the 88 Australians and many Balinese who died and the many others who were wounded.

Much of what we had previously taken for granted has changed. We have become accustomed to increased levels of security, and our consciousness of strangers has grown. Our government goes to war quickly, strikes pre-emptively, and displays little faith in collective institutions like the United Nations.

For me, as I'm sure for many of you, the last year has been a time of reflection about what it means to be an Australian and what we stand for as a nation in an increasingly less 'relaxed and comfortable' world. In terms of the theme of the Australian and New Zealand Communication Association Conference, ‘Designing Communication for Diversity’, it is time to decide if we are mates with one another and the world’s other citizens, or whether we choose to separate ourselves from the rest of that world and its citizens. Further, we can ask ourselves what efforts we should make to design our communications so that happiness or ‘subjective well-being’ (Hosen, Solovey-Hosen, & Stern, 2003) is increased.
These concerns are developed here in relation to the concepts of individualism and collectivism and their impact upon advertising and its construction of gender, and their implications for the theory and practice of Communication in the light of our theme.

Let us consider three questions.

1. In the contemporary world, where through technology, travel, and multiculturalism we are connected to increasing numbers of groups, how might we reconcile individualist notions of self-reliance with a collectivist feeling of responsibility towards and interdependence among a large number of others in these groups in Australia and around the world?

2. How might advertising campaigns based on unexamined notions of unfettered individualism, task orientation, and ideals of self-supremacy affect citizens of other more inclusive cultures where men and women accept roles in which individual desires are willingly curtailed in the interests of others?

3. In a world where our problems increasingly call for us to look for group solutions and collective action, what are Communication theory and practice and Communication researchers and teachers doing to promote a more benign form of ‘horizontal individualism’ (with greater concern for equality and equity) in a society that allows all our citizens to develop and feel secure, and to promote the communal (enabling, cooperative, and connection-oriented) over the agentic (restrictive, focused on dominance, and rewards to self), and allocentricism (concern for others), over idiocentrism (self-centred concern)?

Key messages about culture are promoted through media and advertising. In considering these messages, I will examine the media presentation of the Bali bombing and its aftermath, and two American advertising campaigns illustrating how ideas of the masculine on one hand and the feminine on the other are established. As a possible alternative, ideas about how societies might create a feeling of subjective well-being (SWB) in their citizens and what we, as Communication professionals, might do to make the theme of ANZCA 2003, ‘Designing Communication for Diversity’, come alive are considered.

**INDIVIDUALISM VERSUS COLLECTIVISM**

A *Time International* headline described the bombing of the Sari nightclub in Bali on October 12, 2002 as a ‘Slaughter of the Innocents: A Terrorist Attack in Peaceful Bali’ that turned a ‘paradise for young Western travellers into a smoldering hell’ (Feizkhah, 2002).
Pictures of wounded young Australians helping their ‘mates’ out of the still smouldering ruins and of gruesome lines of dead bodies brought home to Australians that we exist in a partnership with others—that we are all the potential victims of such acts of terrorism. The Prime Minister voiced the fears of the people: ‘It has happened to our own on our doorstep’, and took a warrior stance, saying that ‘The war on terrorism must go on with unrelenting vigor and an unconditional commitment’ (Feizkhah, 2002, p. 49).

One of the public responses to the Bali bombing was to give money to a Red Cross appeal fund for victims. People gave AUD14.5 million, including initial donations of a million dollars each from the Australian government and the National Australia Bank. However, we Australians didn’t only look after our own. Many Balinese working in the Sari club that night were killed or injured, leaving their families destitute. We gave the bulk of the money to Australian victims but also spent AUD3.5 million of the appeal funds in Bali. The Australian government also gave funds for a hospital to serve the area to redress a need made obvious by the scale of the disaster.

Labelling these responses ‘collectivist’ (even that of one of our largest banks normally devoted to increasing its return to shareholders), I recalled that Hofstede had found Australia to be the second-highest scoring nation in the world on his ‘individualism’ factor, with a score of 90 (compared with the 91 earned by the United States) when the average score of all countries surveyed was 43 (Hofstede, 1980, cited in Hofstede, 2003). Surely Australia is the country of mateship and hanging together—the very epitome of collectivism. Indeed, the Anzac myth celebrated another ‘Slaughter of the Innocents’, but we continued (and still continue) to send troops to fight in wars among people far away to whom we feel connected by history or by region or by principle.

