



Seth J. Schwartz
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Vivian L. Vignoles
Editors

Handbook of Identity

Handbook of Identity Theory and Research

Seth J. Schwartz · Koen Luyckx ·
Vivian L. Vignoles
Editors

Handbook of Identity Theory and Research

Volume 1
Structures and Processes,
Chapters 1–18

Volume 2
Domains and Categories,
Chapters 19–39, Epilogue

 Springer

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Printed in 2 volumes

ISBN 978-1-4419-7987-2

e-ISBN 978-1-4419-7988-9

DOI 10.1007/978-1-4419-7988-9

Springer New York Dordrecht Heidelberg London

Library of Congress Control Number: 2011921352

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Printed on acid-free paper

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For my maternal grandparents, Larry and Alvina Joseph, who were so important to me as a child; and for my wife, Lisa, and my daughters, Angelica and Alexia, who are so important to me now.

Seth J. Schwartz

For my parents, my wife Els, and my children Guust and Frida.

Koen Luyckx

For Claudia, Luca, and Marta Vignoles, with all my love and gratitude for their patience with my identity work.

Vivian L. Vignoles

Preface

There is a story behind this book. I will tell it from a first-person perspective, because it starts – and ends – with a promise I made to my mentor many years ago. The story helps to place the book into context, as well as to detail the sequence of “happy accidents” that occurred along the way and helped to bring the book through to completion.

The story starts back in 1995, when I was a graduate student under the tutelage of the late Dr. Richard (Dick) Dunham, Professor of Psychology at Florida State University. Dick told me one day that he had an idea that he was really excited about, and he just couldn’t wait to tell me what it was. We were riding in his car with the convertible top down on a warm spring day when he said, “Let’s write a book – a grand book about identity!” I looked at him in amazement, and then we shook hands and I promised him that we would work together to create the book.

For a couple of years, we talked about the book, and all the people we wanted to write chapters. We even held a retreat with some prospective co-editors, but Dick’s declining health – and my move to Miami to pursue my doctoral degree at Florida International University – made it virtually impossible to pull the book together. Dick retired in the summer of 1998 and moved to San Diego, California, and his health continued to worsen until his death in April 2002.

For years after Dick retired, I put the book out of my mind. I finished my doctoral degree, got married, started my first assistant professorship, and became a father. Then, in the summer of 2007, I had an e-mail conversation with someone working in a completely different subfield of identity from the one I was working in. Through this exchange, I discovered how vast and fragmented the identity literature is. Consequently, the exchange reawakened the book and the promise I made to Dick Dunham.

A few months later, in late December 2007, I had a flash of inspiration. It was time to put together a “grand book” of identity that would bring together the various “identity literatures” in one place for the very first time. I ran home, sat down at my computer, and put together a table of contents. I came up with a list of about 15 chapters and a “wish list” of authors for them. At this point, however, I had no idea who would be willing to publish such a book.

Meanwhile, my Belgian colleague Koen Luyckx, with whom I had been collaborating for about 3 years, had graciously invited me to co-chair a symposium that he had put together for the biennial meeting of the Society for

Research on Adolescence, which would be held in Chicago in early March 2008. On February 28, 2008, I received an e-mail from Judy Jones, a senior book editor at Springer, saying that she had spotted our symposium in the conference program book and wanted to explore whether a book could be created out of the presentations in our symposium. Sure, I'll meet with her, I thought. I'll see what she thinks of the "grand book" idea.

I met Judy for lunch on March 6, 2008, and I brought my laptop computer with the table of contents that I had written in December. Before she could start asking me about the symposium, I opened the computer and showed Judy the table of contents. She thought for a minute or two and then erupted with enthusiasm. "This is a great idea!" she told me. "This is definitely something we'd be interested in publishing." She told me that she would send me a proposal form, and that I should get started identifying chapter authors. "But you're going to need help," Judy advised. "This project is too big for you to do by yourself."

When I returned home from the conference, Judy e-mailed me the book proposal form, and I completed it immediately. I started thinking of anyone and everyone I knew who was prominent in any subfield of identity – people who were colleagues as well as those whose work I had read and cited in the past. I set to work e-mailing these people and inviting them to contribute chapters. Almost everyone said yes. The book was starting to come together!

It occurred to me shortly thereafter that Judy would never have contacted me had it not been for Koen's generosity in inviting me to co-chair his symposium, so I decided to invite him to co-edit the book with me. Koen was an emerging scholar in the personal identity literature, and he had a number of colleagues and contacts in Europe who were working on identity. He would be a valuable addition to the editorship. He took a few days to think about it, and then he agreed. He recruited some of his colleagues and other people whose work he knew to write chapters, and by this time we were up to about 25 chapters. But something was missing. Koen and I knew a little about the social-psychological side of identity theory and research, but we knew that we didn't know enough. We needed a third co-editor to cover those areas of identity and, after consulting with some people, Viv Vignoles was recommended as a potential co-editor.

Koen and I put together an e-mail to Viv, explaining how the book project had come about and what we were looking for in a third co-editor. Like Koen, Viv took a few days to think about it and then, after exchanging a few e-mails, Viv was aboard, and our editorial team was complete. As luck would have it, not only was Viv well-versed in the social-psychological perspectives that we had sought to cover, but he also argued for including several perspectives from the self-concept literature, and he introduced Koen and me to some sociological and discursive perspectives that previously we had hardly been aware of. We realized that the field of Identity Studies was even bigger (and more disconnected) than we had thought! And Viv was the perfect person to complete our editorial team. Once more, things seemed to be moving into place naturally, almost as though the process was being guided by an invisible hand.

Viv proceeded to suggest a reorganization of our table of contents, as well as a number of new chapters that should be included. The table of contents

quickly increased from 25 chapters to 40. As Koen and I had done earlier, Viv invited prominent scholars to write chapters, and the large majority of them accepted the invitation. Koen, Viv, and I marveled among ourselves how this book was coming together, and that so many people, many of whom were major names and leaders in their respective fields, were willing to contribute chapters to this book that we were editing. Even though all three of us were still at a fairly junior level within the academic profession, chapter authors appeared to sense that we were putting together something very timely and important. By June, we had commitments for almost all of the chapters on the list.

Chapters started coming in by the early fall of 2008, and we knew we had our work cut out for us. For each chapter, one of us was designated as the editor, and another of us acted as a reviewer. The “editor” was responsible for securing one or more outside reviewers for the chapter, such that each chapter would be reviewed by at least two people. In some cases, these reviewers were authors of other chapters. One of our goals was to integrate and build bridges among these various perspectives, so having contributors review each other’s chapters seemed like a logical way to facilitate this. In other cases, people who were outside the book – many of whom we did not know personally, and from many different academic disciplines – contributed their time and expertise to improve the chapters. We thank and appreciate every one of them for the time and expertise that they contributed to the book.

One of Dick’s original objectives for the book, and one that we emphasized strongly, was the need to facilitate integration among the various perspectives on identity. As we discuss in much more detail in the introductory chapter, many of the subfields of identity operate almost in isolation, such that often they are hardly aware of one another’s existence. One of the purposes of this “grand book,” then, was to build bridges among areas of the Identity Studies literature that otherwise would have remained separate and unconnected. In our in-text comments on each of the chapters, Koen, Viv, and I suggested key places where other chapters – especially chapters from alternative schools of thought – could be cross-referenced. Chapter authors were generally grateful for these suggestions, and many of them asked us to send them copies of the chapters we were asking them to cross-reference. Even within the writing and editing process, our goal to facilitate integration within the identity literature was beginning to be accomplished.

Our deadline to submit the book to Springer was the end of August 2010. Koen, Viv, and I continued reviewing and re-reviewing chapters until the very end of that month. The last chapter was accepted on the morning of August 31st, and we submitted the completed manuscript to Springer at 11:54 pm US Eastern time that night – exactly 6 min before the deadline. Dick Dunham’s dream had become a reality. The “grand book” on identity had been finished.

I have many people to thank for helping to make this book a reality. I am extremely grateful to Koen and Viv for co-editing this book with me and for believing in the promise of facilitating integration among the many subfields of identity. Judy was prophetic when she advised me that I could never have done this alone. Even with three of us working together, it took a huge amount of work to bring this project to completion. I could not have asked

for two more dedicated, enthusiastic, hardworking, and absolutely brilliant co-editors. I thank them both from the bottom of my heart.

Koen, Viv, and I also owe Judy a huge debt of gratitude. She gave the original go-ahead for the handbook, and she supported us every step of the way. She was there to answer all of our questions and to reassure us when we needed it. We are very grateful.

The three of us also wish to acknowledge Garth Haller at Springer for guiding the book through the copy-editing, typesetting, proof correction, and publishing process. We thank him for all his help.

Most of all, I want to thank Dick Dunham for discovering me as a 19-year-old college student, for pushing me until I finally started to realize my potential, and for teaching me so much about the world (both academically and in general). It is an honor and a pleasure to have stewarded his dream to reality, and I am humbled that I was the one that he trusted enough to leave it with.

Miami, Florida, USA
September 2, 2010

Seth J. Schwartz

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Vivian L. Vignoles is senior lecturer in the School of Psychology at the University of Sussex in the United Kingdom. He received his first degree in sociology and psychology from the University of Bristol and his PhD in social psychology from the University of Surrey. His primary research interests are in self and identity processes and cross-cultural psychology, especially the interplay of cultural, contextual, and motivational influences on identity construction, as well as combining qualitative and quantitative methodologies, and developing a better understanding of the relationship between individual and social representation processes.

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Introduction: Toward an Integrative View of Identity

1

Vivian L. Vignoles, Seth J. Schwartz,
and Koen Luyckx

Abstract

In this chapter, we attempt to clarify our understanding of the term “identity,” as well as how it relates to associated terms such as “self.” We then discuss some key points of division within the existing literature on identity: (1) Is identity viewed primarily as a personal, relational, or collective phenomenon? (2) Is identity viewed as relatively stable, or as fluid and constantly changing? (3) Is identity viewed as discovered, personally constructed, or socially constructed? (4) Should identity be researched using quantitative or qualitative methods? We argue that each of these questions represents, at least to some extent, an artificial distinction. Finally, we outline our aims for this book and describe the contribution of each of the chapters.

Why do we need a *Handbook of Identity Theory and Research*? Why is this the right time for such an endeavor? How can the identity literature be improved, and why do we think that this book might help to accomplish that? We can begin to answer these questions with a simple anecdote that occurred several years ago. One of us, a developmental psychologist steeped in the neo-Eriksonian identity literature, submitted a manuscript to a prominent journal, and one of the reviewers mentioned that the manuscript did not cite the “correct” identity literature. The reviewer went on to mention a series of sociological and

social psychological sources that he felt should have been cited. The author and reviewer subsequently discovered each other and made contact with one another. The reviewer had never heard of any of the sources that the author was citing, and the author had never heard of any of the sources that the reviewer was suggesting. In an exchange of e-mail messages, the author and reviewer marveled about the fragmentation of the identity literature. It became clear that, as well as any of us believe that we know the “identity literature,” all that we really know is one corner or piece of that literature.

Indeed, identity is one of the most commonly studied constructs in the social sciences (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000; Côté, 2006). The number of publications on “identity” has steadily increased in the past few decades (Côté & Levine, 2002). A perusal of the PsycInfo and Sociological

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Abstracts literature databases, searching for the word “identity” in the title or keywords, produced 1,999 records (journal articles, books, book chapters, and doctoral dissertations) from the 1960s, 5,296 from the 1970s, 11,106 from the 1980s, 44,557 from the 1990s, and 98,933 from the 2000s. Although the overall number of scientific publications has also increased, the rate of increase has been much more dramatic for research on identity: between the 1960s and 2000s, the number of records increased by a factor of 7.4 for the literature in general, but the identity literature increased by a factor of 49.5.

Identity is a powerful construct. It guides life paths and decisions (Kroger, 2007), allows people to draw strength from their affiliation with social groups and collectives (Brewer & Hewstone, 2004; Schildkraut, 2007), and explains many of the destructive behaviors that people carry out against members of opposing ethnic, cultural, or national groups (Baum, 2008; Moshman, 2007; Schwartz, Dunkel, & Waterman, 2009). However, several authors (e.g., Brubaker & Cooper, 2000; Gergen, 1991; Rattansi & Phoenix, 2005) have questioned the utility of identity as a substantive construct, arguing that its definition is not clear enough to support a meaningful line of work. Indeed, in scholarly work, the term “identity” has been used to refer to many different things—referents as diverse as people’s internal meaning systems (Marcia, 1966; Schwartz, 2001), characteristics and attachments conferred through group memberships (Brown, 2000; Tajfel & Turner, 1986), nationalism (Schildkraut, 2007), positions taken in conversations (Bamberg, 2006), and social–historical currents in belief systems (Burkitt, 2004). The term “identity” also has found widespread use in popular culture, where its meaning is equally unclear.

In this chapter, we attempt to clarify our understanding of the term “identity,” as well as how it relates to associated terms such as “self.” We then discuss some key points of division within the existing literature on identity. Finally, we outline our aims for this book and describe the contribution of each of the chapters.

What Is Identity?

In developing a definition of identity, we begin by considering the core issue addressed by “identity,” regardless of how it is conceptualized. Most fundamentally, in our view, identity involves people’s explicit or implicit responses to the question: “Who are you?” This may sound fairly simple, but in fact it masks a considerable amount of complexity. First, we should note that the “you” can be singular or plural—thus, identity can refer to the self-definitions of individuals (“I am the father of two children, a guitarist, a British person, a social scientist, etc.”), as well as pairs of individuals, small face-to-face groups, and larger social categories (“We are parents; we are a band, we are British, we are social scientists, etc.”) (e.g., Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Second, the question may be posed reflexively—to oneself introspectively (i.e., “Who am I?”) or to fellow group members in an intra-group discussion (i.e., “Who are we?”)—as well as in social interactions between individuals and between groups. In other words, identity comprises not only “who you think you are” (individually or collectively), but also “who you act as being” in interpersonal and intergroup interactions—and the social recognition or otherwise that these actions receive from other individuals or groups (e.g., Baumeister, 1986; Butler, 1990; Reicher, 2000). Thus, the identity question, “Who are you?”, actually encompasses a range of diverse but related contents and processes, and these are emphasized in different fields of research, and in different theoretical and metatheoretical perspectives.

Despite this breadth, our definition of identity does not simply encompass all possible characteristics that might be used to describe someone. In popular and academic discourse, the term identity is sometimes applied as a catch-all label for biological characteristics, psychological dispositions, and/or socio-demographic positions. However, having a British passport does not automatically give someone a British identity, nor does having a particular skin color or being intelligent necessarily give someone an

ethnic identity or the identity of an “intellectual.” Characteristics such as these only become part of identity to the extent that they are interpreted and infused with personal and social meaning, and that these meanings are applied to define individuals or groups—in other words, to the extent that people use them to answer the question “Who are you?” Hence, a study that investigates sex differences in mathematical ability is not necessarily a study of identity, even if it focuses on two domains that people can often use to define themselves. In contrast, a study that seeks to explain such differences through a process of individuals stereotyping themselves in terms of the images of men and women that prevail in their cultural context (e.g., Spencer, Steele, & Quinn, 1999) definitely *is* a study of identity.

Identity Contents and Processes

Existing approaches to identity typically focus on one or more of three different “levels” at which identity may be defined: individual, relational, and collective (Sedikides & Brewer, 2001). The distinction among individual, relational, and collective identities can be understood in part as a distinction among different forms of identity content, but it is also often understood to refer to different kinds of processes by which identities are formed and maintained or changed over time. Theories that focus respectively on individual, relational, or collective *contents* of identity are often characterized by a corresponding focus on individual, relational, or collective *processes* of identity formation and change—although, as we argue later in this chapter, there is no necessary reason why this should be the case.

Individual or *personal identity* refers to aspects of self-definition at the level of the individual person. These may include goals, values, and beliefs (Marcia, 1966; Waterman, 1999), religious and spiritual beliefs (MacDonald, 2000), standards for behavior and decision-making (Atkins, Hart, & Donnelly, 2005; Hardy & Carlo, 2005), self-esteem and self-evaluation (Kernis,

Lakey, & Heppner, 2008; Sedikides & Gregg, 2008), desired, feared, and expected future selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986), and one’s overall “life story” (McAdams, 2006). In addition to focusing on individual-level contents of identity, theories of personal identity tend to focus especially on individual-level processes, often emphasizing the agentic role of the individual in creating or discovering his or her own identity (Côté & Levine, 2002; Waterman, Chapter 16, this volume).

Relational identity refers to one’s roles vis-à-vis other people, encompassing identity contents such as child, spouse, parent, co-worker, supervisor, customer, etc. Relational identity refers not only to these roles, but also to how they are defined and interpreted by the individuals who assume them. In terms of relational identity processes, many approaches hold that identity is defined and located within interpersonal space (Bamberg, 2004; Chen, Boucher, & Tapias, 2006; Kerpelman, Pittman, & Lamke, 1997), within families (Grotevant, Dunbar, Kohler, & Esau, 2000; Manzi, Vignoles, Regalia, & Scabini, 2006), or in the roles that one plays within a larger system (e.g., the workplace; Thatcher & Zhu, 2006). A common theme in these perspectives is the idea that identities cannot be established by individuals on their own—claims to a particular identity need to be recognized by a social audience if they are to be secure (Marková, 1987; Swann, 2005).

Collective identity refers to people’s identification with the groups and social categories to which they belong, the meanings that they give to these social groups and categories, and the feelings, beliefs, and attitudes that result from identifying with them (Ashmore, Deaux, & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004; De Fina, 2007; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; van Zomeren, Postmes, & Spears, 2008). Collective identity can refer to membership in any form of social group or category, including ethnicity (Taylor, 1997), nationality (Schildkraut, 2005, 2007), religion (Cohen, Hall, Koenig, & Meador, 2005), and gender (Bussey & Bandura, 1999), as well as smaller, face-to-face groups such as families and work groups (Haslam & Ellemers, Chapter 30, this volume; Scabini & Manzi, Chapter 23, this

volume). Theoretical approaches to collective identity contents tend to focus also on collective processes—for example, examining how moment-to-moment changes in inter-group contexts can shape people’s self-conceptions, leading them to shift from viewing themselves as individuals to viewing themselves as group members (e.g., Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987), or examining the wider societal changes underlying historical transformations in the meanings of ethnic, national, or gender identities (e.g., Segal, 2010; Stepick, Dutton Stepick, & Vanderkooy, Chapter 37, this volume).

Perhaps our definition of identity may now be starting to seem rather broad, extending way beyond the individual self to encompass significant others, social roles, face-to-face groups, and wider social categories. However, it is necessary to broaden it even further. To paraphrase and update a famous quote from William James (1890; see Dittmar, Chapter 31, this volume), the contents of a person’s identity can include not only her mind, body, friends, spouse, ancestors, and descendents, but also her clothes, house, car, and the contents of her bank account. In other words, people view and treat as part of their identities not only social entities beyond their individual selves, but also material artifacts (Belk, 1988; Mittal, 2006), as well as significant places (Proshansky, Fabian, & Kaminoff, 1983). Thus, beyond individual, relational, and collective identities, people might also be said to have *material identities*.

Taken together, these four aspects of identity may provide the basis for an integrated operational definition of identity. Viewed through the lens of an individual person, identity consists of the confluence of the person’s self-chosen or ascribed commitments, personal characteristics, and beliefs about herself; roles and positions in relation to significant others; and her membership in social groups and categories (including both her status within the group and the group’s status within the larger context); as well as her identification with treasured material possessions and her sense of where she belongs in geographical space.

Clearly, multiple aspects of identity can and do coexist, in the sense that a single individual can identify himself simultaneously as a doctor, a skilled tennis player, an expecting father, a Cuban-American, a Miami resident, academically able, a BMW driver, and many other things. Of course, these different aspects of identity will be more or less salient and relevant in different social contexts (Turner & Onorato, 1999). Nevertheless, multiple aspects of identity are not independent of each other—rather, they intersect and interact with each other (e.g., Amiot, de la Sablonnière, Terry, & Smith, 2007; Crenshaw, 1991). A Cuban-American may experience his “Cuban” and his “American” identities as compatible or as conflicting (see Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005), and, as we discuss below, an expecting father who is a member of the Cuban-American community of Miami in 2010 is likely to base his future self-image and actions as a father in part on the prevailing ways that fatherhood is represented discursively within that local community at that historical moment.

In the example above, we have placed the individual as the center of attention. However, an alternative way of viewing identity focuses on the definitions and meanings of identity categories as ideas in their own right (see also Wetherell & Mohanty, 2010). In any given cultural environment and historical moment, identity categories such as doctor, husband, father, Cuban-American, or American citizen have particular meanings that have been constructed and established through social discourse—and these meanings may also be debated and deconstructed. In this sense, identities can be viewed as ways of thinking (or, in some perspectives, ways of talking) that come to prominence in particular social and historical contexts, independently of the perspective of any one individual (Rattansi & Phoenix, 2005). The range of identity categories available in a given social context, and the meanings that are given to them, are constructed through a confluence of social processes over historical time (Burkitt, 2004).

Crucially, we suggest that these two ways of viewing identity are actually two sides of

the same coin. The socially constructed meanings of “fatherhood” that are available within the Cuban-American community of Miami in 2010 are the same meanings that an individual Cuban-American man living in Miami and expecting a first child in 2010 has available to him upon becoming a father. The individual may create a personalized version of what it means to be a father, and perhaps may even contribute to transforming the range of accepted meanings within his local or wider cultural environment, but he cannot simply escape these meanings entirely. Thus, identities are inescapably *both* personal *and* social not only in their content, but also in the processes by which they are formed, maintained, and changed over time.

It seems important to clarify at this stage that people are not necessarily aware of the identity processes that are at work. Clearly, many identity processes are undertaken deliberately and may involve a great deal of conscious effort on the part of individuals and groups. Many processes of personal identity formation, such as exploring potential goals, values, and beliefs and committing oneself to one or more of the options considered, are typically conceptualized as conscious, purposeful, and reasoned choices made by individuals (see Berzonsky, [Chapter 3](#), this volume; Kroger & Marcia, [Chapter 2](#), this volume; Luyckx et al., [Chapter 4](#), this volume). Similarly, accounts of identity politics and social change tend to emphasize the importance of collective consciousness, such that awareness of occupying a disadvantaged identity position in common with others is an important precursor to collective empowerment and action (Bernstein, 2005; Drury & Reicher, 2009; see Spears, [Chapter 9](#), this volume).

In contrast, many other identity processes, such as attempts to defend one’s self-esteem against threats (see Gregg et al., [Chapter 14](#), this volume) as well as the processes by which different identity aspects shift in salience across different social contexts (Turner et al., 1987; see Spears, [Chapter 9](#), this volume), are understood to occur without the person necessarily being aware of them. Similarly, a key idea within many social constructionist perspectives is that people

are unaware of the processes by which identity categories such as nationhood or gender—that are often taken for granted as “real” and “natural”—are actually human inventions (e.g. Anderson, 1983; Segal, 2010). Accordingly, once it is realized that these entities are social constructions, they can be deconstructed and revised. A classic example of this is the changes that have happened in gender roles in Western societies as a result of the feminist movement—in which social change was facilitated once people began to question explicitly what previously had been taken for granted about the typical characteristics of men and women, and the roles that would be appropriate for them to occupy.

Not only identity processes, but also some important aspects of identity *content*, may not actually be easily accessible to conscious introspection. For example, research into implicit self-esteem uses reaction times to test the strength of people’s non-conscious associations between themselves and positive or negative stimuli, rather than asking people explicitly whether they feel positively or negatively about themselves (Greenwald & Farnham, 2000). Compared to explicit self-esteem, implicit self-esteem is affected differently by contextual manipulations, and it differentially predicts other variables (e.g., Rudman, Dohn, & Fairchild, 2007). Hence, we believe that it is important to view identity as encompassing both explicit and implicit processes and contents, and to explore the relationship between the two (for an example, see Heppner & Kerns, [Chapter 15](#), this volume).

A Single Identity or Multiple Identities?

In different lines of research within the field of identity studies, there is a distinction regarding whether a person is understood to have a singular, unitary identity (e.g., Erikson, 1950) or multiple identities (e.g., Rattansi & Phoenix, 2005). Further, even within those perspectives that assume a single identity, it is often not clear whether this single identity is actually comprised of multiple and separable domains or components (Goossens, 2001). For example, within the social

identity tradition (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), individuals are considered to have multiple group identities that may shift in salience depending on features of the intergroup context. On a broader level, are different personal, relational, and collective aspects of self actually separate identities? Or are they separate components of a single identity? When people switch between multiple cultural, gender, or sexual identities (e.g., Diamond et al., Chapter 26, this volume; Huynh et al., Chapter 35, this volume; Savin-Williams, Chapter 28, this volume), are they switching between multiple identities, or between multiple aspects of a single identity?

There are a number of possible ways of resolving these questions. As we have already illustrated, it is self-evident that every individual's identity is multifaceted, in the simple sense that a person can describe herself in multiple ways—for example, as a mother, a musical person, and an Australian. In one sense, whether these things are described as separate identities or as components of a single identity is simply a question of terminology—a definitional question rather than a real substantive problem. But it is also a question of one's frame of reference: if one is focusing on an individual, musically talented, Australian mother, who simultaneously occupies these multiple categories, then it makes best sense to view them as *components* of her identity; on the other hand, if one is focusing on Australian national identity and its meaning in Australian cultural discourse, then it makes better sense to view this as *an identity* that can be considered independently of any particular individual who may endorse it. However, we must not lose sight of the fact that these two framings do not refer to exactly the same thing, and therefore they do not contradict one another.

Nonetheless, there is a further sense in which the multifaceted nature of identity could be seen to pose a problem for unity, and that is the extent to which multiple parts of an individual's identity might be experienced as contradictory or incompatible—for example, if an individual's fulfillment of her musical ambitions interfered with the fulfillment of her role as a mother. This brings to the fore an additional ambiguity in the

terminology. From a theoretical point of view, we could say simply that these two aspects of the person's identity are in conflict, but they are still part of a single, overarching identity. Yet, from a phenomenological point of view, the person might experience herself as having two identities and might have difficulty reconciling these into a unitary sense of self. Whether people need a sense of unity in their identities is an empirical question, quite separate from definitional concerns about the theoretical construct of identity. In relation to the empirical question, it turns out that people have a number of means at their disposal to reconcile apparent inconsistencies in their sense of identity and to preserve a subjective sense of self-continuity. For example, people construct narratives to reconcile apparent inconsistencies across time and situations (McAdams, Chapter 5, this volume; Vignoles, Chapter 18, this volume), and they can also create personalized redefinitions of the meanings of the identity categories they occupy so as to make these “fit” better with each other (Coyle & Rafalin, 2000; Diamond et al., Chapter 26, this volume; Huynh et al., Chapter 35, this volume).

Self and Identity: Overlapping or Distinct?

An additional issue in defining what identity is—and is not—is the extent of differentiation between “identity” and the related term “self” (Côté & Levine, 2002). For example, to what extent are constructs such as self-concept, self-esteem, and self-construal situated within the larger umbrella of “identity?” And do all “self” constructs fall under the heading of “identity” to the same extent? Some have argued that the distinction between “self” and “identity” is artificial (Breakwell, 1987; Roeser, Peck, & Nasir, 2006), whereas others have argued for various ways in which the two constructs may be differentiated (e.g., Côté & Levine, 2002; Soenens & Vansteenkiste, Chapter 17, this volume). The main difficulty in resolving this question is the fact that—perhaps even more so than “identity”—the term “self” has been used with

widely differing meanings by different authors within and across disciplines.

Leary and Tangney (2003, Leary, 2004) suggested that use of the term “self” on its own is typically unhelpful; it is frequently used in a vague fashion where more precise terms might be clearer, such as “self-concept” or “self-image,” on the one hand, or just “person” or “individual” on the other hand. Moreover, Leary and Tangney listed approximately 50 different hyphenated “self-” terms within the social psychological literature alone. Hence, they argued that “self” constructs may be better understood by examining what comes after the hyphen. When navigating through the plethora of hyphenated “self-” terms, it is especially important to distinguish between those terms where “self” is used solely as the reflexive pronoun and those where it is intended to refer to some form of self-representation (whether cognitive, evaluative, or communicative). The former may be entirely unrelated to identity, whereas the latter—which relate to the “Who are you?” question—may be central aspects of identity. For example, self-control, which refers to the ability to control impulses (Muraven & Baumeister, 2000), is less related to identity than is self-esteem, which refers to one’s overall evaluation of oneself (Harter, 1999; Heppner & Kernis, 2007).

An additional layer of complexity comes from the fact that “reflexive pronoun” self-constructs sometimes have been adapted subsequently to address questions about self-representation or identity. An example of this is self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985): this theory was originally developed as a theory of motivation for behavior—where *self*-determination referred to individuals volitionally choosing (or “determining”) *their own* actions—but it has been expanded subsequently to include predictions about identity development (e.g., Ryan & Deci, 2003; Soenens & Vansteenkiste, Chapter 17, this volume). Similarly, the research literature on identity threat and coping processes (e.g., Breakwell, 1988; Tesser, 2000) can potentially be interpreted as reflecting the self-regulatory character of identity processes. In any case, the ways in which

different “self” and “identity” processes overlap and the directional sequences between them are in need of further theoretical and empirical elucidation.

Divisions Within the Literature

Even notwithstanding the frequent overuse of the term, much of the confusion regarding the meaning of “identity” stems from the fact that different bodies of research on identity have grown out of different theoretical, metatheoretical, and disciplinary traditions, have been pursued using differing types of methodology, and are focused on different levels of analysis. Work on identity can be found in fields as diverse as psychology, sociology, anthropology, linguistics, political science, education, family studies, and public health. Even within each of these disciplines, quite different streams of identity research have emerged. For example, conceptions of identity within social psychology differ markedly from those within developmental psychology (cf., Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 2002; Kroger, 2007). Within sociology, there are several distinct perspectives as well (cf., Hitlin, 2003; Stryker, 2003). Each of these perspectives differs in terms of how “identity” is defined and how it is studied, and perhaps as a result, there have been limited interchanges among them.

Various streams of literature on identity have their roots in markedly different theoretical and metatheoretical traditions. For example, most developmental psychological research on “personal identity” traces its roots to Erikson’s (1950) epigenetic model of psychosocial growth, whereas social-psychological research on “social identity” is largely grounded in the work of Tajfel and Turner (1986), who focused on the role of group identity processes in intergroup relations. Research on cultural aspects of identity stems from a completely different set of origins, including the cultural adaptation, relativity, and values models put forth by psychologists such as Berry (1980), Hofstede (1980), and Triandis (1995), as well as the work of anthropologists such as Geertz (1975) and Hsu

(1985). Meanwhile, the intellectual roots of discursive approaches to identity can be traced to Wittgenstein's (1922) philosophy of language, as well as more recent ideas from postmodern philosophy and post-structuralist social theory (e.g., Bauman, 2000; Foucault, 1972; Lyotard, 1984; see also Wetherell, 2010). Given these vastly divergent roots, it should not be surprising that the various literatures on identity have emerged separately and have continued to develop largely independently from one another.

These differences increase the difficulty of creating an integrated field of identity studies (Côté, 2006; Côté & Levine, 2002) because, even when followers of different schools of thought learn about each other's work, they often find that they "do not seem to be speaking the same language." Hence, our goal in this section is to identify some of the key points of divergence in metatheoretical and methodological assumptions and emphases among the different schools of thought in the identity literature. What are the "faultlines" dividing neo-Eriksonian, social identity, self-psychology, symbolic interactionist, discursive, and other perspectives on identity that contribute most to fragmentation of the literature? We believe that the following four questions have been especially divisive within the literature to date:

1. Is identity viewed primarily as a personal, relational, or collective phenomenon?
2. Is identity viewed as relatively stable, or as fluid and constantly changing?
3. Is identity viewed as discovered, personally constructed, or socially constructed?
4. Should identity be researched using quantitative or qualitative methods?

To prefigure our argument, we believe that each of these questions represents, at least to some extent, an artificial distinction, because we see each of the different perspectives in the literature as focusing on different aspects of the same phenomenon of identity. Thus, we contend that identity is simultaneously a personal, relational, and collective phenomenon; it is stable in some ways and fluid in others; and identity is formed

and revised throughout the lifespans of individuals and the histories of social groups and categories, through an interplay of processes of self-discovery, personal construction, and social construction, some of which are relatively deliberate and explicit, whereas others are more automatic and implicit. It is this very complexity that makes identity such a rich and valuable theoretical construct for the social sciences, even if the richness can lead to confusion. Furthermore, we believe that diverse methodologies within both quantitative and qualitative approaches are needed in order to capture the richness and complexity of identity.

In the epilogue, we consider our current state of progress in addressing these differences and suggest some future directions—with the goal of facilitating greater integration of the field of identity studies. But for now, we outline in a bit more detail the forms that these divisions have taken within the literature to date, as well as discussing why each of these divisions might be viewed as unhelpful.

Individual, Relational, or Collective?

As noted above, identity can be defined at several different levels of inclusiveness (Sedikides & Brewer, 2001), and these have been the focus of different perspectives within the identity literature. Neo-Eriksonian perspectives such as the identity status paradigm (see Schwartz, 2001), as well as most perspectives in self-psychology (see Leary & Tangney, 2003), have tended to focus mainly on aspects of individual identity and on individual processes of identity development. In contrast, social-psychological, sociological, and discursive perspectives have tended to focus on aspects of relational and collective identities, and to view these as constituted by social processes (see Wetherell, 2010).

Fewer perspectives actively consider the relationship between identity contents and processes at different levels. According to the social identity perspective, identity includes both personal (i.e., individual/relational) and social (collective)

levels, and both personal and social identities are shaped by social context (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner & Onorato, 1999). Nevertheless, most research in this tradition has tended to focus on social identities while devoting little direct attention to personal identity. We recognize that the distinction between levels of identity may be a useful theoretical tool in some circumstances—especially when trying to understand the processes by which aspects of identity shift in salience across different contexts (e.g., Turner et al., 1987). Nevertheless, it is important to be aware of the similarities and the interconnections between different levels of identity. For example, Reid and Deaux (1996) have shown that social and personal identities are linked in memory—people associate different groups to which they belong with particular traits and other individual characteristics that they possess. More radically, Simon (1997) has pointed out that the same identity aspect can be represented as either a personal or a social identity depending on the context. For example, under many circumstances, one might see skin pigmentation as a personal characteristic—hence as an aspect of personal identity; however, in contexts where people are categorized and granted social status according to skin color, this then becomes a social identity (see also Brewer, 2001).

Moreover, it is important to note that the distinction among individual, relational, and collective identities can be applied either to identity contents or to identity processes, and that the two do not necessarily correspond. For example, cross-cultural psychology has shown ways in which personal identity can be influenced and defined by collective cultural processes (see Smith, Chapter 11, this volume). Similarly, collective identities can take on different personalized meanings for different members of a group (Rodriguez, Schwartz, & Whitbourne, 2010), and these meanings may also be negotiated both in private, interpersonal settings and in wider public discourse (Wodak, de Cillia, Reisigl, & Liebhart, 2009).

Thus, irrespective of levels of content, any given aspect of identity can be viewed as defined by individual, relational, and collective

processes: as the subjective understanding or experience of individuals, as an interpersonal construction, *and* as a sociocultural product. Take, for example, the identity of a young woman who becomes a “clinical psychologist.” This could be examined through a number of different lenses. “Clinical psychologist” could be understood as a vocational choice, and thus in “content” terms it is an aspect of her personal identity. Nevertheless, in “process” terms, the choice to enter this profession is not just a personal one, but it is also likely guided and shaped through interactions and negotiations with parents and other significant others (Marshall, Young, & Domene, 2006; Schachter & Ventura, 2008), and these interactions occur within a wider socio-historical context, including stereotypes of the gender appropriateness of different occupational choices. In the context of the woman’s relationship with her clients, “clinical psychologist” might be viewed as a role, and thus as an aspect of relational identity in “content” terms. But again, the nature of her role may be defined through a mixture of individual, relational, and collective processes, as she develops her personalized version of the culturally expected actions of a clinical psychologist, and as her role takes on a different form in relation to each client who comes to her with different needs and expectations. Finally, she is a member of the social category of “clinical psychologists” and so, in content terms, this might be viewed as a collective identity. However, in process terms, the meaning of this category is defined, yet again, on multiple levels. On one level, there may be a consensual, socially constructed definition of this profession that can be examined independently of the subjectivities of individual members of the profession. Yet, our particular individual may not fully share this view, or she may emphasize different aspects of it in different contexts, for example, depending on whether she is talking to a psychiatrist or to a social worker.

Thus, we believe there is a need for greater integration of theoretical perspectives that focus on different levels of self-representation and on different levels of identity process. As a starting

point for such integration, it is important to keep in mind that more or less any perspective on identity implicitly or explicitly engages with multiple aspects of identity that might be viewed at different levels of content and in terms of different levels of processes. Viewing identity through these multiple lenses is therefore necessary if we are to capture the full richness and complexity of what identity means and how identity processes operate.

Stable or Fluid?

There has been some debate as to whether identity is largely stable and fixed or whether it is fundamentally unstable and in constant flux (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000; Rattansi & Phoenix, 2005). That is, can we list a set of things that I “am,” or has the late-modern world saturated us with so many choices—and so much information—that one’s sense of self is nearly impossible to pin down from moment to moment (Gergen, 1991)? Thinking about these questions requires us to consider the incidence of two kinds of identity changes—long-term developmental changes and short-term contextual fluctuations—as well as the processes and mechanisms that may underlie both change and stability over both of these time scales.

Developmental psychologists tend to view identity change as a long-term process that occurs mainly during specific parts of the lifespan. Approaches focusing on personal goals, values, and beliefs (Kroger, 2007; Marcia, 1993) and on ethnic identifications (Umaña-Taylor, Bhanot, & Shin, 2006) hold that identity issues are most often addressed during the adolescent and emerging adult years. The self-direction and agency underlying personal choices and commitments may require at least the beginnings of formal operational thought (Gestsdóttir & Lerner, 2007); and in many Western societies, the adolescent and emerging adult years are, to some extent, “set aside” for identity development (Arnett, 2000; Erikson, 1968).

Nonetheless, it is increasingly acknowledged that identity issues may be revisited later in

adulthood as well (Kroger & Haslett, 1988; Stephen, Fraser, & Marcia, 1992). This may happen for both developmental and social relational reasons. For example, one’s identity as husband or wife may be revisited through relational events such as divorce or illness, as well as because of normative developmental events such as becoming a parent or finding oneself in an “empty nest” when one’s children leave the family home (Carter & McGoldrick, 2004). Nevertheless, most developmental psychological approaches continue to view identity as relatively stable once it has been formed.

In contrast, social-psychological and discursive approaches to identity often focus on short-term contextual fluctuations in identity. A key conclusion of research within the social identity tradition is that personal and social aspects of identity can fluctuate dramatically in salience depending on the intergroup context in which an individual finds herself (Turner et al., 1987; Turner & Onorato, 1999; see Spears, Chapter 9, this volume). Some discursive approaches to identity go further still, suggesting that individuals essentially “make up their identities as they go along” during social interactions—that identities are nothing more than discursive devices that people can use to help themselves accomplish interactional goals (Potter & Wetherell, 1987; see Bamberg, de Fina, & Schiffrin, Chapter 8, this volume).

Although these views of identity may appear diametrically opposed, we believe that they can be reconciled by focusing on the individual and contextual processes underlying identity construction, maintenance, and change. Seemingly “stable” aspects of identity, such as the roles of husband and father, or one’s view of oneself as an intelligent person, may appear to be stable largely because of active efforts that the person is putting forth to maintain these roles, commitments, and self-views (Swann, 2005), as well as contextual processes that help to hold these roles, commitments, and self-views in place (Serpe & Stryker, Chapter 10, this volume). Thus, just because identity appears stable, this does not mean that there is nothing happening: identity stability may be the outcome of successful processes of identity

maintenance or defense (Tesser, 2000; see Gregg, Sedikides, & Gebauer, Chapter 14, this volume).

Moreover, the fact that aspects of identity have been shown to change in salience from moment to moment does not make the notion of identity stability vanish into thin air. Instead research suggests that such contextual shifts in identity typically occur in a predictable manner, based on features of the context in which individuals find themselves (reviewed by Turner & Onorato, 1999). Thus, much of the contextual fluctuation in identity can be characterized by what English and Chen (2007) have described as an “If . . . then . . .” pattern of variability across contexts but stability within contexts. Hence, if individuals tend to inhabit a relatively stable range of contexts over time, they will correspondingly tend to show a relatively stable range of identity aspects over time, even if different identity aspects become salient in different contexts.

Furthermore, suggesting that identity processes are influenced by context does not rule out the possibility of an active role for the individual in this process. Indeed, within the social identity tradition, Turner and colleagues (1987) explicitly recognize that individuals will differ in their “readiness” to adopt particular self-categorizations, even when these are suggested by the nature of the social context. Moreover, individuals are not just passive recipients of social contexts—they actively seek out and choose which contexts to inhabit. In many cases, people tend to choose contexts that will help them to verify their existing views of themselves—thus harnessing the power of the context in order to maintain stability (Swann, 2005).

Hence, we believe that the apparent divide between a focus on long-term processes in the personal identity literature and short-term fluctuations in the social identity literature should be viewed as a difference of emphasis rather than a difference in the nature of the phenomena. Just as personal identity elements can be explored, adopted, and integrated into one’s self-definition over the long term (Kroger, 2007; Luyckx, Goossens, Soenens, & Beyers, 2006; Marcia, 1993), commitment to different aspects

of personal identity as well as beliefs about one’s individual traits can also fluctuate over short time periods (Klimstra et al., 2010; Lichtwarck-Aschoff, van Geert, Bosma, & Kunnen, 2008; Turner & Onorato, 1999). In the same way, relational and collective identity elements can be emphasized (or deemphasized) differentially across contexts (Chen et al., 2006; Reicher, Hopkins, & Harrison, 2006), but they also vary in their long-term importance to individuals (Aron, Aron, Tudor, & Nelson, 1991; Ashmore et al., 2004). Focusing on the underlying processes, and especially the roles both of context and of individual choices, therefore supports a “middle ground” between viewing identity as fixed or as fluid (see also Schwartz, Montgomery, & Briones, 2006).

Discovered, Personally Constructed, or Socially Constructed?

In some areas of identity theory and research, disagreements have emerged regarding whether identity is constructed or discovered (e.g., Waterman, 1984). A “discovery” perspective implies that one’s true self or potentials exist prior to their discovery (Waterman, 1986), and that one’s mission is to find and actualize that self or set of potentials. On the other hand, a “constructivist” perspective implies that a sense of self or identity is being “built” where it did not previously exist.

At first glance, these two viewpoints appear to be fundamentally incompatible (Berzonsky, 1986, Chapter 3, this volume; Soenens & Vansteenkiste, Chapter 17, this volume). A constructivist perspective might be assumed to start with a “blank slate,” where the self must be developed from the ground up. This may preclude the existence of a true self or innate set of potentials. However, Schwartz (2002) has argued that self-construction might represent the *path* to self-discovery—that is, that steps taken to develop a sense of self might ultimately lead to the discovery and actualization of one’s potentials. A further possibility is that people’s experiences of “true self” may actually be constructed—thus,

it may be the subjective experience of self-discovery and the accompanying feelings of authenticity that matter, rather than whether the true self actually existed, in an objective sense, prior to its discovery.

Moreover, some perspectives emphasize the active role of the individual in constructing his/her own identity—that is, *personal construction* (e.g., Berzonsky, 1990)—whereas other perspectives focus more on the role of local or wider social and cultural contexts in constraining which forms of identity are available to the people within those contexts—that is, *social construction* (e.g., Kitzinger & Wilkinson, 1995). We suggest that identity construction involves the interplay of these two dimensions (which are differentially highlighted in different perspectives). For example, an ethnic minority individual may wish to become a doctor but may be constrained by sociocultural stereotypes of her ethnic group (see Oyserman & James, Chapter 6, this volume)—thus, the individual has agency in constructing her identity, but this personal process occurs within particular contextual constraints that may be challenged but cannot simply be ignored. Understanding the interplay between personal and social construction processes is an important goal for future theorizing and research—especially to identify the conditions under which individuals will be more likely to internalize the socially constructed identity categories that prevail in their local and cultural contexts, as opposed to the conditions under which they may challenge, and potentially help to transform, these social constructions.

Quantitative or Qualitative Methods?

Further to these theoretical divisions, schools of thought in the identity literature have been divided by their tendency to rely on different methodologies. There are differences not only in the choice of quantitative or qualitative methods, but also within each of these broader approaches. For example, on the quantitative side, some base their research mainly on controlled experimentation, whereas others focus

more on correlational and naturalistic methods. Similarly, among those who conduct qualitative research into identity, some treat identities mainly as discursive resources that in some sense “float free” of the individuals and groups who are using them, whereas others use phenomenological approaches to try to understand individuals’ personal, subjective experiences of their identities.

Each of these methodological approaches is better suited to reveal certain aspects of identity than others, and the choice of methodology determines both the theoretical questions that are asked and the kind of answers that are likely to be generated (see Lerner, Schwartz, & Phelps, 2009; Reicher, 1994). Hence, we believe that the differences in methodological preferences can partially account for the differences in how identity has been conceptualized across traditions. If this is the case, then integrating the identity literature requires researchers to look beyond the methodologies that are most familiar to them, and to see what insights can be gained by paying attention to alternative methodological as well as theoretical traditions.

Toward Integration

We believe that the identity literature is in need of an integrative perspective that brings together the strengths of these seemingly contrasting theoretical and methodological approaches without losing sight of the unique contributions that each of these approaches can make. Such integrative perspectives have been advanced *within* a number of identity literatures (e.g., Hitlin, 2003; Schwartz, Mullis, Waterman, & Dunham, 2000; van Zomeren et al., 2008; Vignoles, Regalia, Manzi, Gollidge, & Scabini, 2006), but broader integration *across* the broader field of identity studies remains lacking.

Nevertheless, the potential for progress has been increased through the launching of several journals focusing on identity in the last 20 years, including *Identity: An International Journal of Theory and Research*, *Self and Identity*, and *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power*. Although these journals focus primarily on

entirely different areas of the identity landscape (neo-Eriksonian, self-psychology, and collective identities, respectively), they have provided outlets for scholars working in the larger field of identity studies—and in so doing, they have allowed the scholarship on identity to be more closely concentrated in a smaller number of sources. In turn, it may be possible to develop a larger perspective that draws on these diverse streams of identity theory and research.

There is some evidence that the various literatures on identity are beginning to converge. In the 1990s and early 2000s, several handbooks on self and identity were published—each of which focused on a specific stream of identity literature (Ashmore & Jussim, 1997; Baumeister, 1999; Leary & Tangney, 2003; Marcia, Waterman, Matteson, Archer, & Orlofsky, 1993). More recently, a number of expansive and ambitious theoretical and empirical articles have been published, many of which have attempted to integrate disparate theories of identity (e.g., Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005; Hitlin, 2003; Schwartz et al., 2006; Umaña-Taylor, Yazedjian, & Bámaca-Gómez, 2004; Vignoles et al., 2006). In 2010, Wetherell and Mohanty published a *Handbook of Identities* spanning perspectives in a wide range of disciplines—although their goal was to illustrate the diversity of identity theory and research, and they did not argue for an integrative perspective. These works, and others like them, have suggested that it may indeed be possible to bridge the gaps between and among the various identity literatures and to develop a larger and more integrative understanding of what “identity” is and how it functions.

Purpose and Outline of This *Handbook*

This book is intended to build on these recent integrative contributions and to bring together many different key theoretical and empirical approaches to identity within a single volume. Contrary to writers such as Brubaker and Cooper (2000) and Gergen (1991), who have argued that the term “identity” is overused to the extent that

it has lost its meaning, we believe that there *is* a unifying set of theoretical ideas and empirical phenomena underlying the various uses of “identity.” Our goal is to demonstrate this and to reveal parallels and areas of complementarity among the disparate streams of theory and research that have emerged within the larger field of identity studies. This book therefore represents a response to the challenge set out by Côté (2006), who noted the fragmentation within the field of identity studies and argued that more “cross-pollination” across the various streams of literature would be needed to help the field to fulfill its promise. Indeed, we believe that this book offers an unprecedented opportunity to an extremely fragmented field.

The opportunities afforded by this interdisciplinary and integrative handbook extend well beyond the research community. By definition, identity is central to the psychosocial and interpersonal functioning of people from diverse age groups and cultural backgrounds (Bizumic, Reynolds, Turner, Bromhead, & Subasic, 2009; Cross, Gore, & Morris, 2003). Accordingly, there are literatures on the role of identity in counseling (e.g., Watt, Robinson, & Lupton-Smith, 2002), education (e.g., Dreyer, 1994), the workplace (e.g., Cornilissen, Haslam, & Balmer, 2007), interethnic relations (e.g., Moshman, 2007), and numerous other domains (see Volume 2 of this handbook)—and practitioners in each of these areas may find the diverse perspectives presented here to be beneficial for their work.

In the remainder of this opening chapter, we outline the structure of this book and the contributions of each of the individual sections and chapters. The book is divided into two halves focusing on (1) general structures and processes of identity and (2) specific identity domains and categories.

Volume 1: Structures and Processes

The first half of this book focuses on a range of key structures, mechanisms, and processes proposed within various perspectives on identity. Although any division of the literature is somewhat arbitrary, we have chosen to present these

various perspectives in three sections: we begin with “personal and developmental perspectives,” continue with “social and contextual perspectives,” and end with a section on “well-being, needs, and motives.”

Personal and developmental perspectives. One of the key influences on theory and research in personal identity was Erik Erikson (1950), who developed an eight-stage, lifespan model of psychosocial development. Erikson’s work has inspired all of the approaches within this first section of the book, albeit in somewhat different ways. The identity status approach was one of the first empirical attempts to operationalize Erikson’s work. In Chapter 2, Jane Kroger and James Marcia provide a review and extension of identity status theory and research, including how the identity status perspective emerged from Erikson’s (1950) work and inspired subsequent developments that Schwartz (2001) has described as the “neo-Eriksonian tradition.”

Two other neo-Eriksonian perspectives are included in this section. In Chapter 3, Michael Berzonsky examines identity construction from a neo-Eriksonian and neo-Kellian (e.g., Kelly, 1955) point of view. Berzonsky describes three identity-processing orientations that guide decision-making and with which one approaches important life choices. He reviews the personality and adjustment correlates of the three processing orientations and their appropriateness in different social and cultural contexts. In Chapter 4, Koen Luyckx, Seth Schwartz, Luc Goossens, Wim Beyers, and Lies Missotten introduce a dynamic expansion of Marcia’s identity status model by integrating hypotheses from various neo-Eriksonian models and viewpoints. This perspective suggests ways in which the identity development process can be revisited after commitments have been formed. Their model suggests that personal identity development occurs as a two-step process—commitment formation and commitment evaluation. Commitments that have been adopted are retained subsequently if they are found to resonate with other aspects of one’s self.

The final two chapters in this section draw in part on aspects of Erikson’s thinking that are less

strongly emphasized within the neo-Eriksonian tradition. In Chapter 5, Dan McAdams reviews research on identity as a narrative life story, including ways in which the qualitative richness from a person’s life story can be used to study the inner workings and processes underlying individual and relational identity development. McAdams further likens the life story to a “script” in which one is the protagonist, and he develops the idea that the tone and coherence of the script—as well as its verbal content—tell us a great deal about the person’s identity. The relationship between narrative and identity is also addressed elsewhere in the handbook in the chapters on discursive perspectives (Bamberg et al., Chapter 8) and on identity processes among adopted individuals (Grotevant & Von Korff, Chapter 24). These perspectives remind us of the richness of the identity construct, and of the need for both quantitative and qualitative approaches to capture this richness.

In Chapter 6, Daphna Oyserman and Leah James review the construct of possible identities—who we might become, would like to become, or are afraid of becoming in the future—as originally coined by William James (1890) and popularized subsequently by Markus and Nurius (1986). They view possible identities as a key construct underlying identity-based motivation: The possibilities of who we might become (or are afraid of becoming) are associated with desires to change one’s identity, as well as strategies that one might devise—consciously or otherwise—to attain a desired outcome (cf. Berzonsky, Chapter 3; Gregg et al., Chapter 14; Vignoles, Chapter 18). Additionally, Oyserman and James explore the different ways that individuals may experience and interpret difficulties in attaining their desired identities.

A number of other perspectives in the handbook also draw considerably on Erikson’s thinking and on the identity status paradigm. These include the eudaimonic perspective on self-discovery (Waterman, Chapter 16), and perspectives on ethnic (Umaña-Taylor, Chapter 33), vocational (Skorikov and Vondracek, Chapter 29), and sexual (Dillon, Worthington, and Moradi, Chapter 27) identities.

Social and contextual perspectives. The second section consists of chapters that focus largely on relational and collective aspects of identity. In different ways, each of these chapters highlights the role of context in identity processes. The chapters examine contextual influences at different levels, from interpersonal to intergroup, social structural, and broader cultural and historical influences.

The first two chapters develop in very different ways how identities are created and shaped in different *interpersonal contexts*. In [Chapter 7](#), Serena Chen, Helen Boucher, and Michael Kraus review the latest research on the emerging concept of the relational self. They argue that identity is defined in the context of relationships with significant others—and that a person may have different relational identities, depending on the specific relational context being examined (e.g., child–parent, employee–supervisor, student–teacher). In turn, the valence of these relationships, and the identities constructed within them, help to shape one’s overall sense of self.

In [Chapter 8](#), Michael Bamberg, Anna De Fina, and Deborah Schiffrin discuss the ways in which identities are constructed in the course of social interactions, drawing on the discursive resources available within immediate social and wider sociocultural contexts. From their perspective, the ways in which identities are expressed or claimed from moment to moment in the service of particular interactional goals are at least as important as the self-definition that a person holds internally. They argue that the process of constructing an identity involves positioning oneself in relation to three “identity dilemmas:” between agency and non-agency, between difference and belonging, and between sameness and change over time (for an interesting parallel, see Vignoles, [Chapter 18](#), this volume). A particular focus of their chapter is on people’s use of narrative to construct identities in discourse, although this is developed in a very different way from the life-story perspective described by McAdams ([Chapter 5](#)).

A number of other perspectives in the handbook illustrate the importance of social

relationships in the construction of identity, including chapters on spiritual identity (Roehlkepartain, Benson, & Scales, [Chapter 22](#)), the role of family processes in identity (Scabini & Manzi, [Chapter 23](#)), identity development in adopted individuals (Grotevant & Von Korff, [Chapter 24](#)), and sexual and gender identity development (Diamond, Pardo, & Butterworth, [Chapter 26](#); Dillon et al., [Chapter 27](#); Savin-Williams, [Chapter 28](#)).

In [Chapter 9](#), Russell Spears reviews research into group identity, focusing on the hugely influential social identity tradition originated by Henri Tajfel and colleagues (e.g., Tajfel & Turner, 1986), its extension in self-categorization theory (Turner et al., 1987), as well as subsequent developments. Spears discusses the concepts of group identification, and intergroup differentiation, as well as the role of social identity processes in social change. Of particular importance is the role of the *intergroup context* in changing the salience of different aspects of identity—which leads people to think and feel like group members and thus makes group behavior possible. Social identity processes are critical for studying and understanding a variety of constructs in identity studies, including identity motives (Vignoles, [Chapter 18](#)), genocide and group-based violence (Moshman, [Chapter 39](#)), nationalism and xenophobia (Licata et al., [Chapter 38](#)), ethnic identity development (Umaña-Taylor, [Chapter 33](#)), identity in organizations (Haslam & Ellemers, [Chapter 30](#)), and the internalization of group-based values (Hitlin, [Chapter 20](#)).

In [Chapter 10](#), Richard Serpe and Sheldon Stryker review symbolic interactionist perspectives on identity, developing ideas from the thinking of George Herbert Mead (1934). A particular focus is Stryker’s identity theory, grounded in his conceptual framework of structural symbolic interactionism, which refined and extended Mead’s original ideas by emphasizing the importance of the *social structural context* in shaping identity (Stryker, 2003). Serpe and Stryker view identity as a confluence of the various roles that a person plays, and they describe how particular features of social structure “commit”

people to certain role identities, which in turn lead to role-congruent behavior in social settings. They also review other theories of identity that have drawn on symbolic interactionist thinking, and they discuss the implications of these perspectives for the study of identity in family relationships, the workplace, and other contexts. Symbolic interactionist ideas are also strongly represented in Dittmar's chapter on material and consumer identities (Chapter 31), as well as the chapters providing a historical approach to identity (Burkitt, Chapter 12) and examining the relationship between personal identity and values (Hitlin, Chapter 20).

The final three chapters in this section introduce the importance of the wider cultural and historical contexts in which identity is constructed. In Chapter 11, Peter Smith discusses the ways in which identity is constructed and expressed in different *cultural contexts*—reviewing in particular the evidence regarding Markus and Kitayama's (1991) claim that individualistic cultures foster construals of the self as independent whereas collectivist cultures foster construals of the self as interdependent. Smith outlines some of the challenges in conducting cross-cultural comparisons of identity processes, as well as ways to address these challenges. He also emphasizes the need to look beyond individualism–collectivism and independence–interdependence when describing within-culture and between-culture differences in identity processes. Further, he reviews recent research using experimental methods to prime people with multicultural backgrounds to switch between different cultural orientations. The cultural differences that Smith describes are also reflected in chapters on globalization (Jensen, Arnett, and McKenzie, Chapter 13), civic identity (Hart, Richardson, and Wilkenfeld, Chapter 32), and ethnic identity (Umaña-Taylor, Chapter 33).

In Chapter 12, Ian Burkitt puts identity construction into *historical context*, tracing the historical emergence of contemporary forms of identity in Western cultures. In doing so, he draws on symbolic interactionism and especially the work of Erving Goffman (1959) on self-presentation. Goffman famously likened the social roles that

people enact to the parts played by actors on a stage, leading subsequent researchers to explore the distinction between private and public aspects of identity (e.g., Baumeister, 1986). In this chapter, Burkitt traces the origins of this distinction—and especially the idea of the private self as the locus of one's "true" identity, contrasted with a false, "inauthentic" public self—from Greco-Roman times to the present day. In so doing, he links sociological, context-based theories of identity with agency-based, psychological perspectives. If Smith's chapter provides a snapshot of variation in identity processes across contemporary cultural contexts, the historical processes described in Burkitt's chapter help us to imagine how these differences might have emerged.

In Chapter 13, Lene Arnett Jensen, Jeffrey Jensen Arnett, and Jessica McKenzie address the impact on identity processes of an important recent historical and cultural development—namely the *context of globalization*. One aspect of globalization is that individuals can acculturate to Western values, practices, and beliefs without leaving their countries of origin (cf. Chen, Benet-Martínez, & Bond, 2008). Jensen et al. note that the spread of Western culture has influenced people in many areas of the world, but that individuals and groups can vary widely in their responses to the availability of diverse cultural influences. One aspect of exposure to multiple cultural influences is that what was once taken for granted as one's cultural worldview is now explicitly acknowledged and contrasted with alternative worldviews. Consequently, culture becomes a basis for social identification (see Spears, Chapter 9, this volume), rather than simply a set of implicit assumptions about reality. As a result of this, the pervasiveness of Western cultural influences is sometimes viewed as a threat by those who wish to maintain their own cultural heritage (cf. Schwartz et al., 2006), and hence it is not clear that globalization will necessarily lead to the eradication of cultural differences in the future. Jensen et al. also review the challenges and opportunities that globalization presents for people forming their identities, especially during adolescence and emerging adulthood.

Well-being, needs, and motives. In the third section, we present five perspectives on needs and motives that are understood to underlie many of the identity processes identified and described in the previous two sections, as well as the implications of these processes for well-being. Each of the chapters provides a somewhat different understanding of identity-related needs and motives, as well as how they impact on well-being.

The first two chapters in this section focus in different ways on self-evaluation—the processes by which people come to view themselves positively or negatively. In [Chapter 14](#), Aiden Gregg, Constantine Sedikides, and Jochen Gebauer review ways in which people are driven to preserve and enhance the positivity of their self-perceptions (i.e., self-esteem), both in normal situations and in response to external threats, as well as examining under what circumstances people will circumvent these strategies and assess themselves more objectively. Gregg et al. review evidence showing that individuals typically view themselves more positively than others view them, and that people often attribute their successes to their own devices, but attribute their failures to people or forces outside themselves. These mechanisms often operate relatively automatically and outside of conscious awareness. Moreover, despite some potential costs, these mechanisms are understood to have adaptive value, as they help people to cope with adversity—from minor setbacks to more major life events.

In [Chapter 15](#), Whitney Heppner and Michael Kernis discuss the meaning of self-esteem as a dimension of individual differences, as well as its relationship with identity processes and well-being. In particular, they outline ways in which different forms of high self-esteem can be either healthy or fragile, and they explain how this distinction helps to determine the types of behaviors and interpersonal relationships in which people will engage. People with secure high self-esteem appear to be “at peace” with themselves and do not respond defensively to perceived threats to or attacks on the positivity of their self-image. In contrast, those with insecure high self-esteem are more strongly affected by incoming feedback,

and their self-esteem fluctuates accordingly; thus, they are more likely to defend themselves vigorously against potential threats to their self-worth. Finally, Heppner and Kernis outline how secure high self-esteem is related to mindfulness and to perceived authenticity, suggesting some possible ways in which security might be fostered.

Self-evaluation processes are implicated in more or less every domain of identity, and their influence is drawn out within the chapters on gender (Bussey, [Chapter 25](#); Diamond et al., [Chapter 26](#)), ethnic (Umaña-Taylor, [Chapter 33](#)), religious (MacDonald, [Chapter 21](#); Roehlkepartain et al., [Chapter 22](#)), sexual (Dillon et al., [Chapter 27](#); Savin-Williams, [Chapter 28](#)), consumer (Dittmar, [Chapter 31](#)), and national (Licata et al., [Chapter 38](#); Schildkraut, [Chapter 36](#)) identities. However, several other perspectives in the identity literature focus on different needs and motives, and some argue that the pursuit of self-esteem is detrimental for individual well-being (e.g., Soenens and Vansteenkiste, [Chapter 17](#)).

The next two perspectives adopt a more “humanistic” perspective on identity needs, with roots in the ideas of Carl Rogers’ (1961) person-centered theory, Abraham Maslow’s (1968) hierarchy of needs, and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi’s (1990) work on flow experiences. Both perspectives are based on the idea that identity is most conducive to well-being if it is consistent with one’s “true self”; however, the nature of the true self is defined very differently in each of the two perspectives. In [Chapter 16](#), Alan Waterman outlines a discovery-based perspective on identity formation, drawing on insights from Aristotle’s theory of eudaimonia. Following Aristotle, Waterman proposes that everyone has an individual “daimon” (i.e., true self), which can be understood as the sum total of their unique potentials and talents. Eudaimonia (one form of well-being) is understood to occur when one discovers and actualizes these potentials and talents. He describes the process by which deliberate choices, a balance between challenges posed by one’s goals and the skills that one brings to these challenges, a quest for self-realization, and

expenditure of effort are most likely to result in self-discovery.

In [Chapter 17](#), Bart Soenens and Maarten Vansteenkiste offer a self-determination theory perspective on identity, extending the work of Edward Deci and Richard Ryan (1985; Ryan & Deci, 2003). Like Waterman, Soenens and Vansteenkiste argue that an optimal identity is one that is consistent with the true self. However, where Waterman defines the true self in terms of content—which may have a unique configuration for each individual—Soenens and Vansteenkiste argue that the “true self” comprises the process of satisfying three “basic needs” for autonomy, relatedness, and competence, which are understood to be common to all humans irrespective of individual, group, or cultural differences. Thus, self-realization occurs through the process of sorting through identity alternatives and committing to those that are most intrinsically satisfying to these three needs. Soenens and Vansteenkiste specify that an autonomous, self-directed period of exploration, focused on internal self-discovery rather than on extrinsic concerns (e.g., wealth, recognition), is most likely to lead to self-realization.

The theme of the “authentic self” appears—albeit in many different forms—in many lines of identity research, including Heppner and Kernis’ conceptualization of secure self-esteem ([Chapter 15](#)), as well as perspectives on possible identities (Oyserman and James, [Chapter 6](#)), and moral identity (Hardy and Carlo, [Chapter 19](#)). Despite their differences, both Waterman’s and Soenens and Vansteenkiste’s conceptions assume that the true self is an essential reality. In contrast, others have suggested that the true self is socially constructed; for example, Burkitt ([Chapter 12](#)) describes the idea that “truth” is to be found in a hidden, private self as having emerged gradually over several millennia of Western cultural history. From a constructivist point of view, it could be the subjective “feeling” of truth, rather than any actual, objective reality, that is beneficial.

Concluding this section of the book, in [Chapter 18](#), Vivian Vignoles offers a constructionist account of identity motives. He proposes that processes of identity construction and

defense are guided by six discrete motives: for self-esteem, distinctiveness, continuity, meaning, efficacy, and belonging. In contrast with Soenens and Vansteenkiste, who portray “basic needs” as essential properties of human nature, Vignoles suggests that “identity motives” may represent cultural adaptations to pervasive human concerns about the meaning of existence as well as the demands of social organization. Thus, although the motives are universal, different cultures may develop different ways of satisfying each motive. Vignoles’ model of motivated identity construction brings together elements from several disparate theories of identity, including perspectives on self-evaluation (Gregg et al., [Chapter 14](#); Heppner & Kernis, [Chapter 15](#)), social identity theory (Spears, [Chapter 9](#)), and self-determination theory (Soenens & Vansteenkiste, [Chapter 17](#)); and it also links to the ideas of Erikson (see McAdams, [Chapter 5](#)), and eudaimonic identity theory (Waterman, [Chapter 16](#)).

Volume 2: Domains and Categories

The second half of the book consists of chapters on specific domains of identity, including (a) moral and spiritual; (b) family, gender, and sexual; (c) economic and civic; and (d) ethnic, cultural, and national identities. The theoretical approaches introduced in the first half of the book find applications here in relation to particular identity content areas. However, these chapters do more than just apply the theoretical perspectives introduced in Part I. For example, many of them illustrate ways in which diverse theoretical approaches can be brought together to provide complementary insights on identity processes in the context of a particular domain.

Moral and spiritual domains. The first of these sections centers on the domains of morality and spirituality—which both represent specific instances of the more general domain of values and ideals. Nonetheless, the chapters in this section are grounded in very different disciplines and associated metatheoretical orientations, including psychology, sociology, and family studies.

In [Chapter 19](#), Sam Hardy and Gustavo Carlo provide a broad overview of what is known about moral identity, which they define as the centrality of morality within one's identity (cf. Vignoles, [Chapter 18](#), on identity centrality). They identify morality as a domain of identity that is closely related to many other identity domains (e.g., civic, vocational, religious and spiritual, social, and cultural). They synthesize work on moral identity from various theoretical and empirical traditions, including neo-Eriksonian (Kroger & Marcia, [Chapter 2](#)), cognitive developmental (Hart et al., [Chapter 32](#)), narrative (McAdams, [Chapter 5](#)), relational (Chen et al., [Chapter 7](#)), and symbolic interactionist (see Serpe & Stryker, [Chapter 10](#)).

In [Chapter 20](#), Steven Hitlin proposes a new, emerging perspective integrating aspects of symbolic interactionism (Serpe & Stryker, [Chapter 10](#)) and social identity theory (Spears, [Chapter 9](#)) in the service of elucidating the role of values in personal identity. Hitlin discusses the ways in which values provide a link between societal mores and individual choices, and through which these values come together to create the personal identity that an individual espouses. As such, he argues that values represent the core of personal identity—where values may be, but are not necessarily, “moral.” Thus, “moral identity” might be understood as a specific instantiation of the more general principle of values being internalized in personal identities.

The final two chapters in this section focus on spiritual identity. Both draw, to some extent, on neo-Eriksonian approaches to identity (cf. Kroger & Marcia, [Chapter 2](#); Luyckx et al., [Chapter 4](#)) and call for the study of spiritual identity and development independent of mainstream religious denominations. These two chapters also complement one another in terms of focusing to a different extent on individual and contextual processes. In [Chapter 21](#), Douglas MacDonald outlines the intrapersonal components of spiritual identity, whereas in [Chapter 22](#), Eugene Roehlkepartain, Peter Benson, and Peter Scales focus primarily on contextual influences on spiritual identity. MacDonald describes the structure of spiritual identity as being similar to

that of other domains of identity—that is, people develop a sense of “who I am” and “who I am not” in a spiritual sense—and he stresses that spirituality represents a core attribute of the human experience. Roehlkepartain et al. highlight the importance of attending to the contextual antecedents of spiritual development—such as family, peers, and other social forces.

Family, gender, and sexuality. The next subsection centers on the domains of family, gender, and sexuality. Possibly more than other domains covered in Part II of the handbook, these three domains are characterized by a relational perspective on identity, in the sense that they involve interactions and transactions with other people, both as individuals and as group members. We include chapters covering more broadly applicable issues of identity in the areas of family, gender, and sexuality—as well as chapters referring to specific groups of people within these domains (i.e., adopted individuals, transgender individuals, and sexual minorities).

In [Chapter 23](#), Eugenia Scabini and Claudia Manzi posit that the family system, as a whole, has an identity, and that this “family identity” is inexorably intertwined with the identities of individual family members. The family's identity is embodied within its boundaries—including both the external boundaries surrounding the family and the ways in which boundaries operate within the family—as well as the degree to which children, adolescents, and young adults are permitted (or encouraged) to individuate and differentiate themselves within and from the family system. Scabini and Manzi's perspective is consistent with recent theorizing regarding the family as an “agent” for identity development (e.g., Schachter & Ventura, 2008).

In [Chapter 24](#), Harold Grotevant and Lynn Von Korff examine the issue of identity in the specific family situation of adopted individuals. They argue that having been raised by people who are not one's biological parents introduces an identity challenge and a search for meaning. Although Grotevant and Von Korff conceptualize being adopted as an ascribed characteristic, they emphasize that—similar to gender, ethnicity, and nationality—it can nonetheless be infused with

different meanings that guide and constrain the process of identity construction.

In [Chapter 25](#), Kay Bussey discusses gender identities, including gender-stereotyped roles and behaviors that have been documented by sociologists and psychologists—as well as the ways in which these roles and norms vary across cultural contexts. Drawing on the social cognitive theory of Albert Bandura (1986, Bussey & Bandura, 1999), she describes the process by which individuals acquire gender identities, involving an interplay of individual agency with a wide variety of social influences, including parents, peers, and the media. Finally, she evaluates the extent and likely impact of changes in gender roles over the last century in Western societies, and argues for the benefits of a reduction in the differentiation between “male” and “female” roles and activities.

In [Chapter 26](#), Lisa Diamond, Seth Pardo, and Molly Butterworth focus on the specific case of transgender identities, which they define as any gender identity (e.g., transsexual, transvestite, gender bender, gender blender) that does not fit neatly into the male/female distinction, and they note that transgender identities do not imply any particular sexual identification (cf. Dillon et al., [Chapter 27](#); Savin-Williams, [Chapter 28](#)). Diamond et al. call for a more fluid and flexible definition of gender identity, where a healthy sense of identity does not require identification as exclusively male or female. Similar to many discursive approaches to identity (see Bamberg et al., [Chapter 8](#)), they argue that it is counterproductive to try to locate the self within fixed and essential categories.

In [Chapter 27](#), Frank Dillon, Roger Worthington, and Bonnie Moradi introduce a model of sexual identity development that is applicable across the spectrum of sexual orientations. Similar to the identity status model (Kroger & Marcia, [Chapter 2](#)) and Luyckx et al.’s ([Chapter 4](#)) expansion of identity status, sexual identity development is posited as the confluence of two interrelated processes: (a) recognition of the need to explore one’s sexual self and to elucidate one’s sexual preferences and needs; and (b) identification with a specific sexual orientation, which may or may not involve prejudice toward

individuals espousing other sexual orientations. Dillon et al. discuss the implications of their model for the study of sexuality, as well as its implications for prevention of HIV/AIDS and other potentially negative consequences of sexual activity.

In [Chapter 28](#), Ritch Savin-Williams outlines the process of sexual identity development for sexual minority adolescents and young adults using his differential developmental trajectories framework. Like Dillon et al., he emphasizes that sexual identity development operates in much the same way across sexual orientations—with the exception that sexual minority youth are confronted with negative social stereotypes about their sexuality. Savin-Williams discusses ways in which the social sciences have pathologized sexual minorities, as well as ways in which increased acceptance of sexual minority lifestyles has begun to facilitate healthy development for sexual minority youth.

Economic and civic participation. We have included four chapters in this sub-section, focusing on vocational and civic identity, as well as consumer identity and the role of identity in the organizational and workplace setting. These domains all refer to ways in which the individual can contribute directly to societal functioning.

Two chapters focus on identities within the occupational domain. The first of these examines identity at the level of the individual person choosing and pursuing a career, whereas the second addresses this domain by viewing the workplace as a context for group identity processes. In [Chapter 29](#), Vladimir Skorikov and Fred Vondracek describe vocational identity in relationship to other neo-Eriksonian domains of identity, and they review research suggesting that educational and family experiences in childhood and early adolescence are strongly predictive of successful vocational identity development later on. Drawing on the identity status approach (Kroger & Marcia, [Chapter 2](#)), they argue that vocational identity is a critical component of the transition to adulthood, and that moving toward a stable career identity is strongly facilitative of subjective well-being and positive functioning. Their perspective intersects significantly with the focus on

skills, competencies, and self-realization emphasized by Waterman (Chapter 16). In Chapter 30, Alexander Haslam and Naomi Ellemers review several applications of social identity theory (see Spears, Chapter 9, this volume) to the organizational setting. Their approach is based on, and extends, social identity theory to examine the ways in which identity affects—and is affected by—conditions within the organization. In particular, they argue that a social identity approach helps to illuminate important concerns within organizational psychology—namely leadership, motivation, and stress.

The remaining two chapters in this section focus respectively on the identity dynamics underlying people's economic and civic participation. In Chapter 31, Helga Dittmar reviews the social psychology of ownership and material possessions from a symbolic interactionist perspective (see Serpe & Stryker, Chapter 10). She argues that the things one owns are experienced as part of who one is, and that people buy material goods as an expression of their identities—or to enhance their identities. Dittmar also reviews research suggesting that basing one's identity heavily on material possessions can negatively affect well-being by placing the source of self-worth outside of oneself. She characterizes compulsive buying as a dysfunctional search for a "better" self. In this way, purchasing patterns can be viewed as an expression of core identity motives (see Vignoles, Chapter 18), and as a mechanism for defending one's identity against threat (see Gregg et al., Chapter 14).

In Chapter 32, Daniel Hart, Cam Richardson, and Britt Wilkenfeld discuss civic identity and citizenship, in terms of political involvement and participation. Drawing on insights from developmental psychology, political science, and population geography, they highlight both personal (individual-level) and social (national-level) construction of civic identity. At the individual level, they explore civic identity as a shared meaning system that young people acquire and put into practice—both in terms of social roles and in terms of active involvement in the political and social systems. At the national level, they illustrate ways in which civic identity is

affected by both political and socio-demographic forces (cf. Schildkraut, Chapter 36).

Ethnic and cultural identities. We have included three chapters under the heading of ethnicity and culture. These chapters provide developmental, social, and epidemiological perspectives relevant to cultural diversity, ethnic heritage, and their effects on psychosocial and health outcomes.

In Chapter 33, Adriana Umaña-Taylor reviews research on ethnic identity in minority groups, drawing on insights and literature from developmental and social psychology. Extending the pioneering work of Jean Phinney (e.g., Phinney & Ong, 2007), Umaña-Taylor highlights ways in which parents socialize their children ethnically and culturally, and the processes through which this socialization leads children to retain or relinquish their ethnic identification. She discusses ways in which ethnic identity is related to psychosocial and health outcomes, as well as its salience across various American ethnic groups. This chapter is a particular example of how tenets from the neo-Eriksonian (Kroger & Marcia, Chapter 2) and social identity (Spears, Chapter 9) traditions can be successfully integrated.

In Chapter 34, Jennifer Unger reviews epidemiological research linking cultural values, practices, and identifications to public health outcomes (e.g., drug and alcohol use, physical activity, fast food consumption) among ethnic minority individuals in the United States. She outlines some of the mechanisms through which these associations operate, such as acculturation. Together with Umaña-Taylor and Huynh et al., Unger's chapter paints a picture whereby loss of heritage-culture identity among immigrants is associated with health-compromising behavior, whereas heritage-culture retention and a sense of compatibility between one's heritage and receiving cultures is associated with healthier outcomes.

Another key issue for identity in the context of cultural diversity involves the ways in which individuals negotiate and may integrate the multiple cultural backgrounds and streams to which they are exposed. In Chapter 35, Que-Lam

Huynh, Angela-MinhTu Nguyen, and Verónica Benet-Martínez discuss their concept of bicultural identity integration (BII), which addresses this issue. They highlight how some bicultural individuals prefer to keep their two cultural backgrounds separate, whereas others create a third, hybrid culture that integrates the two component cultures into one (cf. Schwartz, Zamboanga, Rodriguez, & Wang, 2007; Tadmor & Tetlock, 2006). Huynh et al. review research suggesting that “blended” bicultural individuals tend to report more favorable psychosocial functioning compared to bicultural individuals who keep their two cultural backgrounds separate.

National identity, cohesion, and conflict. This final section examines ethnic and national identity processes, focusing especially on intergroup relations. Although social identity theory is a key perspective in this area, the chapters draw on wider insights from political science, anthropology, social psychology, and ethnic studies.

The first three chapters in this section are devoted to national identity, focusing on the feeling of solidarity with a country and its ideals. These chapters also highlight the position of immigrant minorities in relation to national majorities. In Chapter 36, Deborah Schildkraut provides a political science perspective on the meaning of American national identity, the ways in which this identity has been constructed at the group level, as well as perceived threats to the American national identity. She reviews the principles that are widely thought to characterize the United States, and she presents original findings questioning earlier arguments (e.g., Huntington, 2004) suggesting that mass immigration undermines these principles. Schildkraut also advances recommendations for studying national identity in other countries.

In Chapter 37, Alex Stepick, Carol Dutton Stepick, and Tricia Vanderkooy provide an anthropological perspective on the history of immigrant incorporation in the United States, as well as ways in which contemporary immigrants come to view themselves as American and begin to take part in American civic activities (cf. Hart et al., Chapter 32). They highlight

the mechanisms through which perceiving oneself as American is associated with participation in American society among immigrant adolescents and young adults. Similar to Berry (1980), Stepick et al. stress that becoming American does not require relinquishing one’s heritage-culture identity (cf. Umaña-Taylor, Chapter 33) and that, in fact, being bicultural may be associated with greater civic participation (cf. Huynh et al., Chapter 35).

In Chapter 38, Laurent Licata, Margarita Sanchez-Mazas, and Eva Green integrate insights from social psychology and political philosophy to produce a novel “interactionist” perspective on majority–minority relations. Focusing on European immigration contexts, they examine the ways in which national and European identities can be associated with denials of recognition toward immigrants, as well as how immigrants respond to these denials of recognition. Similar to Schildkraut’s (Chapter 36) findings in the United States, Licata et al. report that individuals who identify more strongly with their nation or with Europe are more likely to discriminate against immigrants—especially those from Third World countries—although this depends on personal as well as socially shared constructions of the meanings of the national and European identities. Furthermore, they suggest that immigrants’ struggle for recognition should be viewed as a multi-stage process, beginning in the sphere of legal and political rights, and then progressing to a quest for more informal recognition within the sphere of social relations.

The final chapter in this section moves beyond a consideration of national identification and boundaries, to focus on the explanation of genocide and intergroup violence. In Chapter 39, David Moshman highlights the role of social identity processes (Spears, Chapter 9) in genocide and other forms of group violence, and he also draws on insights from political science as well as a wealth of anecdotal illustrations. Moshman contends that the partitioning of groups and individuals into “us” versus “them” allows for the lumping together of a collection of human beings into a single enemy group. He proceeds to argue that, in cases of

extreme differentiation between “us” and “them,” dehumanization of the out-group facilitates mass killing and extermination of out-group members with little or no hesitation or remorse, and such events are often denied subsequently (see also Baum, 2008).

Summary and Conclusion

In sum, this introductory chapter has provided a roadmap for our handbook. The chapters are organized not only to provide logical coherence to the book, but also to situate alongside one another perspectives that have not been considered together. In doing so, we hope to facilitate the type of integration, and broader coherence within the identity studies field, for which we believe the field is ready. In the epilogue, we outline briefly some ideas about the form that this integration might take.

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Part I
Personal and Developmental
Perspectives

The Identity Statuses: Origins, Meanings, and Interpretations

2

Jane Kroger and James E. Marcia

Abstract

This chapter describes the origins and development of the identity statuses and provides a brief overview of studies into antecedent, concurrent, and consequent implications of the construct. In so doing, it reviews selected personality, relational, behavioral, and developmental variables that have been examined in relation to the identity statuses over the past 45 years. Additionally, the chapter addresses some of the many implications that the identity statuses hold for intervention as well as the relationship of the identity status paradigm to other models of identity. The rootedness of the identity statuses in Erikson's concept of identity versus identity diffusion (confusion) is discussed, and meta-analyses of the identity statuses in relation to selected variables are presented. Therapeutic and educational interventions for individuals in each identity status are also discussed.

One always begins with a theory. The only question is whether or not that theory is made explicit and testable, or remains implicit and untestable. Only when theories are made explicit can their propositions be falsified. The identity statuses—on which much current identity theory and research is based (Kroger, 2007)—originated from attempts to validate a major construct, ego

identity, drawn from Erikson's (1950) ego psychoanalytic theory. In this chapter, James Marcia begins by detailing the origins and meanings of the identity statuses. He also provides thoughts on the construct validity and measurement of identity. Jane Kroger then turns to the interpretations of the identity statuses by reviewing studies that address key questions that have been asked by identity status researchers over the history of the model, spanning more than 40 years. She concludes with comments on the implications of the identity statuses for intervention as well as the place of the identity status paradigm in relation to other perspectives on identity covered in the present volume.

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Origins and Meanings of the Identity Statuses

Theoretical Origins

Erik Erikson (1950), a practicing psychoanalyst, located his theory of psychosocial development, as well as his central concept of ego identity, within the matrix of psychoanalytic theory. Specifically, ego identity arose from the extension of psychoanalytic theory known as “ego psychology.” In what became an introduction to Erikson’s (1959) monograph, Rapaport (1958, p. 5) laid out basic assumptions underlying the work discussed in this chapter as well as a description of the field of ego psychology:

Before beginning our survey, it will be worth reminding ourselves that the ego, the id, and the superego are concepts. They are abstractions that (sic) refer to certain characteristics of behavior. In contrast to the id, which refers to *peremptory* aspects of behavior, the ego refers to aspects of behavior which are *delayable*, *bring about delay*, or are themselves, products of *delay*.

Three phases may be distinguished in Freud’s development of the concept of ego functions (cf. Rapaport, 1958). First, the ego was viewed as a structure preventing the re-encountering of painful affect occasioned by an experience occurring in external reality. Second, the ego was seen as oriented toward dealing with intrapsychic dangers occasioned by id-dominated fantasies, rather than arising from external reality. Finally, the ego was freed somewhat from its dependence upon both external reality and the id and considered as a structure having its own genetic roots and energies. This third function of the ego was introduced in Freud’s (1946) work on the role of ego and ego defense mechanisms.

Hartmann, Kris, and Lowenstein (1946) further established autonomy for the ego by postulating that both ego and id were differentiated from a common matrix, implying that the ego, in its origins, was characterized by both unique processes and its own energy. The infant entered the world “pre-adapted” to an “average

expectable environment.” This meant that the ego was autonomous in two senses: it had its own pattern for development (the epigenetic principle) and mechanisms, which, though id- and conflict-initiated, eventually became freed from their instinctual origins. At the same time, theorists such as Adler, Horney, Sullivan, and Kardiner were exploring the realms of interpersonal relations and the influences of society on ego development (Rapaport, 1958). Erikson was the heir and systematizer of all of these developments.

Erikson spelled out eight stages of ego growth, each marked by a chronological phase-specific psychosocial crisis. Ideally, at each phase there is a mutuality or cogwheeling (as in the meshing of gears) between the developing individual and his/her social milieu, resulting in the predominantly positive resolutions of psychosocial crises. The relationship between the individual and society, rather than being the primarily antagonistic one described by Freud (1930, 1961), was a co-constructive one. Rapaport (1958, p. 104) puts this nicely:

In Erikson’s conception, neither does the individual adapt to society nor does society mold him (sic) into its pattern; rather, society and individual form a *unity* within which a mutual regulation takes place. The social institutions are pre-conditions of individual development, and the developing individual’s behavior, in turn, elicits that help which society gives through its adult members directed by its institutions and traditions. Society is not merely a prohibitor or provider; it is the necessary matrix of the development of all behavior.

Identity and Late Adolescence

The psychosocial crisis of late adolescence was postulated to be identity versus identity diffusion (or confusion, in Erikson’s later writings). Faced with the imminence of adult tasks (e.g., getting a job, becoming a citizen, and planning marriage), the late adolescent must relinquish the childhood position of being “given to” and prepare to be the “giver.” Accomplishing this involves changing one’s worldview as well as projecting oneself

imaginatively into the future via a possible occupational path (see also Skorikov & Vondracek, Chapter 29, this volume). This self-reconstructive process is assumed to strengthen overall ego processes as the individual becomes capable of handling a broader range of developmental tasks. Ego strengthening occurs on both an internal level (e.g., delay of impulses) and an external level (e.g., adaptation to societal demands).

The psychosocial task of ego identity development is essentially one of integration. The achievement of ego identity involves a synthesis of childhood identifications in the individual's own terms, so that she/he establishes a reciprocal relationship with her/his society and maintains a feeling of continuity within her/himself. It represents a reformulation of all that the individual has been into a core of what she/he is to become.

Researching Erikson's Identity Construct

Concepts such as "configuration," "synthesis," and "core" suggest the formation of an internal structure. The problem for empirical research was how to determine the presence or absence and qualities of this structure. No one ever sees *an* ego, or *a* superego. One observes only the behavioral referents for hypothesized states of these personality structures. Likewise, no one can observe *an* identity. What can be seen and measured are behaviors that should result if an identity has or has not been formed.

The task at the onset of identity research was to determine what observable referents were available that would point to the presence, absence, and nature of the hypothesized underlying identity structure. Erikson furnished some direction for this work by specifying two issues confronting the late adolescent: the choice of an occupation and the formation of an ideology.

In general, it is the inability to settle on an occupational identity which disturbs young people. (Erikson, 1963, p. 252)

To envisage a future, the young adult may also need that something which Shaw called "a religion" and "a clear comprehension of life, in the light of an intelligible theory." . . . we would call

this something-between-a-theory-and-a-religion an ideology. . . *a necessity for the growing ego* which is involved in the succession of generations, and in adolescence is committed to some new synthesis of past and future: a synthesis which must include but transcend the past, even as identity does. (Erikson, 1963, p. 97)

Choosing an *occupation* involves the individual's consideration and integration of at least the following Eriksonian criteria for identity formation: "[integration of] . . . constitutional givens, idiosyncratic libidinal needs, favored capacities, significant identifications, successful sublimations, and consistent roles" (Erikson, 1969, p. 116). Forming a personally and socially relevant *ideology* involves, again, "[integrating] . . . significant identifications" and "consistent roles." "Effective defenses" are not so specifically embedded in the areas of occupation and ideology, although they appear related to both of these areas, especially when changes in their content occur as the result of "identity crises." Any significant change in personality structure, even if positive, elicits anxiety that must be controlled in order to permit effective functioning in the world.

Embedded in the Erikson quotation above, and stated specifically in the following one, is the idea that commitments in the two areas of occupation and ideology are accompanied by a period of reflection and trial and error, whereby past patterns are examined, some discarded, and others integrated into a new identity configuration.

The final identity, then, as fixed at the end of adolescence is superordinated to any single identification with individuals of the past: it includes all significant identifications, but it also alters them in order to make a unique and reasonably coherent whole of them (Erikson, 1956, pp. 67–68).

Based on Erikson's ideas, two criteria for the presence of identity formation were proposed: *exploration* (originally called "crisis"; Marcia, 1966), and *commitment*. Exploration referred to some period of re-thinking, sorting through, and trying out various roles and life plans. The exploratory period is a time when the late adolescent is actively involved in choosing among meaningful alternatives. Commitment referred to the degree of personal investment the individual

expressed in a course of action or belief. The two life areas in which exploration and commitment were to be assessed were *occupation* and *ideology*, the latter being composed of religious and political positions. The centrality to identity of both religion and politics recur in Erikson's theoretical writings and biographical sketches (Erikson, 1956, 1963, 1969). Although other researchers have considered identity to exist in separate domains (e.g., "occupational identity" or "political identity"), domains were used here *to point to* a hypothesized underlying identity structure, not as "identities" in themselves. Essentially, they were a "map" used to indicate a more fundamental "territory." Two measures of identity were constructed. The first was a semi-projective measure: the Ego Identity Incomplete Sentences Blank (EI-ISB). This was intended to be an overall measure of ego identity and to include in its scoring criteria as thorough a survey of Erikson's ideas concerning identity formation as possible. The EI-ISB scoring manual was constructed according to the general criterion: if one has achieved an ego identity, either by the criteria of exploration and commitment or in terms of behaviors which Erikson proposed to be indicative of identity formation, what should a participant's responses be (Marcia, 1964)? The scoring criteria for the EI-ISB comprised the following characteristics excerpted from Erikson's theory: self-reflection, a realistic sense of the future, commitment to occupation and ideology, self-initiated action, relatively safe expression of impulses, reformulation of childhood personality antecedents in adult terms, autonomy, group affiliation, social integration, and internal locus of self-evaluation.

The second measure was a semi-structured interview, the identity status interview (ISI), and an accompanying scoring manual. The interview was designed to reveal the presence or absence of a developmental process: the history of how individuals, through the course of their lives, came to their present identity resolutions. It asked participants in some depth how they came to their present commitments or lack thereof; what their past influences had been; as well as how and why they had changed from whom they had

been in childhood. The actual *content* of occupational choices and beliefs was not important. The focus was on the developmental *process*: how were choices arrived at; how thorough was the respondent's exploration; what were the related feelings accompanying exploration; how firm and how actualized were commitments; and under what foreseeable circumstances would commitments change. The scoring manual contained both theoretical rationales for evaluating participants' responses and sample responses.

The Identity Statures

Whereas the EI-ISB yielded an overall score for ego identity, the identity status interview (ISI) assessed the depth and breadth of exploration and the extent of commitment in the areas of occupation and ideology (religion plus politics). The ISI provided a classification of individuals into one of four groups called *identity statures*. Two stature groups were high in commitment. One group had arrived at commitments via an exploratory process and was called *identity achievement*. The second committed group had proceeded by taking on commitments from significant others, with little or no exploration, and was called *foreclosure*. Identity achievements were seen as having "constructed" identities; foreclosures were considered to have "conferred" identities. They seemed to be heirs to a bequeathed identity rather than having formulated their own via an exploratory process. The other two statures were characterized by a low degree of commitment. *Moratoriums* were struggling to reach commitments and were engaged in an exploratory period. *Identity diffusions* were not committed and had undergone little meaningful exploration. These two groups were distinguished by differences in a sense of concern and direction. Moratoriums were actively attempting to form an identity and were torn between alternatives. Their future directions were present but vaguely defined. Moratoriums were, optimally, a prelude to eventual identity achievement. Diffusions were relatively directionless, unconcerned about their lack of commitment, and easily swayed by external influences.

Following are portraits of the identity statuses that have emerged from thousands of identity status interviews as well as accumulated empirical findings since the initial identity status construct validation research was undertaken. Much of this research will be reviewed in subsequent sections.

Identity achievements. These persons impress one as solid with important focuses in their lives. While they retain some flexibility, they are not easily swayed by external influences and pressures in their chosen life directions. Even if they encounter obstacles, one senses that they will persevere in their chosen directions, unless proceeding becomes clearly unrealistic. They have room for understanding the experiences of others, whose differing opinions they can consider reflectively and non-defensively. Their characteristics of “self-sameness and continuity” (Erikson’s descriptors) make them dependable and sources of strength for others.

Moratoriums. Moratoriums are struggling to define themselves. They are lively, engaging, conflicted, and sometimes tiring to be around. They tend to use the identity status interview (as well as many conversations) in the service of determining who they are and who they are to be. They may try to draw others into their identity-information project, sometimes setting others up to take a position polar to their own stated one, so that they may be at least temporarily relieved of the internal conflict they are undergoing by converting an interior struggle into an external one. Moratoriums are often exquisitely morally sensitive. And, if they are articulate, they can engage others in their quest and appear, albeit briefly, as charismatic figures. There are other Moratoriums who appear to be drowning in their struggles to swim against the tide of earlier authority-based identifications. Rather than explorers, they become ruminators, perpetually mired in what seem to be insoluble dilemmas. In the best of outcomes, Moratoriums make self-relevant choices and move on to the firm commitments of identity achievement; in more unfortunate outcomes, they can become paralyzed in their vacillations.

Foreclosures. Foreclosures may appear as strong and self-directed as achievements.

