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Socio-economic justice perception in Lithuania: individualism and collectivism models

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Abstract. *The article is based on the research results which summarize the evaluation of socio-economic justice perception for the citizens of Lithuania. The literature analysis suggests that the main objective of welfare state is a perfect social justice. Social justice is associated with the free market economy and the government's desire to reduce social risk of socially excluded groups: the unemployed, the disabled people, the poor families and so on. Since different social groups have different living conditions in Lithuania, perception and understanding of social justice is different. The authors conducted an empirical study searching for the answer to the following questions: what is the perception of social justice for different social groups and what models of social behaviour: individualism and collectivism are prevalent in Lithuania. The article was prepared by using comparative analysis of scientific literature, summarizing results of empirical study and the authors' insights on this topic.*

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Keywords: social justice, social values, citizens and customers justice perception.

JEL Codes: D63, P46 .

1. Introduction

The problem of perception and assessment of justice is one of the oldest and probably the eternal one in human history. However, the concept of social justice is a relatively recent concept, related to the free market outspread and development of the quality of human life. Since then within the public space, discussions and programs of political parties, social justice is related to human rights, human dignity and fair distribution of goods in the society as well as the quality of life (Social Justice in an Open World. The Role of the United Nations, 2006).

The scientific literature contains various definitions of social justice in dealing with philosophical, moral, psychological, political, economic and legal aspects. This paper presents the definition of social justice from values approach. Social justice may be defined as a cooperation of a person and the state creating and maintaining the unity of rights and duties in the legal status of a person (Vaišvila, 2000).

The framework of social justice is set by perceived value priority of public members. The various social groups are not equally sensitive to social justice that is why the understanding and perception of social

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justice varies among them. Society may be divided and stratified in different ways. This paper examines two main social justice perception models: collectivism and individualism.

The purpose of this article is to investigate social justice perception from different points of view: individualism and collectivism in Lithuania. The article was prepared by summarizing the research findings, based on empirical study as well as the authors' study insights on the topic.

The research problem: What are the models of social justice perception in Lithuania? What values are dominant in the society: individualism or collectivism?

2. Social justice perception description and models in society

2.1. Social justice definition

The establishment of market economy and the expansion of market relations created a wide market of work force together with an additional social risk (Putman, 2000). Thus under the conditions of market economy a considerable part of the society, being capable from the legal point of view, may become incapable from the social point of view, and thus they may become eliminated from market relations – and consequently from culture and the society. A threatening situation appears for such individuals as well as for the society, because individuals, who have found themselves beyond the limits of the society, seek to return back to it, destroying social structures that impede their return. So in the paradigm of social justice investments in the return of such individuals back to the society and not the compensation for individuals' unrealised social rights are emphasized more.

Seeking to avoid negative outcomes of social exclusion the society must execute social justice towards such individuals, i.e. to acknowledge that the individuals have certain rights (e.g., a complex right to minimum subsistence) and to relieve the individuals from the performance of duties that create and maintain the rights (the society undertakes to perform the rights). In order for this relief from the duties to be legal and compulsory for the state, it should be consolidated by a law, thus ensuring legality, obligation as well as stability of such help, at the same time separating it from the episodic character of charity. So the concept of social justice is related to the guarantee that each individual will have the same possibilities for self-realisation as all other members of the society (Sen, 2009; Welzel, Inglehart, 2010).

So social justice, as much as it is not subject to the directly comprehensible unity of rights and duties, stems not from an individual's right but only from a legitimate interest, from the society's goodwill, social solidarity (Vaišvila, 2009).

Social justice conception is important for every member of the society. The concept includes ideas of justice and injustice, and everyone interprets them based on their perception of the values and experiences. Social justice generally refers to the perception point of view, the existence of a social security system for all members of the public fairly and impartially. Justice perception often touches on multi-level questions:

- Decision-making power: who makes decisions and who must comply with them?
- Division of labour: who has to make this work, when and how?
- Created goods and services breakdown: how resources, opportunities, awards, position, punishment, and other things that relate to society's economic, social, physical and psychological well-being to be distributed in society?

Every modern society is faced with these problems and possible solutions are offered. In order to solve the problem there is a need for sustainable social coordination. Looking at the different societies implemented the concept of social justice can be seen sweeping the problems of organization, coordination

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and range of solutions. In turn, the different solution methods that public moral changes with different perceptions of justice or injustice and assessments. Social justice perception can vary dramatically depending on what is the best and is based on: what moral views, values, existing socio-economic system, historical circumstances. Social justice perception especially amplified changing socio-economic system type and has the potential to cause public conflicts.