Like most terms in Communication-speak, ‘individualism’ and ‘collectivism’ have special meanings within Hofstede’s framework, and the use of these terms continues to be refined. Samovar and Porter (1995) define individualism as ‘the doctrine that the interests of the individual are or ought to be paramount, and that all values, rights, and duties originate in individuals. It emphasises individual initiative, independence, individual expression, and even privacy’ (p. 84). On the face of it, individualists would be selfish and not care about others. However, if Australians were only focused on individual aims, fewer than 20 million people wouldn’t donate AUD14 million to about 200 people. A study by Triandis, Bontempo, Villareal, Asai, and Lucca (1988) explored definitions of individualism and collectivism and refined them by finding that
a key element of these concepts concerns ‘ingroups’ and ‘outgroups’. For ‘collectivist’ cultures, the ingroup is usually fairly tight and is often limited to family, with the most direct relationship being vertical, between parent and child. Triandis et al. explain that ‘an essential attribute of collectivist cultures is that individuals may be induced to subordinate their personal goals to the goals of some collective, which is usually a stable ingroup (e.g., family, band, tribe)’ (1988, p. 324). Further, they claim that the requirements of these close-knit groups can be demanding and unavoidable. In ‘individualist’ cultures, on the other hand, people are most closely connected horizontally with spouses and friends rather than with parents and children, and they belong to many more ingroups (e.g., family, co-workers, clubs, motorcycle gangs, ANZCA), and much of the behaviour of members concerns goals that are consistent with those of the various ingroups of which they are members or to which they aspire. However, unlike in collectivist cultures, if your motorcycle club or your mother-in-law gets too demanding, you can change clubs or put her in a nursing home without too much trauma.

In case you are wondering whether individualists get off scot-free from responsibility to wider ‘others’, while collectivists are ground down by the burden of a web of relationships with their kin, Triandis et al. (1988) point out that, although not obligated to specific others by culture, individualists nevertheless create ‘webs’ of reciprocity and obligation of their own with people they choose, so that, paradoxically, you are better off living in an individualist culture:

People in individualist cultures are very good at meeting outsiders, forming new ingroups, and getting along with new people ... [so] the individual has many ingroups and those who are not ingroup members are not necessarily in the outgroup; behavior is often conformist in order to be accepted by ingroups [and people define their ingroups as] people who are like me in social class, race, beliefs, attitudes, and values.

Triandis et al. say: ‘That is a huge group. Most interpersonal behaviour occurs within that huge group’ (p. 325). This makes for concern for others, even in seemingly very individualist cultures.

On the other hand, for collectivist cultures, the ingroup is restricted mostly to close family relationships involving reciprocal rights and duties, and, while cooperation exists within the ingroup, cooperation with members of an outgroup is less likely. Triandis et al. (1988) point out that in collectivist societies, behaviour towards outgroups (and that is likely to be most people) can be extremely individualistic. In collectivist societies, while people share and show harmony and cooperation
within their close family ingroups, the total society 'may be characterised by much disharmony and nonsharing', because most 'relationships with merchants, policemen, government bureaucrats and so on are outgroup relationships'. In collectivist cultures, 'there are complex patterns of social behavior that require the distinction between ingroup behavior (conformity) and outgroup behaviour (do whatever you can get away with)' (p. 325). Triandis et al. argue that 'the major disadvantage of collectivism is in the political domain'. If collectivists are centred on the family as 'their major collective ... [they] tend toward actions that benefit the family rather than the broad public good. Those in power act mostly to benefit themselves and their ingroup and often disregard the public good' (p. 329).

Triandis et al. (1988) have thus made a distinction between individualistic and collectivist cultures, but also categorise people within those cultures as 'allocentric' (other-centred) or 'idiocentric' (centred on themselves). An idiocentric person in a collectivist culture cannot easily get away with not conforming to the collectivist ethos, and so is unhappy or a misfit and is likely to leave if that is possible. On the other hand, allocentric people fit in as well in a collectivist culture as in an individualist one where they behave in a collectivist way towards a greater number of people because they 'feel concern about their communities and ingroups' (p. 325). The worst situation is to have idiocentric people in individualist cultures because they can do their own thing and be antisocial and 'disregard the needs of communities, family, or work group' (p. 325). Corporate criminals, thieves, and drug dealers fit into this category at the extreme of the continuum, but also included are self-centred people whose actions cause others stress in daily life though selfish and inconsiderate behaviour.