However, there is a brittleness, and, hence, underlying fragility, to their position. Because of their difficulty in considering alternatives seriously, they must maintain their stances defensively and either deny or distort disconfirming information. If their values are generally mainstream and they stay within social contexts supporting those values, they appear “happy,” “well-adjusted,” loving their families and their families loving them. But if they stray from these conforming positions, they experience both self- and familial rejection. The longer a foreclosed position is maintained, the greater the attendant shame and guilt associated with questioning those positions. Often a foreclosure position is maintained by adopting an “us” and “them” posture, wherein the “them” can be a bit less than fully human. The price paid by the foreclosure for security is a limited, although sometimes reasonably satisfying, life.

Identity diffusions. Diffusions come in a variety of styles, all having in common a weak or non-existent exploratory period and an inability to make definite commitments. At their best, diffusions can appear extremely flexible, charming, and infinitely adaptable. They can be whatever current influences shape them to be. But, in the absence of an internal sense of self-definition, they must constantly look externally to define who they are and will be. At their worst, diffusions are lost and isolated, beset by feelings of emptiness and meaninglessness. Both types of diffusions seem to lack a solid identification with just those early childhood figures from whom foreclosures do not differentiate. In identity terms, foreclosure, because it is at least *some* identity, is preferable to diffusion. While superficially “well-adjusted” diffusions do exist, they require a defining context to supply externally what is internally lacking.

Research Strategy

The research methodology used to validate the new identity measures focused on construct validity (Cronbach & Meehl, 1955). This procedure allows for the investigation of complex

theoretical ideas such as identity by requiring an operational definition of the construct—facilitated here through the EI-ISB and ISI measures—and a choice of dependent variables selected for their theoretical relevance to the constructs under investigation. The choice of theoretically relevant dependent variables is especially important if the results of studies are to have the broadest possible implications. One should learn as much from negative as from positive results. For example, if the identity construct does not relate to other measures of ego strength, then one is pretty certain that either the identity measure or the theory underlying it is invalid. However, if the dependent variables chosen are unrelated, or only tangentially related, to ego strength, then neither positive nor negative measures tells us much.

In the process of operationalizing any complex construct such as identity, the construct is drained of some meaning. No operationalization of Erikson's identity construct would likely ever include either all of the content or spirit of his lengthy—and sometimes inconsistent—descriptions. However, a judicious and fairly broad selection of dependent variables, *if they are theoretically grounded*, will, through numerous studies, *replenish and extend* the meaning of the construct, as has been the case with the extensive research on the identity statuses. Erikson's original ideas have been expanded by means of the established relationships between the identity statuses and the variables discussed in the latter part of this chapter. Identity status research has facilitated the extension of Erikson's theory into theoretical realms he had not specifically envisioned (e.g., moral development, cognitive development, object relations).

A number of dependent variables were employed in the original identity status construct validation studies (Marcia, 1966, 1967). Only a few will be described here, those with especial theoretical relevance. They may be considered as “near” and “far” variables. “Near” variables are those, which, on a face validity basis, must relate to the construct. For example, another measure of the same construct, such as the identity statuses and the EI-ISB, or a variable that “common sense” would predict to be related, such

as foreclosure and authoritarianism. “Near” variables are those whose content comes very close to the definition of the construct under investigation. If no relationships are found with these “near” variables, then something is wrong either with the measure of the construct or with the theory underlying the construct. “Far” variables refer to more distant, less obvious, theoretical propositions underlying the construct being studied (e.g., identity status and performance on a stressful concept attainment task). If no relationships are found between these “far” variables and the construct, then again the underlying theory may be faulty or the measure of the construct inadequate, and, in addition, the choice of the dependent variable may be inappropriate—or any combination of the above. If positive relationships are found, then, in addition to some validity being established for the construct, validity can accrue to the theory underlying the construct (e.g., ego psychoanalytic theory).

Initial Identity Status Research

In the first identity status studies, the primary “near” relationship established was between the new identity statuses and the overall measure of ego identity, the EI-ISB. Although this approaches a form of concurrent validity, the EI-ISB had not been previously established as a measure of ego identity. As stated before, the EI-ISB was scored according to criteria representing a very broad reading of Erikson's theory. The positive relationship that was found between this measure and the identity statuses suggests that the statuses, although a rather shorthand measure of identity, provided an adequate representation of the broader Eriksonian theory as represented by the EI-ISB.

A second “near” measure was authoritarianism, on which foreclosures scored highest of the statuses. That persons who had unquestioningly followed directions laid down for them by important childhood figures should espouse values of “law and order,” preference for a strong leader, and suspicion of others unlike themselves was considered evidence corroborating the validity

of the foreclosure designation. With respect to underlying psychoanalytic theory, the formation of an ego ideal (the final development of the superego) is proposed to occur during adolescence (Blos, 1974). Failure to complete this task leaves one at the mercy of an un-reconstructed superego formed in childhood, when the internalized parental figures are formidable characters in the child's life. The suggestion that emerges from the now oft-found relationship between foreclosure and authoritarianism is that persons in this identity status remain fixed in childhood values and, in their adult lives, seek out authorities upon whom they can depend for guidance. Clinically, they would also be expected to find themselves at the mercy of strict internal (parental) standards that they have never re-formulated in their own terms. In order to avoid guilt and anxiety, it would seemingly be important for these individuals to maintain, as closely as possible, a living situation that approximates that of their childhoods. Any other context would seriously threaten their rigid value structure. This predicament is described by Erikson (1987) in his discussion of "pseudo-speciation," wherein it becomes necessary, for defensive purposes, to divide the world into "us" (fully human) and "them" (sub-human) (see also Moshman, 2005; Moshman, Chapter 39, this volume).

A third "near" measure involved participants' susceptibility to positive or negative feedback from the researcher following their performance on a difficult conceptual task. It was found that participants in the statuses of foreclosure and diffusion changed their estimates of their own abilities following feedback from others more than did achievements and moratoriums. Again, these findings were consistent in differentiating those who had constructed, or were in the process of constructing, their own identities on their own terms from those who either had adopted conferred identities or who had no firm identities.

An important "far" dependent variable was performance on a fairly complex concept attainment task administered under the stressful condition of evaluation apprehension (i.e., participants believed that they were working on a task assessing "academic potential"). Participants

were shown a large chart displaying 24 rectangular cards. Included in each card were five characteristics: one or two, large or small, black or white, squares or circles, and located on either the right or left side of a dividing line. Hence, each card contained five concepts: number (1 or 2), size (large or small), color (black or white), shape (squares or circles), and position (right or left). The experimenter pointed to one of the 24 cards as an example of the correct concept to be arrived at by the participant, for example, a card having one large, black, square on the right-hand side. In this case, the concept to be arrived at might be "one, large." Then, the participant pointed to other cards on the chart and received positive or negative feedback as to whether or not that card contained the correct concept. In the case of "one, large," a card with one, small, circle, on the left, would be called "negative." A card with one, large, square on the right would be called "positive." By a deductive process of elimination, participants arrived at the correct concept. The task was timed, and negative points were accumulated for time passed and incorrect guesses made.

Now, why should efficient guessing at concepts, in the face of stressful conditions, relate to participants' interview responses concerning their occupational plans and ideological beliefs? The reasoning was as follows: Identity development is assumed to constitute a stage in ego growth. A primary function of the ego is to mediate between internal states (e.g., anxiety) and the demands of external reality in order to function effectively in the world. To the extent that an identity has been achieved, ego processes should be stronger, more efficient, and better able to deal with a complex task in the face of disruptive feelings. If the identity statuses accurately reflected identity formation and, hence, greater ego strength, then participants in "higher" or more mature identity statuses (achievement and moratorium) should perform better than those in the "lower" or less mature (foreclosure and diffusion) statuses (given previously established equivalence in intelligence). That they did so suggested validity for the identity statuses, for Erikson's concept of ego growth via resolution

of psychosocial crises and for the underlying psychoanalytic conception of the role of ego processes. It would be difficult to link exploration and commitment in occupation and ideology, assessed by a semi-structured interview, with performance on a rather sterile, stressful concept attainment task without using the concept of ego development as an explanation.

Other dependent variables were also employed in the early identity status studies (e.g., level of aspiration, self-esteem, anxiety, parental antecedents), but the above have been chosen as important examples of moving from theory, to measure, to validation, and back to enrichment of theory via accumulated empirical findings.

The early identity studies—1964–1969—used only male participants. However, once some validation was established with men, it was essential to broaden the criteria for identity status to issues of relevance for women, and this was done in 1969–1970 (Marcia & Friedman, 1970) and further in 1972 (Josselson, 1972). The initial interview area added was “attitudes toward sexuality,” following Erikson’s writings on women’s identity development. Evidence for the importance of adding this domain for women’s identity was provided by Schenkel and Marcia (1972). Subsequently, the area of “sexuality” has been broadened to include “ideas about relationships,” and this domain, together with other related domains (see Marcia, Waterman, Matteson, Archer, & Orlofsky, 1993) is currently used in interviews with both men and women.

Some Implications of Method for Assessing Identity Status

It is essential not to underestimate the importance of the ISI method in assessing late-adolescent identity formation. A number of questionnaire measures assessing identity status have been developed in the service of “efficiency” and “objectivity.” These measures could be considered acceptable to the extent that they correspond closely to identity status categorization using the interview. However, because of their

closed-ended form, they all lack the opportunity to probe, in depth, the genuineness and extensiveness of a person’s exploratory process and the depth of subsequent commitment (Marcia, 2007). Just asking research participants “have you explored . . .” and “are you committed . . .” allows for only superficial, individual, interpretations of the questions. Whether or not what the researcher means by exploration and commitment is the same as what the respondent means is unknown. In addition to involving much more theoretically rich interview scoring criteria, the interview and its scoring criteria also have a “built-in” developmental focus. *How*, *when*, and *why* an individual came to their current position is important.

New shorter, more “objectively scorable” measures have enabled researchers to use large numbers of research participants and employ statistics suited for large sample sizes. Perhaps these large *N* studies average out the error variance due to some invalid individual categorizations. And, if a questionnaire measure yields identity status categorizations close to those of the lengthier interview, then there is certainly nothing wrong with using such questionnaire “indicators” as proxies for the identity statuses arrived at by the lengthier interview. The interview, itself, was an “indicator.” That is, it was formulated to “point to” an underlying, essentially unobservable, hypothesized identity structure. Similarly, the questionnaire measures can “point to” the identity statuses as determined by the more thorough and careful interview. The problem is that the identity statuses, as determined by objective questionnaires, can easily become social psychological or sociological concepts, sometimes superficially understood as they become unmoored from their original ego psychoanalytic bases. An original requirement for administering an identity status interview was the interviewer’s thorough grounding in ego psychoanalytic theory, Erikson’s psychosocial developmental theory, and interviewing techniques. The interview involves the thoughtful assessment of one individual by an empathic other in a relationship of rapport (see Bartholomew, Henderson, & Marcia, 2000). That is a far cry

from a group setting where 200 (or more) persons mark X's in boxes.

A Current Assessment

What can be, and, to some extent, has been lost with questionnaire methods is the original theoretical grounding of the construct and of the researcher, as well as the accuracy of any one identity status assessment. For example, not understanding that a developmental process is embedded *in the interview itself* may lend a “non-developmental” quality to the identity statures, portraying them as *only* snapshots of current identity states. Not recognizing the degree of theoretical underpinning of the interview scoring manual and the related EI-ISB, as well as not considering the extensive nomological network that has been established for the identity statures, can suggest that the identity statures inadequately represent Erikson's theory. This was just Erikson's fear when he was skeptical about empirical research being conducted with his concepts. And there is some validity to this concern. Not all of Erikson's ideas about identity are represented directly by the identity status definitions themselves. Likewise, not all of the theoretical richness underlying the identity status concepts is reflected in questionnaire measures. However, to the extent that these latter measures do accurately correspond to interview ratings, and to the extent that the interview categories and their associated nomological networks reflect essential aspects of Erikson's theory, the road is then clear for the accumulation of findings that *enrich* the theory and give back to it *enhanced meaning*.

That said, most current identity researchers are neither psychoanalytically oriented nor concerned with whether or not classical psychoanalytic theory, or even psychosocial developmental theory, is enhanced. There are positive and negative aspects to this unmooring of the identity status concepts from their original theoretical base. On the positive side, it has freed the concepts to be applied to such diverse areas as general education, counselor training,

theological studies, business training, political science, sports education, self-regulated learning platforms, remedial youth projects. Negatively, however, few of these applied settings, and research conducted within them, have considered the psychoanalytic grounding of the identity statures and the implications of findings for the advancement of theory. In some senses, perhaps the popular identity statures have “succeeded” all too well. I (JEM) recall musing at a recent symposium as to why the identity statures had persisted long beyond the time when such constructs were likely to have been subsumed by others. A colleague responded that it might be because they had “street cred.” I winced at this, realizing the truth of his statement and feeling regretful about the shallowness of understanding that could accompany their acceptance—at the same time being pleased that so many had found them so useful. My plea, here, is that readers will remember where the identity status ideas came from and the wealth of theory that underlay, and underlies, them.

Interpretations of the Identity Statures: Studies and Theoretical Place

Once some predictive validity had accumulated for the identity statures and researchers were reasonably assured of their viability, additional variables holding concurrent relationships with the identity statures could be investigated. Concurrent relationships refer to variables that operate in conjunction with one's current identity status. In the two decades following the initial investigations of construct validity described in the previous section, some researchers questioned whether or not different clusters of personality variables (Adams & Shea, 1979; Ginsburg & Orlofsky, 1981) or cognitive variables (Berzonsky & Neimeyer, 1988; Podd, 1972) might be differentially associated with the four identity positions. And, indeed, support was found for many of the hypothesized differences among the statures, providing further evidence of the paradigm's construct validity. Some of these

personality studies are reviewed in the following section.

In the decades of identity status research that followed, investigators have asked questions regarding antecedent and consequent conditions of the various identity statuses. *Antecedent* conditions refer to developmental precursors of identity. For example, what kind of child-rearing practices might be associated with one identity status or another (Adams, 1985; Grotevant, 1983); what are the early memories (reflecting psychosexual stage fixation) of different statuses (Josselson, 1982; Orlofsky & Frank, 1986); what resolutions of prior psychosocial stages are associated with various identity statuses (Kowatz & Marcia, 1991). *Consequent* conditions refer to subsequent developmental implications of the construct. For example, what kind of intimate relationships will persons in different identity statuses establish (Orlofsky, Marcia, & Lesser, 1973; Whitbourne & Tesch, 1985); what kind of child-rearing practices will different identity status persons employ (MacKinnon & Marcia, 2002); what is the impact of different types of identity resolutions at late adolescence upon the resolution of subsequent psychosocial stages (Årseth, Kroger, Martinussen, & Bakken, 2009). Antecedent and consequent conditions could be investigated legitimately only after initial construct validity was established, and examples of some of these studies will also be presented below.

During the second, third, fourth, and fifth decades of identity status research, questions regarding possible gender differences in identity status have also been explored, alongside questions of identity status development and ethnic identity formation. Erikson's (1968) discussions of gender and identity suggested that women may follow different developmental pathways in the identity-formation process as compared to men, and a number of investigations began focusing on possible gender differences in overall identity status distributions as well as on the relevance of various domains used to assess identity status (Goossens, 2001; Rogow, Marcia, & Slugoski, 1983). Investigators also questioned whether or not there might be gender differences in the

actual timing of identity status development, arguing that women's earlier physical maturation might be associated with more advanced identity development compared to men (Kroger, 1997). Questions about the ethnic identity-formation process also appeared (Phinney, 2006; Phinney & Tarver, 1988), alongside questions of identity development both in terms of global identity status changes and in specific identity status domains such as work, politics, religion, and sexuality (Archer, 1982; Fadjukoff, Pulkkinen, & Kokko, 2005). Studies have also been expanding the identity statuses to explore the implications of ruminative identity exploration and of identifying with commitments for ongoing identity development (Luyckx, Goossens, Soenens, & Beyers, 2006; Luyckx, Soenens, Goossens, Beckx, & Wouters, 2008b).

Early in the fifth decade of identity status research, researchers have also begun turning to meta-analytic techniques to examine earlier studies of the identity statuses in relation to selected personality variables, antecedent and consequent conditions, and developmental patterns of change and stability, particularly where some conflicting findings have emerged over preceding decades. Where meta-analyses¹ have been performed, their results will be presented in subsequent sections. Several explanatory points are made here with regard to the studies reviewed below.

As noted, the selected variables that are the subject of the identity status studies reviewed in the following sections can be construed as having a *concurrent*, *antecedent*, or *consequent* focus. These categorizations and some rationale for their relationships to the identity statuses, based upon the theoretical considerations previously outlined, will be discussed. However, two caveats have to be stated. The first is that the rationales proffered here may not be the rationales that all, or any, researchers stated in their individual studies. To the extent that they are not, their discussion here is an instance of theoretical "bootstrapping." That is, theoretical rationales are offered post hoc for studies and findings, when those studies did not necessarily set out clearly to test the theoretical propositions. So, the

rationales offered below are from the perspective of the original theoretical underpinnings of the identity statuses and not necessarily those of the authors' studies. Second, although a variable may "look" or be conceived as developmental, most variables are measured cross-sectionally and not longitudinally. For example, when identity is found to be related to intimacy, one assumes that intimacy is a condition consequent to identity. In fact, because both measures are given simultaneously rather than sequentially over time, the assumed developmental progression lies only in the description of the measures and the theoretical model underlying them, not in the design of the study.

Identity Status and Concurrent Personality Variables

Self-esteem. A number of studies of identity status in relation to self-esteem measures have been undertaken over the past four decades. One problem with self-esteem measures is that they may come from differing theoretical perspectives, so that their meanings are confounded. For example, does a self-esteem test used in one of the studies measure Rogerian real-ideal self-discrepancy, psychoanalytic proximity of observed self to ego ideal, or general "feeling good about oneself." That being said, one would expect the highest self-esteem scores from identity achievements and foreclosures—but for different reasons. Achievements have successfully undertaken an important developmental task; they have "paid their psychosocial dues" by struggling to find meaningful life directions for themselves. Foreclosures may have defensively high self-esteem scores, in attempts to "shore up" their rather rigid and superficial self-concepts and defend themselves against feelings of uncertainty or deficiency. Moratoriums are struggling or stuck and are unlikely to be feeling very good about themselves (depending, of course, on the day you test them, given their high variability). Diffusions will differ according to the nature of their diffusion, but they generally would be

expected to score low on measures of self-esteem, together with moratoriums.

Ryeng, Kroger, and Martinussen (2010a) undertook a meta-analysis of some 18 of 35 studies that provided data on the relationship between identity status and self-esteem measures from the larger identity status database described in footnote 1. These studies were selected because they all used measures of self-esteem that assessed a similar, global self-esteem construct. Among studies that assessed identity status and self-esteem as continuous variables, identity achievement was the only status to have a positive correlation with self-esteem ($r = 0.35$); this correlation is considered moderate in terms of Cohen's (1988) criteria. Among studies that assessed identity status as a categorical variable, the effect size difference between foreclosures and achievements was especially low (Hedges' $g = 0.00$)²; this finding indicated no significant difference in self-esteem scores between identity achievements and foreclosures. Furthermore, the confidence interval for this effect size difference contained zero, indicating a lack of significant difference from zero for the identity achievement–foreclosure comparison. The effect size for the foreclosure–diffusion comparison (Hedges' $g = 0.40$) was small to medium in terms of Cohen's (1988) criteria, and the confidence interval did not contain zero, indicating a significant effect. The following comparisons produced very small or small effect size differences in self-esteem scores: moratorium versus foreclosure (Hedges' $g = -0.19$); achievements and diffusions (Hedges' $g = 0.37$); moratorium versus diffusion (Hedges' $g = 0.07$). Correlational and categorical studies support a relationship between identity achievement and self-esteem; the categorical analyses also support a small to medium relationship between the Foreclosure status and self-esteem.

Anxiety. A number of investigations over the past five decades have also explored the relationships between anxiety and identity status. The theoretical linkages between anxiety and identity status have seldom been provided in these investigations. In general, anxiety measures are behavior checklists about current or abiding

states. Moratoriums, because of their challenging of parental or other authorities, with the attendant oedipal consequences, as well as their discomfort over their indecisiveness, would be expected to score highest on anxiety measures. Foreclosures and achievements would score lower, for the same rationales as noted above for self-esteem. And, again, whether or not diffusions are anxious would depend upon the nature of their diffusion. In general, they would be expected to be close to, but lower than, moratoriums in their scores on anxiety.

Lillevoll, Kroger, and Martinussen (2010a) examined the relationship between identity status and anxiety through meta-analytic techniques. Some 12 of 27 studies of identity status assessed categorically provided useable data on the relationship between identity status and anxiety. Effect size differences in anxiety scores for moratoriums compared with foreclosures (Hedges' $g = 0.40$) were small to moderate according to Cohen's (1988) criteria. Additionally, confidence intervals for the moratorium–foreclosure comparison did not contain zero, which indicates that the difference in anxiety scores was significantly different from zero. Also, of interest were the effect size differences in anxiety scores for the foreclosure–diffusion comparison (-0.41), which was small to moderate in terms of Cohen's criteria and the achievement–moratorium comparison, which was small. Furthermore, the confidence interval surrounding these effect sizes also did not contain zero, indicating significant effects. The effect size for the moratorium versus diffusion comparison (Hedges' $g = -0.01$) was very small, and the confidence interval contained zero, indicating a nonsignificant effect. Results offer some support for the hypothesis that moratoriums have significantly higher anxiety scores than foreclosures and that foreclosures have significantly lower anxiety scores than diffusions.

Locus of control. A number of studies have also explored the relationship between locus of control and identity status in the first decade of identity status research. Because of their self-constructed identity-formation process, identity achievements should have high internal locus of

control scores relative to other identity statuses. Moratoriums, who are currently undergoing a self-examination process, would be expected to rank second to achievements. Foreclosures and diffusions should be more externally oriented, looking to others for their self-definitions.

Lillevoll, Kroger, and Martinussen (2010b) undertook a meta-analysis of identity status in relation to locus of control and identity status. Only five of nine studies provided sufficient information for meta-analysis. Although limitations of the small sample size must be kept in mind when interpreting results, the hypotheses above were partially supported. In terms of Cohen's (1988) criteria, the correlations between identity status and locus of control corresponded to effect sizes that ranged from weak to moderate in the predicted directions. The following mean correlations appeared between identity status and *internal locus of control* measures: For achievements, $r = 0.26$; for moratoriums, $r = -0.17$; for foreclosures, $r = -0.12$; and for diffusions, $r = -0.15$. The following mean correlations appeared between identity status and *external locus of control* measures: For achievements, $r = -0.17$; for moratoriums, $r = 0.17$; for foreclosures, $r = 0.19$; and for diffusions, $r = 0.23$.

Authoritarianism. The rationale for foreclosures scoring highest on authoritarianism was discussed earlier. Moratoriums, in the midst of an authority-questioning process, should score lowest on measures of authoritarianism. Achievements and diffusions would be expected to score intermediate on measures of authoritarianism, whereas foreclosures would score highest of all identity statuses.

Ryeng, Kroger, and Martinussen (2010b) conducted a meta-analysis of the relationship between identity status and authoritarianism. Some 9 of 13 studies contained sufficient data to be included in this investigation. Results confirmed that achievements and moratoriums both scored significantly lower than foreclosures on measures of authoritarianism, and these effect sizes (Hedges' $g = -0.79$ and -0.67 , respectively) were both large in terms of Cohen's (1988) criteria. Furthermore, foreclosures also scored higher than diffusions on authoritarianism measures, and

this effect size (Hedges' $g = 0.42$) was small to moderate, according to Cohen's (1988) criteria. Additionally, none of the confidence intervals for the three effect sizes above included zero, so results can be interpreted as being significantly different from zero. In sum, results provided strong evidence that foreclosures score very high on measures of authoritarianism, relative to the other identity statuses.

Findings here strongly support the hypothesis explored in Marcia's (1966, 1967) original construct validation studies that foreclosures, who based their identities on identifications with important childhood figures, would prefer to follow a strong leader without questioning his or her directions. Foreclosures are theoretically at the dictates of unexamined, internalized standards from parents or significant others. In order to avoid guilt and anxiety, foreclosures would be expected to retain a living situation that closely approximates that of their childhood. Their high authoritarianism scores, relative to all other identity statuses, offer further evidence corroborating the validity of the foreclosure identity status.

Moral reasoning. Kohlberg (1984) developed a stage sequence in the complexity of reasoning surrounding questions of justice in moral decision-making. Pre-conventional stages are marked by responses in which the needs of the self are paramount in considering what is right or just. Conventional stages of moral reasoning reflect decisions about what is right and wrong based on the dictates of the immediate social group or the laws of the larger social context. Post-conventional levels of moral reasoning reflect a consideration of broader ethical principles in deciding what is just; here, that which is just is judged by broader principles that may be agreed upon (and changed) by the community or that are regarded as universal standards, such as the right to life. In terms of the relationship between Kohlberg's stages of moral reasoning and the identity statuses, the same introspective processes that lead to the identity achievement and moratorium positions should lead also to higher levels of reasoning about issues of morality. The almost total lack of real introspectiveness

on the part of diffusions should produce the lowest levels of moral reasoning. And foreclosures, who might be characterized as the standard barriers of the mass culture, would be expected to score primarily at conventional moral reasoning levels.

Jespersen, Kroger, and Martinussen (2010a) undertook a meta-analysis of the relationship between identity status and moral reasoning. A total of 10 out of 17 studies provided sufficient data for further analysis (five studies had categorical assessments of both measures and five had continuous assessments of both measures). Results showed a large mean effect size (odds ratio = 6.85) when the relationship between identity achievement/non-achievement and post-conventional/non-post-conventional levels of moral reasoning was examined.³ However, no relationship was found between the foreclosed/non-foreclosed identity statuses and conventional/non-conventional levels of moral reasoning (odds ratio = 0.90).

For continuous measures of both variables, it was anticipated that there would be a positive mean correlation between identity status and moral reasoning. A moderate correlation, in terms of Cohen's (1988) criteria ($r = 0.31$), was found between continuous measures of identity status and moral reasoning. The limitation of small sample sizes in both analyses must be kept in mind when interpreting these results; however, results partially supported the hypothesized expectations. In sum, the identity achieved was significantly more likely to be reasoning at post-conventional levels of moral reasoning than non-post-conventional levels, and a moderate correlation between identity status and moral reasoning was found.

Ego development. Loevinger's (1976; Hy & Loevinger, 1996) measure of ego development is an instrument designed to assess different levels of complexity in how one makes meaning of one's life and life experiences. The low end of the continuum (preconformist stages) is marked by an organization of the self in which meaning is derived primarily in terms of implications that others and life events have for the self. The conformist stage is marked by the interpretation

of the world in terms of the needs, expectations, and opinions of others. Postconformist stages are marked by increasingly complex organizations that are aware of an inner life, seek to balance the needs of others with the needs of the self, show an increasing tolerance for ambiguity, and a valuing of individuality. Achievements and moratoriums, because of their resolution or proximity to resolution of a psychosocial stage issue, should score highest on this measure, with foreclosures and, especially diffusions, scoring lowest. Although moratoriums may be in a period of feeling badly about themselves or experiencing anxiety, they should score relatively high on this measure that assesses complexity of meaning construction rather than emotional feeling states.

Jespersen, Kroger, and Martinussen (2010b) undertook a meta-analysis of the relationship between identity status and level of ego development. A total of 12 out of 14 studies contained sufficient data to be included in the two analyses. Results from eight studies showed a weak to moderate relationship between identity achievement and postconformist levels of ego development (odds ratio = 2.15). However, no relationship between the foreclosure status and conformist level of ego development was found. Furthermore, results from six studies showed a moderate correlation, in terms of Cohen's (1988) criteria ($r = 0.35$), between continuous measures of identity status and ego development. Limitations of small sample sizes must again be considered in interpreting results. Although some relationship appeared (a) between identity achievement and postconformist levels of ego development and (b) between continuous measures of identity status and ego development, these relationships were not as strong as anticipated.

Identity Status and Antecedent Conditions

Attachment. Attachment styles (e.g., Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991) refer to expectations of relationship security based upon the internalization of child–parent interactions.

In developmental terms, secure attachment is assumed to be a prerequisite for guilt- and shame-free exploratory behavior. Hence, achievements, who have undergone a successful exploratory period, should be found most frequently in the secure attachment category. Somewhat surprisingly, so might foreclosures—not because they are securely attached, but because they might be defensively reluctant to say anything negative about their relationships with attachment figures. Moratoriums, currently experiencing estrangement from early authority figures, should be lower than the achievements and foreclosures. Diffusions, given previous findings of perceived lack of acceptance by parental figures (Marcia, 1980), should score as the most insecurely attached identity status group.

Årseth, Kroger, Martinussen, and Marcia (2009) undertook a meta-analysis of the relationship between identity status and attachment style. Some 14 of 30 studies provided sufficient data to be included in analysis. Results indicated that the highest mean proportion of secure attachment was found within the identity achieved status (0.55), and the lowest among diffusions (0.23). Only the achieved and diffuse identity statuses did not have overlapping confidence intervals on secure attachment scores, and thus could be said to differ significantly from each other. However, the achieved and foreclosed identity statuses had only marginally overlapping confidence intervals, suggesting a possible difference in the mean proportion of securely attached individuals between these two statuses as well. Mean correlations between identity status and attachment styles were generally weak (ranging from $r = 0.21$ for the relationship between secure attachment and identity achievement through $r = -0.02$ for the relationship between preoccupied attachment and identity achievement). Scores for the achieved and foreclosed identity statuses were, however, positively correlated with the secure attachment style ($r = 0.21$ and 0.10 , respectively); the moratorium and diffusion statuses were negatively correlated with the secure attachment style ($r = -0.14$ and -0.23 , respectively). Results suggest a stronger positive

link between secure attachment and the committed identity statuses than negative link between secure attachment and the uncommitted identity statuses.

Findings from continuous measures of adult attachment and identity status suggest that the concept of “exploration” in adult attachment theory may have a somewhat different meaning than “exploration” in identity theory. Exploration in adult attachment theory generally refers to social, intellectual, and environmental exploration, such as developing new interests, working toward new goals, and traveling (e.g., Hazan & Shaver, 1990). Exploration in identity theory involves active questioning for the purpose of arriving at commitments in individual values, beliefs, and goals (Marcia et al., 1993). In identity theory, exploration is ideally a means to an end, which is commitment. In attachment theory, however, exploration is described as an ideal goal in itself. While the contents of *what* might be explored in the two theoretical approaches may be similar, the *process* of exploration may hold different functions in attachment theory compared with identity theory. Research on adult attachment has often drawn simple parallels between infant and adult exploration (Elliot & Reis, 2003), and a more rigorous conceptualization of adult exploration and its role in adult attachment theory is needed (Hazan & Shaver, 1990).

Identity Status and Consequent Conditions

Intimacy. Erikson (1968) proposed that intimacy versus isolation is the psychosocial stage succeeding, and dependent upon, resolutions to identity versus role confusion. Orlofsky et al. (1973) and Orlofsky and Roades (1993) postulated that there may be qualitatively different styles of intimacy, or intimacy statuses, as there are qualitatively different styles of identity status resolutions. They conducted validation studies and provided construct validity for the following intimacy statuses: The intimate individual is characterized by having close friendships characterized

by depth and openness of communication, as well as an exclusive, committed partner relationship. Pre-intimate individuals share the same openness and depth of communication with friends, but lack an exclusive partner relationship. The pseudointimate individual has relationships with friends that are more superficial in nature, lacking closeness and depth; these features may also be present in some exclusive partner relationships. Stereotyped individuals have relationships with friends that are characterized by the relationship qualities of the pseudointimate; however, the stereotyped individual lacks an exclusive partner relationship. Finally, the isolate may have a few casual associations, but generally withdraws from social situations and contact with others.

In line with Erikson’s (1968) epigenetic theory, the developmental ordering of the intimacy statuses should be closely associated with the developmental ordering of the identity statuses: those with an achieved or moratorium identity status would be more likely to have an intimate or pre-intimate intimacy status than would those with a foreclosed or diffuse identity status. On continuous identity status and intimacy measures, there should be a positive difference between high (identity achieved and moratorium) and low (foreclosure and diffuse) identity status individuals on scale measures of intimacy. To paraphrase Erikson (1968), in order to share oneself with another, one must have a sufficiently secure sense of identity in order not to risk losing oneself in the (temporary) merger that an intimate relationship involves.

Årseth et al. (2009) have also undertaken a meta-analysis of the relationship between identity status and intimacy. Some 21 of 31 studies provided sufficient data for further examination. Results indicated that the mean odds ratio for being in both a “high” (achievement and moratorium) identity status and a “high” (intimate and pre-intimate) intimacy status was significantly higher for men than for women ($p < 0.001$). Some 69% of males in high-exploring identity statuses were also high in intimacy status, whereas only 23% of males in low-exploring identity statuses were high in intimacy status. For women, the pattern was different. Some 65% of high-exploring

identity status women were also high in intimacy status, whereas 46% of low-exploring identity status women were also high in intimacy status. Results from studies using scale measures of intimacy indicated that the mean Hedges' g for men, women, and the combined group (collapsing across gender) ranged from 0.30 to 0.41. This finding represents a small difference between the intimacy scores of those in high- and low-identity status groups (Cohen, 1988).

Results from categorical analyses suggest a positive relationship between identity and intimacy statuses for the majority of men and women, supporting Erikson's (1968) epigenetic conceptualization of personality development. Among women, however, nearly half of women "low" in identity status were also "high" in intimacy status. Although Erikson (1968) does suggest that identity and intimacy may co-develop for women, reasons for the findings obtained empirically require further investigation. The relatively small sample sizes involved in most of the meta-analytic results reported here strongly suggest the need for further studies to examine possible moderator effects of such contextual variables as social climate and other situational factors. The impact of various support systems for identity exploration and consolidation has been examined only infrequently in identity status research, and may be an important issue in understanding the phenomenon of why so many women rated "low" in identity status were also rated "high" in intimacy status. This finding may result from greater relational responsibilities that characterize women's roles in many cultures.

Identity Status and Developmental Patterns of Change

Developmental patterns of change. There has been much discussion in the identity status literature over the past decades about the developmental nature of the identity statuses and whether or not a developmental continuum underlies these statuses (Côté & Levine, 1988; Meeus, Iedema, Helsén, & Vollebergh, 1999; van Hoof, 1999). New research methods now exist that enable

the testing of identity status category orders along a developmental continuum. Al-Owidha, Green, and Kroger (2009) have addressed the preliminary question of whether the identity statuses can be empirically ordered in a theoretically optimal way through the use of Rasch model threshold and scale statistics.⁴ All permutations of Marcia's four identity status ratings, Loevinger's (1976) ego development stage ratings, and Kegan's (1982) self-other differentiation ratings were examined in data from a sample of late adolescent and young adult participants. The optimal identity status category order found was diffusion to foreclosure to moratorium to achievement in two sets of analyses, and diffusion combined with foreclosure to moratorium to achievement in two additional sets of analyses. Results supported the theoretically optimal identity status category order, based on Erikson's (1968) account of the identity-formation process.

Kroger, Martinussen, and Marcia (2010) conducted a meta-analysis of investigations containing longitudinal or cross-sectional data on identity status movement or stability patterns over time (some investigations had more than one study). These 124 investigations were limited to adolescents (13–19 years) and young adults (20–36 years). A total of 72 studies contained sufficient data to be included in these analyses. These 72 developmental studies were further divided into the following types for purposes of meta-analysis (with K indicating the numbers of studies): (1) Longitudinal studies with categorical identity status assessments ($K = 11$); (2) longitudinal studies with continuous identity status assessments ($K = 1$); (3) cross-sectional studies with categorical assessments of identity status ($K = 52$); and (4) cross-sectional studies with continuous assessments of identity status ($K = 9$).

A number of hypotheses were explored with respect to each developmental subgroup. Based on proposals from Waterman (1999), it was anticipated that in Group 1, a preponderance of progressive rather than regressive developmental movements ($D \rightarrow F$, $D \rightarrow M$, $D \rightarrow A$, $F \rightarrow M$, $F \rightarrow A$, $M \rightarrow A$) would occur over time. It was also predicted that there would be movement out of the diffusion and foreclosure statuses and

into the moratorium and achievement statuses. During adolescence and the transition to young adulthood, it was anticipated that the identity development process would begin with foreclosure or diffusion. The years of late adolescence (18–25 years) were predicted to be associated with more transitions through the moratorium status than other age ranges, and moratorium was hypothesized to be the least stable of the identity statuses. The mean time span covered by the longitudinal studies in Group 1 was 3.0 years ($SD = 2.6$ years); 8 of the 11 studies focused on identity status changes over the years of tertiary study, whereas two addressed changes between university study and 18 months–6 years post-university. The final study focused on changes in a sample from the general population between ages 27 and 36 years. Group 1 results generally supported our hypotheses. However, there were also relatively large mean proportions of individuals who remained stable in their original identity statuses over time (0.49). Stability was highest in the committed (foreclosure and achievement) statuses (0.53 and 0.66, respectively). There was also a relatively high mean proportion of individuals who regressed (0.15) in identity status movement over time (i.e., $A \rightarrow D$, $A \rightarrow F$, $A \rightarrow M$, $M \rightarrow D$, $M \rightarrow F$, $F \rightarrow D$).

Unfortunately, the number of studies in Group 2 ($K = 1$) was too small for further analysis. With respect to Group 3 studies, a decrease in the mean proportions of identity diffuse and foreclosed youths was anticipated from mid to late adolescence, alongside an increase in the mean proportions of moratorium and achievement identity statuses. From late adolescence through young adulthood, an initial drop in the mean proportions of identity achieved and moratorium youths was anticipated, followed by a subsequent increase in the mean proportions of these two statuses over time. A concurrent increase in the percentages of foreclosure and diffusion youths was predicted from late adolescence through young adulthood, followed by a subsequent decrease in the mean proportions of these two statuses over time. These hypotheses were generally supported for the patterns of identity development through mid-late adolescence.

From late adolescence through young adulthood, patterns of identity status change were more varied. As predicted, there was an initial drop in identity achievement mean proportions followed by a general increase in identity achievement mean proportions through young adulthood. The moratorium mean proportions peaked at age 19 years (0.42), and then declined thereafter. The mean proportions of youths in foreclosure and diffusion statuses were more varied through the university years, but declined fairly steadily in the 23–29 and 30–36 year age groups.

It was hypothesized that Group 4 studies, where Hedges' g served as the measure of effect size, would evidence a positive difference between younger and older moratorium and achievement scores over time and a negative difference between younger and older foreclosure and diffusion scores over time. Results were in the predicted directions; moratorium and achievement scores did increase over time, while foreclosure and diffusion scores decreased. However, in terms of Cohen's (1988) criteria, all effect sizes were small (identity achievement, $g = 0.17$; moratorium, $g = 0.24$; foreclosure, $g = -0.16$; diffusion, $g = -0.18$).

Considered together, findings from meta-analytic studies of identity status change reviewed in this section generally support the slow, evolutionary process of identity formation that Erikson (1968) proposed some four decades ago. Further consideration, however, must be given to regression in identity status movements and the meanings that various forms of regression may have in the identity-formation process of late adolescence and young adulthood. The fact that approximately 15% of late adolescents participating in longitudinal studies included in these meta-analyses showed some form of regressive movement suggests the need for further understanding of regression and its role in the identity-formation process. Kroger (1996) suggested the possibility of three different types of regressive identity status movements that may reflect different identity-related processes: (a) regressions of disequilibrium ($A \rightarrow M$), (b) regressions of rigidification ($A, M \rightarrow F$), and (c) regressions of disorganization ($A, M, F \rightarrow D$).

Although regressions of disequilibrium may be very adaptive in the ongoing process of identity development once initial identity decisions have been made and re-evaluations are undertaken, regressions of rigidification and regressions of disorganization are likely to be non-adaptive causes for concern. Further research needs to be undertaken to understand conditions that may be associated with each of these three forms of regression, for each process will likely require very different strategies for intervention.

Identity Interventions

Research into intervention methods appropriate for facilitating identity development is in its infancy. In the mid-1980s, Marcia (1986) first described the possible implications that the identity status paradigm held for intervention in educational and clinical settings. He warned against requiring occupational or other major educational decisions in early adolescence, and he made a plea that professional degree programs should provide opportunities for the study and exploration of ideas and values rather than accelerated degree acquisition. Marcia also discussed forms of clinical intervention likely to be effective with individuals in each identity status. Archer (1994) produced the first edited volume that considered the implications of identity and identity status interventions across a wide range of contexts—from psychotherapy to the family, and from ethnic minority adolescents to educational settings. Contributors to that volume reflected on a range of issues essential to intervention programs encouraging identity exploration and self-discovery. However, research on the actual applications of identity and identity status interventions has begun only more recently.

One of the first systematic attempts to assess results of an intervention program aimed to facilitate identity status development in late adolescence was undertaken by Markstrom-Adams, Ascione, Braegger, and Adams (1993). These researchers introduced a short-term perspective-training program aimed particularly at increasing identity exploration. However, their two studies

failed to show significant results, and the authors concluded that it was difficult to promote substantial identity development through short-term intervention programs. These results have been largely re-echoed through various doctoral studies that have attempted to implement short-term strategies to facilitate identity status change (e.g., Edward, 1981; Hall, 1994; Wentz, 1986).

More recently, intervention attempts have targeted areas such as knowledge, attitudes, and exploration/commitment dimensions of identity in marginalized youth. Ferrer-Wreder et al. (2002) examined the impact of a one-semester intervention program for marginalized youth on the specific developmental domains of skills/knowledge, attitudes, orientations, and exploration/commitment dimensions linked to identity. Although immediate intervention gains were apparent, these gains were not well-maintained over time. From these studies, it seems that identity exploration and consolidation requires time and readiness for development to proceed, and short-term intervention efforts (e.g., sessions over the course of several weeks or months) have, in general, not been particularly effective in facilitating long-term identity development.

Very recent attempts have been made to examine implications that the identity statuses hold for intervention by refining definitions of the statuses or the processes of exploration and commitment to consider their interplay with adaptive or maladaptive forms of adjustment. Luyckx and colleagues (e.g., Luyckx et al., 2008a; see Luyckx et al., Chapter 4, this volume) have attempted to understand the association of identity exploration with both openness and distress. They have expanded Marcia et al. (1993) identity status model by adding ruminative exploration as a new identity dimension, alongside exploration in breadth and in depth. They found that ruminative exploration was positively related to identity distress and self-rumination, whereas the two forms of positive, reflective exploration were positively related to self-reflection. They have also differentiated between “carefree diffusion” and “diffused diffusion” statuses. In further research, Luyckx et al. (2008b) discuss some possible counseling

implications from their findings that adaptive and maladaptive levels of perfectionism were differentially linked with new identity statuses. They suggest that clinicians could attend specifically to possible underlying levels of maladaptive perfectionism to reduce dysfunctional identity-formation processes. Common to intervention theory and research to date is the suggestion that differential intervention strategies must be targeted to individuals in each of the distinct identity statuses.

The Identity Statuses in Relation to Other Identity Models

Marcia's (1966; Marcia et al., 1993) identity status model has been one of the earliest and most enduring systematic approaches used by social scientists to examine selected dimensions of Erikson's (1968) adolescent identity-formation concept. Whereas Marcia and colleagues (Marcia et al., 1993) have used such psychosocial domains as occupational, religious, political, family, and sexual values as indicators of global identity status, Skorikov and Vondracek (Chapter 29, this volume) have focused on the occupational domain, alone, to examine occupational identity status patterns of change over time and its associations with other identity domains. Berzonsky (Chapter 3, this volume) uses a social cognitive model of identity to describe three modes by which individuals process, interpret, and make decisions regarding self-relevant information: informational, normative, and diffuse-avoidant. These modes have been strongly linked with Marcia's (1966, Marcia et al., 1993) identity statuses. Waterman (Chapter 16, this volume) uses the two philosophical metaphors of self-construction and self-discovery to address the question of how one knows which, among many identity alternatives, represents the "best choice" in making identity-related decisions. Building upon frameworks of the identity status paradigm and eudaimonistic philosophy, Waterman discusses how these two metaphors contribute to a "well-lived" life. McAdams (Chapter 5, this volume) also draws upon Erikson's (1968)

identity writings to suggest that the configuration of the self is, in fact, a story or narrative that the individual constructs in order to maintain a sense of continuity over time and place. McAdams identifies how life stories can be interpreted in terms of a number of identity themes such as narrative tone, themes of agency and communion, ideological setting, and future script in order to understand the nature of an individual's identity. All of these major contributions to the understanding of lifespan identity development have built upon and expanded dimensions of Erikson's (1968) identity-formation process, articulated over a half century ago.

Conclusions

This chapter has reviewed the ego psychoanalytic origins of Marcia's (1966) identity statuses, as well as the early procedures used to validate the statuses. We have also commented on the meanings that various methods for identity status assessment may hold in relation to interpreting data and in refining Eriksonian theory. The chapter has also reviewed some recent meta-analytic findings regarding a number of the variables that have been examined in relation to the identity statuses over the past 40 years and has commented on some of the developmental patterns of change that comprise the identity-formation process for various groups of adolescents and young adults. A brief history of intervention theory and empirical work aimed at facilitating adolescent and young adult identity development has been undertaken, suggesting that methods must be targeted to individuals in particular identity statuses in order for intervention to be effective. Evidence was also reviewed suggesting that short-term intervention efforts have failed to produce long-term gains. Additionally, recent empirical efforts to refine the identity statuses have been reviewed, and their implications for intervention have been discussed. Marcia's (1966; Marcia et al., 1993) identity status model has provided an enriched understanding of identity-relevant constructs that Erikson (1968) originally identified and defined, as well as a deeper appreciation of

the difficulties and rewards offered by the adolescent and adult identity-formation process. The model continues to be as relevant and important today as it was in years past.

Notes

1. Studies described in the meta-analyses have been drawn from a large database at Univeristy of Tromsø. Using PsycINFO, ERIC, Sociological Abstracts, and Dissertation Abstracts International databases, researches first collected all English language publications and dissertations produced between the years January 1966 and December 2005 that used statistical analyses to provide data on the identity statuses and their patterns of change over time and/or their relationship to at least one additional variable. The following search terms were used: Identity status, identity and Marcia, identity and Marcia's, and ego identity. Dissertations that later appeared as publications were eliminated from further analysis, except where the dissertation could supplement the publication with necessary statistical information. Also eliminated were studies that used the same data, or part of the same data, to address similar questions. Our initial database was comprised of 565 empirical investigations (287 publications and 278 doctoral dissertations) that met these criteria.

A coding sheet was developed for each of these investigations to provide a number of demographic details such as year of publication, type of article (publication or doctoral dissertation), primary themes of study, measure of identity status and its reliability, sample size and gender distribution, mean age and age ranges for study sub-samples, and other sample characteristics. Six graduate students, trained by the first author, coded the variables. From the larger database, 25% of the studies were selected for a reliability assessment of agreement between two coders. For categorical variables, Kappa values ranged from 0.48 to 1.00, and the percent agreement
2. In terms of Cohen's (1988) criteria, Hedges' g effect sizes are defined in the following terms: large, $g = 0.80$; medium, $g = 0.50$; small, $g = 0.30$. Cohen's (1988) criteria for correlational effect sizes are defined as follows: large, $r = 0.50$; medium, $r = 0.30$; small, $r = 0.10$.
3. An odds ratio that deviates from 1 indicates that there is a relationship between the variables. Confidence intervals for an odds ratio that do not contain 1 indicate an average effect size that is different from 1.
4. The Rasch model, used here, enables a non-linear transformation of raw scores (here, category order) to create an interval scale measure of an underlying trait. Rasch model step and scale statistics are applied here to determine an empirically optimal category order for a disputed developmental model (here, Marcia's identity status categories) by examining all permutations of ratings for the four identity statuses in combination with categorical ratings for two models describing related phenomena with a previously determined categorical order: Loevinger's (1976) stages

ranged from 79 to 85%. Pearson's correlations for the remaining continuous variables described above ranged from 0.84 to 1.00. Disagreements were resolved by discussion between or among the coders.

From this initial database of 565 empirical investigations, study themes were examined to identify those containing sufficient data for further examination through techniques of meta-analysis. Meta-analysis is a statistical technique that enables one to combine data from multiple studies for the purpose of identifying a mean treatment effect (or effect size) (Hunt, 1997). Replacing the procedure of narrative literature reviews, meta-analysis holds the advantage of applying objective criteria for study selection and takes into account varying sample sizes as well as the strength of results across studies. Furthermore, meta-analysis is a far more statistically powerful technique compared with narrative literature reviews (Hunt, 1997). All calculations were performed using the software program *Comprehensive Meta-analysis* (Borenstein & Rothstein, 1999).

of ego development and Kegan's (1982) stages of self-other differentiation. While theorists may describe a developmental process based on intuition or logic, Rasch model step and scale statistics enable the researcher to empirically test whether a hypothesized developmental (or category) order yields an adequate and optimal fit to the actual data itself. In the study described here, the Winsteps computer software (Linacre, 2008) was used to determine the empirically optimal category order for Marcia's (1966, 1993) identity statuses. The optimal developmental identity status category ordering was diffusion, foreclosure, moratorium, to achievement in two sets of analyses and diffusion/foreclosure, moratorium, to achievement in the remaining two sets of analyses.

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A Social-Cognitive Perspective on Identity Construction

3

Michael D. Berzonsky

Abstract

This chapter examines identity formation in terms of a social-cognitive model. Identity is conceptualized as a cognitive structure or self-theory, which provides a personal frame of reference for interpreting self-relevant information, solving problems, and making decisions. Identity is also viewed as a process that governs and regulates the social-cognitive strategies used to construct, maintain, and/or reconstruct a sense of personal identity. Three different identity-processing orientations or styles are explicated: Informational, normative, and diffuse-avoidant. Individuals with an informational processing style are skeptical of their own self-views and they intentionally seek out, process, and utilize identity-relevant information to personally resolve identity conflicts. In contrast, individuals with a normative processing style more automatically adopt a collective sense of identity by internalizing the standards and prescriptions of significant others and referent groups. Those with a diffuse-avoidant processing style are reluctant to confront and face up to identity conflicts; they procrastinate and delay as long as possible. Their actions tend to be influenced more by immediate situational rewards and demands than personally informed decisions or normative standards. Empirical evidence from several lines of research on identity-processing style is reviewed including linkages between identity style and a number of identity and cognitive processes; developmental changes in identity styles; and factors that may contribute to individual differences in identity styles such as gender, culture, parental processes, and personality traits. The role that identity-processing styles may play in effective and ineffective self-regulation and in maintaining a coherent sense of self-continuity is considered.

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Though you were to live three thousand years, or three million, remember that no man loses any other life than this which he now lives . . . The longest and the shortest thus come to the same . . . For a man cannot lose either his past or his future: for what a man has not, how can anyone take from him? Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*.

As Marcus Aurelius (170–180 A.D./1945) notes, life exists in the present. The decisions people make, the commitments they form, and the actions they take can only occur in the present—the past is gone and the future is indeterminate. Yet, as Erik Erikson (1968) explained, to be adaptive and functional, individuals need to perceive a sense of identity or continuity across the separate temporal episodes of their lives. Having the cognitive resources to represent the past, and then use transformations of those representations to anticipate the future, enables people to transcend time and maintain a sense of themselves as persistent volitional agents who think, doubt, will, act, desire, and self-regulate (Berzonsky, 2004a). Without a sense of identity or self-continuity people could not be held accountable for their prior actions; the threads from which social life is woven (e.g., promises, contracts, moral responsibilities, loans) would become meaningless if people did not own (or were not considered to own) their past (Chandler, Lalonde, Sokol, & Hallett, 2003). Moreover, the inability or failure to envision a continuum linking present actions to the promise of a future renders life meaningless and devoid of purpose (Chandler & Ball, 1990). The present chapter examines identity formation in terms of a social-cognitive model (Berzonsky, 1988, 1990). First, an overview of this social-cognitive model is presented. Three identity-processing orientations are then described, and empirical evidence from several lines of research on identity style is reviewed including linkages between identity style and a number of identity and cognitive processes; developmental changes; and factors that may contribute to individual differences in identity styles such as gender, culture, parental processes, and personality traits. Finally, the role that identity styles may play in effective and ineffective self-regulation and in maintaining a coherent sense of self-continuity is considered.

The Structure of Identity

In the cognitive tradition of Kelly (1955), Epstein (1973), Inhelder and Piaget (1958), and others, I

have conceptualized identity as an implicit theory of oneself (see Berzonsky, 1988, 1990, 1993). A self-theory is a cognitive structure composed of a loosely organized system of personal constructs, assumptions, hypotheses, beliefs, schemas, and postulates relevant to the self interacting in the world (Epstein, 1980). Self-theories provide a conceptual frame for encoding, organizing, and understanding experiences and identity-relevant information. In the course of daily life, people form personalized constructs that govern the detection, selection, organization, and interpretation of environmental stimuli (Kelly, 1955). Human brains detect and represent regularities in nature, which become organized into concepts or personal constructs that, in turn, are synthesized into higher-order cognitive structures or theories (see Berzonsky, 1990, 1993; Kelly, 1955).

A self-theory includes more than representations of previous behavior and experience; it serves an executive function in that it includes the procedural knowledge or operative structures that guide and regulate efforts to cope and adapt in everyday life (Berzonsky, 1988; Epstein, 1980). It also includes a core of values, standards, epistemological assumptions, goals, and ideals that serve as criteria for monitoring and evaluating the predictive and practical usefulness of efforts to cope with and adapt to the demands and problems encountered in the process of daily life (Berzonsky, 1993). Efforts that are unsuccessful relative to some goal or standard may produce negative feedback, signaling the need to modify or adjust aspects of the identity structure. Within the context of a relatively stable world, adult identity development would require fairly minor adjustments of relatively stable self-constructs. In a more fluid world characterized by changing contextual demands and problems, however, previously useful constructions may be invalidated by changing circumstances. Optimal identity development in a rapidly changing world entails an ongoing dialectical interaction between control processes governed by the existing identity structure and regulatory efforts to modify it (Berzonsky, 1988, 2005a; see also Kerpelman, Pittman, & Lamke,

1997; Whitbourne, 1986). It should be noted that the utility of self-constructs depends on the standards and goals against which feedback is construed. Feedback is not inherently meaningful; its meaning depends on the frame of reference being used.

A Constructivist Epistemological Perspective

The model outlined here is based on constructivist epistemological assumptions about the nature of knowledge and knowing (see Berzonsky, 1986, 1993). In contrast to discovery views of identity (see Waterman, 1984, Chapter 16, this volume), a constructivist perspective assumes that people play a role in constructing both a sense who they think they are and the “reality” within which they live. As Kelly (1955) noted, to understand experiences, people manufacture personal constructs that govern the selection, integration, and understanding of environmental stimuli. Experiences and life episodes are not inherently meaningful. A person’s reality reflects personal interpretations of objects and events, not the events in themselves. This identity-as-theory view does not imply that people always theorize about themselves in a conscious, intentional fashion (compare Moshman, 2005). Constructs may be acquired, for instance, indirectly from parents, peers, and others via modeling; more directly through formal schooling, instruction, and other sorts of cultural and social transmission; as well as from direct observation and experience. Further, the model I propose does not assert that people can necessarily articulate the beliefs, postulates, and constructs they hold about themselves (Berzonsky, 1990). Aspects of self-theories may be implicit and vaguely understood by their possessors. Most self-theorizing and self-regulation involve automatic (Bargh, 1997) or “intuitive” (Epstein, Pacini, Denes-Raj, & Heier, 1996) processes. However, there are individual differences in the extent to which the processes of self-construction and reconstruction are approached in a rational, open, and informed fashion. Further,

as Baumeister, Bratskavsky, Muraven, and Tice (1998) argue, in the long run, deliberate, rational self-functioning may play a disproportionately valuable role in facilitating personal effectiveness by overriding previously useful automated behavioral routines or reasoning heuristics that become maladaptive when circumstances change. Even though from my theoretical standpoint I assume that people construct a sense of identity, they may go about that constructive process differently. Whereas some may approach the task in a deliberate, effortful fashion, others may more automatically internalize roles, values, and expectations of others; or they may opportunistically assume, and quickly abandon, roles and public presentations in different situations. Thus, from their own first-person perspectives, they would not all be expected to use the “language of construction” when describing their own process of identity formation (see Berzonsky, 1986, and compare Waterman, 1986, Chapter 16, this volume).

My model does not posit that a self-theory is a valid representation of one’s “true” or essential self. People are not assumed to have direct introspective access to an accurate understanding of their true inner self. Instead, people construct a theory about who they *think* they are and what they *think* they want. Like formal theories, the validity of self-constructs is evaluated in terms of practical usefulness. Given a person’s biological potential and the environmental contexts within which he or she lives, do her or his theoretical constructs provide explanations and interpretations that are personally intelligible and beneficial? Do these personal constructs solve the problems and answer the questions they were constructed to deal with? Consequently, people cannot arbitrarily create any viable identity they choose. The perception and understanding of information from reality (i.e., social, cultural, and physical contexts) is filtered through people’s theoretical constructs and identity structure, which in turn influence what information they attend to and encode and how this information is interpreted. The cognitive structures alone, however, do not directly determine what will be perceived. The viability of personal

theoretical constructs is constrained by a person's genetically influenced characteristics and dispositions as well as by optical and acoustical feedback from the contexts within which she or he lives (Berzonsky, 1993; Kelly, 1955; Mahoney, 1991).

Finally, some readers may object to the notion of a self-theory, preferring instead the concept of, for instance, a self-story or self-narrative, as proposed in McAdams (Chapter 5, this volume) and others. Although a self-theory does provide a narrative or story about one's life, I prefer the term *self-theory* because I postulate that people rely on implicit constructs for explanatory purposes. In addition to providing a personal frame of reference for synthesizing and interpreting the various episodes one experiences, the postulates within the self-theory provide a basis for acting with foresight and making predictions about how to deal with problems and to attain personal goals (Berzonsky, 1990).

Self-Theorists: A Process Approach to Identity Formation

The model I propose postulates differences in the social-cognitive processes that individuals use to engage or avoid dealing with identity conflicts and issues. One might say that individuals operate as different types of self-theorists (see Berzonsky, 1988, 1989b). Early research indicated that formal operational reasoning was not consistently associated with identity formation (e.g., Berzonsky, Weiner, & Raphael, 1975; Cauble, 1976; Rowe & Marcia, 1980). Based on a review of this literature, Craig Barclay and I (Berzonsky & Barclay, 1981) conceptualized formal reasoning as a set of problem-solving strategies or processes that could be used to deal with identity-relevant problems, conflicts, and decisions. We further hypothesized that Marcia's four identity statuses (see Marcia, 1966; Kroger & Marcia, Chapter 2, this volume) reflected three different stylistic approaches to dealing with identity crises: an open, informed approach utilizing formal-reasoning strategies; an avoiding or delaying orientation; and an inflexible,

closed approach that relies on conformity (see also Berzonsky, 1988, 1989b). These three approaches—now referred to, respectively, as the informational, diffuse-avoidant, and normative identity-processing orientations—are described below.

An Informational Processing Orientation: Scientific Self-Theorists

Individuals with an informational processing orientation deliberately seek out, process, and evaluate identity-relevant information. They are skeptical self-explorers who are open to new ideas and alternatives and are willing to suspend judgment in order to examine and evaluate their self-constructions. Consistent with the metaphor of an intuitive scientist (see, e.g., Inhelder & Piaget, 1958; Kelly, 1955), they function as scientific self-theorists who want to learn new things about themselves and to obtain accurate self-diagnostic information. They are considered to be rational agents who have or seek rational, informed explanations and reasons for their choices and actions. This orientation is hypothesized to lead to a well-differentiated but hierarchically integrated self-theory and to be characteristic of individuals classified in Marcia's (1966; Kroger & Marcia, Chapter 2, this volume) achieved or moratorium identity statuses (Berzonsky, 1988, 1989b). An informational identity-processing orientation is associated with cognitive complexity, problem-focused coping strategies, vigilant decisional strategies, and openness to alternative ideas, values, and behaviors (see Berzonsky, 2004a, for a review).

Diffuse-Avoidant Processing Orientation: Ad Hoc Self-Theorists

A diffuse-avoidant orientation involves a reluctance to confront and deal with identity conflicts and issues. If one procrastinates too long, actions and choices will be determined by situational demands and consequences. Such context-sensitive adjustments, however, are more

likely to involve transient acts of behavioral or verbal compliance rather than stable, long-term structural revisions in the self-theory. This processing orientation, originally identified as a diffuse orientation (Berzonsky, 1989a), is postulated to be typical of individuals categorized as having a diffused identity status (Marcia, 1966). When it became apparent that at least some strategic avoidance was involved, it was referred to as the *diffuse/avoidant* (confused and/or strategic) orientation (Berzonsky & Sullivan, 1992). The term *diffuse-avoidant* (with a dash instead of a slash) currently is preferred because it denotes that the orientation involves more than a confused or fragmented self; it reflects strategic attempts to evade, or at least obscure, potentially negative self-diagnostic information (Berzonsky & Ferrari, 2009). Individuals with a diffuse-avoidant orientation adopt an ad hoc, situation-specific approach to self-theorizing, which should lead to a fragmented set of self-constructs with limited overall unity (Berzonsky, 1989b). They assume a present-oriented, self-serving perspective that highlights immediate rewards and social concerns, such as popularity and impressions tailored for others, when making choices and interpreting events. Diffuse-avoidance is positively associated with efforts to excuse or rationalize negative performances, self-handicapping behaviors, impression management, limited commitment, and an external locus of control (Berzonsky, 1989a, 1990; Berzonsky & Ferrari, 1996, 2009).

A Normative Processing Orientation: Dogmatic Self-Theorists

Individuals with a normative orientation internalize and adhere to goals, values, and prescriptions appropriated from significant others and referent groups in a relatively automatic or mindless manner, that is, they make premature commitments without critical evaluation and deliberation (see Langer, 1989). They have a low tolerance for ambiguity and a high need to maintain structure and cognitive closure (Berzonsky, 1990). Individuals who adopt this protectionist approach function as dogmatic self-theorists

whose primary goal is to conserve and maintain self-views and to guard against information that may threaten their “hard core” values and beliefs. This relatively automatic approach to self-construction is associated with a foreclosed identity status and should lead to a rigidly organized self-theory composed of change-resistant self-constructs (Berzonsky, 1989b; Berzonsky & Adams, 1999). A normative orientation is associated with firm goals, commitments, and a definite sense of purpose, but a low tolerance for uncertainty and a strong desire for structure (Berzonsky, 2004a).

Research on Identity-Processing Orientations

The identity-processing orientations are conceptualized as functioning on at least three levels (Berzonsky, 1990). The most elemental level consists of the various *cognitive and behavioral responses* that individuals actually perform and engage when dealing with identity-relevant information and issues. *Identity-processing strategies* comprise systematic collections of the more basic cognitive and behavioral units. *Identity-processing style* refers to the strategies that individuals characteristically use or prefer to utilize when dealing with identity conflicts. Evidence indicates that, by age 18 at the latest, most normal late adolescents are capable of utilizing the strategies that underpin the three styles (Berzonsky & Ferrari, 1996; Berzonsky & Kuk, 2005). Nonetheless, there may be reliable differences in how efficiently these strategies are accessed and how effectively they are used. Stylistic differences appear to reflect variation in motivational factors such as need for cognition, need for self-knowledge, and need for structure (Berzonsky, 2004a).

Most research has focused on the style level of these orientations, which is operationalized by a self-report *Identity Style Inventory* (ISI; Berzonsky, 1989a, 1992a, 1992b). The Inventory includes an identity commitment scale and scales for each of the three identity styles. The ISI has been found to have adequate psychometric

properties (Berzonsky, 1992a, 1992b, 2003). The English or translated versions of the ISI have been used in a diversity of cultural contexts including Canada, Spain, Turkey, Denmark, Greece, China, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium, Iran, Pakistan, India, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Finland, Poland, Germany, and Australia (see Berzonsky, 2006).

Convergent Validity

One basis for the construct validity of the identity style measures is the extent to which they converge with measures of other identity processes. The association between identity style and identity status is one of the most consistently replicated findings in the identity status literature. Identity foreclosure—firm commitment with limited self-exploration—is associated with a normative style, identity diffusion is associated with a diffuse-avoidant style, and identity achievement and moratorium are linked with an informational identity style (Berman, Schwartz, Kurtines, & Berman, 2001; Berzonsky, 1989a, 1990; Berzonsky & Adams, 1999; Berzonsky & Kuk, 2000; Berzonsky & Neimeyer, 1994; Krettenauer, 2005; Schwartz, Mullis, Waterman, & Dunham, 2000; Streitmatter, 1993). Strength of identity commitment has been found to be uniquely positively correlated with both the informational and normative styles and negatively associated with diffuse-avoidance (e.g., Berzonsky, 1989a, 1990, 2003, 2004a, 2008a). The unique contributions that the three styles make in accounting for significant variation in strength of identity commitment is consistent with the view that commitments may be formed and held in a relatively automatic (normative) or more mentally effortful, informed (informational) fashion (Berzonsky, 2003, 2008a; Berzonsky & Neimeyer, 1994). The types of self-elements or information on which individuals rely to define and ground their sense of identity have been found to be associated with identity style. As measured by the Cheek (1988) Aspects of Identity Questionnaire (AIQ), individuals with an informational

style highlight personal self-elements such as personal values, goals, and standards; those with a diffuse-avoidant style emphasize social self-attributes including their reputation, popularity, and impressions made on others; those with a normative style stress collective self-components such as their family, religion, and nationality (Berzonsky, 1994a, 2005b; Berzonsky, Macek, & Nurmi, 2003; Lutwak, Ferrari, & Cheek, 1998). Considered together, these findings attest to the validity of style assessments as measures of identity processes. The styles, though, are postulated to include cognitive processing as well as identity dimensions. We now turn to a consideration of cognitive processing and identity style.

A Dual-Process Model

Following Epstein (1990) and others (e.g., Klaczynski, 2004; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986; Stanovich, 1999), my social-cognitive model postulates the operation of two parallel information-processing systems (see Berzonsky, 2008a). One is a rapid experience-based cognitive system that processes concrete, emotion-laden information in a relatively automatic fashion. Because this experiential or intuitive system (Epstein, 1990) does not make heavy processing demands, it is efficient and economical but susceptible to cognitive biases such as stereotypical thinking, paranormal beliefs, and naïve optimism (Berzonsky, 1988; Epstein et al., 1996). The experiential system encodes information in terms of concrete images, episodes, figurative representations, and narratives that are contextualized or welded to real world knowledge or experience (Epstein, 1990; Stanovich, 1999). The second system—the reason-based, rational system—in contrast processes decontextualized, symbolic information in an analytical and effortful manner. A decontextualized mode of thinking enables one to think hypothetically and form meta-representations, or what Inhelder and Piaget (1958) term second-order mental operations, decoupling symbolic representations from the concrete factual knowledge on which they were originally based.

This provides a basis for thinking about the process by which conclusions and commitments were arrived at and critically evaluating the extent to which those conclusions correspond to relevant and available evidence. The rational system is deliberate and conscious and relies on logical analyses and evidence to inform and justify decisions and actions. Because it involves considerable mental effort and processing, it is less prone to distortion; it can override automatic processing and calibrate views to the quality of the evidence they are based on (Sá, Kelley, Ho, & Stanovich, 2005; Stanovich, 1999). The automaticity associated with the experiential system makes it the default option in most life situations (Epstein, 1990). Both systems are hypothesized to play a role in self-construction and self-regulation, but people can switch between them, and reliable individual differences in the use of, or preference for, each have been reported (Berzonsky, 2008a; Epstein et al., 1996). The rational system is composed of cognitive resources and strategies such as capacity of working memory, efficiency of information retrieval, and accuracy of stimulus differentiation and epistemological goals and values (Stanovich & West, 1998). Epistemological values include the extent to which individuals value cognitive activities such as elaborating complex information, considering alternative explanations, and rationally evaluating evidence that may conflict with existing views (see Stanovich, 2008). The experiential system consists of cognitive processes that operate with limited conscious awareness and heuristics that are automatically deployed.

Identity-Processing Style and Cognitive Processing

According to my social-cognitive model, individuals with different identity-processing styles vary in the extent to which they use, or prefer to use, different cognitive processes and strategies when dealing with identity conflicts and issues. Research has demonstrated that an informational processing style is positively associated with openness to ideas, values,

and behavioral alternatives (Berzonsky, 1990; Berzonsky & Sullivan, 1992; Dollinger, 1995; Duriez & Soenens, 2006; Duriez, Soenens, & Beyers, 2004) and rational/analytical thinking (Berzonsky, 1990, 2008a; Berzonsky & Ferrari, 1996; Berzonsky & Sullivan, 1992). Consistent with the view that both rational and automatic reasoning play a role in self-regulation and the construction and reconstruction of a sense of identity (Berzonsky, 2004a; Epstein et al., 1996), an informational identity style is also positively associated with automatic, experientially based reasoning as indexed by the Epstein et al. faith in intuition measure of automatic processing (Berzonsky, 2004a, 2008a). Despite the advantages associated with engaging problems and conflicts in a relatively effortful and rational fashion, it is inefficient and counterproductive continually to seek novel information and reconsider decisions and problem resolutions. Consequently, information-oriented individuals do not constantly regulate their lives in a consciously willful, rational fashion—they also rely on relatively automatic, experientially based processing. Individuals with an informational style generally adopt a constructivist epistemological stance, which assumes that knowledge is relative and that people play a role in constructing who they are. They are aware that, although the truth of their constructions cannot be established with absolute certainty, intellectually defensible decisions about which views and options are better or more credible than others can be made relative to a particular set of rules, standards, and criteria (Berzonsky, 1993, 2004a; Caputi & Oades, 2001; Krettenauer, 2005). Such individuals are motivated to construct rational explanations to justify their choices and actions.

In line with the supposition that individuals with a diffuse-avoidant style operate in a hedonistic, situation-specific fashion (Berzonsky, 1990), diffuse-avoidance has been found to be negatively associated with rational processing (Berzonsky, 1990, 2008a), positively correlated with intuitive reasoning (Berzonsky, 2008a), and generally unrelated to automatic processing measured by need for cognitive closure (Berzonsky, 2007; Crocetti, Rubini, Berzonsky,

& Meeus, 2009; Soenens, Duriez, & Goossens, 2005). Epistemological views associated with a diffuse-avoidant style are less clear. In one investigation, diffuse-avoiders were found to endorse a worldview suggesting that their sense of identity was predetermined by fate or factors beyond their control (Berzonsky, 1994b). In another study, a diffuse-avoidant style was found to be associated with the fatalistic view that individuals cannot alter or control future events (Luyckx, Lens, Smits, & Goossens, 2010). Other findings suggest that individuals who score high on diffuse-avoidance view knowledge and the world as a chaotic multiplicity of options that offer little hope of legitimate objective certainty or rational judgment (Krettenauer, 2005). Given the multiplicity of options and alternatives they face, the decisions and actions of diffuse-avoiders seem to rest primarily on arbitrary personal wants, hedonistic desires, and feelings.

A normative identity style is associated with automatic processing as indexed by intuitive reasoning (Berzonsky, 2008a, 2008b). However, in contrast to their informational counterparts, individuals with high normative scores are unwavering in their efforts to conserve and preserve existing beliefs and truths (Berzonsky, 1990; Berzonsky & Sullivan, 1992; Dollinger, 1995). A normative style is also positively associated with a high need for cognitive closure (Webster & Kruglanski, 1994), which reflects cognitive impatience and a low tolerance for uncertainty (Berzonsky, 2008b; Crocetti et al., 2009; Soenens, Duriez, et al., 2005). A normative style is associated with a worldview that highlights environmental determinism and an absolutist view of truth (Berzonsky, 1993; Caputi & Oades, 2001; Krettenauer, 2005).

Empirical support for the hypothesized theoretical linkage between identity-processing styles and cognitive processing raises the question about whether identity-processing styles reflect differences in information-processing in general or whether the styles are uniquely associated with the processing of identity-relevant information. We now consider research on the extent to which both identity styles and general cognitive processes contribute to variation in measures of

identity processes such as commitment, identity status, and the types of self-elements upon which individuals rely to define their identity.

Identity-Processing Styles, Cognitive Processing, and Identity Processes

The role that identity styles and general cognitive processes play in accounting for variation in measures of identity formation has been investigated in several studies framed in terms of a mediational model (Berzonsky, 2007, 2008a, 2008b). This mediational model postulates that, even though general cognitive processes and identity styles both directly contribute to variation in identity processes, linkages between rational and automatic cognitive processing, on the one hand, and various markers of identity formation, on the other hand, will at least in part be mediated by identity-processing styles. This mediational model was evaluated by a series of hierarchical regression analyses, controlling for sex and age. Measures of rational and automatic processing were entered on Step 2 to evaluate their contribution prior to controlling for the effects of identity style. The style variables were entered last to evaluate their hypothesized mediational role. A substantial reduction in the beta coefficients for the cognitive variables indicated mediation, with Sobel tests used to evaluate whether mediated effects were significant.

Berzonsky (2007, 2008a) examined the roles that rational reasoning (Cacioppo & Petty, 1982) and automatic/intuitive reasoning (Epstein et al., 1996) played in accounting for variation on measures of strength of identity commitment (Berzonsky, 2003), Marcia's identity achievement, foreclosure, moratorium, and diffusion identity statuses (Adams, 1999; Marcia, 1966) and collective identity (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992). The Luhtanen and Crocker (1992) measure of collective identity focuses on the extent to which an individual's sense of identity reflects the social groups to which she or he belongs (e.g., "The social groups I belong to are unimportant to my sense of what kind of a person I am [reverse scored]"). In both studies, rational

and intuitive processing accounted for significant variation in strength of identity commitment and identity achievement before the effects of style were controlled. All three styles uniquely predicted strength of commitment, and both the informational and normative styles were uniquely associated with identity achievement. Evidence for the mediational hypothesis was obtained in all the analyses. All of the significant paths from rational and intuitive processing to commitment and achievement were at least partially mediated by the informational style. The normative style partially mediated the significant relationship between intuitive processing and collective identity (Berzonsky, 2008a) and completely mediated the linkage from intuitive processing to identity foreclosure (Berzonsky, 2007). Neither cognitive processing variable accounted for significant variation in diffusion or moratorium status scores. The diffuse-avoidant and informational styles uniquely explained significant variation in both diffusion and moratorium scores. Diffuse-avoidance was positively associated with both diffusion and moratorium, whereas the informational style was negatively associated with diffusion but positively with moratorium.

The findings are consistent with the view that identity styles reflect differences in the processing of information relevant to identity formation. The style variables accounted for significant variation on all of the measures of identity formation after the effects of general cognitive processing had been controlled. Moreover, in all the analyses where cognitive processes had a direct effect, those effects were at least partially mediated by identity style. Finally, supplemental analyses indicated that the style variables accounted for a greater amount of unique variation than the cognitive variables in all of the measures of identity formation (Berzonsky, 2007, 2008a).

Identity-Processing Styles, Cognitive Processing, and Identity Content

Another approach to investigating the role that identity styles and cognitive processes play in

identity formation is to examine the types of self-relevant information or self-elements individuals utilize to form their sense of identity (Cheek, 1988). In two studies, Berzonsky (2008b) investigated whether identity-processing styles mediated the relationships between cognitive processes and the types of self-attributes on which individuals' sense of identity was based: (a) personal identity attributes such as "personal values" and "self-knowledge;" (b) social identity components including "reputation" and "impressions made on others;" and (c) collective identity elements such as "religion" and "family." The analyses—controlling for sex and age—were based on the mediational model described above. The same cognitive and style measures used in Berzonsky (2007, 2008a) were used in Study 1. Need for cognitive closure (Webster & Kruglanski, 1994) was used to assess automatic processing in Study 2. Individuals with a high need for closure are intolerant of ambiguity, cognitively impatient, reluctant to suspend judgment, and closed minded; they do not expend a lot of cognitive effort considering alternatives or processing new information (Webster & Kruglanski, 1994). The use of personal identity attributes was associated with both rational and intuitive processing, whereas the utilization of collective identity elements was more exclusively automatic (as operationalized by both need for closure and intuitive processing). Reliance on social identity components was negatively associated with rational processing and positively associated with need for closure. Individuals who consider identity issues in a rational, informed way were likely to highlight personal aspects of their identity, whereas those who utilized more automatic processing relied on social or collective aspects of who they are. In all the analyses, the styles accounted for a greater amount of the variation than the cognitive variables in the types of self-elements the participants used to ground their sense of identity, supporting the view that the processing styles focus on identity-relevant information (Berzonsky, 1990). Further, identity styles mediated most of the significant relationships between the cognitive variables and the identity element scores. In both studies, an informational

style mediated the positive path from rational processing to personal identity. In Study 1, both the normative and diffuse-avoidant styles mediated the negative path from rational processing to social identity; and in Study 2 the normative style mediated positive relationships between need for closure and both social and collective identity. Consistent with the view that diffuse-avoidance reflects a situational approach to identity considerations (Berzonsky, 1990), this style was directly positively associated with social identity in both studies.

Identity-Processing Style and Self-Knowledge

The process of identity formation involves more than a mentally effortful exploration of identity-relevant options and alternatives; it involves turning attention inward to analyze and become aware of the views, goals, standards, values, etc., that constitute the inner self (Berzonsky & Barclay, 1981; Erikson, 1964). Some early research indicated that an informational processing style was positively associated with private self-consciousness and introspection (Berzonsky, 1990; Berzonsky & Sullivan, 1992). The tendency to focus on oneself, however, has been found to have a dark (e.g., maladjustment, anxiety, depressive reactions, neuroticism, rumination, and psychopathology) as well as beneficial (e.g., accurate self-insight, a well-developed self-structure, and definite personal standards) side (Buss, 1980; Ingram, 1990; Trapnell & Campbell, 1999). Evidence indicates that Buss' (1980) measure of private self-consciousness may consist of two factors. One involves a maladaptive excessive preoccupation about negative evaluations and expectations of others; whereas the other is a more adaptive state of internal self-awareness, which is associated with a clear sense of identity and positive self-regard (Creed & Funder, 1998; Piliavin & Charng, 1988). Evidence also indicates that people may reflect on themselves for different reasons. Self-reflection motivated by an epistemic interest to gain insight about intrapersonal states and standards should be

constructive and adaptive (Franzoi, Davis, & Markwiese, 1990; Trapnell & Campbell, 1999). In contrast, reflection motivated by anxiety or perceived threats to the self (i.e., ruminative self-attention) is more dysfunctional (Luyckx, Soenens, Goossens, Beckx, & Wouters, 2008; Trapnell & Campbell, 1999).

Berzonsky and Luyckx (2008) investigated relationships among identity-processing styles, ruminative and epistemic self-reflective processes, and an awareness of internal states. A series of regression analyses was conducted in which each identity style served as the dependent variable and age, sex, and the other two style scales were controlled. Both epistemic self-reflection and internal state awareness were found to uniquely account for significant variation in informational style scores. Individuals with high informational scores reported engaging in active self-reflection in order to better understand their inner thoughts, feelings, and standards. Ruminative self-attention was uniquely positively associated with a normative as well as a diffuse-avoidant style. A normative style was not associated with epistemic self-reflection or internal state awareness. Even though individuals with high normative scores indicated little interest in reflecting on their inner thoughts, feelings, and standards, they did report a high level of ruminative self-preoccupation, which may reflect concern with the social appropriateness of their actions. Participants with high diffuse-avoidance scores also displayed little interest in reflecting upon and understanding themselves, which may provide a strategic way to evade or obscure potentially negative self-diagnostic information. Indeed, diffuse-avoidance was negatively associated with awareness of inner states and views (Berzonsky & Luyckx, 2008).

These results are consistent with previous findings that diffuse-avoidance generally is associated with negative affective responses including anxiety, neuroticism, and depressive reactions (Berzonsky, 1990, 2003; Dollinger, 1995; Nurmi, Berzonsky, Tammi, & Kinney, 1997), and that an informational approach tends to show opposite relations with affective responses. However, Berzonsky and Kuk (2000)

unexpectedly found that, even though an informational style was not directly associated with depressive reactions, when psychosocial resources—i.e., self-regulation, agency, and commitment—were statistically controlled, a reliable positive relationship between an informational style and depressive reactions emerged. The same pattern of results was found in an 8-month longitudinal follow-up (Berzonsky & Kuk, 2000).

One possible explanation of these findings is that, in the absence of clear self-standards and adequate self-regulatory resources, the informed processing of self-relevant information may devolve into a helpless state of personal rumination (Nolen-Hoeksema, 1991; Pyszczynski & Greenberg, 1987). Some individuals with high informational scores may become so obsessed with the problems and negative feelings they are experiencing that they are unable to focus on effectively attempting to solve those problems. Such a pattern may explain the positive relationship between an informational style and depressive reactions once psychosocial resources were held constant. An alternative explanation is that, as mentioned previously, adaptive behavior is not a function of internal standards or goal states alone; it also requires a willingness to encode negative feedback from one's behavior and actions and to make relevant adjustments. Tendencies to personalize negative feedback would short-circuit the cycle. Being motivated to reflect on and gain insight about inner states and standards, consequently, would be instrumental to personal effectiveness and self-regulation. It is possible that, when Berzonsky and Kuk (2000) controlled for psychosocial resources, the variance that these resources shared with constructive self-reflective tendencies and self-insight may have also been removed. However, Berzonsky and Kuk (2000) did not include measures of adaptive or maladaptive self-reflection.

To evaluate some of these alternative possibilities, Berzonsky, Dunkel, and Papini (2009) administered a battery of measures to over 500 participants, including: identity style (Berzonsky, 1992a), epistemic self-reflection and rumination (Trapnell & Campbell, 1999), need

for self-knowledge (Franzoi et al., 1990), internal state awareness (Buss, 1980), self-regulation (Berzonsky, 2005b), personal agency (Snyder et al., 1991), identity commitment (Berzonsky, 2003), and depressive reactions (Beck, Rush, Shaw, & Emery, 1979). Thus, in this investigation, unlike the previous studies, measures of both psychosocial resources and self-reflective processes were included. Informational scores were positively correlated with self-reflection, need for self-knowledge, internal-state awareness, and all three psychosocial resources: self-regulation, agency, and commitment. A regression analysis indicated that self-reflection, self-regulation, agency, commitment, and rumination were uniquely associated with the informational style (total $R^2 = 0.43$, $p < 0.01$). Further hierarchical analyses revealed that even though the zero-order correlation between rumination and informational scores was not significant, when the effects of self-regulation, agency, and commitment were controlled, rumination accounted for significant variation in informational scores ($\beta = 0.08$, $p < 0.05$). Also, supplemental analyses revealed that the contributions of need for self-knowledge and inner-state awareness to variation in informational scores were completely mediated by the psychosocial-resources variables.

The findings are consistent with previous research in that the informational style was positively associated with effective psychosocial resources (Berzonsky & Kuk, 2000) and self-reflection and self-insight (Berzonsky & Luyckx, 2008). Additionally, self-rumination was found to be positively associated with an informational style but only after the contribution of psychosocial resources was controlled. Consequently, the findings indicate that the processing of self-relevant information may not always promote constructive self-insight and may, at least to some extent, devolve into maladaptive ruminative self-preoccupation in the absence of adaptive psychosocial resources.

The main objective of the Berzonsky et al. (2009) study was to attempt to evaluate some explanations about which variables may suppress a positive relationship between an informational style and depressive reactions. Depressive

symptom scores (Beck et al., 1979) were regressed hierarchically, in order, on the identity style, self-attention, self-insight, and psychosocial variables. The unpublished findings are presented in Table 3.1.

Age and sex, entered first as control variables, are not included. On Step 2, the normative (negatively) and diffuse-avoidant (positively) styles uniquely contributed to the prediction of scores ($\Delta R^2 = 0.14$, $p < 0.01$). Consistent with the bivariate correlations (presented in the last column in Table 3.1), an informational style was not associated with depressive reactions. Rumination (positive) and self-reflection (negative) were significant predictors on Step 3: beta coefficients for the style variables remained relatively stable ($\Delta R^2 = 0.20$, $p < 0.01$). Need for self-knowledge and self-awareness were both negatively associated with depressive scores on the next step ($\Delta R^2 = 0.02$, $p < 0.01$). When they were added, however, a significant positive contribution of the informational style to depressive symptoms emerged ($\beta = 0.09$, $p < 0.05$). Further, the contribution of self-reflection was no longer significant, suggesting that the negative relationship between self-reflection and

depression was mediated by knowledge about the self. Thus, epistemic self-reflection may be negatively associated with depressive reactions when it contributes to self-insight and self-awareness. When the psychosocial resources were added on the final step ($\Delta R^2 = 0.10$, $p < 0.01$), the positive standardized regression coefficient for the informational style doubled (0.09–0.19). In addition, the coefficients for self-knowledge and self-awareness were no longer significant. Thus, not only did the agency and self-regulatory variables directly contribute to variance in depressive reactions, they also mediated the negative relationships between self-knowledge and self-awareness and depressive reactions.

These findings suggest that the processing of identity-relevant information does not necessarily directly promote personal adjustment and well-being, and that such processing may be detrimental when it does not contribute to self-insight and effective self-regulation. To evaluate whether rumination mediated the positive relationship between an informational style and depressive reactions that was found after the psychosocial variables were controlled, a supplemental analysis was conducted with rumination entered after

Table 3.1 Hierarchical regression of depressive reactions on identity style, self-reflective, self-insight, and psychosocial variables (Berzonsky et al., 2009)

Predictor variables	Step 2	Step3	Step 4	Step 5	<i>r</i>
	β	β	β	β	
Informational style	0.04	0.05	0.09*	0.19**	-0.07
Normative style	-0.27**	-0.23**	-0.22**	-0.15**	-0.30**
Diffuse-avoidance	0.24**	0.22**	0.20**	0.12**	0.27**
Self-reflection		-0.12*	-0.04	-0.07	0.01
Self-rumination		0.46**	0.46**	0.36**	0.47**
Self-knowledge			-0.09*	-0.01	-0.10*
Internal awareness			-0.13**	-0.03	-0.19**
Commitment				0.02	-0.29**
Agency				-0.37**	-0.54**
Self-regulation				-0.09*	-0.38**
Change in R^2	0.14**	0.20**	0.02**	0.10**	
Total adjusted R^2	0.14**	0.34**	0.36**	0.46**	

Note: Regression coefficients for sex and age, controlled on Step 1, are not presented. Correlation coefficients between depressive reactions and the predictor variables are presented in the last column (*r*).

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$.

all of the other variables. In this analysis, the positive standardized regression coefficient for the informational style was only reduced about 17% (from 0.23 to 0.19), providing limited support for mediation. Future research needs to establish the reliability of the suppressive role the psychosocial variables were found to play and to attempt to further clarify why an informational style was positively associated with depressive reactions after these variables were controlled.

Gender Differences in Identity-Processing Style

In a number of studies, men have been found to score higher on diffuse-avoidance compared to their female counterparts (e.g., Berzonsky, 1992b, 2008a; Berzonsky & Kinney, 2008; Soenens, Berzonsky, Vansteenkiste, Beyers, & Goossens, 2005). It is not clear why this relationship occurs, but the contributions of gender-role stereotypes and differences in parental processes should be considered (Berzonsky & Kinney, 2008). Although other gender differences have been reported in some investigations—for example, Berzonsky (2008a) found that female participants scored higher than males on informational scores and Soenens, Berzonsky, et al. (2005) found that females had higher normative scores—effect sizes were relatively small, and such findings tend to be isolated rather than systematic. The more important question is: Does gender qualify relationships between identity styles and other variables? The answer, for the most part, appears to be no.

Cultural Differences in Identity-Processing Styles

Although, as noted earlier, the English or translated versions of the *Identity Style Inventory* have been used in numerous countries, few cross-cultural or cross-national comparisons of scores on the style measures have been published.

In general, in those studies that have been published, the relationships between style and other variables do not appear to be moderated by culture or country (e.g., Berzonsky et al., 2003; Crocetti et al., 2009; Krettenauer, 2005; Soenens, Duriez, et al., 2005). Schwartz, Côté, and Arnett (2005) did compare the style scores of three self-identified ethnic groups of students in an American university: Hispanics, non-Hispanic Blacks, and non-Hispanic Whites. The majority of the students in each group were born in the United States. Hispanic and non-Hispanic Black students had significantly higher normative scores than their non-Hispanic White counterparts; no significant ethnic differences on the other style scales were found. The structure of the factors on which each style loaded was stable across the three ethnic groups (see also Schwartz & Montgomery, 2002).

These limited findings suggest cross-cultural generalizability of identity-processing styles. However, these studies have been conducted within academic contexts—usually within university settings, where rational, informed reasoning is valued and encouraged. Whether the same pattern of relationships would be obtained within non-academic contexts is a question that has yet to be addressed.

The Development of Identity Style

Although the effect sizes are quite modest, there is some evidence for developmental changes in identity style scores. In a recent longitudinal study of early adolescents (age 13 at baseline), Berzonsky, Klimstra, Keijsers, and Meeus (2009) found significant linear increases in informational scores and decreases in normative scores over 4 years. Likewise, Luyckx et al. (2010) found that the informational scores of university students increased significantly over a 4-month interval. The possibility that familial processes and core personality traits such as the Big Five factors (Caspi, 1998) may contribute to the development of identity styles has received some consideration—as reviewed below.

Identity Style and Parental Processes

Several studies have investigated associations between parenting processes and identity styles. A diffuse-avoidant style has been found to be associated with parental practices that provide limited guidance and nurturance, such as permissiveness (Berzonsky, 2004b), negligible behavioral control (Smits et al., 2008), low levels of emotional support and expressiveness (Adams, Berzonsky, & Keating, 2006; Dunkel, Papini, & Berzonsky, 2008), and minimal communication and disclosure (Berzonsky, Branje, & Meeus, 2007). In contrast, a normative style generally is linked to more directive and supportive parental practices such as authoritative parenting (Berzonsky, 2004b), open communication (Berzonsky et al., 2007), family cohesiveness (Adams et al., 2006), and emotional closeness (Dunkel et al., 2008; Smits et al., 2008). The pattern of parental processes associated with an informational style, however, has been less consistent. Although Berzonsky (2004b) found that supportive, reason-based authoritative parental practices were associated with an informational style, other investigators have found an informational style to be related to more demanding, less rational practices such as manipulative psychological control (Smits et al., 2008) and parental solicitation of information (Berzonsky et al., 2007). In all of these studies, parental practices and attitudes were self-reported by the participants. It is possible that individuals with a normative style who identify strongly with their parents tend to perceive them in more positive light than individuals with an informational style, who may be more concerned with differentiating their own views from those of their parents. Assessing parental practices via multiple informants may provide more insight into this issue. It should be noted that a normative style is positively linked with rigid, authoritarian beliefs (Duriez & Soenens, 2006; Soenens, Duriez, et al., 2005), which seems inconsistent with the pattern of supportive parental correlates that have been found. Possible factors that moderate the relationship between a normative style and parenting processes need to be investigated,

such as the type of behaviors and reasoning strategies the parents model.

Identity Style and Personality Traits

Consistent links between identity styles and the Big Five personality traits (see Caspi, 1998) have also been found. Openness to experience is positively correlated with the informational style and negatively with the normative style (Berzonsky & Sullivan, 1992; Dollinger, 1995; Dollinger & Dollinger, 1997; Duriez et al., 2004; Irvine & Strahan, 1997). Conscientiousness is positively linked with the normative style and negatively with diffuse-avoidance (Dollinger, 1995; Dollinger & Dollinger, 1997; Dunkel et al., 2008; Duriez & Soenens, 2006; Duriez et al., 2004). Positive linkages between conscientiousness and an informational style and between neuroticism and diffuse-avoidance have also been found (Dollinger, 1995; Dollinger & Dollinger, 1997; Irvine & Strahan, 1997). Given that twin studies indicate that variation in these personality traits is highly heritable (Jang, Livesley, & Vernon, 1996; Lochlin, McCrae, Costa, & John, 1998), the possibility that genetic variation may play a role in the identity style that individuals adopt should be considered. Of course, heritability estimates indicate the percentage of trait variance explained by genetic factors given existing environmental conditions; they do not indicate how much of the variance would be controlled by genetic factors under a *different* set of environmental conditions.

Self-Regulatory Processes

According to my social cognitive model, to function at optimal levels, individuals need to effectively regulate and modify their internal processes and overt actions (Baumeister, Heatherton, & Tice, 1994). The self-theory provides the cognitive basis for understanding and interpreting self-relevant information, and it contains scripts and operative schemes for dealing with conflicts and environmental demands and the standards

and values against which information about the efficacy of adaptive strategies will be evaluated (Berzonsky, 1988, 1993). Adaptive efforts that fall short of a standard or desired state may create dissonance, or what Piaget referred to as disequilibrium, which may motivate accommodative efforts to revise aspects of the self-theory or identity structure (see also Kerpelman et al., 1997; Whitbourne, 1986). This regulatory cycle may be short-circuited in several ways.

