Standing Out Across Cultures: 
Personal Distinctiveness in Canada and Japan

By

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements 
for the degree of Master of Arts 
Graduate Department of Psychology 
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Abstract

Many have argued that the Japanese do not strive for personal distinctiveness or separation from others. Alternatively, the Japanese may pursue indirect or masked forms of distinctiveness that do not mirror the typical expression of this motive in the West. To explore this possibility, a distinction is drawn between horizontal and vertical distinctiveness. Horizontal distinctiveness refers to standing out from others by appearing different in a manner that is not inherently good or bad. Vertical distinctiveness refers to standing out from others by being clearly superior or inferior in an activity domain that is itself normative. The hierarchical, tight structure of Japanese society suggests that vertical forms of positive differentiation and horizontal forms of negative differentiation may be more pronounced than in the West. These predictions were tested by comparing the distinctiveness-related experiences recollected by Canadian and Japanese students. As predicted, the Japanese reported a greater proportion of horizontal (rather than vertical) negative events than did the Canadians, suggesting that standing out for its own sake is more costly for the Japanese. Contrary to prediction, however, the Japanese also reported a greater proportion of horizontal (rather than vertical) positive events than did the Canadians. The latter finding is considered in relation to the potential influence of modesty bias.
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Awareness of intentional autonomy and separation from the consciousness of others is essential to the development of personal identity. Just as essential, however, is social attachment, belonging and communion with others (Bakan, 1966). Separation and attachment are so basic as to be considered psychological universals. Even so, it cannot be denied that these two complementary vectors manifest themselves in profoundly different ways across cultures. Most obviously, cultures that emphasize individualism, independence and autonomy foster greater striving for separation and distinctiveness than do cultures that emphasize collectivism, interdependence, and social harmony (Burns & Brady, 1992). Beyond differences in strength or magnitude, however, there is considerable variability in how these strivings are expressed as a function of the dissimilar opportunity structures afforded across cultures (Parsons & Shils, 1951). In this paper, I introduce a conceptual dichotomy that may be useful in understanding this variability. The proposed study is a first step toward assessing the value of the dichotomy, through using it to understand differences in the experience of personal distinctiveness in Japan vs. Canada.

The starting assumption for the arguments that follow is that, irrespective of differences in the absolute levels of separation striving across cultures, the acquisition and maintenance of a private "bounded" consciousness requires recognizing and acting upon one's fundamental separation from the subjectivity of others. The motivational concomitant of this developmental imperative throughout the lifespan is assumed to be biologically founded and universal, discernible in all cultures (Mahler & McDevitt, 1989). The separation motive that underlies the desire for distinctiveness, individuation, and uniqueness may, however, be less obvious in some societies than it is in the West, due to its masked
appearance in cultural milieus that constrain or inhibit direct behavioral expression. I will focus here on Japan, and argue that rather than being absent in that culture, separation striving is often subtly expressed in a "vertical" manner, as achievement and status seeking. This contrasts with the dominant "horizontal" form of separation so common in Canada and other Western cultures, whereby distinctiveness is affirmed by simply being different from, rather than superior to, others. To lend credence to this idea, I will examine the memories of Japanese and Canadian students for life events that produced a sense of personal distinctiveness. The analysis will be primarily aimed at confirming the claim that vertical forms of positive distinctiveness are dominant in Japan but not Canada. In light of the scant and cursory treatment that cross-cultural differences in separation striving have received to date, a more critical examination could prove highly informative.

Toward outlining the rudiments of a theory relating distinctiveness seeking to culture, I begin by discussing the separation-attachment dialectic as it has been developed in Western psychological theory. After relating this dialectic to cultural differences in individualism-collectivism, I describe past research on the need for distinctiveness and, finally, suggest a fundamental distinction in its form of expression that may accommodate non-Western cultural realities. A comparison of Japanese and Canadian distinctiveness experiences will provide a test of predictions derived from the new theoretical distinction.

**Separation and Attachment**

Uniqueness motivation is rooted in the interplay of two core developmental imperatives: the forming of social attachments, and the establishment of autonomy through separation from others. While it is generally agreed that both attachment and separation are essential for identity development, theories vary in the relative emphasis they place on the two complementary motives. To the extent that separation is emphasized, attention is
focused on independence, autonomy, and differentiation as the primary routes towards identity achievement. Theorists stressing the importance of separation in the development of self include Freud, Mahler, and Maslow.

Freud stressed freedom from dependence in his oral stage of development, the growth of self-control in the anal stage, and the importance of separation from one’s opposite sex parent in the genital stage. Maturity entails that the individual’s ego be firmly differentiated from the parents. Similarly, Mahler (1972) construed individuation as a split from symbiosis with the mother, thus marking a shift from childish dependency to autonomy. Maslow (1970) also viewed autonomy as the end goal in identity development, a necessary step toward the ideal of self-actualization. Overall, psychoanalytical and humanistic theories tend to place greater importance on separation as a developmental imperative.

In contrast, ethological and sociobiological perspectives on human development and personality tend to emphasize attachment. Here, identity is often discussed in the context of interpersonal relationships. According to Bowlby (1969, 1980), individuals are biologically driven to form emotional attachments to others. Attachments serve an adaptive function for the species, as the infant is more likely to survive if a caregiver is often close by. As observed by Harlow (1959) in his work with rhesus monkeys, an innate need for physical closeness and tactile stimulation appears to characterize primate infants, the deprivation of which results in tragic psychological consequences. Similarly, insecure attachment in human infants poses a risk for later socioemotional difficulties, including identity problems. Grotevant and Cooper (1988), for example, found that insecurely attached infants often experience identity diffusion in adolescence, whereas securely attached infants are more likely to show healthier forms of identity resolution.

Rather than placing emphasis on either separation or attachment, some theories
describe an interplay between the two. Erikson's (1959) epigenetic theory, for example, posits eight psychosocial stages in human development. These stages reflect the necessity of both separation (in autonomy vs. shame and doubt) and attachment (in intimacy vs. isolation). Blatt and Blass (1990) argue that at each psychosocial stage, separation and attachment form a dialectic whereby progress in one domain is necessary for progress in the other. Similarly, Bowlby (1980) postulates that infants develop an internal working model of their caregiver that allows separation processes to take place after attachment has been established.

Although developmental theories differ in the relative emphases they place on separation, attachment, and the interaction of the two, all hold both needs to be biologically rooted and basic to human nature. Such universality, however, does not preclude considerable variation in how these motives play themselves out across cultures.

**Separation-Attachment and Individualism-Collectivism**

Like theories, cultures often place greater emphasis on either separation or attachment. Generally, individualistic cultures prescribe self-sufficiency and separation as psychological ideals while collectivistic cultures prescribe interdependence and attachment. In the individualist West, where differentiation and uniqueness are highly valued, the self is understood as separate, independent, and autonomous, with each person possessing their own distinctive mental states and psychological character. Markus & Kitayama (1991) refer to this as the independent construal of self.