2.2. Social justice perception

Justice perception is determined not only by values, but also by other structures: beliefs, experience (experience), opinion, understanding (see Figure 1). All of these terms refer to the cognitive process, the individual's efforts to give meaning, to assess the situation they are dealing with and adapting social norms. People rely on their own values and beliefs to form their own opinions about the situation, they are correct. Thus, opinions (decisions) can be attributed to the normative assessment of justice, which determine what is or should be in the right situation. This is seen as a situation maybe different depending on the people's ideological stereotypes, values and beliefs. Thus, these estimates may not match the reality, but also depend on whether the public is the political spectrum, left or right, and how to separate the way the individual accepts or rejects the ideology. Situation analysis is usually filtered through ideology or social group values. In addition, the appreciation and understanding is influenced by media.

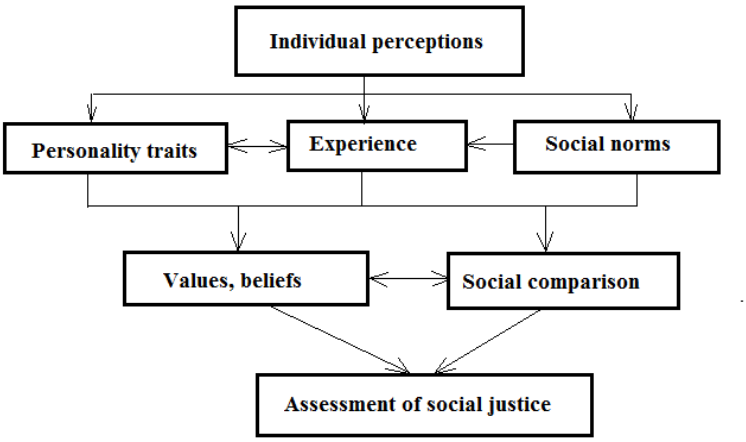


Fig.1. Justice perception conceptual model (created by the authors)

All cognitive justice perception elements (Figure 1.) are related to each other. Existing equity assessment depends on the gap between the perception and values and beliefs in size. The greater the difference between how people perceive and evaluate the correctness of their ideas about justice, the more stringent evaluations of justice become. As experience shows, it is difficult for people to live where their perception of the current world does not match their conception about what it should be. Therefore, they can adapt their normative provisions so that they 'fit' perceptions. In other words, according to what people perceive as "current", they can adjust what "should be" (Marshall et al., 1999). Earlier modern philosophers and economists had unanimous opinion that every individual has his own unique and constant set of priorities.

However, recent studies did not confirm this view, on the contrary, it was revealed that the preferences that individuals express both use some of the aspects of the institutional context function (Frohlich and Oppenheimer, 1999).

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As can be seen from the conclusion of a conceptual understanding of the justice model (Figure 1)., Social justice values and beliefs influence is multifaceted and complex. Due to its complexity, the concept of social justice requires the disclosure of people's priorities and choices, which cannot be obtained solely from theoretical considerations. Thus, the set of values and beliefs and their impact on every society can be judged only after extensive empirical research. However, there are areas where only empirical studies cannot reveal the whole picture. This applies to individuals' attitudes and it causes the formation of an informed choice and methods.

One of the well-known social justice perception models was proposed by Caldwell (Caldwell et al., 2002). In this model, the actual behavior is individually and subjectively formed as a private intermediate lenses (filters) (Fig. 2).