In the days after the Bali bombing, Australians donated AUD14.5 million to both Australian and Balinese victims. The Australian government also gave funds for a hospital in Bali. These are allocentric acts and they show the benefits of individualistic cultures when they work. The victims were not just the responsibility of their families. For Australians, the gift was given because they shared the pain and in doing so they identified with those who were not their family or even their close neighbours.

Not only did Australians give AUD14.5 million to Bali victims, they also contributed AUD20 million to the 'Farmhand Appeal', also administered by the Red Cross and running simultaneously with the Bali appeal. The Farmhand Appeal, 'Give a Mate a Helping Hand', was for the thousands of farmers who faced destitution and hardship because of
the years of drought. It seems not completely logical to give AUD14 million to fewer than 200 people and AUD20 million to thousands, but then the stories of the Bali victims were vivid and horrible, while the problems of farmers were long-term and lacked the visual impact of burned flesh. We are apparently creatures of emotion. Maybe, too, drought relief is seen as the collective responsibility of us all and therefore primarily of our governments. Even in an individualist society, there is resistance to assuming as personal responsibilities those that might more efficiently be borne through a justly administered tax and welfare distribution system. If governments in modern democratic individualist states assume some collective responsibilities, it may be that individuals are loath to contribute to those remaining needs not met by the state. After all, they might reason, the government has the expertise to decide between all the deserving causes and choose the most worthy. That’s why we don’t expect to see beggars in Brisbane. Appeals by the Red Cross, the Salvation Army, and St Vincent de Paul and other charities might be seen as an inefficient way to deal with the problems of modern life.

We are fortunate in Australia to have a tradition of care, and a health and welfare system (albeit presently politically contested) set up to buffer misfortune, to allow us to not be at the mercy of the whims of family fortunes, to enable the poorest of us to fix a young child’s hare lip or an old lady’s cataracts, and to shelter us from unemployment, accident, and other life misfortunes. Collectivist societies such as Indonesia, with an individualism score of 14 compared with Australia’s 90 in Hofstede’s rankings, with their emphasis on the ingroup, balk at provisions for the whole population, and they are averse to sharing family wealth with the wider society, although they can be very generous to those who belong to their race or religion or region. Although tourism has developed the Balinese economy, the wealth has not transferred to infrastructure such as schools, roads, or adequate hospitals for all to share, but remains in the private hands of a few wealthy citizens or foreigners. It seems odd, but individualist societies that contain allocentric (other-centred) people willing to set up community schemes make better societies and, arguably, happier ones. Obviously, allocentric people give the society the conscience to decide that all citizens are in their ingroup. They did this with the Bali victims and they do this when they elect governments they know are going to tax them to pay for services for all and not just for the ones who have the education, skills, and luck to be able to do exactly what they want or need to do.
Allocentric people in individualistic societies would argue that random acts of kindness are not an efficient way to bring social justice to a community, and society should encourage allocentricism over idio-centricism. Triandis and Suh (2002) suggest that individualist societies contain about 40% of allocentric people. Increasing this percentage by encouraging awareness of others could be a positive aim of education at all levels to create a better society. Triandis and Suh (2002) suggest that, when things do go wrong in a collectivist society, they are hidden in order for those who made the mistake to save face. In an individualist society, they claim that problems are discussed and mistakes admitted and penalties paid and forgiveness is possible if reparation is paid. An example of this is Brad Cooper, with his cheerful face in the paper after paying back some of the HIH money (Harris & Milligan, 2003).

So far, it seems that individualism provides more options for a contemporary society than collectivism, particularly if it is, as in Australia and Sweden (Triandis, 2002), a ‘horizontal’ form of individualism that does not set up one group above another but makes it possible for people to regard and treat themselves as equal. In contrast, the United States, with its wide differences between groups of people in wealth, education, and power, and its encouragement of high levels of competition, represents a ‘vertical individualism’. Although represented by virtually the same ranking on the Hofstede Individualist Scale, Australia and the United States differ in the way that individualism is expressed. Indeed, because of the overwhelming media power of the United States, ‘horizontal allocentric individualist’ societies like Australia need to be wary of the cultural attitudes, the ‘idiocentric, vertical individualism’ inherent in many products of the creative industries in the United States, and their potential power in changing other cultures in an age of global advertising.