In contrast, an interdependent construal of self is primarily relational, and gives primacy to attachment over separation. This view of self is dominant in many non-Western, collectivistic societies. Here, personal identity is seen as holistically integrated within a social dynamic where one's behaviour, emotions, and cognitions are reciprocally contingent
on those of others (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Unlike the independent construal of the self, where personal attributes such as attitudes, abilities, and personality are seen as static and trait-like, the interdependent construal regards these attributes as variable and situation-specific, in flux with the social context. Through responsiveness, empathy, and sensitivity to social cues, the interdependent self takes on a stable and meaningful identity as a part of the ingroup. This contrasts with the independent orientation, which is characterized by pursuit of a clearly individuated identity that can only be achieved through distinction from the social unit.

Related to independent and interdependent self-construals are Triandis’s (1994) concepts of idiocentrism and allocentrism, representing at the individual level of personality the broad cultural orientations of individualism and collectivism. Originally coined by Hofstede (1980), individualism-collectivism has become one of the most heavily researched constructs in cross-cultural psychology. Cultures emphasizing independence and separation, namely Western, industrialized societies, can be characterized as individualist, while cultures promoting interdependence, attachment, and conformity—such as Japanese, Thai, Chinese, Vietnamese, Filipino, and Hindu cultures—can be characterized as collectivist.

To lend support to this postulated distinction in value systems, Hofstede (1980) factor-analyzed extensive data from forty nations to arrive at the dimensions of individualism-collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity-femininity. The Chinese Culture Connection (1987) validated the dimension of individualism-collectivism by demonstrating its considerable overlap with the Chinese value of integration. Similarly, individualism overlaps with Schwartz’s (1994) value of openness to change, while collectivism overlaps with the value of conservation. Cross-cultural studies using Asch’s conformity paradigm yielded the finding that conformity and the valuing of
conformity are positively correlated with collectivism (Bond & Smith, 1996). Accordingly, Morris (1956) found that members from collectivist societies valued alignment with others as the most preferred “way to live,” whereas those from individualist societies rated autonomy and self-actualization as the highest life values.

National cultures representing high individualism and collectivism evolved from distinct religious and philosophical traditions. Individualist cultures are rooted in a Cartesian, dualistic tradition where the self is seen as sui generis, a separate and private entity. In contrast, collectivist cultures are monistic by tradition, conceiving of the self as one with nature (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). As a result, individualist cultures have come to emphasize the singular and detached nature of the self, whereas collectivist societies have come to focus on the fundamental attachments of human beings to nature and to each other. This contrast implies parallel differences in the behavioral expression of separation-attachment dynamics in individualist vs. collectivist cultures.

One expression of separation is personal autonomy. This is most commonly achieved through asserting control over the environment. Weisz, Rothbaum, and Blackburn (1984) found that individualists are more likely to rely on primary control (changing external circumstances to suit the self), whereas collectivists rely more often on secondary control (changing oneself to suit external, often social, circumstances). Similarly, individualists are more prone to exhibit an internal locus of control, while collectivists are more likely to exhibit an external locus of control. Separation through autonomy thus appears less prominent in collectivist than individualist cultures.

Collectivists also show less desire for distinctiveness or uniqueness. For example, the false uniqueness bias, or the tendency to see one’s attributes on a certain dimension as unique compared to others, has been demonstrated in North America but not in Japan, Korea, or
Thailand (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). The desire to exaggerate one's uniqueness in part reflects socialized separation striving, a cultural mandate that supports self-esteem in individualist societies. Sticking out from the crowd for its own sake, however, is less of a goal for collectivists and plays less of a role in their self-esteem. As it is this aspect of separation-attachment—the motivational character of human distinctiveness—that will be cross-culturally examined here, a brief review of theory and research is warranted. Most of this work has been undertaken in relation to the "need for uniqueness" (Snyder & Fromkin, 1977, 1980).

**Uniqueness and Personal Distinctiveness**

Research on uniqueness has its origins in the conformity literature. Because Western culture promotes independence and autonomy as virtues, social psychologists have assiduously chronicled a range of conformity effects (e.g., Asch, 1963; Sherif, 1936), often implicitly treating them as evidence of human weakness or failing. Notably, these findings show that the need for attachment and social belonging is powerful even in individualist societies that stress separation. At the same time, however, the findings reveal that a good number of participants are resistant to social pressure, maintaining their opinion in contradistinction to the group. These contrarians first stimulated Snyder and Fromkin’s (1977) interest in the need for uniqueness as an aspect of personality. Individuals who, through their behaviors and attitudes, chose separation over attachment were presumed to have higher motivation for uniqueness.

Need for uniqueness is determined by both individual differences and situational factors. With regard to the former, Snyder and Fromkin (1980) have postulated three trait components of uniqueness striving: (1) indifference to how others react to one’s ideas, behaviour, etc.; (2) disregard of traditional rules and conventions; and (3) an inclination to
publicly defend one's beliefs. In order to measure individual differences in uniqueness assertion, the authors developed the Need for Uniqueness Scale (NUS), which reflected the three dimensions when factor analyzed. The scale has been shown to have adequate test-retest reliability, internal consistency, and discriminant validity (Snyder & Fromkin, 1977). Joubert (1988) showed that score on the second component described above was positively correlated with loneliness and negatively correlated with social interest. Men scored higher on general need for uniqueness as well as loneliness, whereas women scored higher in social interest (Joubert, 1988). These findings fit with contemporary theory on gender typing.

To gauge the effect of situational variables on uniqueness motivation, Snyder and Fromkin (1977) developed a false feedback methodology. Participants filled out personality tests and then received non-contingent feedback describing them as either highly (low uniqueness condition) or slightly (high uniqueness condition) similar to 10,000 of their peers on certain attributes. When provided with opportunities to express themselves, those in the low uniqueness condition generated more creative or individuating responses than those in the high uniqueness condition (Fromkin, 1968). For example, subjects in the low uniqueness condition created a greater number of innovative uses for a common object, exaggerated the dissimilarity between themselves and a stranger, and were more covetous of experiences unavailable to other subjects. Elsewhere, very high dissimilarity to others has been shown to be similarly aversive and to prompt symmetrical compensatory behaviour (Byrne, 1969).

Such findings led Snyder and Fromkin (1980) to advance a general theory of uniqueness consisting of several basic postulates: (1) a moderate degree of perceived similarity to others is experienced as optimal; (2) as individuals perceive themselves to be more or less similar than is optimal, discomfort arises; and (3) the negative affect associated with too much or too little similarity motivates individuals to re-establish an optimal sense of
similarity. Desire for an intermediate degree of similarity is consistent with exchange theory. By conforming, the individual can enjoy social rewards and avoid punitive responses by the group. Conformity, however, is not without cost, for it compromises one's sense of independence. Moderate similarity allows a balance of rewards and costs.