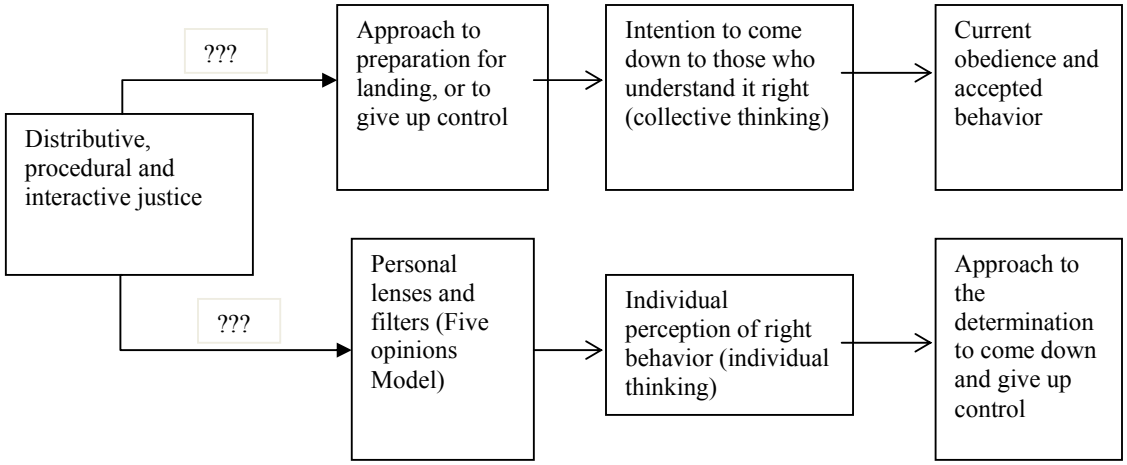


Fig.2. Subjective justice perception model (according Caldwell, 2002 and Fishbein, Ajzen, 1975)

2.3. Individualism and collectivism models

The theoretical level often considered individualistic and community groups (collectivism) social justice perception vision (Sor-Hoon Tan, 2005). For this reason, further examination of the citizen and the consumer perception of social justice will be two distinguished citizens and consumers to meet the concept: individualistic (I) and the collectivist (K). Individualism-collectivism often considered a cultural point of view, these guidelines describe the common values, beliefs, norms and roles (Trianda, 1995). Collectivism is associated with a tendency to unconditionally see themselves as a group, and the recognition of group interests prevail. The collectivists expected that he subjugated the interests of their group interests and collective good. In addition, because the collectivists define themselves as part of their group (Markus, Kitayama, 1991) are seen as the greatest value of interpersonal relationships and group harmony (Trianda, 1995). Collectivists understanding and behavior shaped by their group-related information. In contrast, individualists are most worried about their individual interest. Individualistic paying attention primarily to the personal effects and benefits, not to the group's interests. For example, individualists are characterized by the question "what's in it for me?" Individualists see themselves as independent beings and independence of the group rather than their values or relationships with others (Markus, Kitayama, 1991).

By summarizing, the individualistic motivation of personal benefits and independence. At the same individualistic values, emotions, beliefs, behaviors are formed distinguishing themselves

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as relevant information. Studies (for example, Earlye, 1994; Earlye, Gibson 1998) reveal a different individualists and collectivists information perception concept. Analyzing information and evaluating results of the benefits they place different emphases. Social relations, as elsewhere, the individualists' main interest is personal. Thus, a situation they tend to evaluate positively if it satisfies their personal interests, regardless of the fact that it is neutral or harmful to the collective which they belong. Accordingly, for the collectivists it is a favorable outcome if they are useful for a group, even if they are neutral or harmful to themselves. Unlike perceived individualists and collectivists social justice values are conditioned by different cultural values (Choi, 2003).

Table 1. Individualism and collectivism features

Individualism and collectivism		
Type	**Collectivist**	**Individualist**
Features	Collectivity	Individualism, private property
	Justice for All	Justice for oneself
	Trust in authority (government)	Trust in market regulation
	Altruism, group interests prevail	Selfishness
	Group (collective) benefits	Personal benefits and independence
	Citizenship as a desired activity	Citizenship as a status
	Public life	Privacy Policy
Rights	Group interests of the proactive	Civil, political, legal and social rights of the individual
	Freedom and the conditions of possible activities	The right to personal benefits
Responsibilities	Act in the interests of the group	To act according to their interests, to develop individuality
	Socially forced civic virtues maintained fraternal responsibility	Respect the rights of others
	Working together to keep the system created	According to your own preference of civil virtue-based personal accountability and the conjuncture

Table No.1 shows that individualists and collectivists properties shows that the personal benefits are more important for individualists than collectivists, as individualists share information directly with you, and collectivists to connect with him through the prism of the interests of the group.

3. Empirical research methodology

A representative survey was conducted in Mykolas Romeris University, Vilnius , Lithuania in the Faculty of Economics and Finance during 25 February- March 1, 2013. A number of 238 graduate students of social sciences were questioned. The questionnaire was made out of 12 individualism/collectivism value questions, 16 (macro/micro-level) social values questions and also 10 distributive, procedural and interactional justice questions measured by a five-point Likert scale.