Commitments and Self-Standards

Roy Baumeister and his colleagues (Baumeister & Heatherton, 1996; Baumeister et al., 1994) have indicated that self-regulation failures can occur for numerous reasons, including the absence of clear and stable self-standards. Individuals with a normative style have internalized the values, goals, and prescriptions of significant others, whereas those with an informational style may or may not have formed strong commitments: they may be currently engaged in the process of exploring different values, goals, and standards. Firm, strong goal commitments and standards are associated with the informational, and especially normative, styles, whereas diffuse-avoiders have weak commitments and standards (Berzonsky, 1989a, 1990, 2003; Berzonsky et al., 2003; Berzonsky & Luyckx, 2008). Commitments and convictions may provide people with a sense of purpose and direction and facilitate regulation by providing a referent for evaluating feedback; and their absence is likely to undercut regulatory effectiveness.

Individuals with different identity styles may also adopt different self-standpoints (Higgins, 1987) when considering themselves and their regulatory efforts. Individuals with an informational style are likely to highlight their own self-perspective; those with a normative style would adhere to the perspective of significant others (Berzonsky, 1994a). Both of these perspectives have an internal locus and should facilitate regulatory efforts. In contrast, diffuse-avoiders are more likely to adopt a standpoint dictated by

hedonistic concerns and to look to others for approval and guides about how to act and who to be in different situations, which undermines the effectiveness of regulatory efforts vis-à-vis long-term goals (Berzonsky, 2004a).

Self-Evaluative Processing

Biased self-evaluative processing may also impede self-regulatory efforts (Baumeister & Heatherton, 1996). Individuals with a normative style have a strong need for cognitive closure and selectively seek confirmatory information when evaluating hypotheses about themselves or about the world around them (Berzonsky, 1999; Duriez & Soenens, 2006; Soenens, Duriez, et al., 2005). As dogmatic self-theorists, their reasoning is motivated by a desire to reach conclusions dictated by pre-existing values and beliefs. Additionally, discrepant information that threatens one's self-views can be misinterpreted or dealt with defensively. Individuals with an informational style are relatively more motivated to process and evaluate evidence before drawing inferences and conclusions. As scientific self-theorists, they consider self-views to be hypothetical and strive to consider and evaluate plausible alternative explanations before drawing informed conclusions (Berzonsky, 1988). Individuals with a diffuse-avoidant style attempt to avoid or obscure potentially negative self-diagnostic feedback. Evidence reveals that the three identity styles are associated with different patterns of defensive mechanisms (Berzonsky & Kinney, 2008). Individuals with high informational scores rely on complex cognitive maneuvers that enable them to focus on responding adaptively by reinterpreting and downplaying the personal significance of potentially self-threatening information. Those with high normative scores rely on more maladaptive mechanisms that distort or deny self-discrepant feedback. Diffuse-avoidance is associated with relatively immature defensive maneuvers that direct blame and hostility outward toward others. Such maneuvers not only minimize personal responsibility, but also thwart problem-solving efforts and may reflect attempts

to at least publically preserve or bolster self-esteem (Berzonsky & Kinney, 2008).

Overriding Impulsive Reactions

Regulation may also break down when people are unwilling or unable to exercise self-control (Baumeister et al., 1994). Effective self-regulation requires the ability and motivation to override impulses and emotional responses that are likely to lead to undesirable outcomes. As Baumeister and Heatherton (1996, p. 2) note, “The problem is not that people have impulses; it is that they act on them.” Informational and normative styles are associated with characteristics and resources such as self-discipline, frustration tolerance, and conscientiousness (Berzonsky, 2005b; Dollinger, 1995), which are likely to enable them to effectively control and regulate their behavior in response to environmental demands and self-relevant feedback. However, an informational (but not normative) style is also positively associated with emotional and academic autonomy (Berzonsky & Kuk, 2005), self-efficacy (Hejazi, Shahraray, Farsinejad, & Asgary, 2009), emotional intelligence (Seaton & Beaumont, 2008), self-regulated learning (Jakubowski & Dembo, 2004), and an autonomous causality orientation (Soenens, Berzonsky, et al., 2005). Willpower (or impulse control) is also facilitated by deliberate cognitive control that shifts attention away from immediate temptations or enables one to override impulses by refocusing on long-term consequences (Metcalfe & Mischel, 1999). The regulatory efforts of individuals with an informational style tend to be self-determined; those with a normative style are more likely to be controlled by introjected standards and goals of significant others (Berzonsky, 2003; Soenens, Berzonsky, et al., 2005; Soenens & Vansteenkiste, Chapter 17, this volume). In well-structured situations characterized by relatively stable demands and problems, both normative and personally informed commitments and standards should enable individuals to be relatively effective and successful. Differences may be

more marked, however, in situations characterized by change and diversity where more flexible, resourceful, self-reliant behaviors and efforts are necessary.

Diffuse-avoiders, in contrast, are less likely to possess the resources to successfully regulate their behavior in either type of situation. They tend to be impulsive, hedonistic, and self-centered, and they have an impersonal causality orientation—believing that they are ineffective with minimal personal control over what happens to them (Berzonsky & Kuk, 2005; Soenens, Berzonsky, et al., 2005). Of course, emotional reactions do not necessarily always interfere with self-regulation. Guilt, for instance, may facilitate self-control by signaling the violation of personal standards and motivating attempts to redress the harm that occurred (Baumeister & Heatherton, 1996). Tangney and her colleagues have found that adaptive guilt reactions, as measured by the Test of Self-Conscious Affect (TOSCA), are associated with perspective taking, empathy, efforts to deal with anger-provoking situations constructively by discussing corrective actions, and a tendency to engage in cognitive reappraisals about the role self and others may have played in initiating the situation (Tangney, 1991; Tangney, Wagner, Hill-Barlow, Marschall, & Gramzow, 1996). An informational style is associated with guilt reactions as measured by the TOSCA, whereas a diffuse-avoidant style is correlated with shame reactions that are associated with feelings of being worthless and ineffective and maladaptive ways of handling anger (Lutwak et al., 1998). Consistent with the view that diffuse-avoidance reflects ineffective regulatory processes, research indicates that, compared to their informational and normative counterparts, diffuse-avoiders experience more problems, including higher levels of depression and neuroticism (Dollinger, 1995; Nurmi et al., 1997), more conduct disorders and delinquency (Adams et al., 2001; Adams, Munro, Munro, Doherty-Poirer, & Edwards, 2005; White & Jones, 1996), disordered eating (Wheeler, Adams, & Keating, 2001), and greater use of illegal drugs and alcohol (Jones, Ross, & Hartmann, 1992; White, Montgomery, Wampler, & Fischer, 2003).

Identity-Processing Style and Self-Continuity

A sense of identity enables individuals to maintain a sense of coherent self-unity over time and space despite the physical, social, and psychological changes they experience (Erikson, 1964). People receive optical, acoustical, and kinetic information that objectively specifies their location in and interactions with the world (Neisser, 1994). Objective stimulus information, however, only indicates where people are and what they are doing in the present, not what they have done in the past. Mentally representing events and experiences in the form of, for instance, schemas and episodic memories (Tulving, 1972) enables people to recapture the past. Distinguishing representations based on past information from those based on current information provides a basis for realizing that one's existence transcends the present: "I am the person who did that." Of course, neither information nor memories speak for themselves; their meaning and significance is constructed and reconstructed within a person's broader self-theory. The cognitive integration and transformation of representations provides a basis for envisioning future possibilities and acting with foresight: the hypothetical meta-representations or second-order cognitive operations that emerge make it possible to think in a goal-oriented fashion and hypothesize that "I am the person who will do that" (see, for example, Boyer, 2008; Conway, 2003). Having the cognitive wherewithal to recapture the past and to mentally envision future goals and outcomes is liberating in that it enables individuals to cognitively entertain possibilities and alternatives not presently being experienced. However, especially during adolescence, these advanced cognitive resources, coupled with other pubertal, social, and psychological changes, can undermine the epistemological foundation upon which existing beliefs, goals, and self-views have been built (Chandler, 1987). Not only do pubertal changes usher in the need to revise and modify the body image one has taken for granted, but advances in cognitive reasoning may enable

youth to consider views, life options, and value systems other than the ones they have grown up with and accepted without question. These advances in cognitive resources may undermine the certainty with which previous views and values have been held and underscore the relativistic and subjective nature of making life choices and forming commitments. Such epistemological crises may destabilize their self-theory and create the challenge of restructuring it in an effort to maintain a sense of personal sameness and persistence over time.

Marcia (2003) proposed that identity-processing styles may be associated with different strategies for warranting a sense of self-continuity (Chandler et al., 2003). Although direct linkages with Chandler's strategies have not been investigated, identity-processing styles are associated with structural differences in self-theories (Berzonsky, 1989b; Berzonsky & Adams, 1999; Berzonsky, Rice, & Neimeyer, 1990; Dunkel, 2005). An informed, self-exploratory approach to identity formation is associated with a self-theory composed of well-integrated but differentiated self-constructs, which should provide a flexible sense of self-unity and wholeness. Diffuse-avoidance is associated with poorly integrated personal constructs that appear to reflect a fragmented sense of self. Lacking a stable and coherent sense of self, diffuse-avoiders look outward to others and social cues to define who they are. A normative approach to identity formation is associated with an integrated self-theory—one that consists of rigidly organized self-constructs that are steadfastly conserved. Internalized collective elements—such as religious or nationalistic views—provide a normative sense of self that persists over time (see also Berzonsky, 1994a, 2005b).

Concluding Comments

A social-cognitive model of identity is presented in this chapter. People are viewed as different types of self-theorists who rely on different cognitive processes to encode self-relevant information and to construct and reconstruct or maintain a sense of identity. An extensive review of empirical research

has indicated that an informational processing style is associated with both rational and automatic processing, whereas a normative style is more exclusively automatic. It is possible that the automatic processing associated with the normative and informational style occurs for different reasons. The normative style may primarily reflect a “mindless” process (Langer, 1989) of prematurely internalizing beliefs and commitments without deliberate conscious effort (see Berzonsky, 1988). The automaticity associated with an informational style, in contrast, may mainly involve views and commitments originally formed via mentally effortful reasoning that subsequently became automatic and required less effort and resources as they are repeatedly accessed and utilized. A diffuse-avoidant style is negatively associated with rational processing; it appears to be driven mainly by external demands and consequences. Evidence indicates that individuals with high informational scores tend to be more effective along a number of social, cognitive, and personality dimensions than their diffuse-avoidant counterparts, whereas people with high normative scores generally fall somewhere in between.

Identity-processing styles, however, do not appear to be inherently good or bad. Personal effectiveness is considered to be an interactive function of individuals and environmental contexts; the functional utility of a particular style would appear to depend on how well it fits the demands and consequences that individuals face. In relatively stable, tradition-oriented contexts, a normative style appears to be quite functional. In technologically advanced Western cultures characterized by relatively rapid change and transition, an informational style may be more adaptive than a normative style. Some have argued that in a relativistic, postmodern world, a diffuse-avoidant—or at least “fluid”—identity orientation may maximize adaptive flexibility (see Gergen, 1991). To the extent that diffuse-avoidance is associated with such “flexibility,” most likely its effectiveness will be moderated by an individual’s level of ability and skills

such as, for instance, general intelligence or verbal facility (Berzonsky & Ferrari, 2009). Of course, demands and problems within cultural contexts are not homogeneous, and a normative style has been found to be relatively adaptive for at least some individuals within modern Western cultures on dimensions such as career planning, educational involvement, and self-regulation (Berzonsky & Kuk, 2000, 2005); self-esteem and self-worth (Beaumont & Zukanovic, 2005; Phillips & Pittman, 2007); and emotional intelligence (Seaton & Beaumont, 2008). Given the available evidence, however, it appears that an informational style may generally provide the best fit for coping with the challenges and benefiting from the opportunities afforded by the institutionalized moratoria made possible by attendance in a university context. It remains to be determined whether the same is true outside of the university context.

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Processes of Personal Identity Formation and Evaluation

4

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Abstract

In the present chapter, we propose a process-oriented model suited to map personal identity development across different phases of the lifespan and in different domains of identity. Primarily inspired by Marcia's (1966) identity status paradigm, this model unpacks the dimensions of exploration and commitment into five distinctive but interrelated identity dimensions: three forms of exploration (ruminative, in-breadth, and in-depth) and two forms of commitment (commitment making and identification). In doing so, the model focuses on both the development and the evaluation of one's personal identity and enables researchers to distinguish between more and less adaptive identity strategies. Special attention is paid to developmental issues, antecedents, and concomitants of this identity model and to how the different dimensions of the model—and the statuses derived based on this model—are related to psychosocial (self-esteem, depressive symptoms, and anxiety) and health (illness adaptation, coping) outcomes in non-clinical and clinical populations. Suggestions for individually and contextually based intervention strategies are provided.

The present chapter focuses on a process-oriented approach to personal identity development (Luyckx, Goossens, & Soenens, 2006), strongly grounded in Marcia's (1966) seminal identity status paradigm (see Kroger & Marcia, Chapter 2, this volume) and in extensions of this paradigm. The present chapter consists of four

general sections. First, we outline the identity status paradigm and some neo-Eriksonian models that have been introduced as extensions of this paradigm (Lichtwarck-Aschoff, van Geert, Bosma, & Kunnen, 2008; Schwartz, 2001). We particularly attend to integrative theoretical viewpoints that bring together various neo-Eriksonian perspectives on identity and that served as important sources of inspiration for the model we developed. Second, we introduce an integrative model of identity development, focusing on the processes involved in both the formation and the evaluation of identity commitments.

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The developmental trajectories of the constituent identity dimensions throughout the adolescent and emerging adult years are outlined. Important antecedents, correlates, and consequences of the identity dimensions are discussed. Third, in an attempt to explain the paradoxical association of identity exploration with both positive and maladaptive psychosocial outcomes, we distinguish between reflective and ruminative components of exploration. Based on this new extended identity model, we empirically derive identity statuses, further extending Marcia's identity status paradigm. We describe ways in which these identity dimensions and statuses are related to psychosocial and health outcomes in normative (high-school students, college students, and working emerging adults) and clinical populations (such as individuals with a chronic illness). Finally, some suggestions for interventions are provided with a focus on promoting adaptive exploratory strategies and encouraging the formation of self-endorsed commitments (Schwartz, Kurtines, & Montgomery, 2005).

The Identity Status Paradigm and Its Extensions

Erikson and Marcia as Founding Fathers

The model of identity development proposed in this chapter is grounded in Erikson's (1950, 1968) and Marcia's (1966) work (Kroger & Marcia, Chapter 2, this volume). Erikson's seminal theory emphasizes identity development as the most prominent developmental task of adolescence, and identity maintenance and revision as an important developmental task during adulthood (cf. Kroger, 2007). Erikson conceptualized identity as a multidimensional construct tapping into cognitive, moral, cultural, and social aspects and encompassing different levels of analysis (including personal and social dimensions). For Erikson, identity refers primarily to a subjective feeling of sameness and continuity across time and across contexts, and it is best represented by a single bipolar dimension ranging from identity synthesis to identity confusion. *Identity synthesis*

refers to a reworking of childhood identifications into a larger and self-determined set of ideals, values, and goals, whereas *identity confusion* represents an inability to develop a workable set of goals and commitments on which to base an adult identity (Schwartz, 2001). Importantly, Erikson stressed that identity is never "final" and continues to develop through the lifespan. Due to both normative developmental changes and transactions with the environment, one's identity is subject to change and transformation. This core assumption of identity development as an ongoing psychosocial task has guided the identity model that we (Luyckx, Goossens, & Soenens, 2006) have developed.

Although a number of writers attempted to operationalize Erikson's theoretical and clinical writings for empirical research, the identity status paradigm (Kroger & Marcia, Chapter 2, this volume; Marcia, 1966, 1980) was the first neo-Eriksonian identity model to inspire a significant research literature. Indeed, many personal identity researchers base themselves on the identity status paradigm—or on other models that expand in significant ways on the concept of identity status (Schwartz, 2001). As explained in Kroger and Marcia (Chapter 2, this volume), Marcia's primary objective was to identify key identity processes described by Erikson and to operationalize them for empirical research. By targeting the dimensions of exploration (consideration of multiple identity alternatives) and commitment (making a choice to adhere to one or more of the alternatives considered)—and by specifying how they intersect to derive identity statuses—Marcia attempted to identify psychological or behavioral markers of an underlying identity structure.

Each identity status represents a combination of levels (present or absent) of exploration and commitment. Both achievement and foreclosure are characterized by the presence of identity commitments but differ in the degree to which the person has explored prior to enacting the commitment. Achievement is characterized by commitments following a period of exploration, whereas foreclosure is characterized by commitments enacted without much prior exploration. Both moratorium and diffusion are

characterized by the relative absence of commitment but differ in terms of whether the person is engaging in systematic identity exploration. Individuals in moratorium are currently exploring potential life choices, whereas diffused individuals have engaged in little or no systematic identity exploration. Abundant research, mostly cross-sectional, has focused on the presumed antecedents, correlates, and outcomes of these statuses (Kroger & Marcia, [Chapter 2](#), this volume; Marcia, 1993).

Influential Neo-Eriksonian Extensions

Since the mid-1980s, a number of authors have proposed models that expand on the identity statuses (Schwartz, 2001). Some of these perspectives are reviewed in this book (e.g., Berzonsky, [Chapter 3](#), this volume; and Waterman, [Chapter 16](#), this volume). Schwartz (2001) and Lichtwarck-Aschoff et al. (2008) have reviewed these different perspectives and have organized them into logical groupings. In the next sections, rather than trying to classify neo-Eriksonian models into groupings, we briefly describe some of these different neo-Eriksonian perspectives and explain how they inspired us to develop an integrated process-oriented model. More specifically, three models will be briefly discussed: Grotevant's (1987) process model, Kerpelman's (Kerpelman, Pittman, & Lamke, 1997) identity control model, and Bosma and Kunnen's (2001) transactional model.

First, Grotevant (1987) focused on exploration—which he defined as “problem-solving behavior aimed at eliciting information about oneself or one’s environment in order to make a decision about an important life choice” (p. 204)—as the process underlying identity development (see Berzonsky, [Chapter 3](#), this volume, for similar ideas). As such, he framed exploration at the heart of identity work in late adolescence and emerging adulthood. Identity exploration, as conceptualized by Grotevant, involves five interrelated factors that interact over time as the individual moves toward making commitments: (a) initial expectations and beliefs

that guide and shape the exploration process; (b) hypothesis-testing behaviors conducted by the individual; (c) the degree of energy and affective investment in existing commitments (which is hypothesized to constrain exploration); (d) the degree to which competing alternatives are judged as attractive, or the presence of counterbalancing factors that discourage further exploration (such as a romantic relationship that may lead one to decline opportunities to explore careers in faraway places); and (e) interim evaluations of one’s progress, as a way of determining whether further exploration is necessary.

Consistent with a constructivist perspective on identity (for a discussion on constructivist vs. discovery perspectives, see Soenens & Vansteenkiste, [Chapter 17](#), this volume; Vignoles, Schwartz, & Luyckx, [Chapter 1](#), this volume; Waterman, [Chapter 16](#), this volume), Grotevant (1987) hypothesized that both assimilation (i.e., incorporating new information into an existing identity structure) and accommodation (i.e., transforming the existing structure to include new information) occur during identity exploration. Commitments enacted as a result of the exploration process become integrated into a newly consolidated sense of identity, which may contribute to a feeling of personal continuity over time (Dunkel, 2005). The individual then is charged with determining how satisfying and self-concordant this new identity is and how well it fits with the contexts in which one operates. These goodness-of-fit evaluations then cycle back to influence one’s desire and motivation to engage in further identity work and to consider additional alternatives (Crocetti, Rubini, & Meeus, 2008). If one’s commitments are judged as unsatisfactory, one may resume the process of exploration. This may occur as a result of recurrent evaluations of one’s current commitments, mandated by situational changes, individual growth, or other new information (Schwartz, 2001). In short, Grotevant alluded to the importance of both the *formation* and the continuous *evaluation* of identity commitments, and both these processes were proposed to influence each other in reciprocal fashion.

Second, identity control theory (Kerpelman et al., 1997) was proposed as an extension of Grotevant's (1987) model in an attempt to target the microprocesses that drive exploration and identity development. Identity control theory views identity development as a series of recurrent feedback loops intended to minimize the discrepancy between one's self-perceptions and the feedback received from others. Interpersonal feedback is most strongly valued when it originates from significant others, such as parents, peers, or romantic partners (Kerpelman et al., 1997; Schwartz, 2001). When the self-perception and the interpersonal feedback are incongruent, either the specific self-perception or the social situation itself is changed to produce congruence between the self-perception and personal standard (assimilation), or—when the latter course of action fails—the person's identity undergoes more comprehensive changes (accommodation). This process is repeated until the identity standard or goal is validated or modified. Again in line with Grotevant's model, Kerpelman et al. indicate that forming an initial sense of identity is an important first step. However, much identity work centers on evaluating how well this sense of identity fits with (internalized) personal standards and goals. For instance, Kerpelman et al. conceptualized exploration partially as a way to obtain feedback—both intra- and inter-personally—on current identity configurations and to evaluate the choices one has made in comparison with the identity goals that one holds.

Finally, much like the models introduced by Grotevant and by Kerpelman and colleagues, Bosma and Kunnen (2001) argued that identity development can be described as a sequence of short-term re-occurring transactions between a person and her or his context. Continuous identity work leads to confirmation of, or changes in, one's existing identity commitments. A balance between assimilation and accommodation is necessary for the development of a mature, flexible, and coherent identity. By defining identity development as changes in the strength and quality of commitments, Bosma and Kunnen (2001) recast commitment as a process rather than as an outcome. That is, commitments are continuously

evaluated, and maintained or changed as a result of this evaluation—rather than representing the endpoint of the identity development process.

To summarize, whereas the identity status model initially focused primarily on the formation of identity commitments (e.g., Marcia, 1966, 1980, 1993; Waterman, 1982), the distinction between identity formation and evaluation was made explicit by Grotevant (1987), among others. Subsequent theorizing suggested that formative and evaluative processes complement and influence each other, and should be included within a larger and more comprehensive model. However, at that point in the evolution of the identity status paradigm, no systematic attempts had been made to integrate commitment formation and commitment evaluation into a single empirically based model of personal identity development. In other fields of identity, however, such efforts have been undertaken. For example, with respect to sexual identity development (Dillon & Worthington, Chapter 27, this volume), Worthington, Navarro, Savoy, and Hampton (2008) developed an instrument to assess four identity dimensions (commitment, exploration, identity uncertainty, and synthesis or integration), enabling researchers to capture both development and revision of sexual identity.

A Process-Oriented Approach to Identity Formation and Evaluation

Introducing Four Interrelated Dimensions

Through the use of confirmatory factor analysis, Luyckx, Goossens, Soenens, and Beyers (2006) were able to validate a four-dimensional model consisting of exploration in breadth, commitment making, exploration in depth, and identification with commitment. Underlying this model is an unpacking of both commitment and exploration into two separate but interrelated dimensions apiece. The model includes processes of commitment formation and commitment evaluation—each of which includes one dimension of exploration and one dimension of commitment. The

commitment formation process of our model captures the dimensions by which adolescents select one of many possible identity alternatives. We refer to the dimensions involved in commitment formation as *exploration in breadth* and *commitment making* (Luyckx, Goossens, & Soenens, et al., 2006), and these dimensions are commonly captured in measures based on Marcia's (1966) identity status paradigm. Exploration in breadth refers to the gathering, both internally and externally, of information on various identity alternatives (indexed using items such as "I think actively about different directions I might take in my life" and "I think about different goals that I might pursue"). Commitment making refers to enacting strong choices in different identity domains, perhaps as a result of exploration in breadth (indexed using items such as "I have decided on the direction I am going to follow in my life" and "I have plans for what I am going to do in the future").

Approaches to commitment evaluation have concentrated primarily on the appraisal and reformulation of identity commitments (e.g., Bosma & Kunnen, 2001; Kerpeiman et al., 1997; Meeus, 1996). These approaches highlight the dimensions by which adolescents continuously evaluate their identity commitments. We refer to these dimensions as *exploration in depth* and *identification with commitment* (Luyckx, Goossens, & Soenens, et al., 2006). Exploration in depth refers to introspective mechanisms, gathering information, and talking with others about current commitments (i.e., commitments one has already made) in order to evaluate them (Meeus, 1996). Exploration in depth is indexed using items such as "I think about whether my plans for the future really suit me" and "I try to find out what other people think about the specific direction I decided to take in my life". Identification with commitment refers to the degree of security and certainty experienced with regard to one's existing commitments and to how well these commitments fit with one's own standards and wishes (Bosma, 1985). This dimension is indexed using items such as "My plans for the future match with my true interests and values" and "I am sure that my plans for the future are the right ones

for me". Prior to the introduction of our model, both of these terms had already been used to some extent by authors such as Bosma (1985), Grotevant (1987), and Marcia (1993).

Identification with commitment bears some similarity to the idea of person-commitment fit advanced in Waterman's (1992, Chapter 16, this volume) eudaimonic identity theory and in Deci and Ryan's (2002) self-determination theory (Soenens & Vansteenkiste, Chapter 17, this volume). Waterman defines *personal expressiveness* (an index of person-commitment fit) as engagement in self-defining activities and commitments that draw upon one's fundamental purposes in life. Personal expressiveness thus refers to the degree to which a person's sense of identity corresponds to her or his unique potentials (Waterman, 1990). Personal expressiveness also serves as an index of intrinsic motivation (Waterman et al., 2003), in that individuals experience a special fit or meshing with, and an unusually intense involvement in, their activities or commitments. When the alternatives that one considers, and to which one commits, are consistent with one's potentials (cf. the notion of autonomy within self-determination theory), commitment making might constitute a path to self-discovery (Schwartz, 2002; Schwartz, Mullis, Waterman, & Dunham, 2000).

To clarify the meaning of these four different dimensions, take, for example, an individual who enrolls in college. After she has explored various possibilities for academic majors through, for instance, reading flyers or talking with others (exploration in breadth), she might choose one specific major (commitment making). The fact that she chooses a major does not imply that the identity process is finished. She will probably continue to gather information and turn her attention inward to evaluate the choice being made (exploration in depth). Gathering information about that specific choice can lead to a growing conviction that the chosen major is the right one (identification with that major will strengthen) or, conversely, that the chosen major is not the right one (identification with that major will weaken). If the person decides that this major is not the correct one, then exploration in

breadth may resume and a broad-based search for different alternatives might start again. In sum, a critical characteristic of this developmental sequence is its reciprocal nature (Bosma & Kunnen, 2001; Grotevant, 1987; Kerpelman et al., 1997). Identity development has often been characterized as an alternation of exploration and re-evaluation (Arnett, 2004; Bosma & Kunnen, 2001; Stephen, Fraser, & Marcia, 1992). Exploration in depth and identification with commitment interact in such a way that not only does exploration in depth influence identification with commitment but also (a lack of) identification with commitment can influence the need for a prolonged exploration in depth of those commitments or, as outlined in the above example, a renewed exploration in breadth of alternatives. Figure 4.1 presents a simplified graphical presentation of the interplay among the four identity dimensions as illustrated in the example. Again, the double-headed arrows emphasize the reciprocal nature of the relationships among these dimensions.

Exploration in breadth and in depth share some common themes in that they are both characterized, and probably prompted, by being information-oriented and by maintaining an open and flexible approach to life (Berzonsky, Chapter 3, this volume). This contention is supported by the substantial correlation (r 's range from 0.47 to 0.66, p 's < 0.001; mean $r = 0.55$) obtained between these two exploration dimensions in a series of Belgian studies using the Dimensions of Identity Development Scale¹ (DIDS; Luyckx, Schwartz, Berzonsky, et al., 2008). However, these two dimensions

likely differ in their target and goal (i.e., choosing from different alternatives vs. evaluating current commitments) and in the specific strategies involved (i.e., more externally oriented and broad-based vs. more internally based; Berzonsky & Luyckx, 2008). Relatedly, longitudinal research has documented that these dimensions do not develop in tandem; increases (or decreases) in exploration in breadth may not necessarily be accompanied by increases (or decreases) in exploration in depth, and vice versa (Luyckx, Goossens, & Soenens, 2006).

Commitment making and identification with commitment also share a substantial amount of variance in Belgian studies using the DIDS (r 's range from 0.62 to 0.69, p 's < 0.001; mean $r = 0.66$), likely due to the fact that enacting strong identity choices generally generates feelings and perceptions of security and certainty. Further, changes in both these dimensions were substantially and positively related across time: increases (or decreases) in commitment making were positively related to increases (or decreases) in identification with commitment (Luyckx, Goossens, & Soenens, 2006). However, as demonstrated later in the present chapter, commitment making and identification with commitment do not always accompany one another. Further, the distinction between these dimensions sheds new empirical light on the link between identity and psychosocial adjustment. Two studies (Luyckx, Goossens, & Soenens, et al., 2006; Luyckx, Schwartz, Berzonsky, et al., 2008) indicated that, when looking at unique associations, identification with commitment was substantially related to various indicators of psychosocial adjustment,

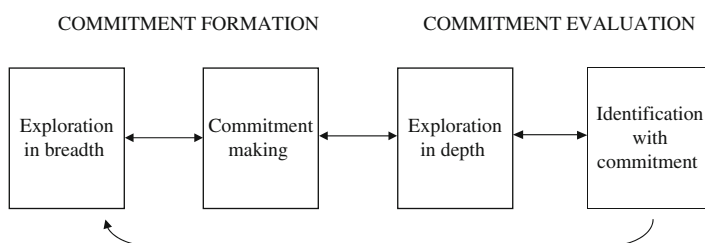


Fig. 4.1 Integrating commitment formation and commitment evaluation processes

whereas commitment making was largely unrelated to these outcome measures.

We argue that the current model applies not only to chosen identities across the lifespan (such as occupational identity) but also to ascribed identities (i.e., personal characteristics over which one has no personal control), such as one's race or ethnicity (Umaña-Taylor, [Chapter 33](#), this volume) and having been adopted (Grotevant & Von Korff, [Chapter 24](#), this volume). In such cases, the model provides insights into how individuals assess and evaluate what these ascribed identities *mean* to them. For instance, being adopted or being male or female may carry different meanings for different individuals, and these meanings can be explored, committed to, and subsequently identified with or revisited. So, although these four identity dimensions are thought to characterize identity development in general, individual differences exist both in the extent to which individuals utilize these processes and in the extent to which these processes develop and influence each other across time (Luyckx, Goossens, & Soenens, 2006). For instance, for foreclosed adolescents—those who latch onto the values and choices provided by significant others without considering other alternatives (Marcia, 1966, 1980)—a thorough exploration in breadth prior to making commitments is largely absent. Further, when individuals experience the commitments they have enacted as personally expressive (whether or not these commitments resulted from a period of exploration in breadth), they may feel less inclined to proceed to an in-depth affective or socio-cognitive evaluation of their commitments (i.e., exploration in depth). The congruence between the commitments made and the person's potentials and wishes may decrease the need for re-evaluation of the choices enacted, resulting in a high degree of identification with commitment without the need for extensive exploration in depth.

The theorizing underlying our model has recently inspired other neo-Eriksonian researchers to develop similar process-oriented models. For instance, Crocetti, Rubini, & Meeus (2008) have proposed an 3D identity model, consisting

of commitment, in-depth exploration, and reconsideration of commitment (see Klimstra, Hale, Raaijmakers, Branje, & Meeus, 2010 for a longitudinal investigation using this model). Reconsideration of commitment bears some similarity to exploration in breadth because it encompasses sorting through different alternatives. The impetus for this search, however, comes from evaluating current commitments and finding that they are no longer sufficient or satisfying. As such, similar to our work, the model introduced by Crocetti et al. (2008) explicitly focuses on some of the mechanisms involved in constructing and revising one's identity (Klimstra, Luyckx, Hale, Meeus, van Lier, & Frijns, 2010).

Assessing Identity Development Across Time

Most of the work based on our model has been conducted with a longitudinal dataset in which these identity dimensions were assessed seven times with semi-annual measurement waves in a sample of college students (i.e., the Leuven Trajectories of Identity Development Study or L-TIDES; Luyckx, Schwartz, Goossens, Soenens, & Beyers, 2008). This design enabled us to examine how these dimensions develop and relate to one another across time. [Figure 4.2](#) illustrates the mean observed developmental trends for the total sample across time.

Changes in the dimensions of commitment formation and evaluation appeared to be limited and gradual, with no steep increases or decreases. Further, the initial levels of these identity dimensions (scores could range between 1 and 5) were already quite elevated when our participants entered university at Wave 1. These findings suggest that commitment formation and evaluation begin to take place during the high-school years (for empirical evidence of this, see [Chapter 2](#); Klimstra, Hale, et al., 2010; Meeus, van de Schoot, Keijsers, Schwartz, & Branje, 2010; Kroger & Marcia, [Chapter 2](#), this volume). Interestingly, the observed trajectory of identification with commitment seemed to

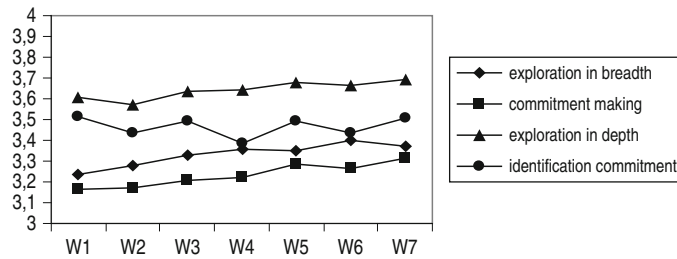


Fig. 4.2 Mean observed developmental trends of four identity dimensions in L-TIDES (W = measurement wave)

fluctuate somewhat from one measurement wave to the next. These developmental changes could very well reflect a continuous evaluative process, which has been hypothesized to represent a core mechanism in identity evaluation (Kerpelman et al., 1997). The fact that these fluctuations emerged in averaged group data may have indicated that, given the fact that all participants in the Luyckx, Schwartz, Goossens, Soenens, et al. (2008) study were college students from the same academic department, important contextual factors (such as having exams twice a year) may have influenced their identity development to some extent.

Latent growth curve analyses reported by Luyckx and colleagues (2008) indicated that, on average, commitment making and exploration in depth increased linearly over time (see also Meeus, Iedema, Helsen, & Vollebergh, 1999). Exploration in breadth showed a linear increase over time combined with a negative quadratic slope, signaling that the linear increase leveled off toward the end of the study. Apparently, the motivation to engage in a broad exploration of different alternatives might stabilize or even decrease as the strength of commitments continues to increase (Grotevant, 1987). Relatedly, when people come close to finishing their university studies, they need to figure out what they will do with their lives, which means they need to stop exploring to some extent and make commitments. Of course, a thorough exploration in breadth may occur again later on in adulthood—such as during the “midlife crisis.” Identification with commitment showed a linear decrease over time, coupled with a positive quadratic slope. This means that the linear decrease leveled off during the course

of the study and that the scores showed an upward trend toward the end.

Typologies of Identity Formation in Adolescence and Adulthood

To this point, we described identity development at the group level and have focused on the developmental trajectories of the four identity dimensions, averaging across subgroups that might be characterized by different change trajectories. Recently, Kunnen (2009) investigated identity formation at the individual level and assessed the ways in which 28 psychology students developed across a period of 3 years with respect to their educational commitments. She found evidence for substantial individual differences in developmental pathways. Importantly, several authors have stressed this heterogeneity or diversity in identity development in adolescence and (emerging) adulthood in the literature and, consequently, have distinguished—empirically, theoretically, or both—among different identity statuses, classes, or trajectories. As demonstrated in Table 4.1, across studies, these classes appear to be consistent with Marcia’s original model, despite the fact that the dimensions used to assign individuals to these classes differ across studies. This set of status groups (with some additional variants identified) was again supported by Kunnen (2009) in her qualitative study.

In this subsection, we explore various typologies that have been developed to characterize longitudinal changes in identity. One of the earliest researchers to focus on this issue was Josselson (1996), who extended Marcia’s (1966)

Table 4.1 Existing typologies of identity formation in adolescence and adulthood

Author(s)	Class labels			
Marcia (1966)	Achievement	Moratorium	Foreclosure	Diffusion
Josselson (1996)	Pathmakers	Searchers	Guardians	Drifters
Côté & Levine (2002)	Resolvers	Searchers	Guardians	Drifters/refusers
Helson & Srivastava (2001)	Achievers	Seekers	Conservers	Depleted

identity status approach into midlife through a qualitative longitudinal study of women's development, beginning at the end of college. Josselson assumed that Marcia's four identity statuses represented identity trajectories, or characterological ways of approaching identity issues throughout adulthood. Indeed, supporting this assumption, the identity status to which young women were assigned in college was found to predict the ways in which they dealt with challenges throughout adulthood. In early adulthood, pathmakers were taking on new challenges, whereas guardians continued to feel firm in the commitments they had adopted from significant others early in their lives. Searchers continued to experience substantial ambivalence and self-doubt, and drifters were still unable to find meaning in their lives. By middle age, all groups had increased in awareness, albeit in different ways. By that time, pathmakers had integrated new aspects into their ever-evolving sense of self; guardians had learned to make their own decisions; and searchers had moved toward a clearer sense of self-definition. Only the drifters continued to stand out because their increased awareness had only allowed them to accept themselves and their histories, without finding their place in life.

Côté and Levine (2002) distinguished among five identity strategies theorized as being common in late-modern societies. Resolvers are actively engaged in the process of forming an identity, fully capitalizing on opportunities provided within society, and motivated by a desire to optimize their potentials. Searchers are often driven by unrealistically high standards, rendering them unable to form a steady set of commitments. They seem to be locked in a perpetual state of identity exploration and are in despair about their inability to enact or sustain commitments.

In contrast, guardians have internalized the values of their parents or of society, providing them with a set of strict guidelines to move into adulthood. However, the rather rigid and change-insensitive nature of this process could prevent them from growing intellectually and emotionally. Finally, refusers and drifters evidence a lack of steady commitments to an adult lifestyle and community. These two subgroups are distinguished in terms of the personal resources they have at their disposal (both tangible and intangible resources, such as family wealth or occupational skills). Whereas refusers have few resources at their disposal, drifters are more resourceful, but they seem unable or uninterested in using the resources available to them.

Finally, Helson and Srivastava (2001) distinguished among four distinct classes of personality development in midlife women, based upon two underlying dimensions (environmental mastery and personal growth; Ryff, 1989). Environmental mastery was defined as the ability to achieve a good fit with one's environment and to develop a sense of mastery in managing and relating to one's surroundings. Personal growth was defined as the ability to see the self as growing and expanding in ways that reflect increasing self-knowledge and effectiveness. Individuals scoring high on both dimensions were labeled achievers, displaying a conscientious, outgoing orientation and identity integration. Individuals scoring high on personal growth but low on environmental mastery were labeled seekers. They were open to new experiences and evidenced the greatest amounts of identity exploration. Individuals scoring high on environmental mastery but low on personal growth were labeled conservers, and these individuals were motivated to seek security and were described as readily accepting social norms and values. Finally,

individuals scoring low on both dimensions were labeled as depleted—lacking confidence, psychological resources, and identity integration.

Building on these previous models (and especially on Josselson's developmental typology), Luyckx, Schwartz, Goossens, et al. (2008) empirically identified four developmental trajectory classes: pathmakers, searchers, guardians, and consolidators. No separate class of diffusions or drifters was empirically identified. It is possible that individuals matching the drifter profile may have dropped out of the longitudinal study after one or two assessment waves (the class solution was derived using only those individuals who participated in at least three of the seven waves of data collection).

Pathmakers displayed high scores on all four identity dimensions, and these scores—except for identification with commitment—increased across time. These individuals were also characterized by moderate or high levels of well-being. Pathmakers appear to be active in forming, evaluating, and strengthening their commitments—characteristic of what Côté and colleagues (Côté & Levine, 2002; Schwartz, Côté, & Arnett, 2005) have labeled as developmental individualization. Developmental individualization represents a conscious search for growth opportunities (see also Stephen et al., 1992 for description of the experiential orientation and Berzonsky's, Chapter 3, this volume, for description of the information-oriented style). The developmentally individualized person transacts with the environment in a purposeful way and takes advantage of social possibilities in an active manner to form, develop, and evaluate her or his identity on the way to self-realization (Côté, 2002; Schwartz, 2002; Waterman, Chapter 16, this volume).

Searchers scored low on the commitment dimensions and high on the exploration dimensions. They were exploring various alternatives in breadth, but they were also evaluating tentative commitments. A substantial portion of searchers were characterized by fairly high and stable levels of distress (see also Luyckx, Schwartz, Berzonsky, et al., 2008; Schwartz, Zamboanga, Weisskirch, & Rodriguez, 2009). These individuals are likely characterized by

default individualization—a passive and confused approach to transacting with the social environment (Côté & Schwartz, 2002; Schwartz, Côté, et al., 2005)—which may interfere with the development and evaluation of commitments (Stephen et al., 1992). However, many searchers reported moderate levels of well-being, and about 20% of individuals in this class were characterized by high levels of self-esteem and low levels of depressive symptoms. Apparently, intense identity searching can be associated with some distress, but it may also serve as the route to personal growth (Arnett, 2000; Helson & Srivastava, 2001) and hence should be viewed in the light of personal development or self-discovery (Schwartz, 2002; Waterman, Chapter 16, this volume). As we note below, the extent to which exploration is associated with self-discovery or with distress likely depends partially on the quality and coherence of the exploration process itself (Luyckx, Schwartz, Berzonsky, et al., 2008).

Guardians displayed stable and moderate scores on all four identity dimensions across time. These individuals appeared to be rather closed to new identity options and tended not to explore their current commitments in depth. These individuals—to some degree—resemble “firm” or “closed” foreclosures (Archer & Waterman, 1990; Kroger, 1995), who tend to react defensively to information that threatens their identity. Schwartz, Côté, et al. (2005) found foreclosed individuals to have elevated scores on indices of default individualization, referring to a life course dictated by circumstance, with little agentic assertion on the part of the person (Côté, 2000).

Finally, consolidators represented a relatively new identity trajectory class. Their main identity work appeared to be evaluating and consolidating their current identity commitments. They tended to score highly on commitment making, accompanied by a strong upward trend across time. Exploration in breadth, however, was relatively low. Exploration in depth and identification with commitment were initially high and remained so over time. Virtually all consolidators reported moderate to high levels of well-being across time. Archer and Waterman (1990) described

a more adaptable subcategory of foreclosure—open foreclosure—that, to some extent, resembles this consolidator class. Open foreclosures are described in the literature as adolescents who have committed themselves to a set of alternatives without much prior exploration, but who are characterized by a flexible orientation (i.e., a high score on exploration in depth). However, although open foreclosures are willing to evaluate their current choices, they show virtually no interest in exploring other identity options.

These classes were developed using a relatively short-term longitudinal study. More intensive and long-term studies on identity remain to be conducted, starting in early adolescence and extending well into adulthood. Obeidallah, Hauser, and Jacobson (1999) outline three competing hypotheses reflecting three long-term developmental pathways. Some of these ideas are grounded in Erikson's (1950, 1968) lifespan theorizing and are very similar, for instance, to those of the lifespan approach to vocational development (Super, 1990; Skorikov & Vondracek, Chapter 29, this volume). First, the continuity effect hypothesis states that individuals who experience optimal functioning in adolescence will also report high levels of well-being in adulthood. Second, the rebound effect hypothesis states that initial outcomes could be short lived; experiencing optimal psychosocial functioning during adolescence would not necessarily lead to optimal outcomes in adulthood. Third, the sleeper effect hypothesis states that the developmental work of adolescence is not accompanied by psychosocial benefits in the short term. Instead, optimal psychosocial functioning appears later on, when one must utilize identity-based resources to cope with the challenges of adulthood.

These three hypotheses emphasize the need to view identity within a lifespan framework. The continuity effect hypothesis implies that the detrimental effect of prolonged searching in adolescence and emerging adulthood continues into adulthood. However, the sleeper effect hypothesis implies that the beneficial effects of searching would appear primarily once individuals have reached adulthood. Arnett (2000) argues that exploration in emerging adulthood is likely to

be beneficial in the long run because it allows individuals to obtain a broad range of life experiences before taking on enduring adult responsibilities (see also Josselson, 1996). Similarly, the continuity effect hypothesis implies that, among the identity trajectory classes that we identified, pathmakers and consolidators would continue to demonstrate the most favorable adjustment in adulthood. The rebound effect hypothesis, on the other hand, implies that long-term beneficial effects may not occur for consolidators because they do not explore in breadth during the college years, and as a result, their identities are unlikely to be “updated” during or shortly after this time period.

Antecedents, Correlates, and Consequences of Identity Formation and Evaluation

In this section, we briefly summarize longitudinal research into the antecedents, correlates, and consequences of the different identity dimensions defined earlier. The main focus is on personality factors and perceived parenting. With respect to personality traits, reciprocal influences (as found in cross-lagged analyses) and interrelated developmental changes (as found in latent growth curve analyses) were found. These findings suggest an interdependent personality-identity system, with mainly neuroticism, openness to experience, and conscientiousness influencing or being influenced by identity (Luyckx, Soenens, & Goossens, 2006). More specifically, the developmental trajectory of neuroticism appears to be related to the developmental trajectories of the commitment dimensions (negatively) and exploration in breadth (positively). Further, whereas openness was especially (positively) related to exploration across time, conscientiousness influenced and was influenced by the degree to which individuals were able to form and identify with identity commitments. In sum, we found that identity and personality developed as part of a system, with each reinforcing the other (Caspi & Roberts, 1999). Not only did Luyckx, Soenens, et al. (2006) find that trait personality influenced

identity processes but they also found that the significant amount of decision making, competence, and self-reflection that identity formation and evaluation required also tended to prompt personal change to some extent (cf. Pals, 1999).

Second, within research on family socialization and parenting, there is a strong interest in the construct of psychological control, a parenting dimension highly relevant to the process of identity because it intrudes upon or impedes the adolescent's search for autonomy (Barber, 2002). "[Psychological control] is characterized by a type of interpersonal interaction in which the parent's psychological status and relational position to the child is maintained and defended at the expense and violation of the child's development of self" (Barber, 2002, p. 6). Psychological control creates a climate in which dysfunctional or maladaptive identity processes are initiated or exacerbated and, conversely, in which the child's self-initiation and self-governing are impaired. As such, psychological control represents the inverse of autonomy-supportive and empathetic parenting (Soenens et al., 2007; Soenens & Vansteenkiste, Chapter 17, this volume).

Luyckx, Soenens, Vansteenkiste, Goossens, and Berzonsky (2007) and Beyers and Goossens (2008) conducted a longitudinal study on the four-dimensional identity model and its relationships to constructs such as supportive parenting and psychological control. Findings were in line with transactional models of socialization that emphasize the need to study both child and parent effects when examining parent-child relationships (e.g., Soenens, Luyckx, Vansteenkiste, & Goossens, 2008): commitment formation/evaluation and parenting reciprocally influenced each other across time. For example, emerging adults who perceived their parents as intrusively controlling appeared to experience difficulties in establishing clear and committed identity choices across time. Moreover, to the extent that these individuals did manage to make commitments, they were unlikely to identify with them or to experience a sense of certainty and satisfaction. Conversely, continuing exploration in breadth in the college context led to increases in perceived parental psychological control across

time. As such, psychological control could also emerge as a reaction to a continuous search for identity alternatives, perhaps because parents might pressure their offspring to "settle down" into firm identity commitments. These parenting strategies, however, are likely to lead to a further forestallment of self-endorsed commitments, as explained above.

Moving Identity Theory and Research Forward

Distinguishing Between Ruminative and Adaptive Exploration

Exploration is generally thought to be an adaptive process that facilitates the enactment and the evaluation or strengthening of identity commitments. Indeed, research has found exploration to relate positively to variables such as curiosity and openness to experience (Clancy & Dollinger, 1993; Luyckx, Soenens, et al., 2006). However, identity exploration—especially prolonged exploration in breadth—is also associated with depressive symptoms and lowered self-esteem (Schwartz et al., 2009). Although these somewhat paradoxical findings may reflect "two sides of exploration," it is also possible that different forms of exploration are associated with openness and maladjustment. It is possible that exploration can be subdivided into reflective vs. ruminative components (Burwell & Shirk, 2007) and that the elevated distress associated with exploration may be indicative of ruminative or maladaptive exploratory processes. Hence commonly used identity measures may fail to differentiate such a ruminative type of exploration from adaptive forms of exploration and may conflate ruminative and reflective sources of variance in exploration, which may relate differentially to psychosocial outcomes.

Similar mixed findings in studies of personality led Trapnell and Campbell (1999) to distinguish between ruminative or maladaptive and reflective or adaptive types of private self-attentiveness. Self-rumination is a negative, chronic, and persistent self-attentiveness

motivated by fear and perceived threats or losses to the self, whereas self-reflection is motivated by a genuine interest in the self. Others (Treyner, Gonzalez, & Nolen-Hoeksema, 2003) have also distinguished between relatively adaptive types of self-reflection and maladaptive types of self-rumination—the latter characterized by brooding, that is, an unproductive, passive, and repetitive focus on the self.

Previous research has demonstrated that self-reflection is related to higher levels of empathic concern, perspective taking, and openness, whereas self-rumination is related to lower levels of perspective taking and to higher levels of neuroticism and depressive and anxiety symptoms (Joireman, Parrott, & Hammersla, 2002; Nolen-Hoeksema, 2000). Further, Ward, Lyubomirsky, Sousa, and Nolen-Hoeksema (2003) have demonstrated that self-rumination is negatively related to commitment to future plans. Similarly, Segerstrom, Tsao, Alde, and Craske (2000) have emphasized the importance of both rumination and worry in understanding difficulties and unresolved issues in identity formation. People scoring high on ruminative types of exploration may have difficulty settling on satisfying answers to identity questions. Partially troubled by what they perceive as inadequate progress toward personally important identity goals, they keep asking themselves the same questions, resulting in an intrusive feeling of uncertainty and incompetence.

Ruminative and nonproductive identity processes are increasingly important to examine as the process of developing a sense of identity becomes increasingly difficult. As Arnett (2000) and Côté (2002) have noted, establishing a stable and viable identity has become increasingly challenging for young people in contemporary societies. A portion of today's young people—especially in Western societies—are relatively free from limitations on their choices and can assume a more active role in their own development (Côté & Levine, 2002; Côté & Schwartz, 2002). Late-modern societies, however, also appear to be increasingly chaotic and less supportive. At the same time, societal pressure on individuals to create their own identity with

little external help has increased (Baumeister & Muraven, 1996). Some individuals—especially those whom Côté (2002, Côté & Levine, 2002) would characterize in terms of developmental individualization—thrive in such a setting and are successful in developing and forming self-endorsed identity commitments. However, other individuals may become “stuck” in the exploration process, continue to dwell over the different alternatives at hand, and experience considerable difficulty arriving at fully endorsed commitments (Schwartz, Côté, et al., 2005).

Consequently, Luyckx, Schwartz, Berzonsky, et al. (2008) extended their identity model by including ruminative exploration, conceptualized as a dimension that would delay or inhibit progress in both the formation and the evaluation of identity commitments. Ruminative exploration would be indexed using items such as “I keep wondering which direction my life has to take” and “I worry about what I want to do with my future.” The addition of ruminative exploration helped to clarify some of the previous mixed findings on exploration. For instance, Luyckx and colleagues found, in two samples of high-school and college students, that—when looking at unique variability in each exploration dimension, controlling for the others—ruminative exploration was positively related to depressive and anxiety symptoms and negatively related to self-esteem, commitment making, and identification with commitment. Controlling for ruminative exploration, however, exploration in breadth and in depth were unrelated to adjustment and positively related to both commitment dimensions. Future long-term longitudinal research should investigate whether ruminative exploration is a core developmental dimension of identity or whether it is more stable and grounded in individuals' personality—that is, related to traits such as rumination and indecisiveness.

Extending Marcia's Identity Statuses

The use of these five dimensions has allowed us to shed additional light on Marcia's (1966;

Kroger & Marcia, [Chapter 2](#), this volume) identity statuses. Through the use of cluster analysis using the five aforementioned identity dimensions, identity clusters similar to Marcia's original four identity statuses have emerged repeatedly (irrespective of specific questionnaires used to derive the statuses; e.g., Crocetti, Rubini, Luyckx, & Meeus, 2008), with some additional variants of some statuses also emerging from analysis. In a series of Belgian studies, these statuses were obtained in samples of high-school and college students, young adults in the workforce, and individuals afflicted with a chronic illness. Further, in a large-scale study on approximately 10,000 American college students, a similar set of identity clusters emerged, and these clusters were further validated against a broad range of outcome measures (Schwartz, Beyers, et al., in press).

These cluster-analytic studies have made it possible to address certain issues that have been raised regarding the identity status paradigm. For example, several authors have questioned whether the moratorium status is truly an adaptive stage on the path toward forming steady identity commitments. To the extent that young people are engaged in a "perpetual moratorium," they may experience aggravated identity confusion (Berzonsky, 1985; Marcia, 2002). For such individuals, moratorium may be more similar to diffusion than to achievement in terms of decision making and adjustment (Côté & Schwartz, 2002). As noted above, Côté and Levine (2002) described a group of searchers driven by unrealistically high standards for functioning, which undermine their ability to form steady commitments. These individuals seem to be locked in a ruminative cycle because they are unable to find perfection within themselves (see also Helson, Stewart, & Ostrove, 1995). So there remains a question about whether moratorium represents an adaptive response to the task of developing a sense of identity, and whether the distress associated with active exploration is part of a temporary transition toward identity consolidation. Luyckx, Schwartz, Berzonsky, and colleagues (2008) indeed found that members of the

moratorium cluster scored as high on ruminative exploration as they did on exploration in breadth and in depth (as opposed to the achievement cluster, which scored high on exploration in breadth and in depth and low on ruminative exploration). Consequently, following Côté and Levine (2002) and Helson et al. (1995), moratorium might denote some type of arrested development (as is the case with diffusion; Orlofsky, Marcia, & Lesser, 1973), blocking some individuals from forming commitments.

With respect to the diffusion status, Luyckx and colleagues (e.g., Luyckx, Goossens, Soenens, Beyers, & Vansteenkiste, 2005; Luyckx, Schwartz, Berzonsky, et al., 2008) differentiated empirically between two diffusion clusters, carefree and diffused diffusion, with members of the diffused diffusion cluster scoring high on ruminative exploration and maladjustment. In contrast, carefree diffusion was characterized by an untroubled approach toward identity, and individuals in this cluster did not appear to be distressed by their current lack of strong identity commitments (but see Schwartz, Beyers, et al., in press, as discussed later on in this chapter). This distinction parallels a distinction that earlier researchers had drawn between different types of diffusion. For example, Marcia (1989) delineated between carefree and pathological types of diffusion; and Archer and Waterman (1990) distinguished between apathetic and commitment-avoiding diffusions. Whereas apathetic diffusions display an "I don't care" attitude to mask underlying insecurities, commitment-avoiding diffusions appear to enjoy their current lack of commitments (Berzonsky, 1985).

With respect to the committed statuses (i.e., the achievement and foreclosure clusters), the use of this extended model shed interesting empirical light on how these two statuses differ. Not only were achieved individuals characterized, as expected, by high scores on the two adaptive forms of exploration (whereas foreclosed individuals had low scores on these dimensions), but achieved individuals also scored higher on commitment making, and especially on identification

with commitment, in a number of samples (e.g., Luyckx et al., 2005). This finding again emphasizes the importance of assessing both commitment dimensions. Foreclosed individuals appear to differ from achieved individuals not only in the strength of their commitments but also, and especially, in the degree to which they identify with their commitments. Apparently, foreclosed individuals feel less immersed in, involved in, and enthusiastic about their commitments, possibly due in part to their closed outlook on life and to their lack of exploratory strategies in dealing with identity issues. This finding is in line with previous research demonstrating that, compared to achieved individuals, foreclosed individuals feel less autonomous and personally expressive (Luyckx, Vansteenkiste, Goossens, & Duriez, 2009; Waterman, 2007) and score lower on measures of identity synthesis (Schwartz, Beyers, et al., in press; Soenens & Vansteenkiste, Chapter 17, this volume).

When interpreting the empirically obtained status clusters described in this section, it is important to bear in mind that the questionnaires used to derive these statuses (such as the DIDS) largely tap into present exploratory processes (as demonstrated in the sample items provided earlier in this chapter), making these questionnaires especially suitable for use in prospective longitudinal research. However, the original delineation of Marcia's (1966) identity statuses also includes processes of exploration in the past. For instance, when looking at both the achievement and foreclosure statuses, these are originally defined mainly as making identity commitment after or without a period of *past* exploration, respectively. The achievement and foreclosure status clusters obtained in the studies described in this section are defined somewhat differently: these consist of individuals who succeed in making identity commitments and who are *currently* exploring or not exploring identity issues, respectively. Hence, prospective studies using these measures on multiple occasions can shed further light on the exact nature of these identity clusters and on the degree of convergence between Marcia's "classical"

statuses and these empirically derived identity clusters.

New Correlates, Target Groups, and Methodologies

New correlates. Given that perfectionism essentially deals with how individuals set and pursue standards, this personality dimension is thought to be an important determinant of how the identity development process will unfold (Campbell & Di Paula, 2002). Luyckx, Soenens, Goossens, Beckx, and Wouters (2008) demonstrated that maladaptive (or neurotic) and adaptive types of perfectionism (Flett & Hewitt, 2002) were differentially related to the five identity dimensions, providing insight into some of the mechanisms involved in identity formation and evaluation. Central to the concept of perfectionism is the setting of high standards that provide motivation to engage in proactive and goal-directed behaviors. To the extent that individuals are able to flexibly adjust and re-evaluate their standards in accordance with life events, experiences, and situational demands, these standards may provide them with a sense of purpose and goal directedness (Hamacheck, 1978). Luyckx, Soenens, Goossens, and colleagues (2008) indeed found that such "adaptive" perfectionism appeared to facilitate exploration in breadth and in depth, as well as commitment making and the subsequent identification with the commitments that are enacted. The setting of high standards, however, turns into maladaptive perfectionism when individuals rigidly adhere to their standards and chronically engage in negative self-evaluations (Shafran & Mansell, 2001). As such, perfectionism creates vulnerability for maladjustment because such "neurotic" perfectionists tend to define their self-worth in terms of achieving these unrealistic standards. Luyckx, Soenens, et al. (2008) found that maladaptive perfectionism was associated with a ruminative approach to identity exploration and appeared to inhibit both commitment dimensions. It appears that, through the process of ruminative exploration,

neurotic perfectionists continue to focus on unrealistic identity standards instead of goal-directed identity work, such as proactive exploration or commitment making. As such, neurotic or maladaptive perfectionism interferes with the development of an integrated set of identity commitments.

Schwartz, Beyers, et al. (in press) focused on the practical applicability and public-health relevance of the identity statuses by relating them to health-compromising behaviors such as illicit drug use, unsafe sexual behavior, and drunk driving. Foreclosure and achievement tended to be associated with the lowest levels of health risk behaviors, especially illicit drug use and impaired driving. Apparently, either type of commitment (foreclosed or achieved) is sufficient to protect against health-compromising behaviors, but these effects may occur for different reasons: conformity and obedience in foreclosed individuals vs. advanced moral reasoning and decision making in achieved individuals (Krettenauer, 2005). Self-reported rates of dangerous drug use were between two and three times greater in the carefree diffusion status than in any of the other statuses. Carefree-diffused participants were also significantly more likely to engage in hazardous alcohol use, to ride with a drunk driver, and to have sexual relations with a stranger. Therefore, failing to engage in any meaningful identity activity—which defines the carefree diffusion status and differentiates it from diffused diffusion (in which some exploration, albeit ruminative and nonproductive, is taking place)—may pose serious health hazards that can place the person at risk for serious injury, illness, or death. A lack of consideration for the future therefore appeared to be associated with the highest likelihood of engaging in present-oriented, hedonistic, dangerous behaviors (Luyckx, Lens, Smits, & Goossens, 2010; Zimbardo, Keough, & Boyd, 1997).

New target groups. Most of the research discussed so far has focused exclusively on high-school or college students. Consequently, an important aim of our recent work has been to validate the five-dimensional identity model in new target groups and demonstrate the

usefulness of studying identity formation and evaluation processes in young people outside the high-school or college context (Schwartz, 2005). Luyckx, Schwartz, Goossens, and Pollock (2008) studied identity development in a sample of employed, non-student emerging adults and found that specific identity dimensions—and especially the degree to which identity commitments are made—were associated with achieving a subjective sense of adulthood. Subjective adulthood is important to study because it may promote responsible behavior and may be protective against depressive symptoms and against extensive drug and alcohol use (Nelson & Barry, 2005). Luyckx et al. (2008) found that employed young people scored higher on commitment making as compared to college students, which partially explained the higher subjective adulthood scores among employed emerging adults.

Relatedly, Luyckx and colleagues (2010) derived identity statuses in a sample of 21–40-year-old employees, and highly similar clusters as described above emerged. These employees were found to function substantially differently (on indicators of job burnout and engagement) in their jobs depending on the identity status in which they were classified (and these differences remained largely stable across 1 year). As expected, achieved individuals scored substantially higher on job engagement and substantially lower on job burnout as compared to individuals in the diffused diffusion status. Whereas foreclosed individuals generally scored as low as achieved individuals on indices of job burnout across time, they scored significantly lower on job dedication, and especially on job absorption (on which they did not differ significantly from diffused individuals). This suggests that, although foreclosed individuals may not necessarily experience more burnout than their achieved counterparts, they do feel less immersed in, involved in, and enthusiastic about their work. As mentioned above, in the case of foreclosure, individuals did not thoroughly explore possible future life plans and may have foreclosed on a job that they did not fully endorse—which Skorikov and Vondracek (Chapter 29, this volume) frames

as experiencing work as a job instead of as a calling.

Finally, in one of the first studies in this direction, Luyckx, Seiffge-Krenke, and colleagues (2008) recruited a sample of emerging adults with a chronic illness, that is, type 1 diabetes. Luyckx and colleagues examined the ways in which identity processes affected general and illness-specific measures of well-being through their influence on illness-specific coping strategies. They found that achieving a sense of identity appeared to facilitate problem-focused strategies in coping with diabetes and with the daily diabetes management regimen, as well as to facilitate integrating the illness into one's sense of self. In sum, a strong identity seems to represent an important internal resource determining, at least in part, how individuals deal with (chronic) illness-related stressors. A recently collected dataset consisting of more than 400 adolescents with congenital heart disease confirmed the importance of having a strong sense of identity in coping with and adjusting to a chronic medical illness (Luyckx, Goossens, Van Damme, & Moons, 2010).

New methodologies. Based on the identity model introduced by Crocetti et al. (2008) and inspired by the work of Kernis and colleagues (Kernis, Grannemann, & Barclay, 1989; Heppner & Kernis, Chapter 15, this volume), Klimstra and colleagues (2010; Heppner & Kernis, Chapter 15, this volume) focused on the short-term or daily dynamics of identity formation and, more specifically, on the interplay between making and reconsidering identity commitments. Findings indicated that identity formation processes operate on a day-to-day basis, with commitment and reconsideration of commitment (i.e., feeling uncertain about one's commitment and trying to search for a new one) mutually influencing each other from one day to the next. Further, Schwartz, Klimstra, et al. (in press) found that intra-individual fluctuations in these identity dimensions from one day to the next served as important predictors of subsequent levels of these same identity dimensions, as well as of depression and anxiety. More specifically, large fluctuations in reconsideration of commitments from one day to another

were related to higher subsequent levels of reconsideration, depression, and anxiety, and to lower subsequent levels of identity commitments. Apparently, being certain about one's commitments one day but doubting them the next day might signal a moratorium-like state, resulting in feelings of distress and a less well-synthesized identity.

Suggestions for Intervention and Counseling

Interventions to promote healthy identity development might be most relevant in contemporary societies that lack structure and guidance on which to rely in forming and maintaining a sense of identity (Côté, 2000; Schwartz, 2001). Interventions have as their primary objective to facilitate movement from a less coherent sense of identity to a more synthesized identity, as a way of reducing confusion and uncertainty (Josselson, 1994). As noted, in line with Erikson's (1968) model of lifespan development, the sense of identity that one develops in adolescence and emerging adulthood also helps to determine one's success in addressing subsequent developmental tasks in adulthood. Hence, such an integrated sense of identity is crucial because it helps to unify the various aspects of one's life and everyday experiences, thereby providing a sense of direction and meaning in one's life (Schwartz, Kurtines, et al., 2005). A number of identity intervention studies have been conducted, primarily targeting skills such as decision making, social perspective taking, and problem solving (Enright, Olson, Ganiere, Lapsley, & Buss, 1984; Markstrom-Adams, Ascione, Braegger, & Adams, 1993). Initial results have suggested that several identity processes, such as generating potential identity alternatives, can be improved by way of intervention. However, follow-up data indicate that intervention gains may not be maintained after the intervention activities end (Ferrer-Wreder et al., 2002). To strengthen long-term effects of intervention programs, additional follow-up activities might

need to be conducted after the intervention has ended.

It is important to bear in mind that most of the identity statuses or trajectories described in the present chapter are not universally healthy or unhealthy (Josselson, 1994). For example, for those individuals who have already committed themselves to certain identity options, interventions should not be instituted for the purpose of undermining existing identity commitments, even those formed in a non-reflective or foreclosed manner (Marcia, 1994). The extent to which an identity commitment serves an adaptive function may be more important than the manner in which it was formed. When a commitment is perceived as functional, there is a natural, and appropriate, resistance to efforts to change or undermine it. For instance, for some guardians or foreclosures, exploring identity issues might be threatening due to the guilt and anxiety associated with questioning introjected or internalized parental values. However, if at some future time a commitment is no longer functional, intervention or guidance might be needed for some to find personally meaningful alternatives that can provide a base for new commitments (Waterman, 1994). In the ideal case scenario, these new commitments will be personally expressive and, as such, can provide a base for self-discovery (Waterman, Chapter 16, this volume). Schwartz, Kurtines, et al. (2005) demonstrated that such a process of self-discovery can be stimulated through certain emotionally focused intervention strategies.

Marcia (1980) indicated that individuals in moratorium would be most likely to appear for counseling due to the distress associated with ongoing exploration. Instead of exploring in a systematic or a focused manner, some searchers seem to be ruminating and drifting (Luyckx, Schwartz, Goossens, et al., 2008). Consequently, their continuous exploration is associated with disappointment, depressive symptoms, and insecurity. However, for other searchers, these explorations are illuminating for self-understanding and self-discovery (Schwartz, 2002). In other words, a continuous identity search may represent a source of instability or disruption for some (Orlofsky et al., 1973), but may be beneficial

for others. However, it seems fair to say that exploration should result in commitment making at some point. So, a thorough exploration of alternatives needs to be valued, rather than discouraged, although some individuals might need some guidance through the provision of structure and autonomy support (Luyckx, Soenens, Goossens, & Vansteenkiste, 2007; see Soenens & Vansteenkiste, Chapter 17, this volume, for a review on the role of autonomy support in identity development). Individuals who present for counseling regarding identity issues might be characterized by indecisiveness or maladaptive perfectionism, which generalizes across situations and which leaves them unable to enact or maintain commitments. They experience fear when engaged in decision-making processes and, consequently, they avoid making decisions and turn to rumination or procrastination (Rassin & Muris, 2005). Such chronic decisional procrastination is likely to produce feelings of incompetence and maladaptive functioning (Luyckx et al., 2009).

Conclusion

Our goal in this chapter has been to sketch some of the advantages of an explicitly process-oriented approach to personal identity (with a focus on both commitment formation and evaluation and incorporating both adaptive and maladaptive types of exploration) and to demonstrate its usefulness as a complementary approach to (and extension of) current identity research. We hope that our approach, combined with others described in this book and elsewhere, will inspire more integrative studies and advance both conceptualizations of identity and future applications of identity constructs to important social and public-health issues.

Note

1. The first studies using this extended model (e.g., Luyckx et al., 2005, Luyckx, Soenens, et al., 2006) made use of two separate questionnaires (i.e., the Utrecht–Groningen

Identity Development Scale and the Ego Identity Process Questionnaire). Correlations among the four identity dimensions were substantially lower as compared to the correlations obtained with the DIDS, but this was likely due to the fact that these questionnaires assessed different identity domains to some degree. Therefore, the DIDS was developed, among other reasons, to standardize the domains across the different identity dimensions. Recent studies in the United States (e.g., Schwartz, Fortthun, et al., 2010; Schwartz, Beyers, et al., in press) have started using the English version of the DIDS and assessing its reliability and validity.

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Abstract

Narrative identity is the internalized and evolving story of the self that a person constructs to make sense and meaning out of his or her life. The story is a selective reconstruction of the autobiographical past and a narrative anticipation of the imagined future that serves to explain, for the self and others, how the person came to be and where his or her life may be going. People begin to put their lives together into narrative identities in their late-adolescent and young-adult years, but the process of narrative identity development continues across the life course. In constructing self-defining life stories, people draw heavily on prevailing cultural norms and the images, metaphors, and themes that run through the many narratives they encounter in social life. Conceptions of narrative identity began to emerge in the social sciences in the 1980s with the writings of philosopher, psychologists, and social theorists. McAdams (1985) proposed the first full theoretical model of narrative identity and outlined a research agenda for examining content and structural features of life stories. Since then, conceptions of narrative identity have evolved to encompass themes from a number of different approaches and viewpoints. The chapter traces the interdisciplinary history of the concept of narrative identity, recent research on the forms and functions of narrative identity, the role of narrative identity in contemporary conceptions of human personality, the development of narrative identity across the human life course, and the cultural manifestations and meanings of life stories.

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Around the age of 20, we begin to work on the stories of our lives. In order to address what Erik Erikson (1963) first described as the challenge of ego identity, emerging adults living in modern societies construct integrative narratives to explain how they came to be, where their lives

are going, and how they hope to fit into the adult world that awaits them. *Narrative identity* is an internalized and evolving story of the self that provides a person's life with some semblance of unity, purpose, and meaning. Complete with setting, scenes, characters, plots, and themes, narrative identity combines a person's reconstruction of his or her personal past with an imagined future in order to provide a subjective historical account of one's own development, an instrumental explanation of a person's most important commitments in the realms of work and love, and a moral justification of who a person was, is, and will be. People begin to work on their narrative identities in the late-adolescent and emerging-adult years, but the work never really finishes. Stories are never set in stone. Instead, narrative identity continues to present a psychosocial challenge for much of the rest of the adult life course. People continue to make sense of their own lives, and the lives of others, through narrative.

This chapter begins with an historical account of the concept of narrative identity. The ideas may be traced back to the 1980s with the emergence of narrative approaches to the self in the behavioral and social sciences and in the humanities. Building on Erikson's (1963) concept of ego identity and Murray's (1938) personological approach to the study of lives, McAdams (1985) provided the first full conception of narrative identity for empirical psychologists, focusing mainly on the content and structural dimensions of life stories. Over the past 25 years, the concept of narrative identity has evolved in many different directions, encompassing perspectives from cognitive science, life-course developmental studies, cultural psychology, sociology, and personality and social psychology. The concept of narrative identity, moreover, is now a central component of a full, multi-level theory of personality (Hooker & McAdams, 2003; McAdams, 1996; McAdams & Pals, 2006; Singer, 2005) and a new integrative theory of human selfhood across the life course (McAdams & Cox, 2010).

Next, the chapter traces the developmental origins of narrative identity in childhood and adolescence and it reviews what recent research has

to say regarding the development of narrative identity in the adult years. Finally, the chapter examines the intricate interplay between culture and narrative. Recent understandings of narrative identity suggest that a person's life story says as much about the culture wherein a person's life finds its constituent meanings as it does about the person's life itself.

History of the Concept

Poets, novelists, biographers, and everyday folk have long been fascinated by life stories. But behavioral and social scientists did not develop systematic procedures and frameworks for exploring the meaning and the manifestations of the stories people live by until the 1980s. Around the time that a number of philosophers were writing about the power of narrative to provide human lives with unity in time (Ricoeur, 1984) and moral direction (MacIntyre, 1981), McAdams (1985) proposed that identity itself might be conceived as an internal story, or personal myth, that a person begins to formulate in the late-adolescent years. If one were able to "see" an identity, McAdams (1985) argued, it would look like a story—an internalized and evolving tale with main characters, intersecting plots, key scenes, and an imagined ending, representing how the person reconstructs the personal past (chapters gone by) and anticipates the future (chapters yet to come). As Erikson (1963) argued, a major function of identity is to organize a life in time. What might possibly organize a life in time better than a *story*? In the psychoanalytic literature, Spence (1982) suggested that the stories told in therapy say less about literal historical truth in the client's life and more about how the client conveys a narrative truth regarding who he or she was, is, and may be. Beginning in the 1980s, Bruner (1986), Sarbin (1986), Polkinghorne (1988), and a number of other social scientists began to argue—as did Ricoeur (1984), MacIntyre (1981), and Spence (1982) before them—that people naturally employ stories to make sense of goal-directed human behavior as it evolves over

time. Integrating human lives in time is what stories ideally do.

Although Erikson was never explicit about the fundamental content and deep structure of an identity, his seminal writings on the topic suggest that identity itself might look something like a story that puts a life together in time and in culture. Erikson (1963) conceived of identity as a configuration of the self that integrates a person's talents, identifications, and roles such that a person comes to feel an "accrued confidence that the inner sameness and continuity *prepared in the past* are matched by the sameness and continuity of one's meaning for others" (p. 261, italics added). Identity "arises from the selective repudiation and mutual integration of *childhood identifications*, and their absorption into a *new configuration*, which in turn is dependent on the process by which a society (often through subsocieties) identifies the young individual, recognizing him as somebody who *had to become the way he is*, and who, being the way he is, is taken for granted" (Erikson, 1958, p. 113, italics added). Erikson suggested that the establishment of ego identity confers upon a young person the status of *adulthood*. And to be an adult is to create one's life anew, to make one's life into a dynamic narrative that is set (retrospectively and prospectively) in time and in social context, as Erikson (1958) articulated beautifully in this rich passage from *Young Man Luther*:

To be adult means among other things to see one's own life in continuous perspective, in both *retrospect and prospect*. By accepting some definition as to who he is, usually on the basis of a function in an economy, a place in the sequence of generations, and a status in the structure of society, the adult is able to *selectively reconstruct his past* in such a way that, step for step, it *seems to have planned him*, or better, he seems to have planned it. In this sense psychologically *we do choose* our parents, our family *history*, and the *history* of our kings, heroes, and gods. By making them our own, we maneuver ourselves into the position of proprietors, of *creators*. (Erikson, 1958, pp. 111–112, italics added)

Whereas Marcia's (1980; Kroger & Marcia, Chapter 2, this volume) classic conception of identity *statuses* focused research attention on the *processes* of exploration and commitment

in identity formation, McAdams's (1985) formulation redirected attention toward identity as a *product*. If the product of identity exploration and commitment is a story about the self that the person begins to formulate in late adolescence and emerging adulthood, then how might that narrative product be analyzed? McAdams looked to Murray (1938) and the personological tradition in psychology for analytic frameworks and tools. Murray (1938) conceived of human lives as integrated and evolving wholes whose motivational themes might be exposed by asking people to produce narrative responses, such as autobiographical vignettes and imaginative stories in response to pictures (the Thematic Apperception Test, or TAT). Refining Murray's approach, McClelland (1985) and colleagues developed rigorous content-analytic procedures for coding motivational imagery in TAT stories. McAdams (1985) adapted the same procedures for analyzing narrated scenes obtained from extended life-story interviews. A person's narrative identity, therefore, might be analyzed in terms of the relative salience of motivational themes related to agency (e.g., power, achievement, autonomy) and communion (e.g., love, intimacy, belongingness). The structure of the story might be analyzed in terms of narrative complexity and coherence.

Over the past 20 years, researchers have developed a wide range of analytic systems for assessing the content and structure of life stories, conceived as the narrative products of a person's identity work. Many studies have sought to link content and structural dimensions of narrative identity to other consequential features of a person's psychological make-up, such as personality traits and motives, developmental stages, psychological well-being, depression, and important life outcomes (Baddeley & Singer, 2007; McAdams, 2008; McLean, Pasupathi, & Pals, 2007). For example, research shows that people scoring high on the trait of neuroticism tend to construct life stories with negative emotional tones whereas people high in agreeableness express themes of communion in their life narratives (McAdams et al., 2004; Raggatt, 2006a). Psychological health and well-being have been

linked to narrative identities that show high levels of coherence (Baerger & McAdams, 1999) and themes of redemption (McAdams, Reynolds, Lewis, Patten, & Bowman, 2001), emotional closure (Pals, 2006a), and personal growth and integration (Bauer, McAdams, & Sakaeda, 2005). Depression is associated with constructing life stories that show a preponderance of contamination sequences (scenes wherein good events suddenly go bad) (Adler, Kissel, & McAdams, 2006), whereas successful recovery from depression and other psychological disturbances is associated with constructing life-story scenes that are rich in themes of agency (Adler, Skalina, & McAdams, 2008). Among highly religious American Christians, political conservatives tend to privilege life-narrative scenes that highlight strict authority, personal discipline, and the purity of the self whereas politically liberal Christians tend to tell stories of empathic caregiving and self-expansion (McAdams et al., 2008). Life narratives of conservatives suggest an underlying fear of chaos and conflict, whereas life narratives of liberals suggest a parallel fear of emptiness (McAdams & Albaugh, 2008).

Studies that have examined content and structural dimensions of narrative identity work under the implicit assumption that life stories are integrative autobiographical projects with psychological staying power (McAdams, 1985, 2006). In other words, people's internalized life stories are broad enough and stable enough to warrant their being coded for themes that reveal important psychological insights about the storyteller. An alternative perspective on life narratives, however, suggests that personal stories are smaller in scope, less integrative, and more ephemeral (e.g., Gergen, 1991; Thorne, 2000). Often couched in terms of postmodern literary theories, discursive psychology, and social-constructionist approaches, this latter perspective tends to cast a suspicious eye upon the notion of a broad psychological narrative that holds the power to integrate human lives. Instead, people often *perform* narrative identities in particular social situations and with respect to particular demand characteristics and discursive conventions (Bamberg, de Fina, & Schiffrin, Chapter 8,

this volume; Shotter & Gergen, 1989). Selves are constantly being revised through repeated narrative encounters, as situations change and time passes. People bring forth different stories for different situations, and no single narrative frame can possibly organize the full and shifting gamut of everyday social life. As Gergen (1991) suggests, contemporary selves are "saturated" with the complex and shifting demands of social life. Contemporary selves rarely achieve unity and purpose; instead, fragmentation and multiplicity are the norms.

The idea that narrative identity consists of a multiplicity of stories evolving in a de-centered psychological space is a foundational concept for narrative theories offered by Hermans (1996), Gregg (1991), and Raggatt (2006b), among others. These authors all suggest that narratives function to express disparate features of human identity. For example, Hermans conceives of narrative identity as a polyphonic novel within which different voices of the self (akin to characters in a story) express themselves in their own unique and self-defining ways. The self evolves through an internalized dialogue of voices, each with its own story to tell. Similarly, Raggatt (2006b) rejects the idea that life narratives serve to integrate lives. In his case studies and quantitative analyses, Raggatt suggests that contemporary social life is too complex and inconsistent to afford the kind of neat identity consolidation that Erikson once envisioned. Instead, people construct multi-form narrative identities that pit opposing images of the self against one another.

McAdams (1997, 2006) acknowledges that few human beings ever experience full integration and unity in their lives. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine what such an idealized psychological state would look and feel like. However, people living in complex, postmodern societies still feel a need to construe some modicum of unity, purpose, and integration amidst the swirl and confusion. People still seek meaning in their lives—a meaning that transcends any particular social performance or situation. Narrative identity need not be *the* grand and totalizing narrative that makes all things make sense for all time in any given person's life. Rather, people seek some

semblance of unity and purpose as they move into and through adulthood. They aim to make some narrative sense of their life as a whole. These efforts, as limited and fallible as they may be, are the stuff out of which narrative identity is made.

McAdams and Pals (2006) conceive of narrative identity as the third of three layers of human personality (see also Hooker & McAdams, 2003). The first layer consists of broad dispositional traits, such as extraversion and neuroticism, which account for consistencies in behavioral style from one situation to the next and over time. The second layer is made up of values, goals, personal projects, defenses, and other characteristic adaptations that capture more socially contextualized and motivational aspects of psychological individuality. If traits provide a dispositional sketch of personality, characteristic motives and goals fill in many of the details. But neither traits nor goals spell out what a person's life means, for the person and for the person's world, in time and culture. Only narrative identity can do that. As it begins to develop in adolescence, narrative identity comes to form a third layer of personality, layered over adaptations and traits. A full accounting of personality requires the examination of broad dispositional traits, characteristic adaptations, and integrative life stories—a unique design for each person, evolving, multi-layered, and complexly situated in the social ecology of a person's life.

Most recently, McAdams and Cox (2010) positioned narrative identity within a broadly integrative framework for conceptualizing human selfhood. What William James (1892/1963) famously described as the conjoining of “I” and “Me” to comprise the full “self” appears in three qualitatively different guises across the human life course: (1) the self as actor (2) the self as agent, and (3) the self-as-author. Over the life course, the I develops increasingly sophisticated and nuanced understandings of the Me as it develops from an actor to an agent to an author. Reflecting our evolutionary heritage as social animals, human infants begin life as (1) social *actors*. Around one's second birthday, an initial actor-self begins to form, as the I begins reflexively to take note of the basic traits and

proclivities that make it (the Me) up. With its collection of fixed traits and essential features, the actor-Me is similar to what Chandler (2001) describes as an *essentialist* rendering of selfhood. With the development of theory of mind (Wellman, 1993) in the fourth and fifth years of life and with the establishment of goals and motives in later childhood, human beings begin to see themselves from the standpoint of (2) motivated *agents*, as well, whose goals, plans, desires, programs, and long-term aims take up residency in the newly expanded Me. In adolescence and young adulthood, the I becomes (3) an *author* too, seeking to fashion the Me into a self-defining story, consistent with what Chandler (2001) describes as a *narrative* rendering of selfhood. That story, or narrative identity, explains what the social actor does, what the motivated agent wants, and what it all means in the context of one's narrative understanding of the self. By providing a story regarding how the Me came to be over time, as well as what the Me may become in the future, the self-as-author extends the Me back into one's personal history and forward into the imagined distant future. Narrative identity, then, is that feature of human selfhood that begins to emerge when the adolescent or young-adult I assumes the guise of a storyteller.

Whereas McAdams (1985) claimed that identity is a story and *only* a story, it is now clear that identity encompasses much more. The I makes room within the Me for many different features of the self as both actor and agent—self-ascribed traits, roles, goals, values (Hitlin, Chapter 20, this volume), possible selves (Oyserman & James, Chapter 6, this volume), gender (Bussey, Chapter 25, this volume), ethnic identifications (Umaña-Taylor, Chapter 33, this volume), etc. As the current volume shows, many of these different meanings of selfhood can be construed in terms of the broad concept of “identity.” Thus, narrative identity is but one of many different psychological senses wherein human selves make identity. But psychologically speaking, narrative identity is an especially compelling construction—a psychosocial first among equals—in that it conveys how the author-self constructs a self-defining story that serves to

integrate many other features of the Me in order to provide a life in full with some degree of unity, purpose, and meaning in culture and in time.

Over the past 20 years, theorists and researchers have focused a great deal of attention on the developmental and cultural dynamics of narrative identity (e.g., Fivush & Haden, 2003; Habermas & Bluck, 2000; Hammack, 2008; McAdams, 1996, 2006; McLean et al., 2007; Singer & Salovey, 1993; Thorne, 2000). What are the developmental origins of narrative identity in childhood and early adolescence? What cognitive skills need to be in place before a person can construct an integrative life story? How do people organize important scenes in their lives into narrative identities? How are narrative identities performed in social relationships and in culture? To what extent is a life story a cultural construction? Whereas McAdams's (1985) original conception viewed life stories as akin to finished products that reveal fundamental tendencies in identity, the concept of narrative identity has evolved substantially over the past two decades to emphasize (1) how life stories are more like works-in-progress that convey multiplicity as well as unity in the self (e.g., Bamberg, de Fina, & Schiffrin, Chapter 8, this volume; Hermans, 1996), (2) how life stories reflect important developmental processes as they change over time (e.g., McLean et al., 2007), and (3) how life stories are exquisitely contextualized in social relationships, communities of discourse, and culture (e.g., McAdams, 2006; Rosenwald & Ochberg, 1992).

Narrative Identity and the Life Course

Stories are accounts of the vicissitudes of human *intention* organized in time (Bruner, 1986). In virtually all intelligible stories, humans or human-like characters act to accomplish intentions upon a social landscape, generating a sequence of actions and reactions extended as a plot in time. Human intentionality is at the heart of narrative, and therefore the development of intentionality is of prime importance in establishing the mental conditions necessary for storytelling

and story comprehension. Research on imitation and attention suggests that by the end of the first year of life, human infants recognize that other human beings are intentional agents who act in a goal-directed manner (Kuhlmeier, Wynn, & Bloom, 2003). They implicitly understand that a story's characters act in accord with goals.

The second year of life marks the emergence of a storytelling, autobiographical self. By 24 months of age, toddlers have consolidated a sense of themselves as agentic and appropriating subjects in the social world who are, at the same time, the objects of others' observations (as well as their own). As William James (1892/1963) suggested, the 2-year-old self is a reflexive, "duplex," I–Me configuration: A subjective I that observes (and begins to construct) an objective Me. Among those elements of experience that the I begins to attribute to the Me are autobiographical events. Howe and Courage (1997) argue that children begin to encode, collect, and narrate autobiographical memories around the ages 2–3—*my* little stories about what happened to *me*, stories the I constructs and remembers about the Me.

With development and experience in the preschool years, the storytelling, autobiographical self becomes more sophisticated and effective. The burgeoning research literature on children's *theory of mind* (Wellman, 1993) shows that in the third and fourth years of life most children come to understand that intentional human behavior is motivated by internal desires and beliefs. Interpreting the actions of others (and oneself) in terms of their predisposing desires and beliefs is a form of mind reading, according to Baron-Cohen (1995), a competency that is critical for effective social interaction. By the time children enter kindergarten, mind reading seems natural and easy. To most school children, it makes intuitive sense that a girl should eat an ice-cream cone because "she wants to" (desire) or that a boy should look for a cookie in the cookie jar because "he believes the cookies are there." But autistic children often find mind reading to be extraordinarily difficult, as if they never developed this intuitive sense about what aspects

of mind are involved in the making of motivated human behavior. Characterized by what Baron-Cohen (1995) calls *mindblindness*, children with autism do not understand people as intentional characters or do so only to a limited degree. Their lack of understanding applies to the self as well, suggesting that at the heart of severe autism may reside a disturbing dysfunction in “I-ness,” and a corresponding inability to formulate and convey sensible narratives of the self (Bruner, 1994).

Autobiographical memory and self-storytelling develop in a social context. Parents typically encourage children to talk about their personal experiences as soon as children are verbally able to do so (Fivush & Nelson, 2004). Early on, parents may take the lead in stimulating the child’s recollection and telling of the past by reminding the child of recent events, such as this morning’s breakfast or yesterday’s visit to the doctor. Taking advantage of this initial conversational scaffolding provided by adults, the young child soon begins to take more initiative in sharing personal events. By the age of 3 years, children are actively engaged in co-constructing their past experience in conversations with adults. By the end of the preschool years, they are able to give a relatively coherent account of their past experiences, independent of adult guidance.

Yet, differences in how parents converse with their children appear to have strong impacts on the development of the storytelling self. For example, mothers tend to encourage daughters, more than sons, to share *emotional* experiences, including especially memories of negative events that produce sadness (Fivush & Kuebli, 1997). Early on, girls use more emotion words than boys in their autobiographical recollections. When mothers consistently engage their children in an elaborative conversational pattern, asking children to reflect and elaborate upon their personal experiences, children develop richer autobiographical memories and tell more detailed stories about themselves. Conversely, a more constricted style of conversation on the part of mothers is associated with less articulated personal narratives in children (Reese & Farrant, 2003).

By the time children are able to generate their own narrative accounts of personal memories, they also exhibit a good understanding of the canonical features of stories themselves, as Mandler (1984) has convincingly shown. Five-year-olds typically know that stories are set in a particular time and place and involve characters who act upon their desires and beliefs over time. They expect stories to evoke suspense and curiosity and will dismiss as “boring” a narrative that fails to live up to these emotional conventions. They expect stories to conform to a conventional *story grammar* or generic script concerning what kinds of events can occur and in what order. In a simple, goal-directed episode, for example, an initiating event may prompt the protagonist to attempt some kind of action, which will result in some kind of consequence, which in turn will be followed by the protagonist’s reaction to the consequence. Stories are expected to have definite beginnings, middles, and endings. The ending is supposed to provide a resolution to the plot complications that developed over the course of the story. If a story does not conform to conventions such as these, children may find it confusing and difficult to remember, or they may recall it later with a more canonical structure than it originally had.

As children move through the elementary school years, they come to narrate their own personal experiences in ways that conform to their implicit understandings of how good stories should be structured and what they should include. Importantly, they begin to internalize their culture’s norms and expectations concerning what the story of an *entire human life* should contain. As they learn that a telling of a single life typically begins, say, with an account of birth and typically includes, say, early experiences in the family, eventual moves out of the family, getting a job, getting married, etc., they acquire what Habermas and Bluck (2000) term a *cultural concept of biography*. Cultural norms define conventional phases of the life course and suggest what kinds of causal explanations make sense in telling a life. As children learn the culture’s biographical conventions, they begin to see how single events in their own lives—remembered

from the past and imagined for the future—might be sequenced and linked together to create their own life story.

Still, it is not until adolescence, according to Habermas and Bluck (2000), that individuals craft causal narratives to explain how different events are linked together in the context of a biography, a point that has been made by a number of theorists (e.g., Chandler, 2001; Hammack, 2008). What Habermas and Bluck (2000) call *causal coherence* in life narratives is exhibited in the increasing effort across the adolescent years to provide narrative accounts of one's life that explain how one event caused, led up to, transformed, or in some way was/is meaningfully related to other events in one's life. An adolescent girl may explain, for example, why she rejects her parents' liberal political values (or why she feels shy around boys, or how it came to be that her junior year in high school represented a turning point in her understanding of herself) in terms of personal experiences from the past that she has selected and reconstructed to make a coherent personal narrative. She will explain how one event led to another, which led to another, and so on. She will likely share her account with others and monitor the feedback she receives in order to determine whether her attempt at causal coherence makes sense (McLean, 2005; Thorne, 2000). Furthermore, she may now identify an overarching theme, value, or principle that integrates many different episodes in her life and conveys the gist of who she is and what her biography is all about—a cognitive operation that Habermas and Bluck (2000) call *thematic coherence*. In their analyses of life-narrative accounts produced between the ages of 8 and 20 years, Habermas and de Silveira (2008) show that causal and thematic coherence are relatively rare in autobiographical accounts from late childhood and early adolescence but increase substantially through the teenage years and into early adulthood.

Cognitive development, then, sets the stage for narrative identity. But as Erikson (1963) emphasized, socio-emotional and cultural factors also play important roles in moving the identity agenda forward in the teens and 20s. In modern

societies, teachers, parents, peers, and the media all urge the adolescent to begin thinking about who he or she *really* is and what he or she wants to *become* as an adult. Social and cultural forces tell the young person that it will soon be time to *get a life* (Habermas & Bluck, 2000). Of course, even children know vaguely that they will become adults someday, and they may wonder what they will be when they grow up. In early adolescence, these wonderings may begin to take narrative form in fantasies, diaries, web postings, and other self-expressions.

Elkind (1981) described these early drafts of narrative identity as *personal fables*. Often grandiose and breathless, these tales of personal greatness and personal tragedy (I will write the great American novel; I will play shortstop for the New York Yankees; I will save the world or maybe destroy it; I will find the perfect love, and my lover will save me; nobody will ever understand how deep and unique my life has been and will be) may spell out a coherent story of life, but it is typically one that is wildly unrealistic. This is (usually) okay, Elkind suggested, putting grossly paranoid and destructive ideation aside. Narrative identity needs to start somewhere. As they mature into later adolescence and beyond, the authors of personal fables edit, revise, and often start the whole thing over, so as to compose life narratives that are better grounded in reality, reflecting a keener understanding of social constraints and a more astute appraisal of personal skills, values, gifts, and past experiences (Elkind, 1981; McAdams, 1985).

Even though most people ultimately abandon their personal fables, narrative identity never completely descends into literal realism. If they are to inspire and integrate, the stories we tell ourselves about who we are and how we came to be must retain their mythic qualities. Like personal fables, they are acts of imagination that creatively select, embellish, shape, and distort the past so that it connects causally and thematically to an imaginatively rendered and anticipated future, all in the service of making meaning (McLean et al., 2007; Singer, 2005). The task of constructing a narrative identity requires people to assume a role that is more like a novelist than a secretary. The

job is to tell a good story rather than to report exactly what happened at the meeting.

Still, facts are important. A person's narrative identity should be based on the facts of his or her life as they are generally understood in a social community, for credibility is a cardinal criterion of maturity in identity and in social life (McAdams, 1985). Those facts are part of the material—the psycho-literary resources—with which the author works in order to craft a self-defining narrative. But all by themselves, facts are devoid of social and personal meaning. A fact of my life may be that I lost a limb in the Iraq War. What do I make of that fact? Marshalling all the resources at my disposal and working within a social community that privileges some kinds of narratives and discourages others, I decide whether my loss signals tragedy, irony, romance, redemption, a return to God, a recommitment to family, a loss of faith, or whatever. There are many narrative possibilities, but not an infinite number. In narrative identity, the storyteller can work only with the material at hand. Narrative identity draws upon the powers of imagination and integration to shape those materials into a good story, empowered and constrained as the storyteller is by the physical, biological, psychological, ideological, economic, historical, and cultural realities in play (Hammack, 2008; McAdams, 2006; Rosenwald & Ochberg, 1992).