According to Snyder and Fromkin (1980), symbolic separation from others coupled with affiliative conformity provide an optimal level of personal distinctiveness. A similar position is taken by Brewer (1991), in her "optimal distinctiveness theory." She suggests that social behavior is guided by a balanced interplay between assimilation and differentiation motives. Brewer goes further, however, to propose that assimilation needs are primarily satisfied within one's ingroup, whereas distinctiveness needs are primarily satisfied through comparisons with outgroups. Consistent with this, Markus and Kunda (1986) found that those who were made to feel highly dissimilar to others increased their ratings of similarity to their ingroup but also decreased their ratings of similarity to outgroups.

Neither Snyder and Fromkin (1977, 1980) nor Brewer (1991) address the importance of culture for need for uniqueness beyond pointing out that the normative or optimal balance of separation and attachment differs across cultures. The foregoing suggests that collectivist cultures would be characterized by less need for distinctiveness than individualist cultures. Consistent with this, Burns and Brady (1992) found that American students scored higher on the NUS than did Malaysian students. The cultural difference stemmed from disparity on only one component of the scale: Americans showed less concern than did Malaysians about the reactions of others to their thoughts and behaviour. Similarly, Yamaguchi (1994) found that allocentrism (collectivist orientation) was negatively correlated with scores on the NUS among Japanese. The collectivist vs. individualist difference in need for personal distinctiveness may not, however, apply to all subgroups within a culture. Hayashi and
Weiss (1994), for example, found no difference between Anglo-American and Japanese marathon runners. Even so, research has generally confirmed the claim that collectivists are lower than individualists in their desire for personal distinctiveness.

Beyond gross differences, little is known about how distinctiveness is pursued and achieved within collectivistic vs. individualist cultural contexts. Insofar as the cultural orientations provide dissimilar constraints and opportunity structures for the realization of psychological separation, it may be necessary to look for culture-specific patterns of behavioural expression. Toward this end, I offer a new distinction.

**Personal Distinctiveness: Horizontal and Vertical**

If the need for separation is indeed a biologically based, universal quality, as claimed, it stands to reason that it must be discernible in all cultures to various degrees. The motive must therefore be evident in even the most collectivistic of societies. Moreover, the surface expression of this motive within each culture must reflect the norms, values and opportunity structures that characterize that culture. Thus, striving for personal distinctiveness may be obvious and direct in some cultures, but masked and subtle in others.

I suggest a fundamental dichotomy for understanding the assertion of personal distinctiveness. One may find distinction through either **vertical** or **horizontal** differentiation. Horizontal differentiation refers to distinguishing oneself from others on what Snyder and Fromkin (1980) refer to as “uniqueness attributes.” Through clothing and other adornment, expression of attitudes and interests, voluntary participation in sports and activities, and characteristic gestures, the uniqueness of the self can be privately affirmed and publicly announced. This form of distinctiveness-seeking is horizontal because it is not based on being superior or inferior to others, but, rather, simply being different in a self-expressive manner. For example, the woman who chooses to receive an odd tattoo does not necessarily
leave the parlour feeling that she is better or worse than others, but she may feel distinctive, unique, and special because of her new appearance. Individualist societies, through their emphasis on personal liberty, self-expression, creativity, and autonomy in decision making, provide myriad opportunities for horizontal distinctiveness. Such behaviours, however, would be less tolerable in tighter collectivist societies where deviations from social norms are viewed as transgressions, and desire for interpersonal harmony and mutual deference in decision making is high. "Doing one's own thing" for the purpose of asserting distinctiveness is inconsistent with collectivistic moral perspectives, which give priority to the needs of the group over the individual.

Vertical differentiation, in contrast, refers to distinguishing oneself from others by being better at culturally normative tasks. Here, one strives to stand above others on dimensions related to achievement and status, satisfying the need for separation without overstepping normative prescriptions for acceptable behaviour. Due to the hierarchical organization and limited latitude for horizontal differentiation in most collectivist societies, this may be the primary means of psychological separation adopted by individuals. Differentiation may be sought through academic success, ascending the corporate ladder, being a top athlete, contributing more than others, or making a lot of money. This is not to say that collectivists would be conscious of their desire for vertical differentiation. In fact, to the extent that such a motivation is considered inappropriate in these cultures, as might be expected, its psychological significance would be disavowed. This masking would only obscure the prominence of vertical differentiation, as alternate justifications and explanations for behavioural investment would be pointed to.

To test the contention that the primary route to distinctiveness is horizontal in individualist cultures and vertical in collectivist cultures, I will compare two representative
cultures.

**A Canadian vs. Japanese Comparison**

Mainstream Canadian culture, rooted in British and French cultural traditions, and heavily influenced by the United States, is unanimously viewed as highly individualist. Japanese culture, in contrast, is highly collectivist. Described by Lebra (1976) as an “ethos of social relativism,” the Japanese value system promotes belonging, dependency, and reciprocity. These values are reflected in the Japanese language. The Japanese word for self, jibun, means “one’s share of the shared life space” (Hamaguchi, 1985). Amae refers to dependence on a superior (Church, 1987). Itai kan refers to a feeling of merger with others (Weiss, Rothbaum, & Blackburn, 1984).

In contrast to Canada’s cultural emphasis on heterogeneity and equality, Okabe (1983) describes Japanese society as homogeneous and vertically structured, divided into numerous groupings that are each organized in a status hierarchy. Within each group, individuals have the opportunity, and often the obligation, to try to distinguish themselves by ascending the hierarchy. Vertical differentiation therefore stands out as a legitimate avenue for the pursuit of distinctiveness in Japan. Horizontal differentiation, however, would be inhibited in such a tight and homogenous culture. Thus, it is possible that a Japanese student who wins a prestigious scholarship may feel as distinctive and unique as a Canadian who takes up an unconventional new hobby.

In presenting the specific hypotheses for the comparative study, positive and negative feelings of distinctiveness must be treated separately. The notion of separation striving presupposes a desire for positive distinctiveness—standing out in a way that makes one feel good about oneself. Apart from what is deliberately sought, however, life events often leave one feeling separate and different, even alienated, in a way that feels bad.
The cultural theory described above focused on positive distinctiveness. Drawing from these ideas, the Japanese experience of positive distinctiveness is hypothesized to derive more from vertical forms of differentiation (and therefore less from horizontal forms) than does the Canadian experience.

Hypotheses can also be derived for negative distinctiveness. Given the high degree of concern with violating social conventions and thereby suffering the disapproval of others in Japan, the Japanese experience of negative distinctiveness is hypothesized to derive more from horizontal forms of differentiation (and therefore less from vertical forms) than does the Canadian experience. Negative vertical differentiation would involve being atypically inferior at a culturally normative activity. The premium placed on independent attainment and competitive achievement in individualist cultures, such as Canada’s, reinforces this hypothesis.