The aim of the empirical study is to reveal the young people's perception of social justice from the point of view of individualism and collectivism. The following three hypotheses, based on aim of the research, were formulated:

Hypothesis H1: collectivists perceived social justice as the benefits of the whole group over the possible personal benefit.

Hypothesis H2: individualists perceived social justice by focusing on their personal interests and needs.

Hypothesis H3: collectivists enjoy the dependence to the public and they do not want to change it.

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Hypotheses have been checked by using dispersion analysis of variance method (ANOVA). This method is a procedure designed to test the hypothesis that K is equal to the sample averages, K ⩾ second dispersion analysis of variance ANOVA comparing samples or groups of averages in order to deduce the existence of differences in the population averages.

ANOVA procedure includes two types of variables: independent and dependent. The independent variables (ordinal or nominative) selects and controls the investigator (test case statements, 8.4), and the dependent variable (continuous) is the result of manipulation of the independent variable. The main result of ANOVA - F-test, which allows checking the hypothesis that more than two quantities are equal to the population mean (Fisher, 1990):

$$F = \frac{s_A^2}{s_W^2} \qquad (1)$$

Here s_A^2 is the deviation of the sample mean, o s_w^2 the observations within the sampling variation.

Statistical hypothesis:

H_0: $\mu_1 = \mu_2 = \ldots \mu_K$

H_A: $\mu_1 \neq \mu_K$, kur K – number of groups.

ANOVA test is based on the assumption that the populations, from which the samples are taken, distributed by the normal law and have the same variances. In practice, ANOVA test is relatively resistant violations of normality assumptions, but sensitive to differences in population variances. Violation of equality of variances assumptions has a significant impact on the reliability criteria.

Assumption of homogeneity was checked by Levene F test. When equality of variance assumption is not met, Brown-Forsythe and Welch criteria should be applied as alternative variants of the F statistic. As Welch criteria is stricter heterogeneous variance, we applied Welch criteria. The study was used in 5 per cent. (α = 0.05) level of significance.

4. Empirical research results

The purpose of the study was to determine the relationship between individualists and collectivists. To that end, there were two types of statements: A) the collectivists of nusttaymui Q1: "A man must sacrifice HIS free time and register to participate in social activities for the public welfare and Q2:" If personal goals do not coincide with society's goals, they must be conformed to the goals of society ". The results show (Figure 3.) that only a 12% of respondents give priority to public purposes.

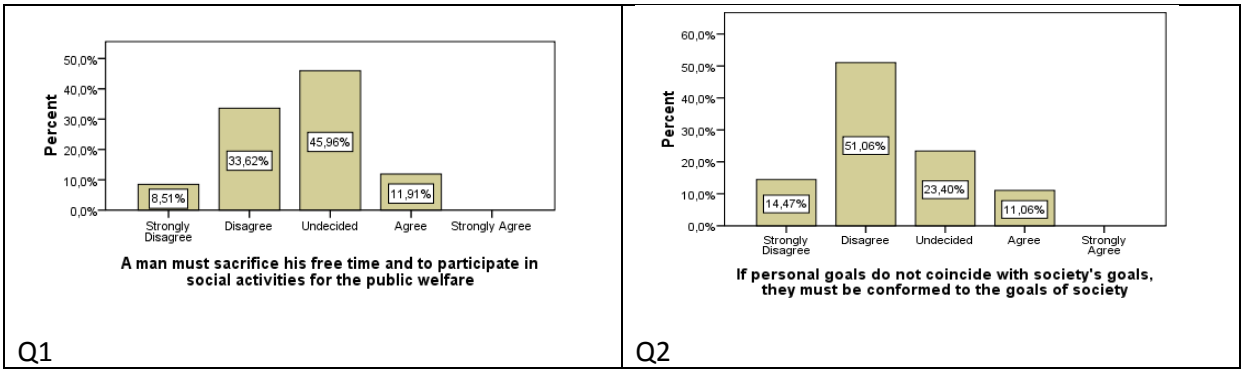


Fig.3. Relationship between individualists and collectivists

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The goal of the following examination was to affirm the individualistic approach:

A) Q7: "The most important thing for a man is to have no restrictions on unfettered personal freedom of action" ir Q8: "The purpose of human freedom is to create the best possible conditions for meeting the personal requirements"