Narrative identity emerges during a period of the life course that will forever retain a special salience in autobiographical memory. One of the most well-documented findings in cognitive psychology is the tendency for older adults (say, over the age of 50) to recall a disproportionate number of life events from the late-adolescent and emerging-adulthood years (roughly age 15–30). What is called the *memory bump* represents a dramatic departure from the linear forgetting curve that one might expect to prevail for autobiographical recollections (Conway & Pleydell-Pearce, 2000). This is to say, that people tend to recall fewer and fewer events as they go back further and further in time. The research shows that this general trend holds, except for memories of what happened in the emerging-adulthood years.

For those years, people usually hold many more memories, especially highly emotional memories, than the linear temporal trend predicts.

Researchers have proposed many different reasons for the memory bump, such as the possibility that this period in the life course simply happens to contain a disproportionate number of objectively momentous life events, such as leaving home, first job, first sexual relationship (Conway & Pleydell-Pearce, 2000). But the memory bump may also reflect the developmental emergence of narrative identity. As the storytelling I begins to author a narrative of the Me, it invests personal experiences with special meaning and salience. People remember so much about their emerging-adulthood years, in part, because that was when they began to put their lives together into a story.

Narrative identity emerges as a central psychosocial problem in late adolescence and emerging adulthood, corresponding roughly to what Erikson (1963) originally identified as the stage of *identity vs. role confusion*. The problem of constructing a story for one's life, however, should not be expected to fade away quickly once the individual resolves an identity "stage." The common reading of Erikson's (1963) theory to suggest that identity is a well-demarcated stage to be explored and resolved in adolescence and early adulthood is, from the standpoint of narrative theory and recent life-course research in psychology and sociology, an increasingly misleading reading of how modern people live and think about their lives. More accurate, it now appears, is this view: *Once narrative identity enters the developmental scene, it remains a project to be worked on for much of the rest of the life course*. Into and through the midlife years, adults continue to refashion their narrative understandings of themselves, incorporating developmentally on-time and off-time events, expected and unexpected life transitions, gains and losses, and their changing perspectives on who they were, are, and may be into their ongoing, self-defining life stories (Birren, Kenyon, Ruth, Shroots, & Svendsen, 1996). Adults continue to come to terms with society and social life through narrative. The autobiographical, storytelling self continues to

make narrative sense of life and its efforts may even improve with age.

The lion's share of empirical research on narrative identity in adulthood has examined (a) relations between particular themes and forms in life narratives, on the one hand, and personality variables (such as traits, motives, and defenses), on the other hand, (b) life-narrative predictors of psychological well-being and mental health, (c) variations in the ways that people make narrative sense of suffering and negative events in life, (d) the interpersonal and social functions of and effects on life storytelling, (e) uses of narrative in therapy, and (f) the cultural shaping of narrative identity (McAdams, 2008). To date, there exist few longitudinal studies of life stories and no long-term efforts to trace continuity and change in narrative identity over decades of adult development. Nonetheless, the fact that researchers have tended to collect life-narrative data from adults of many different ages, rather than focusing on the proverbial college student, provides an opportunity to consider a few suggestive developmental trends.

Because a person's life is always a work in progress and because narrative identity, therefore, may incorporate new experiences over time, theorists have typically proposed that life stories should change markedly over time (e.g., Gergen, 1991). Yet, if narrative identity is assumed to provide life with some degree of unity and purpose, then one would expect that life stories should also show some longitudinal continuity. But how might continuity and change be assessed? By determining the extent to which a person "tells the same story" from Time 1 to Time 2? If yes, does "same story" mean identifying the same key events in a life? Showing the same kinds of narrative themes? Exhibiting the same sorts of causal or thematic connections?

In a 3-year longitudinal study that asked college students to recall and describe 10 key scenes in their life stories on three different occasions, McAdams et al. (2006) found that only 28% of the episodic memories described at Time 1 were repeated 3 months later (Time 2), and 22% of the original (Time 1) memories were chosen and described again 3 years after the original

assessment (Time 3). Despite change in manifest content of stories, however, McAdams et al. (2006) also documented noteworthy longitudinal consistencies (in the correlation range of 0.35–0.60) in certain emotional and motivational qualities in the stories and in the level of narrative complexity. Furthermore, over the 3-year period, students' life-narrative accounts became more complex, and they incorporated a greater number of themes suggesting personal growth and integration.

Cross-sectional studies suggest that up through middle age, older adults tend to construct more complex and coherent life narratives than do younger adults and adolescents (Baddeley & Singer, 2007). One process through which this developmental difference is shown is *autobiographical reasoning*, which is the tendency to draw summary conclusions about the self from autobiographical episodes (McLean et al., 2007). Autobiographical reasoning tends to give a life narrative greater causal and thematic coherence (Habermas & Bluck, 2000). Pasaupathi and Mansour (2006) found that autobiographical reasoning in narrative accounts of life turning points increases with age up to midlife. Middle-aged adults showed a more interpretive and psychologically sophisticated approach to life storytelling, compared to younger people. Bluck and Gluck (2004) asked adolescents (age 15–20), younger adults (age 30–40), and older adults (age 60 and over) to recount personal experiences in which they demonstrated wisdom. Younger and older adults were more likely than adolescents to narrate wisdom scenes in ways that connected the experiences to larger life themes or philosophies, yet another manifestation of autobiographical reasoning.

Singer, Rexhaj, and Baddeley (2007) found that adults over the age of 50 narrated self-defining memories that expressed a more positive narrative tone and greater integrative meaning compared to college students. Findings like these dovetail with Pennebaker and Stone's (2003) demonstration, based on laboratory studies of language use and analyses of published fiction, that adults use more positive and fewer negative affect words, and demonstrate greater

levels of cognitive complexity, as they age. The findings are also consistent with research on autobiographical recollections showing a positivity memory bias among older adults (e.g., Kennedy, Mather, & Carstensen, 2004). At the same time, evidence suggests that older adults tend to recall more general, as opposed to specific, event memories, tending to skip over the details and focus mainly on the memory's emotional gist (Baddeley & Singer, 2007). In our later years, narrative identity may become warmer and fuzzier.

Counselors who work with the elderly sometimes employ the method of *life review* to encourage older adults to relive and reflect upon past events (Butler, 1963). In life review, older adults are encouraged to mine their autobiographical memory for specific events that seem to have meaning and value. Life review therapists teach their clients how to reminisce productively about these events and to reflect upon their meaning. Some studies suggest that life review can improve life satisfaction and relieve symptoms of depression and anxiety among older adults (Serrano, Latorre, Gatz, & Montanes, 2004). Even without undergoing formal training or assistance in life review, however, older adults may draw increasingly on reminiscences as the years go by. Positive memory biases among older people may give narrative identity a softer glow in the later years. The increasing tendency with age to recall more generalized memories may also simplify life stories in old age (Singer et al., 2007).

Culture and Narrative

A central finding in the study of narrative identity is that as adults move into and through midlife they become better able to construct life stories that derive positive meaning from negative events (Bauer & McAdams, 2004; King & Hicks, 2006; Pals, 2006b; Woike & Matic, 2004). Finding positive meanings in negative events is the central theme that runs through McAdams's (2006) conception of *the redemptive self*. In a series of nomothetic and idiographic studies conducted over the past 15 years, McAdams and

colleagues have consistently found that midlife American adults who score especially high on self-report measures of generativity—suggesting a strong commitment to promoting the well-being of future generations and improving the world in which they live (Erikson, 1963)—tend to see their own lives as narratives of redemption (Mansfield & McAdams, 1996; McAdams, 2006; McAdams & Bowman, 2001; McAdams, Diamond, de St. Aubin, & Mansfield, 1997; McAdams et al., 2001). Compared to their less generative American counterparts, highly generative adults tend to construct narrative identities that feature redemption sequences, in which the protagonist is delivered from suffering to an enhanced status or state. In addition, highly generative American adults are more likely than their less-generative peers to construct life stories in which the protagonist (a) enjoys a special advantage or blessing early in life; (b) expresses sensitivity to the suffering of others or societal injustice as a child; (c) establishes a clear and strong value system in adolescence that remains a source of unwavering conviction through the adult years; (d) experiences significant conflicts between desires for agency/power and desires for communion/love; and (e) looks to achieve goals to benefit society in the future (McAdams, 2006). Taken together, these themes articulate a general script or narrative prototype that many highly generative American adults employ to make sense of their own lives (see also Colby & Damon, 1992; Walker & Frimer, 2007). For highly productive and caring midlife American adults, the redemptive self is a narrative model of *the good life*.

The redemptive self is a life-story prototype that serves to support the generative efforts of midlife men and women. Their redemptive life narratives tell how generative adults seek to give back to society in gratitude for the early advantages and blessings they feel they have received. In every life, generativity is tough and frustrating work, as every parent or community volunteer knows. But if an adult constructs a narrative identity in which the protagonist's suffering in the short run often gives way to reward later on, he or she may be better able to sustain

the conviction that seemingly thankless investments today will pay off for future generations. Redemptive life stories support the kind of life strivings that a highly generative man or woman in the midlife years is likely to set forth. They also confer a *moral legitimacy* to life (Hardy & Carlo, [Chapter 19](#), this volume), a life-narrative function that Taylor (1989) and MacIntyre (1981) identify as central to the making of a modern identity. Certain kinds of life narratives exemplify what a society deems to be a good and worthy life. Indeed, virtually all life narratives assume some kind of moral stance in the world. Narrators operate from a moral perspective and seek to affirm the moral goodness of their identity quests. Taylor (1989) writes that “in order to make minimal sense of our lives, in order to have an identity, we need an orientation to the good,” and “we see that this sense of the good has to be woven into my understanding of my life as an unfolding story” (p. 47).

The conception of the redemptive self brings to attention the crucial role of culture in the construction of narrative identity over the lifespan. The kinds of life stories that highly generative American adults tend to tell reprise quintessentially American cultural themes—themes that carry a powerful moral cachet. Indeed, the stories of highly generative American adults may say as much about the cultural values that situate the story and the teller as they do about the storytellers themselves. The life-story themes expressed by highly generative American adults recapture and couch in a psychological language especially cherished, as well as hotly contested, ideas in American cultural history—ideas that appear prominently in spiritual accounts of the seventeenth-century Puritans, Benjamin Franklin’s eighteenth-century autobiography, slave narratives and Horatio Alger stories from the nineteenth century, and the literature of self-help and American entrepreneurship from more recent times (McAdams, 2006). Evolving from the Puritans to Ralph Waldo Emerson to Oprah, the redemptive self has morphed into many different storied forms in the past 300 years as Americans have

sought to narrate their lives as redemptive tales of atonement, emancipation, recovery, self-fulfillment, and upward social mobility. The stories speak of heroic individual protagonists—the *chosen people*—whose *manifest destiny* is to make a positive difference in a dangerous world, even when the world does not wish to be redeemed. The stories translate a deep and abiding script of what historians call *American exceptionalism* into the many contemporary narratives of success, recovery, development, liberation, and self-actualization that so pervade American talk, talk shows, therapy sessions, sermons, and commencement speeches. It is as if especially generative American adults, whose lives are dedicated to making the world a better place for future generations, are, for better and sometimes for worse, the most ardent narrators of a general life-story format as American as apple pie and the Super Bowl.

Different kinds of narrative identities make sense in different kinds of cultures. In Erikson’s (1958) classic study of Martin Luther’s identity formation, the stories that young man Luther constructed to make sense of his own life—stories about physical encounters with devils and saints—made all kinds of cultural sense in sixteenth-century Christian Germany, but they strike the modern secular ear as somewhat odd. A member of a rural Indian village may account for his feelings of tranquility this morning as resulting from the cool and dispassionate *food* he ate last night (Shweder & Much, 1987). His story will make sense to his peers in the village, but it will not fit expectations for life-narrative accounts in contemporary Berlin.

Furthermore, within modern societies different groups are given different narrative opportunities and face different narrative constraints. Especially relevant here are gender, race, and class divisions in modern society. The feminist author Carolyn Heilbrun (1988) remarked that many women have traditionally “been deprived of the narratives, or the texts, plots, or examples, by which they might assume power over – take control of – their own lives” (p. 17). The historical and contemporary life experiences of

many African Americans do not always coalesce nicely into the kind of life-narrative forms most valued by the white majority in the United States (Boyd-Franklin, 1989). Narrative identity, therefore, reflects gender and class divisions and the patterns of economic, political, and cultural hegemony that prevail at a given point in a society's history (Franz & Stewart, 1994; Gregg, 2006; Rosenwald & Ochberg, 1992).

With respect to cultural effects, researchers have noted strong differences in autobiographical memory and narrative identity between East Asian and North American societies. For example, North American adults typically report an earlier age of first memory and have longer and more detailed memories of childhood than do Chinese, Japanese, and Korean adults (Leichtman, Wang, & Pillemer, 2003). In addition, several studies have noted that North Americans' personal memories tend to be more self-focused than are the memories of East Asians (e.g., Wang, 2001, 2006). The differences are consistent with the well-known argument that certain Eastern societies tend to emphasize interdependent construals of the self whereas Western societies emphasize independent self-conceptions (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; reviewed by Smith, Chapter 11, this volume). From an early age, Westerners are encouraged to think about their own individual exploits and to tell stories about them. In a more collectivist culture that inculcates interdependent self-construals, by contrast, children may be encouraged to cultivate a listening role over a telling role and to construct narratives of the self that prioritize other people and social contexts.

Wang and Conway (2004) asked European American and Chinese midlife adults to recall 20 autobiographical memories. Americans provided more memories of individual experiences, and they focused their attention on their own roles and emotions in the events. In contrast, Chinese adults were more inclined to recall memories of social and historical events, and they placed a greater emphasis on social interactions and significant others in their stories.

Chinese also more frequently drew upon past events to convey moral messages than did Americans. Wang and Conway (2004) suggested that personal narratives and life stories fulfill both self-expressive and self-directive functions. Euro-Americans may prioritize self-expressive functions, viewing personal narratives as vehicles for articulating the breadth, depth, and uniqueness of the inner self. By contrast, Chinese may prioritize the self-directive function, viewing personal narratives as guides for good social conduct. Confucian traditions and values place a great deal of emphasis on history and respect for the past. Individuals are encouraged to learn from their own past experiences and from the experiences of others, including their ancestors. From a Confucian perspective, the highest purpose in life is *ren*—a blending of benevolence, moral vitality, and sensitive concern for others. One method for promoting *ren* is to scrutinize one's autobiographical past for mistakes in social conduct. Another method is to reflect upon historical events in order to understand one's appropriate position in the social world. It should not be surprising, then, that personal narratives imbued with a Confucian ethic should draw upon both individual and historical events in order to derive directions for life.

Conclusion

Narrative identity is the internalized and evolving story of the self that a person begins to work on in late adolescence and emerging adulthood and continues to rework for much of the rest of life. Combining a selective reconstruction of the past and imagined scenario for the future, narrative identity helps to provide a person's life with the sense of temporal continuity and purpose that Erikson (1963) originally identified as a cardinal function of ego identity. Narrative identity integrates a life in time and culture. Providing a subjective, storied explanation for how a person came to be and where his or her life may be going in the future, narrative identity also lends a moral legitimacy to a life, linking the person's own story up with the master moral narratives

that preside within a given culture. As such, then, any person's particular narrative identity is a co-authored, psychosocial construction, a joint product of the person him/herself and the culture wherein the person acts, strives, and narrates.

The concept of narrative identity may be traced back to McAdams's (1985) initial attempt to re-cast Erikson's idea of ego identity into narrative terms. McAdams (1985) launched a research program focused on analyzing the salient content and structural dimensions of life stories. Since then, the concept of narrative identity has evolved considerably, assimilating themes from cognitive science, life span and life-course studies, cultural psychology, social and personality psychology, clinical psychology, and other disciplines wherein scholars have begun to consider the narrative features of human lives. The concept of narrative identity plays a major role today in the multi-layer personality theory developed by McAdams and Pals (2006) and in a broad, interdisciplinary framework for understanding the self as actor, agent, and author, recently articulated by McAdams and Cox (2010). The current chapter has traced the historical evolution of the concept of narrative identity, reviewed research and theory on the development of narrative identity across the human life course, and examined the role of culture in the making of narrative identity. The study of narrative identity continues to attract researchers from many different disciplines and points of view. What links them all together is the goal of understanding how human beings make narrative sense out of their own lives, how they develop the stories that come to comprise their very identities, how those stories change over time, and how those stories function—psychologically, socially, morally, culturally—as the storyteller journeys across the long course of adult life.

Acknowledgments The preparation of this chapter was supported by a grant from the Foley Family Foundation to establish the Foley Center for the Study of Lives at Northwestern University.

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Daphna Oyserman and Leah James

Abstract

Possible identities are the positive and negative identities one might hold in the future. This chapter reviews what is known about the content and consequences of possible identities. Of particular interest are the implications of possible identities for identity-based motivation, current action in pursuit of identity-based goals. From a theoretical perspective, possible identities are important; they provide a goal post for current action and an interpretive lens for making sense of experience and so should influence both well-being and motivation. Surprisingly little is known about how and under which circumstances these consequences occur. This chapter addresses this gap. Key findings are threefold. First, possible identities differ with life phase, life transition, and life circumstance and intersect with other aspects of identity. Second, possible identities, and particularly negative possible identities, sometimes affect well-being. Similarly, possible identities are sometimes, but not always, implicated in current action. Research is beginning to address when and how possible identities matter. As outlined in the identity-based motivation model, connection, congruence, and interpretation of difficulty matter. If a possible identity feels connected to the current self and the actions needed to attain the future identity feel congruent with the current self, then people are more likely to interpret difficulties they encounter as meaning that the future identity is important rather than impossible to attain, and consequently to persist in their pursuit of this future identity.

In each kind of self, material, social, and spiritual, men distinguish between the immediate and actual, and the remote and potential. (William James, 1890, p. 300)

The self is a mental concept, a working theory about oneself, stored in memory, and amended with use. It is a working theory about who one is, was, and will become, rather than a store of autobiographical memories. Autobiographical memories and mental images become part of the self only if they take on self-defining meaning (see Banaji & Prentice, 1994; Epstein, 1973; Greenwald & Banaji, 1989; Oyserman, 2001,

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2007). As the opening quote by William James makes clear, within one's self-theory, the future part of the self (who one may become) is distinct from the current part of self (who one is now). The future self provides a sense of potential and an interpretive lens to make sense of experience, guide self feelings, and energize goal pursuit. People are motivated to act in ways that feel identity congruent. They are motivated to work toward the futures they believe people like themselves can attain. At the same time, they are also motivated to work to avoid other futures, especially futures they believe out-group members (people not like themselves) attain (for an overview of the identity-based motivation model: Oyserman, 2007, 2009a, 2009b; Oyserman & Destin, 2010b; for a different perspective, see Soenens and Vansteenkiste, Chapter 17, this volume).

However, for a number of reasons, identity-based motivation processes do not always cue current action to attain a future self. First, the future self may not feel connected to the present self. Second, the actions necessary to attain a future self may feel incongruent with other salient aspects of the current self. Third, experience of ease or difficulty in thinking about a future self may be misinterpreted as implying that no action is needed at the moment (or that action does not matter). For example, bringing to mind a future self may feel difficult and experienced difficulty may be interpreted as meaning that the future self is impossible to attain.

Thus, while the future self can influence the current self, it does not always do so. To understand why the self matters sometimes but not always, we begin this chapter with an operationalization of what we mean by self and identity as well as examples of the early psychological theory and research on which current theorizing and research are based. In the third section we describe the content of the possible identities that make up the future self, emphasizing what is known about the influence of life-phase and socio-cultural factors on self-content. In the final section, we describe what is known about the consequences of possible identities, their impact on well-being and behavior, ending

with implications for identity-based motivation. Though it may seem that knowing the content of future self-goals is sufficient to predict behavioral outcomes, as discussed in the final section of this chapter, this is not necessarily the case.

Conceptualizations of Possible Identities

Early Roots

The idea that the future self matters seems to have developed from multiple theoretical well-springs. Perhaps the best-known early psychological conceptualization comes from William James (1890). James (1890) provided a useful working definition of the self, describing it as both a cognitive structure (e.g., differentiating that which is me vs. not me, that which is the current me vs. future potential me) and the content (all the qualities that a person can define as his or her own), feelings, and actions that accompany this content.

According to James, if they could, people would attempt to define themselves as potentially all things and as potentially successful at everything. However, James specifies that aspiring to become all things and failing to do so can undermine self-esteem; people do not feel good about themselves when they aspire to become more than they attain. Thus, in James' view, people weigh (though not necessarily deliberately and consciously) the advantages of broad aspirations (many possible identities) against the disadvantage of feeling badly about oneself when progress toward an aspiration (a possible identity) is insufficient. Consequentially, he proposed, people let go of previous possible identities to improve current self-esteem, but are always tempted to expand the future self by adding new possible identities (see Section Content Across Life Phases and Transitions for other early research).

Current Conceptualizations

Current conceptualizations of the self also focus on cognitive structure, describing it as a theory

about the self rather than as simply content (for reviews that include some focus on the future self, see Banaji & Prentice, 1994; Baumeister, 1998; Karniol & Ross, 1996; Markus & Wurf, 1987). Generally, the *future self* is that part of self-concept focused on the self one might become. As components of the future self, possible identities are working theories of who one may become, based in current assessments of one's own strengths, weaknesses, talents, and characteristics, as well as assessments of what is possible for people like oneself (e.g., for an early formulation, see Erikson, 1968). This future-oriented perspective provides an evaluative context for making sense of the present and motivates and incentivizes future-oriented action.

Philosophers and psychologists alike have asked about the effects of the future self for current behavior and emotional experience. In particular, they have asked *why* and *when* (under what circumstances) conflict between the needs and desires of the future self and the needs and desires of the present self are resolved in favor of the future self. In other words, what predicts the likelihood that the present self will take current action in service of the future self? When and how might the existence of a future self spur future-focused action in the present? As will be discussed in Section Temporal Distance, the answers to these questions depend in part on whether the future self is perceived as connected to the present self, representing the "true" self unencumbered by current constraints, or as disconnected from the present self, such that the concerns of the future self matter no more than the concerns of a stranger.

Possible-identities researchers are interested in both content and consequences of these identities. They ask which future identities people choose for themselves, what are the consequences of having particular future identities for self-regard (well-being) and self-change (behavior), and when these consequences are likely to unfold. A variety of terms are used in the literature to describe aspects of the future or to-be-attained self. Thus, relevant research describes possible selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986; Oyserman & Markus, 1990a, 1990b), ideal

and ought selves (Havinghurst, Robinson, & Dorr, 1946; Higgins, 1987; Higgins, Klein, & Strauman, 1985), desired and undesired selves (Ogilvie, 1987), fantasy selves (Bybee, Luthar, Zigler, & Merisca, 1997; Oettingen, Pak, & Schnetter, 2001), goals (Austin & Vancouver, 1996), and personal projects (Little, 1987; Little, Salmela-Aro, & Phillips, 2007). In the current review of the literature, we attempt to be as inclusive as possible without losing sight of the goal of outlining content and consequences of possible identities for well-being and action. Of necessity, we synthesize across a very disparate literature obtained through Psych-info and Google Scholar searches using as key words the above future self terms. Throughout, we take the simplifying step of referring generally to *possible identities*.

Identity-Based Motivation: Situated, Dynamic, Constructed in Context

In this chapter, we use the term *possible identities* rather than *possible selves*, or another term, for both empirical and theoretical reasons. First, empirically, the literature typically examines content of specific social (e.g., "I'll be a college student," "I'll be a better daughter") and personal (e.g., "I'll be successful," "I'll be smart") possible future *identities*, rather than the future *self* as a whole (for reviews, see Kerpelman & Dunkel, 2006; Oyserman & James, 2009). Self-concept is a large, multifaceted structure that includes past, current, and future identities (Howard, 2000; Neisser, 1988, 1997; Oyserman, 2001). As outlined next, using the term *identity* also has advantages for linking to theoretical frameworks.

Possible identities as social products. Erikson (1968) described adolescent identity development as a process of defining oneself in a particular historical, cultural, and sociological time period. Re-connecting with this term both (a) facilitates connection to Erikson's earlier perspective and (b) highlights that we are conceptualizing future identities broadly, beyond a Western culture-bound focus on the self as an individual product. Indeed, we focus on a broader cultural perspective of the self as a social

process consisting of connections and relationships to important others (e.g., Oyserman & Markus, 1993, see also Chen, Boucher & Kraus, Chapter 7, this volume).

Possible identities as social cognition. Thinking of the self as set of multiple, not necessarily well-integrated current and possible identities is critical to dynamic conceptualizations of the self that take into account recent advances in social cognition research (Banaji & Prentice, 1994; Greenwald & Banaji, 1989; Markus & Wurf, 1987). Possible identities are not fixed. Rather they are amended, revised, and even dropped depending on contextual affordances and constraints, and these changes are not necessarily conscious and deliberate. A social cognition perspective highlights three core points. First, feelings and actions are influenced by those aspects of self-concept that are in working memory; second, situations influence which aspects of self-concept are in working memory; third, self-concept is revised and amended by experiences. The identity-based motivation perspective model takes a further step and predicts that the meaning of a particular identity and the actions that feel congruent with it are not simply cued but actively *constructed* by features of immediate contexts (Oyserman, 2007, 2009a, 2009b; Oyserman & Destin, 2010a). As will be detailed in the final section of this chapter, contexts not only make a particular identity salient, they also shape the content and behavioral consequences of identities.

Possible identities as psycho-social and cultural forces. Moreover, using the term *identity* facilitates bridging psychological and sociological literatures and integration of the possible identity literature with modern goal theories. Psychologists often refer to the self and to possible selves without considering the social aspects of the self or the social contexts within which the self is enacted, essentially treating possible identities as decontextualized *personal* identities. In contrast sociological and social psychological theories expand their frame beyond the decontextualized self-focus to social identities and social contexts (e.g., see Cinnirella, 1998; for reviews,

see Hogg & Smith, 2007; Stryker & Burke, 2000).

By moving beyond first person singular identities (the identities *I* aspire to attain and wish to avoid), other perspectives on the future self come to light. Consider, for example, first person plural identities, *us* identities, *social* possible identities, or possible identities embedded in social identities. These are the identities *we* aspire to and wish to avoid and include the identities people in my social group (*we*) can strive for (e.g., Cameron, 1999; see Oyserman, 2007; Spears, Chapter 9, this volume). A possible identity can be personal and also social, thus a person assessing whether a college graduate possible identity is plausible for him/herself is asking not only a personal identity question, but also a social identity question (“can people like me get to and graduate from college?”). Another less studied perspective is the third-person perspective on the future self. This involves considering how others might see the future self. As will be outlined later (see Section Intersectionalities of Possible Identity Content Across Gender, Racial–Ethnic, and Socio-Cultural and Socio-Economic Contexts), there are average gender and cultural differences in sensitivity to contextual information, with women and those from collectivist cultures are more likely than men and those from individualist cultures to incorporate the desires and perspectives of others into their possible identities (e.g., Knox, 2006; Markus & Oyserman, 1989; Oyserman & Markus, 1998; Waid & Frazier, 2003). Moreover, there is some evidence taking a third-person perspective can motivate action to attain a future self (Vasquez & Buehler, Studies 1 and 2, 2007).

Early Research on Possible Identities: Role Models as Ideal Self

While James (1890) provided a theoretical conceptualization, Darrah (1898) and others undertook empirical research. These early studies content-coded the responses of school-aged children to open-ended questions about their ideal self. Researchers were explicitly concerned with

generalizability and context effects. Therefore, they tabulated results from large samples of children from the United States (e.g., Chambers, 1903; Darrah, 1898; Havinghurst et al., 1946), Australia, England, New Zealand, Scotland (e.g., Havinghurst & Macdonald, 1955), and Norway (Teigen, Normann, Bjorkheim, & Helland, 2000). The focus was on describing *who* children wanted to become (e.g., parents, historical figures, movie stars). Though this is not how possible identities are currently conceptualized, early research provides anecdotal evidence supporting James' ideas about the content and structure of the future self and foreshadows more recent research on future content and consequences of possible identities.

The earliest study of the future self we were able to locate operationalized the ideal self as who one wants to be like. Data were collected in 1896 from a large sample of 7–16-year-olds in San Mateo County, California and in St Paul, Minnesota (Darrah, 1898, extensively summarized in Chambers, 1903; Greenstein, 1964). Darrah found that young children's ideal self focused on other children they knew, in essence describing an ideal self they could become now. However, by mid-childhood, children's ideal self focused on future possibilities. They described future selves in terms of adults, both historical and contemporary public figures, with particular focus on George Washington. Thus, whereas about a third of 7-year-olds described a child of their age as their ideal self, less than 10% of 16-year-olds did so. By age 15, a third of boys and a quarter of girls said that they would most like to be George Washington. Though children's reasons for their choices are not fully described in the publication, from the examples the author provided, it seems that responses focused on children's understanding of the *character* of the desired ideal self. For example, children wanted to be honest like George Washington.

Chambers (1903) followed up with an examination of the reasons children gave for choosing a particular person as an ideal future self. Chambers surveyed all the children in the New Castle, Pennsylvania, public schools using the same core question, "What person of whom you have ever heard or read would you most

wish to be like? Why?" Like Darrah, Chambers also found that George Washington was a future ideal self, particularly among children in early to middle childhood (though less among later adolescents, who focused on individuals they were acquainted with as ideal future selves). Chambers also reported his analyses of the reasons children gave for their choice, finding a developmental trajectory. The youngest children gave no reason or simply described the person chosen; by age ten, children gave general positive reasons (because he is "good") and only in early adolescence were reasons substantively focused on the kinds of civic qualities, personal morals or character children desired to attain. For example: "Queen Victoria, because she was a good Christian woman and very kind and knew how to raise her children and knew how to mind her own business and knew how to bring up her children in the proper way" (p. 123). However, this category was not fully operationalized in the published paper.

The third early milestone study provided children an opportunity to describe characteristics of future identities and re-shifted focus to particularly examine *adult* possible identities. Havinghurst et al. (1946) collected data from a varied sample of over 1,100 children in Baltimore, Chicago, and small Midwestern communities in the United States. Samples differed in age (6–16), gender, socio-economic status, rural–urban location, and ethnicity. Their goal was to ask children to describe their ideal future selves and, through content coding and comparing responses across groups, to come up with a general coding scheme to describe the development of the ideal self. Children were asked to write a brief essay entitled "The Person I Would Like to be Like" (p. 242). Specifically, children were asked to "Describe in a page or less the person you would most like to be like when you grow up. This may be a real person, or an imaginary person. He or she may be a combination of several people. Tell something about this person's age, character, appearance, and recreations. . ." (p. 242). As before, question format focused attention on potential models for ideal selves; however, in contrast to earlier studies, the prompt also provided the opportunity

for students to write about “what” they hoped to be like—their future character, appearance, and activities. Further, by focusing on “when you grow up,” they focused on adult ideal selves explicitly.

These authors also noted differences by age. Shifts occurred both in who was the focus of the future self and in whether a particular other was used as a model at all. At 6 or 7 years of age, ideal selves were commonly rooted in examples of parents. In middle childhood, ideal selves shifted toward images of athletes, movie stars, entertainers. In adolescence, ideal selves shifted back to closer-to-hand examples of young adults in one’s immediate context, especially neighbors, older siblings, aunts, and uncles. These people’s successes and failures were deemed likely models for one’s own future self. Moreover, while adolescents tended to shift to closer adults, they did not necessarily choose a single ideal. About half of 16-year olds developed composite ideal selves abstracted from a number of people.

Thus, early researchers found some continuity in developmental trajectories across time and place. Although early researchers focused on identifying *who* role models were rather than on the content and consequence of future identities, the narrative content that survives from this early research clearly demonstrates that children were describing the content of their future self and its implications for well-being and action. As an example, here is an excerpt from the ideal-self response from a 16-year-old boy studied by Havinghurst and colleagues (1946):

I want to be energetic. Someone once told me, genius is 99% perspiration and 1% inspiration, I want to be philosophical and plump . . . someone who is always astride the situation . . . but . . . also be efficient and have a good sense of humor. I may be asking too much, but I would not like any broken limbs or crippled faculties. I don’t care what I look like, just so I’m not too repulsive. I can’t think of any particular occupation I will be suited for, but since I like to write, I may devote my time to that. . . . I should like to be able to play tennis, or at least play at tennis.

This teenage boy’s description highlights three current interests of possible identity researchers—the link between content and

action, the link between positive and negative possible identities, and the meaning of differences in perceived likelihood of various possible identities. Thus, in his free description, this boy includes both possible identities (e.g., “energetic” and “astride the situation”) and strategies to attain them (e.g., hard work and “perspiration” rather than “inspiration”). In doing so, he implies that his effort, not his current state, is important for attaining his possible identities. Moreover, some of his positive future identities seem to cue disavowal of some of his negative future identities. For example, describing self-defined positive future identities (e.g., I want to be plump) seems to cue to-be-avoided self-defined negative future identities (e.g., I don’t want to be crippled), even though the instruction was simply to describe one’s ideal self. Third, some future identities seem more likely than others (e.g., his conceptualization of a future career is “I can’t think of any particular occupation I will be suited for, but since I like to write, I may devote my time to that”). As far as the domains described, William James’ “material self” which includes the body (e.g., “I don’t care what I look like, just so I am not too repulsive”) is clearly important, but elements of the “spiritual self” which includes self-reflections and traits (e.g., “philosophical”) are also represented. Less clearly articulated are aspects of the “social self” which includes how others see the self, though it may be that these descriptions imply that others agree that one is efficient or has a good sense of humor in order for these traits to have the desired positive effects.

Possible Identity Content

Now we turn to current conceptualizations of possible identity content. In this section, we briefly summarize heterogeneity in assessment (differences in measurement and focus) then move on to content domains, reviewing the content literature within four organizing frames. These are: (1) life phases and transitions; (2) intersectionalities across gender, racial–ethnic, and socio-cultural and economic context; (3)

identity valence and balance; and (4) identity distance. Of course, the studies described here could fit in more than one section; our goal is simply to provide the reader with a sense of the multiple ways possible identity content can be considered.

Assessment Issues

Heterogeneity in measurement. Measures of possible identities are diverse both because of differences in theoretical conceptualization and because it is not yet clear how best to assess them. One general division is between open- and closed-ended measures. Open-ended measures have two distinct strengths and two related weaknesses. First consider their strengths. Open-ended measures allow participants to freely describe salient possible identity domains, content, and concerns. Moreover, because the researcher does not provide a list, open-ended measures reduce social desirability responding and self-presentation concerns. Next consider their weaknesses. First, open-ended responses provide a sense of salient possible identities but not a full listing of all identities one might be willing to consider. Second, open-ended responses must be content coded prior to interpretation, which can be labor intensive and can result in loss of much of the detailed information obtained. In contrast, closed-ended measures ensure uniformity of response domains, content, and concerns. These are clear strengths of the method but at the same time a pre-selected list reduces chances of learning what is salient to the respondent and increases the chance of social desirability influences (endorsing possible identities that feel normative whether or not one would have generated them in an open-ended task).

Another domain of measurement heterogeneity is how far in the future the future self is and whether the question provides a temporal anchor (e.g., next year, in 10 years, as an adult) or not (e.g., in the future). Temporal anchors increase specificity but only make sense if anchors are grounded in a theoretical conceptualization of the future self. Some theories refer to the future more

generally (e.g., ideal self, future self, personal projects). If the theory does not distinguish near and far future, researchers may prefer not to include specific anchors.

Similarly, probes that elicit both positive and negative aspects of the future self (e.g., desired, undesired, expected, feared) ensure that both positive and negative aspects are covered. This coverage makes sense if it is theoretically relevant. But since some future self theories do not specify differences in the function of, or even the necessity of, considering valence in the future self, it is hard to argue that all measures should make valence explicit.

In sum, the current state of the field is that a variety of open- and closed-ended measures are used, some specifying temporal distance and valence, others not, some specifying content domains and others leaving domain open. Although differences reduce our ability to generalize about the likely content of possible identities, they also reflect real divergence across theories as to what should be the focus of attention. As a result, it would be premature to force standardization of measurement (for a contrary position, see Erickson, 2007).

Heterogeneity in focus. In addition to differences in measurement, focus of attention also differs across authors. It is plausible that possible identity content is linked to life phase or specific to gender, racial-ethnic, cultural, or socioeconomic contexts and that content varies by perspective, valence, and temporal distance as will be outlined in the following sections.

Content Across Life Phases and Transitions

A number of reviews address possible identity content (e.g., Hoyle & Sherrill, 2006; Oyserman & Fryberg, 2006). Though many populations have yet to be studied, our sense is that, as predicted by Erikson's (1968) developmental model, content centers on salient life tasks, phases, and transitions. Here we consider two broad age and life phase groupings: (a) Schooling and preparing for adult relationships and occupations, and

(b) engaging in parenting and career, aging, and the life phase of retirement and health concerns.

Childhood and adolescence. Atance (2008) reviews research findings demonstrating that children form mental images of their future wants and desires by the age of four or five. Havinghurst and colleagues (1946, 1955) also found early focus on the future self, with children from age 6 years of age (and through the teenage years) describing their ideal self in terms of character, physical appearance (especially girls), material goods (especially boys), and sociability. More recently, Oyserman and Markus (1990a) found that the positive and negative possible identities of 13–16-year olds focused largely on school and extracurricular activities (e.g., do well in school, play basketball, do poorly in school, not get to play sports). Other common possible identities were intrapersonal identities (e.g., happy, attractive, depressed, fat), interpersonal identities (e.g., have friends, spend time with mother, alone, no boy/girlfriend), jobs versus poverty (e.g., have a job, make money, be poor, can't have nice things), material goods (have a car, have nice clothes), and crime (e.g., steal, sell drugs, be in jail). School was a more salient possible identity for youth who were in school, accounting for a third of their responses. On the other hand, children adjudicated to treatment facilities for delinquent activities were significantly less likely to report school-focused possible identities.

In addition to obtaining content information, researchers have also asked about the effect of parents and other adults on their children's future identities, asking whether children nominate parents as influencing what is possible for them (Oyserman, 1993), whether children see becoming like their parents or other adults as a positive future self, and whether parents' own ideal selves directly shape the ideal selves of their children. Oyserman (1993) found that more delinquent teens were more likely to view peers, lifestyles, or no one at all as influencing their possible identities and less likely to perceive parents and other adults as influential than were teens not involved in delinquent activity. Havighurst and colleagues (1946) found that children nominated their parents as their ideal self but that mid-adolescents

shifted focus to famous role models, and that older adolescents again returned to family or other local models. The influence of parents and other adults on adult possible identities has been described qualitatively (e.g., Freer, 2009; Shepard & Marshall, 1999). Zentner and Renaud (2007) focused specifically on the impact of parents' ideal selves on children's ideal selves. Teens' ideal selves were correlated both with their parent's beliefs about what the teen's ideal selves should be and with parent's own ideal selves. The association between parent and child ideals was stronger among teens reporting a positive and nurturing parent-child relationship. Mother's ideals mattered more than father's.

Adulthood and aging. A number of studies with middle class young adults suggest that their possible identities are focused on occupational and interpersonal issues such as getting married; that family and parenting possible identities become more important in the middle adult years; and that the centrality of job-focused possible identities recedes as adults enter later adulthood (Cross & Markus, 1991; Hooker, Fiese, Jenkins, Morfei, & Schwagler, 1996; Strauss & Goldberg, 1999). As adults age, they continue to imagine future identities (e.g., Cotter & Gonzalez, 2009; Hoppmann & Smith, 2007; Hoppmann, Gerstorf, Smith, & Klumb, 2007). However, older adults become less positive in general about their future self (Ryff, 1991). Moreover, physical health-related possible identities become more prominent in older adulthood (Frazier, Hooker, Johnson, & Kaus, 2000; Hooker & Kaus, 1994).

The Berlin aging study provides unique insight into possible identities among aging adults. In this sample, over half of all possible identities are health-related (Hoppmann & Smith, 2007). Additional common possible identities focus on everyday competence (both cognitive and physical), family, and political and religious attitudes (Freund & Smith, 1999; Hoppmann & Smith, 2007; Smith & Freund, 2002). In these adults, as in others, prior life-phase choices influence current possible identities. A surprising finding is that the possible identities of childless elderly women were more likely to focus on family ties, whereas the possible identities of

elderly women with children focused on social relationships outside the family (Hoppmann & Smith, 2007).

Transitions and changes. In addition to studying specific life phases, a number of authors have examined life transitions and changes. Life transitions typically refer to normative shifts from one phase to the next. Transitions are often accompanied by changes in the accessibility of, commitment to, and beliefs about the likelihood of attaining a particular possible identity. These changes may occur slowly as new challenges unfold developmentally, or they can occur relatively quickly as new challenges present themselves due to unforeseen circumstances. We found a number of studies examining transitions. Some transitions involve adding possible identities, while others are better described in terms of the loss of possible identities. As detailed below, examples of adding possible identities include transitions to adulthood, school transition, and transitions into parenthood. Examples of losing possible identities include divorce, job loss, and other setbacks.

Dunkel (2002) studied the transition to early adulthood. To understand the relationship between identity development and possible identities in young adulthood, he assessed both constructs in a sample of mostly white college students (averaging 20 years of age).¹ He found that students reported more possible identities, and especially more negative or feared possible identities when they were in the *identity moratorium* phase than when they were in other phases. The identity moratorium phase can be considered a mid-range phase of identity development. The goal of the moratorium phase is to commit to working toward certain identities (see Kroger and Marcia, Chapter 2, this volume).

Manzi, Vignoles, and Regalia (2010) examined stability of possible identities across the transition to university and the transition to being a parent or parenthood. Prior to these transitions, these authors asked participants to describe their desires, fears, and expectations about the centrality of different parts of their identity in the future. After the transition, participants were

shown their prior rating and asked to consider it again. Identities participants expected or desired to be central were in fact rated as more central after the transition.

Changes in life circumstances have also been associated with loss of possible identities. For example, Price, Friedland, and Vinokur (1998) note that one of the effects of job loss is loss of identity as a current and future breadwinner, contributing member of society, and valued part of the family unit. King and Raspin (2004) studied associations between possible identities and the well-being of recently divorced women, distinguishing possible identities that were currently possible and those which had been lost due to divorce. Those with clear, easy to imagine, and detailed currently possible identities had higher well-being both concurrently and 2 years later than those with clear, easy to imagine, and detailed possible identities that were lost and no longer attainable due to the divorce.

To study what it takes for people to give up on a possible identity, Carroll, Shepperd, and Arkin (2009) set up a field experiment. Participants were psychology students in their final year of undergraduate coursework who were seeking career advice. In the first stage, students met with a career advisor who created a positive possible identity (“business psychologist”) by providing attractive information about this field and the possibility of an intensive 1-year master’s degree program to become certified. At the next phase, students were divided into two conditions. All were provided feedback. Some were simply told that this positive possible identity was unlikely. Others were told both that the possible identity was unlikely and, if pursued, was likely to result in attaining a negative possible identity (“clerical worker”). Only when the negative possible identity was referenced, did participants relinquish the positive possible identity. Carroll and colleagues (2009) replicated these findings in a follow-up experiment using the same method. The implication is that, as predicted by James (1890), once a possible identity has been formed, it is revised downward or let go of only with great reluctance.

Intersectionalities of Possible Identity Content Across Gender, Racial–Ethnic, and Socio-Cultural and Socio-Economic Contexts

Similarities and differences in possible identity content by socio-economic status, gender, socio-cultural, or racial–ethnic group have also been studied. Antecedents of between-group differences found are difficult to specify. Such differences may be due to differences in opportunity structures, differences in socialization, or other differences—particularly differences in how intersections among identities are handled.

Gender. If one's future is structured within gendered norms and expectations, then possible identities should differ by gender (Knox, 2006). If women are more socialized to focus on connections and relationships while men are socialized to focus on autonomy and independence, then their sense of self generally and their possible identities in particular, should differ in that one focuses on relating and connecting and the other focuses on autonomy and independence (see Knox, 2006; Markus & Oyserman, 1989). Indeed, Darrah (1898) found gender differences in the ideal selves generated by boys and girls. On average, boys picked fewer people as ideal-self models than girls and picked mostly men, whereas girls picked men and women equally. Darrah proposed that this might be due to the relative dearth of high-achieving female figures in school textbooks and public discourse. Chambers (1903) also found that by the end of high school, girls returned to more local individuals as ideal-self models, interpreting this as due to their realization their goals should be set lower.

Moving beyond coding of specific individuals that children and teens wanted to become, Havighurst and colleagues (1946) coded for content of ideal selves and found this also varied somewhat by gender. *Character* was the most common content of ideal selves for both genders, while *Physical appearance* was as salient as character for girls, but less so for boys. Conversely, *Material goods* were salient in the ideal selves of boys, but not girls. *Sociability* was the third most common ideal-self content for boys.

Gender and social context effects may intersect. For example, in their analyses of the possible identities of boys and girls in a four-state sample, Oyserman, Johnson, and James (2010) found that doing well and not getting in trouble at school are more salient possible identities for children living in more disadvantaged neighborhoods compared to children living in less disadvantaged neighborhoods. Boys and girls did not differ in the salience of school-focused possible identities overall. However, controlling for salience of school-focused possible identities, boys living in more economically disadvantaged neighborhoods were less likely to have strategies to attain their school-focused possible identities than girls.

Results also highlight gender differences in sensitivity to relational and social factors. In the Zentner and Renaud (2007) field study previously described, parents had more impact on the ideal selves of girls than of boys. Not only are girls more sensitive to their parents' perspective, they are also more likely to assume that their possible identities need to fit social contexts in the future. For example, Curry and colleagues (1994) found that academically successful girls were more likely to consider both work and family in their possible identities, while boys focused only on work.

Kemmelmeier and Oyserman (2001a; Study 2) demonstrated gender differences in sensitivity to contextual cues with an experimental paradigm. They asked male and female college undergraduates to think of someone they knew who was doing poorly in school and who may fail. Then they randomly assigned participants to consider either (a) how they were similar to this person or (b) how they were different from this person. As predicted by the hypothesis of higher average female contextual sensitivity, women's academic possible identities were more negative in the condition cuing similarity to a failing target and more positive in condition cuing difference from this target. No such effect emerged for men.

Other studies suggest that negative or feared possible identities are either more salient or more consequential for girls. Feared physical appearance possible identities were negatively

correlated with self-esteem for girls, but not for boys (Knox, Funk, Elliott, & Bush, 1998). Adolescent girls rate feared possible identities as more likely to become realities than adolescent boys (Knox, Funk, Elliot, & Bush, 2000; see also Anthis, Dunkel, & Anderson, 2004). Mothers are more likely to have feared possible identities focused on parenting than fathers (though men focused more on occupation-focused feared possible identities), so this may reflect gender-role stereotypes regarding parent responsibility for child outcomes (Hooker et al., 1996).

Culture and race-ethnicity. Content of the future self may differ by cultural context for a number of reasons. First, cultures may vary in valued content. Second, cultures may vary in the extent to which people are sensitive to contextual information. Third, cultures may vary in the extent to which positivity about the self is normative. Finally, culture may interact with structural affordances and constraints to influence content of possible identities (for reviews, see Oyserman & Lee, 2008a; Oyserman, Coon, & Kimmelmeier, 2002).

Though little research has used culture as an axis with which to study the future self, existing research has tended to focus on the distinction between individualism and collectivism (for reviews of how culture influences goal focus and motivational processes, see Oyserman & Lee, 2008b; Oyserman & Sorensen, 2009; see also Oyserman et al., 2002 and Smith, Chapter 11, this volume, for more information on the individualism–collectivism distinction).

Oyserman, Gant, and Ager (1995) collected data from college students in Detroit, Michigan, finding that the association of cultural factors (individualism, collectivism) with possible identities differed between White and African-American students. Higher individualism was associated with reporting more strategies to attain school-focused possible identities among White students; among African-American students, individualism did not matter, but students higher in collectivism reported more strategies to attain school-focused possible identities.

In another study, Kimmelmeier and Oyserman (2001b) assessed individualism and collectivism

and asked college students to think of someone they knew who was doing well in school and was likely to succeed, randomly assigning participants to either (a) consider how they were similar to or (b) how they were different from this successful person, and then rate how likely they were to attain a number of academic possible identities. Students who were higher in individualism believed they were more likely to attain academic possible identities no matter whether they thought of similarities to or differences from a successful other. However, participants who were higher in collectivism were more sensitive to the context manipulation. They rated their chances of attaining a positive academic possible identity as higher after thinking of how they were similar to, rather than different from, a successful other.

In a third study, Waid and Frazier (2003) found differences in content of possible identities that were congruent with cultural differences. They compared possible identities of Hispanic and White American adults aged 60 and older. Compared to Hispanic Americans, White Americans' possible identities focused more on the personal (e.g., hoping for education and personal abilities, fearing physical decline) whereas, compared to White Americans, Hispanic Americans' possible identities focused more on the social (e.g., family-focused hopes).

Research comparing content of possible identities across racial–ethnic groups suggests that school-focused possible identities are common among youth across racial–ethnic groups. For example, Fryberg and Markus (2003) found that school-focused possible identities were the most common category of expected self for both American-Indian and European-American junior high-school and college students. However, these results are context sensitive. Thus, Oyserman and Markus (1990a) found that school-focused possible identities were more common among African-American than among White youths in their Detroit, Michigan sample. However, in their primarily white context, Anderman, Anderman, and Griesinger (1999) found the reverse, with African-American youth less likely to report school-focused possible selves than white youth. Moreover, living in segregated neighborhoods

can undermine positive racial–ethnic identity elements associated with school-focused possible identities (Oyserman & Yoon, 2009).

These findings imply that salient stereotypes about racial–ethnic groups can influence the content of possible identities. Fryberg, Markus, Oyserman, and Stone (2008, Study 4) recently tested this proposition empirically among American-Indian students. Specifically, they randomly assigned American-Indian students to one of three conditions: A stereotype-cuing condition, in which they viewed American-Indian sports mascots, a non-stereotype-cuing condition, in which they viewed an American-Indian College Fund advertisement, or a no image control condition. As expected, school-focused possible identities were more likely to come to mind in the control and neutral image conditions than in the stereotype image condition.

Kao's (2000) qualitative analysis of high-school focus group and personal interview data support the interpretation that possible identities are influenced by salient stereotypes. In this study, Black students described feared possible identities of being a school failure (a negative stereotype of Black students). Hispanic students described feared possible identities of being an unskilled manual laborer (a negative stereotype of Hispanics). Asian students described hoped-for possible identities of high academic success (a positive stereotype of Asians).

Socio-economic status (SES). A handful of studies specifically examine the content of possible identities of participants who are either low income or vary in their income status. We found three studies focusing explicitly on low-income mothers. In each study, possible identity content focused on employment and family roles (pregnant teens, Klaw, 2008; mothers receiving welfare or transitioning to work, Lee & Oyserman, 2009; single, rural, low-income mothers, Ward, 2009). Less is known about low-income fathers. Although a study with imprisoned fathers suggests a common feared possible identity for these men is becoming like their own fathers (Meek, 2007).

Two studies compared content across socio-economic status and found subtle differences.

Among college students varying in socio-economic status, lower socio-economic status was associated with expecting to attain less-prestigious work and career goals and these lower expectations were associated with lower well-being; however, the groups did not differ in their hoped-for identities (Pisarik & Shoffner, 2009). Among middle-school children, the most common next-year possible identity focused on school, with no effect of parental SES. Controlling for parental SES, neighborhood-level economic disadvantage mattered. Children from more disadvantaged neighborhoods were *more* likely to have school-focused possible identities but were less likely to have strategies to attain these identities than children from more advantaged neighborhoods (Oyserman et al., 2010). One possible way to interpret this result is that all children are exposed to images of school success through the media but differ in their access to chances to learn how to go about achieving their desired identities.

Moreover, models of possible identities may also be less delineated among children in high-poverty contexts. White and Black children from more impoverished circumstances were more likely to desire becoming “glamorous adults” (p. 248), public figures, or fictional characters than individuals from their own lives. They were also more likely to maintain their wish to become a glamorous adult (an athlete, a movie star, or an entertainer) over time (though it became less salient over time for children from higher socio-economic circumstances) (Havinghurst et al., 1946).

Valence

Positive and negative possible identities. As outlined next, positive and negative possible identities are likely to focus on salient life domains but negative possible identities are often more diverse than positive possible identities. With regard to life domains, Hooker and colleagues (1996) found that the most common hoped-for and feared possible identities of parents of infants and preschoolers focused on parenting (e.g., “have

a closer relationship with my kids when they're grown" or "kids being hurt or stolen") or on occupation. Both mothers and fathers of preschoolers had more feared possible identities than parents of infants, suggesting that concerns become more salient as infants transition to childhood.

Studies with children and adolescents often find larger variety in negative than positive possible identities. Thus, in a comparative study of the possible identities of adolescents in four subgroups (public school, community placement following delinquent activity, schools of attention following delinquent activity, and maximum security lockup), Oyserman and Markus (1990a, 1990b) noted that hoped-for and expected identities converged on a few categories but that feared possible identities were more heterogeneous. Yowell (2000) and Knox and colleagues (2000) replicated this effect of more heterogeneity in negative possible identities in school-based samples.

Balance. Rather than compare positive and negative identities, it is also possible to consider whether they are in the same domain. This has been termed "balance" of possible identities (Oyserman & Markus, 1990a, 1990b). In the initial examination of this construct, Oyserman and Markus (1990a, 1990b) found that teens differing in their self-reported level of delinquent involvement differed in the likelihood that they had balanced (positive and negative) future identities. Teens who reported more balanced possible identities subsequently reported fewer delinquent behaviors, even when controlling for other factors such as race-ethnicity, gender, and positivity of expected and negativity of feared possible identities (Oyserman & Markus, 1990a, 1990b).

This effect was replicated when teens differing in their official level of delinquent involvement were compared; those with higher official involvement with the justice system (e.g., adjudicated, community placement) had fewer balanced-possible identities than those with lower-official involvement (e.g., public school). In a follow-up study comparing male adolescents in public high school and the county detention facility, Oyserman and Saltz (1993) replicated

this difference in balance across official delinquency level and also demonstrated that balance was associated with higher social competence. The positive effects of balance have also been documented in the domain of academic attainment, specifically, using more strategies to work on school-focused goals, more engagement with school, and better grades (Oyserman, Bybee, & Terry, 2006; Oyserman, Bybee, Terry, & Hart-Johnson, 2004; Oyserman et al., 2002; Oyserman et al., 1995).

Temporal Distance

Although all possible identities are future-oriented, the future may be proximal (e.g., "I'll pass the eighth grade") or distal (e.g., "I'll have a good job when I grow up"). Time units can be marked vaguely (e.g., "when I am an adult and on my own") or clearly (e.g., "next September" or "next semester"). Time can be marked by meaning unit ("by the time I have to buy another swimsuit," "by the time I retire") or by date ("by Valentine's Day").

How time is marked is likely to influence how vividly a possible identity is imagined, how much attaining it feels linked to present action, and therefore the likelihood that it will cue identity-based motivational striving. For example, soldiers, prisoners, and high-school students may mark time until the future begins (after discharge, once parole begins, after graduation) such that the present is experienced as separate from the future and the future feels distal, vague, and open. When the future begins later, there is not much that can be done now—except wait for the future to arrive. Conversely, the present can be seen as connecting fluidly to the future, and as such, as a time for setting the groundwork for what will become possible in the future. When the future begins now, current action is immediately necessary. With this mindset, a soldier may focus on getting the kind of training that can be used after military service, a student may focus on taking advanced-placement classes to increase the likelihood of college acceptance, and a prisoner may focus on attaining peace of mind,

re-connecting with family, or obtaining training, to make the transition to life outside the prison smoother.

Temporal distance is also likely to matter for possible identity content. In their construal-level theory, Trope and Liberman (2003) show that thinking about a distal future event activates a more global, abstract construal style in which the focus is on the general “essence” of the event, whereas thinking about a proximal future activates a more local, concrete, and context-focused construal style. Analogously, there is some evidence that thinking about a distal future self results in more abstract, trait-like descriptions (Wakslak, Nussbaum, Liberman, & Trope, 2008) than thinking about a proximal (e.g., myself tomorrow) future self or the current self (Pronin & Ross, 2006). For example, Pronin and Ross (2006) randomly assigned participants to rate either their current or their future self on a series of descriptors, with the option of stating whether the trait that describes them depends on the situation. Participants tended to describe the distal future self in terms of traits and to describe the proximal future self and current self as constrained by context, with actions being predicted by situation as opposed to fixed traits.

This tendency is especially pronounced when participants are asked to imagine the actions the future self will take rather than the feelings the future self will have (Pronin & Ross, 2006). When considering the far future, participants make choices and commitments based on what they value, rather than on what is merely easily feasible (Liberman & Trope, 1998). This is a potentially critical difference in perspective and may be at the root of at least some of the motivating effects of possible identities. In sum, this research implies that when imagining a (far) future self, people are motivated to attain important, valued self-attributes and are not immobilized by the situational limitations of the present.

In line with this thinking, Kivetz and Tyler (2007) demonstrate that distal future thoughts activate the desire to become like one’s *true* self², whereas proximal future thoughts activate

a vision of the future self focused on more pragmatic and instrumental concerns, especially how best to act toward a goal. They randomly assigned participants to proximal (in a week) and distal (in 10 years) conditions then had participants select characteristics that would best describe them. In the far future, the self was described with abstract characteristics (e.g., “fulfilling my inner potential”) more so than in the near future.

Consequences of Possible Identities

Research describing possible identity content typically does so with the aim of understanding the consequences of these aspects of the future self for well-being and goal attainment (e.g., Carver & Scheier, 1982, 1998; Karniol & Ross, 1996; Markus & Nurius, 1986), often with particular focus on specific goals and their link to strategies (Gollwitzer, 1999; Gollwitzer & Bayer, 1999; Gollwitzer & Moskowitz, 1996). In this section, we consider what is known about the consequences of possible future identities for two core functions of self-concept: well-being and goal attainment. The well-being function is to protect and maintain a reasonable level of positive self-regard (*self-protection* or *self-enhancement*). The goal attainment function is to sustain and facilitate personal growth, development, and change (*self-improvement*) (for reviews of self-motives, see Brown, 1998; Fiske, 2008; Gregg et al., Chapter 14, this volume).

Possible identity content has been associated with current well-being as well as with later outcomes including academic success and life satisfaction (for recent reviews, see Kerpelman & Dunkel, 2006; Massey, Gebhardt, & Garnefski, 2008). These associations suggest that the content of the future self matters. Typically, studies provide either cross-sectional or longitudinal associations of identity content with an outcome of interest. However, some studies first manipulate content of possible identities and then show consequences for outcomes, providing a clearer causal pathway. We review both kinds of research designs here.

Although studies do not typically assess a process model for how possible identities matter, Carver and Scheier (1982, 1998) provide a clear description of a potential mechanism: a self-regulatory negative feedback loop (for a review, see Lord, Diefendorff, Schmidt, & Hall, 2010). Carver and Scheier (1998) propose that, once an individual sets possible identity goals, he or she uses these goals as comparison standards, compares progress against possible identity goals, and then modifies his or her thoughts and behaviors to increase fit between the current and future self. Although this perspective provides a useful rubric, it has rarely been empirically tested. Moreover, recent work suggests that possible identities are not necessarily influential only when consciously brought to mind as implied in the Carver and Scheier model. Modern motivational theories assume that self-regulatory processes can be unconscious and automatic (for a review see Fishbach & Ferguson, 2007). That is, while people sometimes explicitly and consciously focus on their future identities, much of the impact of the future self is likely to occur through implicit and automatic cuing of various potentially competing possible identities. Furthermore, situations do not simply cue possible identities from memory; possible identities are likely to be actively shaped by situational affordances in the moment (e.g., Oyserman, 2009a, 2009b; Oyserman & Destin, 2010a).

This section consists of two parts. First, we review evidence that possible future identities are consequential for well-being, optimism about the future, anxiety, and mood (e.g., Cross & Markus, 1994; Freund & Smith, 1999; King, 2001; Markus & Nurius, 1987; Markus & Wurf, 1987). Second, we turn to evidence that this same act of generating mental images of possible identities can change behavior, heighten self-regulation and motivation, and ultimately facilitate attainment of various goals. We describe research suggesting when these positive consequences are likely to occur (e.g., Oyserman & Destin, 2010; Ramanathan & Williams, 2007; Ruvolo & Markus, 1992; Taylor, Pham, Rivkin, & Armor, 1998). Where possible, we connect this literature to the related literature on

intrinsic motivation and the experience of *flow* (Csikszentmihalyi & Rathunde, 1993; Keller & Bless, 2008; see also Soenens & Vansteenkiste, Chapter 17, this volume; Waterman, Chapter 16, this volume).

Consequences for Well-Being

Research on the interface between possible identities and well-being focuses on the motivational and emotional consequences of considering possible identities. Negative possible identities can be particularly motivating when they are salient such that being different from an undesired self feels better and being similar to one feels worse than being similar or different from a desired self feels (Ogilvie, 1987). The notion that positive possible identities should enhance motivation is congruent with a self-efficacy perspective (e.g., Bandura, 1997; Bandura & Schunk, 1981).

Simply considering a future identity may improve how one feels about one's self and one's future (Oyserman et al., 2004). Adolescents who believe that *positive* possible selves *are likely* to be attained have higher self-esteem compared to those who do not (Knox et al., 1998). An improved sense of well-being may be inherent in considering alternatives to the current self because alternative futures serve as a reminder of the malleability of the self (e.g., "I may not be doing well in school this year, but I will next year").

This positive consequence of considering a future self does not require that particular detailed future identities be instantiated or that a particular action plan to attain a future identity be articulated (Gonzales, Burgess, & Mobilio, 2001). A number of studies provide supporting evidence for positive effect of imagining a positive future self. In one study, participants were randomly assigned to either an experimental condition in which they articulated a future self-goal or a control condition in which they did not (Gonzales et al., 2001). All participants were asked to report their current mood and well-being. Both mood and well-being were higher in the experimental

group. Just considering a future self-goal resulted in elevated mood and improved well-being of experimental compared to control participants.

Content of possible identities is also sometimes, but not always, correlated with well-being, as can be seen in studies of individuals with physical and mental health problems. In one study, Kindermans and colleagues (2010) content-coded the ideal, ought, and feared possible identities of patients with chronic lower back pain. They did not find a relationship between possible identity content and depressive symptoms but Janis, Veague, and Driver-Linn (2006) did find effects in their comparison of the possible identity responses of women diagnosed with borderline personality disorder and non-diagnosed controls (using a closed-ended measure). Women diagnosed with borderline personality disorder rated their positive possible identities as farther from their current identities and negative possible identities as both closer to their current identities and more likely to be true of themselves in the future than did non-diagnosed control women.

Although optimism about the future are correlated with motivation, success, and well-being (e.g., Bandura, 1997; Seligman, 1991; Taylor & Brown, 1988), recent work suggests that effects of future identities may differ depending on how future identities are represented. For instance, a number of other studies suggest that the consequences of possible identities for well-being depend on their fit with contextual demands and affordances. In one study, Meade and Inglehart (2010) assessed the possible identities of teens in orthodontic treatment. They found that teens whose possible identities focused on physical appearance were happier and more satisfied with their choice to complete orthodontic work than were teens whose future identities were not related to the outcomes of the orthodontic work. In another study, Manzi et al. (2010) focused on two transitions: Students who transitioned to college and adults who transitioned to parenthood. Pre-transition participants were asked to describe their future identities, and then were shown their prior responses following the transition. Participants whose subjective identity structures were consistent with their expected and

desired identity structures prior to the transition reported more current positive emotions. Finally, using a beeper methodology, Hoppmann et al. (2007) examined the associations among possible identities, everyday behaviors, and well-being in a sample of elderly adults (average age 81). Participants first filled out a questionnaire including open-ended hoped-for and feared possible identities. For the next 6 days, they were asked to note what they were doing and how they were feeling when their beeper sounded. They received five daily beeps at random intervals, thus allowing researchers to sample their ongoing experiences rather than obtain a retrospective report. The core finding was that participants who engaged in more activities relevant to their hoped-for identities reported greater well-being than those who engaged in few or no relevant activities.

Positive possible identities are more likely to enhance well-being when they feel close rather than far (e.g., Janis et al., 2006), clear and vivid, rather than vague or pallid (e.g., McElwee & Haugh, 2010). Thus, college students who endorsed scale items suggesting that they see their future self with clarity (e.g., *When I picture myself in the future, I see clear and vivid images*) were more likely to report positive emotions, as well as less depression, less alcohol use, and greater life satisfaction. Ruminating about one's future self (e.g., *My thoughts tend to wander toward imagining possible futures for myself*) was not helpful and was associated with negative affect and more negative automatic thoughts and anxiety. Such rumination was typically focused on feared possible identities that were perceived as unavoidable (McElwee & Haugh, 2010).

Valence of possible identities also matters for well-being. However, highly positive future images do not enhance well-being in the long or short term. In a 5-year longitudinal study of young adults, Busseri, Choma, and Sadava (2009) found that participants with steep upward "subjective temporal perspective" trajectories, who see their present as more satisfying than their past and their future as much more satisfying than their present, reported lower levels of life satisfaction both when first asked

and 5 years later. The authors suggest that individuals low in current life satisfaction engage in “complacent” fantasy and wishful thinking and tend not to engage in future-focused action. Therefore, they do not make progress toward their goals and are distressed by the large gap between their present and desired states (see also Oettingen & Mayer, 2002).

The discrepancies between one’s current and possible future identities have also been implicated in predicting well-being. Higgins’ self-discrepancy theory (Higgins, 1987, 1996; Higgins, Bond, Klein, & Strauman, 1986) examines two discrepancies, the actual-ideal discrepancy between one’s current or actual self and the self one would ideally like to become; and the actual-ought discrepancy between one’s current self and the self one feels obligated to become. A separate line of work has examined the effect of two somewhat different discrepancies, the actual self-future desired self-discrepancy and the actual self-future undesired self-discrepancy (Ogilvie, 1987). Studies related to each discrepancy model are presented next.

Higgins proposed and found that an actual-ideal discrepancy is associated with symptoms of depression and dejection (Higgins, 1987, 1996; Higgins et al., 1986). This finding has been replicated across a number of studies and samples (Gramzow, Sedikides, Panter, & Insko, 2000; Heppen & Ogilvie, 2003; Ozgul, Heubeck, Ward, & Wilkinson, 2003). Higgins (1987, Higgins et al., 1986) also proposed and found that an actual-ought discrepancy should be associated with guilt and anxiety. However, recent studies have found that actual-ideal and actual-ought discrepancies are highly correlated and that controlling for actual-ideal discrepancy reduces the effect of actual-ought discrepancy on emotional well-being, implying that more research is needed to understand the unique effects of this third-person perspective on the self (Gramzow et al., 2000; Heppen & Ogilvie, 2003; Ozgul et al., 2003).

With regard to discrepancies between one’s current and future desired and undesired self, Ogilvie (1987) found that the discrepancy between one’s current and undesired future self

mattered more for well-being than did the discrepancy between one’s current and desired future self. This result has been replicated (Carver, Lawrence, & Scheier, 1999; Phillips, Silvia, & Paradise, 2007). Carver and colleagues (1999) asked participants to complete an open-ended self-measure, including ought, ideal, and feared-future selves and then rate how similar each was to their current self. Perceiving a small, rather than a large, discrepancy between current and feared selves was associated with more symptoms of depression, less happiness, more anxiety, more guilt, and less contentment. The stronger-negative effect of similarity to undesired possible identities compared to the weaker-positive effect of similarity to desired possible identities was confirmed by Phillips and colleagues (2007). Why this might be so is not yet clear though Ogilvie argues that it implies that undesired selves are more concrete and experience-based than ideal selves.

That said, congruence between present and ideal selves has long been used as a measure of psychological growth in therapeutic settings. For instance, Carl Rogers (1954) described use of a Q-sort technique to assess a patient’s present and ideal selves before, during, and after therapy. He found that, as therapy progressed, the correlations between these Q-sorts increased, suggesting that movement toward one’s ideal self can be used as a measure of therapeutic progress. More recent work has provided further evidence that the proximity between actual and undesired selves can predict the presence of psychopathology. Allen and colleagues (1996) used a free-response measure (Rosenberg, 1977) to assess conceptions of actual (current) self, ideal self, undesired self, ought self, and distal future self (“my long term prospects for the future”) among individuals diagnosed with major depressive disorder and a control group. They did not find an association between valence (positivity, negativity) of future self and diagnosis or symptoms of depression, but they did find that smaller actual self-undesired future self-discrepancy was associated with a diagnosis of major depression.

Taken together, research suggests that both positive and negative possible identities can

influence well-being when they are salient. While simply contemplating positive possible identities can provide a sense of optimism for the future, the effect of the negative aspect of the future self on well-being may be even larger than the effect of imagining a positive future. In particular, contemplating a large gap between undesired future identities and one's current situation is associated with higher well-being.

Consequences for Behavior

Now we turn to the effects of possible identities on behavior. Although the idea that possible identities should influence motivation and behavior is central to theorizing on all aspects of the future self (e.g., Markus & Nurius, 1986), research documenting direct effects of possible identities on performance is just beginning to emerge (for a similar point, see Norman & Aron, 2003). Initial studies focused on demonstrating effects of balanced-possible identities (having positive and negative possible identities in the same domain) on subsequent likelihood of engaging in delinquent activities (Oyserman & Markus, 1990a, 1990b). These studies were important because they demonstrated that possible selves are associated with real and important behavioral consequences. Follow-up research suggested that one of the mechanisms linking balance to behavior was the impact of balance on teens' ability to imagine consequences of their behavior, as assessed in their responses to social problem scenarios and communication tasks (Oyserman & Seltz, 1993).

Another series of studies demonstrated that possible identities are also associated with academic outcomes during the college years (Oyserman et al., 1995) and in middle school (Oyserman et al., 2004). Some of these studies showed effects over time, such that balance (Oyserman et al., 2004) or having school-focused possible identities (Anderman et al., 1999) at one point in time predicted grades at a later point in time. For example, sixth grade students with positive academic possible identities improved their grade point average by seventh

grade, especially when their sixth grade academic possible identities were more positive than their current academic self-concept (Anderman et al., 1999). Positive academic possible identities in middle school predicted higher endorsement of performance goals—wanting to do schoolwork in order to prove one's competence (Anderman et al., 1999).

A few studies explicate how the near and far future are linked within the future self. In one study, controlling for current grades, occupation-focused possible identities predicted subsequent grades but only if future occupation was perceived as education-dependent, not otherwise (Destin & Oyserman, 2010, Study 1). Another study showed effects of educational and occupational future identities over a 7-year follow-up. In this longitudinal study of low-income rural teens, those 15-year-olds who aspired to go further in school and get more prestigious jobs reported having attained more education 7 years later (e.g., Beal & Crockett, 2010).

Future identities can influence current health-related behaviors as well. For example, salient health-possible identities can influence exercise time. In this study, students either wrote about a future identity as regular exerciser or as non-exerciser or about someone else who did or did not exercise. Among participants high in future orientation, writing about either exerciser or non-exerciser possible identities increased subsequent exercise time, whereas writing about someone else did not (Ouellette, Hessling, Gibbons, Reis-Bergan, & Gerrard, 2005). Research linking possible identities to healthy choices has also been conducted with elderly adults. In the previously described beeper study with adults aged 80 and older, Hoppmann and colleagues (2007) found that adults with desired possible identities focused on social and cognitive capacity were more likely to report engaging in social and skill-preserving activities (e.g., going out, paying bills) when they were beeped the following week. Moreover, 10 years later, survival was predicted by the extent that hoped for self and behavior were in sync.

These studies represent important advances for two reasons: they indicated effects across

content domains (academics and health) and they showed effects over time. However, these studies were limited because they could not establish a causal process. They showed associations over time but could not conclusively argue that possible identities produced the change (rather than that possible identities were associated with the change due to a common third variable).

To address this problem of causal uncertainty, a number of researchers have tried to directly manipulate the salience and content of a possible identity and demonstrate behavioral consequences, with regard either to an immediate behavior (typically in the laboratory), or to an effect on behavior over time. For example, Ruvolo and Markus (1992) measured students' persistence on academic tasks after they had been randomly assigned to either a positive or a negative future self condition. In the positive future self condition, students imagined that things had gone as well as possible for them. In the negative future self condition, students imagined that things had gone as poorly as imaginable. Students in the positive future self condition persisted more than students in the negative future self condition. Another study assessed partner preferences when different possible identities were salient (Eagly, Eastwick, & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2009). Students were randomly assigned to either a homemaker future-identity salient or a provider future-identity salient condition. Imagining oneself as a future homemaker increased interest in a mate with more of a provider focus. Imagining oneself as future provider increased interest in mates who would share homemaking. Though this study did not assess behavior over time, the authors interpret results to suggest that gender differences in choices may be based in salient possible identities.

To demonstrate a causal effect of possible identities over time, Oyserman and colleagues (Oyserman et al., 2006; Oyserman, Terry, & Bybee, 2002) randomly assigned children to control or intervention groups. Control was school as usual; intervention was a series of small group activities designed to change children's school-focused possible identities. As predicted, possible

identities were influenced by the intervention. Children in the intervention groups reported significantly more balanced school-focused possible identities that were linked to behavioral strategies (e.g., do homework, listen in class). Their school grades and school behavior improved significantly over 1 and 2-year follow-ups. These effects were mediated by change in balance (Oyserman et al., 2006).

Consequences for Identity-Based Motivation

We opened this chapter by proposing that possible identities are likely to affect behavior over time if certain conditions hold. We term these conditions *connection*, *congruence*, and *interpretation of difficulty*. Connection refers to the perception that the future self is connected to the present self. Congruence refers to the perception that actions necessary to attain a future self are congruent with other salient aspects of the current self. Interpretation of difficulty refers to the perception that ease or difficulty in thinking about a future self implies that the future self is important, not impossible to attain (so action is needed at the moment). In the following sections, we examine each of these premises (for more extensive reviews and evidence, see Oyserman, 2007; 2009a; Oyserman et al., 2006).

Felt connection to the current self. As outlined next, evidence from a number of experiments supports the proposition that people are more likely to take action in support of their future self if the future self feels connected to rather than disconnected from the current self. Anything that makes it easier to imagine a future self should increase felt connection to that future self. Indeed, people are more likely to take action when a proximal possible identity is linked to a distal one (Destin & Oyserman, 2010, Study 1), when the future feels close (Peetz, Wilson, & Strahan, 2009, Study 1), when the future self feels near (Nurra & Oyserman, 2010, Studies 1 and 2), and when it is easy to imagine the future self in context (Oyserman & Destin, 2010, Studies 1–3).

Since felt connection may be an implicit judgment rather than an explicit or conscious one, rather than simply tell participants that the future self is connected to the present self, each experiment utilizes a different subtle manipulation. Studies have manipulated the perceived link between proximal and distal possible identities (Destin & Oyserman, 2010, Study 2), whether the future feels close (Peetz et al., 2009, Study 2), whether future identities feel close (Nurra & Oyserman, 2010), or whether the path to future identities feels open (Destin & Oyserman, 2009). Effects have been shown with college students (Oyserman & Destin, 2010; Peetz et al., 2009) as well as with children in middle (Destin & Oyserman, 2009, 2010) and elementary school (Nurra & Oyserman, 2010).

For example, Nurra and Oyserman (2010) asked children to imagine their future selves as adults. Children mostly described jobs they would have. The predicted effect of future self on later-school performance was found when the future self felt connected to the current self. To manipulate how the future self was imagined, children were randomly assigned to either a future-connected condition (and asked to describe their “near future as an adult”), a future-disconnected condition (“far future as an adult”), or a control condition (“future as an adult”). Children in the connected future condition outperformed children in the other conditions. Similarly, Oyserman and Destin (2010b) randomly assigned first-year college students to imagine either their desired or their undesired future selves during their college years. Participants described at least one school or career-focused possible identity. The predicted effect of the future self on planned school effort was found when the future self felt connected to the current self. In these studies, felt connection was manipulated by manipulating match between future self and social identity as a student. Specifically participants were randomly assigned to imagine students at their university (succeeding or at risk of failing) and to imagine their own (positive or negative) future identities. Participants planned to more schoolwork in

more settings and starting sooner in the matched conditions (in which they imagined students like themselves as at risk of failing and their own negative future identities or imagined students like themselves as likely to succeed and their own positive future identities) compared to the unmatched conditions.

The idea that students should be more motivated when the future feels nearer was tested by Peetz and colleagues in a series of field studies. In the first study, students were contacted 2 weeks before their midterm exam, asked how well they expected to do on the exam and how far in the future the exam felt. Compared to those who said the midterm felt close, those who said it felt farther away expected to perform worse on the exam and actually did perform worse, even when controlling for their expectations (Peetz et al., 2009, Study 1).

In a second experiment, students were asked to generate their (positive and negative) possible identities (and strategies to attain them) once they were college graduates. They then filled out a current academic motivation scale. Whether being a college graduate was a near or far future identity was manipulated by providing students with a long (from now until 25 years from now) or short (from now until 5 years from now) timeline. These contexts shifted perspective on whether graduating in 3.5 years was a subjectively near future (when considered in the context of a 25-year future) or a subjectively far future (when considered in the context of a 5-year future). The manipulation influenced the likelihood that specific strategies were generated to attain possible identities. Participants provided more specific strategies when the future felt near, but provided more outcome-focused thoughts when the future felt far. Students felt more motivated when they considered specific strategies, and less motivated when focused only on outcomes (Peetz et al., 2009, Study 2).

Rather than directly manipulate how far the future feels, other studies have shown effects with children by manipulating whether the far future (adult economic success) and the near future (educational attainment) feel connected (Destin & Oyserman, 2010, Study 2) and whether the

path to the near future (educational attainment) feels open or closed (Destin & Oyserman, 2009, Studies 1 and 2). For example, to show effects of the distal future when linked to the proximal future, Destin and Oyserman (2010, Study 2) randomized children into two groups. Half were presented with information suggesting that their future was education-dependent (e.g., more education would result in more income), and half were presented information suggesting that their future was education-independent (e.g., income would come from skills such as athletic competence or other non-school-dependent abilities). Students in the education-dependent condition were eight times more likely to work on extra-credit homework than were those in the education-independent condition. These results were interpreted to mean that distal possible identities can influence action when linked to more proximal possible identities.

In each of these studies, effects were found when researchers manipulated how participants considered their future. The advance in these studies is that effects are not assumed to be based in conscious and deliberate processing, but rather to be based in the kind of non-conscious or automatic and peripheral processing likely to happen in every day life. This contrasts with earlier models demonstrating that ratings of the importance of a possible identity were correlated with the detail with which the identity was described and how fast people were in responding to a trait as fitting or not fitting their possible identity (Norman & Aron, 2003). Rather than focus on which identities people *say* are important to them, newer research focuses on the conditions under which possible identities *are* important for behavior.

Congruence and connection to other important identities. Even if a possible identity feels connected to the current self, it can fail to influence behavior in the desired direction if the actions necessary to work on the possible identity do not feel congruent with other important aspects of the self, including social identities. That content of possible identities may be influenced by gender, race-ethnicity, and socioeconomic status and that this effect is due in part

to salient stereotypes about what is possible for one's group has already been noted (see Section Possible Identity Content). Here, we propose that a particular possible identity (e.g., becoming a successful student) is more likely to influence behavior when it feels congruent with an important social identity (e.g., being African-American). To test this possibility, Oyserman and colleagues (2006) developed an intervention to bolster school-focused possible identities in part by reframing difficulty in working on school as meaning that this possible identity was important and creating congruence between school-focused personal possible identities and important social identities such as racial-ethnic identity. A more direct test was conducted by Elmore and Oyserman (in press) who randomly assigned middle-school boys and girls to either a "we do it" or a "we do not do it" condition in which they either learned about successes of their gender group or successes of the other gender group. Compared to children in the control or "we do not do it" conditions, children in the "we do it" condition worked harder on a math task, reported more school-focused possible identities (open-ended measure), and were more optimistic about their earning and educational attainments.

Interpretation of difficulty and certainty. Working on important self-goals is typically difficult and success is typically uncertain. In this section we consider the possibility that how this difficulty and uncertainty is interpreted is consequential in predicting when future self-focused action will occur. Current action is influenced by how experiences of difficulty (or ease), of uncertainty (or certainty) are interpreted. If experienced difficulty is interpreted as meaning that attaining the possible identity is impossible to attain or experienced ease is interpreted as meaning that attaining the possible identity is a sure thing, current action is less likely. The same holds for interpretation of uncertainty or certainty. If experienced uncertainty is interpreted as meaning that the possible identity is impossible to attain, or experienced certainty is interpreted as meaning that the possible identity is a sure thing, current action is less likely.

The notion that expectations matter is common to self-efficacy (Bandura, 2007; Skinner, 1996), expectancy, and value X expectancy (for early formulations, see Atkinson, 1964; Miller, Galanter, & Pribram, 1960) theories (see also Locke & Latham, 1990). These models assume that people are more likely to work on self-goals when they believe that they have the skills to attain the goal and when they believe that they will be able to attain the goal if they try. Thus, following these perspectives, self-regulatory effort is more likely when one feels relative certainty and when this feeling of certainty is assumed to derive from either one's own prior experience or the experiences of relevant others.

An identity-based motivation model differs from these perspectives by highlighting the positive motivational consequences of experienced *difficulty* and *uncertainty* in attaining a possible identity. Difficult tasks should not undermine effort if the task feels identity congruent. For example, Smith and Oyserman (2010, Study 2) randomly assigned students to hear that a difficult task was something that people in their major did well at or a no information control and demonstrated if a task was perceived as identity-relevant, students persisted longer at the task than otherwise. Parallel effects are found when considering certainty. If attaining a possible identity feels completely certain, there may be no need to think of it or work on it at all right now; it can always be worked on later. Much like the sad end of the hare in the fable of *The Tortoise and the Hare*, in which the hare never got around to trying, a possible identity that is experienced as fully certain to be attained may not feel worthy of effort or may simply not come to mind. In this sense, some uncertainty about the outcome is useful.

Indeed, a number of studies have demonstrated the undermining effect of too much certainty. Some studies directly manipulate certainty of success, whereas others manipulate the feeling that one can always start working later. For example, Amir and Ariely (2006) tested the impact of certainty on game performance. They randomly assigned participants to differing levels of feedback on their progress. Although some

feedback was better than none, at very high levels, feedback reduced effort. Specifically, either seeing progress or learning about proximity to the finish was helpful, but adding both reduced effort, as if the participants became overconfident "Hares." In another set of studies, Khan and Dhar (2007) randomly assigned participants to two conditions. In one condition, they were offered choices among snacks (or magazines or movies). In the other condition, they were offered the same choices but with the following twist: they could choose now and would be called back later to make the same choices again. Those with only a single choice tended to make healthy and useful choices; however, those who knew they could choose again later chose the unhealthy snacks, and kept doing so on each subsequent choice, as if they assumed they could always catch up later. Field studies also imply the negative consequences of high certainty; a number of field studies show that compared to lower or more moderate family SES, higher-family socioeconomic status increases risk of early initiation of alcohol and substance use (e.g., Luthar, 2003; Luthar & Latendresse, 2005).

That some uncertainty is helpful when considering one's possible identities was demonstrated by James and Oyserman in a series of studies with college students. In one study (James & Oyserman, 2009a), students were randomly assigned to a control condition (in which they read some facts about their university) or to one of two experimental conditions that either presented the future as certain or uncertain for graduates of their university. Students were then asked to describe what they expected and feared becoming like over the college years and how much time they planned to spend that week on a number of activities. Those primed with uncertainty generated more possible identities focused on occupation and more strategies to attain these identities. As expected, effects for the control group were midway between the certainty- and the uncertainty-primed groups. In a second study (James & Oyserman, 2009b) students were again randomly assigned to control or experimental conditions. In each condition, students were asked to think about a possible future identity and

the path to work toward it. What varied is whether they first read text implying that the path was certain and predictable, entirely uncertain and unpredictable, or certain in some ways and uncertain in others (this “both” condition was labeled “optimal uncertainty”). Students were then asked to describe their possible identities, to describe what they would be doing the coming week, and to rate their likely use of alcohol and recreational drugs that week. As predicted, students in the optimal uncertainty condition were most likely to focus on academic possible identities, allocated more time to studying, and were less tempted to drink and use drugs.

The implication is that some uncertainty is motivating and that too much certainty is not. Potentially, the relationship is U-shaped, such that neither very high certainty nor very high uncertainty are helpful (Oyserman & James, 2009). Whereas studies outlined earlier show de-motivating effects of too much certainty, other work suggest that excessive uncertainty can also reduce effort. For instance, less uncertain “expected” possible identities are typically more strongly associated with behavioral consequences than more uncertain “hoped for” or even “fantasy” possible identities (Klinger, 1987; Oettingen, 1996, 1999; Olson, Roese, & Zanna, 1996; Singer, 1966).

Other support for the idea that too much uncertainty undermines effort comes from survey data with school children in which high uncertainty about attaining positive future identities predicts subsequent behavior problems. In one large survey, Griffin Botvin, Nichols, and Scheier (2005) asked urban minority seventh grade students about their chances of attaining a number of positive-possible futures, including graduating from high school, attending college, getting a job that is enjoyable and pays well, and having a happy family life. The next year, these same students filled out questionnaires about their risky behaviors. Students who believed that their chances of attaining positive futures were low engaged in more binge drinking in eighth grade.

In another large survey, Honora and Rolle (2002) asked eighth grade students about their

academic possible identities and how prepared they believed they were to attain these goals. Their findings indicated that high uncertainty was undermining. Specifically, students who believed they could not attain their desired academic possible identities were more likely to engage in fighting and maladaptive behavior in school. Certainty about negative futures produces parallel results. For example, in a nationally representative survey, students with negative future expectations (e.g., low life expectancy, low belief in college attendance) reported more risky behavior (e.g., delinquency, shoplifting) (Caldwell, Wiebe, & Cleveland, 2006). We interpret these results to mean that uncertainty about positive future selves and certainty about negative future selves signaled that effort was useless.

Conclusion

In the current chapter, we reviewed the literature on the content of possible identities and the consequences of possible identities for well-being and current action. Early research focused on understanding who children see as models for their adult self. While these researchers assumed that identifying these models would predict behavior and development, we found no evidence that early researchers tested their hypothesis by measuring behavioral outcomes. After a hiatus, interest in the future self returned. As before, researchers assumed that the future self mattered because it provides a goal post for current action, but as before, much of the literature is descriptive rather than predictive. Moreover, although there is increasing interest in studying intersectionalities of identities and in understanding potential cultural effects, possible identities are typically studied as personal identities and many groups and contexts have not been studied. Thus, content-focused future research is still needed to address these gaps, by including more groups and contexts, by considering *social possible identities* (the socially rooted aspects of possible identities), and more generally by connecting possible identity research to culture-sensitive models.

Researchers typically focus on a first person perspective, but cross-cultural and counseling literatures suggest that imagining one's future self from a third person's perspective (how others see one's self) can be quite motivating. This too is an area for future research.

Future research can be guided by research to date, which does provide some important outlines of the likely content of possible identities. Specifically, the literature reviewed here suggests that possible identities are typically concentrated on life tasks and transitions. Relatively little research has examined the role of possible identities in overcoming or dealing with life problems and setbacks. There is some evidence that giving up a possible identity is difficult. Future research focused on coping with lost possible identities is likely to be useful in understanding how individuals cope with temporary or more chronic setbacks, including not only job loss and divorce, but also physical and mental illness, debilitating accidents and other events that change individual's life course. Research has only just begun to examine the consequences of race-ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status, and cultural factors on possible identity content and consequences.

With regard to implications for well-being, negative possible identities matter. Feeling too close to an undesired possible identity is worse for well-being than feeling far from a desired possible identity. More research is needed to explain when and how desired and undesired possible identities matter for well-being over time. Lastly, with regard to implications for action, people are more likely to take action to attain a possible identity when three conditions are met. First, the possible identity feels connected to the current self. Second, actions needed to work on the future self feel connected to the current self. And third, the experience of thinking about and working on the possible identity is interpreted to mean importance, not impossibility or futility. Each of these conditions for taking action has been studied but not has been extensively researched, leaving much room for future enquiry.

Notes

1. While younger children and teens have possible identities, a central life task of adolescence has been described as identity development, with the notion that during adolescence and early adulthood, the form of one's future occupational and relationship-focused identity begins to solidify (Erikson, 1968).
2. See Waterman, [Chapter 16](#), this volume and Soenens and Vansteenkiste, [Chapter 17](#), this volume, for alternative conceptualizations of "true self."

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Part II

Social and Contextual Perspectives

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Abstract

This chapter describes emerging theory and evidence on the relational self from the personality and social psychology literatures. Broadly speaking, the relational self refers to aspects of the self associated with one's relationships with significant others (e.g., romantic partners, parents, friends). In this chapter, we review multiple theoretical perspectives on the relational self, starting with our recent integrative conceptualization of the relational self (Chen, Boucher, & Tapias, 2006). According to our model, the relational self (1) is self-knowledge that is linked in memory to knowledge about significant others; (2) exists at multiple levels of specificity; (3) is capable of being contextually or chronically activated; and (4) is comprised of self-conceptions and a constellation of other self-aspects (e.g., motives, self-regulatory strategies) that characterize the self when relating to significant others. After describing each of these facets of our model, we review theory and research on the social-cognitive phenomenon of transference in detail, as this body of work served as the primary foundation for our broader model. From there, we describe several other theoretical perspectives on the self and significant others (i.e., relational schemas, attachment theory, inclusion of other in the self, relational-interdependent self-construal), and compare and contrast each of these with the transference perspective on the relational self and, in turn, our broader conceptualization. Finally, we discuss relations between the relational self and other aspects of identity (e.g., cultural identity, gender identity), as well as some important directions for future research.

In this chapter, we describe emerging theory and evidence on the relational self within the social and personality psychology literatures. As will become apparent, there is some variation in these literatures in how the term “relational self” is used, but broadly speaking, the relational self

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refers to aspects of the self associated with one's relationships with significant others (e.g., romantic partners, parents, friends). To preview, in the first part of our chapter, we delineate the key assumptions of our recent, integrative conceptualization of the relational self (Chen et al., 2006). In developing this conceptualization, we have drawn from several theoretical perspectives on the self and significant others, but most notably from a transference perspective (Andersen & Chen, 2002). As such, in the second part of our chapter, we describe this particular perspective in detail, while including a range of supporting evidence.

In the third part of our chapter, we review several other prominent theoretical perspectives on the self and significant others, with an emphasis on their points of convergence with and divergence from the transference perspective and, in turn, our integrative conceptualization of the relational self. First, we describe work on relational schemas and attachment theory, both of which offer unique contributions to our broader conceptualization. We then turn to work on inclusion of others in the self and the relational-interdependent self-construal, two theoretical perspectives that provide a useful point of comparison for our conceptualization of the relational self. In the final part of our chapter, we discuss relations between the relational self and other aspects of identity (e.g., cultural identity), as well as some important directions for future research.

An Integrative Conceptualization of the Relational Self

In a recent review article, we offered an integrative conceptualization of the relational self aimed at bringing together the unique facets of several different theories on the self and significant others (Chen et al., 2006). This conceptualization draws especially heavily not only from social-cognitive work on transference, but also from work on relational schemas and attachment theory. According to our conceptualization, the

relational self reflects who a person is *in relation to* his or her significant others. Put differently, we propose a “self-within-relationships” viewpoint on the relational self, which contrasts with other perspectives, to be discussed in later sections, that take a more “relationships-within-the-self” viewpoint on the self and significant others.

Our integrative conceptualization can be summarized in four key assumptions: (a) the relational self is comprised of knowledge about the self when relating to significant others, where this knowledge is linked in memory to stored information about significant others; (b) the relational self exists at multiple levels of specificity (i.e., relationship-specific, generalized, global); (c) the relational self is capable of being contextually or chronically activated—that is, accessed from memory; and (d) the relational self is composed of self-conceptions as well as a constellation of other self-aspects (e.g., goals, self-regulatory strategies) that characterize the self when relating to significant others (Chen et al., 2006). Below, we elaborate on each of these assumptions.

Linkages Between Stored Self-Knowledge and Significant-Other Knowledge

Our integrative model is grounded in basic social-cognitive theory and research on knowledge representation and use (e.g., Higgins, 1996a). Specifically, we propose that relational selves are composed of people's stored knowledge about the self in the context of their relationships with significant others (e.g., who I am when relating to my brother) that is distinct from, but linked in memory to, people's stored knowledge about their significant others.

The view that relational-self and significant-other knowledge are distinct is important because, as noted above, it sets our view of the relational self as the self *in relation to* significant others apart from theories, to be discussed below, that posit the incorporation of aspects of significant others into the self-concept (e.g., Aron, Aron, Tudor, & Nelson, 1991). To illustrate, a person may be submissive around her

mother—in other words, this person’s relational self with her mother may be characterized by submissiveness—but this need not imply that submissiveness is an attribute of the person’s mother that has been incorporated into the person’s self-concept. Indeed, the person’s mother may or may not be submissive.