To test these hypotheses, Canadian and Japanese students were asked to report life events that produced strong feelings of positive or negative distinctiveness. The relative prominence of vertical vs. horizontal differentiation was compared across cultures.

**Method**

**Participants**

Participants were 199 (102 women and 97 men) introductory psychology students at the University of Toronto and 192 (92 women and 100 men) introductory psychology students at Hokkai Gakuen University in Sapporo, Japan. The modal age was 19 for the Canadians and 18 for the Japanese.

**Materials and Procedure**
Two questionnaires were administered to all participants (see Appendix). Japanese participants completed Japanese-language versions of the questionnaires that had been produced from the English-language originals using back-translation methods.

**Distinctiveness Life Events Questionnaire (DLE).** This open-ended questionnaire was expressly designed for the study. It requires participants to recall the five most personally significant events from their past that produced a positive sense of personal distinctiveness and the five most significant events that produced a negative sense of personal distinctiveness. Each event is described in a few sentences. The age of the respondent at the time of each event and the emotional intensity of each event are also reported, the latter on a 9-point Likert-type scale anchored with *very mild* and *very intense*.

**Need for Uniqueness Scale (NUS; Snyder & Fromkin, 1977).** The NUS was included as an ancillary measure to confirm the expectation that Japanese would be lower in need for uniqueness than Canadians. Though not directly related to the hypotheses, the magnitude of this difference would reflect the relative salience of striving for personal distinctiveness within the two cultures. The measure consists of 16 first-person statements (e.g., "I like standing out in a crowd," "I dislike being the odd one out.") that reflect the presence or absence of uniqueness motivation. Respondents indicate the extent to which they agree with each statement using a 5-point Likert-type scale, anchored with *strongly disagree* and *strongly agree*. Ratings for negative items are reverse-scored before summing across all items to create an overall score.

In addition, Canadian participants were asked to indicate their ethnic origin, allowing the cultural composition of the sample to be assessed. The Japanese sample, in contrast, was homogeneous.
Results

Need for Uniqueness. Only the 195 Canadian and 181 Japanese participants who provided ratings for all 16 NUS items were included in the analysis. Preliminary to testing the expected cultural difference in uniqueness motivation, the reliability of the implicitly unidimensional NUS scale was assessed for the combined sample. Cronbach’s (1951) alpha coefficient was modest at .73. The item-total correlations ranged from .14 to .50 and the item intercorrelations ranged from −.14 to .44. This limited reliability suggests that more than one dimension may be represented by the 16 NUS items. To examine this possibility, principal factor analysis of the items was conducted separately for Canadian women, Canadian men, Japanese women, and Japanese men. As the solutions were parallel across all four groups, only the combined-sample results will be described.

Only the first two factors were retained for rotation, as their eigenvalues were discontinuous with the rest and they together accounted for 95% of the common item variance. An oblique rotation (promax) was used to allow for correlated factors. The factor pattern and factor structure were examined as guides to factor interpretation. All items with factor correlations of $|r| \geq .40$ appear in Table 1. As can be seen, the items that most strongly represent the first factor emphasize being different than others. The items that most strongly represent the second factor emphasize the value of belonging to a social group (reverse-scored). Hence, the distinction appears to be between desiring or preferring to appear different, on the one hand, and remaining detached from, or independent of, one’s social groups, on the other. These two latent dimensions were only weakly correlated, at $r = .28$. Scores were estimated for all participants on both the Being Different and Separation from Ingroups factors.
Table 1

Indicator Items from Need for Uniqueness Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor 1 (Being Different)</th>
<th>Factor 2 (Separation From Ingroups)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I try to avoid disagreeing with people.</td>
<td>I like the sense of belonging I get when I’m part of a group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t like feeling ordinary.</td>
<td>I value the traditions and norms of my social group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m stubborn with my points of view.</td>
<td>I prefer to blend in with my social group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like standing out in a crowd.</td>
<td>I place a lot of value on my memberships in social groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People often say I’m a nonconformist.</td>
<td>I think it’s important to fit in with one’s group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like being different.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Were the Canadians higher in need for uniqueness than were their Japanese counterparts, as expected? Before testing this prediction, the participants were further differentiated. A large proportion (48.7%) of the Canadian sample reported at least partial West, South, East, or Southeast Asian ethnicity. These participants had lived in Canada for, on average, 10.93 years. To guard against the possibility of blunted comparative tests due to cultural overlap, Canadians who did vs. did not report Asian ethnicity were treated as separate cultural groups alongside the Japanese in all analyses that follow. Thus, three-group comparisons were effectively conducted.

Group differences on the two NUS factors were tested using 3 (cultural group) × 2 (gender) ANOVA. For Being Different, only the main effect for cultural group was significant, $F(2, 370) = 10.19, p < .0001$. As expected, both the Asian Canadians ($M = .07$) and the non-Asian Canadians ($M = .28$) were significantly higher than the Japanese ($M = -.19$), $p = .02$ and $p < .0001$, respectively. The two Canadian groups, however, did not significantly differ, $p = .09$. For Separation from Ingroups, again, only the main effect for
cultural group was significant, $F (2, 370) = 12.14$, $p < .0001$. As expected, the non-Asian Canadians ($M = .26$) were significantly higher than the Japanese ($M = .04$), $p = .03$. Contrary to prediction, however, the Asian Canadians ($M = -.33$) were lower than both the Japanese and the non-Asian Canadians on this dimension, $p = .0007$ and $p < .0001$, respectively.

The Japanese, then, were lower than the non-Asian Canadians on both dimensions of uniqueness motivation represented by the NUS items. Compared to the Asian Canadians, however, the Japanese were lower on only one dimension and higher on the other. This pattern of findings confirms the value of culturally differentiating the Canadian sample as was done.

Distinctiveness Events. To compare the prominence of horizontal vs. vertical distinctiveness across cultures, all reported events were categorized by two independent judges blind to the hypotheses. A three-category classification scheme was used. First, each event was assessed on its relevance for the experience of distinctiveness. If the event, as reported, did not appear to convey this experiential quality at all, it was considered irrelevant to the phenomenon under investigation and was placed in the Other category. All relevant events were further classified as either Vertical or Horizontal in the primary form of distinctiveness they represented, as described above. The judges agreed on 86.30% of the Japanese events (translated into English), resulting in a chance-corrected concordance index of $\kappa = .71$. Similarly, they agreed on 83.49% of the Canadian events, resulting in $\kappa = .65$. All disagreements were resolved through discussion.