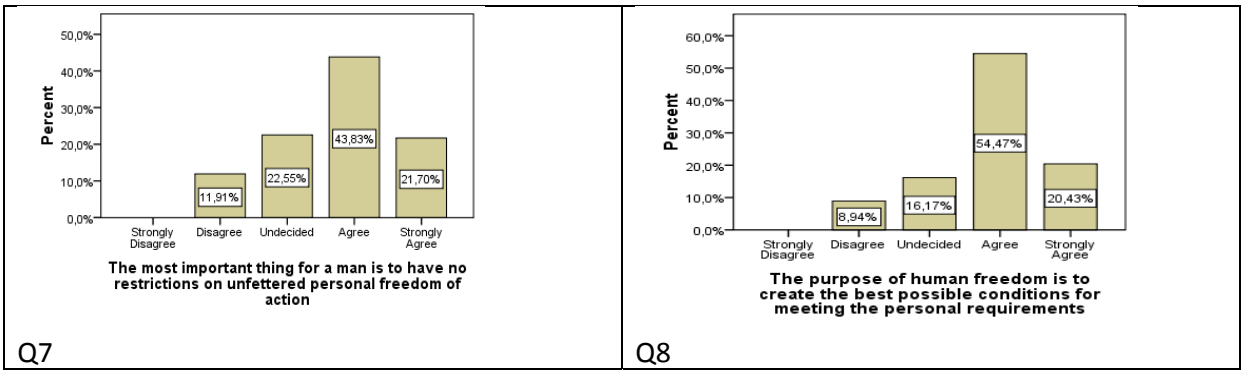


Fig.4. Individualistic values

As shown by Figure 4 as much as 65% bright young people give priority to the individualistic concept. Perhaps the strongest statement of individualism reveals that: "The purpose of human freedom is to create the best possible conditions for meeting the personal requirements, some as much as 75%. This assertion is supported by young people. This confirms earlier results where only about 12 p. respondents chose the collective values. Thus, we can assume that about 30% respondents are completely undecided.

However, further research shows that the respondents, most of which expressed individualism seemingly not consistent. Assessing the distributional and procedural fairness preferences are sometimes given to individualism - sometimes collectivism. This might be influenced by a small volume of the sample (n = 228). However, it may be that respondents apparently formed over the environment or the media than deliberate. An additional statement was made, important collectivists-individualistic values priorities. This statement reveals the relationship with the public, i.e. youngster feel 'I belong to the public': "I do not feel lonely because I am part of the Lithuanian society, my intimate community" (Figure 5).

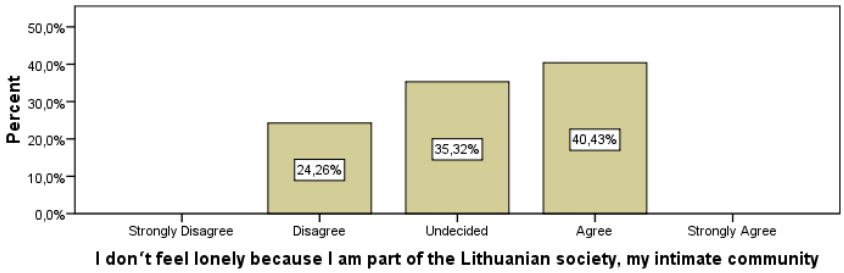


Fig.5 . Dependence to the society value

The study showed that it is the statement "I do not feel lonely because i am part of the Lithuanian society, my intimate community" that best illustrates the differences between individualists and collectivists. Interestingly, although the trend charts can be seen between this statement and prior statements, the statistical analysis does not allow the strictly approved by the (test was used for the chi-square test).

However, analysis of variance showed that it is the sense of belonging to society the best way the views in the distribution of justice. For example, in response to the statement "The most important thing for people is to have what THEY need, even if it would mean That Those who earn more than Should need to give to others (Fig. 6). The study used the ANOVA method of analysis of variance.

