

SELECTED NORTH AMERICAN VALUES

Independent Individualism

Dimensions of the Self: We naturally assume that each person is not only a separate biological entity, but also a unique psychological being and a singular member of the social order. Deeply ingrained and seldom questioned, the dominant American self, in the form of individualism, pervades action and intrudes into each domain of activity.

Individualism and Individuality: We assume that the individual is the biological unit of nature. We are socialized to make decisions early in life ("What cereal do you want?") and to be self-reliant. As a culture, we are intensely self-centered, which is the foundation for our individualism.

Self-reliance and Mythic Individualism: We 'pull ourselves up by the bootstraps' to become 'self-made men' (and women). Mythic individualism is the dream of becoming "one's own person" ("I just want to be myself"). The sagas of Daniel Boone and Davy Crockett (and the 'cowboy' mentality) are some of our expressions of the individualism.

Scientific Materialism

View of Facts: We assume rational thinking is based on an objective reality where measurable results can be attained. Based on this, we define "facts" as:

- * empirical, observable, measurable;
- * reliable so that different observers will agree about them;
- * objective and valid (impersonal and exist separately from perceptual processes and from observers)
- * associated with measurements using coordinates of time and space

A Mechanistic World View: We tend to think of "nature" as a machine in which the various actions of each part are determined by external, impersonal forces. Engineering and the physical sciences epitomize this attitude.

Human Relationship to Nature: Nature (the physical world) should be controlled in the service of human beings. We have an engineer's approach--the world is based on technology which applies to social spheres (social engineering and human resource development). The natural laws assumed to underlie the physical world should be harnessed and hence at the service of people.