All Canadian participants reported five negative and five positive events. Many Japanese, however, were unable to produce this number. Rather, they produced an average of 3.59 negative events and 2.98 positive events. Furthermore, only those events for which
the participant had provided a 1-9 intensity rating were used in the analyses that follow. This slightly reduced the average number of negative and positive events to 4.99 and 4.94 for the Asian Canadians, 4.97 and 4.95 for the non-Asian Canadians, and 3.54 and 2.94 for the Japanese. Finally, only those participants who reported at least one negative and one positive event (virtually all did), along with their corresponding intensity ratings, were included in the analyses that follow.

Group differences in the proportion of negative and positive events that were classified as Other (irrelevant) were examined through 3 (cultural group) × 2 (gender) ANOVAs. For negative events, only the main effect for cultural group was significant, $F(2, 352) = 11.94$, $p < .0001$. As group differences were not predicted here, Tukey’s HSD test was applied to control familywise Type I error rate in the comparison of group means. The test revealed that the reporting of Other events was comparable for Asian ($M = .22$) and non-Asian Canadians ($M = .17$). Both these groups, however, reported a greater proportion of Other events than did the Japanese ($M = .10$). For positive events, in contrast, no group or gender differences emerged, all $ps > .38$.

To test the critical predictions in relation to negative events, only those participants who reported at least one negative Vertical or Horizontal event were included in the analyses, to ensure strict complementarity of Vertical and Positive proportions. For each of these participants, the number of negative Horizontal events was divided by the total number of negative Vertical and Horizontal events. The complementarity rendered separate analysis of Vertical events redundant, as this proportion was simple one minus that for Horizontal events. As before, a 3 (cultural group) × 2 (gender) ANOVA was conducted. Only the main effect for cultural group was significant, $F(2, 349) = 6.79$, $p = .001$. As predicted, the Japanese reported a higher proportion of negative Horizontal (rather than Vertical) events ($M$
than did both the Asian Canadians ($M = .21$) and the non-Asian Canadians ($M = .26$), $p = .0004$ and $p = .02$, respectively. Furthermore, the two groups of Canadians were comparable, $p = .23$.

A parallel ANOVA conducted for positive events revealed, again, only a main effect for cultural group, $F (2, 342) = 14.51$, $p < .0001$. Recall that the Japanese were predicted to report a greater proportion of positive Vertical (rather than Horizontal) events than that reported by the Canadians. In contrast to the prediction, the Japanese again reported a smaller proportion of Vertical events ($M = .83$) than did both the Asian Canadians ($M = .95$) and the non-Asian Canadians ($M = .96$), both $ps < .0001$. Again, the two groups of Canadians were comparable, $p = .89$.

Consistent with prediction, then, Japanese participants reported a greater proportion of negative Horizontal events than did their Canadian counterparts. Contrary to prediction, however, they also reported a greater proportion of positive Horizontal events.

**Intensity Ratings.** Were there also differences in the subjective impact of the distinctiveness-related events across cultures? To examine this possibility, separate 3 (cultural group) $\times$ 2 (gender) ANOVAs were separately conducted for the average intensity rating given to negative Horizontal events, positive Horizontal events, negative Vertical events, and positive Vertical events. (Sample differences across analyses precluded MANOVA here.) The single significant effect found in any of the four analyses was a main effect for cultural group in the analysis of average intensity rating for positive Vertical events, $F (2, 329) = 19.12$, $p < .0001$. Tukey’s HSD on the group means revealed that the Japanese rated the subjective impact of these positive events as less intense ($M = 6.40$) than did both the Asian Canadians ($M = 7.24$) and the non-Asian Canadians ($M = 7.34$). The latter two groups did not significantly differ. The Japanese, then, were selectively less
willing to report that their experiences of being better than others in some domain were intensely gratifying. Might this simply be an expression of the well-documented Japanese emphasis on modesty? (Lebra, 1976). If so, then the surprising and hypothesis-disconfirming finding that the Japanese reported a smaller proportion of positive Vertical events might stem from the same conscious motive. To indirectly examine this possibility, the average intensity rating given to positive Vertical events was utilized as a rough index of modesty. This variable was added as a covariate to the original 3 (cultural group) x 2 (gender) ANOVA conducted above to examine group differences in the proportion of positive Vertical events reported. Results for this ANCOVA revealed that the previously highly significant main effect for cultural group ($p < .0001$) was now reduced to non-significance, $p = .08$. In contrast, a parallel ANCOVA for negative Horizontal events, using average intensity rating for negative horizontal events as the covariate, did not significantly reduce the main effect for group, $p = .005$ vs. previous $p = .001$. This pattern of results lends some credence to the speculation that the greater modesty bias of the Japanese led them to report fewer positive Vertical events than those reported by their Canadian counterparts. This, by complement, would have inflated the proportion of positive Horizontal events reported by the Japanese, producing misleading group differences on this dimension.

Discussion

Toward exploring cultural variation in the experience of personal distinctiveness, the present study provides initial evidence that horizontal and vertical distinctiveness are differentially experienced by Canadians and Japanese. Consistent with prediction, Japanese participants reported a higher proportion of negative horizontal events than did Canadian participants. In contrast, the complementary prediction that Japanese would report a higher proportion of positive vertical events was not supported by the results. Instead, Japanese
participants reported a higher proportion of positive horizontal events than Canadians. The reasons for this disconfirmation are unclear. One possibility relates to modesty bias. The Japanese participants provided comparatively lower ratings of subjective intensity only for positive vertical events, suggesting a selective concern with appearing proud by revealing, more than is socially appropriate, the enjoyment of one's own successes. Moreover, the difference between Japanese and Canadians in their reporting of such events was virtually eliminated when the average intensity rating of these events was used as a covariate. This reveals that those who reported fewer positive vertical events also tended to rate such events as less gratifying, lending credence to the speculation that modesty bias may have distorted the analyses of positive events. Note that, in contrast, intensity ratings for negative events were not related to the tendency to report vertical vs. horizontal events.

To interpret these findings, I will first relate them to the guiding theory. Second, I will discuss the possibility of a Japanese modesty bias in detail. Third, I will discuss the implications of the observed differences in need for uniqueness. Fourth, I will discuss the heuristic limitations of the study. Finally, I will consider the broader implications of the study and directions for future research.

Horizontal Distinctiveness in Japan

The tightly structured, hierarchical nature of Japanese society presents behavioural constraints and proscriptions that should limit the expression of horizontal distinctiveness. By extension, such a culture should give rise to an enhanced experience of negative horizontal distinctiveness relative to the more loosely structured, individualist Canadian culture. The Japanese emphasis on harmony, conformity, and interdependence discourages those who seek to brashly distinguish themselves from others (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Indeed, the threat of social rejection may underlie the enhanced negativity associated with
even mild deviance for the Japanese (Lebra, 1976). To illustrate, Japanese participants reported the following situations as common examples of feeling different from others in a negative way: differing from peers in height or weight; having one’s name mispronounced or ridiculed; and being singled out in a crowd. Canadian reports of negative horizontal distinctiveness tended to be more pronounced in the degree of “different-ness” they implied (e.g., physical abnormalities or serious medical problems in childhood, inability to speak English with peers upon arriving in Canada). Importantly, the Canadians reported a higher proportion of negative vertical distinctiveness events than did the Japanese. Considering the Canadian focus on individual achievement, it is not surprising that events suggestive of inferiority (often performance-related) would be especially memorable. Common examples of negative vertical events reported by Canadians included poor academic performance, failed romance, and defeat in sports activities.