Multiple Levels of Specificity

Consistent with a large social-cognitive literature indicating that abstract, general social knowledge, as well as highly specific forms of social knowledge, are stored in memory (e.g., Smith & Zárate, 1992), we maintain that most people possess multiple relational selves and that these selves exist at varying levels of specificity. A *relationship-specific* relational self designates the self in relation to a specific significant other (e.g., the self in relation to one’s father), whereas a *generalized* relational self is akin to a summary representation of the self in the context of multiple relationships. These relationships may involve either a single, normatively defined relationship domain (e.g., the self when relating to one’s family members) or idiosyncratic groupings of relationships (e.g., the self when relating to one’s book club friends). Finally, people may possess a *global* relational self which denotes conceptions and aspects of the self in relation to significant others as a general class of individuals.

Although different theoretical perspectives on the self and significant others have tended to examine different levels of specificity of relational selves, results reflecting relationship-specific, generalized, and global working models generally converge, thereby increasing the likelihood of parallels in the responses associated with relational selves at different levels of specificity (e.g., Baldwin, Keelan, Fehr, Enns, & Koh-Rangarajoo, 1996; Mikulincer & Arad, 1999). Nonetheless, maintaining distinctions between different levels of specificity is important insofar as the particular content of a given person’s relational selves may vary widely across different levels of specificity (e.g., a person’s

relational self with his spouse may differ sharply from his relational self with significant others in general). Thus, the predictions one can make about a given relational self can only be as specific or broad as the particular relational self in question.

Paralleling the different levels of specificity possible for relational selves, the significant-other knowledge to which relational-self knowledge is linked may also vary in specificity. Thus, relational-self knowledge may be linked in memory to knowledge about a specific significant other (e.g., one’s oldest sister), knowledge abstracted from experiences with multiple significant others to whom the self relates similarly (e.g., all of one’s siblings to whom one relates in a similar manner), or knowledge about significant others in general. Regardless of level of specificity, because relational-self knowledge is linked to significant-other knowledge, when significant-other knowledge is activated, this activation should spread by association to the relevant relational-self knowledge.

Activation of Relational Selves

In terms of when relational selves are activated, our conceptualization draws on the notion of the working self-concept (Markus & Kunda, 1986), or the set of self-aspects that are accessible from memory in the current context. Thus, not all self-knowledge is accessible at the same time; rather, only a subset of one’s overall pool of self-knowledge is accessible in any given context. Our model posits that cues in the immediate context that denote the actual, imagined, or symbolic presence of a significant other, or the relational dynamics between the self and this other, should alter the content of the working self-concept, just as other contextual cues do (e.g., McGuire & Padawer-Singer, 1976). Specifically, such cues should shift the working self-concept toward the relevant relational self. For example, a phone call from a significant other, a whiff of his or her cologne, or facing circumstances (e.g., threat) that call for the other’s support, may all serve

as contextual activators of relevant relational-self knowledge.

Alongside these working self-concept assumptions, we adhere to the principle that repeated, frequent activation of any stored knowledge construct increases its baseline or chronic level of accessibility; that is, its activation readiness (e.g., Higgins, King, & Mavin, 1982). The higher the chronic accessibility of a construct, the less contextual cueing is required to activate it (Higgins & Brendl, 1995). Thus, although the activation of relational selves is influenced by immediate, contextual cues, frequent contextual activation of a relational self should result in its chronic accessibility, rendering it more likely to be activated even in the absence of contextual cueing (e.g., Andersen, Glassman, Chen, & Cole, 1995).

Content of Relational Selves

Finally, our integrative model assumes that relational selves are composed of attribute-based (e.g., fun-loving) and role-based (e.g., authority figure) conceptions of the self in the context of the relevant significant others. These attributes and roles are derived idiographically (from unique experiences) as well as from normative, cultural role prescriptions that are similar across people (Clark & Mills, 1979; Fiske, 1992). Importantly, relational selves are also thought to contain affective material, goals and motives, self-regulatory strategies, and behavioral tendencies. That is, they include positive and negative evaluations of the self in relation to a given significant other, the affect one experiences when relating to the other, the goals one pursues in the relationship with the other, the self-regulatory strategies one uses in interactions with the other, and the behaviors one enacts toward the other. Thus, for example, a person's relational self with his critical mother may be composed of conceptions of the self as inferior, feelings of rejection, and the goal to please.

To summarize, drawing from various perspectives on the self and significant others (to be reviewed below), we propose that relational

selves refer to conceptions and aspects of the self specifically in the context of relationships with specific or multiple significant others, or with significant others in general (Chen et al., 2006). Due to linkages between relational-self and significant-other knowledge, relational selves can be made accessible through activating significant-other knowledge. Reflecting working self-concept notions, relational selves are activated by contextual cues, although the chronic accessibility of a relational self increases its likelihood of being activated across contexts. When a relational self is activated, a person not only conceives of and evaluates himself or herself as when relating to the relevant significant other(s), but he or she also exhibits associated affective, motivational, self-regulatory, and behavioral responses.

The Relational Self: A Transference-Based Perspective

As noted, our conceptualization reflects an integration of several theories on the self and significant others, but draws the most from theory and research on transference. As such, in this section we review the transference perspective on the relational self in detail.

Transference refers to the phenomenon whereby aspects of past relationships re-surface in encounters with new others. Clinicians (Freud, 1958; Sullivan, 1953) view transference as a tool that therapists use to encourage clients to transfer their thoughts, feelings, and habitual patterns of behavior with significant others onto the therapist, as a means of fostering client insight into, and improvement of, maladaptive relational patterns. In contrast, the social-cognitive model of transference (Andersen & Glassman, 1996; Chen & Andersen, 1999, 2008) specifies the cognitive structures and processes that account for the occurrence of transference in everyday social interactions. Below we describe this model, flesh out the role of the relational self within it, and offer a sampling of evidence in support of the transference approach to the relational self.

The Social-Cognitive Model of Transference

The social-cognitive model of transference (Andersen & Glassman, 1996; Anderson & Cole, 1990; Chen & Andersen, 1999, 2008) assumes that mental representations of past and current significant others—such as a parent, romantic partner, close friend, or sibling—are stored in memory. These representations are akin to warehouses of knowledge about these important individuals, including beliefs about their physical and personality attributes, as well as their internal states, such as their thoughts and feelings (Andersen, Glassman, & Gold, 1998; Chen, 2003). Given that many of our goals, thoughts, and feelings hinge on significant others, representations of these individuals are laden with affect and motivation.

According to the social-cognitive model of transference, transference occurs when a perceiver's representation of a significant other is activated in an encounter with a new person—for example, due to the person's physical resemblance to the significant other, or the overlap of his or her personality attributes or role vis-à-vis the self with those of the significant other. Upon such activation, the perceiver interprets the new person in ways consistent with the knowledge stored in his or her representation of the relevant significant other, and responds to the person in ways derived from his or her relationship with the specific other. Although the activation and use of significant-other representations reflect nomothetic processes, or processes that operate similarly across people, the content and meaning of significant-other representations is thought to be idiographic.

Research has shown that significant-other representations are chronically accessible, indicating that they are in a constant high state of activation readiness, or readiness to influence social perception, judgment, and behavior (e.g., Higgins & King, 1981). Nonetheless, transient or temporary cues in the environment—such as cues based on priming specific features of one's significant other—further increase the accessibility of these representations (Andersen et al., 1995). In each

case, the “match” between stored knowledge and the present cues heightens the likelihood of knowledge activation and use (Higgins, 1996a). In most research on transference, the to-be-interpreted stimulus person has been described as having some of the attributes of the relevant significant other as a way of increasing the accessibility of the corresponding significant-other representation (e.g., Andersen & Baum, 1994; Chen, Andersen, & Hinkley, 1999). In other words, the attribute-based resemblance of the stimulus person to the significant other elicits transference.

The research paradigm that has been used to empirically examine transference involves two sessions. In the first, pretest session, participants name a significant other (e.g., parent, romantic partner), and then generate descriptors about this person. Several weeks later, in an ostensibly unrelated session, participants are led to believe there is another participant with whom they will later have an interaction (in most studies, the other participant does not actually exist). Participants then go through a learning phase in which they are presented with descriptors allegedly about their upcoming interaction partner. For participants in the “Own Significant Other” condition, some of these descriptors are derived from those that they previously generated about their significant other. That is, their interaction partner is described as resembling their own significant other, thus eliciting transference. Participants in the “Yoked Significant Other” condition, on the other hand, are shown descriptors about the significant other of another participant in the study, and thus transference is not elicited. “Own” and “Yoked” participants are randomly paired on a one-to-one basis so that the descriptors used across “Own” and “Yoked” conditions are identical, but they are significant only to participants in the “Own” condition.

After the learning phase, transference is assessed using one or both of two standard measures. One is a recognition-memory test that measures representation-derived inferences about the interaction partner. Such inferences are indexed by participants' confidence that they learned descriptors about the partner that are true of their

significant other, but that were not actually presented in the learning phase. Thus, this measure taps how much participants use stored knowledge about their significant other to make inferences about the partner. The other measure, which asks participants to evaluate their interaction partner based on what they have learned about them in the learning phase, assumes that the positive or negative affect associated with significant others is elicited upon the activation of a significant-other representation (Fiske & Pavelchek, 1986). Evidence for transference on this measure takes the form of “Own” participants evaluating the interaction partner significantly more positively (negatively) when the partner resembles their own positively (negatively) evaluated significant other, with no such difference observed among “Yoked” participants. In short, this measure taps how much participants’ evaluations of their partner are influenced by evaluations of their significant other.

Nearly two decades of research has documented transference using these measures. Included in this body of work is evidence that transference may occur automatically (e.g., Glassman & Andersen, 1999). In other words, perceivers need not consciously draw analogies between significant and newly encountered people for transference to occur. Indeed, given the chronically high activation readiness of significant-other representations, it is likely that transference typically occurs automatically (Andersen, Reznik, & Glassman, 2004; Chen, Fitzsimons, & Andersen, 2006). Importantly, in addition to inferences and evaluations of new others derived from significant-other representations, transference elicits a myriad of consequences for the self. In the following section, we summarize transference effects reflecting people’s responses when relating to their significant others—in other words, responses reflecting relational selves.

Transference and the Relational Self

Expanding on the social-cognitive model of transference, Andersen and Chen (2002)

presented a theory of the relational self in which they posited that every individual possesses a repertoire of relational selves, each reflecting aspects of the self when relating to a particular significant other. Moreover, as reflected in our broader conceptualization (Chen et al., 2006), we argued that significant-other representations and relational selves are linked in memory by knowledge reflecting the typical patterns of relating to the significant other. Because of such linkages, when a significant-other representation is activated, this activation spreads to the relevant relational self. In working self-concept terms, transference elicits a shift in the self-concept toward the person one is when relating to the significant other. Thus, just as non-significant-other contexts (e.g., the office) elicit shifts in the self-concept toward aspects of the self relevant to the particular context (e.g., job-related aspects of the self), significant-other contexts elicit shifts toward relational aspects of the self.

As in our integrative conceptualization, Andersen and Chen (2002) maintain that relational-self knowledge includes both attribute- and role-based aspects of the self with significant others. That is, relational selves include the positive and negative self-evaluations, affect, goals, self-regulatory strategies, and behaviors that are typically experienced or exhibited in relation to significant others. Finally, like significant-other representations, the content of relational selves is not only thought to be largely idiographic, unique to each individual, but also includes socially shared facets, such the role enacted with significant others (e.g., parent).

Evidence for the Relational Self in Transference

Below we present a sampling of findings from research on transference and significant-other representations more generally that provide support for the transference perspective on the relational self (for additional evidence, see Chen & Andersen, 2008; Chen et al., 2006).

Self-definition and self-evaluation. As noted, the transference perspective predicts that when a

significant-other representation is activated, the working self-concept should be infused in part with associated relational-self knowledge. Thus, the perceiver should define and evaluate his/her self in line with the relational self that has been activated. For example, participants in one study were asked to perform five different feature-listing tasks in the pretest session of the transference research paradigm described above (Hinkley & Andersen, 1996). First, they were asked to list features to describe themselves as a baseline self-concept measure. They then listed features to describe both a positively and negatively regarded significant other, after which they listed features to describe themselves when relating to each significant other, as a baseline measure of each relational self. In the ostensibly unrelated second session of the transference paradigm, participants were presented with descriptors about a new person who either did (“Own” condition) or did not (“Yoked” condition) resemble the positively or negatively evaluated significant other they described in the pretest session. They then listed descriptors to characterize themselves at that moment—as a measure of their working self-concept—and classified each descriptor as positive or negative—as a measure of their self-evaluation.

To assess shifts in the working self-concept toward the relational self, Hinkley and Andersen (1996) first calculated the overlap between the features listed in participants’ baseline working self-concept and in each relational self. Controlling for this pretest overlap, participants in the “Own” condition, for whom transference should be elicited due to the new person’s resemblance to one of “Own” participants’ significant others, showed a greater shift in their working self-concept toward the relevant relational self, relative to “Yoked” participants—a finding that held for both positively and negatively evaluated significant others. Turning to self-evaluation, Hinkley and Andersen summed the positive and negative classifications that participants ascribed to those features listed in the second session that overlapped with their pretest relational self. “Own” but not “Yoked” participants evaluated these overlapping descriptors more positively

when the new person resembled their positive, rather than negative, significant other. Hence, when transference occurs, both self-definition and self-evaluation shift to reflect the relevant relational self.

Other researchers have documented self-evaluative processes associated with relational selves simply by activating a significant-other representation. For example, research has shown that activating a significant-other representation leads people to stake their self-worth in domains they believe are valued by the significant other (Horberg & Chen, 2010). As a result, successes and failures in these domains lead to rises and drops, respectively, in people’s momentary self-esteem. Importantly, these self-esteem effects only occur for people who desire closeness to the significant other, presumably because linking one’s self-esteem to one’s performance in domains valued by a significant other is ultimately in the service of maintaining the relationship.

Expectations of acceptance or rejection. Numerous theories emphasize the role that people’s expectations of significant others’ acceptance and rejection play in their relationships (e.g., Downey & Feldman, 1996). Like any other aspect of significant-other relationships, such expectations should be stored in the linkages binding relational-self and significant-other knowledge. Hence, when a significant-other representation is activated, these expectations should play out in interactions with new others. Indeed, research on transference has shown that participants in the “Own” but not “Yoked” condition expect more acceptance from an upcoming interaction partner when the partner resembled a positively, rather than negatively, evaluated significant other (Andersen, Reznik, & Manzella, 1996).

In another study examining physically or psychologically abusive family members, Berenson and Andersen (2006) arranged for female participants with and without an abusive parent to anticipate an interaction with a partner who did (“Own” condition) or did not (“Yoked” condition) resemble this parent. The results showed that “Own” but not “Yoked” participants with an

abusive parent expected more rejection from the upcoming interaction partner than did their counterparts without an abusive parent, once again demonstrating that acceptance/rejection expectations held by the relational self are activated in transference encounters.

Goals and motives. Significant others enable people to satisfy the fundamental need for belonging (Andersen, Reznik, & Chen, 1997; Baumeister & Leary, 1995). This desire to connect with others should be stored in the linkages binding relational selves and significant-other representations, and therefore activated in transference. Indeed, several transference studies have shown that “Own” but not “Yoked” participants were more motivated to be emotionally open with, and not distant from, a new person who resembled a positively rather than negatively evaluated significant other (e.g., Andersen et al., 1996; Berk & Andersen, 2000).

Research has also explored self-evaluative motives, such as self-verification motives, pursued when relational selves are activated. Self-verification refers to the desire to have others view the self in a manner consistent with one’s pre-existing self-views (Swann, 1990). Self-verification theory argues that when others see us like we see ourselves, this bolsters our sense of prediction and control by assuring us that we hold sensible beliefs about ourselves and that others’ expectations of us are appropriate—and thus that interactions with others should proceed smoothly (Swann, Stein-Seroussi, & Giesler, 1992).

Traditionally, research on self-verification has focused on people’s efforts to seek verification of their global self-views. However, some recent studies have examined self-verification strivings directed at more contextualized self-views, such as people’s views of themselves in the context of their relationships—in other words, people’s relational self-views (Swann, Bosson, & Pelham, 2002). Given research suggesting that people seek self-verifying appraisals from significant others (e.g., Swann, De La Ronde, & Hixon, 1994), Kraus and Chen (2009) hypothesized that self-verification motives are activated along with relational selves in transference encounters.

Supporting this, a transference study showed that, relative to “Yoked” participants, “Own” participants wanted an upcoming interaction partner to evaluate them more in a manner that verified their core relational self-views (i.e., self-views that they rated as highly defining of the relevant relational self), regardless of the positivity or negativity of the self-views. Another study showed that the transient activation, or priming, of a significant-other representation, relative to priming a representation of an acquaintance, led participants to provide more favorable ratings of feedback that verified the relevant relational self, compared to other forms of feedback (e.g., self-enhancing).

Other researchers have similarly found evidence for goal-related elements of relational selves by activating a significant-other representation. For example, one study showed that subliminal exposure to the name of a significant other leads people to behave in line with goals associated with this other (Fitzsimons & Bargh, 2003). Moreover, activation of a significant-other representation increases the accessibility of the goals associated with the other (e.g., achievement goals), as well as goal commitment and persistence, especially when participants are close to this other and believe he or she values the goal (Shah, 2003a). Finally, significant others’ expectations about one’s goal attainment affect one’s own appraisals of the difficulty of goal attainment (Shah, 2003b).

Elicitation and disruption of affect. According to Andersen and Chen (2002), the affect-laden nature of significant-other representations means that the emotions associated with significant others should be elicited as part of the relational self in transference. In one test of this, participants’ facial expressions of emotion while reading each descriptor about an upcoming interaction partner in the learning phase of the transference paradigm were covertly videotaped (Andersen et al., 1996). Judges’ ratings of the pleasantness of participants’ facial expressions showed that “Own” but not “Yoked” participants expressed more pleasant facial affect when the representation of their positively rather than negatively evaluated significant other had been activated. Thus, transference

elicits the affect associated with the significant other.

Affect reflecting the overall emotional tone of a relationship tends to be chronically experienced by the self in the context of the relationship. However, perceivers' external and internal circumstances may disrupt this affect, which should be detectable in transference. To illustrate, results of one transference study indicated that negative affect is elicited when the representation of a positively regarded significant other is activated with a new person whose role in relation to the self is incongruent with the significant other's role; for example, the new person is in the role of a "novice" whereas the significant other's role is typically that of an "authority figure" (Baum & Andersen, 1999). Such role violations disrupt the positive affect typically enjoyed in positive significant-other relationships, presumably because they signal that the goals one pursues in the significant-other relationship are not likely to be met (e.g., Martin, Tesser, & McIntosh, 1993).

Self-regulation. Two forms of self-regulation have been studied in transference contexts. The first pertains to efforts to meet significant-other-related standards, and the second pertains to strategic responses aimed at defending the self and one's relationship in the face of threat (see also Gregg, Sedikides, & Gebauer, Chapter 14, this volume).

An example of the first form of self-regulation comes from recent work drawing on self-discrepancy theory (Higgins, 1987). Self-discrepancy theory maintains that people are aware of the standpoints of significant others on their actual, ideal, and ought selves (in addition to their own standpoints). The actual self is comprised of attributes that the individual believes he/she actually possesses, whereas the ideal and ought selves are comprised of, respectively, attributes that the individual wishes to possess and attributes he/she feels it is his/her duty or obligation to possess. Significant-other standpoints on these different selves are likely to be stored as part of relational selves. As such, the activation of a relational self should activate the ideal and ought self-guides held by the relevant significant other. To the degree that

actual-ideal discrepancies exist, dejection-related affect should ensue, whereas actual-ought discrepancies should elicit agitation-related affect.

To test these predictions, Reznik and Andersen (2007) asked participants with either an ideal or ought self-discrepancy from the standpoint of a parent learn descriptors about an upcoming interaction partner who did ("Own" condition) or did not ("Yoked" condition) resemble this parent. Activating the parent representation should activate the associated relational self, including the ideal or ought self-discrepancy from the parent's standpoint. Indeed, ideal-discrepant participants in the "Own" but not "Yoked" condition reported more dejection-related affect, whereas their ought-discrepant counterparts reported more agitation-related affect.

Regulating the self with respect to ideal standards reflects a promotion regulatory focus (a focus on attaining positive outcomes), whereas self-regulation in the service of ought standards reflects a prevention focus (a focus on preventing negative outcomes) (e.g., Higgins, 1996b). If activating a parent representation activates the self-discrepancy from this parent's standpoint, the regulatory focus with respect to this significant other should also emerge in transference. In the research described above, then, ideal-discrepant participants in the "Own" condition should show greater-approach tendencies toward their partner, whereas their ought-discrepant counterparts should show more avoidance. Supporting this, ideal-discrepant "Own" participants reported less motivation to avoid their partner in anticipation of meeting him or her, relative to after learning the meeting would not occur (at which point promotion was no longer relevant). In contrast, ought-discrepant "Own" participants reported more avoidance motivation before relative to after learning the meeting would not occur (at which point prevention was no longer relevant). Such results were not observed among "Yoked" participants.

Research on the second form of self-regulation, which involves strategic responses aimed at defending the self or one's relationship in the face of threat, has documented both self- and relationship-protective responses. For

example, regarding the research on shifts in self-definition and self-evaluation toward the relational self, the reader may recall that participants learned about an upcoming partner who did or did not resemble a positively or negatively evaluated significant other (Hinkley & Andersen, 1996). Afterward, “Own” participants described themselves with features that overlapped with ones they listed earlier to describe the relational self with this significant other, and evaluated these relational-self features in line with their evaluation of the significant other. In addition, however, “Own” participants in the negative significant-other condition evaluated the *non*-relational-self features of their working self-concept more favorably than participants in all other conditions—a finding that could be interpreted as a defensive response to the threat incurred by the shift toward the negative relational self.

Regarding relationship-protective self-regulation, in the study assessing facial affect (Andersen et al., 1996), regardless of whether their upcoming partner resembled a positive or negative significant other, participants were shown both positive and negative descriptors about him or her. Being confronted with negative descriptors about an upcoming partner that were derived from a positive significant other poses a threat to participants’ positive views of this other, and thus should prompt a self-regulatory response aimed at curbing this threat. Indeed, “Own” participants responded to negative descriptors about their partner with more pleasant facial affect relative to participants in any other condition and, moreover, relative to positive descriptors about this same significant other. Hence, “Own” participants buffered themselves against the negative descriptors about their positive significant other by expressing more positive facial affect, in line with the evaluative tone of the significant-other representation—a finding suggesting a relationship-protective response (for related findings, see Murray & Holmes, 1993).

Interpersonal behavior: As noted above, Andersen and Chen (2002) posit that when the relational self is activated, this includes expectations regarding the significant other’s

acceptance or rejection. Such expectations should have implications for behavior in transference encounters. Indeed, research on the self-fulfilling prophecy shows that perceivers’ expectations about a target person are often fulfilled by virtue of perceivers’ tendency to act in line with these expectations and by the target’s tendency to respond in kind (e.g., Snyder, Tanke, & Berscheid, 1977). Such a self-fulfilling cycle has also been demonstrated in transference.

In this work, participants (perceivers) were exposed to descriptors about another participant (target) with whom they then had an audiotaped conversation (Berk & Andersen, 2000). The target resembled the perceiver’s own (or a yoked participant’s) positively or negatively evaluated significant other. The pleasantness of the affect expressed in participants’ conversational behavior was coded. It was hypothesized that the relational self associated with the positive or negative significant other should be activated in transference in such a way that people behave in line with their positive or negative assumptions, respectively, thus eliciting confirmatory behavior in the target. Indeed, the target expressed more pleasant affect when he or she resembled the perceiver’s own positive rather than negative significant other; no such effect was seen in the “Yoked” conditions.

Another example of the behavioral consequences of activated relational selves in transference comes from a set of studies examining affiliative behavior (Kraus, Chen, Lee, & Straus, 2010). Participants were exposed to descriptors about their upcoming partner; in the “Own” condition, the partner was described as resembling the participants’ own positively evaluated significant other, whereas in the “Yoked” condition the partner resembled someone else’s positive significant other. Across “Own” and “Yoked” conditions, the partner was described as either an in-group or out-group member (e.g., liberal or conservative). Affiliative behavior was measured as the distance participants chose to move their chair to the one that they thought was going to be occupied by their upcoming partner (e.g., Burgoon, Buller, Hale, & DeTurck, 1984). Regardless of the group status of the partner,

“Own” participants pulled their chair closer to the chair of their anticipated interaction partner than did “Yoked” participants, reflecting the kind of affiliative behavior they presumably exhibit in relation to their positive significant other.

Summary

In sum, the transference perspective on the relational self (Andersen & Chen, 2002) formed the primary basis for our integrative conceptualization of the relational self (Chen et al., 2006). This social-cognitive perspective on transference and the relational self maintains that when a significant-other representation is activated in an encounter with a new person, a broad constellation of processes and phenomena come to reflect the self one is when relating to the relevant significant other—an assertion supported by a growing body of research not only on transference, but also on significant-other representations more generally. As noted from the outset, however, in addition to work on transference, our conceptualization was also grounded in several other prominent perspectives on the self and significant others, to which we now turn.

Other Theoretical Perspectives on the Self and Significant Others: Points of Convergence and Divergence

In this section, we describe four other prominent theoretical perspectives on the self and significant others. For each, we will highlight points of convergence with and divergence from the transference perspective on the relational self, and then discuss ways in which the perspective adds to or serves as a point of comparison for our broader conceptualization. Two of the perspectives, relational schemas and attachment theory, converge with the transference perspective in a number of respects, yet at the same time add unique elements to our integrative model. The other two perspectives, inclusion of others into the self and the relational-interdependent self-construal, offer

a viewpoint on relational selves that diverges from our conceptualization. We will discuss this divergence, and also suggest ways that these perspectives may offer complementary rather than conflicting insights.

Relational Schemas

According to Baldwin (1992), a relational schema consists of three components: schemas of the self and the significant other in the self-other relationship, and an interpersonal script. The script consists of if-then contingencies of interaction between the self and significant other—for example, “If I seek support, then my mother will provide it.” Such if-then contingencies embody expectations about how significant others will respond to the self, built on the basis of past experiences with these individuals. Baldwin (1992, 1997) further argues that people derive rules of self-inference and self-evaluation from repeated exposure to if-then contingencies of interaction. To illustrate, the contingency “If I make a mistake, then others will criticize and reject me” may give rise to the self-inference rule “If I make a mistake, then I am unworthy” (Baldwin, 1997, p. 329).

Considerable research on relational schemas has focused on the self-evaluative outcomes that result when a relational schema is activated. For example, when the relational schema associated with a critical or disapproving significant other is activated, people exhibit more self-critical responses (e.g., Baldwin, Carrell, & Lopez, 1990; Baldwin & Holmes, 1987). Such responses reflect the self-evaluations that have presumably been derived from repeated experience with critical or disapproving feedback from the relevant significant other. Another strand of research on relational schemas has focused on the particular types of relational schemas associated with individual differences such as self-esteem. For example, research has shown that people who are low but not high in self-esteem tend to possess relational schemas in which success is associated with acceptance, whereas failure is associated with rejection (Baldwin & Sinclair, 1996).

How does the relational-schema approach relate to the transference perspective and our broader model of the relational self? The relational-schema perspective is compatible with the transference perspective on the relational self in several key respects. First, the self-schema component of relational schemas fits with the transference view that relational-self knowledge reflects knowledge about the self when relating to significant others, which is distinct from knowledge about significant others. In addition, the interpersonal script component of relational schemas fits the assumption that linkages exist in memory between relational-self and significant-other knowledge. Once again, positing such linkages is important because it distinguishes the kind of “self-within-relationships” viewpoint on the relational self put forth by transference researchers and our broader conceptualization from the “relationships-within-the-self” viewpoint put forth by other researchers to be described below. Whereas the former views the relational self in terms of the self in relation to significant others, the latter views the relational self in terms of the incorporation of aspects of significant others into the self-concept.

Theory and research on relational schemas are also compatible with transference work in that relational-self knowledge is thought to be activated by either transient or chronic sources of accessibility. That is, it has been argued that, when immediate cues in the environment activate the significant-other schema component of a relational schema, this in turn activates associated if-then rules that shift one’s views of the self toward self-conceptions in the relevant relationship (Baldwin, 1997). Research has also shown that relational schemas may be chronically accessible (e.g., Baldwin et al., 1996), implying that transient cueing is not always needed to activate these schemas and their associated self-elements.

Despite the considerable compatibility of the relational-schema and transference approaches to the relational self, studies based on the two approaches have tended to differ in emphasis and methodology. For example, although both assume that relational-self knowledge arises from repeated patterns of interaction with significant

others, relational-schema research offers particular precision regarding the mechanisms underlying the formation of this self-knowledge. Specifically, as noted above, self-inferences and self-evaluations are thought to be derived from the repeated use of if-then rules, which refer to procedural knowledge structures that dictate the self-inferences and self-evaluations that follow from particular responses from significant others (Baldwin, 1997). Such if-then rules can, however, be readily incorporated into the transference view of the relational self and, in turn, our broader model. Specifically, when a significant-other representation is activated, if-then self-inference rules (derived from repeated interactions with the relevant significant other) are activated, thus leading to a shift toward relevant relational self-aspects.

As another example of differences in emphasis, given that transference refers to the resurfacing of prior relationships in interactions with *new* others, research on the phenomenon has tended to rely on attribute-based cues in a *new* person that match the attributes of a perceiver’s significant other to activate a significant-other representation and its associated relational self. In other words, the activation cues used in research on transference emanate directly from new people themselves. Because the new person’s resemblance to the significant other is relatively minimal, the activation of transference, as we discussed above, is fairly implicit. By contrast, although subliminal exposure to significant-other faces has been used to activate relational schemas (e.g., Baldwin et al., 1990), most relational-schema research has had participants consciously visualize that they are interacting with an actual significant other (e.g., Baldwin & Sinclair, 1996). In other words, relational schemas have been activated by procedures that refer directly to significant others, rather than by cues in a resembling new person. These differences are primarily procedural, not conceptual, in nature—but it might nonetheless be worthwhile to examine the consequences of activated relational schemas in interactions with new people.

Of interest, research on relational schemas has also shown that novel cues (e.g., auditory

tones) that are repeatedly paired with elements of relational schemas can activate these schemas (e.g., Baldwin & Main, 2001). If-then contingencies can also serve as activation cues in that harboring expectations about an interaction partner's responses (Pierce & Lydon, 1998), or being exposed to an interaction pattern that resembles if-then dynamics with a significant other (Baldwin, Fehr, Keedian, Seidel, & Thompson, 1993), can activate relational schemas. Applied to transference, such studies suggest that, in daily social encounters, transference may be elicited not only by new people who resemble a significant other, but also by cues incidentally associated with a significant other or cues reflecting the dynamics of the relationship.

In sum, theory and research on relational schemas largely converges with the transference perspective on the relational self. Differences between the two bodies of work—namely the greater precision with which the relational-schema approach specifies the mechanism by which relational-self knowledge is formed, and the types of cues that have been used to activate relational schemas and their associated self-elements—suggest ways to expand the transference perspective on the relational self and, in turn, are useful additions to our broader model of the relational self.

Attachment Theory

Attachment theory is a broad theoretical framework with evolutionary, ethological, and cognitive underpinnings. The theory is used by psychologists spanning several sub-disciplines, including developmental, clinical, personality, and social psychology. It was originally developed to understand variations in the emotional bond formed between infants and their caregivers (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978; Bowlby, 1982, p. 2), but in recent decades has been used to study the bonds formed in any relationship, such as relationships formed between adults (e.g., romantic relationships, friendships).

A core assumption of attachment theory, and one that is particularly relevant to the present

discussion, is that people develop internal working models of themselves and others in the course of early interactions with attachment figures, such as one's mother (Bowlby, 1982). Caring and responsive attachment figures foster the formation of a model of the self as competent and worthy of love, and of others as caring and available. Attachment figures who are inconsistently responsive or are neglectful, on the other hand, give rise to insecure models—for example, a model of the self as unworthy of love and of others as uncaring. Once formed, internal working models of attachment are thought to shape people's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. For instance, a person with an insecure model of attachment may be more likely to interpret an ambiguously rejecting response from a romantic partner as, in fact, rejection, given his/her prior relationship experiences.

Most comparable to research on the other theoretical perspectives discussed in this chapter is research on adult attachment conducted by personality and social psychologists. This literature on adult attachment is vast and continues to grow rapidly (for a recent review, see Cassidy & Shaver, 2008). In broad strokes, the primary focus of this literature has been on the ways in which attachment working models of the self and others predict a wide array of intrapersonal and interpersonal responses. To give just a handful of examples, research has examined how people with different attachment working models regulate their emotions (e.g., Mikulincer, 1998a, 1998b), give and receive social support in their relationships (e.g., Simpson, Rholes, & Nelligan, 1992), approach interactions with strangers (e.g., Feeney, Cassidy, & Ramos-Marcuse, 2008), and make attributions about their relationship partners' behaviors (e.g., Collins, Ford, Guichard, & Allard, 2006).

How does the attachment perspective compare and contrast with the other theoretical perspectives on the self and significant others? Several points of convergence and divergence exist between the attachment-theoretical and transference views of the self and significant others. In terms of points of convergence, early infant and adult attachment research focused on

attachment figures, defined as individuals who serve a specific set of functions (e.g., significant others who provide the individual with a “secure base” from which to explore the world). However, more recent work on adults has shown the utility of applying attachment theory to a broader circle of significant others (e.g., Baldwin et al., 1996), whether or not they meet all of the criteria of attachment figures per se. Thus, working models of the self can reflect attachment figures or significant others more generally, which fits the focus of the transference theory of the relational self on the impact of significant others, attachment figures, or otherwise, on the self.

As another point of convergence, attachment theory maintains that working models of the self and of others are complementary and intertwined (e.g., Bowlby, 1973; Collins & Read, 1994), implying that they exert their effects in tandem. This fits well with the transference perspective that linkages exist between relational-self and significant-other knowledge, although most attachment research does not explicitly refer to such linkages. Exceptions are studies conceptualizing individual differences in attachment working models in terms of relational schemas, which are explicitly composed of self and significant-other schemas bound together by linkages embodying the typical if–then dynamics between self and other. In such studies, differences in attachment working models are conceptualized in terms of differences in the nature of the if–then contingencies stored in relational schemas (Baldwin et al., 1993).

Consistent with both transference and relational-schema findings, attachment working models can be activated by transient or chronic sources of accessibility (e.g., Mikulincer & Arad, 1999). In fact, methods for activating attachment working models often overlap with methods for activating significant-other representations (e.g., Saribay & Andersen, 2007a). However, attachment theory is unique in positing that physical or psychological threats in the environment activate the attachment system, and thereby activate working models (Bowlby, 1982). A key function of attachment figures is to

provide a safe haven. Thus, people should seek proximity to these figures in the face of threat. Indeed, research has shown that threat-related, semantic stimuli (e.g., separation) increase the accessibility of representations of attachment figures among those who are securely attached (Mikulincer, Gillath, & Shaver, 2002). More pertinent to the activation of working models of the self, threat (e.g., failure feedback) has been shown to polarize the chronic self-evaluations of insecurely attached individuals such that those with negative self-evaluations evaluate themselves even more negatively, whereas those with positive self-evaluations evaluate themselves even more positively (Mikulincer, 1998a).

As another unique facet, most adult attachment research has treated attachment as an individual differences variable (e.g., Hazan & Shaver, 1987). As a result, working models of the self are often treated as though they reflect the self-concept as a whole, and the relational origins of these models recede into the background. For example, some research has used global self-esteem as a measure of attachment working models of the self (e.g., Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994). Although some attachment experiences may become so internalized that it may be suitable to treat them as general trait characteristics, the transference perspective on relational selves focuses on self models that derive from interactions with significant others and that designate the self in relation to specific significant others. Consistent with this focus, a growing body of research suggests that people possess both general and relationship-specific attachment models (e.g., Klohnen, Weller, Luo, & Choe, 2005; Overall, Fletcher, & Friesen, 2003; Pierce & Lydon, 2001). Overlap may exist across levels, but general and relationship-specific working models may predict different outcomes—for example, relationship outcomes may be predicted only by the corresponding relationship-specific model, and not more generalized models (Klohnen et al., 2005). In short, there is evidence to support both the attachment emphasis on generalized models and the transference emphasis on specific models.

That people can have more generalized conceptions of significant others and of relational selves, as suggested by attachment research, suggests ways in which the scope of the transference phenomenon can be widened. Namely, a new person may activate a more generalized significant-other representation (e.g., of family members), thus shifting the working self-concept toward self-aspects experienced with multiple family members. Research on transference can also inform adult attachment work. For example, recent findings suggest that transference may constitute a mechanism by which attachment working models arise in current encounters and manage to persist over time (e.g., Brumbaugh & Fraley, 2006, 2007). That is, attachment working models may persist not only because they are activated in interactions with attachment figures themselves, but also because they are activated in encounters with new people who resemble these figures.

In sum, there are several points of convergence, as well as divergence, between the attachment-theoretical and transference perspectives on the self and significant others. However, rather than suggesting a fundamental incompatibility between the two bodies of work, we maintain that the differences that exist between attachment and transference perspectives suggest ways to extend both literatures and, moreover, add to our broader model of the relational self. For example, our assumption that relational selves and their associated significant others vary in specificity was derived largely from research suggesting that attachment working models of the self and others vary in specificity.

Including Others in the Self

The inclusion-of-other-in-the-self (IOS) approach (Aron et al., 1991) is part of a larger conceptual framework known as the self-expansion model (Aron & Aron, 1986; Aron et al., 2004). The self-expansion model assumes that a fundamental human motivation is expansion of the self—that is, people are motivated to acquire resources, perspectives, and identities as a means

of increasing self-efficacy and their ability to achieve goals. The IOS approach builds on this assumption by positing that one way that people can expand the self is to incorporate the resources, perspectives, and identities of close others into the self-concept. Thus, people enter into and maintain relationships in part out of a desire to expand the self via including aspects of relationship partners into the self-concept. For example, a person may treat his/her relationship partner's possessions as his/her own, exhibit the same cognitive biases as the partner, and view the self as possessing the same attributes as the partner. According to the IOS approach, the closer a relationship is, the more the relationship partner has been included in the self. In social-cognitive terms, the IOS approach maintains that closeness in relationships leads to the merging of, or overlap in, representations or schemas of the self and of significant-other representations.

The IOS approach has been supported by various forms of evidence. In terms of the inclusion of close others' resources, research has shown, for example, that people treat close others' resources (e.g., money) as if these resources are their own such that allocations of resources to the self versus a close other are more similar than resource allocations to the self versus a less close other (the latter allocations favor the self over the other) (Aron et al., 1991). Importantly, this effect occurs even when participants were led to believe that the other would not know that they were responsible for the allocations. In terms of the inclusion of close others' perspectives, studies have shown, for instance, that the attributional biases that people typically exhibit with regard to others but not the self (e.g., blaming negative actions of others on their internal states) are less apparent when others are close. In particular, the actor–observer difference, whereby people tend to make dispositional attributions for others' behavior but situational attributions for their own behavior, is lessened when the other is a close other (e.g., Aron et al., 1991; Sande, Goethals, & Radloff, 1988).

Finally, research examining the inclusion of close others' identities has typically shown that people confuse the attributes of close others as

their own (e.g., Aron et al., 1991; Aron & Fraley, 1999). Specifically, people are faster to make “me/not me” judgments, and make fewer errors in these judgments, for attributes on which the self matches a close other (i.e., the attribute is either true or not true of both the self and other) than for mismatching attributes (i.e., the attribute is true of the self but not the other or vice versa). In other words, for mismatching attributes it takes longer to sort out and properly indicate that an attribute is true of the self and not a close other (or vice versa) because representations of the self and the close other are so merged or overlapping.

How does the IOS approach compare and contrast with other perspectives on the self and significant others? The IOS approach distinguishes self-knowledge from significant-other knowledge. However, its core assumption that closeness leads to overlap, or the merging of, self- and significant-other knowledge sets this approach apart not only from the transference perspective on the relational self, but also the relational schema and attachment perspectives. The transference and relational-schema perspectives and, in turn, our broader conceptualization, are especially explicit about treating relational-self and significant-other knowledge as linked but separate, reflecting the view that the relational self designates how the self relates to, rather than incorporates, significant others.

Research adopting a relational-schema approach provides a useful illustration of the above distinction by showing that people’s self-construals assimilate to their relationship partners on some dimensions (e.g., affiliation), but complement their partners on others (e.g., control; Tiedens & Jimenez, 2003). Thus, self-conceptions may be similar to or different from conceptions of significant others, but what matters is linkages between self- and significant-other knowledge—that is, how the self relates in interactions with significant others. The IOS approach, on the other hand, focuses on assimilated or overlapping aspects of the self and significant others to the exclusion of complementary ones, which may be equally or more relevant to the relational self.

Other differences between the transference and IOS approaches become apparent when one considers the instrument most commonly used to measure the degree to which others are included in the self. This measure consists of seven pairs of circles, with one circle in each pair designating the self and the other circle designating a significant other (Aron, Aron, & Smollan, 1992). The degree of overlap between the circles varies, with more overlap indicating greater inclusion of the other in the self. Respondents are asked to indicate the circle pair that best reflects their relationship. Although this measure is usually administered with respect to a specific significant other, there is ambiguity as to which “self” is being assessed. To illustrate, research shows that entering a new relationship yields self-concept expansion, due partly to the inclusion of aspects of the relationship partner into the self-concept (Aron, Paris, & Aron, 1995). In this research, participants were asked to describe themselves with instructions that did not explicitly refer to the relationship. Thus, it is unclear whether the “self” here refers to self-conceptions in the context of the relationship or to global conceptions of the self. In fact, IOS theorizing is relatively silent on whether contextual variations, relationship or otherwise, have implications for how much others are included, whereas variations in the relational context are central to the transference view of the relational self and, in turn, to our broader model.

In sum, IOS researchers assume that significant others influence the self by being incorporated into the general self-concept, whereas transference and relational-schema researchers maintain that significant others prompt the formation of self-aspects reflecting the self when relating to these others. Put another way, as noted in prior sections, whereas our broader conceptualization, along with the theories in which it is grounded, put forth a “self-within-relationships” viewpoint on the relational self, the IOS approach is a prominent example of a “relationships-within-self” viewpoint on the self and significant others. The IOS approach, then, may or may not make predictions about how an individual will respond to significant or new others, whereas relational

selves as conceptualized from the other perspectives discussed thus far provide a clear basis for making such predictions.

Importantly, although we are drawing a distinction between perspectives like the IOS approach that take a “relationships-within-self” viewpoint on the self and significant others and perspectives like ours that take a “self-within-relationships” viewpoint, we are not saying that one of these types of perspectives is more “correct” than the other. Instead, we believe both viewpoints may characterize the nature of the self and significant others, and may even do so at the same time, within the same individual. For example, it is certainly possible for a person to interact with significant others (or new others who resemble a significant other) in ways derived from these others themselves—that is, how the self relates to others may include some aspects of significant others, suggesting these aspects have been included in the self—but at the same time these relational selves need not be derived solely from significant others. As another example, perhaps the degree to which aspects of a significant other have been included within one’s sense of self determines the extent to which aspects of the relational self become integrated with and infused into one’s general self-concept. In short, the IOS perspective on the self and significant others and broader perspectives like ours can, and likely do, co-exist.

Relational-Interdependent Self-Construal

Finally, the relational-interdependent self-construal (Cross, Bacon, & Morris, 2000) is another recent and prominent perspective on the self and significant others. Individuals who hold such a self-construal are thought to define the self primarily in terms of their close relationships. Cross et al. (2000) developed the relational-interdependent self-construal (RISC) scale to index individual differences in this self-construal primarily among respondents from North American cultures (see

below for a discussion of cultural differences in self-construal). In this sense, the RISC construct is in a different category than our construct of the relational self, which is not focused on assessing individual-level variation. However, comparing and contrasting the RISC perspective and other conceptualizations of the relational self, including ours, is nonetheless useful.

Broadly speaking, the thoughts, feelings, motives, and behaviors of people who score high on the RISC scale—that is, highly relational individuals—are more colored by their close relationships than those of individuals who score lower on the RISC scale. For example, some key findings in the literature on the RISC construct include evidence that, relative to low scorers on the RISC scale, high scorers are more likely to consider the needs and opinions of significant others in their decision-making, and are judged as more open and responsive by interaction partners after a getting-acquainted interaction (Cross et al., 2000). High-RISC people also have more elaborate cognitive networks of close relationships, and have been shown to selectively attend to, and thus better recall, relational information about other people (Cross, Morris, & Gore, 2002). As a final example, high-RISC individuals are more apt to pursue goals for reasons that take into account their close relationships (e.g., Gore, Cross, & Kanagawa, 2009).

How does the RISC construct compare and contrast with the other perspectives described above on the self and significant others? Despite some basic points of convergence, such as the assumption that self-knowledge and significant-other knowledge are jointly activated from memory, several key differences exist between the RISC construct and the transference perspective. As noted earlier, a fundamental difference is that the RISC approach was specifically developed to index individual differences in defining the self in relational terms, whereas the transference approach simply assumes that all people possess aspects of the self that are linked to significant others, and that these aspects are influential for all individuals. Variations undoubtedly exist in the content and number of relational selves that

people possess, but these variations have thus far not been the focus of empirical work emerging from either the transference perspective or, more broadly, our integrative model.

Second, unlike relational selves from the transference and our perspective, knowing a person's score on the RISC scale does not provide any information on the precise content (e.g., attributes, goals, evaluations) of the person's selves in relation to his or her significant others, nor then does it allow one to predict which of the person's relational self-aspects are likely to be elicited when a particular significant-other representation is activated.

Finally, like the notion of including others in the self, the RISC construct connotes the incorporation of significant others into the self, or puts forth a "relationships-within-self" viewpoint, rather than the kind of "self-within-relationships" viewpoint put forth by the other perspectives discussed in this chapter. That is, for high-RISC people, "representations of important relationships and roles share the self-space with abstract traits, abilities, and preferences" (Cross et al., 2000, p. 791). On a somewhat related note, the RISC construct refers to a global, higher-order self-structure below which lower-order, more specific self-schemas exist (Cross et al., 2002). Relational selves in the transference approach and, in turn, our broader conceptualization, are more akin to lower-order self-schemas than to the central organizing structure that the RISC construct—with its explicit focus on indexing individual-level variation in self-construal—is thought to be.

In sum, like the IOS approach discussed above, the relational-interdependent self-construal offers a different perspective on the self and significant others compared to the other perspectives discussed in this chapter, including our broader conceptualization. But once again, we argue that both kinds of perspectives—the IOS and RISC perspectives, on the one hand, and the remaining perspectives, on the other hand—can and likely do co-exist. That is, one kind of perspective is not more "correct" than the other; both are potentially accurate characterizations of the self and significant others.

Moreover, it is not difficult to posit potential avenues of integration between the RISC construct and the other perspectives, such as the transference and relational-schema approaches. In fact, one recent set of studies examined the effect of activating a significant-other representation, and presumably the associated relational self, on perceivers' "self-confidence"—that is, perceivers' confidence in and comfort with who they are (Gabriel, Renaud, & Tippin, 2007). Gabriel et al. found that individuals scoring high on the RISC scale, or who were manipulated to hold a relational-interdependent self-construal, reported greater self-confidence after the priming of a significant other. Gabriel et al. concluded that, because high-RISC individuals (or those manipulated to hold such a self-construal) define themselves largely in terms of their relationships, bringing to mind relational selves by activating a significant-other representation should increase their self-confidence.

Another possible point of intersection is a suggestion by Cross et al. (2002) that relational schemas—and by implication, the relational self-component of these schemas—may be activated more often among high-RISC individuals. In other words, relational schemas may be more chronically accessible among high-relative to low-RISC individuals, and thus more likely to color high-RISC individuals' thoughts, feelings, motives, and behaviors.

The Bigger Picture: Relations to Other Aspects of Identity and Future Directions

One question we have yet to address is how relational selves from the perspective of our integrative conceptualization (Chen et al., 2006) are related to other aspects of the self and identity. In this section, we consider the role of relational selves in people's cultural and gender identities, drawing on existing evidence that speaks to this question. Finally, we discuss possible directions for future research on the relational self.

Relational Selves and Culture

In considering connections between relational selves and cultural identity, readers familiar with the cross-cultural literature are likely to wonder how relational selves are related to Markus and Kitayama's (1991) distinction between independent and interdependent self-construals (see also Smith, Chapter 11, this volume). Markus and Kitayama argued that the traditions, institutions, and practices of North American cultures promote an independent self-construal, a view of the self as a separate, autonomous, and bounded entity. In contrast, East Asian traditions, institutions, and practices foster an interdependent self-construal, a view of the self as interconnected with others. Seemingly reminiscent of our relational-self construct, Markus and Kitayama (1991) defined the interdependent self-construal as the "self-in-relation to specific others in specific contexts" (p. 227). Moreover, they argued that this self-construal influences a wide array of psychological processes and outcomes. Does this mean that one can equate the relational self and the interdependent self-construal?

We see several reasons why the answer to this question should be no. First, although both our view of the relational self and the interdependent self-construal refer to the self in relation to others, they differ in terms of who is specified as the "others." According to Markus and Kitayama (1991), interdependence includes an awareness of one's part in a larger social unit, which can include both significant-other relationships and group memberships (see Brewer & Chen, 2007). Thus, minimally, the conceptualization of the interdependent self-construal is broader in scope than that of the relational self, which focuses almost exclusively on the role of significant others (for an exception, see Saribay & Andersen, 2007b, described below).

Second, the interdependent self-construal derives from self-regulatory tasks mandated in East Asian cultures, particularly that of Japan. In Japan, "one's behavior is determined, contingent on, and, to a large extent organized by what the actor perceives to be the thoughts, feelings, and actions of others in the relationship" (Markus &

Kitayama, 1991, p. 227). Indeed, Japanese individuals are expected to know their place, fit in, and engage in socially appropriate action (but see Arnett Jensen, Jensen Arnett, & MacKenzie, Chapter 13, this volume). It is this active process of attending and adjusting to others that defines the self in relation to others, and success leads to feelings of being a good cultural member (Markus & Kitayama, 1994). We are not arguing that only the Japanese adjust themselves according to whom they are with—in fact, our perspective on the relational self assumes that, across cultural contexts, different self-aspects are activated with different significant others. However, the emphasis of "adjustment" may vary across different cultures. Specifically, whereas adjustment in Japan emphasizes consideration of others' thoughts, feelings, and needs, adjustment in North American culture, for example, may be relatively more self-focused, whereby people adjust themselves with different significant others as part of self-oriented tasks such as defining, evaluating, or presenting the self.

Lastly, although relational selves have goal elements, as described in prior sections, the relational self does not assume any single, overarching motive. In contrast, challenging the idea that the need for positive regard is a human universal, so robustly demonstrated among North Americans, Heine and colleagues have suggested instead that self-criticism and self-improvement are chief self-evaluative motives among the Japanese (Heine, Lehman, Markus, & Kitayama, 1999; cf. Sedikides, Gaertner, & Vevea, 2005; for a review, see Boucher, 2010). That is, the Japanese are hyper-vigilant to their flaws, continuously seek to improve themselves, and persevere at whatever tasks they undertake. It is through such tendencies that people with an interdependent self-construal promote unity within and commitment to their relationships and groups. That is, being aware of one's shortcomings informs the individual where improvement efforts need to be directed so as to secure approval from others and, by implication, to maintain relationship and group harmony. Overall, then, despite surface similarities, our view of the relational self is distinct from Markus

and Kitayama's interdependent self-construal in several fundamental respects.

There are, however, potential connections between relational selves and cultural identity. For example, English and Chen (2007) recently examined differences in the consistency of relational selves across different contexts, as well as within the same context over time, among Asian-Americans versus European-Americans. They found that, consistent with theory and evidence suggesting that individuals of East Asian descent (i.e., Chinese, Korean, and Japanese descent) exhibit lower self-concept consistency (e.g., Cousins, 1989; Suh, 2002) and are especially likely to tailor the self to different relationships, East Asian Americans showed less consistency in their self ratings across different relationship contexts relative to European-Americans. In other words, East Asian Americans are especially likely to form distinct relational selves. Importantly, however, when consistency in the self was defined in terms of consistency within the same context across time, rather than consistency across different contexts, East Asian and European Americans showed similarly high levels of consistency. Hence, by examining the consistency of relational selves across and within contexts over time, English and Chen (2007) provided a more nuanced understanding of cross-cultural differences in consistency in the self.

Relational Selves and Gender

Relational selves may also be related to a person's gender identity (see Bussey, Chapter 25, this volume). There is wide-ranging evidence, based largely on North American samples, for gender differences in the relational-interdependent self-construal, such that women tend to define themselves in terms of their close relationships more so than men (e.g., Cross & Madson, 1997; Gabriel & Gardner, 1999; Josephs, Markus, & Tafarodi, 1992). For example, women tend to score higher than men on the RISC scale (Cross et al., 2000). Earlier we described findings showing that the activation of relational selves via the priming of a significant-other representation

led to higher self-reported self-confidence among high-relative to low-RISC individuals (Gabriel et al., 2007). The implication here, then, is that the activation of relational selves is likely to have a greater impact on women's overall self-confidence than on men's overall self-confidence.

In a somewhat related vein, researchers have examined the implications of gender differences in the degree to which the self is defined in terms of relationships for self-verification purposes. Specifically, Chen, English, and Peng (2006) hypothesized that because women define themselves in terms of their close relationships more so than men, women should be more likely to seek verification of their relational self-views. Supporting this hypothesis, Chen et al. found that, whereas both men and women favored verifying feedback over non-verifying feedback about a global self-view, only women favored verifying feedback over non-verifying feedback about a relational self-view.

Future Directions

Finally, we discuss several potential directions for future research on the relational self, each prompted by some initial, suggestive findings in the literature.

Moderators of transference. The research that we reviewed on transference and the other perspectives on the self and significant others suggests that relational selves exert a major influence in people's daily interpersonal lives. Nonetheless, some recent work has identified moderating variables that make transference and other phenomena associated with the activation of significant-other representations more or less likely to occur, and these moderators provide insight into possible future areas of inquiry on the relational self.

Specifically, researchers have shown that transference effects are more likely to occur when participants are tested during times of "circadian mismatch"—that is, when people who prefer daytime activity are tested in the evening and when people who prefer nighttime activity are tested in the morning—relative to times of "circadian

match” (Kruglanski & Pierro, 2008). This circadian difference presumably reflects reduced cognitive resources during times of circadian mismatch, and hence a greater likelihood of reliance on existing schemas—in this case, representations of significant others. In a related vein, Pierro and Kruglanski (2008) demonstrated that individuals who score high on the need for cognitive closure, or the desire for “a firm answer to a question, any firm answer as compared to confusion and/or ambiguity” (Kruglanski, 2004, p. 6), are more likely to exhibit transference effects, reflecting the pronounced tendency of such individuals to “seize and freeze” on judgments derived from highly accessible schemas—again, in this case, significant-other representations.

Other work has documented moderators of the effects of activating significant-other representations on goal-related processes. As described earlier, there is evidence that activating a significant-other representation elicits the pursuit of goals associated with the relevant significant other (e.g., Fitzsimons & Bargh, 2003; Kraus & Chen, 2009; Shah, 2003a). Does it matter whether the goals in question reflect perceivers’ own personal goals, whether they reflect the goals that significant others hold for perceivers, or both? Morrison, Wheeler, and Smeesters (2007) found that, when people share the goal that a significant other holds for them, then activating the representation of this significant other led to pursuit of this goal. In contrast, when people do not share their significant other’s goal for them, activating the representation of this significant other led to pursuit of the other’s goal only among individuals who are high in their motivation to respond to social cues (i.e., high in self-monitoring or the need to belong).

Overall, such evidence for moderators of transference and related significant-other effects is quite useful, as it adds complexity and precision to relational-self effects. More broadly, these initial moderator findings pave the way for additional research focused on identifying new dispositional and situational variables that render relational-self effects more or less likely.

Relational selves and social identity. Another possible direction for future research on the

relational self has to do with connections between relational selves and social identities, where social identities refer to people’s membership in and sense of belonging to different social groups (e.g., ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation; see Spears, Chapter 9, this volume). Some initial research on transference suggests that information about social identities may be stored as part of relational selves—for example, the fact that one shares the same social identity as a significant other may be stored as part of the relational self with this important other—and are therefore activated along with the relevant significant-other representation in transference (Saribay & Andersen, 2007b). In Saribay and Andersen’s work, participants in the “Own” condition (i.e., those anticipating an interaction with a partner who resembled one of their own significant others) assumed that their upcoming partner possessed the same ethnic group identity as the relevant significant other. Moreover, “Own” participants showed bias against other ethnic groups if the relevant significant other lacked an ethnically diverse friendship circle, relative to “Yoked” participants (i.e., those anticipating an interaction with a partner who resembled another participant’s significant other) and to “Own” participants whose significant others had more diverse social networks. This inter-group bias finding—that people tend to discriminate in favor of their in-group and against out-groups (e.g., Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Spears, Chapter 9, this volume)—suggests that perceivers’ social identities are activated in transference contexts involving a significant other who shares their same group identity.

In a different but related vein, some initial research has begun to examine whether the positive expectations, attitudes, and behaviors that characterize relational selves associated with positively evaluated significant others can be harnessed in inter-group interactions to improve inter-group relations. For example, Mikulincer and Shaver (2001) found that, relative to control participants, those exposed to positive significant-other relationship primes evaluated out-group members more positively, presumably because those participants who were reminded

of positive relational experiences felt safe and secure enough to be welcoming toward members of other groups. In related transference work, “Own” participants engaging in a transference encounter involving a positively evaluated significant other evaluated a target person positively—in line with the positive tone of the relevant significant-other representation—even when the target belonged to a different social group than the significant other and the participant (Kraus et al., 2010; cf. Saribay & Andersen, 2007b). Overall, this research suggests that positively toned aspects of relational selves can be used in social identity contexts as tools for reducing negative biases toward members of other social groups (see Moshman, Chapter 39, this volume; Spears, Chapter 9, this volume).

Relational selves and well-being. Finally, given the ubiquity of the relational self, an interesting question involves the possibility of using relational selves to promote well-being. We have recently conducted some work in this area under the rubric of self-affirmation theory (Steele, 1988). According to this theory, people defend themselves from the impact of information that threatens feelings of self-worth by emphasizing an unrelated but important aspect of self (see Gregg et al., Chapter 14, this volume). For example, someone may defend against the possibility of having made a bad choice, and the feelings of incompetence that ensue, by thinking of his or her promising career as a scientist (Steele, Hoppe, & Gonzales, 1986). We argue that relational selves can serve as a self-affirmational resource in the same way, by deflecting a threat that is delivered in an unrelated domain, especially for those for whom relational selves are important (Chen & Boucher, 2008). Supporting this prediction, both women and people who score high on the relational-interdependent self-construal (RISC) scale—for whom relational aspects of the self are especially self-defining, as described in prior sections—were more likely to emphasize relational self-aspects after receiving failure feedback on academic competence tests relative to men and low-RISC scorers; that is, they were more likely to spontaneously affirm relational selves in the face of threat.

Furthermore, the series of studies that we have conducted has demonstrated that relational self-affirmation repairs the blow to self-esteem that occurs after threat. Specifically, in one study, high- and low-RISC participants received threatening feedback (or not) and were *induced* to affirm a relational self-aspect (or not). Threatened high-RISCs had higher implicit self-esteem (i.e., non-conscious or automatic evaluation of the self) if they were induced to affirm a relational self-aspect, relative to their low-RISC counterparts; indeed, their implicit self-esteem was higher than that of high-RISCs who were not threatened at all. But, even threatened low-RISCs who were induced to affirm a relational self-aspect scored relatively highly on the implicit self-esteem measure (especially compared to threatened low-RISCs who did not affirm), although the boost they received did not match that of their high-RISC counterparts. This research is important because it suggests that, although low-RISCs may not spontaneously affirm relational selves after threatening feedback in the same way as high-RISCs, exhorting even low-RISCs to do so could serve a self-esteem repair function.

On a more basic level, one relatively straightforward way to promote well-being is to encourage the activation and use of representations of positively evaluated significant others. As described in earlier sections, when such significant-other representations are activated, not only are self-evaluations more positive (e.g., Hinkley & Andersen, 1996), but perceivers’ expectations about, and responses toward, others are similarly positively toned (e.g., Andersen et al., 1996).

Summary and Concluding Remarks

In this chapter, we described our recent, integrative conceptualization of the relational self (Chen et al., 2006), which puts forth the view that the relational self captures aspects of the self specifically in relation to—that is, in the context of interactions with—significant others. Our conceptualization was grounded heavily in social-cognitive theory and research on transference and the relational

self (Andersen & Chen, 2002), which we reviewed in detail. We then described several other perspectives on the self and significant others, emphasizing ways in which they are compatible with and add unique facets to our broader model, or ways in which they offer a distinct but nonetheless useful viewpoint on the link between the self and significant others. Finally, we considered relational selves in a broader context—namely in relation to cultural and gender identities—and discussed several potential directions for future inquiry on relational selves. To conclude, judging from theory and findings to date, and across different conceptualizations, relational selves constitute an important component of an individual's identity, and one that is likely to be a topic of great interest for self and identity researchers for decades to come.

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Discourse and Identity Construction

8

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Abstract

We describe and discuss discursive approaches emerging over the last 50 years that in one way or another have contributed to identity studies. Approaching identities as *constructed* in and through discourse, we start by differentiating between two competing views of construction: one that moves progressively from existing “capital-D” social discourses to the domain of identity and sense of self and the other working its way up from “small-d” discursive practices to identities and sense of self as emerging in interaction. We take this tension as our point of departure for a discussion of different theoretical and analytical lenses, focusing on how they have emerged as productive tools for theorizing the construction of identity and for doing empirical work. Three dimensions of identity construction are distinguished and highlighted as dilemmatic but deserving prominence in the discursive construction of identity: (a) the navigation of agency in terms of a person-to-world versus a world-to-person directionality; (b) the differentiation between self and other as a way to navigate between uniqueness and a communal sense of belonging and being the same as others; and (c) the navigation of sameness and change across one’s biography or parts thereof. The navigation of these three identity dilemmas is exemplified in the analysis of a stretch of conversational data, in which we bring together different analytic lenses (such as narrative, performative, conversation analytic, and positioning analysis), before concluding this chapter with a brief discussion of some of the merits and potential shortcomings of discursive approaches to identity construction.

Examining the construction of identity from a discursive point of departure requires two lenses, the lens of *discourse* and the lens of *construction*,

and bringing them to focus on identity. As a result of this fusion, certain aspects of identity theory and identity research gain center stage, whereas others are set aside. Having our own roots in two disciplinary orientations, language studies and psychology, we decided to approach this task by starting with a thorough overview on the topic of discourse, the way discourse theory and discourse

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analysis have developed in the field of language studies and emerged as new domains for theory and research over the last 60 years. Alongside this discussion, we will provide a sharper understanding of how construction is deeply embedded in discourse and how and why discourse becomes relevant for what are called *identity practices*. The constructionist framework that we draw on (see De Fina, Schiffrin, & Bamberg, 2006) is grounded in theory that suggests that phenomena typically considered as internal (e.g., knowledge, intentions, agency, emotions, identity) or external (varying widely from more obvious constructions such as marriage, money, and society to less obvious ones such as location, event, and continuity) have their reality in an intersubjectively reached agreement that is historically and culturally negotiated. These agreements are never fixed but subject to constant renegotiation—in which the forms of discourse that negotiators rely on play a major role.

It is important to note at the very start of our chapter that viewing identity as constructed implies a reorientation when it comes to identity research. Instead of following a more traditional essentialist project and asking what identity *is*—and from there attempting to pursue the lead into human actions that follow from how we defined identity—we suggest to study identity as constructed in discourse, as negotiated among speaking subjects in social contexts, and as emerging in the form of subjectivity and a sense of self. Our suggestion implies a shift away from viewing the person as self-contained, *having* identity, and generating his/her individuality and character as a personal identity project toward focusing instead on the processes in which identity is *done* or *made*—as *constructed* in discursive activities. This process of active engagement in the construction of identity, as we will show, takes place and is continuously practiced in everyday, mundane situations, where it is open to be observed and studied.

Furthermore, this process is best conceptualized as the navigation or management of a space between different dilemmatic positions. The three most pressing dilemmas revolve around (i) *agency and control*, resulting in the question

whether it is the person, the *I-as-subject*, who constructs the way the world is or whether the me-as-undergoer is constructed by the way the world is—and how this dilemma is navigated on a case-to-case basis; (ii) *difference and sameness between me and others*, posing the question how we can draw up a sense of self as differentiated and/or as integrated within self–other relations—and how in concrete contexts we navigate in between those two; and (iii) *constancy and change*, posing the question how we can claim to be the same in the face of constant change and how we can claim to have changed in the face of still being the same—and what degree of continuity and development are necessary to develop and maintain a sense of self as unitary.

A discursive and constructionist approach to identity views these questions as empirical questions. Speaking subjects are confronted with ambiguities and choices, and languages offer options for saying the same things differently and expressing ourselves in a variety of ways. Learning another language, a dialect, or a particular vernacular makes it possible to come across differently. Consider for instance the offer to learn to speak like a Wisconsin local (Johnson, 2010), or maybe better, coming across as a Chicago pro (McLean, 2010).¹ Bates (2005) invites us to learn to “speak like a CEO” so we are able to find out about the “secrets for commanding attention and getting results.” To add another curiosity, September 17 is the official *Talk-Like-a-Pirate-Day*, and a number of programs are offered so that anyone interested can come across authentic. Now, one may object that being able to *talk* like a pirate or a CEO (with results!) is not the same as *being* one. Nevertheless, it will be this close proximity between discourse and identity that will be explored in this chapter—and we shall see that discourse is a lot more powerful than just sounding like a person who we would like to be.

Let us briefly foreshadow what we consider the central merit of a general discursive perspective for the exploration of identity. A discursive approach brings together language and other communicative means in text and context

and allows us to theorize and operationalize how the forms and meanings therein provide access to what are commonly called *identity categories*²—general membership categories such as age, gender, race, occupations, gangs, socio-economic status, ethnicity, class, nation-states, or regional territories, to name a few. In order to provide our view of how discursive perspectives contribute to a better understanding of the processes of identity formation, negotiation, and maintenance, we divide our chapter into three parts. Following this introductory section, we first discuss how different discourse theories have contributed to establishing the centrality of language use in the constitution of social life and, thus, are to be considered crucial for the creation and negotiation of identities. In the same section we also delineate a distinction between “capital-D” and “small-d” discourses that is important in order to understand different ways of approaching and analyzing identity in discourse. We review some disciplinary and interdisciplinary trends in discourse analysis that have contributed to our understanding of specific aspects of identity: the construction of sameness and difference, the creation of categories of belonging, and the building of continuity and change. In the next section of this chapter, we summarize and highlight the contributions of discursive approaches to the empirical dimensions of shifting identity constructions and their maintenance from situation to situation as well as across the lifespan. We highlight the role of discourse as the medium that offers choices for navigating the three identity dilemmas: agency/control, sameness/difference, and constancy/change—before we turn in the next section to an illustration. In this section we exemplify, using a stretch of discourse among five 15-year-olds, how identity and identity research might benefit from a perspective that starts with a focus on local identity construction within small-d discourses (i.e., concrete choices of language forms and language functions—within a particular text and context). The goal of this illustration is to demonstrate the value of discourse analysis in revealing how, in such everyday and seemingly mundane interactive situations (in vivo), macro-level identities are reproduced

through recurrent practices and ideologies that constitute capital-D discourses.

Discourse and Identity

Discourse: A Preliminary Working Definition

The term *discourse* has its roots in the Latin prefix *dis-* (*in between, back and forth*) and the verb *currere* (*to run*). When transferred onto the domain of talk, the metaphor of running back and forth between two poles is applied in two senses: First is the image that the texture of a stretch of talk (the form and content of what is said by a person) consists of a running back and forth between the structural whole and its component parts. The parts relate to one another in sequence as cohesively tied together and form—in a bottom-up and sequential procedure—the meaningful whole of, for instance, a recipe, a route description, or a narrative. At the same time, the overarching whole—let’s say the account of what happened at a pie-eating contest that can be heard as a fantastic *barforama* or as a revenge plot³—lends meaning to the particular actions of the participants in terms of what membership categories the participants are portrayed as occupying. The same image evoked by the metaphor of running back and forth can be applied in a second sense to the communicative situation, such as a conversation around a campfire, a dinner table, a group meeting, or a one-on-one interview, in which at least two speakers “run” back and forth between one another by taking turns. Within this image, the orderliness of the sequential arrangements of talk in interaction is focalized and brought to the fore.

Accordingly, many analyses of discourse concentrate on the sequential aspects of what thematically or topically is held together and merging into a thematic whole, whether produced through speaking, writing, and signing or by use of multi-modal repertoires such as gesture, gaze, facial expressions, or overall body posture. Alternatively, discourse analysis can delve deeper into the sequential moves that are taking place in the turn-taking behaviors

between speakers—again by focusing on the same kinds of bodily and linguistic means used to accomplish this. Finally, as we illustrate at the end of this chapter, both foci—the textual and the contextual/interactional—may be combined, showing how the form as well as the content of a text have been interactionally emergent (for a more detailed methodological account of *narrative analysis*, see Bamberg, in press b). Regardless of which discursive lens dominates, it is crucial to address how the process of constructing meaningful units takes place through human action in time and space. Thus, discourse analysis typically takes into account the circumstances (context) of what has been said, how it was said, and why it may have been said—contextually embedded at a particular point in time at a particular location. And although the unit of analysis is an extended stretch of talk, one that is said to be “larger than the sentence” (Harris, 1952; Stubbs, 1983),⁴ the analytic focus can reach from the location of a particular breath intake to prosodic features, from pronunciations of a vowel in different phonetic environments to the use of *well* or *oh*, or from shifts between different tense forms or pronouns all the way up to the design of plots or life stories.

However, it seems to be a long shot from the analysis of breath intakes and the pronunciation of particular vowels or consonants to the question of how a person forms an identity or a sense of who they are. In the following sections, we will outline the kinds of linkages that have been formed between talk and identity by use of three different lenses. We start by following up on two at first glance opposing views on discourse, one that views the person as constructed in and through existing discourses (which, following Gee, 1999, we call *capital-D* discourses), while in the other the person agentively constructs who they are by use of discourse (which, again following Gee, 1999, we term *small-d* discourse). These two conceptualizations of discourse differ in terms of agency and control⁵ and have led to different ways of doing discourse analysis. A second lens sheds light on the different traditions that have looked at and analyzed discursive means as they are deployed

when human agents enter social relations and engage in bonds with others—but at the same time begin to differentiate themselves from one another with an orientation toward authenticity and uniqueness. These traditions typically have their roots in applied fields of language analysis and have impacted on identity theory in a number of ways. A third lens will focus on one specific form of discourse—narrative. Narrative, for many, has become a privileged form of discourse for identity analysis, because it is by way of narrative that people are said to be able to construct a sense of a continuous self—one that fuses past and future orientation together into one’s present identity.

Capital-D and Small-d Discourse: Constructing a Sense as Agent

Having laid out a working definition of what is meant by the term discourse, it should be noted that this term is typically embedded in different theories and applied to different fields of investigation and analysis.⁶ Capital-D discourse theoreticians such as Habermas, Foucault, and Lyotard agree on the relevance of discourse for the constitution of discursive practices that become the distinguishing features of different discourse communities. Within a capital-D discourse perspective, it is assumed that the dominant discursive practices circle around and form the kind of thought systems and ideologies that are necessary for the formation of a consensus that extends into what is taken to be agreed upon, what is held to be aesthetically and ethically of value, and what is often simply taken to be *true*. Discourse theoreticians have developed varying theories that mark discourse as central for the interface between society and individual actions. Some stress its role in laying the foundation for a universal “discourse ethics” (cf. Apel, 1988; Habermas, 1979, 1981). Others see it as providing the constitutive principles for the historical formation and the changes of thought systems (*regimes of truth*—Foucault, 1972). Still others conceive of discourse as providing the basis for differing thought systems that dissent among or

even contradict one another (*discourse genres*—Lyotard, 1984).

Within these kinds of societal discourse theories, there is a tendency to see individual and institutional identities as highly constrained by societal norms and traditions. Thus, for example, within a Foucauldian approach, it is assumed that it is the engagement in discursive communal practices that forms speaking subjects—and their worlds (Foucault, 1972). Typically, in this theoretical framework, subjects are assumed to have some choice in making use of existing patterns that can be found in their culture, but they do not create the practices in which they engage. Rather, practices are imposed onto them by their culture, society, or communal norms. Thus, chosen identities stem from already existing repertoires (Foucault, 1988, p. 11) that can arguably be viewed as categories or domains.

Although theoreticians such as Foucault, Habermas, and Lyotard posit that discourse necessarily also consists of what is said—what is being talked about in terms of topics, themes, and content—and how culturally established repertoires are put to use, their attention has traditionally centered on the broader social and institutional conditions that make this possible. These conditions frame and, even more strongly, constrain who *can* say what is said, under what circumstances it can be said, and how it actually may have to be said so it will be communally validated. In other words, the analysis of discourse, especially along Foucauldian lines, focuses on the conditions that hold particular discourses together. Also, explored is how conditions have changed over time—such that over history we have come to shape and reshape our views of ourselves. The goal within these societal discourse theories is to investigate the general communal and institutional conditions under which discourses can become “*regimes of truth*,” that is, frames within which social life is talked about and understood and the impact of these frames on the local contexts of everyday in vivo and in situ interaction. Therefore, these theorists see identity as fundamentally determined by such societal macro-conditions. In order to understand alternative approaches to identity, it is therefore

important to distinguish between these general societal contextual conditions (as framing and delineating local conditions) that can be characterized as *capital-D contexts* and the kinds of local in situ contexts within which subjects “find themselves speaking” that can be described as the *small-d contexts* of everyday activities.

In contrast to theories that explore capital-D discourses, discourse theorists who have been working in more linguistically informed traditions have tried to better understand and empirically investigate the relation between what is said, how exactly it is said, and the functions that such utterances serve in their local in vivo context. Harris (1952) has been credited as the first linguist to develop discourse analysis, even though his work preceded the study of sentence structure (syntax) and excluded anything but language (hence, no context). Harris worked at the level of morphemes (units of form and meaning including affixes and words) to find morphological patterns distinctive to different types of texts. It was his bottom-up work of identifying patterns of morphemes that accrued to create texts. More contemporary approaches (e.g., Smith, 2003) examine how syntactic patterns of sentence structures combine into particular types of texts and discourse genres (e.g., narratives, descriptions). In the footsteps of these structural approaches to text were widespread attempts to link analytically the semantic and syntactic patterning in language with how speakers intend to convey meaning in interaction (e.g., Brown & Yule, 1983; Coulthard, 1977/1985; Levinson, 1983; Schiffrin, 1982, 1985, 1994; Stubbs, 1983).

Similarly to the capital-D discourse tradition, linguistically informed small-d discourse theorists also start off from the assumption that the choices that speakers can make when engaging in talk (spoken, written, or signed) are limited. However, for representatives of the small-d perspective on discourse and discourse analysis, the actual choices made in the form of performed in vivo utterances constitute the center of interest and analysis, because they are taken to reveal aspects of how speakers make sense of the context within which they move and accordingly how they weave relevant aspects of this context into

their utterances. In other words, speakers, in their choices of how they say what they say—which may be as detailed as a breath intake at a particular point in the interaction—are interpreted as making use of (indexical) devices that cue listeners on how to read their messages as interactively designed. It is through a reading of these means that hearers (or more generally, recipients) come to a reading of the speaker's intentions and ultimately to a reading of how speakers present a sense of who they are.

Of course, the presentation of self in everyday interactions is a far cry from being transparent or easy to read (cf. Goffman, 1959). For example, a speaker may use certain lexical items, pronunciations, syntactic constructions, and speaking styles that index particular social membership categories such as those indicated at the outset of our chapter: age, gender, region, social class. The local contexts within which self-presentations are displayed (intentionally or unintentionally) are continually shifting, making it difficult to make attributions. These local contexts nevertheless form the ground on which situated meanings can be assembled and related to culturally based folk models of person, personality, and character. Thus, the in situ context within which the enunciation and interpretation of a sense of self are taking place is possibly best characterized as the small-d context that needs to be understood and analyzed when making sense of small-d discourse.

Also challenging for the attribution of identity, however, is a view of communication developed by H. P. Grice (see discussion in Schiffrin, 1994, Chapter 6). Grice points out that communication is based not only on language but on implicit cultural presuppositions of cooperation (or strategic violations thereof) that depend on language and context as resources through which a hearer recognizes a speaker's intention. The problem here is that the linguistic patterns used by a speaker may not necessarily be recognized by the speaker and/or the hearer as indices to particular identity categories.

There have been attempts within the frame of social psychology, particularly in the United Kingdom, to bring together small-d and capital-D

perspectives into a synthetic form of analysis that traces normative practices as impacting on identity formation processes, while simultaneously paying attention to the local conversational practices in which notions of self, agency, and difference are constituted and managed. Potter and Wetherell (1987) developed an approach to identity analysis that centers on the analysis of *interpretive repertoires*. Interpretive repertoires are defined as patterned, commonsensical ways that members of communities of practice use to characterize and evaluate actions and events (Potter & Wetherell, 1987, p. 187). In recent writings, Wetherell (2008) shifted the terminology slightly to *psychosocial practices* as the basic unit of analysis. "Psycho-discursive practices are recognizable, conventional, collective and social procedures through which character, self, identity, the psychological, the emotional, motives, intentions and beliefs are performed, formulated and constituted" (p. 79).

The connection between "on the ground" in situ and in vivo interactive practices and wider cultural sense-making strategies (also called "dominant discourses" or "master narratives") is also taken up in a type of discourse analysis called "positioning theory" (Bamberg, 1997b, 2003; Davies & Harré, 1990). Positioning and its analysis refer broadly to the close inspection of how speakers describe people and their actions in one way rather than another and, by doing so, perform discursive actions that result in acts of identity. We will return to the notions of positioning and acts of identity when discussing sociolinguistic and ethnographic lenses on identity below.

Despite some caveats, it should be clear that discourse (small or capitalized) is the place par excellence for negotiating categorical distinctions with regard to all kinds of identity categories—be it gender, sexuality, ethnicity and race, or nationality and immigration. What surfaces in our discussion is an existing tension between capital-D and small-d discourse perspectives in the space and importance alternatively given to macro or local phenomena in the formation and negotiation of identities. The tension between a perspective that views (personal and institutional) agency as

constituted in terms of a direction of fit from global, structural phenomena to local actions versus one that emphasizes the direction of fit from local actions to the constitution of global phenomena is ultimately a productive one—one that requires further integration into the business of identity theorizing. However, although it may be desirable to combine these two perspectives into one that shifts back and forth in an effort to illuminate how meaning is “*agentively experienced*,” it may be necessary to keep in mind that they are *perspectives*—not to be confused with the phenomena as such.

A similar tension will resurface in our next section, where we turn to a discussion of how sameness and difference between self and others figure into the construction of identity and sense of self. We will work through a number of sub-disciplines of language analysis (e.g., sociolinguistics and ethnography) as they address (implicitly and recently more explicitly) the tension between small-d discourses (as operating within small-d in situ and in vivo contexts) and capital-D discourse (operating in capital-D institutional and communal contexts).

Stylistics, Sociolinguistics, and Ethnography: Integrating and Differentiating Self and Other

Research on styles and structures of texts was originally housed in the discipline of “literary analysis.” *Texts*, particularly literary texts, are typically viewed as consisting of form and content. *Style* of a text traditionally refers to a particular aesthetic patterning of rhetorical figures and lexico-syntactic patterns. A new approach to style was ushered in by Roman Jakobson’s (1960) groundbreaking model of language, in which functions of language were connected to different facets of a situated context—such as the use of the referring function of language for the production of speech genres such as descriptions or lists. Not only were the functions connected to aspects of context, but they were typically identified with more than one context, such that language was assumed to be multi-functional.

Jakobson included *poetics* within the array of functions in order to add a lens that focuses onto the message itself. Along with incorporating more formal linguistic analysis into stylistics, Jakobson’s model led to widespread recognition of the multi-functionality of language and what this meant for the purpose of analyzing its use.

A clearer differentiation arose in the works of Halliday (1989) who distinguished between (i) the referential function of language (as referring to and naming objects in the world), (ii) the textual function (structuring texts in terms of their units so they can emerge as recipes or narratives), and (iii) the communicative/interactive function (providing a tool for interpersonal communication). The linguistic and stylistic make-up of texts and their structural units thus became the middle ground and connective tissue between the language function, identifying the actual grammatical and lexical choices that were made at the referential level of language use, and the intentional acts of communicating with others. In spite of the fact that this orientation toward language coincides with the commonsense conviction that the choice of particular linguistic devices is in the service of communicative intentions, and that this relationship becomes *encoded in* the text, reading intentions off the text is not straightforward: “there is no ‘understanding’ of texts as a semantic process, separate from, and prior to, a pragmatic ‘evaluation’ which brings context into play” (Widdowson, 2004, p. 35).

Recent discourse- and text-analytic developments have been influenced by the sociolinguistic assumption that linguistic variation is reflective *and* constructive of social membership categories. Likewise, the analysis of textual and stylistic features (cf. Coupland, 2001; De Fina, 2007; Eckert & Rickford, 2001; Georgakopoulou & Goutsos, 1997), especially in stylizations and *styling*, has brought to the fore a more agentive (though not necessarily conscious) speaker identification with particular uses of communally expressive forms and repertoires. Choices that index particular styles consist of linguistic features in close relation to metalinguistic, gestural, and bodily characteristics (including phenomena such as hairstyle or clothing). The interplay

of these choices points to how users identify themselves subjectively and position themselves in terms of the community or subculture to which they belong or aspire. As such, stylistic choices and stylistic variation are constantly renewed and become deeply engrained with the expression of a personal, individual identity, as well as a group or community identity. Thus, stylistics and text analysis, originally operating on the internal make-up of (written) texts, have moved on to the analysis of the use of small-d repertoires as contextual cues for identifications with—or disengagement from—existing social patterns of capital-D discourses.

Traditional sociolinguistics has primarily been interested in linguistic variation across particular populations. The starting point for this type of investigation is the basic conviction that speakers have options as to how to present referential information. Thus, in terms of their lexical, syntactic, prosodic, and even phonetic selections of formal devices, speakers can either conform to, or deviate from, established standards. The preferences that are revealed in their choices usually characterize speakers along regional or socio-cultural dimensions of language use, marking them in terms of particular membership (social) categories. Work by LePage and Tabouret-Keller (1985) on processes of pidginization and creolization, for example, has interpreted speakers' choices of linguistic varieties as tokens of the emergence of such social identities. Repeated choices in language use, as well as changes in these choices over time, signal "acts of identity in which people reveal both their personal identity and their search for social roles" (LePage & Tabouret-Keller, 1985, p. 14). Interactional approaches to sociolinguistics (Gumperz, 1982a, 1982b) similarly highlight the close relationship between language choices and identity categories such as gender, ethnic, and class identities as communicatively produced. Gumperz's analyses of face-to-face verbal exchanges focused on the inferential processes that emerge from situational factors, social presuppositions, and discourse conventions, all of which work together to establish and reinforce speakers' identifications with membership categories.

In recent articles and edited volumes, the different schools of thought that emerged from traditional sociolinguistics (e.g., Labov), interactional sociolinguistics (e.g., Gumperz), in overlap with ethnographic traditions (e.g., Gumperz & Hymes, 1964, 1972) have been reworked and partly transformed to develop more specific tools for the analysis of identity in discursive contexts (cf. Blommaert, 2006; De Fina, 2003; Johnstone, 1996, 2006; Schiffrin, 1996, 2006; Thornborrow & Coates, 2005). Similarly to recent trends within text-linguistic and stylization traditions, sociolinguists and ethnographers have developed new strategies to analyze more closely the use of speech patterns for processes of differentiation and integration, i.e., the use of small-d discursive means to position a sense of self vis-à-vis existing capital-D speech communities. Although identity in these approaches is typically not further theorized, the distinction between self and other, as integrating sameness and differences (individually and socially), is taken for granted as universally woven into the use of speech as socially occasioned.

The term *membership categories* is an off-spring from Sacks' early work on *category-bound activities* (Sacks, 1972, 1995). Authors within this tradition (see especially the work of Baker, 2002, 1997, 2002; and the collection of chapters in Antaki & Widdicombe, 1998a) have explored identities by use of *membership categorization analysis* (MCA), a branch of conversation analysis and ethnomethodology that pays close attention to the commonsense knowledge that speakers are invoking in their everyday talk. Sacks (1995) proposed that categories may be linked to form classes or collections, which he termed *membership categorization devices* (MCDs), and he attempted to tie these categories to local and situated activities, which he termed *category-bound activities*. Central to the analysis of speakers' use of membership categorization devices, and what they accomplish in interactive situations, is the assumption that speakers engage in identity work: People establish identities in terms of *doing age* or *doing gender* (cf. Bussey, Chapter 25, this volume). In order to avoid prematurely imposing membership categories from the researcher's perspective (as the *outsider*

perspective), MCA proponents work analytically, as closely as possible, with speakers' micro-level orientations (e.g., by use of gaze patterns) toward each other. It is at this small-d discourse level that speakers are assumed to sequentially fine-tune their interaction and, through this process, also make capital-D categories and ideologies visible for each other. And it is at this detailed, small-d discourse level (typically working from transcripts of conversations) that we can capture the interactional dynamics that are at work in accomplishing how communicative partners engage jointly in categorically differentiating and integrating their identities. Thus, categories in MCD serve as repertoires from which people can select different facets of identity, to which discourse analysts gain access analytically.

In contrast, traditional *conversation analysis* (CA) does not analyze the conversational patterns as aspects of broader social situations, focusing instead on discourse and interaction as more autonomous concepts. Consequently, CA researchers argue that it is necessary to “hold off from using all sorts of identities which one might want to use in, say, a political or cultural frame of analysis” (Antaki & Widdicombe, 1998b, p. 5.) and begin to ask “*whether, when, and how* identities are used” (Widdicombe & Antaki, 1998, p. 195, emphasis in original). According to this view, and in combination with the analysis of membership category devices, identities are locally and situationally occasioned, and they only become empirically apparent if participants in interaction actually “orient” to them. Thus CA, in combination with MCA, shares a commitment to the empirical study of in vivo small-d discursive practices through which particular capital-D social orders are said to be implied and coming to be visible. Consequently, the emphasis is on the analysis of naturalistic data, the way discourse and interaction take place in often very mundane, everyday settings, displaying the participants' ways of making sense in these settings. Identities and sense of self are made relevant in interactions and oriented to by the way talk is conducted. Thus, identities are *done*—emerging in the here and now of the interaction.

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) bears a number of resemblances to MCA insofar as critical discourse analysts attend to categories within which, and by use of which, identities are framed. However, in contrast to MCA, identities are not seen as locally established by use of small-d discourse agents, but as aspects of larger capital-D political and ideological contexts (cf. Fairclough, 1989). Within this framework, identities are typically explored as power spaces in which the articulation of voice is “repressed.” For CDA researchers, the properties of speakers' gendered or racial identities may play an important role in the discourse that is under construction, contributing to the discursive reproduction of, for instance, sexism or racism (see van Dijk, 1993). Thus, although CDA is primarily interested in the reproduction of power and the abuse of power in discourse, the identities that participants are said to bring to the interactive encounters, or that materialize in texts, may play important roles in this.

Narrative Identities—Constructing Constancy and Change

Narrative discourse takes up a special status for purposes of identity work and identity analysis. In addition to the functions of discourse for the construction of agency and self-differentiation, narratives add a temporal (and spatio-temporal) dimension to a sense of self and identity. Building on narrative theorists such as Bruner, Polkinghorne, and Sarbin, McAdams (1985, Chapter 5, this volume) has turned the assumption of selves plotting themselves in and across time into a life-story model of identity. He states that life stories are more than recapitulations of past events: They have a *defining* character. In his words, “our narrative identities are the stories we live by” (McAdams, Josselson, & Lieblich, 2006, p. 4). His approach, as well as other kinds of *biographic approaches* to identity analysis, however, has recently been criticized as overplaying the temporal dimension of identity construction, at the expense of the interactive and cultural role of discourse as the

practice grounds for agency and self–other differentiation/integration (cf. Bamberg, in press a; Georgakopoulou, 2007). Because the biographic approach to identity is represented elsewhere in this *Handbook* (McAdams, Chapter 5, this volume), we focus our depiction of the contribution of narrative discourse to identity construction on describing a larger discursive perspective that attempts to integrate and merge sociolinguistic with ethnographic and conversational approaches to identity construction (see also Bamberg, in press b).

It is interesting to note that sociolinguists such as Le Page and Labov displayed an explicit interest in identity in their variationist approaches, but not in their narrative work. In Labov's case, his interest in narrative analysis was more a by-product of his sociolinguistic studies that aimed to combat the linguistic prejudice found in Black English spoken in American cities in which poor African-Americans were disenfranchised. His early attempts to use "narratives as a method of recapitulating experiences by matching a verbal sequence of clauses to the sequence of events which had actually occurred" (Labov, 1972, p. 360) provided evidence that African-American male teenagers had full control of both syntactic and textual structures, but that Black English was a marker of differentiating black from non-black and of integrating a sense of black self within a black discourse community. His work on narrative has become not only widely discussed but also critically evaluated (cf. Bamberg, 1997a). Nevertheless, Labov's (1997) continuing work on narrative turned into a "*theory of . . . the narrator as an exponent of cultural norms*" (p. 415, our emphasis), where the narrator became a more explicit target for the analysis of social and personal identity.

In an interesting contrast to Labov's framework, Hymes (1974, 1981) established a different, though equally close, link between sociolinguistics and narrative and theoretically elaborated it in more recent writings (Hymes, 1997; 2003). By adopting a broader perspective on language, text, and context through the theory and practice of the ethnography of communication (Schiffrin, 1994, Chapter 5), Hymes' program of

ethnopoetics went further to explicitly suggest the analysis of speech patterns in the forms of *verses* and *stanzas*, taking fuller account of the performative aspects of language use as narrative performance and practice.

In recent attempts to integrate sociolinguistic, ethnomethodological, and—to a degree—critical discursive elements (cf. Bamberg, 1997b; 2003; Bamberg, De Fina & Schiffrin, 2007; Bamberg & Georgakopoulou, 2008; De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2008; Georgakopoulou, 2006, 2007), narratives are typically analyzed as small-d stories and as discursive practices, i.e., in the way they surface in everyday conversation and other kinds of in vivo interactions where they form the locus of identities as continuously practiced and tested out. This approach allows exploration of self at the level of the talked about that reaches from a past into a present (as in the biographic approach) *and* at the level of tellership and performance in the here and now of small-d storytelling contexts. All three of these facets—content, form, and performance—thus feed into the larger project at work in terms of a capital-D global situatedness within which selves are usually positioned, i.e., with more or less implicit and indirect referencing and orientation to social positions and discourses above and beyond the here and now.

Placing emphasis on small-d stories allows for the study of how people as agentive actors position themselves—and in doing so become positioned. This model of positioning (see Bamberg, 1997b, 2003; Davies & Harré, 1990) affords us the possibility of viewing identity constructions as twofold: We are able to analyze the *way* the referential world is constructed, with characters (such as self and others) emerging in time and space as protagonists or antagonists, heroes or villains. Simultaneously, we are able to show how the referential world (of a past that is made relevant for the present) is constructed as a function of the interactive engagement. In other words, the way the referential world is put together points to how tellers *index* their sense of self in the here and now. Consequently, it is the action orientation of the participants in small storytelling events that forms the basic point of departure for

this kind of functionalist-informed approach to narration and, to a lesser degree, to what is represented (or reflected upon) in the stories told. This seems to be what makes this type of work with small stories crucially different from biographical research. A small story approach is interested in how people use narratives in their in vivo and in situ interactive engagements *to construct* a sense of who they are, whereas biographic story research analyzes stories predominantly as *representations* of the world and of identities within those representations.

Identity as Discursively Constructed

Here we reflect back on discursive perspectives, and we focus on some of the common themes that have emerged in the different kinds of approaches discussed thus far, as well as their central implications for current and future research on identity.