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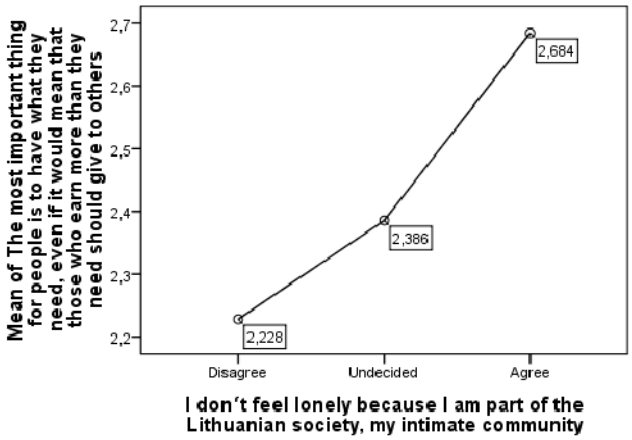


Figure 6. Collectivists-individualists connection with the distribution of justice (ANOVA, F=4.6, p=0.01)

Is a feeling that the youth of the community have an impact on the satisfaction of living environment? For this purpose we have investigated the relationship between statements: "I do not feel lonely because I am part of the Lithuanian society, my intimate community and satisfaction with the environment I enjoy my everyday living environment" and "I'm not satisfied with the current Lithuanian environment and I would like to leave. "Studies have shown that there are differences in the averages: in the first case, F = 2.9, p = 0:05, the second - F = 3:35, p = 0:04. Averages chart given in Figure 7.

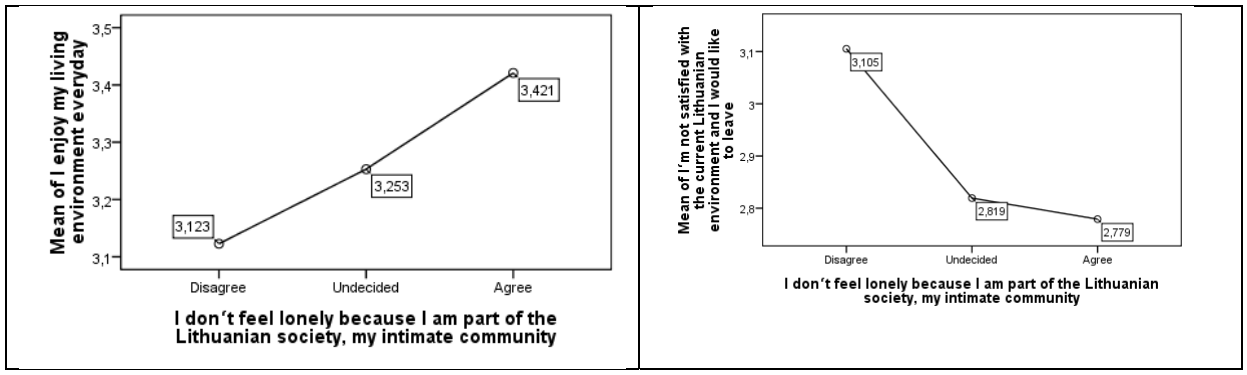


Fig. 7 Relationship between a society, life satisfaction and the desire to change the living environment

Thus, the study showed that the most prominent distinguishing feature of individualistic and collectivists is the sense of belonging. People who feel belong to the public and the environments are more satisfied with life and less willing to change the living environment.

5. Conclusions

The results of the research on social justice perception in Lithuania in collectivism and individualism approach have showed that:

1. The 21st century advancing in technology and with higher urbanization rates began to emerge in Lithuania as for the rest of the world with new features of the society. Individualism and the pursuit of personal wealth is observed increasingly in Lithuania. Development of communication technologies and globalisation processes of economic success leads to information and knowledge society. Therefore social welfare and an egalitarian distribution of social justice ideas are less observed, along with the changing economic and cultural characteristics and social relations.

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2. Individualists primarily are seeking the personal benefits, paying less attention to the group's interests. Individualists see themselves as independent beings and independence of the group rather than their values, or relationships with others. Thus, we can say that the main individualistic characteristics are motivation for personal benefits and independence. Individualism encourages consumerism and commercial approach to the social and natural environment. Individualistic self-interest as to the feel greater pressures than collectivists.
3. Collectivism is associated with a tendency to see themselves as a group, and the recognition of group interests is prevailing. The collectivists expected that he their group interests is collective good. In addition, as collectivists define themselves as part of their group, they are seen as the greatest value of interpersonal relationships and group harmony. Collectivists understanding and behaviour of social justice is shaped by their group-related information. Collectivists, on concern the group's performance, often working harder than they work, being alone.
4. The empirical research has showed that only a 12% of our research respondents give priority to public purposes and as much as 65% bright young people give priority to individualistic concept. But still they are not fully consistent of this approach. Thus, the study showed that the most prominent distinguishing feature of individualists and collectivists is the sense of belonging. People who feel belong to the public and the environment are more satisfied with life and less willing to change the living environment.

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