The results for the negative events, then, were highly consistent with the theoretically derived predictions. As important, however, is the finding that the Japanese reported a greater proportion of positive horizontal events than did the Canadians. This is inconsistent with the proposed theory. It was reasoned that if separation striving is indeed a biological, universal human motive, it would tend to manifest itself covertly in cultural milieus that curtail its overt expression. To the extent that Japanese culture inhibits standing out from others in an arbitrary, unique manner, the Japanese should seek to satisfy the need for separation by striving for “distinguished” success (vertical distinctiveness) on culturally mandated tasks.

The unexpected finding that the Japanese reported fewer positive vertical events than did their Canadian counterparts clashes with this reasoning. The finding, however, can be interpreted in several ways. One possibility is that Japanese culture, due to its heightened
exposure to Western values since WWII, has shifted toward greater individualism and corresponding forms of uniqueness expression. If so, there is little reason to expect that the predictions, premised on an out-dated cultural characterization, should hold. This account, however, does not accommodate the finding that the Japanese participants were clearly lower than their non-Asian Canadian counterparts in reported need for uniqueness. The willingness to express the need for uniqueness on a questionnaire presumably reflects the tolerance for such direct expression, verbal and behavioural, within a culture. Hence, the finding supports the assumption that the Japanese culture offers less latitude for the direct expression of this motive, setting the stage for enhanced indirect, vertical expression insofar as the underlying motive requires an outlet.

That the Japanese reported fewer distinctiveness events overall is also significant. This may simply reflect the lower frequency of this type of experience for the Japanese. Additionally, it may be that distinctiveness events are less central in their self-definition and therefore more difficult to retrieve from memory. Consistent with their lower need for uniqueness, distinctiveness expression does not appear to be as much a conscious preoccupation for Japanese as for Canadians.

**Japanese Modesty**

A more plausible explanation for the lower proportion of positive vertical events reported by the Japanese hinges upon modesty bias. Japanese participants may have been reluctant to report positive vertical events due to a modest self-presentational strategy. Indeed, the value of modesty in Japan has been well-documented in the literature (Lebra, 1976). In a nation where “cutting down tall poppies” – or, criticizing those who have achieved success in certain normative domains – is more prevalent than in individualist societies (Feather & McKee, 1993), it is in the best interests of Japanese to downplay their
successes in order to achieve greater harmony with the group. Japanese face social rejection if they do not behave modestly (Bond, Leung, & Wan, 1982). If this bias were pronounced in the present study, then intensity ratings for vertical positive events should also be selectively suppressed for the Japanese, downplaying how good it felt to be better than others. This was found. Furthermore, if Japanese participants were reluctant to express intense emotion over events that made them feel superior, it is likely that the same avoidance of immodesty led them to report fewer positive vertical events to begin with, spuriously inflating the proportion of positive horizontal events.

The question of whether this modesty bias reflects a self-presentation strategy or private self-effacement has important theoretical implications. On the one hand, it is possible that reluctance to report and emphasize the subjective impact of positive vertical events is due to the spontaneously self-critical orientation of the Japanese (De Vos, 1985; Doi, 1973; Kashiwagi, 1986). Self-criticism may have caused them to downplay their positive performances even as they occurred, resulting in a less gratifying sense of pride and achievement. Alternatively, a more modest response style on self-report questionnaires may merely reflect a conscious impression management technique. Insofar as Japanese act differently in public and in private (Lebra, 1976), they may present themselves in a more modest manner on psychological measures than their true self-perceptions warrant.

Heine, Lehman, Markus and Kitayama (1999) have reviewed several lines of evidence that question the feigned modesty account of Japanese questionnaire response style. First, although exaggerated modesty on self-reports supposedly reflects a social desirability motive, no cross-cultural differences in socially desirable responding has yet been found (Heine & Lehman, 1995b). Second, to the extent that Japanese are responding in a superficially self-effacing manner on questionnaires, this self-criticism might not be expected
to extend to ingroups as well. But as Kitayama, Markus, Matsumoto, and Norasakkunkit (1997) have demonstrated, Japanese have a tendency to disparage their social groups as much as they disparage themselves. Third, a modest self-presentation would presumably be diminished if Japanese participants were confident that their answers were anonymous. In the present study, participants were assured at the outset of their anonymity. Kitayama (1999), taking it one step further, created an experimental situation where participants were assured beyond doubt that any identifying information would be eliminated. Similar to the present results, a self-critical response style was still evidenced.

Modesty or genuine self-criticism? This debate has been heavily argued in the psychological literature, and is not the main focus of the present study. The self-criticism hypothesis, however, cannot account for the pattern of selectivity in the emotional intensity ratings. The case for modesty bias in relation to the present study is supported by the fact that intensity ratings for positive horizontal events were not lower for Japanese than for Canadians; the cultural difference emerged only for positive vertical events. Furthermore, self-criticism would be expected to exacerbate how "bad" standing out in a negative way feels. This was not the case: Canadians and Japanese were equivalent in their negative intensity ratings. Such selective responding, therefore, speaks against a private and generalized tendency toward self-criticism.

To resolve the self-criticism vs. modesty debate, implicit measures of self-perception, such as priming paradigms (Fazio, Sanbonmatsu, Powell, & Kardes, 1986) or the implicit association test (IAT; Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz, 1998), might be used. To the extent that modesty is a conscious social characteristic of the Japanese, it may not be apparent at the automatic, unconscious level. Although some of the available evidence challenges the modesty hypothesis, it should be noted that these studies used explicit measures of modesty.
Implicit measures, which tap mental processes without reflective awareness, might indicate that any pleasure Japanese spontaneously derive from positive vertical events is eventually "over-ridden" by conscious concern with modesty. Accordingly, Farnham and Greenwald (1998) found that the modesty bias disappeared in Japanese when measuring reaction times in a priming paradigm. Although this study is problematic (Heine et al., 1999), it suggests a possible avenue for future research. The Distinctiveness Life Events Questionnaire and the NUS are self-report measures of psychological processes and, therefore, vulnerable to modesty bias. Future reliance on implicit measurement would avoid this limitation.