Agency

Discursive perspectives on identity construction view the speaking subject as a bodily agent, i.e., in contrast to a disembodied mind. Participants in small-d discursive interaction—better: bodies-in-interaction—are the location where identities are construed in and through talk. Talk, of course, is more than words connected by the rules of grammar. Any analysis of bodies-in-interaction requires to make concomitant non-linguistic actions part of the analysis. Viewing the speaking subject as agentively engaging in small-d discourse, and in these activities as indexing positions vis-à-vis capital-D categories and ideologies, captures only half of the dilemma faced by subjects who are arguably constructing themselves. When choosing discursive devices from existing repertoires, speaking subjects face what we have termed the “agency dilemma” (Bamberg, in press a). Indeed, either speakers can pick devices that lean toward a person-to-world direction of fit or they can pick devices that construe the direction of fit from world to person. On one end of this continuum, speaking subjects

view themselves as recipients, i.e., as positioned at the receiving end of a world-to-person direction of fit. Choosing devices from small-d repertoires that result in low-agency marking assists in the construction of a victim role or at least a position as less influential, powerful, and responsible and—in case the outcome of the depicted action is negatively evaluated—as less blameworthy. In contrast, picking devices from the other end of the continuum, speaking subjects position themselves as *agentive self-constructors*. Discursive devices that mark the character under construction in terms of high agency lend themselves for the construction of a heroic self, a person who comes across as strong, in control, and self-determined. In either case, depicting events in which a self is involved and placing this self in relation to others (as agent or as undergoer) require a choice of positioning; and the analysis of identity construction must attend to these choices as indexing how the agency dilemma is being navigated and a sense of self as actor or as undergoer comes to the surface.

A brief illustration, taken from Bamberg (2010), may help clarify what we mean when we talk about “agency navigation.” In an interview that John Edwards gave on August 8, 2008, on ABC’s *Nightline*,⁷ he presents himself as a hardworking young man—i.e., as highly agentive who was *dreaming of doing something useful* in society. In the course of the interview, however, he shifts this position and marks himself as being swept into popularity—losing his agency and thereby becoming less accountable for the transgressions that *happened* (cf. Bamberg, 2010, for a more detailed analysis of John Edwards’ interview).

Same Versus Different

A second theme identified by discursive perspectives on identity construction is the management of self-differentiation and self-integration. What is at stake here is that choices of small-d discourse devices often signal a position of the speaking subject in relation to others; others

who are being referred to (in what the talk is about) and who are being talked to (in the speech situation under consideration). More specifically, category ascriptions or attributions to characters that imply membership categories, or even choices of event descriptions as candidates for category-bound activities, mark affiliations with these categories in terms of proximity or distance. Aligning with (or positioning in contrast to) these categories, speakers draw up boundaries around them—and others—so that individual identities and group belongings become visible. Thus, it is typically through discursive choices that people define a sense of (an individual) self as different from others, or they integrate a sense of who they are into communities of others. Although this can be done by overtly marking self as belonging to a social category—as in John Edwards' case: "*I grew up as a small-town-boy in North Carolina, came from nothing, worked hard*"—most often the kind of category membership is hinted by way of covertly positioning self and others in the realm of being talked about (again, quoting from John Edwards' interview: "*people were telling me, oh he's such a great person . . . you're gonna go, no telling what you'll do*"). Thus, aligning with the moral values of others who come from nothing and are hardworking, and at the same time trying to explain how we differ from these same people, because we have violated their moral values (as in Edwards' case by committing adultery), requires the navigation of how and to what degree we are the same and simultaneously differ from others. And giving descriptions of self and others or trying to explain their behaviors and actions, and whether this is done directly in terms of character attributions or in terms of action descriptions, identifications along the axis of similarity or differences between self and others are unavoidable.⁸

Self–other differentiation and the integration of speaking selves into constellations with others operate against the assumption that other and self can simultaneously be viewed as same and different. However, which aspect of sameness and difference is picked and made relevant in a particular speech situation is likely to vary

from situation to situation and is open to negotiation and revision between conversationalists in local contexts. Some of these aspects fall under the traditional header of *social identities* and are said to be sorted out in terms of placing others and selves in membership groups, associating with particular groups favorably, comparing us (as the in-group) with other groups, and desiring an identity that is (usually) positively distinct in relation to other groups. However, the contrast or seeming contradiction between what is social and what is personal or individual dissolves away in discursive perspectives on identity construction: The personal/individual *is* social and vice versa. Discourse perspectives view the person empirically *in interaction* and *under construction*. They do not ask where the personal (individual/private) starts and where it becomes social; nor do they ask where the social (group/cultural/socio-historical) starts and whether or how it impacts on the individual. Of course, this is not meant to deny that there is a culturally shared sense of what counts as personal, private, and intimate vis-à-vis a space that is communally more open and public.

Constancy and Change Across Time

Speakers' accounts of life as an integrated narrative whole form the cornerstone of what Erikson (1963) has called "ego identity." Narrative, as we laid out above, seems to lend itself as the prime discourse genre for the construction of continuity and discontinuity in the formation of identity, given that it requires speaking subjects to position a sense of self that balances in between two extreme endpoints on a continuum: no change at all, which would make life utterly boring, and radical change from one moment to the next, resulting in potential chaos and relational unpredictability. As with the previous two dilemmas discussed thus far, speaking subjects are required to navigate this conflict by positioning their sense of self in terms of *some* form of continuity, i.e., constructing their identities in terms of *some* change against the background of *some*

constancy (and vice versa). The choice of particular discursive devices, taken from the range of temporality and aspectual markers, contributes to the construction of events as indexing (potentially radical) transformations from one sense of self to another and constitutes change as discontinuous or qualitative leaps. In contrast, other devices are typically employed to construe change as gradual and somewhat consistent over time—leaving no third option on this continuum except the one that simply doesn't require a story. Consider for instance stories that reason about (lay out and explain) one's sexuality. *Coming out stories* of a homosexual identity can give shape to who-I-am in the form of a transformation—maybe even a relatively sudden one. However, they also can be plotted as continuous, where the speaker *just* didn't know or notice his/her *real* sexuality, which all along (continuously) had been the same (though *hidden* or *dormant*). In contrast, John Edwards navigates the waters of change and constancy by maintaining that he is in his “*core exactly the same person*” he used to be when he was the boy who grew up poor and had high moral values, but that his “*outside*” underwent changes—brought about by the agency of others—that resulted in his moral transgression (for more detail, see Bamberg, 2010).

The contribution of narrative approaches to identity is that they replace the question of whether a person really *is* the same across a certain span of time or whether she/he has changed, with the analysis of how people navigate this dilemma *constructively* in their small-d discourse, particularly in their narratives in which they try to weave past and present into some more or less coherent whole. Here it is evident that the question is to a lesser degree what actually happened and to a much larger degree how constancy and change are *constructively* navigated. It is at this level where speaking subjects engage in discursive practices of identity maintenance, as well as in underscoring and bringing off how they have changed—unfortunately not always for the better. For us as discourse and identity analysts, narratives—particularly those embedded in their interactional small-d

in vivo contexts—are the empirical domain in which identities emerge and can empirically be investigated.

Summary

Discursive perspectives on identity construction and identity analysis distinguish between and clarify three analytic domains within which identity constructions are discursively accomplished: (a) navigating the two directions of fit—one in which the person constructs the world and the other in which the world constructs the person—in order to display a sense of who-I-am in terms of agency, (b) balancing one's sense of being the same and different from others—and thereby practicing the differentiation of who-I-am from others together with the integration of who-I-am with existing membership categories, and (c) positioning oneself as same and different across time (and space)—and thereby constructing a sense of *some* continuity (and development) across one's lifespan (or parts thereof). Choosing the “right” discursive devices enables speaking subjects to come to grips with these dilemmatic challenges, and analyzing these small-d discourse choices offers insights into the ways in which identities are occasioned and accomplished in local in vivo contexts. Thus, what from one angle appears to be a disadvantage of discursive approaches—namely that they do not appear to yield generalizable results—from another angle turns out to be their gain. From a discursive perspective, the descriptive detail and deeper insights into how the three dilemmatic spaces can be occupied and productively navigated outweigh the traditional call for reliability and generalizability. Using the lens of discourse and the lens of construction and bringing them to focus onto identity, what comes to the fore are discursive practices as the sites for identity formation processes—where the social and the personal/individual are fused and become empirical as situated, in vivo, interactive processes.⁹ Focusing our lenses on the interactive (and as such always psychosocial) nature of identity practices, detailing how identities are coming to

existence and are maintained microgenetically (cf. Bamberg, 2008), how they are practiced and change over time, and feed our subjective sense of who-we-are as somewhat unitary beings, establishes a different kind of encounter with empirical material in new and unprecedented ways.

Illustration

In this section, we provide an illustration of how identities and their construction are approached from a discursive perspective. We have chosen a short stretch of interaction—what we term a “small story”—that consists of a brief account given by a 15-year-old male 9th-grader in the context of a group discussion with five of his peers and an adult male moderator. The actual account, which altogether does not entail much of a plot development or a script-break, is centrally about a 17-year-old male 11th-grader who is categorized as gay. The character depicted in this account is construed as talking (a lot) about his gayness (near his locker) (lines 22/23) and further categorized as associating more with girls than with other boys (lines 26/27). It will become clear that an assessment of what the story is about can more securely be made if we take into account why the story was shared, which requires an investigation into how it is interactionally embedded and jointly accomplished by the participants (Bamberg, in press b). We will illustrate how we proceed in our analysis by sequentially following the participants in their interactive positions vis-à-vis each other and discussing how, in this process, they orient toward capital-D discourses and differentiate themselves from third person others—here a gay boy. Our analysis centers around the discursive construction of a heterosexual male identity, individually (for James as the speaking subject) as well as a group identity that is fine-tuned by the participants as active participants in this conversation. We will try to document, wherever possible, how speakers orient toward the three dilemmas that we described as relevant cornerstones for discursive identity construction earlier in this chapter.

The topic at the start of this excerpt is whether there are gay boys in the school attended by the teenagers. In line 6, James contradicts Ed and positions himself as better informed about the current status of gay boys at their school and in line 9 backs up his position with his claim to actually *know* a few gay boys at their school. However, in midstream he self-repairs this claim to authority by changing *knowing* to *having seen* them (line 10). At this point, let us pause for a second and ask what is going on here. “Knowing someone” comes with the connotation of a certain kind of proximal or intimate recognition, maybe even acceptance. Having had visual encounters with a person—in contrast to the claim of “knowing this person”—implies more distance, less proximity, and less intimate recognition; maybe to be able to recognize this person among others, but not much more. James’ downgrading to *only having seen* a few gays at his school asks for further commentary. One possible explanation for his change in position vis-à-vis gay schoolmates may be that he wants to more clearly spell out his *proximity/distance* (position) vis-à-vis the membership category labeled gay; that is, he may wish to avoid being heard as someone who has “gay friends” or being construed as gay himself. However, he is challenged by Ed and Alex in their subsequent turns. Both challenge James’ criteria for categorizing others as gay on the grounds of “spotting gays” by simply *seeing* (lines 11 and 12)—thereby calling into question James’ claim to authority on issues of sexuality and potentially charging him as prejudicial. James, in line 13, returns the question with a similar phrase: *how do I know* <not: “how can I tell”> *they’re gay?* Thereby he acknowledges that Ed and Alex potentially saw through the maneuver behind his modified “knowing” and also recognizes that “seeing” members of a particular membership category is still a categorization and counts as a kind of “knowing;” but he formulates his answer in a display format that originally signals “not to have understood” Alex and Ed’s challenge—then, after Ed insists (line 14), followed by a more elaborate answer.

James’ more elaborate response, starting with line 15, could have gone into a number of

Excerpt: *How Do I Know They're Gay?*

- 1 Ed there ARE some gay boys at Cassidy
 2 Mod do they (.) do they suffer in eh at your schools
 3 do they are they talked about in a way//
 4 Ed I don't think there are any
 5 I don't think there are any openly gay kids at school
 6 James ah yeah there are
 7 Ed wait there's one
 8 there's one I know of
 9 James actually (.) I know a few of them
 10 I don't KNOW them but I've SEEN them
 11 Ed how can you tell they're gay
 12 Alex yeah you can't really tell
 13 James no (.) like how do I know they're gay <rising voice>
 14 Ed yeah
 15 James well (.) he's an 11th-grade student (.) the kid I know
 16 I'm not gonna mention names
 17 Ed all right (.) who are they <both hands raising>
 18 James okay um and I'm in a class with mostly 11th-graders
 19 Josh and his name is <rising voice>
 20 James ah and ah and um a girl
 21 who is very honest and nice
 22 she has a locker right next to him
 23 and she said he talked about how he is gay a lot
 24 when she's there (.) not with her
 25 like um (.) so that's how I know
 26 and he um associates with um a lot of girls
 27 not many boys
 28 a lot of the (.) a few of the gay kids at Cassidy

different directions. For instance, a potential dispute could have evolved over what counts as activities or behaviors that qualify as typically gay (membership category-bound activities). However, when Ed upheld his challenge (line 14), James responds with a turn initial *well*,

a general shifter of frames that also signals the intention to hold the floor for an extended turn (Schiffrin, 1985). He shifts focus from plural *gays*—from who they are and generically do—to an unspecified singular *he*¹⁰—to a past event—presumably what he, now as a specified member

of the “gay category,” once did. This third person *he* is now specified as an 11th-grader, and his name is explicitly “not being mentioned.” The rhetorical device of “explicitly not mentioning” is a clever way of displaying sensitivity and discreteness, thereby indexing the interactive business at hand as not gossiping. However, at the same time, this very same device of withholding information designs audience expectations toward something that is highly tellable—if not gossipy. Ed’s and Josh’s forceful requests (lines 17 and 19) to hear names bespeak exactly this. However, instead of specifying the person, James (in line 18) moves further into descriptive (background) details: that he has class with mostly 11th-graders, and thus—in contrast to the other five participants, who all are 9th-graders—may not only be more knowledgeable of the boy he had previously introduced (and left unspecified thus far) but also be more knowledgeable in general. At the same time, this information may serve the function to clarify why he “knows” and the other participants in this round do not.

To summarize, the interactional setting in which the upcoming account is grounded is the following: James, who seemed to have successfully laid claim to knowing better and more about a gay population at their school, is challenged for potentially drawing on prejudicial categories in his segregation of gays from non-gays. This leads to James’ response in setting the scene that orients toward a more elaborate account in the form of a small story. He introduces a specific character, presumably a gay 11th-grader, and opens up audience expectations for what is to come next as a sequence of descriptions and evaluations (about the character in question) which (hopefully) clarifies how and why James is able to uphold authoritative judgments on gay issues. In other words, with his subsequent story James is expected to reclaim the authority on the gay–hetero distinction that he had laid claim to have experiential access to—which had been called into question.

The storied account unfolding in lines 20–24 and 26–28 does not consist of a typical plot line or plan break, but of two pieces of further descriptive information. First, a description

of the 11th-grader as someone who talks a lot about his being gay—and, as the elaboration shows, openly, i.e., in the presence of overhearing audiences; and second, as someone who hangs out at school more with girls than with boys. These pieces of information position the gay boy in (grammatical) subject position as the agent, i.e., as willfully, intentionally engaging in these category-bound activities, which are said to have been habitually occurring. Both pieces of information arguably provide evidence for the alleged person’s membership in the category “gay” and in this sense can be said to relate to the point the audience may be waiting for. James seems to make good on this expectation in line 25: *so that’s how I know*.

More interesting, however, is the way this information is garnered and sequenced. James presents the information about the gay boy as “second-hand knowledge.” He uses a form of “constructed dialogue” (here in the form of “indirect speech,” i.e., as a summary quote) to recreate the action in question (having *seen* or *knowing* about gays in their school) through the lens of talk of someone else who is held socially accountable. He introduces a nameless witness, who is characterized as female, honest, and nice, and as having her locker right next to the boy whose sexual identity is at stake in this account. It is this girl who is presented as overhearing the speech actions of the boy that give rise in the unfolding story to the characterization of “gay” category activities. James, having reportedly heard this from a female character, also may imply that he is able to talk openly with females about such issues. In sum, James’s attempt to regain his credibility and authority (on “gay” issues—though probably also on issues of sexuality in general) rests on his presentation of an overhearing eye-witness and relays the crucial information as hearsay. By placing his reputation as knowledgeable in the hands of this reliable witness, he is able to successfully “hide” behind her. Thus, the question arises of how he manages to come across as believable in spite of the fact that he himself does not have any first-hand knowledge—at least not in this particular case. He has not “seen” (witnessed) gayness as he had claimed in line 10, and

his former statement of “knowing” now is being modified to what others have told him. So how does he do this without undermining and having to withdraw his original claim of “knowing by having seen?”

James seems to be accomplishing several activities at the same time. First, when openly challenged on his ability to make a differentiation between gays and heterosexuals, he successfully (re)establishes his authority. He lists a witness’ account and rhetorically designs this witness as reliable. This witness is “honest” (in contrast to “a liar”) and “nice” (in contrast to “malicious” or “notoriously gossiping”). In addition, giving details such as the fact that her locker is “next to his” contributes further to the believability of James’ account (on the role of detail in narrative accounting, see Tannen, 1989/2007). Furthermore, the characterization of the boy as talking “a lot” about his gayness makes it difficult to (mis-)interpret the girl’s (and James’s) accounts as potential mis-readings—or worse, as simply relying on stereotypes about gay behavior.

Second, the introduction of his witness as a girl (note that James could have left the gender of this person unspecified), and also as one who did not talk directly to the gay boy, further underscores how James “wants to be understood.” In line with his corrective statement in line 10 (“just having *seen* gay boys, not really *knowing* them”), having a close confederate who is also relationally close to the gay boy (and speaking with him “a lot”) could make this confederate hearable (again) as in a close kind of *knowing* relationship with a “gay community.” Thus, designing this confederate as a girl, who is not even being addressed by the gay boy when he talks about his sexual orientation, makes it absolutely clear that there is no proximity or any other possible parallel between this boy’s sexual orientation and James’s. A girl is a perfect buffer that serves the role of demarcating the difference in sexual orientation between James and his gay classmate.

Third, James’ staging of the “fact” at the end of his small story that this boy “associates with a lot of girls and not boys” (except with a few other gay kids at school) is very telling. While the “fact” that this kind of category-bound activity

(that gays hang out with girls) may be an observable, empirical “fact,” and therefore may come across as substantiating his claim “*I have seen them*,” it is also easily hearable as a stereotypical and potentially prejudicial judgment. Had James mentioned this at the beginning—i.e., had he prefaced that he had seen one boy hanging out predominantly with girls in the form of an abstract or an orientation for why he is sharing his small story about the girl at the first place—he would have been heard as expressing a (stereo-typical) view of a heterosexist, antigay capital-D discourse, potentially resulting in further challenges from Ed and Alex as “loosely speaking,” not differentiating carefully enough, or even being prejudicial. However, placing this category-bound activity at the end of his small story about the girl, and giving it the slot of the coda, he uses this structural narrative device to finish off his storied account and orients the conversation toward a new topic, namely why it is that gays hang out more often with girls (and this is actually what happens in the talk that follows). In other words, this way of strategically sequencing his “evidence” allows James to epitomize the category of gays by having captured the individual in relation to the aggregate. This move in turn helps James to draw up and position himself within the group boundaries of “his peers” by drawing a boundary between “them” and “us.” The intentionality, and therefore responsibility, for not hanging out with heterosexual boys is placed squarely in the court of them, the gay kids; not us, the heteros. Note that the facts that James constructs with lines 26–28 could have been constructed by placing agency in others’ courts—such as “many girls associate with him,” or “not many boys associate with him,” or even more bluntly: “*we* rarely associate with him.”

In sum, James’s story allows him to accomplish multiple things: When openly challenged that he can differentiate gays from non-gays by simply “*seeing*” them, his story enables him to re-establish his identity as knowledgeable and reliable; furthermore, it helps him to fend off the interpretation of coming across as gossiping and being heard as prejudiced—as outright antigay or homophobic. However, and more importantly, his

story allows him to carefully construct a sense of who-he-is as heterosexual and straight. It is in this sense that his story can be said to borrow and enact masculine norms and a sense of heteronormativity. However, as we would like to argue, this sense of a heteronormative self—as well as his sense of self as an authority on “gay issues,” a non-gossiper, and as someone who is not homophobic and prejudiced—are all active accomplishments of the participants who in concert put these norms to practice. They are achieved by how this story is situated and performed by use of small-d discourse devices within this very local setting. Thus, it is the situation that determines the logic or meaning of the norms being circulated, and not the boys’ cognitions or previously established concepts that they seem to have acquired elsewhere and now “simply” reproduce in their interactive encounters. And it is in this sense that the boys (as members of the membership category “heterosexual boys”) are both producing and being produced by the routines that surround and constitute these kinds of small-d narratives-in-interaction. And although our particular “small story” in a strict sense is the response to the challenges by Ed and Alex (lines 11 and 12), it answers a number of other identity challenges that are recognizable in the way the story is made to fit into the ongoing negotiation. It should be stressed that this particular local “small story”—as an exercise in maneuvering through the challenges of gossiping, homophobia, and heteronormativity—is simultaneously a practice of negotiating competing ideological positions. It is in situations like this that not only children and adolescents but also adults across their lifelong process draw on multiple positions; positions that can be used to signal complicity with existing master narratives, to counter, or to convey neutrality vis-à-vis them. Practicing these kinds of “small stories”—as a sub-component of discursive practices—is an indispensable stepping stone in the identity formation process of the person.

Concluding Remarks

The above illustration has laid out some of the procedural steps of how identity construction may be analyzed from a discursive point

of departure. One of the guiding assumptions was to show how participants in their discursive practices navigate what we had called identity dilemmas. With regard to the navigation of sameness and change across time, the stretch of discourse chosen was relatively unrewarding: Although the events reported by James were past events, they were not used to reveal or document changes in terms of a former position that was replaced by a new one. He presented himself as “the same” back-then and here and now, i.e., as holding the same position with regard to what counts categorically as gay and what category-bound activities follow from this label in the past (when he presumably heard the story) and now (the conversational situation under scrutiny). In sum, he simply made a past event relevant for the present, but the past did not lead to or result in any change. We refer the reader to other examples where this type of identity navigation is more clearly exemplified and related to the navigation of the other identity dilemmas (cf. Bamberg, 2010, in press b; De Fina, 2003; Schiffrin, 1996).

With regard to the differentiation between self and other, we were able to show how James and his friends were navigating the territories of hetero- and homosexuality, but at the same time speaking authoritatively and coming across as non-prejudicial. The positions taken up in terms of how he and his friends differentiate themselves vis-à-vis gay boys (but also girls) and how they relate in terms of similarities vis-à-vis others and among themselves as a group reveal insights into the repertoires of identity formation processes and how these repertoires are negotiated and practiced in vivo and in situ. How these positioning practices microgenetically feed into next and new practices in subsequent interactions and storytelling situations cannot be detailed here; again, the reader is referred to other publications that follow up on changes in discursive practices in ontogenesis (cf. Bamberg, 1987; 1997c; 2000a; 2000b; Bamberg & Damrad-Frye, 1991; Berman & Slobin, 1994; Georgakopoulou,

2007; Korobov, 2006; Korobov & Bamberg, 2004).

Navigating one's personal involvement, proximity, and affiliation in terms of the agency dilemma, we could follow James' balancing acts between coming across as authoritatively speaking on matters of sexuality, avoiding to be heard as prejudicial, and simultaneously demarcating a strong sense of his heterosexual identity. Positioning oneself (as the speaking subject) and others (in our example *the gay other* as well as *the female bystander*) in affinity relations—closely or distant—as agentively involved or as passive recipients—are important practices when it comes to staking out a world of moral values. Drawing from discursive repertoires to mark outcomes of actions as caused by volition, unintended accidents, or unwillingly tolerated reveals a horizon of subjective viewpoints and values—often implying moral and ethical standards that are overtly embraced or covertly implied. Consequently, when analyzing how speakers (together with their audiences) engage in navigating who is at fault or blameworthy versus who is innocent and virtuous (or just uninformed and naïve)—and analyzing these positions in the realm of differentiating oneself from others along particular membership categories—here gay versus hetero—reveals a wealth of insights relevant for how identity is discursively forming in situ and in vivo, probably practiced and ritualized over time, and feeding into a sense of who-we-are across situations as a seemingly unitary subject.

Fusing the lenses of construction and discourse onto identity results in a view of the person as actively–interactively—and therefore always socially—involved in the relational constitutive process of answering the who-am-I question. This dynamic and process-oriented perspective views the person as engaged in living their own constructions—thus, the person is actively–interactively involved in negotiating, modifying, sustaining, and changing their sense of who-they-are by making use of discursive means that humans

before and around them (and they themselves in previous practices) have constructed and kept in use as meaningful. Of course, it is possible to cut into these ongoing engagements, focalize on the person, and take a particular developmental moment to have emerged as “the product” of those changes and modifications, and possibly even posit this as an “internal structure” that holds the person together. Of course, it is equally possible to stop this emerging process and pose the question what societal factors, social groupings, or contextual features come into question as determining what we take this “personal identity” to be at this moment. However, we have purposely chosen to view identity construction as taking place in discursive practices that are first of all singular acts and taking place in vivo and in situ, with the person as an agentive part in this. Drawing on given discursive resources, as we have laid out in our illustration, people repeat and reiterate regulatory discursive performances. We suggest that these performances gain a certain durability and stability over time—up to a point where they appear to become solid and seemingly foundational for what we take to be a unitary sense of self.

Both discursive and constructive lenses have brought to the fore the social–relational constitution of identity, the way it emerges under the force of two directions of fit, the person as constructing him/herself in small-d discourse, on the one hand, and as being constructed by capital-D discourses, on the other hand. Our approach in this chapter has been to illustrate how participants in interaction make use of existing discursive repertoires and attend to or make relevant how they position themselves vis-à-vis pre-existing capital-D discourses. As we tried to argue in our introductory section, there are other discursive approaches that give more license to capital-D discourses and their impact on what and how people can and cannot do in small-d discourse contexts (e.g., critical discourse analysis). We purposely highlighted in the constructionist approach presented here that the discursive meaning-making tools, although having their

own history in socio-cultural practices, are not fixed and require occasions of use and continuous practice by active agents. It is along those lines that we favored analytic procedures that work up from in situ and in vivo examples and spell out microgenetically how meaning-making tools are put to use. Starting from these levels of phenomena, the project is to see how such situated in vivo practices solidify and result in identities that, on the one hand, give the appearance of a unitary and relatively stable sense of self but, on the other hand, “are looser, more negotiable and more autonomously fashioned” (Muir & Wetherell, 2010, p. 5).

Notes

1. Tessa McLean invites her readers on her website: “Now before you get all huffy and puffy, we aren’t trying to make you lose your identity or anything . . . just trying to help you get to know the local lingo! If you want to sound like you’re a Chicago pro, here’s a brief description of some essentials” (McLean, 2010).
2. We have chosen the term *identity category* (over *identity domain*) which is in line with the study of the larger field of identity studies and the pluralization of identity (Wetherell, 2010; Wetherell & Mohanty, 2010).
3. See Bamberg (2003) for the analysis of a campfire story shared between four 10-year-olds, who use different “parts” of the same story as points of departure for how they make sense of themselves and each other.
4. Georgakopoulou and Goutsos (1977) and Widdowson (2004) claim, and we agree, that isolated phrases and words also function as, and therefore are, discourses and that texts are better thought of as the products of discourse rather than synonymous to discourse.
5. Pitting capital-D discourses and small-d discourse against one another in terms of two directions of fit along the construction-dimension runs parallel to what we will discuss in the next section under the header of *agency*. We will return to this aspect of the construction-dimension in our concluding remarks.
6. Using the terms *capital-D discourses* and *small-d discourse* in order to differentiate between two discursive perspectives, we pick up on Gee’s (1999) coining of this distinction, though with the important distinction that we view “other bodily cues” such as speech style, intonation, facial expression, gaze, gesture all the way down to clothing, as part and parcel of small-d discourse. Capital-D discourses are the “forms of life” or “thought systems” that come to existence and gain material force as correlations “between fields of knowledge, types of normativity, and forms of subjectivity in a particular culture” (Foucault, 1985, p. 3).
7. John Edwards, born in 1953, served a 6-year term as US Senator from North Carolina. Then he ran to become the presidential nominee of the Democratic Party in 2004 and 2008 and was nominated for Vice Presidency in the 2004 campaign. A few days before the interview, it was publicly revealed that he had an extramarital affair in which he had fathered a child, while his wife was fighting cancer.
8. Of course, it seems to be possible to “remain *neutral*.” However, a neutral perspective is not an unmarked perspective from which proximity and distance are the marked aberrations. *Neutrality* is equally constructed and requires particular choices of lexical and syntactic devices—in conjunction with a facial expression of “neutrality.”
9. This should not be taken to imply that identities *only* exist in interaction, but it is in interaction where they become visible—to the participants in situated contexts as well as to us as discourse analysts doing identity research.
10. Note that thus far the referent had been *gay boys*—plural. Shifting from plural *they* to singular *he* signals the choice of a discursive device that ranks higher in the “animacy hierarchy” and lends itself to the interpretation of a “better agent” (cf. Comrie, 1981). In terms

of “agency marking,” this story character, although upgraded in individuation from *they* to *he*, remains relatively underdeveloped: no name, little detail, and his actions still remain relatively generic.

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Group Identities: The Social Identity Perspective

9

Russell Spears

Abstract

The concept of group identity, and its implications for the self and relation to others are addressed by the social identity approach within psychology. I review this approach, comprising social identity theory, self-categorization theory, and the most important subsequent developments. Social identity theory not only addresses the bases for differentiation and discrimination between groups, but it also views social competition as a means for disadvantaged groups to challenge the status quo, helping to explain social change. Self-categorization theory develops the concept of group identity, clarifying the contrast with personal forms of identity, and extends the realm of application to address a range of classical phenomena within social psychology. These include issues clearly relating to the intergroup context (stereotyping, salience, collective behavior), as well as others where an intergroup dimension has not always been acknowledged (self, social influence, leadership, etc.). Some key extensions and developments of the social identity approach focus on contextual factors that can affect the salience and strategic expression of identity (the social identity model of deindividuation effects), how identity is transformed and radicalized through collective struggle (the elaborated social identity model), and the importance of emotions to group identity and group life (intergroup emotion theory). These extensions help to specify further the precise forms that group behavior may take and the processes responsible for this. The influence of the social identity approach not only within social psychology, but also beyond its borders, points both to the importance of group identity and to the heuristic and explanatory value of this theoretical tradition.

Introduction

In this chapter, I present an overview of the dominant approach to group identity within social psychology, the “social identity approach”—which includes social identity theory and its close

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relative, self-categorization theory. Although other social sciences have addressed the concept of social or group identity, perhaps inevitably the psychological dimension of this concept is less well-developed in these other disciplines. And although there is a long history of research within social psychology on group processes, and indeed on intergroup relations, social identity theory was the first to theorize a distinct form of identity at the group level, and to accord ontological and explanatory significance to group identities.

The social identity approach has gained increasing and widespread influence outside the boundaries of social psychology, and indeed across disciplines. Social identity theory has proved particularly influential in areas of political science (Schildkraut, [Chapter 36](#), this volume), organizational behavior (Haslam & Ellemers, [Chapter 30](#), this volume), language and communication studies (Harwood & Giles, 2005), and related disciplines. For example, the concept of “organizational identity” central to industrial and organizational psychology, is imported directly from social identity theory, with the key article by Ashforth and Mael (1989) attracting over 1,500 citations to date (see also Haslam & Ellemers, [Chapter 30](#), this volume). If anything, the concept of social identity derived from social identity theory has been even more influential beyond the disciplinary borders of social psychology than within. This focus on group identity from the perspective of the social identity approach therefore represents an important contribution to the understanding of group identity that transcends disciplinary boundaries. Moreover, although group identity was the first target of both social identity and self-categorization theory, self-categorization theory in particular is a general theory of identity, and consequently it has much to say about identity in its more personal and individual forms.

Social Identity Theory

Background

Social identity theory emerged in the mid-1970s from a concern that the prevailing

individualistic approaches, characteristic of the dominant American mainstream social psychology of the day, were not equipped to explain some of the intergroup phenomena that were perhaps then more salient in Europe. This was particularly true for Henri Tajfel, a Polish Jew, who was studying in France at the outbreak of the Second World War, and who was destined to endure most of it as a prisoner of war. Clearly, Tajfel understood all too well the significance of group identity, not just as a source of meaning and value for one’s own group (often referred to in social psychology as the “in-group”), but also in terms of how it could be devalued and derogated by other groups (typically referred to as “out-groups”). He survived only by keeping his Jewish identity secret. This, along with the experience of resettling refugees in the aftermath of the war, profoundly colored his experience and his later work as a social psychologist.

It is perhaps a testament to the power of the prevailing individualism in social psychology at the time that Tajfel’s focus on group identity would emerge only many years later in the 1970s. However, Tajfel’s earlier work on social judgment and social perception can be seen as laying important groundwork for the emergence of the social identity approach. His research on categorization and the development of accentuation theory highlighted the cognitive consequences of (social) categorization processes, an important component in social identity theory and also later in self-categorization theory. He proposed that classifying physical stimuli (such as lines of different lengths) into categories could lead people to perceive between-category differences as larger (Tajfel & Wilkes, 1963) and within-category differences as smaller (see Eiser & Stroebe, 1972). Tajfel’s (1957) earlier work on perceptions of coin size demonstrated that a value dimension (in this case the monetary value associated with coins), when correlated with the dimension of actual size (such that larger coins are more valuable) could also accentuate the *perceived* size differences among different coins. This demonstration was consistent with the so-called “New Look” in psychology, in which values and motives were shown to influence

perception and cognition (Bruner, 1957a). In an influential article on the cognitive aspects of prejudice, Tajfel (1969) related such categorization effects to an understanding of some of the cognitive processes underlying prejudice. Ironically, this paper became very influential for a school of thought suggesting that cognitive processes were in some ways sufficient for our understanding of stereotyping and prejudice (Hamilton, 1981), a position from which Tajfel distanced himself (see, e.g., Tajfel, 1981).

Social Identity and Social Identification

Although processes of social categorization were an important component of understanding intergroup relations, taken on their own they were insufficient because they do not make clear the perceiver's position in, and relation to, that social world. A process of social identification with the groups to which we belong is an important element that connects us to groups, and that tells us both who we are and who we are not. A social identity is thus the product of a process of social categorization and of identification with the groups we belong to, which we then characterize as part of ourselves. Tajfel defined social identity (or group identity), in both cognitive and evaluative terms, as that part of the self-concept corresponding to knowledge of the group membership together with the value and emotional significance of that membership (Tajfel, 1978a).

It might be useful to summarize briefly the key tenets of this theory up front before going into the elements and their development in a little more detail. Essentially, social identity theory describes processes of social categorization into groups, followed by social comparison between these groups by people who define and identify themselves as members of one of these groups (a process of social identification). More specifically, the theory proposes that we derive value from our group memberships to the extent that we can compare our own group positively with others, and that we are therefore motivated to gain and maintain a sense of positive group

distinctiveness from the other group(s) to which we do not belong, and against which we compare our own group (see Tajfel, 1978a; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). However, as we shall see further below, this is only the socio-motivational starting point for the theory. It is also important to take into account the nature of the social structure in which people and groups are embedded, and their positions in that structure.

Tajfel was not claiming that social identities were necessarily more important than other aspects of self and identity that were so prominent in the rest of psychology, but his point was that they might become important in "intergroup contexts" which can vary from the more mundane (e.g., being a fan at a football match) to the more consequential (being involved in a war between different nations or ethnic groups). Tajfel wrote of an interpersonal–intergroup continuum to represent situations in which group identities would become more or less salient and relevant. In characteristically intergroup contexts (an extreme case being intergroup conflicts such as wars), group identity could become very salient, and may become the dominant way of perceiving the self and others—in line with Tajfel's own wartime experience (see also Moshman, Chapter 39, this volume).

A third component or process is crucial here and follows from the processes of social categorization and social identification. To categorize in-group and out-group and to identify with one's own group entails social comparison between groups; indeed, social comparison is perhaps the only way we can assess the true meaning or value of our own group (we define our groups, and more generally who we are, partly by comparison with others). This theme was strongly developed subsequently within self-categorization theory. Here, the process of valuing one's own group identity and deriving positive value from it implies and entails social comparison with other groups.

However, it would be mistaken to reduce social identity and the motivating force within social identity theory to a simple quest for positive value associated with one's group identity (the so-called "self-esteem hypothesis," which

we examine in more detail below). Although self-enhancement may play an important part in understanding social motivation, at least as important is the meaning accorded to identity, and the sense of group distinctiveness from other groups that this differentiated meaning provides. It not only provides us with a positive sense of esteem when comparisons are favorable, but it also provides us with a distinctive and meaningful identity, which is of value in itself in telling us who we are.

The tension between self-esteem and self-enhancement, on the one hand, and the quest for distinctiveness, on the other hand, has arguably remained somewhat unresolved within the theory (more later on this). However, these elements are combined and captured in the concept of *positive group distinctiveness*, which grew out of the early experimental work on minimal groups, from which the concept of social identity partly emerged. In the early demonstration of the “minimal group bias,” the fully fledged social identity theory was not yet developed, but the theory was introduced, in part, to explain these findings (e.g., Tajfel, Flament, Billig, & Bundy, 1971).

The Minimal Group Studies

In the minimal group paradigm, Tajfel and colleagues demonstrated that merely categorizing participants (school boys in the first studies) according to a trivial criterion (preference for different abstract painters such as Klee or Kandinsky), appeared to be sufficient to encourage them to allocate more resources (be these symbolic points or more material monetary rewards) to fellow in-group members than to out-group members. This happened despite the fact that participants did not know who these in-group and out-group members were (and thus they did not know whether they were in the same group as school friends and classmates). Moreover, self-interest seemed to be ruled out as an explanation because the rewards were allocated to other in-group individuals, not to groups as a whole, and so participants never allocated rewards directly or indirectly to themselves. Results showed that,

as well as favoring the in-group, participants would maximize the difference in rewards favoring the in-group member over the out-group member, even at the cost of absolute rewards to the in-group (the so-called maximum difference strategy).

These findings, obtained in groups with no prior history or expected future, generated considerable controversy and interest that is still ongoing. In particular, the minimal group studies presented problems for prior models of inter-group conflict that were premised on the idea that discrimination arises from conflicts of interests between groups, and from competition over valued resources, as in realistic group conflict theory (e.g., Sherif, 1967). In the minimal group paradigm, there were no clear conflicts of interest between the groups, and so the basis of discrimination seemed to be more symbolic or purely social (thus labeled “social competition” by Turner, 1975).

Early attempts to explain the minimal in-group bias phenomenon in terms of a generic norm of competitive discrimination, characteristic of Western societies, quickly fell from favor, as it did not seem to explain such in-group bias adequately. Instead, the concept of social identity, and the motivated quest for positive group distinctiveness, was developed to account for these results (Spears, Jetten, Scheepers, & Cihangir, 2009; Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Tajfel, 1978a). Thus, the emerging social identity theory moved beyond purely cognitive approaches to stereotyping and prejudice by adding the process of identification with one of the groups involved.

It is important to note, however, that there has been continuing debate and even controversy not just about the mechanism for minimal in-group bias, but also more fundamentally about what the findings actually show and how widely they can be generalized. Largely based on the results of the minimal group studies, social identity theory is often (mis)represented as providing evidence for a generic tendency to discriminate. This reputation seems to be based on the finding that people penalize out-group members even at the cost of (absolute) in-group gain (i.e., the

maximum difference strategy). However, rather than interpreting this as evidence for out-group derogation per se, Tajfel saw this as evidence of a differentiation strategy in line with the proposed motive to enhance group distinctiveness (see also Spears et al., 2009). The point is that discrimination may be the main (perhaps only) means to achieve positive differentiation in the minimal group context. In contrast, more benign or less malign forms of differentiation may be available in real world groups.

Despite evidence for the maximum difference strategy, the minimal group studies also show that participants display much stronger in-group favoritism than out-group derogation (see, e.g., Mullen, Brown & Smith, 1992). Consequently, some critics have argued that social identity theory is actually rather ill-placed to explain instances of out-group hate, as opposed to in-group love (Brewer, 1999). However, real life contexts may also incorporate strong threats to social identity (both in terms of distinctiveness and esteem) that can arguably help to explain more antagonistic strategies of differentiation and even discrimination in less minimal contexts (Spears, Jetten & Doosje, 2001).

In sum, social identity theory has a rather ambivalent relation to discrimination and prejudice, with some commentators suggesting it implies that all groups will be biased toward favoring their own members against others, and some suggesting it does not go far enough in explaining prejudice and out-group derogation. The reality may be more complex and contingent (and somewhere in between), providing good reason to seek further refinements, theoretical principles, and moderator variables, that can help us to explain the extremes and variability of intergroup prejudice and discrimination (and we return to this theme below when we consider the role of intergroup emotions, for example).

Motives for Intergroup Discrimination

Returning to explanations for the minimal group bias effect, early research tended to focus on the “positive” part of the positive differentiation

construct—namely that people differentiate to enhance their social identity and thereby self-esteem (the “self-esteem hypothesis:” Abrams & Hogg, 1988). This focus is unfortunate because it neglects the role of group distinctiveness and thus arguably the group level of analysis (Spears, Jetten & Scheepers, 2002), leaving itself open to reductionist and individualistic interpretations for group motivations (i.e., that we seek positive group identities simply to advance personal agendas). The concept of distinctiveness is arguably more relational (and thus social) than the concept of esteem, in that one’s group is only distinctive in relation to some other group (which is not to deny that esteem *can* be comparative). And although we can of course be personally distinctive from other individuals (see also Vignoles, Chryssochoou & Breakwell, 2000), *group* distinctiveness implies distinctiveness at the intergroup level. Perhaps the more important point to make here, though, is that social identity theory became somewhat bogged down in the (over)specification and assessment of the “self-esteem hypothesis,” and the validity of SIT became perhaps too identified with the sometimes mixed support for this hypothesis (Abrams & Hogg, 1988).

In some of my own work with others, we have tried to re-establish the importance of the group distinctiveness motive in the minimal group paradigm (Spears et al., 2009). However, it is also important to acknowledge that a range of other explanations have emerged for discrimination in minimal groups, in addition to self-esteem and distinctiveness processes. In particular, despite the attempts in the minimal group paradigm to rule out the role of self-interest and interdependence processes (e.g., rewarding others in anticipation of reciprocation from them), such explanations have made a comeback in recent years (e.g., Gaertner & Insko, 2000; Stroebe, Lodewijkx & Spears, 2005). This research shows that reciprocation motives do play an important role in explaining why people allocate more to the in-group, although if reciprocation (and anticipated self-interest) were the only factor it remains unclear why this is stronger in the case where people perceived themselves to be more

dependent on the in-group than on the out-group. In short, reciprocation per se does not seem to be the whole story and is also less well-placed to explain the Maximum Difference strategy than in-group favoritism.

Another motive proposed to explain in-group bias in this paradigm is the reduction of subjective uncertainty created by being a member of minimal groups (e.g., Mullin & Hogg, 1998). Despite some initial support for this account, there does not seem to be clear evidence that differentiation is caused or mediated by the need to reduce uncertainty. Moreover, relating in-group bias to such a basic individual motive leaves this account open to the same charge of reducing group processes to individual motives that has blighted the self-esteem hypothesis. In our own research focusing on the role of “creative distinctiveness” processes, we also measured uncertainty and found that this played little or no role in explaining intergroup differentiation. This research suggested that creating a distinctive and meaningful group identity was independent from the reduction of uncertainty, and explained intergroup differentiation and discrimination whereas uncertainty reduction did not (see Spears et al., 2009). In short, the original explanation for the minimal in-group bias effect, in terms of positive group distinctiveness, is supported.

Another influential theory that also puts the role of distinctiveness processes in relation to group identity center stage is Brewer’s (1991) optimal distinctiveness theory. In this theory, Brewer proposes that group identity provides a way of satisfying two very basic human needs and their associated motives, namely the needs for social inclusion (see also Baumeister & Leary, 1995) and for social differentiation. Because fulfilling inclusion and differentiation needs can work against each other, groups that are relatively small in size (e.g., minority groups) are proposed to optimally satisfy these competing motives. Here it is useful to contrast the meaning of group distinctiveness in ODT, which hinges on relative group size, with that in social identity theory, which refers to the motive to differentiate one’s own group, whatever its size, from others in

the social context in terms of salient and relevant dimensions of comparison.

Although membership of a numerical minority can often be a distinctive and meaningful source of identity, and perhaps more so than in the case of majority groups, another sense of being a minority is in terms of lower power and status of one’s group. For example, Black South Africans in the Apartheid era were clearly in a numerical majority, but their ethnic identity was no less distinctive or important to them for that (indeed the injustice of their situation was arguably reinforced by their majority status in their historical homelands). Interest in the psychology of such disadvantaged “minorities” was a key preoccupation for Tajfel that motivated his development of social identity theory (Tajfel, 1978a, 1978b).

Social Identity, Status Differences, and Social Change

Clearly, from such examples, it is not the case that people can always rely on their group memberships to afford them a positive (or distinctive) social identity. Nor, as the South African example also shows, can they always easily move to groups that will enhance their social identity. The broader social identity theory that developed in the wake of the minimal group studies was very much focused on the plight of disadvantaged groups—considering how they cope with their low-status position and with the negative social identity that this implies (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). This identification with the disadvantaged was not accidental, but was consistent with Tajfel’s experience as a member of such a devalued minority. Social identity theory can thus be seen as a *normative* theory, in the sense that this term is used in political science—as a prescription of what ought to be, rather than what is. That is, it identifies with the disadvantaged, and tries to understand how such groups are motivated to change their position for the better (Tajfel, 1978a, 1978b). In this respect, social identity theory is designed to explain social change (from social inequality to greater equality). Nevertheless, because it also specifies the

conditions where this is more or less likely, it is also equipped to account for social stability and stasis. In these terms, the concept of social identity can be seen as an intervening variable that helps to explain the processes of change or stability from the perspective of disadvantaged social groups.

In the first full statement of social identity theory, Tajfel and Turner (1979; see also Ellemers, 1993) set out the different strategies open to disadvantaged groups (and although there is an emphasis on the plight and motives of the disadvantaged group, the reactions of higher status groups to attempts at social change are not ignored). They proposed that a range of different strategies may be available, depending on group members' appraisals of the possibilities in the situation, as well as the importance of their group identity to them. For example, one possible strategy is that of social mobility (more accurately, individual mobility), which involves simply moving to a higher status group. This point makes clear that social identity theory does not always mechanically predict social competition and social change. Indeed, these strategies may well only be considered when other (perhaps easier) avenues to a more positive social identity have been closed off. Social mobility depends on group boundaries being permeable and this is not always the case—this may be easier in the case of class than in the case of “race,” caste, or gender, for example.

Social mobility is characterized as an individualistic strategy, in the sense that it is unlikely to change the status quo in any meaningful way that will help the group as a whole, and it leads to “tokenism” that may only help a few individuals (Wright, 1997). At the other extreme, more group-level strategies may become salient under certain conditions that foster the salience of group identity and intergroup comparisons. Whereas the interpersonal end of the interpersonal–intergroup continuum is associated with individualism and “social mobility beliefs,” the intergroup end of this continuum is more likely to focus on “social change beliefs.” However, in this event, group members must be able to conceive of “cognitive alternatives to the status quo”—the notion

that change is not just desired, but also possible. For this to happen, Tajfel and Turner (1979) suggest that group members must perceive the status relations between the groups to be *illegitimate* and also *unstable*. Social comparisons based on these appraisals are said to be *insecure* (because change is desired and also conceivable), and it is in such circumstances that low-status groups are likely to challenge the status hierarchy (and where we might also expect most resistance from the insecure high-status group).

In cases where cognitive alternatives to the status quo are not conceivable, and neither social mobility nor direct social competition is an option, disadvantaged groups might adopt instead various “social creativity” strategies that address their negative status by framing it more positively (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). For example, they could choose a more favorable dimension of comparison, a different comparison group, redefine the negative stigma of their low status (“black is beautiful”), or indeed redefine the group identity (“I am not Black, I am British”). Some of these may seem cosmetic strategies that do little to change the status relations (and more ideologically, they may even reinforce these relations). However, more positively, such strategies may also offer subtle forms of resistance that serve to undermine perceptions of the status quo or build for more “revolutionary” strategies when they become available. For example, the slogan “Black is beautiful” did not change the deprivation of Black Americana in itself. However, it may well have contributed to consciousness raising, strengthening the collective esteem, confidence, and solidarity within this group, and thus it may have helped to motivate and justify more active and confrontational forms of resistance when the moment came.

To summarize, social identity theory is not just a theory that explains discrimination and why groups are nasty to each other (although it has much to say about this). More positively, it is a theory of social change with an implicit agenda of equality and liberation (which is not to say that change is always easy or the process pleasant). Although social identity theory is primarily

a theory of intergroup relations, it necessarily introduced the concept of social identity, which, although modestly theorized at first, was the first specifically social psychological attempt to theorize group identity as a part of the self-concept or self-definition. Self-categorization theory moved this theoretical agenda further forward on a broader front, and we now turn to this theoretical framework.

Self-Categorization Theory

Self-categorization theory was developed by John Turner and his students (Turner, 1982; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987), and grew out of the social identity tradition that he had been involved in developing. If social identity theory is primarily a theory of intergroup relations, self-categorization theory can be seen as a more general theory of the self, of *intragroup* as well as *intergroup* processes—possibly as close as we come in contemporary social psychology to a grand theory. More explicitly than social identity theory, self-categorization theory proposes that there is not just one self or self-concept, but many different group, and also personal selves, corresponding to different comparative contexts (Turner et al., 1987). Whereas social identity theory posited an interpersonal–intergroup continuum to address the salience of social identity, self-categorization theory conceptualizes the self at different levels of abstraction (e.g., personal, group, human). As such it also addresses issues of identity salience (when and why a particular self becomes relevant and operative), social influence (as a group process), attraction (distinguishing interpersonal attraction from attraction to others because of their shared in-group membership), group formation, leadership, and (together with social identity theory) collective behavior, just to name a few of the social phenomena to which it has been applied. So, as a general theory of the self, self-categorization theory is applicable to the personal as well as the group level of self-definition, and there have indeed been attempts to understand personality and the individual self through the prism of this theory (e.g., Turner & Onorato, 1999).

Self and Self-Definition

To start with the more fundamental issue of self-definition relevant to the current volume, self-categorization theory makes the distinction between personal and group identity more explicit than was the case in social identity theory. Initially grounded in more traditional notions of self-concept, social identity theory theorized social identity as one part of the self-concept. Perhaps more radically, self-categorization theory views personal and group identities as different levels of self-categorization (or levels of abstraction), and thus self-definition can extend in a more inclusive direction (such as identification with superordinate groups or ultimately with humanity as a whole) and even downwards within the personal self (such as the “true” or “authentic” self; see also Waterman, Chapter 16, this volume).

Moreover, just as we may have a wide repertoire of group identities available to us (psychology student, male, family member, etc.), so too may we have a number of different personal selves corresponding to different contexts of comparison (Spears, 2001; Turner, Oakes, Haslam, & McGarty, 1994): myself as a brother, myself in relation to my student peers, selves in the context of friendship group A versus B, etc. (for a similar account, see Chen, Boucher, & Kraus, Chapter 7, this volume). Brewer and Gardner (1996) conceptualized these forms of self in terms of a third category of “relational” self (see also Sedikides & Brewer, 2001). However, from a self-categorization perspective, self-definition is always relational and comparative, be this (inter)group or (inter)personal, and so a third form of self is not necessary (see Spears, 2001). In this respect, self-categorization theory is not just about groups. However, it is also true that group memberships can influence and inform personal identities in certain important ways. For example, as the sociologist Simmel (1955) noted, the same attributes that can define a group identity when shared with others (e.g., the left-wing group, the students, or the extroverts) can define individual identity in an interpersonal comparative context (e.g., unlike my sister, I am left-wing, a student, and an introvert).

By replacing the interpersonal–intergroup continuum of social identity theory with a more hierarchical structure, the number of forms of self can extend vertically and horizontally, encompassing different instantiations of personal and group selves with a theoretically unbounded variety of contextually contingent contents (e.g., self-stereotypes, attributes). It is clear here that the role of social comparison is every bit as central to self-categorization theory as it is to social identity theory. The process of social comparison is also central to determining which identities become salient in which contexts.

As we shall see, self-categorization theory has been influential in providing a theoretical grounding and impetus to a range of research areas. These include: helping to explain the mechanisms whereby group identity becomes salient; providing a more psychological basis to processes of group formation than was available previously; elaborating the processes involved in group influence and collective behavior; and elaborating the relation of the individual to the group in general (relevant to processes of group-based social attraction, and of leadership and followership). I address a few key topics.

Identity Salience

Following Bruner (1957b), Oakes (1987) proposed that the salience of a given (group) identity is a product of the “perceptual readiness” (or accessibility) of the relevant categorization and its “fit” to the underlying social reality (or how well the categories capture or map on to that reality in a given context). Thus, social categorizations that maximally differentiate between two groups (so that the differences between them outweigh the differences within groups) are said to have a high “comparative fit” (I elaborate a second form of fit below). Perceptual readiness is determined by a psychological predisposition to perceive a particular social category as salient, which includes not only perceiver variables (e.g., motivation, degree of identification), but also past perceived fit between the social stimuli and the

social categorizations used to order them. The fit is contextually determined, so this may vary depending on which groups are included in the frame of reference and on the dimensions available to distinguish them.

Consider, for example, a discussion between a group of men and women sampled from Britain and the Netherlands (Lea, Spears, & Watt, 2007). If the topic of conversation centers on attitudes toward the European Union, it may well be that nationality becomes more salient, because British people tend to be more anti-Europe, and Dutch people tend to be more pro-Europe. However, if the topic of conversation turns to expressing one’s feelings in relationships, or whether there should be more football on TV, then gender identity may become more salient (I leave the distribution of fit here to your stereotypic imagination for the moment). From this example, it is easy to see that the salience of identity is highly contingent on the social context, and can shift quite quickly as the context changes.

The *meta-contrast principle* provides a way of calculating the fit in the context: meta-contrast is maximized to the extent that between-group differences are large and within-group differences are small on a given dimension. The higher the meta-contrast, the higher the likelihood that the categorization will become salient. Comparative fit refers to fit derived from these perceived differences in context. However, a second form of fit, “normative fit,” is based on the meaning or the content associated with the social categories, and whether such differences are typical of the social categorization based on prior expectations (e.g., stereotypes). Put another way, comparative fit is just about group difference per se, whereas normative fit incorporates expectations about the direction or content of these differences, providing a link to the other source of salience based on perceiver readiness (see above). To return to the above example, we might stereotypically expect women to be better at talking about their feelings than men, but men to be more interested in watching football on TV, and these expectations may predispose us to pick up on this relation, especially when it is confirmed.

Social Stereotyping (Versus Prejudice) and Depersonalization

The concept of fit and the meta-contrast principle have proved enormously heuristic in a range of areas. The application to social stereotyping is perhaps already obvious from the above examples (see Oakes, Haslam, & Turner, 1994). According to this view, the stereotyping process is not about accessing fixed schemas from memory about “how groups are” (although such knowledge might contribute to perceiver readiness), but more about constructing what the appropriate and relevant stereotypes of groups should be in context. This is not to deny that we have stereotypic expectations about many groups that we can and do use (as the concept of normative fit described above makes clear). The point here is that the precise meaning of a given stereotype might only become clear in a specific comparative context.

For example, what is the stereotype of psychology students? Well this may depend on to whom we compare this group. Compared to physics students they may seem quite creative (but perhaps less intelligent), whereas compared to art school students they may seem quite intelligent (but perhaps less creative; Spears, Doosje, & Ellemers, 1997). When the context is taken into account, stereotypes may be useful and even relatively accurate ways of capturing social reality in context. However, when they are used as generic templates to characterize groups (e.g., as schemas or other stored representations), this flexible link to social reality may be lost. It is for this reason that self-categorization theorists have criticized the conceptualization of stereotypes as primarily stored representations or knowledge structures (Oakes et al., 1994). But this is not to deny the role of relevant knowledge in *generating* the most meaningful stereotypes in context, as I will discuss below.

According to self-categorization theory, stereotyping is not just about perceiving out-groups, but also about perceiving the self and the in-group. In principle, we attribute stereotypes and beliefs about groups to our own groups and ourselves, in the same way that we attribute these to others when in a salient intergroup context.

Of course this is not to say that the stereotypes a group has of itself will be the same as those an out-group has of it; groups are very likely to resist negative and prejudiced stereotypes that others have of them (Haslam, Turner, Oakes, Reynolds, & Doosje, 2002; Spears, Greenwood, De Lemus, & Sweetman, 2010). This may sometimes simply involve a different evaluation of the same descriptive dimension. Thus, an anti-Semitic stereotype of Jews as scheming or cunning may be represented by non-prejudiced people and by Jewish people themselves in terms of more positive competence dimensions (e.g., intelligent; cf. Peabody, 1968). The motivation to positively differentiate the in-group (based on social identity theory) may also determine the choice of dimension. For the earlier example, psychology students may prefer the dimension of creativity to differentiate themselves from physics students (even though intelligence may generate a similar comparative fit; Spears et al., 1997). Similarly, Scottish people are more likely to see themselves as warm when comparing themselves to the English than when comparing themselves to Greeks (Hopkins, Regan, & Abell, 1997).

When a particular intergroup dimension becomes salient, the perception of self and other is likely to become “depersonalized,” in the sense that people see each other (including themselves) as interchangeable representatives of the salient category on relevant (stereotypic) dimensions, rather than as unique individuals. A good example, used by Oakes et al. (1994), is the case of miners confronting the police during the UK miner’s strike of 1984. In this context, the demonstrators were not likely to perceive themselves as unique individuals, but rather as miners fighting for their jobs. Similarly, the policemen confronting them were unlikely to be seen by the miners as unique individuals with different hobbies and interests (even if they knew what these hobbies and interests were), but as functionally equivalent representatives of their group (helped admittedly by features of the situation, such as the police uniforms, the territorial organization, etc.).

Viewed in this way, social stereotyping is not a biased or distorted process, as it has often been

represented in social psychology and in the cognitive tradition described earlier (see Oakes & Turner, 1990; Spears & Haslam, 1997). Rather, it is a functional, adaptive, rational process reflecting (group-level) social reality. Nor is stereotyping intrinsically related to prejudice. Admittedly, stereotypes *can* be used strategically to justify particular prejudicial group relations that reinforce one group's power or status at the expense of another (Tajfel, 1981). But equally, self or in-group stereotypes can also be used as resources to contest particular patterns of intergroup relations on the part of disadvantaged groups (Haslam et al., 2002; Spears et al., 2009). The point to make here is that it is analytically useful to distinguish stereotypes and stereotyping from the processes involved in prejudice and discrimination. Although stereotyping *can* be used to reinforce prejudice, it does not follow that all stereotyping is prejudiced.

To illustrate this point, it might be useful to examine further the prejudice toward Jews and the stereotypes associated with this. Anti-Semitic conspiracy theories have historically painted Jews as money-lending capitalists (but also sometimes as communists), using their intelligence and cunning to exploit gentiles and others. To the extent that intelligence forms a part of this stereotype, Jews are likely to be seen as a threat or to be the target of envy (or envious prejudice in the terms of the stereotype content model; Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002). However, intelligence is not in itself a negative stereotypic attribute. Moreover, the stereotype of money lending derives from a history of anti-Semitism in which Jews were denied the right to own property and businesses and so had to resort to money lending as one of the few forms of commerce open to them. In short, the history of prejudice and discrimination toward Jews arguably produced the basis for the stereotypic content that emerged, rather than the reverse.

By contrast, until recently, bankers as a group did not suffer from obvious negative stereotypes and prejudice. A similar content to the Jewish stereotypes of intelligence and financial acumen (and bankers are undeniably a group of capitalists) was arguably regarded more neutrally or

even positively for this group. The current financial crisis has changed this, such that bankers are now widely considered greedy, self-interested, and manipulative (albeit perhaps now somewhat less competent). Once again, there is a social reality underlying these stereotypes, but the stereotypes themselves do not explain the shift in evaluation of this group (i.e., prejudice). Other aspects of the intergroup relations (e.g., perceived threats to group interests or values caused by a crisis they had a hand in creating) help to explain how prejudice can inform the interpretation of the associated social stereotypes.

The more general point here is that not all stereotypes are negative or prejudiced, as the examples of positive in-group stereotypes described above already illustrate. Moreover, even *positive* stereotypes can be linked to prejudice in any case, as in the example of intelligence for the Jewish stereotype, and as is also shown by benevolent or paternalistic forms of sexism and racism. More neutrally then, stereotyping is simply group-level social perception that takes the relevant and fitting dimensions of group difference that are apparent in the context to make sense of that situation (although social reality also allows room for motivated choices and evaluation of the dimensions). Indeed, stereotyping at the group level would not be appropriate or relevant in more interpersonal contexts where group-based fit is low. So, for example, the investment banker who goes home after work is probably quite thankful that her family are more likely to see her as a wife, a mother, and an individual person, rather than as a member of a greedy and self-interested group responsible for the global financial meltdown.

Social Influence

As well as being relevant to social perception generally, self-categorization principles have also been applied successfully to the realm of social influence in various ways. An important illustrative example is the case of group polarization (Turner, 1991; Wetherell, 1987). Group polarization is the phenomenon whereby a group

becomes more extreme in its collective viewpoint after discussing a topic in the group. So, suppose that the discussion topic is the proposal that we need to combat global warming by building more nuclear power stations. Suppose that the average of individual opinions prior to discussion was moderately in disagreement with this proposal. After group discussion these individual opinions would typically shift to a more extreme or polarized view (i.e., more strongly against), as would the collective consensus during the group discussion.

This phenomenon presented something of a puzzle to social psychology for many decades, with much debate over different possible mechanisms. The central question was why a group should become more extreme when classical conformity processes would suggest that people should converge around the mean of the group members' positions. The key insight provided by self-categorization theory was that social influence involves *intergroup* as well as *intragroup* processes (just as applied to salience and stereotyping). Although there is not an explicit out-group present when a group discusses a topic, there is an *implied* out-group represented by the non-preferred side of the scale used to represent positions. Thus, if a group of students is discussing nuclear power as an energy option, and are generally against this technology, then there is an implicit comparison with those not present who represent the pro-nuclear position. Using the meta-contrast principle, it is then possible to calculate what the "prototypical" position of the group will be. This takes into account not only similarities within the in-group, but also differences with the implied out-group, such that the prototypical position is shifted to the anti-nuclear pole.

This approach helps to explain convergence on an extremized position that captures both intergroup and intragroup dynamics through a process of *referent informational influence*. This account of social influence transcends earlier dualistic accounts of social influence such as the dual process model (Deutsch & Gerard, 1955), in which social influence in groups is viewed as reflecting either *informational* or *normative* influence.

According to the dualistic view, informational influence is true influence (leading to private acceptance) whereas normative influence, more characteristic of group contexts, is simply compliance with the group designed to gain rewards, or to avoid the punishment or disapproval that might result from rejecting the group's view ("you go along to get along" so to speak). The term, "referent informational influence" is intended to capture the idea that influence has both informational and normative dimensions, but is different from informational and normative influence as conceptualized by this dual process account.

As may be clear by now, the dual process model reflects a largely negative picture of the group—a portrayal that is not shared by self-categorization theory. Because groups are in part aspects of self (at least for high identifiers), social influence in the group does not operate through a sheep-like group pressure to comply. Rather, social influence operates through a willing process of learning the group's position and making it one's own ("social validation"). Thus, social influence in the group can be internal and willing rather than external and forced. In cases where compliance is external and forced, this does not reflect true social influence, but rather reflects power and compliance. The process of referent informational influence proceeds as follows. People categorize themselves as members of a social group or category (i.e., self-categorization or social identification), they learn or infer the norms and attributes associated with that group or category, and they then apply these to themselves. The prototypical position, not necessarily the group mean, will be the most influential. Much evidence has now accumulated to support this view in a range of classical group influence paradigms (e.g., Abrams, Wetherell, Cochrane, Hogg, & Turner, 1990; Turner, 1991).

As well as being applied to the field of social influence, self-categorization principles have also been applied to a variety of other areas that are closely associated with influence processes. Because of space limitations, I will give just two examples, in the domains of leadership and collective behavior, before moving on to consider

some extensions of and developments within the social identity approach.

Leadership. The question of leadership, and how to explain and understand it, is an important topic within social psychology but extends well beyond and into organizational behavior, management studies, and political science (see also Haslam & Ellemers, [Chapter 30](#), this volume). Traditional psychological approaches to leadership have tried to capture the essence of what makes good or effective leaders in various ways, either in terms of defining the profile of good leaders (e.g., trait-based approaches) or trying to define some ideal leadership style or syndrome. One failing of such prescriptive approaches is that there is often not an ideal leader type that fits all situations or groups. This is where the more contextualist approach provided by self-categorization theory has an advantage. One theme developed by a number of researchers within this tradition, but already contained within the original statements of self-categorization theory (Turner et al., [1987](#)), is that leaders will emerge who best represent the prototype of the group (see, e.g., Van Knippenberg & Hogg, [2003](#)). Importantly, SCT suggests that there will not be one ideal type of leader; it could well be that the same person who might represent an ideal leader in one time and place by being seen as best representing the group norms and needs (i.e., prototypical) may not be seen as prototypical of the group in another time or place that provides a different comparative context.

For example, the Conservative Winston Churchill was seen by many British people as the ideal, the archetypal, wartime prime minister (and despite having been seen as something of a maverick before the war). However, as soon as the war was over, Clement Attlee's Labour government swept to power: a new leader and a new team for new times. Of course, it would be oversimplifying matters to claim that Attlee and the Labour Party were more prototypical of Britain, but they seemed to capture the mood of social change in the wake of the war. The concept of prototypicality has provided a rich seam that has been mined by increasing numbers of researchers working on leadership as well

as other areas. It is also a theme in our second illustrative topic: crowd behavior and collective action.

Crowd behavior and collective action. What about situations where there is no clear leader? This is often the case in crowd dynamics. The social identity approach has provided a rich resource for scholars trying to explain the social behavior of crowds. In particular, the work of Steve Reicher and his collaborators has done much to advance our understanding of these processes and, as we shall see, has extended and developed the social identity approach in the process. Explaining crowd behavior appears difficult because a crowd can act in distinct but uniform ways despite the absence of a clear leader or chain of command. Traditional approaches, dating back to the influential writing of Gustav Le Bon, [1995](#), viewed the crowd as inherently fickle and dangerous, and proposed that individuals lost their identity and their rationality in the crowd, succumbing to primitive instincts contained within the nature of the group (the "group mind"). These claims, although dubious and unsubstantiated, greatly influenced subsequent researchers who developed the concept of "deindividuation" to give such claims a more scientific grounding (Diener, [1980](#); Festinger, Pepitone & Newcomb, [1952](#); Prentice-Dunn & Rogers, [1989](#); Zimbardo, [1969](#)).

However, such accounts that pathologize behavior in the crowd neglect the clearly social basis of crowd behavior, which often emerges in intergroup contexts, within a clear historical context. Not every crowd is predisposed to riot, and some may have strong norms that preclude this type of behavior (such as a peace rally, for example). Reicher ([1987](#)) proposed that, instead of losing one's identity or self in the crowd, there was rather a switch to a social identity. Crowds are, after all, groups, albeit often loosely formed or defined, but the crucial process here is one of social identification or self-categorization: do the members of the crowd see themselves as a meaningful group? In contrast to the deindividuation explanation in terms of loss of self (or reduced self-awareness in subsequent accounts), the social identity/self-categorization explanation

argues for the switch to a social identity and depersonalization in the intergroup context. This process of depersonalization helps to explain the uniform behavior, a process that can be accentuated by a sense of anonymity in the crowd (as we shall see in the next section).

This shared identity is an important point that separates the crowd from mere *crowding* (the more incidental assembly of large numbers of people who do not share a common identity or common goals). In the case of crowds that share a common identity, this identity will give important guides to inform behavior even in the absence of explicit leadership. Reicher (1987) drew on the distinction between the inductive and deductive aspects of stereotyping within self-categorization theory to help explain what behavior is appropriate and normative in the group. The deductive aspect of stereotyping refers to a top-down inference of appropriate conduct based on knowledge of the stereotypes and norms associated with a group identity. However, by their very nature, crowds often find themselves in unexpected situations where behavior is not clearly prescribed. Here, the inductive aspects of stereotyping become relevant: crowd members infer appropriate group norms from behavior that emerges in context.

At first, this argument looks quite similar to the “emergent norm” explanation of crowd behavior (R. H. Turner & Killian, 1957). However, the missing element in that explanation is precisely the guiding influence of a group identity. According to the emergent norm account, appropriate behavior is inferred from salient actions of crowd members and transmitted through essentially interpersonal transmission processes (e.g., rumor). However, because there is no analysis in terms of group identity within the emergent norm perspective, there is little potential to explain which actions will become normative and which will not. Ironically, then, there is a danger that this explanation falls back onto some of the mindless accounts of automatic contagion that it was designed to transcend. The social identity account, on the other hand, provides a normative context that helps to determine which forms behavior will take, and which will

likely be rejected by the crowd. Thus, the inductive process of stereotyping is not arbitrary but must be prototypical of the group identity to some degree. For these reasons, we are unlikely to see violence and riots at a peace rally, even in the presence of elements who are agitating for violence (e.g., individuals or subgroups with a different agenda, for example—agents provocateurs). Violent behavior is unlikely to become widespread in such crowds, and a high degree of restraint and self-policing around identity-consistent norms is likely to result.

Indeed, Reicher has shown that even where crowds do engage in violence, this often takes constrained, socially structured forms that make sense in the context of the intergroup conflicts concerned. Thus, in his St. Paul’s riot study, Reicher (1984) showed that those involved did not attack property indiscriminately, but avoided local shops and attacked what they saw as symbols of external exploitation (e.g., banks, police vehicles). This was not a spontaneous uprising, but rather was sparked by a heavy-handed raid by the police on a local black community café that was widely seen as an attack on the community as a whole. In short rather than the mad-mob of Le Bon’s characterization, and as developed in deindividuation theory, a closer inspection and analysis of crowds and even riots reveals a much more mindful and rational pattern of behavior that can be traced back to the intergroup context and the norms associated with group identities. A meta-analysis of the deindividuation literature confirms that the effect of the classic deindividuation variables such as anonymity and group immersion can better be explained by conformity to local (group) norms than in terms of mindless anti-normative and antisocial behavior (Postmes & Spears, 1998).

Developments and Extensions of the Social Identity Approach

As noted at the beginning of this chapter, the social identity approach, comprising both social identity and self-categorization theory, has been influential well beyond the disciplinary borders

of social psychology. However, the basic ideas and principles have also been influential in generating theoretical developments that build on the basic principles provided by this framework. We have already encountered some examples of this. For example, uncertainty identity theory (see, e.g., Mullin & Hogg, 1998) has its roots in the self-categorization explanations of social influence (referent informational influence) in which people experience uncertainty when they disagree with others with whom they expect to agree (e.g., fellow in-group members) and resolve this through social validation and social influence. In this section, I consider some examples of approaches that have extended the social identity approach in various ways to gain further insights into specific phenomena or domains.

Intragroup Dynamics and the “Black Sheep Effect”

Because self-categorization theory moved beyond the intergroup focus of social identity theory, it put the relation of the individual to the group—and intragroup relations—back on the research agenda. Although group identity is correctly seen as that part, or level, of self that comes into play in intergroup contexts and intergroup relations, it would be wrong to think that intragroup processes or dynamics necessarily become less relevant or salient in such contexts. Self-categorization theory has already made the interplay between the intragroup and the intergroup levels clear in the field of social influence and especially in the explanation of group polarization: we are influenced most by those who best represent the group but this depends not only on who is most typical of the in-group in isolation (an intragroup comparison), but also relative to the most relevant and salient out-group (an intergroup comparison). Self-categorization theory thereby opened up the way to reexamine (intra)group dynamics.

When considering the interplay between intragroup and intergroup dynamics, some very interesting findings began to emerge which at first sight seem problematic and even contradictory

from a social identity perspective. As we know, from the perspective of social identity theory, people tend to favor members of their own group, to reward them more, and evaluate them more positively than out-group members. Marques, Yzerbyt, and Leyens (1988) identified an important exception to this principle by showing that when in-group members are disliked in some way, they would be judged *more harshly* than equivalent out-group members. They called this the “Black Sheep effect.”

However, as Marques and colleagues have also noted, the potential for negative in-group members to undermine a positive in-group identity does not contradict the more general tendency to show in-group bias, but rather might be seen as another manifestation of in-group favoritism. Rejecting people who reflect poorly on one’s group is therefore one way of protecting the group’s image, and policing its boundaries (and indeed the harsh treatment of “imposters” by the group can be seen in a similar light; Hornsey & Jetten, 2003). The subjective group dynamics model further developed these ideas by extending such arguments from small face-to-face groups to larger social categories, again focusing on the tendency to distance or differentiate the group from normative deviants (“black sheep”) within the group (Marques, Abrams, & Serôdio, 2001). Once again, the fact that norms differentiate in-groups from out-groups means that derogating in-group deviants represents a way of preserving the normative validity of in-group identity, and indeed superiority, which is why in-group deviants are judged especially critically.

Depersonalization, Deindividuation, and the SIDE Model

I now consider some ways in which the social identity approach has been further developed to help understand various aspects of group behavior in particular kinds of groups, namely crowds, but also more “virtual” groups such as those communicating via e-mail or the Internet. At first, one might consider these two kinds of groups to be as different as one can possibly get. Moreover,

one might question whether these are indeed groups at all, in a traditional sense. Crowds tend to be quite loose and momentary collections of people, and computer-based groups are often so dispersed and visually anonymous that, albeit for different reasons, one could question whether there are sufficiently strong bonds to connect such groups. However, as noted earlier, we know that crowds can engage in quite intense and sometimes extreme forms of (inter)group behavior. It turns out that the apparently weak ties of computer-based groups are not always associated with weaker group effects than face-to-face groups either. Indeed there are interesting parallels between these two domains given the scope for collective coordination and mobilization using the new communications technologies such as CMC/e-mail, Internet and mobile phones, and now Facebook and Twitter as well. Part of the problem, creating the expectations that these are not clear or strong groups, is the traditional conception of a group as the sum of interpersonal bonds between people (an example of an “interdependence” approach to group definition).

The social identity model of deindividuation effects (SIDE for short; Reicher, Spears, & Postmes, 1995; Spears & Lea, 1994) was developed in order to understand how sometimes quite strong group effects could emerge from groups that are often momentary and dispersed, as in these examples. This model grew out of Reicher’s work on collective behavior described earlier and was further developed in an attempt to understand the effect of anonymity in computer-mediated communication. We already noted that one effect of anonymity in the crowd was that it can enhance depersonalization and the salience of group identity by reducing the focus on individual differences. Reicher (1984) demonstrated this idea in an experimental social influence study. He showed that rendering groups anonymous by clothing them in uniforms and hoods (a classic deindividuation manipulation) could produce greater conformity to group norms—thereby contradicting classical deindividuation theory, which predicted more anti-normative behavior in cases of group immersion and anonymity.

Spears, Lea, and Lee (1990) extended this idea to the case of computer-mediated communication. In this study, groups of three psychology students all communicated via computer but they were either located in the same room and thus visible to each other, or were located in separate rooms and thus visually anonymous. In a second manipulation, either we made personal identity salient by stating that the study was concerned with individual differences in personality and communication styles, or we made group identity salient by indicating that we were only interested in the psychology students as a group. We found that group members discussing a topic by means of anonymous CMC were more likely to conform to a polarized group norm (an example of the group polarization phenomenon discussed earlier) when a shared group identity was salient. This is an example of depersonalization (conformity to a group norm under conditions where a group identity is salient and where individual identity and individual differences are not salient)—quite a different process to that of deindividuation (anti-normative behavior due to reduced self-awareness and impaired self-regulation). When individual identity was salient, and the people were visually anonymous, they actually differentiated themselves from the group and contrasted their view against this group norm, consistent with affirming this level of identity.

What is perhaps most interesting about demonstrating this effect of anonymity in the CMC context is that people are acting more in line with group identity (provided this identity is salient), even when isolated from other group members, in contrast to the physical immersion in the group or crowd. This point brings home the power and pervasiveness of group identity: we can be just as much part of the group psychologically even when we are apparently physically removed from it. In a similar way, a woman who reads about a case of blatant sex discrimination in the paper may feel strongly identified with this woman (and women in general) despite having no personal bond with the victim. This also helps to explain the phenomenon of “home-grown terrorists” in the United States and the

United Kingdom; although the 7/7/05 bombers were born in Britain they were clearly radicalized by, and felt that they were a part of, an intergroup conflict playing out well beyond their own shores (Iraq, Afghanistan). This also illustrates the key difference between the social identity approach to the group, and traditional approaches that view the group as a physical structure, as the sum of interpersonal relations or bonds between group members.

The finding that depersonalization caused by anonymity or isolation can actually enhance the effects of group identity may be viewed as a cognitive or psychological effect. However, the effect of anonymity versus identifiability *to others* can be complex and may have different kinds of effects that we call “strategic.” The strategic dimension is concerned with how we express or present our identities depending on our identifiability and thus accountability to different audiences. The cognitive effect of anonymity discussed above refers to the effect of the anonymity *of* group members resulting in the reduced salience of within-group differences (depersonalization). However, there are also potential effects of anonymity *to* others, in contrast with the case where we might be visible and thus accountable for our conduct to others. Put another way: when I cannot see others (“anonymity of”) I cannot distinguish between them, and so am likely to base my image of the group on prototypical expectations of what the group is like (increasing group salience); when the others cannot see me (“anonymity to”), I do not have to worry about conforming to the expectations others may have of me, as a group member (a strategic issue). When I am visible, however, I may feel more accountable to the audience. If this is an out-group audience, I may have to be more careful how I behave, especially if in-group norms or tendencies offend the out-group, which social identity theory tells us they sometimes might.

The power dimension between groups becomes particularly relevant here. Once again, this analysis grew out of a critique of the deindividuation literature, and its concern with crowd behavior. In this case, the question was how

anonymity *to* (rather than *of*) both the in- and the out-group can affect our motivation and ability to express group identities and to behave in preferred ways. In intergroup relations structured by power differences, powerless in-group members are likely to be wary of challenging powerful out-groups when they are visible and accountable to them, but they might be more assertive when more anonymous, or when empowered by the co-presence of like-minded others (Reicher & Levine, 1994a, 1994b).

What the strategic dimension makes clear is that group identities are not just a passive reflection of reality, but rather are negotiated in a struggle to contest reality. Factors such as anonymity and co-presence are just two contextual factors that contribute to the distribution and dance of forces. The SIDE analysis also extends traditional work on the strategic processes of self-presentation and impression management in social psychology. Because this work was grounded in an individualistic meta-theory of the self, which has traditionally been prevalent in social psychology, it failed to appreciate the (inter)group dimension to such strategic behavior.

Recent research and theorizing in this tradition has elaborated this strategic element to behavior. Specifically Scheepers, Spears, Doosje, and Manstead (2006) have developed these ideas by delineating the functions that can be served by social identity processes such as in-group bias and discrimination when communicating to in-group or out-group audiences. They identified an “identity expression” function often associated with high-status groups displaying their superior status or group worth through in-group bias. That is, when one’s group already has a positive social value (i.e., high status), one only has to express that value, which favors one’s group, to derive a positive social identity. By contrast, disadvantaged or low-status groups have little to gain by expressing the ascribed value of their low status. They are more likely to discriminate against high-status groups as part of a process of challenging them and changing the status quo, in line with the classical social identity principles described earlier. This is more consistent with an “instrumental function” for in-group bias.

Developing this line of argument, Klein, Spears, and Reicher (2007) distinguish “identity consolidating” and “identity mobilizing” functions for strategic identity performance. Often, these functions and motives for when and why to express identity in forms of intergroup behavior will not be mutually exclusive: to express an identity is also to make a statement and this may be directed toward certain goals or ends. More fundamentally, this point illustrates that identities are not just cognitive representations in the head. In this respect, although social identities may, to a large degree, reflect social reality, and may be constrained by this reality, expressions of identity through group behavior such as differentiation, and even discrimination, are also a means of changing reality (for low-status groups) or maintaining the status quo (for high-status groups) in ways that affirm group identity and advance group goals. In this respect, group identity is not just about “being” but also about “becoming” (Spears et al., 2001), in line with the normative social change agenda of social identity theory.

The Elaborated Social Identity Model

To see identities as a source of, and resource for, action is also only a partial account to the extent that it neglects the fact that social identities emerge out of, and through, action. This theme is central to another extension of social identity theory, the elaborated social identity model (ESIM; e.g., Drury & Reicher, 2000, 2009). ESIM was developed to further extend the social identity analysis of collective behavior and to explain how collective action not only depends on social identity, but also can transform group identity through practice. In this program of research, the methods and theory move us far beyond the laboratory and the minimal group paradigm, quite literally into the field in many cases. ESIM takes seriously Tajfel’s (1978) original injunction that social identity is an intervening variable in the process of social change and as such is negotiated and contested.

How does collective action shape identity? This can happen in various ways, but three key themes can be highlighted in the research. First, consistent with the strategic dimension of the SIDE model, research on protest actions illustrates the effects of empowerment. That is, the presence of co-acting others gives a sense of support and efficacy to one’s actions, bolstering and transforming identity in the process. This process of becoming aware of a shared identity, and the power associated with it, has been referred to as “collective self-realization” or “collective self-objectification” (Drury & Reicher, 2009).

Second, such action occurs in the context of intergroup relations in which the out-group authority plays a central role in galvanizing this in-group identity by the way in which it treats the in-group. This idea is reminiscent of Althusser’s (1984) notion of “interpellation:” how we are addressed by others, especially powerful outsiders, is likely to affect how we see ourselves and how we act in response. However, as well as reinforcing power relations as Althusser proposed, this can also radicalize those who become aware of how they are (mis)treated. For example, if the police view protesters as generic lawbreakers and treat them accordingly, then this is likely to unite all those treated in this way, including those who did not initially identify themselves in such radical terms (Drury & Reicher, 2000; for a related idea, see also Stepick et al., Chapter 37, this volume). Whereas the SIDE model looks at the way we present ourselves to certain audiences, ESIM goes a step further and considers how the way in which these audiences see us might feed back into “oppositional” group identities. The role of meta-cognition and meta-stereotypes, how we think others perceive us, the behavior this encourages, and the self-fulfilling cycles this can produce, plays a key role in this process.

Third, the experience of the physical, sensuous, and embodied aspects of being in the group (chanting, rituals, and other coordinated group actions) are likely to bolster the sense of group identity and of oneness with others (Novelli & Drury, 2009). In short, although psychology has often conceptualized identity as a starting

point and as the source of action, we should not underestimate the role of action and practice in creating and transforming (group) identity.

Intergroup Emotions

The fact that group identity flows from the sensuous experience of being in the group or crowd points to another potential weakness of the traditional view of identity as primarily a cognitive representation, part of the self-concept. Group identity also involves emotional significance (as signaled in Tajfel's original definition) as well as behavioral implications. Both of these elements are addressed in a further extension of the social identity approach in which the emotional basis of identity is given a firm grounding in emotion theory: intergroup emotion theory (IET; Smith, 1993). IET draws explicitly on social identity and self-categorization theories and grew, much like social identity theory itself, out of an attempt to understand the social nature of prejudice and discrimination between groups, and to provide a group-level and relational understanding of the diverse forms that these social processes can take.

Perhaps one of the less well-developed aspects of social identity theory concerns the affective meaning given to social identities and to reactions toward out-groups. Intergroup emotion theory helps to furnish some of this meaning and passion by showing how these reactions depend on appraisals of the in-group's relation with the out-group. Classic social identity analyses of the relation between groups based on status and power, for example, provide appraisals that will color group-based emotional responses, along with associated action tendencies. Thus, groups with low power may fear powerful out-groups (and avoid them), whereas groups with high power will have the strength to feel anger if they feel thwarted by out-groups (and to confront these out-groups); groups with legitimate high status may feel contempt, disdain or even disgust toward low-status groups, and, under less threatening conditions, perhaps more benevolent paternalistic emotions (see also Brewer & Alexander,

2002; Leach, Snider, & Iyer, 2002). The precise emotional reaction is likely to inform and encourage the forms of action tendency (e.g., discrimination, approach, avoidance, etc.) directed toward the out-group.

This analysis helps to explain why the diverse forms of prejudice and discrimination such as racism, sexism, classism, and homophobia have different "signatures" or profiles (i.e., they do not always occur on the same dimensions, nor always even reflect negative evaluations of the out-group). This diversity is not well-captured by a single simple unidimensional form of in-group bias. Intergroup emotion theory also helps us to understand better why people may be motivated to derogate the out-group as well as simply to enhance the in-group (Brewer, 1999), and to explain more apparently "positive" evaluations of out-groups that nevertheless form a pattern of prejudice (e.g., benevolent sexism, envious prejudices, etc.).

An emotion-based approach to intergroup relations also has much broader application than just understanding the diversity of prejudice and discrimination. It can help to explain more prosocial orientations to out-groups such as collective guilt motivating reparations for past wrongs (e.g., Doosje, Branscombe, Spears, & Manstead, 1998) and anger on behalf of others categorized as similar to self (Yzerbyt, Dumont, Wigboldus, & Gordijn, 2003). Returning to our theme of collective behavior, it can also be applied to predicting willingness to engage in collective action on behalf of the group (Van Zomeren, Spears, Fischer, & Leach, 2004).

Like self-categorization theory, IET helps to inject our understanding of intergroup relations with content and (multidimensional) character, while providing the emotional color that gives group identity more meaning and a behavioral impetus. Although these seeds were arguably already present in the social identity approach, clearly these new developments enrich the theory and help to specify what kind of intergroup behavior will result. Nevertheless, important strengths of the social identity approach remain in its simplicity (in terms of a limited number of key constructs and principles) and

in its generality (in terms of applications and explanatory power). In this respect, it is useful to remind ourselves that social identities and intergroup relations are always open to change, and that flexibility in what is meant by the importance of social context can sometimes be a strength as well as a weakness.

Summary and Conclusions

This chapter has considered group identity from a social psychological perspective, through the prism of the social identity approach. This approach is accessible to, or already in use by, sister disciplines (e.g., political science, communication studies, etc.). A major legacy of the social identity approach is to distinguish group-level identities as distinct aspects of self-concept in their own right, and as distinct from personal identity (or identities). Defining self at the social or group level helps to explain the distinctively group nature of much intergroup behavior, and also provides a framework for analyzing intragroup dynamics. Group identity is not just a form of self-definition (the cognitive level of analysis), but also a source of emotional attachment, meaning, and motivation that helps to explain group behavior. It is also the product of group behavior.

Two key themes that together help to explain the dynamics of intergroup conflict, and that clearly motivated social identity theory from its inception, are (a) processes of discrimination and differentiation between groups, and (b) attempts by disadvantaged groups to bring about social change. From this viewpoint, social identity theory in particular represents a normative theory insofar as it identifies with disadvantaged or low-status groups, and with their quest for equality—but it can also inform us about the behavior of high-status groups who seek to maintain their position. Status hierarchies and intergroup power relations form the social structure in which individuals are located, but group identity forms the agency (collective efficacy) that brings the structure alive, and enables individuals to mobilize this structure. Group identity is thus

not just a cognitive representation or a way of identifying with a social reality, but also a means to challenge and change that social reality.

Self-categorization theory extended this research agenda by elaborating a theory of self-definition, and by further developing the realm of research in intragroup processes, albeit framed by the intergroup context. This led to an analysis of processes, some of which seem to be more associated with the intergroup context (e.g., salience, social comparison, stereotyping), some more with the intragroup context (e.g., social influence, leadership), and even some of which seem clearly individual (e.g., personality), but all arguably depending to varying degrees on the interplay between intergroup and intragroup processes.

As well as providing a broad overview of social identity theory and self-categorization theory, I have also considered developments and refinements that have attempted to extend the social identity approach in addressing a range of theoretical and practical issues. The social identity model of deindividuation effects specifies effects of situational and contextual factors that can influence the salience of identities, and also strategic concerns about how identity is expressed and mobilized, depending on the power relations between groups. The elaborated social identity model also extends the social identity approach by showing how group struggles can transform and empower identity. Intergroup emotion theory also further specifies the social identity approach by elaborating on its emotional character—explaining the specific forms that prejudice and discrimination can take, and helping to specify and explain a variety of intergroup behaviors not accounted for within the original version of social identity theory. The broad repertoire of appraisal dimensions, emotions, and associated action tendencies specified within intergroup emotion theory further increase the scope and explanatory power of the social identity approach.

The focus of the chapter has been mainly theoretical, with less emphasis on empirical

applications. This is mindful of Lewin's dictum that "there is nothing as practical as a good theory;" the value of the social identity approach is precisely in its broad applicability to a range of topics and domains that can benefit from the theoretical analysis it provides. And although the concept of group identity and the social identity approach more generally have been fruitfully applied already in a range of different areas, and used in disciplines outside psychology as well as within, clearly the power and utility of this approach is far from exhausted.

In the applications I have considered, I have necessarily focused on group phenomena, and notably collective behavior, as this has also been an especially rich site for further theoretical development. However, in connecting to broader issues of identity addressed in this volume, it is important to note that group identity occupies more than just a small corner of the self-concept. Self-categorization theory has been especially important in showing that not only are group identities multiple, varied, and contingent on social comparison, but that this may be true of our personal self, or rather selves, as well. Moreover, many of the implications of group identity may fold back into our more personal everyday lives, when group concerns might seem to be outside, and far from our door. One particularly interesting development, addressing issues of health, is the idea that group identity can be an important source of strength, support, and coping, that protects us against psychological stress and physical illness, and promotes our well-being (e.g., Haslam, Jetten, Postmes, & Haslam, 2009). Although the group is too often unfairly portrayed as a source of bias and ills in society, we should remember that it can also be a force for good. At the very least, the power of group identity should not be ignored.

Acknowledgments Thanks are due to Rupert Brown for his helpful feedback on an earlier version of this chapter.

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The Symbolic Interactionist Perspective and Identity Theory

10

Richard T. Serpe and Sheldon Stryker

Abstract

Symbolic interactionist perspectives or frames underlie most sociological interest in identity. We focus first on the presentation of these perspectives, beginning with the eighteenth-century Scottish moral philosophers and the later work of the philosopher-psychologist George Herbert Mead, tracing their influence on current sociological thinking about social psychology and identity. Two important variants in symbolic interactionist thinking, “traditional symbolic interactionism” and “structural symbolic interactionism,” share fundamentals but exhibit significant variation making for differences in utilities. The essay then focuses on a structural interactionist frame and issues of identity emergent from that frame. The evaluation of a frame rests traditionally on its capacity to serve as supplier of images, assumptions, and concepts used to develop testable theories. That structural symbolic interactionism has this capacity is evidenced in discussions of identity theory, affect control theory, and identity control theory incorporating empirical tests. A second criterion for judging the utility of a frame rests on its capacity to bridge to alternative frames. Discussions of the reciprocal relation of structural symbolic interaction and frames and theories in cognitive social psychology, personality psychology, self-esteem theory, and the social psychology of organizations illustrate that value.

Symbolic interactionist perspectives or frames underlie most sociological interest in the study of identity. We focus first on the presentation of these frames, arbitrarily but

usefully beginning with their origin in the writings of Adam Smith, Adam Ferguson, and David Hume, eighteenth-century moral philosophers (Bryson, 1945).¹ While referencing briefly intermediate sources, we pay particular attention to the philosopher-psychologist George Herbert Mead (1934), whose work in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries greatly influenced contemporary sociological thinking about social

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psychological matters, especially self and identity.

Two important variants in current symbolic interactionist thinking, “traditional” and “structural,” draw on these sources, but also exhibit significant variation. In common, they stress the import of subjective experience to human social behavior, and they view society as an outgrowth of interaction, society as basic to the development of self, and self-concepts as guiding social behavior. They differ in their views of attributes of social process and interaction, the nature of society, selves and identities, and the extent to which human social behavior can be understood without seriously invoking the concept of social structure. These differences make for differences in foci, styles of work, and utilities. We then narrow our attention to the structural interactionist frame and addresses issues of identity emergent from that frame.

Perspectives or frames are not theories, if the term theory is taken to mean arguments proposing a tentative explanation of some phenomenon or phenomena capable of evaluation through empirical research. The evaluation of frames rests traditionally on their capacity to serve as the supplier of images, assumptions, and concepts used to develop testable explanations. Evidence that structural symbolic interactionism has that capability is presented through a presentation of identity theory (S. Stryker, 1980) and limited presentations of identity control theory (Burke, 1991) and affect control theory (Heise, 1979). The discussion testifies to the fertility of the structural interactionist frame as well as the empirical soundness of theories developed from that frame.

S. Stryker (2008) has suggested a second criterion for judging the utility of a perspective or frame: the ability of a frame and derived theory to serve as a bridge linking to alternative frames and theories. Pursuing this observation with respect to the capacities of the structural interactionist frame and identity theory constitutes the remainder of this chapter.

The Symbolic Interactionist Frame: Philosophic Backdrop and Early Sociological Development

The label, “symbolic interactionism,” is of comparatively recent vintage, having been invented by Herbert Blumer (1937, 1969) to describe ideas he attributes largely to Mead (1934) and developed mainly at the University of Chicago after World War I. As noted, the origin of the ideas themselves can be traced to the Scottish moral philosophers whose arguments anticipate many to which Blumer attached the label. In particular, these philosophers asserted that the state of human nature is a social state; that society is constituted by communication, social relationships, and interaction based on sociability and sympathy; and that society is a mirror in which people see themselves. The symbolic interactionist frame builds on the premise that in the beginning there is society (S. Stryker, 1977), a stance rooted in the writings of the Scottish moral philosophers.