An example of how individualism can be expressed in the pervasive medium of advertising is to be found in the Journal of Advertising, Spring 2003. The issue is called ‘Men, Dogs, Guns, and Cars: The Semiotics of Rugged Individualism’. Individualism is the theme, but it’s an idiocentric view of individualism. The author equates ‘rugged individualism’ with inner-directed people who see their field of action as one ‘defined by impersonal (e.g., contractual) relationships and self-serving behaviours’ (p. 10). Almost as if she must, the author, Hirschman (2003, p. 11), quotes de Tocqueville’s rather bemused observation that Americans of 1835 ‘owe nothing to any man; they expect nothing from any man; they acquire the habit of always considering themselves as standing

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alone, and are apt to imagine that their whole destiny is in their own hands'—which seems to be an accurate summing up of the Bush approach to international affairs nearly two centuries later.

Hirschman (2003) also quotes Triandis, saying that individualists 'are primarily motivated by their own preferences, needs, rights, and the contracts they have established with others; give priority to their personal goals over the goals of others; and emphasise rational analyses of the advantages and disadvantages to associating with others' (1995, p. 2). Although Hirschman may appear to be advocating a collectivist solution to these difficulties, she doesn't go on to note what Triandis points out are the some of the problems of being collectivist: that is, that those who fall upon hard times are lost unless they have a rich relative or sponsor, and that public services are looked after by nobody. She quotes Hsu (1988), who compares the Chinese collectivists with American individualists. Hsu claims that 'rugged individualists' created a society that encouraged entrepreneurism, exploration, and discovery through aggressive creativity, but that also led to crime and violence. Hsu claims:

To succeed, the rugged individualist is driven to treat all other human beings as things to be manipulated, coerced or eliminated, if they happen to get in the way of his forward march ... [and that] the rugged individual is bound to be self-centred. He is taught to shape the world in his image. (pp. x, xi)

Hirschman (2003) sought to map the 'themes, icons, and rhetoric underlying rugged individualism' by analysing copies of the magazines Hunting, Bow Hunting World, Rifleshooter, Guns and Ammo, Field and Stream, Coonbound, Stock Car Racing, NASCAR Illustrated, and 4 Wheel & Off Road.

Obviously, readers of these magazines represent only a small segment of the American population, but Hirshman (2003) finds it disturbing that, at a time when there is some indication of a cultural shift in that 'the United States has edged closer to a creed that celebrates cooperative endeavour, self-abnegation, altruism, multiculturalism, and interpersonal harmony while discouraging urges toward physical aggression and unbridled competition' (p. 36), these magazines so blatantly preach the gospel of rugged individualism and espouse political candidates who will support their interpretations of the world.

Hirshmann's (2003) analysis shows that magazines such as Guns and Ammo illustrate an ideal of 'ruthless competition' and value solo performance.
Rugged individualism values functionality and performance. It is a worldview focused on utility, in that objects (and people) are valued to the extent they can get the job done... Governments and their laws are regarded as restrictive mechanisms that hamper freedom of expression and act'. (p. 22)

In an off-road magazine, Hirschman (2003) found a comment about government restrictions on the ownership of guns: 'Governments will curtail our freedom to choose, to act and to reach our self-directed aims' (p. 25).

Hirschman also warns that the advertising community and the creative industries are providing rhetorical devices in advertising that alienate women and minority consumers by valuing 'white warriors' with unfettered personal power. Clearly, the skills of the advertising industry are being used in the service of propaganda for a group that has put the individualist ethos of their group above the interests of the larger community.

I will now consider the construction of gender in advertising to support the thesis that individualism is in danger of dominating advertising and perhaps our responses to it.