**Need for Uniqueness**

Consistent with prior research (e.g., Burns & Brady, 1992; Yamaguchi, 1994), non-Asian Canadians scored significantly higher than Japanese on need for uniqueness. As the instrument used to measure need for uniqueness, the NUS has been normed and validated primarily in North America. The magnitude of scalar difference across cultures, therefore, should not be over-interpreted. Administering the NUS to a Japanese sample might represent an "imposed etic" (Berry, 1969) rather than measurement of a culturally equivalent psychological construct. The North American conception of uniqueness may simply not be applicable to the Japanese sense of self (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Arguing against this possibility was the parallel factor structure of the NUS across the Japanese and Canadian samples. Structural equivalence offers some support for psychological equivalence.

Assuming the NUS to possess adequate cross-cultural validity, the scores of the Asian Canadians are noteworthy. Asian Canadians scored significantly lower than did both non-Asian Canadians and Japanese on the Separation from Ingroups factor of need for uniqueness. This pattern suggests an interesting possibility. Might the Asian Canadians, being members of a visible minority and predominantly immigrant, be coping with the
challenges of their status in Canada by developing intensified ties with ingroups? Consider Berry’s (1980a) acculturation strategies: integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization. A separation strategy involves placing high value on maintenance of one’s heritage cultural identity, and low value on establishing relationships with exogenous groups. Perhaps the lesser desire of Asian Canadians to separate from ingroups, as indicated by their responses on the NUS, is the complementary reflection of a prominent separation orientation in this group. An alternative interpretation is at least as plausible. Recall that the Asian Canadians scored significantly higher than the Japanese on the Being Different factor of need for uniqueness, and were not significantly different than non-Asian Canadians on this dimension. This suggests that Asian Canadians, while choosing to maintain a close-knit relationship with ingroups, have nevertheless been influenced by the Canadian values of independence and individuality. This fits more with the acculturation strategy of integration, striving to both maintain one’s heritage cultural identity and embrace elements of the new culture. In this case, the intensified ingroup ties of Asian Canadians may represent a means of both maintaining heritage culture and coping with the threat of racism and alienation in a society wherein they hold visible minority status.

Future research on distinctiveness would profit by explicitly measuring acculturation strategies when comparing an acculturating ethnic group with other domestic groups.

Limitations

Several shortcomings of the study are obvious. First, the inter-judge reliability of the coding of distinctiveness events into vertical, horizontal, and other categories was modest. The problem could be due to the coder’s lack of consensual understanding of the conceptual nuances of the categories used, difficulty in applying the coding scheme to events that were complex in their substantive address, or compromised performance by one or both coders.
Use of the coding scheme in future research should be accompanied by more intensive training, including detailed and formal codification of the classification rules. The marked predominance of vertical over horizontal events in both cultures suggests that the coders may have been too inclusive in the classification of vertical events.

A second limitation is that the predicted cultural differences in horizontal vs. vertical distinctiveness were premised on an assumption that Japanese are less tolerant of deviations from normative behaviour than are Canadians. This assumption, admittedly, was never directly tested. As Matsumoto (1999) points out, many cross-cultural studies that are based on the assumption that Western cultures are individualist and Eastern cultures are collectivist never explicitly measure individualism-collectivism, and this assumption may in fact be false. A parallel criticism could be directed at this study. Thus, the surprising finding that Japanese reported more positive horizontal events than Canadians may simply reflect the fallacy of the assumption on which the expectations were predicated. Matsumoto's (1999) criticism, however, is considerably weaker in relation to the present study. First of all, the theoretical basis of my predictions involved cultural tolerance of deviation from normative behaviour, not a broad and multifaceted construct such as I-C. While there are no validated measures of this circumscribed cultural dimension, there is indirect evidence that the Japanese brook less deviation than do Westerners. For example, it is well known that, beginning at an early age and continuing through the lifespan, the pronounced threat of ostracism effectively keeps Japanese individuals from violating behavioural standards (Weisz et al., 1984). Children are socialized to pursue strict alignment with the family, and those who misbehave are often threatened with alienation and exclusion (Lebra, 1976). This emphasis on alignment is much less prominent in Canada. The strongest support for the assumed cultural difference, however, comes from the present study. As mentioned, the
observed difference in need for uniqueness can be interpreted as reflecting as much the extent to which uniqueness is tolerated as pursued in a culture. It would make little sense to claim that members of a cultural group openly strive for uniqueness but punitively judge all others in their society that do the same. Thus, the lower NUS scores of the Japanese, insofar as they are valid indicators of need for uniqueness, also reflect less tolerance for overt distinctiveness expression in Japan, the very assumption on which the predictions are based.

A third limitation pertains to the division of the Canadian sample into Asian Canadians and non-Asian groups. Any Canadian who indicated at least partial West, South, East or Southeast Asian ethnicity was included in the Asian Canadian group. The heterogeneity of this group, however, might be obscuring specific ethnocultural differences that are important for understanding variation in distinctiveness seeking within the Canadian population. In addition, there was significant variability in the number of years Asian Canadians had lived in Canada. The average of 10.93 years does not reveal the fact that 25% of the Asian Canadians were born in Canada. The immigrant-native distinction, not examined here, may also be relevant for within-group differences on the psychological dimensions of interest. Future research would do well to further subdivide Asian Canadians according to these considerations.

**Implications and Directions for Future Research**

As a first test of the theory of cross-cultural variation in personal distinctiveness, the present study provides only partial support for the theory. The possibility of selective modesty bias and ambiguity surrounding the interpretation of the failure to confirm the predicted difference on vertical positive events demands that conclusions about the validity of the guiding theory be suspended, pending further research. It is not possible to say at this point that the Japanese are prone toward subtle, vertical forms of positive differentiation. If,
however, a more powerful methodology reveals this form of distinctiveness to be more common in Japan, the implications would be notable. First, it would give credence to the central assumption that the need to separate from others is a pan-human, biological motive that is channeled and given expression through the cultural matrix. Second, evidence of the universal presence of this motive would draw into question popular theories of the self-concept in the cross-cultural literature. Most notably, the finding that Japanese exhibit masked forms of distinctiveness expression would challenge Markus and Kitayama's (1991) characterization of the Japanese as exclusively interdependent in their self-definition. To the extent that Japanese seek to distinguish themselves vertically, they can be assumed to be, at some conscious or unconscious level, invested in a separate, bounded identity. Such striving cannot be easily reconciled with exclusive need for interdependence and communion.

Future research might probe these important issues by pursuing several different avenues of investigation. An examination of how personal distinctiveness is differentially expressed across behavioural domains might be one fruitful line of study. For purely exploratory reasons, distinctiveness events in the current investigation were categorized according to a 14-domain scheme (academic, paid or unpaid employment, friends, family, romantic, sports, hobbies, arts performance, physical body, possessions, moral/political opinions, social identity, aesthetic preferences, and other). A preliminary inspection of the data revealed that Canadians and Japanese reported distinctiveness events with varying frequency in certain domains. Interestingly, Japanese men and women appeared to show a greater preoccupation with the physical body than Canadians. The former often reported feeling negatively distinctive because they perceived themselves as being too heavy or too skinny. What this cultural difference represents about the experience of distinctiveness, beyond gross differences in vertical vs. horizontal expression, is unclear at this point.
Additionally, analysis of domains might focus on the role of academic success in the generation of personal distinctiveness. Japanese students, who typically receive higher scores on standardized achievement tests than North Americans, might be implicitly striving for vertical differentiation through academic accomplishment. This intriguing possibility will be addressed in future research.