However, a number of others—philosophers, psychologists, and sociologists—who were either predecessors or contemporaries of Mead contributed to the evolving social psychology represented in his work and labeled symbolic interactionism. William James’ (1890) analyses of self-esteem and of consciousness have been well-known to sociologists since their appearance, but only the latter entered early symbolic interactionist thinking. Consciousness, for James, reflected human experiences; both are continuous processes. Self, defined as all that persons can call their own, emerges from consciousness, and includes the self as knower (the “I”) and as known (the “Me”). He distinguished four types of self, one of which, the social self, has an empirical source in the recognition accorded to persons by others. He argued that persons have multiple social selves, as many as there are individuals who recognize them. Further, he asserted that, since individuals fall into classes, for practical purposes persons have as many different social selves as there are distinct groups of others about whose opinions they care (James, 1890).

Thus, James viewed self as multifaceted and a product of heterogeneous society, ideas of strategic significance in contemporary structural symbolic interactionism.

Viewing human evolution as adaptation to environmental conditions, John Dewey (1930) argued that mind comes into being as persons act, individually or collectively, to resolve problems. Implicated in this argument is a pragmatic theory of action: ongoing activity is blocked, mind deliberates about and selects among alternative possibilities for removing the blockage, and activity continues when a successful solution is found.

A contemporary of Mead, Charles Horton Cooley (1902) believed the special concerns of sociology are the mental and subjective, suggesting that the solid facts of sociology consist in the imaginations people have of one another. These facts are to be discerned using sympathy and empathy to imagine the lives of others. Self is defined and developed in interaction, a product of a looking glass process involving impressions of how we appear to others, impressions of others' assessments of us, and our feelings of pride or shame deriving from these imaginations. He stressed the importance of primary groups defined by intimacy, face-to-face relations, and cooperation, since these shape the social nature and ideals of persons and are the source of more complex relationships. There are obvious correspondences between Cooley's discussion and the conception of relational self (see Chen et al., Chapter 7, this volume). The concept of "significant other(s)," central to discussions of relational self-theory and research, is too recent an invention to appear in Cooley's writings but is implicit in those writings.

W. I. Thomas' aphorism, "(I)f men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences" (Thomas & Thomas, 1928, p. 572), asserted the importance of persons' definitions of the situation. That is, it is because the same objective circumstances in which persons find themselves often do not elicit the same adjustive responses that the subjective sense they have of situations must be taken into account to interpret or explain

their behavior. However, for Thomas, subjective definitions of the situation are in themselves insufficient to understand social behavior. Rather, both the objective, verifiable situation and the situation as defined by persons and groups involved must jointly be considered.

Mead, influenced by Cooley and Dewey, creatively synthesized their jointly developed ideas, becoming the foremost philosophical precursor of symbolic interactionism. The synthesis drew on pragmatism and evolution, incorporated the idea that persons, as selves, determine their worlds, and pointed to Wilhelm Wundt's conception of gestures as the mechanisms allowing mind, self, and society to emerge from social interaction (Mead, 1934). Mind allowed humans to cooperate by manipulating significant symbols (significant symbols are by definition gestures that have common meaning for participants in interaction). Since humans need others to deal effectively with problems they have as collectivities, they must take others into account. They do this, Mead argued, by taking the attitude—for Mead, attitudes are plans of action—or role of the other² in order to anticipate others' responses and to coordinate their and others' behaviors. They also take the attitude of the other in order to think reflexively about themselves and to see themselves objectively. Indeed, Mead defined self as that which is an object to itself; and, as an object, self is an attitude or plan of action. Treating themselves as objects, humans can have conversations with and about themselves and their action plans.

For Mead, social process—equivalently social interaction—is primary, for society and self both emerge from social process. The basic dictum of Mead's social psychology derives from this stance: start with ongoing social process. Stated differently, in order to interact effectively within a group, the members must develop a generalized sense of how they are viewed by the group as an organized whole. One part of the self, the "I," represents the responses of persons to the expectations of the group. Mead treated the "I" as pure impulse, using it to discuss the spontaneity and creativity that he believed were intrinsic to human experience. The second part of self is

the “Me,” a product of interaction within society. Mead visualized the two parts of self as in an ongoing dialectic relationship: while the self as “Me” is a product of society, the self as “I” continuously reacts to the society that shapes it. Such a society is never a fixed entity; it is always being created and recreated.

Three implications of Mead’s thinking deserve explicit statement. First, societies undergo a constant process of institutionalization of solutions to collective problems, and societies undergo constant change as novel problems emerge in and from the social environments in which they exist. Second, both mind and self are intrinsically social phenomena because both come into being and can only exist in and through the process of communicating via significant symbols. Third, the model of social life underlying Mead’s thought is provided by scientific method and the social actor is modeled on the scientist conducting an experiment. Such models of social life and social actor tend to neglect affect or emotion.

Contemporary Symbolic Interactionism: Major Variants, Commonalities, and Differences

The most influential voice shaping the meaning of symbolic interactionism from the mid-1930s to the 1970s—perhaps to the present—was Herbert Blumer’s. The major counter-voice to Blumer in this period was that of Manford H. Kuhn. The former’s work provides much of the content of current traditional symbolic interactionism; Kuhn’s work represents a major early effort to define a structural symbolic interactionism.

Asserting that his symbolic interactionism represented Mead’s ideas, Blumer (1969) argued that the pursuit of general theory is futile given the centrality of meanings, definitions, and interpretations of situations for social actions. Persons continuously construct their behavior anew in the course of activity itself. Consequently, the meanings and definitions that underlie social interaction also undergo continuous reformulation, and those applicable at one point in time will not be applicable at subsequent points in time. Blumer

concluded that sociologists can achieve after-the-fact understandings of social behavior but cannot hope for theory-based explanations predicting behavior. He also rejected conventional numerical methods of sociological analysis, arguing that these fail to capture the meanings essential to understanding social interaction. Rather, he suggested using “exploration” of anything that allows research subjects to speak in their own voice, which includes listening to conversations, the use of what today are called focus groups, interviewing, reading life histories, letters, diaries, and public records. All such methods may be useful in subsequent “inspection,” a process that looks to develop, test, and revise images, beliefs, and conceptions of what is seen in direct observation, by posing questions that challenge working conceptions and open the researcher to new and different perspectives. It seeks to uncover generic relationships, sharpen the reference of concepts, and form theoretical propositions. It is, said Blumer, a flexible, imaginative, creative procedure involving close, shifting examination of elements used for analysis, looking at these in different ways and with different questions in mind.

Labeling his frame “self-theory” to differentiate it from Blumer’s vision of symbolic interactionism, Kuhn (1964, Kuhn & McPartland, 1954) aspired to provide precise, theory-based generalizations and their rigorous empirical test. Accepting the pragmatic position that social structure is created, maintained, and altered through symbolic interaction, he asserted that once created, structure constrains further interaction. He brought role and reference group (Merton, 1957; Merton & Kitt, 1950) ideas into his frame, and adopted the notions of social structure as composed of networks of positions in organized relations among persons and of role expectations as linked to those positions. Recognizing that the relations of expectations to behavior are loose, he saw greater determinancy in the relation of self to behavior. Taking Mead’s views of self as an object and objects as attitudes or action plans, Kuhn argued that self is the most significant object to be defined in a situation, because to know an actor’s self is to

have the best available index of the actor's future behavior.

The concept of core self, a set of stable self-meanings giving relative stability to personality, continuity to interaction, and predictability to behavior, is central to Kuhn's theorizing. However, he argued, the person's actions do not simply follow the dictates of the core self; rather, the role-taking process and the self-control made possible by that process allow for creativity in behavior. Nor are persons social automatons. The self, he suggests, is composed of a great variety of component parts—status identifications, role expectations, preferences and avoidances, personal attributes and traits, and patterns of selection of reference groups—that weaken links of social structure and self.³

Clearly, important issues separate the symbolic interactionisms of Blumer and Kuhn, but the two share a common foundation that begins with a view of society as a web of communication or interaction. Interaction proceeds via meanings developed in interaction itself. The term society summarizes that interaction. Social life is a dynamic flow of events involving multiple persons. Since both society and persons derive from social process, both take on meanings in and through interaction. Neither takes ontological precedence over the other: society as a web of interaction creates persons but the interaction of persons creates society. The symbolic capacity of human beings means they have minds; they think. Thinking about themselves, they develop self-conceptions about who and what they are—shaped by the social process and entering that process. Mind and self are responses to interruptions in activities that involve formulating and choosing among possible resolutions of the problems. These responses represent internal, subjective experience that enters subsequent behavior. Thus, to understand human behavior, sociology must incorporate a concern with the subjective experience of those it studies. Contained in this imagery is the idea that humans, both individually and collectively, are active and creative. Implied is that human behavior is to some extent indeterminate, since neither the course nor outcomes of interaction are completely predictable

from conditions preceding that interaction. As noted, despite a common stance on some fundamentals, the traditional and the structural versions of symbolic interactionism differ with respect to a wide range of issues (Stryker & Vryan, 2003). Table 10.1 presents the major differences between the two perspectives.

The variation between the two interactionist perspectives has been posed in stark terms, historically accurate but appearing today less frequently in other than rhetorical argument. There is growing realization that “either-or” polar choices are not required. In principle, social life may be undetermined; still, both self and social structures do impact on behavior. Phenomenologies affect persons' behaviors, but in part these are rooted in social structure. Social construction and social reconstruction, as well as stability and change, are observable characteristics of social life; if so, general concepts can be useful and used to formulate and test general theory. Both quantitative and qualitative methods can be strategic in achieving this goal.

Yet, the past is reflected in current work based on the symbolic interactionist frame, and there are important differences in the current versions of the frames labeled traditional and social structural. The label “traditional” intends that variations it emphasizes follow in the footsteps of Blumer. The label “social structural” intends that its emphasis is on the role played by social structures in constraining and facilitating social psychological events and processes.

Traditional Symbolic Interactionism

This work generally is used to illustrate an existing concept or to present and illustrate a new concept seen as useful in understanding a situation of interaction under examination. Often, the situation examined is exotic, and is approached from the standpoint of grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), that is, ideally without prior theory or conceptualization. Such work typically shows little interest in the generalizability of its

Table 10.1 Comparison of traditional and structural symbolic interactionism

Traditional symbolic interactionism	Structural symbolic interactionism
It is assumed that self and social organization lack the constancy required to be useful beyond the singular instance being considered. This implies that social life is unpredictable and that testing theories of social psychological phenomena is not possible. What is possible is to describe interaction as it occurs and to understand that interaction after it occurs.	It is assumed that there is sufficient continuity in social life to justify seeking empirical generalizations applying beyond particular interactions. Concepts useful in understanding one situation can be useful in understanding other situations (Heise, 1986; Kuhn, 1964; S. Stryker, 1980).
Actors' definitions and interpretations change continuously in immediate interactive situations. This fluidity extends to social life in general; thus, interaction may be reasonably described only as it unfolds. Consequently, the relevance of concepts representing social structure (as well as concepts imported from prior analyses of interaction) is dubious.	The purposes of sociological social psychology make it essential to include social structure when studying social psychological processes. Conceiving of social structure as relatively stable patterns of social relationships and social interaction, these patterns constrain actors' definitions, providing sufficient stability in definitions to justify using structural concepts in social psychological analyses.
Only the perspectives of participants in social interaction are relevant to understanding their interaction. Using the perspectives of sociological observers negates true understanding. Consequently, the voices of observers are to be eliminated in description and analysis.	Actors' definitions must be considered in explanations of their behavior, but these alone are insufficient as explanations.
Self emerges from society but becomes free of structural constraints over time, acting as an independent source of social behavior (McCall & Simmons, 1978). Novelty and creativity are highly probable in social life. Social life is continuously newly constructed.	Self is a conduit through which prior social organization and structure reproduce themselves (Burawoy, 1979; Goffman, 1974). Creativity and novelty are possible but limited by the degree to which extant social life reproduces existing patterns.
The ideas of symbolic interactionism require commitment to qualitative research methods. The most useful methods of pursuing its ideas are naturalistic; ethnography, participant observation, and intensive unstructured interviewing are strongly preferred. Consequently, the locus of research is generally a small set of interactants.	The widest range of social science data gathering methods, including sample surveys, simulations, and experimentation, are available for use, and quantitative methods of analysis are preferred.

results, seeing its tasks as giving voice to its research subjects and the description and understanding of the total particularities of the situation under examination (Harris, 2001). Work in this vein can serve the end of achieving theoretical generalization by suggesting new concepts potentially of wider use, by pointing up lacunae in current theoretical statements, and perhaps as evidence increasing or decreasing the plausibility of ideas presented as theories with general applicability (for exceptions to the general rule that preference for qualitative methodology is associated with a lack of interest in general theory and a failure to attend to social structures beyond

concrete situations of interaction, see Adler & Adler, 1991, and Strauss, 1978).

Social Structural Symbolic Interactionism

This perspective developed in part out of critiques of the traditional interactionist frame, claiming the traditional perspective was ideologically biased because it focused on everyday life and neglected broader issues of power, politics, and economics in society (Gouldner, 1970). Huber (1973) saw the same bias, viewing

it as a consequence of pragmatic philosophy's tacit endorsement of the political-economic status quo. The perspective also developed out of critiques of the social psychological frame enunciated by Blumer or provided by Mead. With respect to Blumer, these critiques incorporated beliefs that a frame minimizing the import of social structure on social psychological processes is unsuitable for the pursuit of general theory whose implications are subject to rigorous empirical test, and that rejection of the goals and methods of conventional science is unwarranted (S. Stryker, 1968).

With respect to Mead, critiques focused on the ambiguity, imprecision, and lack of fit with current social reality of key concepts (S. Stryker, 1968). Thus, these concepts cannot serve without modification as the basis for theories that are empirically refutable. Mead's image of society is particularly unsatisfactory. He sees society as relatively undifferentiated, with conflict likely to disappear as social evolution leads to the folding of smaller units into more encompassing units. The contemporary sociological vision of society is of a highly differentiated unit composed of multiple subparts, and in which tension and conflict both within societies and between societies are relatively permanent characteristics. In keeping with his view of society, Mead sees self as singular, internally relatively undifferentiated and ideally coherent, a humanistic view making for difficulties in effective theorizing about—for example—how disparate roles result in intrapersonal conflict. Nevertheless, with few but significant modifications grounded in his own ideas, he provides a frame with virtues important to social psychology (S. Stryker, 2008), a frame that can accommodate social stability and change, social production and reproduction, a sense of humans as active agents and not social automata, and the inherent possibility of novelty in social life.

The need for modifications brings us back to structural symbolic interactionism. Since organized society exists before the appearance of all new members, the basic premise of structural symbolic interactionism can be rewritten as

“society shapes self, which shapes social interaction,” although the reciprocal nature of these relationships is also recognized. Taking as a starting point sociology's sense of social structures as patterned interactions and relationships emphasizes the durability of patterns, their resistance to change, and their capacity to reproduce themselves. The frame also sees social differentiation as a continuous process working against the homogenization of structures and interactional experience within societies; it sees societies as mosaics of diverse parts relating variously to one another; and it views social life as largely taking place within relatively small networks of role relationships.

This image of societies implies greater impact of social structures on social interaction than Mead's thinking allowed. It also implies thinking of structures as social boundaries impacting on the probability that persons with different backgrounds and resources will enter particular social relationships. Still further, it implies that social structures of various kinds and on various levels will both constrain and facilitate entrance into and departures from networks of relationships. Accepting Mead's dictum that self is created in the image of society, the frame adopts a multifaceted view of self, and it permits the facets to be independent of, aligned with, or in conflict with one another. Lastly, the frame visualizes social structures as related in a process in which large-scale structures (such as ethnicity, gender, education, and age) work through intermediate structures (like neighborhoods, schools, and associational memberships) which then work through structural or ethnic overlap (the degree to which the same persons or persons of the same ethnicity are involved in multiple network relationships) to affect commitments to social network relationships. Social network relationships are proximate structures impacting on the organization and content of self (S. Stryker, 1980; Stryker, Serpe, & Hunt, 2005). Accepting in modified form ideas of traditional interactionism—the fluidity and openness of social interaction, self-direction, and human agency deriving from symbolic capacities—the modifications emphasize

the constraints and facilitations inherent in membership in society.

While its imagery asserts that person and society are mutually constitutive, the structural interactionist frame nevertheless gives causal priority to society on the grounds that all historical persons are enmeshed in society at birth and cannot survive outside of preexisting organized social relationships. "(I)n the beginning there is society" (S. Stryker, 1997, p. 315). This aphorism leads to other underlying arguments of the frame: human experience is socially organized, not random; and contemporary societies incorporate diverse structural subparts. Structural interactionism conceptualizes society as a differentiated but organized mosaic of role relationships, groups, networks, organizations, communities, and institutions crosscut by structures of age, gender, ethnicity, class, religion, and more. Subparts can be independent or interdependent, isolated or closely related to one another, cooperative or conflicting. Experience is shaped by social relationships in the parts of society in which persons participate. In general, social structures define boundaries, impacting on the likelihood that those located within them will or will not relate to particular kinds of others, interacting with them over particular kinds of issues with particular kinds of material resources. Structures also affect the likelihood that persons will evolve particular kinds of selves and have particular kinds of motivations and symbolic resources for defining situations they enter. People generally live their lives in relatively small and specialized sets of social relationships, through roles attached to the various sets.

Agreeing with interactionists in general that social life is constructed, thus open to reconstruction and radical social change, structural interactionists note that constructions are constrained by objective characteristics of the world lived in, prior constructions, norm-based pressures from interaction partners, and habit. Much interaction simply reproduces existing structures (Burawoy, 1979); while humans are actors, action does not necessarily result in changing situations or larger structural settings. We can expect social behavior

to exhibit a blend of creativity as well as stability and change; thus, a major theoretical task becomes specifying conditions that lead to varying degrees of one or the other (Serpe & Stryker, 1987).

Self-definitions, in particular, mediate the relationship of society to social behavior. Rooted in reactions of others, existing selves interact dialectically with others' responses to allow some independence from others' expectations, but the symbolic and subjective are constrained by persons' social locations. Moreover, external realities can impinge, sometimes strongly, on social behavior independently of definitions, even self-definitions; for example, the realities of social class have their effect whether or not persons affected by class understand that they do. Structural interactionism argues that an adequate social psychological frame must have a place for both the symbolic and the structural, and must view them as simultaneously operative. The theoretical task again becomes one of specifying the mix of the two. Role concepts are basic to providing for social structure in social psychological analyses because they facilitate the integration of traditional interactionist and role theoretic ideas. Building "up" to units of social organization (organizations are in part composed of persons enacting social roles) and "down" to the person (the person can be viewed as a construction consisting of the roles they enact), the concept of role serves to bridge person and society.

As subjective definitions, and following Mead's dictum, selves reflect society, sharing the characteristics of society: they are also complex, differentiated, and organized. Essential subparts of self are identities, internalized expectations attached to particular networks of social relationships, and they reflect compatible or conflicting expectations. Interpersonal and intrapersonal role and identity conflict or reinforcement possibilities are generally present in social relationships and interaction; the degree to which one or another of these possibilities occurs will reflect the characteristics of ties between persons and social structure.

Structural Symbolic Interactionist Theories

One criterion of a frame's worth is its capacity to generate testable and "successful" (in the sense that tests indicate their validity) theories. To make that case, we rely primarily on identity theory (S. Stryker, 1968; 1980/2000) and secondarily on identity control theory (Burke, 1991) and affect control theory (Heise, 1979).

Identity theory (S. Stryker, 1968; 1980/2000) emerged as a specification of a premise drawn from Mead incorporating the development of his arguments in the preceding section on contemporary structural symbolic interactionism. Stated most compactly, as demonstrated in Fig. 10.1, the premise asserts that "society" impacts "self," which in turn impacts "social behavior."

However, a requirement of a theory is that it must be capable of empirical test, and each of the three terms of the premise defeats that requirement at the outset since each is too broad, vague, and imprecise to be useful in research. One way to deal with this fact is to specify the terms of the premise, that is, to narrow each term to a well-defined part of the too broad larger set.

We begin with the term representing the outcome variable the theory seeks to explain. In the present case, the vague, unmeasurable term "social behavior" is specified as role choice behavior, that is, opting to meet expectations of one role rather than another as that which the theory seeks to explain. In the minimal statement of identity theory (S. Stryker, 1968), the question serving as the prototype of issues the theory was designed to deal was, why is it that one man chooses to spend a free weekend afternoon taking his children to the zoo, while another chooses to spend that time on the golf course with his buddies?

Next, as the interactionist framework leads to the expectation that "self" is decisive in bridging

the gap between society and social behavior, the task is to specify the aspect of self that may be important to the explanation of role choice. The concept of "identity salience" is a specification of self, elaborated from a multifaceted view of self. Persons are seen as having multiple identities, potentially as many as they have organized sets of role relationships in which they participate. Identity salience is defined as the (differential) likelihood that identities will be invoked in a variety of situations. Identities have two requirements: that persons are placed as social objects by others assigning position designations and expectations to them, and that they internalize the designations and associated expectations. Identities, then, are self-cognitions tied to roles and through roles to positions in organized social relationships. They are cognitive schemata (Markus, 1977) with the capacity to affect behavioral choices as well as other cognitive and conceptual processes (Stryker & Serpe, 1994). As cognitive schemata, they are not situation-specific and can be carried into the multiple situations that persons experience.

The specification of the overly general "society" is "commitment," a term widely and variously used in social science. While this term generally is seen as describing value-based choices, here its use follows Kornhauser (1962), in researching why some leaders in a radical social movement chose to remain in their leadership positions despite clear evidence that the movements' goals were unachievable, while other leaders did not. He found, for example, that leaders whose spouses were involved in the movement, whose social lives revolved around other movement members, and whose income depended on movement-related activities remained committed to their movement positions and roles, while leaders drawn out of movement relationships for whatever reason did not. As this suggests, commitment is conceived here as interactional and affective ties to others in

Fig. 10.1 The identity theory premise

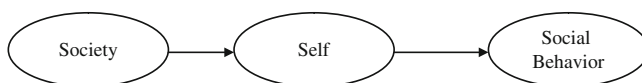
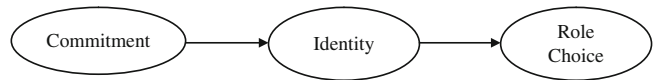


Fig. 10.2 Basic identity theory



social networks. This smallest unit of social structure is measured in terms of the degree to which one's relationships with a set of others depend on being a particular kind of person and playing out particular roles. These translations produce a theoretical argument explaining variation in role choice behavior that can be tested empirically. In minimal form, as demonstrated in Fig. 10.2, the theory proposes that commitment impacts identity salience which in turn impacts role choice.

The first test of identity theory, based on a sample of 328 adults from a large Midwestern city interviewed face-to-face in 1978 (Stryker & Serpe, 1982), used a path model to test the relationship between commitment, identity salience, and role performance associated with their religious identity and found the hypothesized impact of commitment on identity salience and salience on role performance, measured as time spent in role. Specifically, religious commitment significantly increased religious identity salience and religious identity salience significantly increased the "time spent in the religious role." (The basic identity theory model has also been supported in a number of replications, often altering the model by using different indicators of role choice: see Lee, 2005; Owens & Serpe, 2003; Serpe, 1987, 1991; Serpe & Stryker, 1993; Stryker & Serpe, 1982, 1983, 1994; Stryker et al., 2005.)

This work was followed by a panel study of 320 college freshmen who responded at three time points during their first semester to questionnaires focusing on six identities (student, athletic/recreational, extracurricular, personal involvements, dating, and family). The data addressed theoretical and methodological aspects of identity theory. Serpe (1987) tested the theoretically hypothesized importance of the relationship of commitment and identity salience. Using data from the three time points, this paper demonstrated that, while the relationship of commitment and identity salience is reciprocal, the impact of

commitment on identity salience is greater than the effect of identity salience on commitment.

Another paper examined the relationship of prior social relationships and change in identity as a function of moving to a new environment, meeting new people, and negotiating a new social structure (Serpe & Stryker, 1987). The findings suggest that if students are able to reestablish prior social relationships, thus recreating their earlier social environments, the structure of their identities does not change; to the extent they are unable to reconstruct their prior social relationships, the salience of these identities lessens. Serpe (1991) used these data to assess the role of cognitive activity—thinking and planning—associated with an identity on the salience of that identity. The findings indicated that in addition to affective commitment increasing identity salience, the greater the time spent thinking and planning about future role performance the higher was the identity salience.

Serpe and Stryker (1993) looked at how prior social relationships relate to movement into new social relationships and how that movement affects the salience of the identity associated with the new relationships. This research focused on the impact of having a highly salient family identity that could not be enacted easily because of time and distance separation of student and family. The findings suggest that those with strong family ties before entering college were much more likely to develop new social relationships that reproduced the close nature of their prior family interaction.

The last manuscript (Stryker & Serpe, 1994) using these data questions the theoretical and methodological relationship between the concepts of psychological centrality and identity salience and their joint and separate effect on role performance. The goal of this analysis was to decompose the independent effects of the more general measure of how an identity represents the person's self-concept—psychological centrality measured by the level of how important a

given identity is to how the person sees themselves, from the more situational measure of self—identity salience measured by the probability of invoking a specific identity across situations.

The two measures were related but were substantially independent of one another, and both helped explain role performance. However, salience contributed more to the explanation than did centrality. The conclusion reached was that both should be incorporated into identity theoretic research: their explanatory strength will likely vary given the identity and context of interaction implicated.

In 1993, a second data set was collected using telephone interviews of 2,845 adults in five southern California counties: Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and San Diego. Owens and Serpe (2003) used these data to look at the relationships among self-evaluation, commitment, and identity salience of whites, African-Americans, and Latinos for the family identity. The findings show clear differences in the process in the three racial/ethnic groups. Specifically, African-Americans and Latinos have higher levels of commitment to the family than whites. Self-esteem increases identity salience for whites and African-Americans at the same level but is non-significant for Latinos.

Examining the impact of three levels of social structure—large scale, intermediate, and proximal—on commitment, Stryker et al. (2005) found evidence that large-scale social structural variables function to bring certain persons together into some relationships and keep others out of those relationships. Such variables also directly affected the level of commitments to relationships entered, but their impact, while statistically significant, was relatively weak. That is, while educational attainment, income, age, gender, and ethnicity either facilitate or constrain opportunities for social action, positions in these larger social structures did not prescribe social action. Rather, it was social structural variables closer to social relationships per se, in particular the degree to which persons' role sets overlap, that strongly impact

commitment, perhaps because of the interpersonal trust engendered by that overlap. These findings, it should be noted, do not deny the general import of societal level stratification that sociology has traditionally taken as its central concern.

A new longitudinal panel data set following 1,365 science students in 48 US universities began in 2005 and is scheduled to complete data collection in 2013. Available data provided an opportunity to assess impact, stability, and change in identity (Merolla, Serpe, Stryker, & Schultz, 2010). Focusing on identity salience as a predictor of behavioral intent, this research showed that over 3 years, students with a highly salient "scientist" identity sustained intent to become working scientists net of other factors, including mentoring, funding, and research experience. Rather, involvement in proximate social structures—high levels of interaction with other students with strong scientist identities—maintains the salience of the science identity.

Three more studies of identity salience merit mention. Callero (1985) found that the greater the number of relationships based on a blood donor identity, the higher the salience of that identity. Nuttbrock and Freudiger (1991) examined the salience of being a mother among first time mothers, finding that the higher the salience of a mother identity, the more likely mothers were to engage in mothering behavior, make sacrifices in other aspects of daily life to enact the mother identity, and seek less assistance from others (husbands, family, friends) in performing the role of mother. Lee (1998, 2002, 2005), using identity theory to research a summer training program in science for high-school students, demonstrated that commitment and identity salience are influential in underwriting continued interest in science education and that the former reflects the impact of social relationships. In an investigation of gender-related differences in interests in science, Lee (1998) showed that female students are likely to see discrepancies between how they perceive themselves and how they perceive other science students, and that controlling for these discrepancies accounts for part of the

gender differences in interest in science. Lee (2002, 2005) also found support for the identity theory model in contemporaneous effects of identity variables in science-related activities for boy and girls. Specifically, he found that the greater the affective commitment toward a science identity, the greater the salience of the science identity and the greater the academic performance for both girls and boys.

This body of research provides evidence allowing extensions and elaborations of the basic theory (for details see Lee, 2002; Serpe, 1987; Serpe & Stryker, 1987; S. Stryker, 2008; Stryker et al., 2005) as well as stimulating novel theoretical efforts to relate the underlying frame and identity theory to life course processes (Stryker & Wells, 1988), conditions under which structures facilitate or constrain freedom of action in social life (S. Stryker, 1994), variation in kinds and levels of participation in social movement activities (S. Stryker, 2000), the interrelationship of identity and self-esteem (Ervin & Stryker, 2006), and emotion as an amplifier of commitment (S. Stryker, 2004). Such work testifies to the fertility of the structural frame as well as the empirical soundness of theories developed from it.

Two theories closely related to identity theory share the latter's intellectual heritage: identity control theory (Burke, 2004) and affect control theory (Heise, 1979). Both developed independently, derive from Mead, and utilize versions of structural interactionism. Both build on Powers (1973) work on cybernetic control systems in their concern with the internal dynamics of self, viewed as a system that moves to restore equilibriums threatened by events external to the person.

Identity control theory (ICT) began by examining self-meanings of identities and now focuses on the internal dynamics of these meanings. It uses the concept of "identity standard," defined as the individual meanings a person holds representing who they are as a person; Burke (2004) terms these "personal identities." Personal identity is the foundation of a cybernetic model whereby individuals compare how they view themselves to their perceptions of how others view them,

and self-verification is used to keep perceptions of self and perceptions of others' views in equilibrium. Adjustments in existing identities occur in order to secure responses from others that confirm the meaning of the identities; and identities change when disturbing external events are so great that those prior identities cannot be restored. Some theoretical effort has been given to the question of how the external processes described by identity theory link to the internal processes described by ICT, focusing in part on when and how changes in commitments impact on internal processes aimed at restoring equilibriums (Stryker & Burke, 2000); but the question warrants (and is receiving) further theoretical and research attention (Burke & Stets, 2009). The idea of self-verification is equally central to Swann's (1981) work, but he and Burke use the term differently. For both, verification involves the relation of others' views of the person and the person's own views of self. For Burke, however, verification aims at bringing self and others' views close together whether that involves changes in self views or changes in the perceptions of others' view of the person; for Swann, verification involves bringing others' views of the person's self into line with the person's own views of self.

Early in ICT's development, a series of papers (Burke, 1980; Burke & Reitzes, 1981; Burke & Tully, 1977) investigated the relation of the meaning structures of identities to behavior, on the hypothesis that the former would predict the latter. For example, if a person's self-meaning as a worker includes accuracy, precision, and efficiency, then this should predict working behavior consistent with work success, in contrast to that of a person whose self-meaning is more aloof, unconcerned, and relaxed. These studies measured meaning structures of identities using bipolar adjectives (e.g., clumsy-graceful, stupid-smart, smooth-rough). The method has been used to investigate the self-meanings of a number of identities: gender (Burke & Cast, 1997; Stets & Burke, 1996), the student identity (Reitzes & Burke, 1980), identities associated with growing older (Mutran & Burke, 1979), and the moral identity (Stets

& Carter, 2006). Each of these inquiries shows a strong link between meaning structures and behavior.

Building on these studies and incorporating the work of Powers (1973), Burke developed a cybernetic control model of identity. In an early statement of the formulation, Burke (1991) argued that when social stress creates a discrepancy between persons' self-meanings and their perceptions of the meanings contained in others' views of them, individuals will seek to reduce the discrepancies so as to receive the verification essential to maintaining the self-meaning of their identities. Burke and Reitzes (1991) suggested that the greater the commitment to an identity the greater would be the effort to ensure a match between the self-meaning of the identity and the feedback that persons receive from others about that identity. Their research on students showed that those who received rewards from enacting the student identity, and who had more ties with others who verified their identity, had a higher level of commitment to the identity, and exhibited a stronger link between identity meanings and identity behavior. In a sample of newly married couples, Burke and Harrod (2005) found that couples whose identities as spouse were verified had more positive emotions than those couples whose identities were not verified. Stets and Harrod (2004) in a telephonic survey study of 1,100 adults from Los Angeles showed that respondents with higher status characteristics (white vs. non-white, males, higher educated, etc.) experienced greater levels of self-verification across a set of identities. In another research on status and self-verification, Cast, Stets, and Burke (1999) showed that among newly married couples, the higher status members were more likely to have their self-views confirmed by the views of them held by their lower status partners and were more likely to influence the self-views of the lower status partners than vice versa (for a more complete review of ICT research, see Burke & Stets, 2009).

Affect control theory (ACT) views interactions as involving persons doing something to or with other persons. It assumes that both the actors and the action(s) relating them have affective

meanings reflecting cultural attitudes that exist in the situations in which the interaction takes place. That is, each element—person, other, activity, as in the triads “mother feeds child” or “mother strikes child”—can be characterized by a set of affective values representing its semantic meaning in an environing culture. If an element's existing affective value is altered by an external event, an adjustment of the meaning of one or more of the elements restores equilibrium. For example, if the event is described by “mother hurts child,” ACT predicts the affective value of either the mother or the child, or both, will become more negative, so that the earlier affective balance will be maintained. Identity change occurs when a disturbance is sufficiently great such that the affective meanings of the identity cannot be brought into alignment with the other elements.

Empirical research associated with ACT (Heise, 1979, 2007) has focused on measuring culture, tests of the control principle, and application in topical areas (for a more complete review and discussion of research in these areas, see Robinson & Smith-Lovin, 2006). A necessary first step in allowing tests of the control principle and topical applications was finding a way to measure the direction and level of the affect attached to the identities of actors and the action that joined actor and other. The solution found was to develop “cultural meaning dictionaries” that provided affect scores for the words these contained. This work drew on the semantic differential formulation of Osgood, Suci, and Tannenbaum (1957) showing that the semantic meaning of words is captured in the main by scales measuring the evaluation (a good–bad dimension), potency (a strong–weak dimension), and activity (an active–passive dimension) of words. The dictionaries contain affect scores based on responses from samples of persons representing diverse cultures and subcultures, and these scores are then used to analyze various topics, for example, emotions (MacKinnon & Keating, 1989), occupational titles (MacKinnon & Langford, 1994), sexual/erotic identities (Schneider, 1999), and Internet culture (King, 2001).

The research focusing on the control process deals with the assumption of ACT that individuals strive to sustain stable affective meanings in social interaction. For example, Wiggins and Heise (1987) assessed interaction between experimental participants whose identity was consistent over time and experimental confederates whose identities varied over time, in an attempt to determine how changes in definitions and meanings impact on social interaction. Experimental conditions manipulated whether college student participants interacted with other students or persons from a delinquency facility and whether the participants were praised or criticized. As predicted, when the participant was criticized they became friendlier to the student confederates who praised them in order to maintain the stability of their identities and behavior.

ACT application studies include work on emotions. Heise and Calhan (1995) asked respondents to put themselves in 128 different situations depicted by vignettes, and then asked about emotional reactions to each situation. In half the situations the respondents were actors, and in the other half they were the objects of action. The vignettes included situations and questions like: "Imagine that you are asking someone for help" or "Imagine that you are being criticized by your boss," "How do you feel at the moment?" Consistent with symbolic interactionism generally, ACT predicts that placing persons cognitively in a situation will invoke the same emotions as experiencing the situation. Results support the predictions: for example, when asked to imagine praise, participants felt proud; when asked to imagine failure, they felt shamed.

Francis (1997) used a qualitative research frame to study groups involved in emotion work, a group of divorced individuals, and a bereavement group, into which participants entered with strong negative emotions. She observed that group facilitators did not focus on the negative emotions, but rather on the redefinition of meanings associated with marital dissolution and the loss of a loved one, finding that to the extent participants' emotional state improved, this was due

to a redefinition of the meanings surrounding the situation and actors.

Kroska (1997, 2001, 2008) investigated cultural sentiments attached to gender roles and gender attitudes in a sample of couples, using the meanings and sentiments represented by the evaluation, potency, and activity dimensions of the semantic differential measure of culture. She found strong, consistent patterns in the cultural meanings of gendered role behavior, much less so with respect to gender attitudes. Tsoudis and Smith-Lovin (1998, 2001; Tsoudis, 2000) have applied ACT predictions to judgments about criminal defendants. Presenting participants with vignettes of court cases, they examined the impact of criminal defendants' emotional displays (remorse, concern, indifference, etc.) on observers' views of the defendants and sentencing judgments. They found, as predicted, that participants had more empathy with and gave lighter sentences to those who displayed emotions linked to being a good person.

Bridging Capacity: Connections to Other Perspectives and Theories

A single theoretical frame must be focused to be useful in formulating researchable theories; thus, the theories derivable from a frame are necessarily limited in scope. To be useful in a practical sense, other frames and theories must be linked to them, and their capacity to bridge to other frames and theories becomes important in evaluating them. Relating ideas across theoretical and research traditions also helps to counter the intellectual chaos in fields in which specialized theories dealing with specialized topics are unrelated. Further, a major value of bridging frameworks and theories lies in opportunities for innovative theoretical work created when a frame or theory is challenged. Challenges are unlikely when frames or theories remain isolated from one another. Building—even pointing out—bridges demands knowledge of ideas that have implications beyond particular segments, and this implies the necessity for communication

across segments. Communication across segments increases the probability of specialized practitioners obtaining useful insights that would have been unavailable if communication were limited to persons sharing the same ideas. Do the structural interactionist frame and its derivative identity theory bridge to other social psychological frames and theories in sociology, to the cognitive social psychology currently favored by psychologists, and to other segments of sociology?

Bridges to Other Social Psychological Frames and Theories in Sociology

Expectation states and exchange are frames and related theories prominent in contemporary sociological social psychology that do not derive from Mead. The former developed from efforts to explain the findings of Bales' (1950, 1970) small groups research that unacquainted persons brought together to work on group tasks very quickly show inequalities in interaction and stabilize status structures that reflect these inequalities. Viewing expectations as inferences from cultural meanings associated with social characteristics such as gender, social rewards such as wealth, and patterns of behavioral interchanges such as speaking first and forcefully (Ridgeway, 2006), the frame and related theory that emerged focused on performance expectations of contributions to group success. Associated research showed that performance expectations led to behaviors that reinforce inequalities and to structures that support these inequalities (Berger, Connor, & Fisek, 1974; Berger, Fisek, Norman, & Zelditch, 1977). Very similar ideas exist in symbolic interactionist accounts of how persons entering a new group without information about one another organize themselves to deal with problems that bring them together. To interact effectively, they attach meaning to the interaction by specifying who they and others are, and what the situation of interaction is. Without prior experience with or information about one another, they use cues in early interaction and cultural cues that attach meanings to appearance, dress,

speech patterns, and style of early participation to define the situation and organize their behavior. They then behave toward one another in ways reflecting these definitions. Since the meanings of the cues tend to be widely shared in a culture, initial behaviors based on the cues also tend to draw confirming and reinforcing responses, solidifying structures implicit in the meanings of the cues.⁴

This commonality of ideas, despite the differences in language used to discuss the ideas, suggests that interactionist and expectation state theorists and researchers can benefit from one another's concepts and processes. For identity theory, the meanings of social roles and identities are expectations for future behavior, identities are transportable cognitive schemata, and the salience of identities is an important determinant of whether an identity will be transported to new situations. Expectation states research has shown that negative performance expectations assigned to females by males in mixed gender groups (Pugh & Wahrman, 1983) can be reversed and that new positive expectations carry over to subsequent group interactions (Lucas, 2003). Both identity theory and expectation states theory would be enriched by answers to a number of questions. For example, how do preexistent salient identities inconsistent with meanings in cultural cues available in task groups impact performance expectations and emergent social structures? Would males with stereotypical male identities become more positive in their performance expectations for females in response to information negating attitudes explicit in their stereotypical identity? Would they carry these more positive expectations, assuming they occur, into new group interactions?

Exchange theory focuses on the structure of exchange networks' use of power, in recent years becoming concerned with a variety of social psychological issues including trust, fairness, emotion, cohesion, and commitment (Cook & Rice, 2003). Lawler (2001, Lawler, Thye, & Yoon, 2000) has developed a theory to explain the commitment of participants in exchange relationships—a tendency of exchange partners to continue exchanges with those with whom they have exchanged in the past. This theory asserts

that repeated exchanges with others generate positive affect for the relationship itself that creates commitment to the relationship sufficient to override self-interest. Lawler (2003) has incorporated structural symbolic interactionist and identity theoretical ideas into his affect theory of social exchange. He delineates the commonalities and the differences between the two frames, suggesting that exchange theory meets interactionism's need to contextualize social interaction, and he bridges exchange and identity theories by asserting that actors who are attached affectively to groups increase their commitments to identities attached to role relationships within the group. He also argues that this relationship is reciprocal: when identity-related role relationships within a group are strong, affective ties to the group itself are strengthened. Lawler's bridges between exchange and interactionism use mainly the concepts of role identities and identity salience. If exchange theory relaxed its assumption that persons enter exchange relations with a single identity, use might be made of the concept of multiple identities; at a minimum, exchange experiments would better approximate "real world" circumstances even though analysis of experimental data would be complicated.

Bridging to Cognitive Social Psychology, Social Identity Theory, and Personality Theory

Psychologists' interest in self, growing out of the cognitive revolution in psychology roughly 60 years ago, opened the way for dialogue between sociological and psychological versions of social psychology. That dialogue has borne fruit, despite differences in conceptualizing self. Identity theory owes a large debt to work on selves as cognitive schemata, especially Markus' (1977) finding that perceptions of self-schema-related stimuli are faster and memories more accurate and stronger than for unrelated stimuli. Recognizing that self and so identity are schemata implies that people are more likely to see situations they enter as calling for identity-relevant behaviors than they would if relevant schemata were not held. It

also implies that opportunities for identity-related activities are more likely to be recognized and acted upon. In short, viewing self and identity as schemata lends credence to the identity theory argument that salient identities produce social behavior consistent with expectations attached to those identities.

It is through the concept of multiple identities and the related concept of identity salience that a structural interactionist frame and identity theory have had an impact on thinking in cognitive social psychology (Reid & Deaux, 1996; Roberts & Donahue, 1994), but a potentially greater contribution has yet to be realized. Many cognitive theorists and researchers (e.g., Higgins, 1987) have noted that self and identity are produced by persons' experience, and simplified their work by assuming the randomness of experience.⁵ However, experiences are not randomly distributed; both the content and the meanings taken from what is experienced are shaped by the locations of persons in the social structures of class, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, etc. As argued earlier, large-scale structures channel persons into more intermediate-level structures and the latter channel persons into networks of social relationships. The relationships persons enter into impact in important ways on their self-concepts, identities, attitudes, and behaviors. Recognizing the structural sources of these social psychological phenomena deepens understanding of cognitive processes. It also reminds cognitive theorists of the limits of purely cognitive explanations of social behaviors.

The concept of social identity (Tajfel, 1981, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Spears, Chapter 9, this volume) has captured the attention of perhaps most psychologists doing social psychological work on identity. That concept, defined in terms of perceived membership in a social category, contrasts in significant ways with the concept of role identity defined as internalization of role expectations attached to positions in social networks. The distinction reflects a fundamental difference in the orientations of sociological and psychological social psychologies: as noted, sociologists are likely to take society (in the form of interaction and relationships) as

their start point, while psychologists are apt to assume that “in the beginning there is the individual.” Hence, longstanding sociological usage has defined “group” in terms of interactional bonds, whereas psychologists are apt to use the term to apply to both social units based on members’ bonds and social units based on shared categorical identifications (for example, Hogg, Terry, & White, 1995, following Tajfel, 1981, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1979).⁶ Whether either position is more than philosophical preference has yet to be decided. In the meantime, we can observe that while there has been some inclination to see the two in either–or terms, recent work in both sociology and psychology examines the relationship between social and role identities (Burke & Stets, 2009; Deaux & Martin, 2003; Deaux, Reid, Mizrahi, & Cotting, 1999; Thoits & Virshup, 1997). In any event, the outcome of the debate is likely to be that cognitive identification with a category is both precursor and consequence of involvement in social networks representative of the category. In brief, the outcome will involve bridging the structural interactionist and the cognitive frames as well as their derivatives identity theory and social identity theory.

Psychologists have often conceptualized self and identity as dispositional structures of traits, and personality theory has generally followed suit. But some personality theorists (an early instance is Roberts & Donahue, 1994), open to the idea of role-based traits, have introduced into their work a multiple conception of self, specified in multiple trait terms, as well as the concept of identity salience as an organizer of self. Accepting that people can construct identities based on traits (see S. Stryker, 2002) brings a wide range of identity theoretic concepts into play in research questions for sociologists starting with role identities or psychologists starting with traits: for example, can trait-based expectations override role expectations (and vice versa)? If they can, under what conditions do they do so? Can multiple identities be based on traits? On traits of differential salience? Will structural overlap mean competition or its absence between trait-based identities, as it does for role identities?

Bridging to Other Segments of Sociology

Much current work in organizational sociology has embraced cognitive variables in theories of institutions and organizations. That surprising intellectual turn, surprising because of the antipathy of earlier organizational theorists and researchers to social psychology, opened the way for bridges from Mead, structural symbolic interactionism, and identity theory to sociological work on institutions and organizations.

Beginning with the new institutionalism’s use of culture as cognitive taken-for-grantedness (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991; Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Zald, 1970), a series of cognitive concepts—group and role identities, meaning, multiple selves—now appear in organizational theory. Robin Stryker (R. Stryker, 1989) shows how differences in professional role identities and related attributions of meanings and decision-making logics of economists and lawyers on the National Labor Relations Board, an American regulatory agency, contributed to organizational and societal conflicts. The conflicts remade the NRLB from an organization in which economists had considerable authority to one that eliminated economists and economic science. A second study (R. Stryker, 1994) extended the earlier work by showing how the different professional role identities and corresponding cognitive frames and decision-making logics of lawyers and scientists helped shape legitimacy, order, and change in legal institutions. This study demonstrated how professional identities shape perceived meanings and subsequent behaviors that can both change and stabilize social structures. A third piece (R. Stryker, 2000) lays out explicitly the implications of the earlier work on cognitive aspects of institutions for new theories of organizations. Institutionalization of behavioral norms and practices, such as reliance on precedent in legal decision making in US courts or the European Court of Justice, means that these norms and practices increasingly become taken for granted, unchallenged, and unchallengeable. She notes that as new groups of professionals move across organizations and

institutional sectors, distinctive ways of thinking and doing attached to their professional role identities go with them. When, for example, scientists participate in courtroom arguments, they may push lawyers to question legal precedent incorporating faulty understandings of cause and effect. Creation and diffusion of potentially competing professional roles and identities across institutional sectors undermines the tendency to take any one set of institutional norms and practices for granted. Similarly, persons who occupy structural positions that subject them to competing identities or contradictory institutional decision-making logics may find that these create cognitive and emotional dissonance, ambiguities, and role conflicts that promote active choices and institutional innovation.

Movement toward Mead, symbolic interactionism, and identity theory in work on organizations occurs in a study of change in French gastronomy from classical to nouvelle cuisine (Rao, Monin, & Durand, 2003). Cultural frame institutionalism has difficulty explaining how existing institutional logics and role identities are replaced by new logics and role identities. Difficulties arise because cultural frame institutionalism holds that institutional logics are belief systems that provide guidelines for action and governance structures by which power and authority are exercised. Thus, institutions are seen as durable, their logics are viewed as constituting the identities of actors and creating obligations, and their governing structures will constrain action. Consequently, organizations will resemble one another and exhibit little diversity. Further, Rao et al. assert, cultural frame institutionalism, glossing over variations in professional logics and role identities, says little about how social movements impact reinstitutionalization in the professions. They propose that identity-based social movement theory enables understanding of how movements foster cultural change in the professions by reshaping logics and redefining individuals' role identities.

Basic to change is the introduction of identity-discrepant cues with regard to professional logics and identities. Identity movements, celebrating the differences between new logics and identities

and old, create competition between new and old identities that jeopardize the old and lead actors to adopt the new. Initially, individual logics and role identities are altered and in that sense are precursors to identity movements. Specifics of their account of the changes in both the cuisine and in the professionals who altered the cuisine make it evident that it is the meanings of cuisine and chef that are at stake in the competition between old and new logics and role identities. This aligns their frame with that of Mead as well as with a structural symbolic interactionism and identity theory.

While Pratt and Foreman (2000) are concerned with the management of multiple organizational identities and not individual-level identities, they explicitly borrow the logic and insights of Mead, the structural interactionist frame, and identity theory to guide their work. Seeking to manage organizations containing multiple sub-units with different objectives, work cultures, past histories, etc., managers find themselves facing diverse audiences with differing expectations of them in the larger organization they head and are subject to role and identity tensions and conflict. Apparently, managing organizational identities necessarily involves managing individual-level identities as well; while distinguishable analytically, organizational and individual-level identities are not independent of one another.

Kraatz and Block (2008) carry these bridging themes forward in their work on organizations in pluralistic contexts, that is, the case in which organizations function in multiple institutional spheres and present varied faces to the multiple audiences in their environment. They cite three key sources of their perspective on such organizations, two of which are conventional in sociological analyses, namely, the institutionalisms of Selznick (1949) and March (1994, 1999), both seeing the environments of organizations as politically and ideologically heterogeneous and the latter embracing a sociological conception of self. The remaining key source is the structural symbolic interactionist frame and its derivative identity theory. Kraatz and Block specifically credit identity theory's distinction between the self (the whole) and multiple identities (parts

of the whole) as particularly critical in understanding organizational governance in pluralistic organizations, asserting that it is through governance that an organizational self selects, prioritizes, and integrates its various institutionally given identities.

Citing the attention given to processes of identity expression and verification, the ideas that people seek ways to behave that express their salient identities and they seek identity confirming responses from others (Burke & Stets, 2009; S. Stryker, 1980; Swann, 1983), Kraatz and Block argue that organizations' diverse identities are legitimated or delegitimized through actors seeking to validate their identities via symbolic exchanges with different segments of their environments. They suggest, further, that it is individuals, especially leaders, whose personal role identities strongly impact expressions of organizational identities. The following is a lesson those interested in identity processes themselves can take away from this work: multiple identity organizations are clearly fertile grounds for research on the consequences of actors' personal identities meshing or failing to mesh with collective identities.

Concluding Remarks

This essay reviewed the development of symbolic interactionism from the Scottish moral philosophers to the present, and then focused on particular contemporary strains of that tradition, namely, a structural symbolic interactionist frame and a derived-identity theory. The central concept of the frame is "self," understood as comprised of multiple identities or internalized role expectations. Identities are taken to be determinants of social behavior, but the link between identities and behavior is seen as both facilitated and constrained by where persons are located in the social structures constituting organized society. We argued that social psychological accounts of social behavior are incomplete without tying social interaction to its structural locations. Identity theory emerged from these arguments as an explanation of variations in role choice behavior. We reported research results

supporting the contention that the frame met the requirement that a frame provide testable theory.

We then noted that, to be to be useful for research purposes, a frame is necessarily limited to comparatively few concepts, and that any testable theory cannot fully comprehend complex social reality. There is good news and bad news in these observations. The good news is that these very limitations permit the research essential for sound knowledge; the bad news is that knowledge gained researching any theory will be incomplete as an explanation of social behavior. The tension between the good and the bad appears inescapable, but perhaps is open to some mitigation; and the segment of this essay offering the criterion of bridging capacity in evaluating discrete frames and theories aims at encouraging efforts in that direction.

Specifically, much of the work addressing stability and change in identities and interaction over recent decades is found in theoretically related but independent research paradigms. Stryker and Burke (2000) suggested that the challenges for identity theory were to develop research designed to address how structure and person work when multiple identities are taken into account; to develop measurement strategies that go beyond self-reported outcomes for single identities; and to further develop both greater theoretical and empirical understanding of the bases of identity. A decade later, these challenges still lie largely before us. Current research paradigms are typically built on a strategy of using the postulates and underlying logic of separate research agendas to "deepen" knowledge in a limited arena, and this may be one reason why there has been little progress in developing a broader understanding of identity processes. For example, from a symbolic interactionist perspective, social action takes place in a reflexive process of developing shared meanings from society (social structure), person (self), and others (culture). However, in work on identity, each of the available research paradigms has emphasized

one aspect of the broader interactionist frame: identity theory's (S. Stryker, 1980) focus is on the structurally based relationships to others as the dynamic that organizes behavior; ACT (Heise, 1979), drawing on Mead (1934), takes as fundamental the value of the meaning of affect accompanying behaviors derived from the cultural understandings of action in the large society; and ICT (Burke, 2004) rests on the concept of "identity standard" defined by the individual meanings persons hold representing who they are as a person. Future social psychological work on identity should see theoretical development and research that draws on the logical connections between these three related research paradigms. A more inclusive and comprehensive research agenda aimed at investigating the interrelated and reflexive nature of social structure, person, and culture and that capitalizes on the well-developed research on structural identity theory per se, affect control theory per se, and identity control theory per se would begin to broaden the understanding of how society shapes self, which shapes social interaction.

Notes

1. Burkitt (Chapter 12, this volume) locates the antecedents of the concept of identity, basic to some symbolic interactionist thought, in the writings of sixteenth-century Christian humanists like Erasmus and Rabelais. This attribution elevates the imagery of stage-like performances of actors, as in the work of Erving Goffman (1959), to preeminence in symbolic interactionism, rather than the imageries we deem more fundamental to the perspective.
2. Mead takes the terms "attitudes" and "roles" as synonyms. Contemporary sociology uses "role" as expectations for behavior attached to locations in social structures. The latter conception derives from Robert E. Park (1955): Park's work on roles bridges Mead's social psychology and current sociological conceptions of social structure, and so serves as an introduction to the development of a structural symbolic interactionism.
3. It is not clear what Kuhn had in mind in this argument. We believe it calls for a further argument like the following: role taking, for example, introduces the perspectives of others into the self of the role taker, potentially altering behavioral plans that may be different from initial plans held by either self or others. Complicating the concept of self as Kuhn does here makes it infinitely more difficult to develop theories implicating self and conducting sound tests of those theories. Nevertheless, Kuhn's methodological stance, in contrast to Blumer's, is oriented to the requirements of sound social science.
4. The foregoing rephrases the general symbolic interactionist account of social behavior for the special case of unacquainted persons who come together to deal with a task. While the process described here can be benign, used only to allow the interaction to proceed smoothly, it can also be used, deliberately or otherwise, to shape another's behavior in ways that benefit the shaper. The later possibility, labeled behavioral confirmation, has long been recognized by psychologists (Snyder & Swann, 1976, 1978) as well as by sociologists who describe it as involving altercasting (Weinstein & Deutschberger, 1963, 1964), that is, cueing role behaviors in others that lead the others to behave as we wish or expect them to behave.
5. The assumption underlying random assignment from a pool of potential student participants in experiments to treatment conditions is that doing so "equates" the early experiences of the participants and rules out possible systematic differences among participants assigned to experimental conditions in explaining experimental findings.
6. Some theorists, for example, Prentice, Miller, and Lightdale (1994) recognize the distinction. Failure to do so holds a danger, namely, that the qualities and significance of "groups" (in the sociological sense) may too easily

be imputed to categories without empirical justification. Alternatively put, categories are often, perhaps typically, more heterogeneous on a variety of scores than are groups, if only by virtue of their size, and greater unity may be imputed to them than in fact exists.

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Abstract

Substantial variations have been found in the ways in which individuals within different cultural groups identify themselves. Typically, members of individualistic national cultures perceive themselves as more independent of others, while members of collectivistic national cultures perceive themselves as more interdependent with others. In early studies, self-construal was most frequently conceptualised as a relatively trait-like quality that could be measured by open-ended self-description or by self-report scales. To be validly employed, data from such measures need to be analysed in ways that take account of cultural differences in the tendency to acquiescent responding. Independent and interdependent self-construals have been found to correlate with cross-national differences in a wide variety of social behaviours. More recently, greater account has been taken of individuals' capacity to choose between a range of personal and social identities, dependent upon the salience of alternative social contexts. The effect of context is much greater among respondents from collectivistic cultures. The contrast between independent and interdependent self-construal has proved oversimple, and a range of alternatives has been proposed. A distinction between individual, relational and collective identities may more validly capture the range of cross-cultural variation. Given that self-construals are mutable, experimental priming techniques can be used to determine the extent to which variations in self-construal are able to cause effects that are equivalent to cultural differences in social cognition. Recent studies have focused primarily on bicultural respondents, and the utility of priming studies to explain differences between monocultural populations remains to be determined.

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The development of research into cross-cultural psychology over the past several decades has involved a search for the most appropriate way in which to describe and analyse cultural differences. Measurement of respondents' identity has

played an increasingly central role in that search. The early stages of cross-cultural research most typically comprised simple comparisons of empirical results between two or more cultures, with cultures being arbitrarily defined as coexistent with national boundaries. It quickly became apparent that nations differ on a multitude of attributes, each of which might account for any differences that had been identified. By the 1970s, calls were already being formulated in favour of ‘unpackaging’ culture, in order to determine which attributes of cultural difference are most directly implicated in those variations in performance that are of interest to psychologists (Rohner, 1984; Whiting, 1976). It was soon proposed that the way in which most individuals within a given culture characterise themselves is a key element of this type. Subsequent attempts to understand cultural variations in identity have involved a continuing interplay between theorising about identity and proposals for how to measure identity in ways that are culturally valid. This chapter follows the historical sequence that has ensued, moving from research that has drawn on open-ended self-descriptions to structured surveys and experimental research.

Beginnings: The Twenty Statements Test

Bond and Cheung (1983) compared the spontaneous self-concept of students in Hong Kong, Japan and the US, using the Twenty Statements Test (TST) pioneered by Kuhn and McPartland (1954). This test asks respondents to complete 20 sentences that begin with the phrase ‘I am...’. The responses of Japanese students included many fewer direct references to qualities of oneself (e.g., ‘I am friendly’) than the Hong Kong and US respondents. TST responses from a wide variety of nations were subsequently compared (e.g., Bochner, 1994; Triandis, McCusker, & Hui, 1990; Watkins et al., 1998). Studies of this type posed two types of problem that required resolution, if comparative studies of identity were to become fruitful. First, as the

TST elicits open-ended responses, some theoretical framework is required in order to interpret the responses obtained. Second, some consideration is necessary of whether the manner in which the TST itself is formatted can be considered as culture-free.

Contexts for Identity: Individualism and Collectivism

The TST researchers were influenced by the emerging conceptual framework adopted by cross-cultural researchers, which seeks to delineate national differences in terms of a series of dimensions. The analysis of individual-level survey data aggregated to the national level by Hofstede (1980) was particularly influential. Among the dimensions first identified by him, the contrast between individualism and collectivism proved particularly attractive, perhaps because it contrasted rich Western nations with less rich nations in other regions of the world. Individualist nations were said to be those in which one’s identity is defined by one’s individual attributes and goals. Collectivist nations were said to be those in which one’s identity is more strongly defined in terms of long-lasting group memberships. Consistent with this distinction, TST researchers devised schemes for content analysis that distinguished self-descriptions in terms of individual traits and abilities from self-descriptions in terms of one’s relationships with others and membership of social entities. Initial results were encouraging. US respondents employed many more trait-like self-descriptions, whereas East Asians referred more frequently to social categories. However, as the range of locations sampled increased, it has become clear that there is no simple correspondence between the predominance of different types of TST content and nations’ positioning on Hofstede’s dimension of individualism–collectivism (Del Prado et al., 2007; Watkins et al., 1998).

Of course, this divergence may be partly due to the unreliability of Hofstede’s measures, but it seems important also to scrutinise the

implicit assumptions inherent in the TST procedure. The TST protocol typically asks the respondent repeatedly to complete the stem 'I am...'. The principal difficulty with this format is that it provides no context within which respondents can locate their response. For members of individualistic cultures, this is not especially problematic. However, collectivistic cultures are conceptualised in terms of individuals' adherence to the norms and conventions of the groups within which they are located. A more collectivist person would therefore be expected to have difficulty in defining themselves in the absence of a specified context. Cousins (1989) tested this expectation in a study contrasting US and Japanese students. When he used the normal format, he found that US students again used more trait-like self-descriptions. However, when he adapted the TST format to specify context (e.g., 'When with my friends, I am... ', 'When at home, I am... '), the results were quite different. Japanese now used more trait-like descriptions, whereas the US respondents more often qualified their responses in a way that suggested that although they acted in a certain way in this setting, this was not an indication of their overall self.

This finding poses the question of how the decontextualised identities often elicited by the traditional TST procedure relate to the situated identities elicited by Cousins. Tafarodi, Lo, Yamaguchi, Lee, and Katsura (2004) addressed this question to respondents themselves. Respondents were asked whether the beliefs that they held about themselves remained the same in different situations. A total of 65% of Canadians said yes, but only 46% of Japanese and only 28% of Hong Kong Chinese did so. In a similar way, Suh (2002) found that the way that Koreans characterised themselves across five different situations was much less consistent than US responses. Thus, while all persons' identities will change over long time periods (e.g., Kroger & Marcia, Chapter 2, this volume), persons within collectivist cultures report more short-term variation in their experienced identities as they move between different social contexts. However, variation between contexts is not the same as instability over time. English and

Chen (2007) compared self-descriptions of Asian American and European American students. As expected, the Asian Americans showed greater variability in how they described themselves in differing relationship contexts. Crucially, the self-descriptions by each group showed no difference in test-retest consistency 25 weeks later. Thus, Asian Americans show greater situational variability, not greater measurement instability. English and Chen interpreted this result in terms of an 'if-then' model for Asian Americans ('If I am in situation X, then I am like this').

The greater responsiveness of identities to context in collectivist cultures is also reflected in language structures and language usage. Some languages (e.g., Arabic) do not employ the personal pronoun 'I'. Furthermore, many of the languages spoken in collectivist nations permit pronoun drop (for instance, omission of 'I') from sentences (Y. Kashima & Kashima, 1998). Consequently, if TST type tests are used to study identity, their format must be modified to accommodate locally prevailing linguistic conventions. For instance, it would be better to ask respondents to list ways of describing themselves that are important to them.

These considerations indicate that if identity is to be studied validly across cultures, it needs to be addressed in ways that take full account of variations in respondents' context. Researchers have addressed this issue in three different ways, which are considered in turn in the succeeding sections of this chapter. Construal of oneself in terms of concepts explicitly derived from individualism is considered first. Alternative bases of self-construal such as hierarchical position and relatedness are then examined, followed by studies in which self-construal is manipulated experimentally.

Independent Versus Interdependent Self-Construal

The concepts of independence and interdependence were first popularised by Markus and Kitayama (1991). These authors proposed that Americans typically construe themselves

as relatively autonomous individuals, while Japanese typically construe themselves as interdependent with the membership groups within which they are embedded. As used by Markus and Kitayama, these terms are conceptually parallel to individualism and collectivism, and some authors have used them interchangeably. However, it is preferable to use individualism and collectivism to describe the culture of large-scale entities such as nations, and independence–interdependence to describe individuals' self-construals. Cultures are characterised by the interrelatedness of their various components and are consequently more than the simple aggregate of the individuals within them. Measures at the two levels of analysis will therefore sometimes have differing structures (Hofstede, 1980; Schwartz, 1994; Smith, Bond, & Kağıtçıbaşı, 2006).

Markus and Kitayama used their literature review as the basis for a series of propositions as to the consequences of independent versus interdependent self-construal for processes such as cognition, emotion and motivation. Although they did not publish measures of self-construal, their influential formulation has provoked others to develop such measures. The most widespread procedures have entailed the creation of self-report measures using Likert scales. Singelis (1994) created a 30-item survey, comprising separate measures of independent and interdependent self-construal. The Singelis scales provide some advance on measures based on the TST, because the items tapping interdependence refer explicitly to the respondent's relatedness to others. For instance, one interdependence item reads: 'It is important to me to maintain harmony within my group'. Another reads: 'I will stay in a group if they need me, even when I am not happy with the group'. However, it is notable that one of these items describes a value, while the other describes a behaviour. Few of the items refer explicitly to the respondent's identity, but some do touch closely on issues exposed by the studies discussed above. For instance, one of the independence items reads: 'I am the same person at home as I am at school'. Another reads: 'My personal identity independent of others is important

to me'. These scales have been used frequently by cross-cultural researchers, and Singelis (1994) has been cited nearly 500 times. However, perhaps because of the heterogeneity of the scale items, they do not always achieve adequate levels of internal consistency. Critics have identified multifactorial solutions (Hardin, Leong, & Bhagwat, 2004; Levine et al., 2003). Studies that have compared TST responses with the Singelis scales have found only weak correlations between them (Bresnahan et al., 2005; Del Prado et al., 2007). Thus, the question of which procedure is preferable must rest on their ability to show meaningful associations with other indices.

Self-Construals as Predictors

Scores on the Singelis self-construal scales have been shown to relate in plausible ways to other measures of how persons think about themselves. At the level most directly relevant to the focus of this chapter, there is evidence that self-construal is linked with identification with one's nationality. Using a measure similar to the Singelis scales, Jetten, Postmes, and McAuliffe (2002) found that among American students those who identified more with being American scored higher on independence, whereas among Indonesian students those who identified more with being Indonesian scored higher on interdependence. In further studies, these authors showed that when respondents were encouraged to identify with a group that had an individualistic or a collectivistic culture, their self-construals became more independent and interdependent, respectively. Thus, self-construal can be a function of the groups that one associates with, rather than a stable trait-like quality. It is perhaps paradoxical that identifying strongly with an individualistic group leads to construing oneself as more independent.

Self-construals also significantly predict whether respondents believe that personality traits or social context are the best predictors of behaviour. Church et al. (2006) found that American respondents scored significantly higher on belief in traits as causal and significantly lower on contextual beliefs than

Malays, Mexicans, Asian Australians, Filipinos and Japanese. Among US respondents, independent self-construal was correlated with trait beliefs whereas interdependent self-construal was correlated with contextual beliefs. However, the results from other nations were confusing. For instance, in Japan, independence predicted contextual beliefs and interdependence predicted trait beliefs. Some of this confusion may be due to the fact that the Singelis scales do not control for cultural differences in acquiescent responding, in other words, the tendency of some respondents to agree with all the items in a survey.

The next several paragraphs briefly describe the broad range of cross-cultural studies of social emotions and behaviours in which the Singelis measures have been used to explain national differences. In these studies, differences between samples are first identified in mean self-construal scores and in means on the variable of interest. The effect of self-construal on the variable being studied is then discounted statistically. If the difference between the nations in adjusted means is reduced or entirely eliminated, self-construal is said to partially or wholly account for cross-national differences of interest. For instance, Singelis, Bond, Sharkey, and Lai (1999) compared respondents' ratings of how embarrassed they would be in each of a set of scenarios with which they were presented. Samples were from Hong Kong, Hawaii and mainland US. Mainland US respondents scored significantly higher on independence and significantly lower on interdependence than members of the other samples. These measures partially accounted for group differences in ratings of one's embarrassability, both at the level of differences between the different national samples, and also between ethnic groups within each sample separately. In a similar way, Oetzel et al. (2001) compared two types of concerns about loss of face in Germany, China, Japan and the US. Independent self-construal was found to explain differences in the level of concern about one's own loss of face, while differences in concerns about loss of face by others with whom one is interacting were explained by interdependent self-construal.

Kwan, Bond, and Singelis (1997) reported that the effect of relationship harmony on life satisfaction was explained by scores on interdependent self-construal, both in Hong Kong and in the US. Across Korea, Japan, Hawaii and mainland US, Kim et al. (1996) compared favoured forms of communication style, which they referred to as constraints. Differences in endorsement of a task constraint (in other words, a belief that one should focus on the task) by respondents from Korea, Japan, Hawaii and mainland US were accounted for by independent self-construal, whereas sample differences in endorsement of a relationship harmony constraint (preference for focusing on good relationships) were accounted for by interdependent self-construal.

One of the most striking sets of this type of results has been provided by Earley (1993), who compared social loafing in simulated work groups in China, Israel and the US. The Chinese and Israelis worked harder when they believed that they were working in a team with whom they had affinity. Performance in a team with whom they had no affinity did not differ from performance when working individually. Americans worked harder when they believed that they were working alone. The type of team in which they were working had no differential effect on performance. The differences in work levels between the samples from different nations were fully explained by measures of independent and interdependent self-construal.¹

These results indicate that an increasing range of authors have found that self-construal measures can explain cross-national differences of interest. However, not all studies have found such effects and mean national differences in self-construal scores are sometimes absent or in non-predicted directions (Matsumoto, 1999). Consequently, there is continuing confusion as to the circumstances in which self-construal measures may be validly employed. In an influential review, Oyserman, Coon, and Kimmelmeier (2002) compared scores across nations on the Singelis scale, as well as on eight other scales that had been defined by their authors as measuring independence–interdependence or the

related concepts of individualism–collectivism, as applied to individuals. Oyserman et al. concluded that the means of the various measures included in their meta-analysis indicated that European Americans are more individualistic than persons from other nations, and less collectivistic than Chinese, but not less than Japanese or Koreans. These conclusions have been challenged on methodological grounds. None of the scales included in this meta-analysis included balanced sets of positively and negatively worded items. Consequently, they are vulnerable to the risk of acquiescent response bias. Acquiescence is known to differ consistently across nations (Smith, 2004). Oyserman et al.'s comparison of means is therefore as likely to have detected the incidence of acquiescence as the incidence of independence or interdependence. Schimmack, Oishi, and Diener (2005) reanalysed a sub-sample of Oyserman et al.'s data, comprising those scores for which it was possible also to include a control for acquiescence. Their analysis now showed that the data confirmed the contrasts between nations that had been first identified by Hofstede (1980). Respondents in individualistic nations do predominantly construe themselves in independent ways, whereas respondents in more collectivistic nations predominantly construe themselves in interdependent ways.

The differential prevalence of these two types of self-construal across cultures has also been addressed by developmental researchers. Parental models of infant care in Germany, Greece, China, Mexico, India, Costa Rica, the US and Cameroon show wide variations (Keller et al., 2006). These authors have shown that a measure of family allocentrism (equivalent to interdependence) accounted for national differences in mothers' models of parenting. Middle-class mothers in the US, Germany and Greece favour parenting that emphasises the development of independence. Mothers from rural areas in India and Cameroon favour parenting that emphasises the development of relatedness. Urban women in the remaining samples favour an intermediate form of parenting that was described as autonomous–relational. Earlier studies by

this group have shown that differing models of parenting are associated with observed differences, such as frequency of body contact, object stimulation, holding and smiling, in parental behaviours towards infants (Keller, Borke, Yovsi, Lohaus, & Jensen, 2007; Keller et al., 2003).

The development of measures of independent and interdependent self-construal has benefited the field, because it has enabled some fruitful attempts at the unpackaging of key elements within very broad and very complex concepts such as that of national culture. No one would propose that independence and interdependence make up the sum total of ways in which individuals define their identity, but this specific contrast has been particularly helpful to cross-cultural psychologists, because it parallels the dimension of cultural variation that has so far been most fully investigated: individualism–collectivism. These concepts are also valuable precisely because they can be measured at the individual level. Nation-level contrasts are likely to prove adequately interpretable only in studies that have sampled 20 or 30 nations. Practical constraints determine that most cross-cultural studies can span no more than a handful of nations. Moreover, the populations of nations are by no means homogeneous. Thus, although it is the case that the majority of persons within a nation such as China will be found to exemplify interdependent self-construal, even within a sample drawn from a more individualistic nation, some persons will be identified who also exemplify interdependent self-construal. This is illustrated, for example, by the way Singelis et al. (1999) found that interdependence could explain differences not only between samples but also between ethnic groups within each sample in their study of embarrassment. Because this level of diversity exists in most nations, studies sampling only a few nations can still contribute to the current progress of cross-cultural investigation. A greater problem at the present time is that it has tended to be the same few nations that have been repeatedly sampled. We need to be sure that the full range of ways in which persons construe themselves is being sampled.

Perhaps the most striking aspect of the self-construal measures thus far discussed is that they treat persons' identity simply as a stable quality acquired through socialisation, which can subsequently guide our understanding of their emotions and behaviours on particular occasions. Self-construal is taken as consciously accessible and as capable of summary through a single, contrasting pair of concepts. The following sections discuss studies that have sought to broaden the scope of these measures and to allow for their temporal variability.

Additional Dimensions of Self-Construal

The studies outlined in the preceding section focused on the extent to which respondents defined their identity in terms that are associated with Hofstede's contrast between individualism versus collectivism and Markus and Kitayama's parallel distinction between independence and interdependence.

Focus on Hierarchy

In addition to his focus on individualism–collectivism, Hofstede (1980) identified three further dimensions of cultural variation. In principle, each of these could also provide a basis for identifying variations in how persons construe themselves. His dimension of power distance concerns the extent to which a culture is organised on the basis of hierarchy. It can be expected to differentiate those who construe themselves as equal to others (low power distance) from those who see themselves in terms of either submission or dominance (high power distance). An individual-level self-construal measure addressing these types of distinctiveness was devised by Singelis, Triandis, Bhawuk, and Gelfand (1995), comprising items describing the extent to which one's relations with others were based on equality ('horizontal relationships') or on hierarchy ('vertical relationships'). The items

in this measure referred also to independence and interdependence (termed individualism and collectivism by Singelis et al.). Thus, the measure has four scales: vertical individualism, horizontal individualism, vertical collectivism and horizontal collectivism. These measures have also been shown to explain cross-national differences found in some studies. For instance, Thomas and Au (2002) found that horizontal individualism explained the stronger effects of job dissatisfaction and the availability of alternatives on intention to leave one's job that they found in New Zealand compared to Hong Kong. High power distance and collectivism are strongly correlated, at least at the nation level (Hofstede, 2001). In other words, collectivistic nations or cultures are frequently the more hierarchical ones. Consequently, it is possible that the creation of four dimensions of self-construal over Singelis' (1994) previous two scales has not enhanced predictive validity. No study has yet made a direct comparison.

Focus on Relatedness

Hofstede's concept of collectivism has been interpreted in a variety of divergent ways, ranging from cultures characterised by life-long identification with a single group to cultures characterised by a generalised affinity for working in groups. Much less attention has been given to the dimension of cultural variation that he named as masculinity versus femininity. Most probably, this is because his labelling of this dimension has been interpreted as sexist. He defined masculine cultures as those in which persons strive for achievement and recognition, and feminine cultures as those in which greater priority is given to enhancing the quality of interpersonal relationships. Thus, Hofstede's definition of individualism–collectivism rests on variations in attachment to groups, while his definition of masculinity–femininity rests on variations in relatedness to specific others.

These two bases for defining cultural variation are both important in considering the

individual-level concept of interdependent self-construal (Smith & Long, 2006). Some of the items in Singelis' (1994) scales refer to 'my group', while others refer to relations with specific persons such as one's professor and one's parents, and yet others specify generalised attitudes towards other persons. Responses to these varied items may go well together in some cultural contexts, as they did in Singelis' original study. In other contexts, it is likely that the priority given to relations with a long-term in-group and relations with persons from other groups will not be closely associated. These variations may contribute to the low reliability that has been found for the Singelis scales in many subsequent studies. Georgas, Berry, van de Vijver, Kağıtçıbaşı, and Poortinga (2005) used the Singelis items in a study spanning 30 nations, and found that the reliabilities varied so greatly that the data from this scale could not be used in their main analyses.

Brewer and Gardner (1996) proposed that the concept of interdependence, as formulated by Markus and Kitayama (1991), is primarily focused on relatedness with other individuals. In their view, it was preferable to distinguish this concept from collectivism, which has more to do with one's relation to specific groups or other social entities. Personal, relational and collective identities should therefore be distinguished. Following this initiative, Brewer and Chen (2007) made a content analysis of the items comprising all available scales that have been influenced by the concepts of individualism and collectivism. They conclude that it is desirable to make a distinction between items that refer to what they call relational collectivism and those that refer to group collectivism (Sedikides & Brewer, 2001; Chen, Boucher, & Kraus, Chapter 7, this volume; Spears, Chapter 9, this volume). This distinction holds great promise, since it may help to clarify the meaning of some of the more puzzling results in the existing literature. For instance, some researchers have reported the finding that their US respondents endorsed interdependence more strongly than their Japanese respondents (Matsumoto, 1999). This could be because US respondents are more collective and

Japanese more relational. In comparing Japan and the US, Yamagishi and Yamagishi (1998) have proposed that Japanese are more often preoccupied with the assurance provided by the state of relationships within their in-group, whereas the more fluid nature of US culture encourages a stronger focus on the status of relations between one's own group and other groups. Empirical evidence supports this formulation (Takemura, Yuki & Ohtsubo, 2010; Yuki, 2003). Whether this particular reasoning is correct or not, it is important to explore more fully the utility of scales that distinguish relational interdependence from collective interdependence.

E. S. Kashima and Hardie (2000) developed three 10-item scales in Australia tapping personal, relational and collective orientations. All items were positively worded, and the three scales were found to correlate positively with one another. When each of the other scale scores was partialled out, the personal and collective scales were shown to link in predictable ways with the self-construal measures discussed in the preceding sections. After partialling out the other two scales, the relational scale correlated only with a measure of attachment closeness.

Del Prado et al. (2007) included in their six-nation survey an Aspects of Identity questionnaire, which was devised in the US by Cheek and Tropp (1997; see also Cheek, Smith, & Tropp, 2002). This survey distinguishes between personal ('my personal values and moral standards'), relational ('My relations with people I feel close to'), social ('My reputation') and collective ('My race or ethnic background') forms of identity. Respondents were asked to rate items concerning the importance to them of each of these identities. Del Prado et al. tested the ability of the Singelis measures of independence and interdependence to predict each type of identity in each of four nations. In the two individualistic nations, the US and Australia, independence predicted personal and relational identities and interdependence predicted social and collective identities. In Mexico, independence predicted personal and relational identities and interdependence predicted collective and relational identities. However, in the

Philippines, independence predicted the importance of all four forms of identity.

The results obtained by E. S. Kashima and Hardie and by Del Prado et al. both underline the need to control for acquiescent responding, particularly in collectivist cultures such as the Philippines, where it is more prevalent. Until this has been achieved, it is difficult to interpret the variations in the results that have been obtained. A clear separation between measures of personal identity and relational identity in differing cultural contexts has not yet been achieved.

Focus on Category Inclusiveness

An alternative approach to this problem was attempted by Harb and Smith (2008). An instrument was constructed that asks about the respondent's degree of involvement at four different levels of social inclusiveness, labelled as personal, relational, collective and humanity-as-a-whole. Relational categories are defined as those that involve dyadic relations, or an interconnected set of dyadic relationships (e.g., 'friends'). Collective categories are defined as those in which the individual is an interchangeable exemplar of a larger scale social category (e.g., 'students at my university'). Following the inclusion by Singelis et al. (1995) of items referring to hierarchical relations, a distinction is also made between vertical and horizontal relationships within the relational and collective levels, making six dimensions in total. Harb and Smith selected entities which best represent each of these categories and asked students from four nations to complete five Likert scales describing their involvement in each of the six social categories. Confirmatory factor analyses supported the retention of the six separate self-construal indices. Each type of self-construal was found to be significantly related to measures of identification with the equivalent social category, and inclusion of others in oneself, and with endorsement of a distinctive profile derived from Schwartz's (1992) values survey. For instance, horizontal relatedness predicted

identification with friends, inclusion of friends in one's self and endorsement of benevolence, stimulation and hedonism values. The sample was drawn from the UK and three Arab nations. UK students scored significantly higher on personal and on relational-horizontal self-construal. Syrian students scored significantly higher on collective-horizontal, collective-vertical and relational-vertical self-construal. Students in Jordan and Lebanon had intermediate scores. This procedure does succeed in providing a more clearly differentiated set of self-construals, but its validity rests on selection of adequately distinctive exemplars for each of the relational and collective categories. An alternative possibility is that persons might be able to construe the same exemplar in different ways, in which case a measure would be required that differentiates styles of construal rather than targets of construal.

Focus on Agency

Each of the projects discussed in the preceding section has sought to achieve separation between relatedness and other dimensions of self-construal. Kağıtçıbaşı (2005) has argued that the reason why this has proved difficult is that the concept of independence–interdependence, as usually defined, includes two quite separate dimensions of self-construal. She identifies these as a dimension of interpersonal distance, named as separation versus relatedness, and a dimension of agency, named as autonomy versus heteronomy. Drawing on her earlier studies of parenting (Kağıtçıbaşı, 1996), she defines autonomy as 'a state of being a self-governing agent' (Kağıtçıbaşı, 2005, p. 404), which places her view close to that of self-determination theorists (see Soenens & Vansteenkiste, Chapter 17, this volume). Heteronomy is defined as reliance on others as a source of guidance. In terms of these dimensions, independent self-construal is characteristic of persons who construe himself or herself as high on separation from others and high on agency. Interdependent self-construal would be characteristic of a person who construes themselves as high on relatedness and

high on heteronomy. The distinction between these two dimensions permits the formulation of two further types of self-construal. Autonomous-relational self-construal would characterise persons high on both autonomy and relatedness. Such a person would be an active initiator of actions, while retaining membership with a cohesive network of relatedness. Kağıtçıbaşı (2005) does not discuss the fourth possible type, which would entail heteronomy and separateness. However, she cites evidence supporting her contention that autonomous-relational self-construal is characteristic of urban populations within collectivist cultures, in contrast to rural populations in collectivist cultures, who would be more likely to show heteronomous-relational self-construal. Kağıtçıbaşı has yet to publish results of measures employing her concepts, but it could be predicted that measures of autonomous-relational self-construal would be correlated with Harb and Smith's measure of horizontal collectivism, while her measure of heteronomous-relational self-construal would link with their measure of vertical collectivism.

Basic Problems: Theory and Method

The measures proposed as alternatives to a simple contrast between independence and interdependence enrich our understanding of self-construal, by identifying a fuller range of ways in which persons in differing cultural contexts can choose to identify themselves. Some of this diversity was already apparent from factor analyses of data using the original Singelis (1994) items (Hardin et al., 2004; Levine et al., 2003). However, the more recently devised measures entail more explicit theorising about the range of ways in which self-construals may vary.

Despite this, the recent approaches share with the Singelis scales the weaknesses that are present in any measure that asks respondents to characterise themselves on a series of Likert scales. The principal weakness is that the way that they position themselves on these scales is implicitly comparative. However, we

do not know what comparators the respondent will have employed. Judgement could be made relative to one's own internal aspirations, or relative to those within one's immediate context, or relative to some salient reference group. It is unlikely that the judgements would be made relative to one's image of persons from other nations. Consequently, identity measures collected from different nations or different cultural groups may be biased. A member of a collectivist culture may rate himself or herself as highly independent relative to those around him or her, but still be much more interdependent than most members of an individualistic culture. Effects of this kind could explain failures to find predicted differences in mean self-construals between people from different cultures.

This line of reasoning was investigated by Heine, Lehman, Peng, and Greenholz (2002). Using the Singelis scales, they showed that direct comparisons of mean responses from Canada and Japan did not differ. However, when respondents familiar with both cultures were each asked to complete two modified versions of the Singelis items reading 'Compared to most North Americans, I am...' and 'Compared to most Japanese, I am...', the predicted effects were found. This procedure brings into play the stereotypes that members hold about their fellow-nationals and about the other cultural group, but it does not ensure that the resulting data are necessarily more valid, because a frame of reference has been imposed which may not be the respondent's preferred frame of reference.

An implication of Heine et al.'s critique is that measures of self-construal must either contain explicit scale anchors, or else that they should be used in ways that involve intra-cultural, or better still intrapersonal, data analyses rather than comparing mean levels across cultures. For instance, studies cited earlier such as Kwan et al.'s (1997) study of life satisfaction and Earley's (1993) analysis of social loafing utilised a series of parallel within-subject hypothesis tests for each cultural group that was sampled. Another instance of this type is provided by the work of Vignoles (Chapter 18, this volume), whose cross-cultural

analyses of identity motives focus on within-participant variance across multiple elements of identity.

A much more radical way of addressing the problem stems from the original position adopted by Markus and Kitayama (1991). They did not seek to measure self-construals directly at all, choosing instead to test hypotheses predicting how participants would respond to a variety of tasks, based upon the premise that independence and interdependence pervade particular cultural groups. This position has been explored fruitfully in recent years (Kitayama, Ishii, Imada, Takemura, & Ramaswamy, 2006; Kitayama, Park, Sevincer, Karasawa, & Uskul, 2009), but does not advance our understanding of the nature of self-construal itself. A final way to address the need for within-subject analyses is provided by studies that employ experimental priming. These are considered in the next section.

Experimental Approaches

The approaches to the cross-cultural study of identity that have been discussed in preceding sections treat identity as a relatively stable attribute. Persons are seen as having been socialised to think of themselves in ways that are to a substantial degree compatible with the cultural milieu in which they are located. However, we have abundant evidence from research in social psychology that persons are typically aware of a range of identities, any of which may be elicited by momentary events (e.g., Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987; for a review, see Spears, Chapter 9, this volume). From this perspective, cultural differences in identity must be thought of as the predominance of that particular set of identities that are frequently elicited by life within the settings that make up a given culture. For instance, Kitayama, Markus, Matsumoto, and Norasakkunkit (1997) show that US cultural settings include many that encourage individuals to feel proud and self-enhancing, whereas Japanese cultural settings include many that encourage individuals to feel modest and

self-critical. Several types of priming may be involved.

Language as a Prime

Spoken language is an instance of a constantly recurring cultural prime. As noted earlier, languages that can drop the first person pronoun are more prevalent in collectivist nations (Y. Kashima & Kashima, 1998). Repeatedly speaking in a way that does not require the personal pronoun can be expected at the least to predispose against thinking of oneself as agentic. In bilingual contexts, the choice between spoken languages is frequently an important marker of cultural identity in a given setting (Noels, Clément, & Gaudet, 2004) and of consequent actions that accord with that setting. Comparative studies have shown that among bilinguals, the language in which a survey is completed affects responses. Across 24 nations, respondents who completed a survey in English answered in ways that were closer to the answers by Caucasian respondents than were those of respondents answering in their first language (Harzing, 2005). Sanchez Burks, Lee, Choi, Nisbett, Zhao, and Koo (2003) explored the cross-cultural implications of the finding that North Americans feel that work and personal relations should be kept separate, whereas those from other parts of the world see work and non-work as more closely interwoven. They showed that when Thai–English bilinguals responded to scenarios concerning work difficulties in English, they took no account of personal aspects of the situation, whereas when they responded to the same scenarios in Thai they did take account of personal relationship issues. Thus, the language that was used primed a particular cultural orientation.

Priming Independence/Interdependence

Language of response provides an implicit cultural prime, but researchers have increasingly also employed a range of other primes related to

the concepts of individualism and collectivism, some explicit and some implicit (Oyserman & Lee, 2007, 2008). Of the 67 cultural priming studies identified by Oyserman and Lee, only eight were conducted in more than one nation. Priming has been found to show modest effects on various measures of values and self-concept and larger effects on measures of cognition. An early instance related to priming of self-concept is provided by the work of Trafimow, Triandis and Goto (1991). These authors asked students to spend 2 min thinking either about all the things that made them different from others, or about all the things that they had in common with close others. They were then asked to complete the TST. Those who had spent time thinking about differences scored more highly on statements about their personal self, while those who had thought about similarities scored higher on collective self-representations.

Priming of Biculturals

Priming studies have frequently involved samples of bicultural respondents (see Huynh, Nguyen, & Benet-Martinez, Chapter 35, this volume). For instance, respondents may be asked to evaluate cultural icons such as the Statue of Liberty, the Eiffel Tower or a Chinese dragon, or to rate culturally distinctive advertisements, prior to completing an experimental task (Hong, Morris, Chiu, & Benet-Martinez, 2000). In studies of this type, no direct measures of cultural identity are typically collected. Identity is treated as the hypothesised causal variable accounting for the culturally distinctive effects that are obtained. For instance, Verkuyten and Pouliasi (2002) primed Greek children living in the Netherlands to respond to a survey either in Greek or in Dutch. They were also shown icons such as the national flag and asked for their reactions. Those responding to the Greek primes reported significantly stronger identification with their friends, a more positive social identity, a less positive personal identity and more external attributions for events. These differences are all strongly

in the direction of differences that were found between separate control groups of monocultural Greek and monocultural Dutch children. Thus, the primes elicited separate sets of schemata relating to both self-description and description of events whose difference in magnitude was almost as great as the differences found between the two separate monocultural groups. This suggests that cultural priming studies have considerable potential for explaining cultural differences, at least among biculturals. However, if we are to be clear that the effects obtained through priming are attributable to elicitation of specific cultural identities, then direct measurement of identities is preferable. The capacity of identity measures to mediate the effects of cultural priming manipulations could then be tested, just as has been the case in studies using self-construal measures.

National identity is but one of many identities available to an individual, and is one that is much less likely to be elicited in everyday interactions than are those identities that are more proximate. Thus, if priming of identities is to assist our understanding of cultural differences, it is necessary to establish the degree of association between the cultural icons used in priming studies and the cognitive structures thought to be characteristic of members of a given culture. Wan et al. (2007) have provided some initial indications of links between cultural identification and preferred ways of characterising cultures. In three studies, they showed that identification with one's nation was significantly associated with personal endorsement of values that were perceived by the sample as a whole to be more characteristic of one's nation (see also Jetten et al., 2002; Schildkraut, Chapter 36, this volume). These effects were replicated when assessing also identification with subsidiary levels of grouping such as identification with one's university (Wan, Chiu, Peng, & Tam, 2007). Thus, as social identity theorists would predict, cultural identification involves internalisation of a prototype that characterises one's culture collectively, rather than a simple matching of one's personal values with those around oneself.

How Do Priming Studies Advance the Field?

It is likely that the cultural differences that have mostly been categorised in terms of simple contrasts between individualism and collectivism entail a whole range of ways of thinking about oneself and others that are differentially accessible to members of differing cultural groups. Some of these may be associated with ways of processing information relevant to one's cultural identity, whereas others are likely to be associated with ways of processing information relevant to one's participation in the varying groups and activities that make up one's day-to-day life. It remains to be determined whether we gain greater benefit from retaining more global concepts such as individualism–collectivism or from differentiating a more semiotic perspective that addresses the whole range of identities espoused by members of a given culture (Y. Kashima, 2009; Vignoles, Chapter 18, this volume).

To choose between these alternatives, we need more evidence of the relationships between different types of priming effects, self-construal and identity. Sui, Zhu and Chiu (2007) made content analyses of self-descriptions by mainland Chinese students in Beijing who had been exposed to a prime comprising either Chinese cultural icons or US cultural icons. The Chinese prime elicited more interdependent self-descriptions, whereas the US prime elicited more independent self-descriptions. This effect could equally be due to the elicitation of self-schemata or the elicitation of knowledge about China and the US. In a subsequent study using the same primes, students undertook a memory test. Those receiving the Chinese prime (and those receiving no prime) were better at remembering words related to their mother than were those receiving the US prime. Thus, the US prime hindered Chinese students' memory performance in a way that is consistent with thinking of oneself as independent. This result clearly implies that priming achieves its effect through the elicitation of self-schemata, rather than the elicitation of cultural knowledge. Motherhood is much more relevant to

self-schemata than it is to knowledge of different cultures.

Ng and Han (2009) used a similar procedure to that of Sui et al., but also made fMRI brain scans of 15 mainland Chinese and Hong Kong students. The scans of those receiving the Western prime were subtracted electronically from the scans of those receiving the Chinese prime, in order to reveal the areas of brain activity that differentiated the two experimental conditions. The results were interpreted as showing that, for those with a Chinese prime, the memory tasks involving self and mother activated the same area in the ventral medial prefrontal cortex. However, for those receiving the Western prime, each of the two tasks elicited activation in a separate area of the brain. Thus, there is preliminary evidence that priming effects are interpretable in terms of differing patterns of brain activation that are consistent with the contrast between independence and interdependence.

These studies leave open whether priming effects of these types would always elicit identification with the cultural group that is primed. Using cultural icons as primes could elicit a wide range of reactions, not just independence versus interdependence. Not all Chinese are pro-American, nor are all Americans pro-Chinese. Even among biculturals, Zou, Morris, and Benet-Martinez (2008) question whether culture primes necessarily elicit identification. Biculturals may be ambivalent or indifferent towards one or the other of their available cultural identities, leading to varying levels of identity integration (Huynh, et al., Chapter 35, this volume). Consequently, in some circumstances, priming could lead to effects associated with disidentification. Zou et al. showed that, among Chinese and US students, measures of identification and disidentification with one's nation were distinct from one another. Among US respondents, a US prime interacted with high US identification leading to enhancement of the typically American tendency to attribute causes to individuals. However, among Chinese respondents, a Chinese prime interacted with high Chinese disidentification, leading to a reduction in the typically Chinese tendency to attribute causes to groups. Thus,

in this case, priming and identification achieved their impact interactively, not as main effects.

Lechuga and Wiebe (2009) found that a Spanish language prime increased the reported interdependence of bicultural Hispanics, but also increased their identification with US culture. Thus, in this case, priming affected self-construal and identification in apparently opposing directions. This could be because the complexity of elements comprised within a language prime elicits multiple effects. If primes are to illuminate the causal processes relating to self-construals, they may need to be structured in more precisely theory-driven ways than are provided by language or cultural icons.