**ADVERTISING'S CONSTRUCTION OF GENDER**

In the service of those who peddle consumer goods, advertisers are attempting to persuade women to become more selfish and idiocentric. Advertisers want to create a free-spending woman who sees herself rather than others as a focus. To illustrate this, I have chosen another article from the *Journal of Advertising* by Stevens, Maclaren, and Brown (2003), called "Red Time Is Me Time": Advertising, Ambivalence, and Women's Magazines* (Red is an American women's magazine). The authors see that the 'history of consumer culture advertising and ever-evolving ideologies of femininity' (p. 35) is also the history of women's magazines. They quote Ferguson (1983), who found that during the 1980s 'self-help, self-determination and individualism were key themes' in women's magazines (p. 37). After having been charged with changing the world single-handedly, women needed a break, so in the 1990s magazines aimed to be 'an oasis of calm and pleasure' (p. 36). However, Stevens et al. found that women involved in juggling work and family 'whose lives include others—children, partners, wider families, work colleagues—experience this focus on self with mixed emotions' (p. 35). The *Red* advertising campaign was built around the idea of 'Me time' and targeted to women who are notoriously 'time-poor' (p. 35).
The magazine Red was targeted at a group Stevens et al. designated as ‘middle youth’—women in their 30s and 40s going through an ‘extended adolescence’. The campaign ‘Red time is me time’ encouraged them to spend time on themselves by reading the magazine and buying the products advertised in it. Focus-group discussions with readers revealed that, although Red was not the only advertising campaign aimed at encouraging women to indulge themselves (cf. L’Oréal’s ‘Because I’m worth it’), the idea of self-indulgence created conflict. In the focus groups, ‘Time for me’, ‘Rights’, and ‘Deserve’ were ‘accompanied by words such as “Guilt” and “Selfish”’. Women appeared to reject the role of selfish consumer. They felt they could only take ‘time out’ when they had fulfilled their other obligations. Their interests were communal rather than individual.

Stevens et al. (2003) conclude:

The appeal of these commercials centers round the concept of self, a concept that continues to be a seductive (and problematic) component of women’s magazines. It reflects the cultural significance of the self in contemporary consumer culture: as Lash (2001) writes, ‘individualization, self-centeredness, and reflexivity are symptomatic of contemporary times’.

However, it seems that women are not buying the idea that ‘self’ is paramount. Despite the changes in women’s roles, they are not ready to abandon the family role for an individual role, and, for members of the focus groups, at least, the advertising fell on deaf ears.

We have looked at two dangers for advertising. One is for advertisers to become the servants of wealthy ingroups using their skills to advocate their clients’ selfish, exclusionist policies. The other is that through a constant barrage of individualism, advertisers will slowly break down the resistance of women to their role as consumers to the detriment of families and children who need role models of cooperative, open, and ethical unself-centred behaviours currently only provided by parents. If being left alone to read about rugged individualism or selfishness in consumer magazines is progress, then we haven’t come very far—indeed we may be going backwards if we follow these American trends.

In 1973, Gilly (1988) found that sex roles in Australian advertisements ‘were more sex stereotyped than U. S. media’, but, by 1988, her research using analysis of actual videotapes showed that in ‘Australian commercials characters were portrayed equally in relation to others and independently’, showing a wider range of sex roles for women than in US and Mexican advertisements. Gilly attributed this change to an
Australian report 'by a women's organization' that prepared recommendations for advertisers specifically addressing 'changing the stereotyping of sex roles and eliminating the use of the woman's body to sell products' (p. 83). She sees evidence that self-regulation in response to these recommendations had led to a situation where 'The Australian commercials, though still exhibiting some sex role differences, are superior to the U.S. ads in terms of overall equality of the sexes' (p. 84). It seems that in Australia we are willing to self-regulate when advertisements violate social and cultural norms, but in the global advertising market that has developed since 1988 our magazines and television programs feature images not subject to any control over individualism.

**Women and the Corporate World**

Finally, I want to move to the corporate world. If the consumer culture is sending us messages of rugged individualism in sporting magazines and of selfish individualism in women's magazines, what messages is corporate culture sending us?

Take a moment to imagine the 21st storey of a corporate office, with a view over the river to the cliffs and the hills and the harbour beyond. The CEO has a corner office with a commanding glass desk and sits in a chair surveying the world.

Who did you see? In most audiences, even those primed by a discussion of gender differences, only 1 or 2% of the CEOs visualised are women! If no one can imagine you holding a position, what hope do you have of being appointed?