Another challenge for future research, as mentioned earlier, is to develop methods that eliminate the influence of potential differences in modesty bias across cultures. Implicit measurement of attitudes is a promising method of obviating modesty distortions. Unobtrusive measurement may also prove useful in this regard. Furthermore, the effects of modesty and self-criticism on positive vertical differentiation could be investigated by moving beyond the individual level of analysis to the group level. Would self-effacement remain, as Heine and Lehman (1997) found in measuring self-enhancement, when Japanese are instructed to report events pertaining to group rather than personal distinctiveness?

From a different standpoint, investigating group distinctiveness may be especially relevant to Asian Canadians. Insofar as many from this group reported events in the domain of social identity, often pertaining to acculturative stress, it may be that group distinctiveness is particularly salient for Asian immigrants. Accordingly, such an analysis might help explain why Asian Canadians express less desire to separate from ingroups.

Further investigation of this topic holds the promise of yielding theoretical insights into the experience of personal identity across cultures. Rather than viewing diverse societies as fundamentally different, we may come to discover that distinctiveness represents a universal human motive that expresses itself in as many ways as there are cultural contexts.
References


Appendix

Life Events Questionnaire

This questionnaire deals with events in your life that left you feeling that you stood out from other people. All of us have had things happen to us in our lives that left us feeling distinctive as individuals; that is, we felt different, separate, or unique as a result of the events. In some of these situations, it felt good to see ourselves as distinctive, but in others, it felt bad to see ourselves as distinctive.

Part I. For the first part of this questionnaire, we would like you to think back across your life and recall the five most personally significant events that left you feeling distinctive in a bad or negative way. For example, imagine that, as an adolescent, you learned that you were the only one at your school who tested positive for a rare blood disorder. This knowledge may have left you feeling both distinctive (different than others) and very bad. It may have even caused you to feel depressed for a while. If this was a very significant experience in your life, you would want to include it in your list of the five most important events that led to a negative feeling of distinctiveness. Of course, not everyone has experienced such extreme events. So just write down the five most important events you have experienced, regardless of how minor or insignificant these events may seem to others. You must report five events. Write down these five events in the order in which they come to mind. Keep in mind that there are no “right” or “wrong” events to report here; we are simply interested in your personal account of the events that you feel were significant in your life.

Take a few minutes now to think over your life and identify the five most significant events that caused you to feel negatively distinctive. Report them in the order they come to mind, regardless of when they occurred in time. For each event, briefly (in a few sentences) describe what happened. Limit yourself to the lines provided, starting on the next page. Also indicate how old you were at the time of each event. Use the space provided, giving your age in years. Finally, indicate the emotional intensity of the immediate negative impact each event had on you. For this rating, use the following scale:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
very mild moderate very intense

Rate the impact by placing a number (1-9) in the space provided. Be as honest and accurate as possible.
**Negative Event #1**

Age at time of event _____ Intensity of impact _____

Description of event: ____________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

**Negative Event #2**

Age at time of event _____ Intensity of impact _____

Description of event: ____________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

**Negative Event #3**

Age at time of event _____ Intensity of impact _____

Description of event: ____________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________
Negative Event #4

Age at time of event _____ Intensity of impact _____

Description of event: ________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

Negative Event #5

Age at time of event _____ Intensity of impact _____

Description of event: ________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
Part II. For the second part of this questionnaire, we would like you to think back across your life and recall the five most personally significant events that left you feeling distinctive in a good or positive way. For example, imagine that, as an adolescent, you scored higher than everyone else did at your school on a creativity test. This standing may have left you feeling both distinctive (different than others) and very good. You may have even felt quite excited for a while. If this was a very significant experience in your life, you would want to include it in your list of the five most important events that led to a positive feeling of distinctiveness. Of course, not everyone has experienced such extreme events. So just write down the five most important events you have experienced, regardless of how minor or insignificant these events may seem to others. You must report five events. Write down these five events in the order in which they come to mind. Keep in mind that there are no “right” or “wrong” events to report here; we are simply interested in your personal account of the events that you feel were significant in your life.

Take a few minutes now to think over your life and identify the five most significant events that caused you to feel positively distinctive. Report them in the order they come to mind, regardless of when they occurred in time. For each event, briefly (in a few sentences) describe what happened. Limit yourself to the lines provided, starting on the next page. Also indicate how old you were at the time of each event. Use the space provided, giving your age in years. Finally, indicate the emotional intensity of the immediate positive impact each event had on you. For this rating, use the following scale:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
very mild moderate very intense

Rate the impact by placing a number (1-9) in the space provided. Be as honest and accurate as possible.
Positive Event #1

Age at time of event _____ Intensity of impact _____

Description of event: __________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

Positive Event #2

Age at time of event _____ Intensity of impact _____

Description of event: __________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

Positive Event #3

Age at time of event _____ Intensity of impact _____

Description of event: __________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
Positive Event #4

Age at time of event _____ Intensity of impact _____

Description of event: __________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

Positive Event #5

Age at time of event _____ Intensity of impact _____

Description of event: __________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
Part III. Please indicate how much you agree with each statement below. Be as honest and accurate as possible. Do not skip any statements. Complete all statements in the order they appear. Use the following scale:

1 2 3 4 5
strongly disagree agree

Indicate your responses by placing a number (1-5) in the space provided before each statement.

1. _____ I try to avoid disagreeing with people.
2. _____ I'm not much of a team player.
3. _____ I dislike being the odd one out.
4. _____ I like the sense of belonging I get when I'm part of a group.
5. _____ I don't like feeling ordinary.
6. _____ I'm stubborn with my points of view.
7. _____ I value the traditions and norms of my social group.
8. _____ I like standing out in a crowd.
9. _____ People often say I'm a nonconformist.
10. _____ It's good to look at what other people think when forming one's opinions.
11. _____ I prefer to blend in with my social group.
12. _____ It is important to have independent beliefs about things.
13. _____ I like being different.
14. _____ I place a lot of value on my memberships in social groups.
15. _____ I'm a rule-breaker.
16. _____ I think it's important to fit in with one's group.
**Part IV.** Finally, please indicate your ethnic origin by checking a circle (or circles) below. Ethnic origin refers to the ethnic or cultural group(s) to which your recent ancestors belonged. Ethnic origin pertains to ancestral identity or background and should not be confused with citizenship or nationality. You may check more than one ethnic origin if appropriate.

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<td>16.</td>
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How many years have you lived in Canada? _____

**Note:** Classification scheme taken from Statistics Canada.