Why don't more women break through the agentic corporate glass ceiling? The answer seems to be that women are expected to be both agentic and communal, and if they are not communal they are punished for being insufficiently nice by not being promoted! There are different standards of niceness though for men and women. In a series of research papers, Rudman (1998) and Rudman and Glick (1999, 2001) have identified the stereotypes within a culture that handicap women. Rudman and Glick (2001) say that 'perceived sex differences in intelligence, ambition and assertiveness prevent women from being viewed as suitable leaders ... [and that] agentic women are viewed as socially deficient, compared with identically presented men' (p. 743). So a woman in an individualist society not only has to have all the qualities that men need to achieve higher-status jobs, she has to be 'communal (i.e., kind, thoughtful, and sensitive to others' feelings)' (p. 743). Rudman and Glick claim that women 'remain in a bind. Engaging in agentic behaviours allows them to overcome descriptive stereotypes of less compe-
tence (Rudman, 1998), but dominative agentic traits, such as being forceful, directive and competitive are incompatible with a prescribed communal orientation’ (Rudman & Glick, 2001, p. 743).

So far, I have shown that societies that can be labelled ‘horizontally individualistic’ provide citizens with more opportunities to belong to more ingroups. I looked at how some advertising campaigns empowered exclusive, hierarchical, competitive ingroups willing to force others to do their bidding while they themselves were loath to accept government rights to make laws for the safety and benefit of all. Advertisers, while encouraging vertical individualism, were discouraging allocentric kinds of behaviours.

Hosen et al. (2003) describe the concept of ‘subjective well-being’ (SWB) as possessed by those human beings who have happiness as a part of their lives. In their framework, we develop social capital through utilising social networks and communities and bonding emotionally with others. On the other hand, SWB is likely to be diminished for us by people who demonstrate a ‘generic selfishness and self-preoccupation’ (p. 501). As human beings, we need to develop a psychological infrastructure that includes a capacity for ‘emotional self-regulation and effective emotional communication ... [and to develop] a sociable temperament supplemented by persistence, stress resistance, likeability and an ability to feel and express anger but to also rapidly deactivate angry arousal’ (p. 500). Institutions that foster the teaching of these skills are vitally important if SWB is to be available across cultures.

For Hosen et al. (2003), and for Triandis et al. (1988), collectivist societies in contemporary times face some problems.

Societies in which people feel an emotional allegiance to a clan, tribe, sub-tribe, ethnic group, national identity, political organisation, linguistic community, social call or religious sect, provide a great potential for net suffering if this identity leads to enmity towards out-groups under conditions that can promote sustained violence. (Hosen et al., p. 501)

Hosen et al. (2003) see the solution to these problems to be in promoting a society in which individuals can tolerate or acknowledge interdependence and have a capacity for forming and maintaining long-term relationships based on enduring emotional connections. Communication theory, practice, and research can contribute to the development of such societies.
CONCLUSION

This paper draws together the tragedy of the Twin Towers and the Bali bombing with a consideration of how individualism and collectivism are played out in dealing with crisis situations and endemic social problems, to a view of government and individuals and how notions of agentic and communal attitudes are expressed in advertising and workplace relationships and promotions.

For some Communication scholars, there is the hope that our academic work can be focused upon our interactions with one another and our world. In order to add SWB to our lives in the community and the world, we need to look at the Communication curriculum to see how we integrate the technical with the human, to see how we can use theory to examine the assumptions of the agentic. We need to look at how Communication takes its place in the examination of the political process and advertising and at how Communication courses are responding to the challenge of providing an education in the human and the political to future journalists, advertisers, media and public relations practitioners, and corporate and organisational communicators.

In an age of specialisation, we need to make a place in our courses for an understanding of communitarianism and politics in a country where all citizens are expected to exercise their democratic rights to vote for their representatives. Certainly, too, our students will require skills in interpersonal communication and conflict resolution if they are to do their jobs adequately. The creative industries are not merely technical; they require creative minds working in harmony with others—preferably within a horizontal individualistic framework.

We can look to the media coverage of the Bali trials, the coverage of politics in this country, current advertising, and the position of women to provide examples of the values of competition over cooperation and of individualism over collectivism that we see expressed in our society. All individualism is not necessarily bad, all competition not evil, and all collectivism need not be exclusionist.

Speaking as an Australian, I see a need to encourage the easy smile, the nod of recognition, the friendliness, the trust, the mateship that we, and perhaps our neighbours across the Tasman, have considered our signature, and to label those elements as a ‘broad collectivism’ or ‘horizontal individualism’ that needs to be encouraged rather than a selfish ‘vertical individualism’ that would see us focused unwaveringly on a straight path to our own achievements regardless of the common good.

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