The results of priming studies raise a further issue that has not yet been addressed. Most such studies have employed bicultural respondents. Biculturals are by definition likely to have accessible a range of cultural identities, whether these be integrated with one another or not. These are readily available to experimenters, but what implications do the results of such studies have for the broader field of cross-cultural comparisons? One could argue that we are all biculturals, indeed multiculturals, in consideration of the range of multiple identities that social identity theorists have identified. Studies employing monoculturals have certainly yielded significant effects on measures of self-construal that relate to cultural difference (e.g., Ng & Han, 2009; Sui et al., 2007; Trafimow et al., 1991), but we do not know whether these significant effects are of similar magnitude to that which is found between the self-construals of equivalent monocultural populations. Neither do we know whether the ingenuity of experimenters can devise primes that will elicit the more fine-tuned variations in self-construal that survey researchers have begun to identify.

Conclusion

There is a paradox that is central to the study of culture and identity. In cultural groups that are relatively homogeneous, members may only rarely think of themselves in terms of their national or cultural identity. However, cross-cultural psychologists have

mostly continued to treat nations as distinguishable cultures. In analysing cultures conceptualised at this macroscopic level, there is a compelling need for explanatory organising concepts that can identify key elements in such overcomplex entities. Survey measures of self-construal and experimental cultural priming are two of the stronger current candidates for this task. Each has its strengths and weaknesses. There have been continuing problems in creating valid ways of measuring self-construal, partly on account of cultural differences in response style, and partly because of difficulty in defining the comparison group to which a respondent's ratings might relate. The range of respondents' available identities also means that rating scales may themselves prime respondents in unpredictable ways. Nonetheless, the studies showing mediation of cultural differences by self-construal measures have successfully narrowed the range of available explanations for a wide variety of identified cultural differences.

The experimental basis of priming studies offers the prospect of more firmly established causal explanations. However, global 'Western' and 'Eastern' primes are not likely to capture the finer detail of existing cultural differences, and are most readily applicable among bicultural populations that have well-developed alternative systems of construing the world. In order to understand better the impact of priming, it will still be necessary to measure more fully the impact of potential intervening variables such as identification, which raises again the difficulties of measurement associated with the assessment of self-construal.

Cultural identity becomes most salient among biculturals, and among the increasing number of persons who are tourists, sojourners, expatriates and immigrants within the contemporary world (see also Jensen, Arnett, & Mackenzie, Chapter 13, this volume). Acculturation psychology has become a major field of investigation (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006; Sam & Berry, 2006). These areas of study provide valuable information

concerning the impact of numerous variables related to successful acculturation. They also underline the value of treating identification with one's new culture and identification with one's culture of origin as separate from one another. However, with the exception of some approaches discussed within the present volume (Huynh, et al., [Chapter 35](#), this volume), this literature does not suggest ways of analysing relations between self and cultural identity additional to those that have been explored within the present chapter. With the continuing global intermingling of cultural groups, we can anticipate a steady increase in salience of both bicultural identities and multiple identities.

Note

1. Earley used the terms individualism and collectivism, but when used to characterise individuals rather than cultures, measures of individualism and collectivism are similar to measures of independence and interdependence.

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Abstract

The goal of this chapter is to trace the historical roots of the modern Western sense of identity as constituted by the possession of an ‘inner’ self. In contrast to other authors who have traced this notion to Puritanism and Romanticism, or to the Scottish Enlightenment, I begin with the Greco-Roman conception of *persona*, focusing on the way this concept indicated *both* self as mask or public presentation *and* self as the true nature of the individual. This was expanded with the Stoic idea of self-mastery through moderation as a route to self-improvement. I then argue that the tension between self as public persona and self as a private possession grew in the sixteenth century under the influence of the humanist movement. In particular, Erasmus was the first to employ the theatrical metaphor of the world as a stage with all the people on it playing their parts. Erasmus also reinterpreted the Stoic ideal of self-mastery at a time when social controls were moving away from external forces onto the individual psychological plane, so that people were expected to control themselves. In yet a different power structure during the eighteenth century, Adam Smith reinterpreted Stoicism in the context of a commercial capitalist economy, emphasising how we shape our own behaviour by seeing ourselves as we imagine others do. This sets the scene for the different views of self and identity found in psychology today, particularly in symbolic interactionism.

The idea that identity construction varies across time and place, according to a person’s location in specific historical and cultural contexts, is not a new one. However, this idea still seems to occupy

the fringes of the literature in psychology in general and, to a lesser extent, social psychology. In the contemporary Western world we often hear people say that they are ‘searching for themselves’ or looking for answers to the question ‘Who am I?’ (Burkitt, 2008), which could perhaps be phrased in a more interesting way as ‘Who are you?’ (see Vignoles, Schwartz, & Luyckx, Chapter 1, this volume). The key point for me, however, is that in the Western world

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when individuals look for answers to these questions, they tend to look ‘inside’ themselves, as if the secret of who they are is locked away inside like a pearl in its shell. A popular song has recently exhorted ‘look for the hero inside yourself’, something which echoes the common belief that the answers you seek, or the resources you need to succeed, are already there inside ‘yourself’. Again, we find here another popular belief; that what we call our self – our own individual identity or sense of ‘I’ – is a private possession to be found inside, although no one is specific on its exact internal location. However, historical and cross-cultural studies across a range of disciplines suggest this very experience of individual identity as constituting an internal self, one that can be reflected upon and questioned, is an experience particular to the contemporary Western world and not a trans-historical or trans-cultural phenomenon. As Danziger (1997) has put it, the self is not a natural object in the psychological sciences, but is constituted by the very practices we use to reflect upon ourselves. Furthermore, these practices – such as the way we talk, write and think about ourselves – vary historically and culturally, so that human identity changes over time and between places and is ‘constructed’ within interpersonal exchanges (see Bamberg, Schiffirin, & De Fina, Chapter 8, this volume).

My goal in this chapter is to trace the historical roots of the modern Western sense of identity as constituted by the possession of an ‘inner’ self. However, the story is much more complex than this, because all cultures are made up of a variety of different, often conflicting, traditions that offer a variety of different positions on the self. My argument here is that, beginning with ancient Greco-Roman society and culture, the contemporary West has inherited cultural traditions which emphasise the importance of a person’s public persona – in terms of status, rank, class or reputation – alongside a growing belief that we can be identified also by something uniquely personal; a self that is internal to our very being, to which we have unique access, and that can only be seen by others if we choose to reveal it to them. *One of the key themes of this chapter, therefore, will be*

the changing relation between the public and private realm and the effect this has had on the sense of self as a private possession.

It has been argued by a range of authors, many of whom are reviewed in this chapter, that the sense of private ‘internal’ selfhood has grown stronger through the history of the West, from the Anglo-Saxon tradition in Britain, and more generally from the Christian tradition that spread throughout Europe after the fall of the Roman Empire. Authors such as Baumeister (1987) have traced the Western history of the self from the eleventh century in England, through the influence of Puritanism in sixteenth-century Europe, with the establishment of an ‘individual’ relationship to God (Weber, 1905/1985), and particularly the influence of Romanticism in the eighteenth century that emphasised the split between society and the individual. This can be seen most clearly in Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s notion that human nature is inherently good, but can be corrupted by society (Taylor, 1989). Not only did this create a gulf between social and individual identity, it led the Romantics to value the expression of individuality above all else, especially in the creative arts. Alternatively, Danziger (1997) has emphasised the role of the Scottish Enlightenment in the eighteenth century and the work of John Locke and Adam Smith as being important in creating the modern sense of self, something I will refer to later in this chapter. Just this brief review shows that writing a historical perspective on identity construction in the West is a massive task that could take many different angles, as indeed have books on the subject by Charles Taylor (1989) and Jerrold Seigel (2005).

Given this, any single chapter cannot be exhaustive, so instead I have chosen to focus on particular elements in the historical formation of Western identity. First, I examine debates about the Greco-Roman conception of the self as a mask or *persona* and how this is linked to public life, with many contemporary authors believing this public and visible experience of self left little room for the experience of an invisible, ‘interior’ core of self. I adopt this approach because the roots of many of the current notions of self in the West begin in Greco-Roman society, and

also because I believe that in the Greco-Roman philosophy known as Stoicism we find the seeds of the notion of self that are reinterpreted in other historical epochs. Second, this leads me to focus on the time around the sixteenth century in Western Europe when notions of social life as a staged drama became popular, particularly in the work of humanists like Erasmus (who also reinterpreted Stoicism for his age), and to consider the societal and historical conditions surrounding this. My argument will be that the idea of the public presentation of self as a mask or performance became accentuated at a time when people started to feel they had more of an invisible, reflective relationship with themselves that others could not immediately see or share in. The idea and feeling then started to emerge that the image we present to others is not necessarily the image that we hold of our own self. In my view, this cannot be separated from a satiric or ironic stance taken on society, which sees it as a theatre for the staging of performances that are often ingenious or in some other way false. Finally, I look at the Scottish Enlightenment and the work of Adam Smith and its influence on contemporary notions of the self, such as symbolic interactionism. Unlike Baumeister (1987) and Danziger (1997), then, I trace the Western notion of the self to roots much earlier in ancient cultures and argue that here we can see the seeds of some aspects of modern forms of identity. Just as I believe that modern Western notions of the self are composed of different cultural traditions with many different roots, so I believe there to be both continuity *and* radical shifts across historical time scales, some of which I will attempt to trace.

Although I argue here that changes to the formation of self over time are influenced by changing cultural traditions – such as philosophical and, later, social and psychological theories, as well as literature and drama – these discursive or textual productions do not ‘float free’ of other aspects of the social context, such as power relations between social groups (classes and professional groups) and the material context of peoples’ lives. I draw attention to these factors throughout the chapter, because being able to regard oneself as having a private self is based

not only on the *idea* of such a thing, but that this is also recognised as valuable by others in society, is protected in law, and accommodated by social institutions, i.e. having private spaces for study, work or thought, and private places like homes or other properties where we can retreat. That identity is integral to power relations can be illustrated by the example of ancient Greco-Roman cultures, where women and slaves were not regarded as persons and could not participate in public life as men could. This severely restricted the ways in which women and slaves could create an identity for themselves, even in private where women were subservient to more powerful men.

A key problem in studying how identity has changed over long historical time scales is that people from earlier eras are no longer available to speak about how they understood themselves or how they regarded their identity. All that we have left from the distant past is the written records that people have left us in books (autobiographies and novels), letters and diaries. Although this is good evidence about how people wrote about themselves, a key question emerges about whether this is the same as how people actually experienced themselves. In other words, has the self remained the same over the millennia and across cultures, so that ‘people are basically the same everywhere’ and only the forms of expression – such as language and other social conventions – have changed? Or do people change as society and culture change? My argument is the latter. I argue this case because the writings of psychologists such as Lev Vygotsky (1987) and G. H. Mead (1964) have persuaded me that language does not express thoughts that already exist, but provides the tools to bring thoughts into existence. Language is a tool not just to express a thought already there, but to articulate it for oneself (a thought) or for others (a verbal expression). Equally, identity is not formed prior to our upbringing and our life in a particular place and time; instead, the historical context is the very means by which we bring identity into existence. It is formed not just by the relation we have to our own self, but prior to that by the way we are interrelated to others and the power relations that both enable and constrain the

possibilities to become a certain sort of person. Hopefully, this will be illustrated in the following sections, in which I look at historical studies and writers who have accounted for identity construction in different historical epochs of the Western world.

The Ancient Person of the West: *Persona* and Self

According to Marcel Mauss's famous essay on the notion of the 'person' (Mauss, 1938/1985), this word came into use in a way recognisable to modern Westerners in ancient Latin culture. Similar words and concepts to that of 'person' or 'persona' had existed in tribal societies, but had referred to the masks worn in public ceremonies that indicated the individual's title, rank, role or ancestry. However, in ancient Roman society, although the term 'persona' originally kept its meaning as a 'mask' used in theatre or the right to assume a ritual role, it began its transmutation into a fact of law that established the rights of the freeborn as citizens with ownership of their own person. Here the seed seems to have been sown that established the notion of the person in the dual meaning in which it is still regarded today: on the one hand as an artificial character that is 'the mask and role of comedy and tragedy, of trickery and hypocrisy', while on the other hand it is regarded as 'synonymous with the true nature of the individual' (Mauss, 1938/1985, p. 17). Thus, slaves are excluded from the law as they have no personality and do not even own their body. In this example, we see some of the main themes I highlighted in the introduction; that it is in the language of a particular culture (at a certain place and time, with many different traditions coming together to create it) that an idea slowly forms which still has familiar elements today. In particular, the notion that personhood is a right – for example, we have the right to self-determination – and synonymous with who we truly are or want to be: at the same time, as a public mask or role, *persona* can be presented to others in ways that misrepresent this

truth and, thus, can involve falsehood. As a public status, personhood is also a right that can be given to some and denied to others, depending on their place in the power structure of society.

For the freeborn in ancient Roman society – those born outside of slavery – the notion of the person was also enriched through their reliance on the Greek thinkers for their education, and this developed as a stream of Greco-Roman thought reflected in the Stoic philosophers of the Roman Empire such as Seneca (4 BC–65 AD), Epictetus (55–135 AD) and Aurelius (121–180 AD). These thinkers understood the person to be a subject of not only law but also moral conscience and free will, one who could examine his daily habits and routines and, through this, improve himself. For example, through strict regimens of diet and exercise people could strengthen their will and, thus, improve their character. In recent years, attention has been drawn to the Stoic philosophers because of the claims of Michel Foucault (1988a, 1988b) that, despite their concern with care of the self through improved daily routines and practices, there is still no move towards the analysis of self in Stoicism. In other words, there is still no hint of the idea that each individual is the possessor of an invisible, metaphysical soul that can be analysed and revealed to others, a notion that only emerges in Christian and, later, in secular Western culture. People may have tried to improve themselves, but they did so through what Foucault called 'practices of the self', rather than through self-analysis that would reveal some previously hidden truth about themselves. Self-improvement was a social practice not a private interrogation.

However, there is still debate among scholars as to the time at which a concept of the self appears that resembles the contemporary Western notion, where self-identity is understood as something private and 'internal'. Christopher Gill (2008) believes that, until around 200 AD, ancient thought considered the self in 'objective-participant' rather than 'subjective-individualist' terms. According to Gill, the 'objective-participant' position means that self is understood primarily in terms of its role and place in public life, rather than

by reflective reference to some notion of an ‘inner’ world of thoughts and feelings that are separate from the public sphere, which would be the ‘subjective-individualist’ position. In contrast, Richard Sorabji (2006) believes that even the ancient Greeks had an understanding of self that included both positions. Although Sorabji does not deny the importance of public life for the ancients, or the importance of the public persona, nevertheless he believes that, to build this persona, the person must be capable of reflecting upon his choices and actions. Thus, for Sorabji, while the ancient philosophers all differed in their conception of the self, there was an intense preoccupation with ‘the idea of *me* and *me again*’ (Sorabji, 2006, p. 4): in other words, there is intense reflection on the continuation of a person’s identity through time, which must have some ‘inner’ referent for the individual involved in it. While Gill (2008) agrees with this, he nevertheless believes that focusing on the individual or self distorts the main concern of the ancients, which was to make personal decisions and self-improvement compatible with objective ethical norms. Thus, the Stoic individual *persona* is important in this quest, but only to make it consistent with the first *persona*, which was universal reason, as embodied in God. The path to self-improvement through the achievement of virtue and happiness could only be found in the search for objective norms, and this depended on participation in social life and the intellectual community; hence Gill’s belief that self in ancient times was based on objective-participant patterns of thinking and experience. In the ancient world, self is not to be thought of in subjective-individualist terms, either in Sorabji’s sense of the self being ‘I’ or ‘me’ centred, or in Foucault’s terms as being concerned primarily with care and aestheticism of the self; rather the ultimate concern was being virtuous by aligning the whole being of a person with objective norms. According to Gill (2006) the main purpose was to achieve a cohesive character state that could be described as the ‘structured self’, in which all the elements of one’s being, including the individual *persona*, were brought into harmony with the first *persona* of universal reason.

Despite this, Marcus Aurelius’s autobiographical text *Meditations* (170–180 AD) is exceptional because – although it can be regarded in Gill’s terms as objective-participant, as it contains a long list of public debts to relatives, teachers and friends – there can be found in it a description of an interiority or mind which Aurelius sees as being part of a relation to his own self. As Aurelius wrote in *Meditations*:

Men look for retreats for themselves, the country, the seashore, the hills; and you yourself, too, are peculiarly accustomed to feel the same want. Yet all this is very unlike a philosopher, when you may at any hour you please retreat into yourself. For nowhere does a man retreat into more quiet or more privacy than into his own mind, especially one who has within such things that he has only to look into, and become at once in perfect ease; and by ease I mean nothing else but good behaviour. Continually, therefore, grant yourself this retreat and repair yourself. But let them be brief and fundamental truths...to send you back without repugnance to the life to which you return. (Aurelius, 170–180/1992, p. 18)

The above does not necessarily contradict Gill’s notion that figures like Aurelius still cannot be seen in subjective-individualist terms, as concern for self and interiority is not the primary focus of the text – instead, this is primarily concerned with public forms of good conduct as exemplified by forebears and teachers – and it is clear from what Aurelius says above that people could only find ease in themselves if what they found there could be brought into line with good behaviour, presumably as guided by objective norms. However, it is also clear that there is reference to the possibility of a man like Aurelius finding quiet in the private contemplation of the things he finds ‘within’: a retreat into a location that is described above as ‘yourself’ or ‘his own mind’. Nevertheless, this retreat must be brief as it was meant only to send people back repaired to their public life. In the same section of the *Meditations* on the next page (Book IV, 3, p. 19), Aurelius refers to ‘your retreat into this little domain which is yourself’, making it clear that the self within is seen as small and insignificant when compared to the importance of public conduct. As Momigliano (1985) concludes of

ancient autobiographies, we can see in them that the quest for self knowledge, expressed through the articulation of an ‘interior’ life that today in the West we would think of as a private self, is emerging in the ancients only slowly and incompletely. As the Russian linguist and literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin has put it,

It is only with the Hellenistic and Roman epochs that we have the beginnings of a translation of whole spheres of existence – within the individual himself, as well as in the world outside him – onto a *mute register*, and into something that is in principle invisible. But this process was also far from completed in ancient times. (1981, p. 134, author’s emphasis)

What Bakhtin is arguing above is supportive of Christopher Gill’s position, that it is not until the later stages of ancient Roman civilisation that we find in literary texts, especially autobiographies, reference to an interior world of thoughts and feelings that are expressed in terms of a private realm that is distinct from the public one; a world that would remain mute and invisible to others in society if it were not given clear linguistic articulation; an invisible ‘interior’ place that today in the West we would regard as the province of the self. And it is not just that the individual recognises that they have thoughts and feelings – something people have surely always had – it is that now they can express them without the external mediation of official, authoritative social ideologies, values or norms. Whereas the ancient Greeks and early Romans had attributed the events of their biographies, their actions and choices, and their quest for personal improvement, to external sources – to the status of ancestors and family reputation, to philosophical teachers and universal norms – someone like Aurelius could, before his death in 180 AD, refer *a small portion* of this to the authority of his own mind, separate from the public realm.

However, to express *and create* the sense of a private world, there must also be created a language that everyone can recognise whereby it can be articulated in words, either for oneself or for others. To do this, Bakhtin claims that there were three modifications to literary

autobiographical and biographical forms in the Hellenistic and Roman period. The first refers to satirical, ironic or humorous treatments of one’s self and life, which parodied public forms of rhetorical self-accounting along with the heroic forms of identity contained in traditional epic or adventure styles of storytelling. Parody was used because there were no official public forms in which personal and private topics could be given expression, so they were clothed in irony and humour as a way around official styles without openly challenging them. The second modification was in the writing of letters, as represented by Cicero’s letters to Atticus. Through the *familiar letter* written to a trusted friend or teacher individuals developed a style of writing (and speech) more suited to the expression of private thoughts, feelings and sensations that could not be expressed through public and rhetorical forms. Through the letter, forms of rhetoric began to develop suitable to private living spaces, and ‘a new private sense of self, suited to the drawing room, began to emerge’ (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 143). Foucault (1988a) has also focused on the practice of writing letters in ancient Greco-Roman cultures as one of the key ‘technologies of self’ that were employed in the creation of the private sense of self. The third type of modification, according to Bakhtin, is the Stoic style of autobiography, including Seneca’s letters, Marcus Aurelius’ *Meditations* and later in Christian literature such as St. Augustine’s *The Confessions*. For Bakhtin these developments herald the advent of a new form of relating to oneself characterised by a solitary conversation. It is this private and, to others, inaudible ‘inner conversation’ that a modern social psychologist like G. H. Mead (1964) would equate with the social self – the ‘I’ conversing with the ‘me’.

To summarise here, we can see from scholarly discussions about the self in the ancient Western world that, although there is still controversy over the exact nature of the person and self in ancient times, there is some consensus that, in the Hellenistic period and particularly in the Roman Empire, some of the foundations were laid on which eventually there appeared the modern conception of self as a private ‘inner’

place. First, there is the establishment of the dualistic notion of the ‘person’ *both* as an artificial character or mask (which can entail trickery and hypocrisy) *and* as being synonymous with the true nature of the individual – someone who is more than just the mask he or she wears in public life. Second, there is the development of parody and satire as styles that critique official forms of self-accounting, along with the emergence of the familiar letter in which a more private style of writing was created. Lastly, there was the Stoic autobiography, especially the work of Marcus Aurelius, in which written autobiographies reflect some elements of private thoughts and feelings rather than the public defence of a life and its works. In autobiographies such as those written by the Stoics, we can witness the faint beginnings of the mute, invisible core of the self as the centre of all experience, with which we have a private, reflexive relationship not open to anyone else unless we allow them access. As Foucault (1988a) has said, writing becomes an important technique of the self in which this sphere of experience was created rather than merely reflected. Yet there was also parody and satire as a style of writing in which the masks people wear are exposed and questioned and the false is unmasked. This style truly came into its own in the early Renaissance in Western Europe and with it both the metaphor of the world as a stage and the private relation to one’s own self were accentuated.

Before moving on to the Renaissance period, it is worth saying a word or two about St. Augustine and the pivotal role he is thought to have played in the development of the sense of interiority in the Western subjective-individualist standpoint on the self. Taylor (1989) sees Augustine’s writings as a precursor to the modern sense of self, with the establishment in the *Confessions* of the inner nature of the human soul and of God. People are then exhorted to look inwards to find God and truth and not outwards to objective principles or norms located in the social world, and, beyond it, in the created nature of the universe. Thus Augustine constitutes the clearest recorded beginning of the ‘turn inwards’ (Taylor, 1989) and is a forerunner of Descartes’ ‘I’ in the

formula ‘I think therefore I am’, which placed the power of private, rational thought at the heart of Western philosophy in the seventeenth century, and also at the heart of Western identity.

However, Pauliina Remes (2008) has cautioned against seeing Augustine’s work as constituting too much of a radical break from what went before. Remes traces elements of Augustine’s ideas on, and experience of, the self to novelties that are explicit or implicit in the work of Plotinus. Nevertheless, Remes does argue for novelty in Augustine, especially in the way he links memory (which he believes to be an infinite resource) to the temporal generation of the soul that begins in infancy, thus preceding later notions of time, self and narrative (see McAdams, Chapter 5, this volume). In contrast to Aurelius in his autobiography, just over 200 years earlier, in which he placed himself in the lineage of his family without mentioning his birth or childhood, giving him a fixed social status in the eyes of his readers, Augustine begins his story with his birth and childhood, which is the starting point for the train of his highly personalised memories. For Augustine, then, his own self was traced to a personalised beginning and understood as moulded by experience over time. The self was therefore understood as open to change, just as the past was constantly open to reinterpretation and was, thus, infinite. Furthermore, Remes believes that privacy of the self takes on a new meaning in Augustine, through his recognition of a phenomenal world that is distinct from the real world and which can also be hidden from others. This private phenomenal world is described by a series of metaphors such as ‘the fields and vast mansions of memory, where are treasured innumerable images’ (Augustine, 397/1998, p. 204) and ‘the measureless plains and vaults and caves of my memory’, which ‘is the mind, and this is nothing other than my very self’ (397/1998, p. 213). Again, in contrast to Aurelius’s autobiography, in which the mind or self was referred to as an internal retreat that was only a ‘little domain’, now for Augustine that sense of interior self has expanded into vast mansions and measureless plains. While this notion of the mind as inner self, or ‘I’, would be taken much further by

Descartes over a 1000 years later, what I want to focus on in the next section is how, around the same time as Descartes, others were advancing the idea of the ‘outer’ self or self-image as mask and performance.

However, we must be wary of treating that gap of over a 1000 years between Augustine and Descartes as a ‘dark ages’ of the self, in which there was little change in the historical notion of self-identity. As Harbus (2002) points out, literature from Anglo-Saxon England from the sixth to the eleventh centuries – indebted to native, pre-Christian traditions, along with the imported Christian Latin culture – depicts experiences of the scrutiny of inner life and of struggles within the self. There is also a concern in some of this literature to hide this inner reality and turmoil from others and to put on a brave face in public. Thus, the idea of individuals as self-reflective agents who monitor their inner thoughts and feelings, deciding what to keep private and what to show to the world, is one that features recurrently in Old English literature, suggesting this experience was common to both readers and writers. It perhaps contains both the traditions of ancient Latin culture, of seeing the self as a public persona *and* as what is most synonymous with the individual as a unique identity, and that of Christian thought, in which the self is experienced as an inner soul that can be filled with conflict and turmoil. It is clear, then, that the more we delve into the historical, literary record, the more we find continuity as well as radical breaks in the many cultural strands that make up the historical construction of identity in the West.

Self and Self-Image: The Renaissance and the Deployment of Folly, Parody and Satire

Many have argued that the birthplace of the philosophy of the subject, formulated in the first person ‘I’, is to be found in the seventeenth-century work of René Descartes (Ricoeur, 1992), and that it is only after him that subjective knowledge becomes central for Western

philosophy (Burnyeat, 1982). However, just prior to Descartes in the sixteenth century, the literary styles of parody and satire, in which folly appeared as a literary trope, were employed to create some new attitudes and thinking about the self, particularly in terms of the division between the public role of the person and the private experience of self. In their different ways, both Bakhtin and Norbert Elias have illustrated how the mask of folly and the literary styles of satire and parody were used to unmask the pretensions of the ruling classes in early Renaissance Europe, obliquely calling into question their status and the grounds of their power in the trappings of wealth and status. Against this there emerged the idea of judging the worthiness of the individual who occupied a role or possessed status, rather than respect for office or rank in itself. In this, we can see how changing notions of identity are linked to the power struggles between various social groups and classes.

Although Bakhtin (1981) was primarily interested in literature, he realised that the rise of popular literary genres emerged from the changing nature of everyday life, in which the novel is situated and where the experiences of individuals are set. And the changing nature of everyday life was increasingly becoming characterised by heteroglossia¹ – the diversification of language. The novel represents and reinforces these changes and is also important in representing the changing nature of the relation that people had to their own self. In this regard, Bakhtin recognises that the self, as reflected in popular literature, has become double: it is the object of the gaze of others and the subject of its own gaze; it reflects both the exterior and the interior of the self, the public and the private person; the visible self and the invisible unknown self; the verbal and the mute. Reflecting on what occurred after the breakdown of the public image of humanity in the Hellenistic and Roman ages, Bakhtin writes:

In the following epochs, man’s image was distorted by his increasing participation in the mute and invisible spheres of existence. He was literally drenched in muteness and invisibility. And with them entered loneliness. The personal and detached human being – ‘the man who exists for

himself' – lost the unity and wholeness that had been a product of his public origin. . . The human image became multi-layered, multi-faceted. A core and a shell, an inner and an outer, separated within it. (1981, pp. 135–136)

This literary tradition continues some of the characteristics of Old English literature, as detailed by Harbus, in that there is a distinction between the public and private self, only for Bakhtin this division is widening in the sixteenth century, so that much more emphasis is placed on the inner (mute and invisible) sphere of existence. In the novel of the sixteenth century, as in the everyday world, people were no longer characterised as unified characters, nor could they be wholly defined by a social category or type; instead they are much more psychologically complex and nuanced. In the Renaissance novel, certain types – such as the clown, the fool and the rogue – appear as masks or metaphors that act also to unmask, in that they parody or ridicule official social life or public figures. This continues the role of parody that was established in ancient Hellenist and Roman culture, where official styles of self-presentation are satirised in order to find more unofficial ways to carve out a space for private experiences. In Renaissance literature, the hypocritical and false nature of feudal social relations and ideology are satirised, as are the roles that people play, which are seen as overly conventional or inauthentic. A classic example is the work of Erasmus, who, in his books on manners, both reported on and satirised the manners of court society for the upwardly mobile middle classes (Elias, 2000). Thus, the middle classes could learn about the type of manners and conduct that would provide access to the court for themselves and their children, while being able to mock the aristocracy for their artificial and overly refined style of self-presentation. A concern was developing here for sincerity as opposed to false and hypocritical social displays, and this cannot be separated from the power struggles of the times.

As Trilling (1971) has noted, people in sixteenth-century Europe became obsessed with deception and pretence in social life, and at this time the analogy of individuals being like actors,

playing parts on the social stage, emerged as a powerful metaphor. This was most famously employed by Shakespeare who, in serio-comic style, wrote:

All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players;
All have their exits and their entrances;
And one man in his time plays many parts
(William Shakespeare, 1599–1603, *As You Like It*, Act II, Scene VII, lines 139–142).

There is also recognition in the above quotation that people do not just play one role in society, but can play many different parts. When Shakespeare wrote this he was referring to the life cycle, in which, at different stages of life, individuals must take on different roles. However, the point Shakespeare makes above is still familiar today; that there is nothing necessarily consistent about the roles we play in life and, thus, unity and continuity of identity is not to be expected.

In expressing this view, Shakespeare said something that reflected the sentiment of his times, with the prevailing concern for sincerity and pretence. Furthermore, Shakespeare was influenced by Erasmus (Gash, 1998), one of the leading figures of Renaissance humanism. Consider the quotation below from Erasmus (written 88 years before Shakespeare's play) and its striking similarity to the view of Shakespeare that all the world is a stage:

Now what else is the whole life of mortals but a sort of comedy, in which the various actors, disguised by various costumes and masks, walk on and play each one his part, until the manager waves them off the stage? Moreover, this manager frequently bids the same actor go back in different costume, so that he who has but lately played the king in scarlet now acts the flunkey in patched clothes. Thus all things are presented by shadows; yet this play is put on in no other way. (Erasmus, 1511/1941, p. 37)

This idea of life being like a staged drama, with its concomitant concern with the sincerity and duplicity of social 'actors', was clearly of central importance to the humanist movement. In general terms, the humanists advocated the study of grammar, rhetoric, moral philosophy

and poetry, particularly through the study of primary literary sources of Latin and Greek texts which had been rediscovered by Western scholars earlier in the Renaissance. For Erasmus, as we shall see, the independent study of primary texts also extended to the Bible, a position which implicated bypassing the established ecclesiastical authorities and their interpretation of scripture. In their respective biographies of Erasmus, both Cornelis Augustijn (1991) and Margaret Mann Phillips (1949) point out that, as part of the humanist movement, he turned against the traditions and custom of his day, whether it was in the orthodoxies of the Roman church or the customs of Medieval, knightly courtesy. Erasmus could do this because he and his fellow humanists were no longer wholly dependent on church or court for their position, as they were also partly employed by universities and schools in the relatively autonomous cities. Looking back to the culture and learning of classical antiquity, both Latin and Greek, especially to the Stoics, the humanists emphasised self-discipline and the formation of a well-balanced character achieved through the development of capacities in education. This learning took place mainly through independent reading of the Bible and the classics, thus circumventing the teachings of the established Roman church, stripping it of much of its power and authority.

In this changed power structure, where thinkers like Erasmus were gaining greater independence, they could begin to critique official roles and statuses in ways that earlier philosophers and writers could not. They also argued that authority should not rest on the 'external' trappings of wealth and power, such as fine clothing and jewellery, but on the 'inner' qualities of a person cultivated through education. For example, for Erasmus the behaviour of the Pope was regarded as too grandiose and authoritarian, and Kings and nobles who believed that they fulfilled the part of a sovereign by going hunting, feeding the horses, selling offices at a profit to themselves, or taking taxes only to increase their own wealth, were mocked mercilessly. In *The Praise of Folly*, Erasmus railed against all authorities that were too pompous or overbearing or

that took the trappings of their roles, status and privileges as ends in themselves rather than as the public marks of their duty. Erasmus uses the authorial voice of folly as a mask behind which he can unmask and critique all the pretension and trappings of power, wealth and status. He says of Kings:

Fashion me now a man such as princes commonly are, a man ignorant of the laws, almost an enemy of the public welfare, intent upon private gain, addicted to pleasure, a hater of learning, a hater, too, of liberty and truth, thinking about anything except the safety of the state, and measuring all things by his own desire and profit. Then put on him a golden chain, symbolizing the union of all virtues linked together; set on him a crown adorned with gems, which is to remind him that he ought to surpass others in every heroic quality. In addition, give him a scepter, emblem of justice and of a heart in no way corrupted, and finally a scarlet robe, badge of a certain eminent love of the realm. If a prince really laid his own life alongside these symbols, I believe he would have the grace to be ashamed of his finery. He would be afraid some nosy satirist might turn the whole spectacle, suited as it is for high tragedy, into laughter and derision. (Erasmus, 1511/1941, p. 95)

Although many have criticised *The Praise of Folly*, even today, as being a parody of everything, one should note here that the tone of irony has a purpose: to criticise all that Erasmus sees as false and insincere about the old order and to pose against it another set of values: virtue over status, wisdom over learning, self-discipline over indulgence, rationality over passion, truth over falsity of all kinds, service over self-seeking, faith in God over self-importance, and self-refinement over social display. In other words, he was arguing for greater emphasis to be placed on personal qualities of the self and less on the public mask which people presented, along with all its trappings.

Similarly, in terms of manners, Erasmus stood against Medieval, knightly courtesy, but he also parodied the overly refined manners that were being established by the European aristocracy. Elias (2000) identified Erasmus's short treatise of the sixteenth-century 'On Civility in Children' as the moment when the term 'civility' received the specific meaning it still holds in the West.

The book concerns the art of educating young people, and Elias notes that, although Erasmus offers his deliberations with much seriousness, there is also a mocking and ironic tone. The book concerns 'outwards' behaviour – such as bodily carriage, gestures, dress, and facial expressions – which is seen as the expression of the 'inner' person. Erasmus proceeds to give examples of good manners or good grace, which are seen as central to the formation of good character. On the one hand, then, Erasmus criticises social displays in terms of manners that he understands to be overly refined and staged only to impress others, while on the other hand he praises manners that are the indication of a cultivated and intelligent person – qualities that indicate the true character of a person has been changed for the better, not only 'externally' but 'internally' as well.

What was truly radical about the humanists, and of the social changes they helped to bring about, was not just the idea of piety, self-discipline and ascetic self-moderation: it was also that they advocated the transition from external to internal social controls. Refinement of the invisible 'inner' world of selfhood was to be achieved through training and education. The private person is not born to her or his public duties: she or he must be educated into them. There is, however, controversy over the exact contribution made by the humanists in terms of the development of the notion of the 'inner' person and the reflexive relation to oneself. Strozier (2002) argues that in the sixteenth-century humanist tradition – including Erasmus – the self-relation disappears and is replaced by imitating the conduct of others. The emphasis is placed on self-other relations that form the milieu in which a person learns the competencies of courtly skills, virtues, and other modulations of the bodily self. However, this ignores the masked and veiled critique of overly refined courtly behaviour and also that, modifying Stoic philosophy, the humanists emphasised *self-discipline*. This marked a switch from the external to the internal control of behaviour in society, as it was now expected that individuals would control their own actions and gestures when among other people, without

the external threat of physical restraint to keep order. Furthermore, people achieved this through the reflective relationship they had with their own self, by which they monitored and judged their actions in specific social contexts, rather than through a simple behaviouristic learning of acceptable conduct. Instead, this had to be carefully judged and finely attuned to the situation in which the actor found him- or herself, something that could only be done by the close self-reflective modulation of feelings, thoughts and expressions.

Thus, the presentation of image and face became important in maintaining a person's character – as Erving Goffman (1959) was to point out about Western civilisation in the twentieth century – and any slip in this, any breach of good manners or *faux pas*, could threaten a person's reputation and standing (their 'moral career') leading to shame and embarrassment, or to the spoiling of public identity. In the duality between certain social expectations and their reconfiguration as psychological controls, there emerged the tension between what a person may really feel and the face they present to others, a situation which involves the control of those feelings. This moves the tensions between people onto that 'inner' plane, forming the modern 'psychological' attitude in which we look for the little nuances in looks, glances and gestures for a 'give away' as to what a person really thinks or feels.

What I have been stressing here, though, is the historical changes in power relations behind such a situation, which thinkers like Goffman do not refer to. Also, when Erasmus stressed the importance of self-discipline, he did so in order to argue for the full-forming of character through education and training; a character who can show all their virtues, only in a humble way. This, however, means that the humanists are not just concerned with interpersonal relations and behaviour, for they are also primarily concerned with the forming of an 'inner self' through education, discipline, and, eventually, self-discipline. As Foucault was to say about the institutional power of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, these disciplines worked not only on the body but on the 'soul': indeed, they worked to create

a ‘soul’ or self with its own sense of interiority and control of impulse.

As Charles Taylor (1989) has argued, we do not need to choose between the traditions of Augustine and Erasmus, the one stressing the ‘inner’ life, the other appearing to emphasise the importance of public conduct. We do not have to choose because together the two traditions have bequeathed to the modern West the elements in which (a) self-exploration, (b) self-control and (c) personal commitment above adherence to social conventions become important in the formation of self and, particularly, the modern sense that the interior self is the very core of our being.

Adam Smith, the Scottish Enlightenment and Self-Identity

Taylor (1989) has also pointed out that many thinkers of the Enlightenment in the eighteenth century were influenced by the Erasmian tradition, especially those who stressed the naturalness of human benevolence and sympathy. In particular, the transmutation of Stoicism takes another turn in the work of Adam Smith, especially *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. In that book, Smith argued that humans are moved to sympathise with the plight of others, to stand in others’ shoes, and to understand what it must be like to live in and experience the situation in which others find themselves. We also expect others to identify with us in the same way. It is in this way that mutual identification with others is possible: but in the process we also get a view of our own selves from the perspective of others. Smith called this stance from which we can look back on our own selves the ‘Impartial Spectator’, as it is the view not from some *particular* other, but – as G. H. Mead would later say – from that of a *generalised* other. We then reflect on our own actions and impulses and attempt to control them, thinking how they will be judged by others. For Smith, this becomes the basis of self-mastery because it is only through regard for the opinions of others that we are motivated to restrain our own passions and exercise self-command. Therefore, we can see in Smith the

link back to Stoic thinking, with its emphasis on good public behaviour, only now the self plays a central part in this behaviour, as it is fundamental to the mutual identification that links self and other, which in turn is the basis on which people judge their actions in specific social situations.

Furthermore, unlike the ancient Stoics, Smith did not adopt the elitist view that self-mastery could only be attained through a relation to a philosophical teacher or, as with Erasmus, through the model of Christian virtue. Instead, everyone in society can be our teacher. This is why Smith valued commercial enterprise so highly, because it encourages interactions with a wider range of people from all different societies and walks of life, thus broadening the view we have of the world and of ourselves, as well as increasing the scope of the impartial spectator. In this position, though, we are divided into two parts, the spectator and the agent: the self who views itself constantly as if through the eyes of another, and the subjective self that is aware of its own thoughts and feelings, its impulses and sentiments, which move it to action. In this light, it is not surprising that many have noted the similarity between the Scottish moral philosophers and the symbolic interactionist perspective, particularly Serpe and Stryker (Chapter 10, this volume) and others (e.g. Costelloe, 1997) who forge the link between Smith and G. H. Mead. Smith’s notion that, as selves, modern people are divided between the spectator and the agent is very similar to Mead’s (1964) conception of the ‘I’ and the ‘me’. Both also share the idea that we become individual selves only through seeing ourselves from the imagined perspective of others, especially from the standpoint of an impartial spectator or generalised other.

However, Smith is caught very much between a modern perspective on the self and the old struggles with established authority, especially the aristocracy. Like Erasmus, Smith notes that, in the courts of princes where success depends on favour, flattery and falsehood prevail over merit and abilities (1759/1966, p. 87). At least in commercial society, for Smith, people can begin to succeed because of their abilities rather than by currying favour. It is interesting to note that,

when Goffman refers to Smith, it is precisely on this point of how the aristocracy and the middle classes distinguish themselves. Whereas the middle classes establish their superiority over other classes by their knowledge, industry and self-denial, the nobility establish their rank in the performance of the minor activities of life, through which they express their character and power. As Smith says in a segment of text quoted at length by Goffman (1959, pp. 43–44), ‘he [the nobleman] acts upon the most indifferent occasions, with that freedom and elevation which the thought of this naturally inspires. His air, his manner, his deportment, all mark that elegant and graceful sense of his own superiority, which those who are born to inferior stations can hardly ever arrive at’ (Smith, 1759/1966, p. 75). Like Erasmus, Smith can barely conceal his contempt for the nobility and aristocracy in the ironic way these remarks are phrased, yet he no longer has to hide behind the mask of folly in order to make them. But the fact that Goffman can quote these sentiments 200 years later as an accurate description of the way that class superiority is still maintained through social performance shows that the observations still have contemporary relevance.²

There is, then, the ironic view of overly refined, upper-class performances evident in Smith’s work in which authoritative or official behaviour is parodied, only now without need for the author to hide behind a mask to do so (as in the Renaissance). Still, this ironic stance is used by Smith to critique and unmask all that is seen as false in social life, only – to my knowledge – without the idea of the world as a stage. Nevertheless, Smith extends the Stoic idea that social actions require internal control or self-discipline, something that is given through the notion of the ‘impartial spectator’. Thus, in Smith’s work, the foundations are laid for the interactionist view that the private, reflective relation to oneself is inseparable from the ways in which others see us. This is the foundation of the social self, but one that also has a mute and invisible relation to the private self.

I therefore agree with Danziger (1997) that, in Adam Smith, we find a new form of power being expressed in his understanding of what

constitutes selfhood, in which the person, rather than the specific action, becomes the object of social control. However, Danziger sees the lineage of this idea emerging in the work of other philosophers of the Scottish Enlightenment, particularly John Locke, and ignores the other influences at work on Smith’s ideas, particularly his debt to the older tradition of Stoic thought. It is true that, in the work of thinkers like Smith, the private self and the values on which self-evaluation rest are becoming more secularised, shorn of the religious notions of the immortal soul as that which defines the individual. However, I hope to have shown here that this notion of how people viewed themselves, prior to the eighteenth century, is too simplistic and that there was both continuity and change in the ways in which the private self slowly emerged and gained in importance in the life experience of individuals over the centuries of modern Western history.

Discussion

In this chapter I have attempted to trace the social and historical roots of the type of identity construction common in the modern Western world, in which identity is thought to be synonymous with the possession of a unique and private self located ‘inside’ the person. I have traced the roots of this back to its beginnings in ancient Roman times when the idea of *persona* first emerged to indicate *both* the idea of the person as a mask put on in public *and* the innate right that one has to one’s own personage as laid down for the first time in Roman law. However, in these ancient antecedents to the modern conception of self, in both Greece and Rome, it was argued that the idea of the person, both as mask and as having legal rights and duties, was largely a public construction, and only towards the end of the Roman Empire do written biographies appear that start to show persons relating to and addressing themselves in a private conversation that does not have to be shared with others, or to be expressed through some official form of self-accounting. This was, though, only a beginning and there is still controversy among commentators about

exactly when the modern idea and experience of selfhood appeared – where selfhood is understood and made sense of in terms of an ‘inner’ relation or conversation with one’s own self. This private experience of being a person shows itself in the late Middle Ages and early Renaissance in Europe, especially in the work of humanists like Erasmus who began to critique official roles and statuses in public life, particularly among the high and mighty. Here we can see clearly the division emerging between public face and the roles of an individual and his/her private self or personal qualities, which may be at variance with the role he/she is playing. In a sense, one only becomes aware of playing a role on a stage like an actor when one can set against this public role a private self or conversation, from which position one can take a critical reflective stance on one’s public persona. The notion of the ‘self’ as a private possession therefore has a long and complex history with roots in many varied philosophical and literary traditions that belong to different cultures, which themselves are expressions of the changing experiences of individuals: experiences of social life, power relations and of the self.

Indeed, as the work of Adam Smith demonstrated, experiences of the self can never be separated from social life, for it is in social relations and interactions that the psychological capacity for ‘internal conversations’ and, thus, for ‘private’ thoughts and feelings emerge. In this experience, individuals speak to themselves as they would to another, but in a ‘private’ dialogue that need not be heard by anyone else. Furthermore, it is through the eyes of others that the individual comes to evaluate her or himself, rather than through the values of religious doctrines. The understanding of identity as composed of both ‘outer’ and ‘inner’ experience, the latter seen as synonymous with the self, takes a new turn in Smith, yet it is an idea that has a long and complex history, and is not totally unconnected with what went before in ancient Greco-Roman thought.

Today, Smith’s work has had the greatest impact on the symbolic interactionist approach, which stresses the way in which the human self comes into being and is sustained as a social

process (see Serpe & Stryker, [Chapter 10](#), this volume). In this view, it would be impossible for us to be reflective selves, aware of our own existence as an individual being and able to relate to ourselves as if to another person, had we not acquired this habit from the earliest years of life in social interaction with other persons. From that point onwards, the ‘mind’ develops as an internal conversation that one holds with oneself, which Mead (1964) famously described as the relation between the ‘I’ and the ‘me’ in which the ‘I’ speaks while the ‘me’ listens. The relation between these two aspects of the self constitutes the social self as a whole and creates the reactions of the person in the various social situations in which she or he must respond to others. In these situations we play different roles and thus obtain different images of our selves, which constitute the different images of ‘me’ that exist in our internal conversations.

However, since the 1960s this idea has been extended to understand persons more generally as role players, an approach made famous by Erving Goffman (1959) in particular. The idea here is that we are like actors on a stage playing different roles for an audience composed of our fellow social beings, putting on a face or appearance ‘front stage’ for those we are trying to impress while reserving other feelings and behaviours for ‘backstage’ areas where our intended audience cannot see us. This idea has recently been extended to other types of social performance, especially to styles of gender that are thought to be performed according to culturally prescribed rules or roles (see Bussey, [Chapter 25](#), this volume). In this chapter, I have traced the historical emergence of this notion of self, as like an actor performing on the social stage, which goes back to the humanist tradition of the sixteenth century, in particular the work of Erasmus and Shakespeare.

One of the drawbacks of the contemporary interactionist approach, which takes the self to be a social performance staged for others, is that it fails to account for the fact that, unlike actors on a stage, our actions have consequences for the person who performs them, because we invest our own self in them in so many important ways.

But the question is this: What is the self that invests itself in these performances? If the self is seen only as composed from various social performances, it lacks psychological depth, with no conflict or struggles behind its performances. If, as Goffman claims, we invest our ego in our performances, how does this ego come into being? What seems to have been lost from the notion of the self as a social actor, as it developed from the 1960s onwards, is the kind of internal relation to the self that Smith and Mead saw as integral to the social self. This saves us from positing a pre-social self or ego that exists prior to interactions and that invests itself in our roles or performances, for the private sense of self that feels to lie behind our public roles is nothing more or less than the internal conversation we hold reflectively with our self, speaking to our self as we would to another in a public conversation. Thus the self is social through and through but still has that sense of ‘inner life’ and psychological depth in which private doubts and contrary emotions can be articulated and felt, yet not automatically shared with others.

Along with identifying similar historical antecedents to symbolic interactionism as Serpe and Stryker (Chapter 10, this volume), my approach relates to others in this book in various ways. As I have noted above, the historical approach to identity construction allows us to create an understanding of a relational and social self, and I have developed this idea further elsewhere (Burkitt, 2008). Chen, Boucher, and Kraus (Chapter 7, this volume) add to such an approach showing how our relations to significant others provides a crucial basis for both stable and variable aspects of personality. Although my own approach goes beyond this to look at how we are located in broader aspects of social and historical relations, such as power relations in the late modern capitalist societies, the stance of Chen et al. is comparable in that I argue that power relations are always played out in various locales with a community of others. Furthermore, other ways in which power relations impact on our identities, such as how we develop a gender identity and sexual orientation that may be either in line with or at odds with societal norms, cannot be

separated from the interpersonal and familial scenarios in which these deeply personal aspects of our being are formed. Indeed, both Chen et al. (Chapter 7, this volume) and Bussey (Chapter 25, this volume) touch on that here, where Bussey looks at how gender identity develops through the roles played within a culture with its various stereotypes of gender. However, the non-conformity to gender roles, mentioned by Bussey, is dependent upon the formation of a self that can come to understand itself as more than just synonymous with the public roles that it plays. In its own reflections, this self can understand that some roles are not entirely comfortable, and that somewhere in its development it has formed gender or sexual identifications that are perhaps out of line with what is expected in society. But the self that can understand and reflect in this way is not universally given as a product of invariable cognitive capacities: it is sociohistorically formed through the processes I have been describing in this chapter.

Again, this is true of the other capacities of modern selves. For example, I hope to have shown here the historical antecedents for narrative identity as described by McAdams (Chapter 5, this volume). These were to be found in the biographies and, later, the autobiographies that began to appear in the late period of the Roman Empire around 200 AD, particularly with the work of Marcus Aurelius, and then with Christian autobiographies, exemplified by St. Augustine’s *Confessions* in 397 AD. In these works, individuals begin to tell the story of themselves not only in terms of their public works or achievements, but also in terms of their thoughts, feelings and ‘inner struggles’ as they relate these to their public and private selves in their writings. Even before this, though, we can see traces of a narrative self in the familiar letter as written by the Stoics to their teachers and friends. Similarly today, narrative selves relate to others by telling stories about those little everyday details and events that say so much about us, only now we do it through mobile phone calls and emails, as well as face-to-face conversations in coffee houses and bars. Through the myriad forms of mediation offered by modern communication systems,

the narrative self thrives. And this self relates not only to the image of itself as it exists in the present moment but, as Oyserman and James (Chapter 6, this volume) point out, it also relates to future images of itself – to what it wants to be. Such is the possibility of a reflective, narrative self.

Overall, the sociohistorical approach advocated in this chapter differs from other approaches in psychology, in particular cognitive ones, in that it does not assume that the ways we currently see identity and psychological processes are universally applicable. So, for example, in an ancient Greek drama such as Sophocles' 'Oedipus the King' (thought to have been written around 445 BC), a rich description is given of Oedipus' personality and characteristics and how these may well have led him to bring his tragic fate upon himself. However, as Edith Hall (1994, p. xxi) has noted in the introduction to her edited version of the play, 'the Greeks had none of the Christian cognitive machinery which lies behind, for example, Renaissance drama, a limited psychological vocabulary, and only an embryonic notion of the autonomous individual will'. This bears out what I have been saying in this chapter that such an idea of a 'cognitive machinery', or in my terms a reflective relationship to one's own self in which one can hold a conversation with one's self, only begins to appear in a recognisable form in the late Middle Ages and early Renaissance. The ability to converse silently with one's own self rests on the division between the public and private self, the role or performance and the 'inner' psychological being, and is a sociohistorical creation that emerges only under the influence of some of the trends I have been setting out here, in which our contemporary identities are constructed.

Notes

1. For Bakhtin, the heteroglossia of contemporary discourse emerges within European nation states in the Middle Ages out of a growing awareness of other languages and cultures, and from the diversification within national languages that resisted attempts at unification. Heteroglossia is therefore an aspect of the centrifugal forces at work in nation states, constantly challenging the centripetal forces striving for a unified national language. The centrifugal forces are felt most strongly in the dynamic, quickly changing heteroglossia of everyday language and everyday life, which realises a multi-language consciousness. It is this heteroglossia of everyday life that the novel draws upon in its composition, and it is the multi-voiced consciousness of self and world it seeks to represent. This involves confession, in that private life, thought and feeling is its very stuff, but its central feature is the way it captures the heteroglossia of everyday language and life, with its internally competitive, and sometimes contradictory, forms of speech.
2. Smith's remarks foreshadow the work of Pierre Bourdieu (1984) on the *habitus* of the upper and middle classes being developed through their cultural capital and displayed in their tastes, lifestyle, speech and comportment.

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Abstract

This chapter starts by presenting quantitative and qualitative findings to illustrate how adolescents and emerging adults increasingly have exposure to different cultures and a global world. One consequence of adolescents' and emerging adults' exposure to diverse cultures is that cultural identity development becomes a more complex process that may follow a variety of pathways. Recent theoretical and empirical work is used to describe plural pathways. Next, the argument is made that with the opening up of plural developmental pathways for cultural identity formation come both risks and opportunities. With regard to risks, the present focus is on cultural identity confusion and mental health, and the emergence of cultural gaps within families between adolescents and their parents or elders. In regard to opportunities, the focus is on youth civic involvement.

Globalization—the flow across cultures of ideas, goods, and people at unprecedented speed, scope, and quantity—has profound implications for identity formation in adolescence (ages 10–18) and emerging adulthood (ages 18–29). Recent news reports and ethnographies provide vivid, thought-provoking illustrations. In Chile, for example, parties that each draw adolescents in the hundreds, even thousands, flout the traditional sexual mores of what once was one of the most conservative countries in Latin America.

At the parties, promoted through the highly popular Fotologs and MSN Messenger, adolescents meet up with assorted and fleeting partners to dance and make out with enthusiasm and abandon (Barrionuevo, 2008). In China, a mass movement of “factory girls” in their late-teens to mid-twenties streams from rural villages to cities to work. In the process, their lives are changed in myriad ways as some attend English classes, some become escorts for wealthy businessmen, and many increasingly emphasize self-reliance while also sending hard-earned money back home (Chang, 2008). In Paris, France, a couple in their mid-twenties is married. She is American, he is Greek. Following the wedding, they honeymoon in Africa and then take up residence in England (Boston Globe, 2009). These

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“snapshots” begin to show how globalization impacts adolescent and emerging adult identity developments worldwide in such key areas as sexuality, marriage, work, and moral values (see also Hardy & Carlo, [Chapter 19](#), this volume). Below, we provide demographic information further documenting the reach of globalization in regard to other areas salient for identity formation, such as language, diet, and media.

Thus, we start from the observation that adolescents and emerging adults seldom grow up knowing of only one culture in a globalizing world. Rather, they increasingly have interactions with people from diverse cultures, either first-hand or indirectly through various media. Consequently, developing a cultural identity has become more complex, no longer a question of becoming an adult member of one culture but instead of figuring out how to negotiate multiple cultures. Next, we discuss how the new complexity of identity development goes together with increased diversity of possible identities. Because two or more cultures can be incorporated into a person’s identity in many different ways depending on individual choices and the status or power of the different cultures in question, cultural identities take highly diverse forms in a global world (see also Huynh, Nguyen, & Benet-Martinez, [Chapter 35](#), this volume). Finally, the outcomes linked to these diverse cultural identities appear to be varied; we point to a selection that ranges from positive opportunities to risk and psychopathology (see also Unger, [Chapter 34](#), this volume).

Before addressing the intersection of globalization and cultural identity developments in adolescence and emerging adulthood, we define the term cultural identity, and discuss in more detail what we mean by globalization and why it may be particularly salient for adolescents and emerging adults.

A Definition of Cultural Identity

About half a century ago, the anthropologists Whiting and Child (1953) described the relation between cultural beliefs and practices as a

“custom complex,” consisting of “customary practice and of the beliefs, values, sanctions, rules, motives, and satisfactions associated with it” (quoted in Shweder et al., 1998, p. 872). Forming a cultural identity involves adopting the beliefs and practices—the custom complexes—of one or more cultural communities (Jensen, 2003). For example, the extent to which one acts on the basis of familial and communal obligations, or adherence to spiritual precepts, or notions of autonomy and independence typically constitute important elements of one’s cultural identity (Jensen, 2008).

In many ways, a cultural identity includes the key areas that Erikson (1968) emphasized as central to the formation of an adolescent’s identity (see also Kroger & Marcia, [Chapter 2](#), this volume). These key areas pertain to ideology (beliefs and values), love (personal relationships), and work. Erikson’s focus was on how adolescents make choices about ideology, love, and work in order to arrive at an independent and unique sense of self within the culture in which they live (Erikson, 1950, 1968). Forming a cultural identity, however, involves making choices about the cultures with which one identifies. Put another way, the Eriksonian identity formation task centers on the process of developing an individual identity within one’s cultural community, whereas the process of forming a cultural identity involves deciding on the cultural community to which one belongs.

Researchers conducting work on ethnic identity formation in many ways address issues similar to those involved in cultural identity formation (see also Umaña-Taylor, [Chapter 33](#), this volume). Although there are discrepant definitions of ethnic identity (Phinney, 1990), a central focus of research on ethnic identity formation is on how members of ethnic and racial minority groups negotiate their identifications with their own group in the context of living among other ethnic and racial groups. One difference between research on ethnic identity formation and on cultural identity formation as described here is that the former focuses on minority groups. However, cultural identity formation in the context of globalization also pertains to people who form part

of a majority culture but who still have exposure to other cultures as well. For example, a Hindu Indian adolescent living in India with exposure to the global economy and media will likely negotiate culturally diverse custom complexes in forming a cultural identity. An American emerging adult may go abroad for educational or work purposes, or, to return to the example at the outset, may marry someone who is not American. One important similarity between ethnic and cultural identity formation pertains to the issue of dominance. As diverse ethnic, racial, and cultural groups come into contact with one another, there are invariably differences in status and power among those groups. We return to this issue in a number of places below.

Globalization and the Focus on Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood

As noted at the outset, globalization involves a multidirectional flow of people, goods, and ideas (Hermans & Kempen, 1998; Tomlinson, 1999). The impact of globalization is worldwide. At the same time, however, experiences with globalization vary by location. For example, an ethos of individual autonomy and secular values flow from the West to other parts of the world. The movement of migrants, however, is far more often from less developed to more developed countries than the other way around (Martin & Zurcher, 2008). Also, globalization is more evident in urban than rural areas (United Nations Development Programme, 2009).

The influence of globalization on cultural identity formation may be particularly salient in adolescence and emerging adulthood. Media such as television, movies, music, and the Internet contribute to the rapid and extensive spread of ideas across cultures, and adolescents and emerging adults have more of an interest in popular and media culture compared to children or adults (Dasen, 2000; Schlegel, 2001). For example, market researchers aim to sell to “global teens” because urban adolescents worldwide follow similar consumption patterns and have similar preferences for “global brands” of

music, videos, clothing, and so on (Friedman, 2000).

Adolescence and emerging adulthood may also be a time of life with a pronounced openness to diverse cultural beliefs and behaviors. Research has noted that, in many ways, adolescents and emerging adults have not yet settled on particular beliefs and behaviors (Arnett, 2000; Côté, 2000, 2006). Some research with immigrants to the United States has also shown that adolescents change their behaviors, beliefs, values, and identifications more than adults do (Nguyen & Williams, 1989; Phinney, Ong, & Madden, 2000). This phenomenon, also known as dissonant acculturation (Portes, 1997), may apply not only to immigrants but also more generally to adolescents and emerging adults who are exposed to globalization.

On the more negative side, research with immigrants also suggests that risks for psychological and social problems increase as a person moves from childhood into adolescence (Berry, 1997; Unger, Chapter 34, this volume). These risks may carry into emerging adulthood, where identity issues now come to the fore. With globalization, as with immigration, adolescence and emerging adulthood may be vulnerable developmental periods.

Furthermore, the phenomenon of emerging adulthood itself goes hand-in-hand with key features of globalization. Emerging adulthood is a new phase of the life course, spanning the late teens through the mid-to-late twenties. In many ways, this phase is demographically, behaviorally, and psychologically distinctive from adolescence and young adulthood (Arnett, 1998, 2000, 2004). For example, emerging adults have high mobility, yet remain somewhat financially dependent on their parents. They often report striving for a sense of responsibility for themselves, and feeling “in-between” adolescence and full adulthood. Emerging adulthood is not a period of life present in all cultures, however. Researchers find that it is most evident in societies where educational training has become extended while marriage and family obligations often are postponed (e.g., Mayseless & Scharf, 2003). Both emerging adulthood and

globalization, then, involve an emphasis on continuing education and mobility, as well as individual autonomy and a psychology of being “in-between.”

Before proceeding, we wish to observe that, just as emerging adulthood varies in its applicability and presence across cultures (Arnett, 2011), adolescence also takes many forms across cultures. For example, although more and more adolescents worldwide obtain secondary education, substantial numbers of adolescent boys, and especially adolescent girls, do not (see Larson, Wilson, & Rickman, 2009, for statistics documenting worldwide diversity in adolescence on such factors as education, work, and marriage age). We often write here of cultural identity developments in the plural, in recognition of the diversity of the experience of adolescence and emerging adulthood across the globe. Below, we elaborate on the second reason that we write of cultural identity development in plural, namely the complexity and diversity of cultural identifications that come with globalization.

With Globalization Comes Complexity

The worldwide reach of globalization is occurring in many arenas. In this section, we describe it with regard to language, diet, and media. Each of these three arenas typically forms important components of the custom complexes of a culture, as well as of the cultural identity developments of adolescents and emerging adults.

Globalization and Language

Scholars have noted linguistic changes resulting from globalization (Crystal, 2003; Tomlinson, 1999; Tsui, 2007). The number of people who have exposure to, or are learning, the English language is at an all-time high. As of 2002, one-third of the world’s population had at least some English language exposure, and one billion people were then learning English (Lieber & Weisberg, 2002). English is the first language for over 400 million people (English Language

Guide, 2009); it is spoken on a daily basis as a second language by 375 million people; and it is used occasionally as a foreign language by over 700 million people for business or pleasure (English Learning Resources, 2009). Moreover, exposure to English is expected to rise exponentially in the years to come. By the year 2050, it is estimated that half of the world’s population will be proficient English speakers (*The Economist*, 2009).

While English is becoming a global language, many local languages are dying out. More than 7,000 languages are in existence today. With the current rate of “language death” at 1 per 14 days, however, the expectation is that fewer than half of today’s languages will remain in about 100 years (“Enduring Voices,” 2008). Although this threat to local languages has propelled preservation programs such as National Geographic’s Enduring Voices Project and local preservation academies, many indigenous languages are becoming extinct.

With its communicative, symbolic, and social functions, language constitutes a key part of cultural identity, and the linguistic changes occurring as a result of globalization are likely to influence the cultural identity developments of many adolescents and emerging adults. For example, as stated above, around the world, youth are particularly likely to learn English. This occurs formally in school, but also informally through work, the media, contact with tourists, and so forth. Youth are also particularly likely to lose the languages of their local communities, either because the local languages are not passed on from the older to the younger generation, or as a consequence of adolescents and emerging adults moving away from their local community. In some cases, the loss may not be outright, as when second-generation immigrant youth adopt a hybrid language such as Spanglish or Chinglish.

Globalization and Diet

Globalization has made local cuisines available far from their original locales (Mendez & Popkin, 2004; Tomlinson, 1999). A rapid increase in the

availability of Western fast foods is occurring in the developing world. In India, for example, the fast food industry is growing at an average of 40% per year (“Good Stuff? – Fast Food,” 2008). The flow of foods and cuisines also moves in the other direction. Non-native restaurants increasingly permeate the US and European food markets. In Britain, for example, Indian “take-aways” now outnumber fish and chip shops (Tomlinson, 1999).

Clearly, global dietary changes have health effects. One such effect is the worldwide obesity epidemic, which the Worldwide Health Organization attributes primarily to economic growth and the globalization of food markets (Global strategy on diet, physical activity, and health: obesity and overweight, 2009). Rising obesity rates are particularly pronounced among children and adolescents (French, Story, Neumark-Sztainer, Fulkerson, & Hannan, 2001), who may be most likely to be attracted to unhealthy Western food.

Global dietary changes also have psychological implications. Food—what, when, where, and with whom we eat—is part of daily cultural customs. Food is also a crucial part of a culture’s holidays. Finally, food is often linked to moral values and cultural worldviews. For example, foods can be seen as sacred, forbidden, virtuous, disgusting, male or female, and so forth. As with language, youth are particularly likely to change their dietary habits. As with language, the changes are likely to have implications for their worldviews and cultural identity development.

Globalization and Media

With the media explosion, the global world begs for our attention today more than ever. For example, as Table 13.1 shows, worldwide Internet usage skyrocketed between 2000 and 2008. Particularly notable is the rapid rise of Internet connectivity in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Middle East. Cell phone usage has also become increasingly common. Four of every five US teenagers carried a cell phone in 2008, representing a 40% increase

since 2004 (“Cell Phones Key to Teens’ Social Lives,” 2008). Currently, the most rapid increase in cell phone use is occurring in the developing world. In 2002, less than half of mobile subscriptions globally were in the developing world. By 2008, the proportion had risen to two-thirds. As of 2009, 60% of people globally have cell phone subscriptions (“World’s Poor,” 2009).

Another relatively recent media phenomenon is Facebook, a social networking website that allows people to bring their social lives to the Web. According to Facebook’s senior platform manager, Facebook is about “giving users the ability to take their identity and friends with them around the Web” (“Facebook to open the gates,” 2008). The website has 175 million active users as of 2009, more than 70% of whom are living outside of the US (Facebook Press Room, 2009). Additionally, Facebook users tend to be adolescents or emerging adults; 54% of users are under 25 years of age (“2009 Facebook Demographics and Statistics Report,” 2009). Facebook, then, provides instantaneous connectivity, overcomes geographic boundaries, and goes along with particular conceptions of how to self-present and connect with others.

In sum, today’s adolescents and emerging adults seldom grow up knowing of only one culture but increasingly have interactions with people from diverse cultures, either first-hand or indirectly through different media. These interactions influence their everyday lives in myriad ways, from everyday habits such as language use and diet to key life-course decisions about where to work and whom to marry. Consequently, developing a cultural identity has become more complex, and it is no longer a question of becoming an adult member of one culture—but rather a task of navigating both local and global cultures. Next, we turn to how the observed complexity results in diverse pathways to cultural identity formation.

With Complexity Comes Diversity

In a globalized world where many adolescents and emerging adults navigate multiple cultures,

Table 13.1 World Internet usage in 2000 and 2008

World region	Users in 2000	Users in 2008	2000–2008 Growth (%)
Africa	4,514,400	54,171,500	1,100
Asia	114,304,000	650,361,843	469
Europe	105,096,093	390,141,073	271
Latin America/Caribbean	18,068,919	166,360,735	821
Middle East	3,284,800	45,861,346	1,296
North America	108,096,800	246,822,936	128
Oceania/Australia	7,620,480	20,593,751	170
World total	360,985,492	1,574,313,184	336

Note: From “Internet usage statistics: The big picture. World Internet users and population stats”. (2009). Retrieved March 24, 2009, from Internet World Stats: Usage and Population Statistics, website: <http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats>.

cultural identities become more diverse. For most of human history, it seems likely that, for most people, cultural identity development was relatively simple. Children were born into a culture and, in the course of childhood, adopted the ways of that culture as their own ways and as the basis of their cultural identity (e.g., Mead, 1928; Schlegel & Barry, 1991).

This pattern of cultural identity development can still be observed today in traditional cultures (e.g., Whiting & Edwards, 1988). However, for most of the world, the process of forming a cultural identity has changed dramatically in recent decades. As economies have become more complex, the range of possible identity paths in terms of work has expanded vastly. With respect to marriage, young people have more freedom than ever before to choose their partners with minimal family influence, transforming marriage from a practical arrangement between families to an identity-based search for a “soul mate.” Increasing flexibility in gender roles, especially during the past half century, has led to an unprecedented expansion of young women’s life options. In the past, becoming a wife and mother were virtually their only options, regardless of what their personal identity preferences might be, but today young women exceed young men in educational attainment in virtually every country in the world (United Nations Development Programme, 2009). Moreover, women have, in vast numbers, entered professions from which they were formerly excluded, such as medicine, law, and business.

Globalization has brought these changes to every corner of the world. The increasing interconnections of the global economy have led to an expansion of identity options in work for young people in developing countries, especially in urban areas. Consequently, young people are migrating in large numbers from rural villages to urban centers. In 2008, for the first time in human history, more people were living in urban areas than in rural areas (Population Reference Bureau, 2008), and the migration has been led mainly by emerging adults (Hugo, 2005). As young people leave their families and rural villages for urban centers, they gain greater freedom to choose their own love partners as well, sometimes despite their families’ objections. In urban areas, young people come into contact with the ideology and values promoted by the global economy, including independence, consumerism, and individual choice.

One model that fruitfully can be used to understand how globalization promotes diverse cultural identities in adolescence and emerging adulthood is Berry’s (1997) model of adaptation to immigration. In presenting his model, Berry raises the question, “What happens to individuals, who have developed in one cultural context, when they attempt to live in a new cultural context?” (1997, p. 6; see also Huynh et al., Chapter 35, this volume). Because our purposes here pertain to globalization rather than immigration, we could rephrase the question as, “What happens in the identity development of adolescents and emerging adults when they are presented with multiple

cultural contexts, including their local culture and other cultures they may come into contact with via globalization?”

Berry (1997) presented four possible patterns of acculturation:

1. *Assimilation*. Persons do not wish to maintain their original cultural identity. Instead, they reject it and embrace their new culture as the basis of an entirely new cultural identity.
2. *Separation*. Persons place value on holding on to their original culture, and avoid contact with people in the new culture to which they have immigrated.
3. *Integration*. The original cultural identity is combined with elements of the new culture (see also Huynh et al., Chapter 35, this volume, on biculturalism).
4. *Marginalization*. Persons have little interest in maintaining their original culture, but also reject (or are rejected by) the new culture.

Next, we reconceptualize these four acculturation patterns with regard to cultural identity formation occurring in the context of globalization.

Assimilation

In Berry’s model, people who choose assimilation have no wish to hold onto the culture they left when they immigrated, but embrace wholeheartedly the new culture. They engage actively in what Berry terms “culture shedding,” defined as “the *unlearning* of aspects of one’s previous repertoire that are no longer appropriate” (1997, p. 13, emphasis in original).

This is not only an immigration pattern, but a possible cultural identity path for young people growing up with globalization. Especially in places where economic and social changes are occurring rapidly, young people may decide in the course of growing up that their local culture has little or nothing to offer them. They see the global culture, not the local culture, as where their future will be. Consequently, as soon as they are able – usually in adolescence or emerging adulthood – they leave behind the ways of their local

culture as much as possible for the ways of the global culture.

One example of this pattern can be seen in the lives of young women in China. As mentioned at the outset of the chapter, in her book *Factory Girls*, Leslie Chang (2008) describes how there has been a massive migration in recent years from rural villages to booming urban industrial centers, led by young women in their late teens and early twenties. When they first arrive in the city, they are often tentative and reserved. They work in a miserable factory job for long hours and little pay. They send a substantial part of their pay home to their family in the village. Their limited social life is spent with other girls whom they already know from the village or with others who are from their region.

Gradually, however, they may gain more confidence and begin to learn and adopt the ways of the city. In effect, they engage in culture shedding at a rapid rate, and embrace instead the values of the global culture as presented to them in city life: individualism, consumerism, and self-development. They learn that there is a wide range of jobs available, and they switch jobs frequently for better pay, better working conditions, and greater opportunity to learn and advance themselves. They begin to send less of their income back home and spend more of it on themselves, for example on clothes, make-up, technological products such as cell phones, and a nicer place to live. Many seek out additional education and training—including training in how to speak English—so that they can compete for better jobs with not only Chinese, but also international, companies. They undergo a dramatic change in values because they learn that, in the global culture, values of assertiveness, self-confidence, and initiative are rewarded, not the traditional Chinese values of humility, self-sacrifice, and self-denial.

Separation

In Berry’s model, the separation response entails maintaining allegiance to the original local

culture and avoiding contact with the new culture to which the person has immigrated. This response would be most common among people for whom immigration had been involuntary, such as refugees from war or famine, or family members who were required to go along when the head of the family immigrated. Reframed for globalization, it would apply to people whose local culture was being impacted by globalization but who preferred the local culture to the global culture and wished to keep the global culture at bay.

One interesting example of a separation response to globalization comes from the islands known as Samoa, in the Pacific Ocean near New Zealand. Samoa became known to many Americans early in the twentieth century when the anthropologist Margaret Mead wrote a book about Samoan adolescence, *Coming of Age in Samoa* (1928), that was widely read in the United States (and, in fact, all over the world). Many people were fascinated by the stark contrast between adolescence in Samoa and adolescence in the West.

One of the ways in which Samoa differed from the West was in having a ritual to mark the beginning of adolescence. The traditional rite of passage into adolescence involved an elaborate process of tattooing sometime between ages 14 and 16 (Côté, 1994). The tattoos were made in elaborate geometric patterns and extended from the waist to the knees. Having the tattoos put on was painful, especially for males, whose tattoos were more elaborate than those applied to females and usually took 2–3 months to complete, whereas the tattoos for females took 5–6 days. But the young men experienced it together and took satisfaction in sharing the ordeal of it and in supporting one another. In spite of the pain, few young men or young women declined to take part in it, because being tattooed was considered essential to sexual attractiveness and to being accepted as a legitimate candidate for full adult status.

This tattooing ritual has been profoundly affected by the globalization of adolescence. In the past 100 years, Samoan culture has changed a great deal (Côté, 1994; McDade & Worthman,

2004). Christian missionaries arrived and sought to stamp out a variety of native practices they considered immoral, including the ritual of tattooing. More recently, the rise of secondary education and the widening of economic opportunities for Samoans who immigrated to nearby New Zealand undermined the traditional local economy and caused the tattooing ritual to be viewed as irrelevant or even shamefully “primitive” by some Samoans. By now, most Samoans have abandoned their cooperative, traditional ways in favor of participation in the wage labor of the global economy.

Recently, however, tattooing for young men has undergone a revival. Currently, the majority of young men get tattoos in their teens to demonstrate their pride in the traditional ways of their culture, as part of an explicit attempt to resist the total absorption of their indigenous culture into the global culture (Côté, 1994). The tattooing ritual is more than skin deep; it is a custom complex representing their belief in the value of Samoan culture and their desire to retain a Samoan cultural identity. Although many young Samoans immigrate to New Zealand or other places seeking the opportunities available in the global economy, those who stay often adopt a separation response to globalization and represent their resistance to globalization through the traditional tattooing ritual.

Integration

In the integration response, immigrants maintain their identification with their culture of origin even as they also seek to adapt to the ways of their new culture. This response has also been termed *bicultural*, in the literature on ethnic identity (Phinney, 1990; Phinney & Devich-Navarro, 1997; Huynh et al., Chapter 35, this volume; Umaña-Taylor, Chapter 33, this volume). Applied to globalization, it means that, in addition to their local identity, young people develop a global identity that gives them a sense of belonging to a worldwide culture and includes an awareness of the events, practices, styles, and information that are part of the global culture. Their global

identity allows them to communicate with people from diverse places when they travel from home, when others travel to where they live, and when they communicate with people in other places via media technology (such as e-mail or Facebook). Television is crucial in the process of developing a global identity, as it provides exposure to people, events, and information from all over the world. However, for future generations of children and adolescents, the Internet is likely to be even more important, because it allows direct communication with other people worldwide (in e-mail “chat rooms,” e.g., or interactive computer games) and provides direct access to information about every part of the world.

Alongside their global identity, people continue to develop a local identity as well, based on the local circumstances, local environment, local traditions, and local language of the place where they grew up. This is the identity they are likely to use most in their daily interactions with family, friends, and community members. For example, India has a growing, vigorous high-tech economic sector, led largely by young people. However, even the better-educated young people, who have become full-fledged members of the global economy, still tend to prefer to have an arranged marriage, in accordance with Indian tradition (Verma & Saraswathi, 2002). They also generally expect to care for their parents in old age, again in accord with Indian tradition. Thus, they have one identity for participating in the global economy and succeeding in the fast-paced world of high technology, and another identity, rooted in Indian tradition, that they maintain with respect to their families and their personal lives.

Although developing a bicultural identity means that a local identity is retained alongside a global identity, there is no doubt that local cultures everywhere are being modified by globalization, specifically by the introduction of global media, free market economics, democratic institutions, increased length of formal schooling, and delayed entry into marriage and parenthood (see also Huynh et al., Chapter 35, this volume). These changes greatly alter traditional cultural practices and beliefs. Such changes may lead less to a bicultural identity than to a *hybrid identity*,

combining local culture and elements of the global culture (Hermans & Kempen, 1998).

Marginalization

Immigrants who experience marginalization, according to Berry, are those who feel at home neither in their culture of origin nor in the culture to which they have immigrated. Having left their culture of origin, they no longer feel connected to it. They may feel that their new culture is simply too different from their culture of origin for them to adapt it, or they may feel that their new culture rejects them, perhaps due to their physical appearance, socioeconomic status, or religion. Marginalization is most likely when there is a large degree of what Berry calls *cultural distance*, meaning dissimilarity between the culture of origin and the new culture.

With regard to globalization, marginalization may take place among people whose local culture is being rapidly altered by globalization. They may see their local culture changing beyond recognition, so that they no longer feel connected to it, but at the same time they may feel that the global culture has no place for them. Cultural distance applies here, too; the greater the cultural distance between the local culture and the global culture, the more likely the response of marginalization.

A vivid example of marginalization can be found in Nepal. Few places in the world have been more remote and more isolated from the West historically than Nepal. Not only is Nepal thousands of miles from the nearest Western country, but until 1951 the government made a special effort to isolate its citizens, banning all communications (travel, trade, books, movies, etc.) between Nepal and “the outside.” Since then, Nepal, and especially its largest city of Kathmandu, has been undergoing a rapid transition into the world of global trade, Western tourism, and electronic mass media. Ethnographic research provides a vivid look at how adolescents and emerging adults in Kathmandu are responding to globalization (Liechty, 1995). Media represent the driving force of globalization in Nepal. A variety of imported media are highly popular with young

people in Kathmandu. Movies and videos from both India and the US find a broad audience of young people. American and Indian television shows are also popular, and televisions are a standard feature within middle-class homes. There is an enthusiastic audience among the young for Western music, including rock, heavy metal, and rap. Sometimes, young people combine local culture with imported Western styles. For example, a local rock band has recorded an original Nepali-language album in the style of the Beatles. However, older traditions such as Nepali folk songs are rejected by many urban young people.

Nepalese people use the terms *teen* and *teenager* in English, even when speaking Nepali, to refer to young people who are oriented toward Western tastes, especially Western media. Not all Nepalese young people are “teenagers,” even if they are in their teen years, the term is not an age category but a social category that refers to young people who are pursuing a Western identity and style based on what they have learned through media. To many young people in Kathmandu, being a “teenager” is something they covet and strive for. They associate it with leisure, affluence, and expanded opportunities. However, many adults use *teenager* with less favorable connotations to refer to young people who are disobedient, antisocial, and potentially violent. Their use of the term in this way reflects their view that Western media have had corrupting effects on many of their young people.

Even to “teenagers” themselves, the availability of Western media is a mixed blessing. They enjoy it and it provides them with information about the wider world beyond the borders of Nepal. Many of them use media to help them make sense of their own lives, growing up as they are in a rapidly changing society, and as material for imagining a broad range of possible selves (see also Oyserman & James, [Chapter 6](#), this volume). However, the cultural distance between Nepal and the global culture is vast. Western media tend to disconnect Nepalese adolescents and emerging adults from their own culture and from their cultural traditions, leaving many of them confused and alienated. The media ideals of Western life raise their expectations for their own

lives to unattainable levels, and these ideals eventually collide with the incompatibility between their expectations and their real lives. Ultimately, many of them feel marginalized: alienated from their local culture, but not truly part of the global culture. In the moving words of 21-year-old Ramesh (Liechty, 1995, p. 187):

You know, now I know sooooo much [from films, books, and magazines about the West]. Being a frog in a pond isn't a bad life, but being a frog in an ocean is like hell. Look at this. Out here in Kathmandu there is nothing. We have nothing.

The consequences of cultural identity confusion resulting from globalization are examined further in the next section.

With Diversity Come Opportunities and Risks

Cultural Identity Confusion

Revisiting Erikson's (1950, 1968) concern with the possibility of a negative outcome of the identity development process, authors have voiced concern that having exposure to multiple cultures may result in some adolescents and emerging adults experiencing identity confusion (Arnett, 2002; Hermans & Dimaggio, 2007; Nsamenang, 2002). Such confusion may take somewhat different forms. In some cases, there may be lack of commitment to any culture—traditional or new, local or global. Marginalization, as described above, and alternative terminology such as “de-cultured” (Giddens, 2000), “deterritorialized” (Kearney, 1995; Tomlinson, 1999), “delocalized” (Thompson, 1995), and “unrooted” (Friedman, 2000) capture different facets of this risk where an adolescent or emerging adult feels bereft of a sense of home and custom complexes to guide positive involvement in local or global communities. Identity confusion may also take the form of bouncing between or among different cultural identities across situations and contexts. Although some degree of alternation might allow for useful flexibility, in other cases it may be confusing (Phinney & Baldelomar, 2011; see

also Downie, Koestner, ElGeledi, & Cree, 2004; Falmagne, 2004; Huynh et al., Chapter 35, this volume). What we will term *cultural identity confusion* may be a particular kind of identity confusion that occurs as a result of globalization.

One question is whether cultural identity confusion may lead to psychopathology. Hermans and Dimaggio (2007) have suggested that there may be a link between globalization and “identity disturbances.” They note that, since about 1980, there has been a dramatic increase in the diagnosis of multiple personality disorder or dissociative identity disorder. Furthermore, the “alters” (or personalities) reported by patients have increased in number, and they have become more diverse in type of identity. In more recent cases, for example, patients report alters based on media characters, and alters who vary widely in terms of ethnicity, nationality, religion, and so forth. To the extent to which these changes in prevalence of dissociative identity disorder are valid, they begin to indicate how awareness of diverse cultural identities may be internalized in pathological ways. However, the extent to which exposure to globalization is a cause *per se* of psychopathology appears to remain an open question, as does the question of the extent to which adolescents and emerging adults may be particularly vulnerable.

Another question is whether cultural identity confusion may be related to problems such as substance abuse, prostitution, and suicide. In a study drawing on multiple data sources from the period between 1980 and 1991, researchers reported increases in suicide, drug abuse, and male and female prostitution in Ivory Coast youth aged 16–20 (Delafosse, Fouraste, & Gbobouo, 1993). The researchers attributed the increase in problems to the confusion that young people experienced between the values of their traditional cultures and the values of the West. Increases in recent decades, sometimes steep, in rates of suicide and suicide attempts have also been reported by a considerable number of researchers working in Pacific societies, parts of Sri Lanka, and Native American cultures (Booth, 1999; Hezel, 1987; Johnson & Tomren, 1999; Kearney & Miller, 1985; MacPherson &

MacPherson, 1987; Novins, Beals, Roberts, & Manson, 1999; Reser, 1990; Robinson, 1990; Rubinstein, 1983). At a general level, researchers have attributed these increases to youth feeling alienated from both traditional and global values. It should be added, however, that researchers working in different locations vary in their more specific explanations, such as the emphasis they place on changing family roles, the irreconcilability of increased economic expectations and decreased opportunities, and the loss of traditional pathways of adolescent socialization.

Still another question is whether cultural identity confusion is tied to hostility and aggression toward others. In a study of immigrant adolescents, Phinney and Navarro (1997) found that “alternating biculturals” whose ethnic affiliations varied notably across social settings were more negative in their attitudes toward ethnic groups other than their own, as compared to “blended biculturals” who had integrated their ethnic group’s and the receiving society’s cultural mores into a fairly stable identity. In their research in the Ivory Coast, Delafosse and colleagues (1993) also attributed recent increases in armed aggression by youth to experiences of internal conflict between local and global values. At a broader level, Lieber and Weisberg (2002) have argued that “problems of identity” (p. 275) occur in some parts of Africa, South Asia, and the Middle East, where frustration with locally corrupt or unresponsive governments coupled with exposure to global cultural values leads to “rage” (p. 275) and sometimes violence, either locally or directed toward the West (see also Hermans & Dimaggio, 2007; Kinnvall, 2004).

In sum, there is empirical and theoretical basis for concern that globalization, cultural identity confusion, and serious internalizing and externalizing problems are connected. At this time, however, the specific nature of the connections and how they might manifest in different locales require further research.

We can, nonetheless, point to factors for future research to consider. The risks of cultural identity confusion and pathology may be pronounced

where there is a substantial gap between the cultures to which an adolescent or emerging adult is exposed. As noted above, Berry (1997) has observed that the greater the “cultural distance” in beliefs and behaviors between cultures, the greater the psychological and social problems in immigrants. Also, the extent to which one is voluntarily motivated to adopt the custom complexes of a new culture and to shed some from one’s traditional culture appears to be important. Researchers have noted this in comparisons of immigrants and refugees, where immigrants show fewer acculturation problems (Berry, 1997). Nsamenang’s (2002) observations about African families are also suggestive. He notes that fathers are loath to relinquish patriarchal power in the face of changes resulting from globalization. Nsamenang (2002) describes the father as “the net loser” whose “once undisputed authority is declining as teenagers and their mothers find their ways around the world without depending on his guidance or intervention” (p. 23). In sum, lack of volition, the prospect of loss of power, and exposure to cultures that are highly divergent in their custom complexes and statuses raise the likelihood that cultural identity confusion will arise and develop into psychological and social problems.

A Cultural Gap Between Adolescents and Parents

With globalization, a widening gap may open up between adolescents and their parents in terms of views of parental authority and adolescent autonomy. In traditional cultures where adolescents spend the majority of their time with parents and are integrated into adult groups, adolescents and parents typically share common views of obedience, responsibility, self-reliance, and so forth (Schlegel, 2011). With modernity and globalization, however, a gap may open up (Friedman, 2000).

Research with immigrant adolescents from diverse cultural backgrounds living in the US has found that they often report a desire to limit parental authority over a variety of their activities

(Fuligni, 1998). Moreover, research comparing immigrant adolescents and parents in the US has shown that adolescents have expectations for behavioral autonomy at an earlier age than their parents do (Juang, Lerner, McKinney, & von Eye, 1999). Similarly, findings from ethnically diverse immigrant groups in Canada have shown that parents sanction parental authority more than their adolescents, whereas adolescents desire more autonomy than their parents are willing to grant (Kwak & Berry, 2001). In a study in China, adolescents also reported that they desired less parental authority and more adolescent autonomy than their parents believed they should have (Yau & Smetana, 1996). In Japan, researchers have noted that emerging adults in their twenties who continue to rely on parental support while engaging in various forms of self-explorations and postponing marriage are termed “parasite singles” by their parents and older generations—a term that is hardly flattering (Naito & Gielen, 2002). Taken together, these findings suggest that a gap opens up between parents and their adolescents and emerging adults as they cease to share one traditional culture and instead are exposed to various cultures and globalization. This gap pertains to views and behaviors that revolve around autonomy and authority—values that are central to custom complexes and cultural identity development.

The extent to which this gap has negative repercussions seems an open question. Friedman (2000) proposed that parents resent the gap that globalization creates between themselves and their children. Interestingly, however, with regard to the finding above on Japanese “parasite singles,” Naito and Gielen (2002) reported that while parents clearly had some misgivings about their emerging adult children, some parents simultaneously expressed admiration for their children’s creativity and self-assertiveness. Moreover, research has found that only 10–20% of Japanese adolescents report that their parents understand them, but at the same time 80–90% describe their family life as “fun” or “pleasant” and say that they communicate with their parents on a “fairly regular” basis (Stevenson & Zusho, 2002).

Further, an ethnographic study in the Czech Republic found vast differences between parents who had grown up under Soviet communism, and their emerging adult children who grew up mostly in the post-communist era (Nash, 2005). Nevertheless, parents enthusiastically supported their emerging adults' opportunities to work, travel, and study as they chose. Rather than resenting the young, parents generally encouraged their children to pursue the opportunities that they never had.

For research with immigrant adolescents and their parents, findings on the extent of conflict and cohesion are inconsistent. Some studies report more conflict among immigrants than non-immigrants (Farver, Xu, Bhadha, Narang, & Lieber, 2007; Rosenthal, Demetriou, & Efklides, 1989), some find no differences (Fuligni, 1998), and some report less conflict among immigrants (Barber, 1994). Furthermore, very little research has attempted to demonstrate that a gap between adolescents and parents in views of authority and autonomy is predictive of higher levels of conflict and lower levels of cohesion (Dost & Jensen, 2009).

In sum, extant research indicates that, with globalization, a gap may well arise between parents and their adolescents and emerging adults on views of parental authority and adolescent autonomy. The consequences of such a gap, however, require further research. Some findings suggest that resentment and conflict between parents and youth may arise. But findings also intimate that sometimes both parents and youth recognize the necessity or desirability of this gap in a globalizing world. Finally, even as cultural gaps arise between parents and their adolescent and emerging adult children, parents and children may continue to share other values, such as interdependence, respect, and familial harmony, that may mitigate or supersede the importance of the gaps (Dost & Jensen, 2009). To return to Africa for a last example on this topic, Nsamenang (2002) has noted how globalization has partially delocalized many African families, and that some youth have developed more autonomous or self-focused identities; yet he observes that the importance of "African familialism" remains unmatched.

Youth Civic Involvement

Turning from the negative effects of globalization, it may also have positive influences, specifically on youth civic involvement (see also Hart, Richardson, & Wilkenfeld, Chapter 32, this volume; Vanderkooy, Stepick, & Stepick, Chapter 37, this volume). An article in the *Economist* (February 7, 2009) addressing the impact of globalization and worldwide electronic media on adolescents and emerging adults asked: "Will they try to change the world, or simply settle for enjoying themselves?" While this article went on to describe the popularity of so-called "cyber-hedonism" such as online gambling and viewing of pornography in highly diverse regions of the world, there also seem to be ways in which globalization may provide new kinds of political and civic opportunities for the youth.

Giddens (2000) noted that globalization pushes for more democratic and less authoritarian forms of governance, and he speculated that youth may play an important role in civic activism in this new political climate. Saraswathi and Larson (2002), in their reflections on adolescence in a global world, also called for attention to emerging youth political movements, such as "Children's Movement for Peace" in Colombia. Welti (2002) highlighted how youth in a number of Latin American countries have become interested in supporting indigenous movements and have mobilized against privatization of public services. Welti notes that these youth movements are driven, in part, by an anti-globalization stance. In some cases, then, youth civic involvement may be supported or encouraged by some of the characteristics of globalization, such as easy media access and a worldview that conceptualizes adolescents and emerging adults in more egalitarian, independent, and agentic terms. Moreover, globalization may be tied to youth civic involvement as youth mobilize to either support or counter the occurrence of globalization itself.

How globalization, cultural identity, and civic involvement go together, then, becomes an intriguing question (see also Jensen & Flanagan, 2008; Stepick, Stepick, & Vanderkooy,

Chapter 37, this volume). Recently, Huntington (2004) proposed that incorporating more than one culture into one's identity—something increasingly likely with globalization—might threaten civic involvement. Focusing on the US, Huntington specifically argued that immigrants who maintain a culturally distant and immigrant-focused sense of self represent a threat to national coherence and civil society. In this view, immigrants who have multicultural affiliations will see their loyalties and time divided and hence will put less effort and energy into civic associations, public life, and politics in the US.

However, a test of Huntington's proposal found immigrants' cultural identities to be related to civic involvement in a way opposite to what Huntington predicted. The study examined the extent to which immigrant adolescents and parents spoke of "cultural motives," that is their affiliation with their culture of origin or their self-identification as immigrants, to account for their involvement or lack thereof in political and civic activities (Jensen, 2008). Results showed that cultural motives were twice as likely to be mentioned as sources of engagement than disengagement. In fact, cultural motives rarely accounted for lack of participation. The research also indicated that cultural motives for civic engagement included a concern for the welfare of one's cultural community, a desire for "bridging," where one comes to know other American communities and vice versa, and appreciation for civic opportunities afforded by American democracy (see also, Jensen, 2010).

Clearly, more research is needed in this area. But the extent to which youth civic involvement is tied to the means of globalization (such as the Internet), as well as associated mobility (such as migration), values (such as democracy, youth agency, and capitalism), and consequences (such as bicultural identities) constitutes an innovative research area. Answering these questions will help us to understand more about globalization and how it is truly transforming the world.

Conclusion

"Globalization fundamentally transforms the relationship between the *places* we inhabit

and our cultural practices, experiences, and identities" (Tomlinson, 1999, p. 106, emphasis in original). As we have discussed here, the transformations of globalization are quite evident in the complexity and diversity of cultural identity developments in adolescents and emerging adults (Jensen, 2011). Moreover, the last three decades or so likely represent only the beginnings of globalization. For example, China and India each have more than a billion people, of which only a minority have fully entered the global economy and culture. The future, then, is likely to hold quite dramatic changes for even larger groups of adolescents and emerging adults on a worldwide scale. As we have also discussed here, with these transformations come both risks and new opportunities.

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Part III

Well-Being, Needs, and Motives

Dynamics of Identity: Between Self-Enhancement and Self-Assessment

14

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Abstract

Identity, in the psychological sense, denotes a significant subset of self-construals: those that are relatively accessible mentally, deemed essential to who one is, and valued as important. Given that identity matters, it is a locus of affect and motivation. Nonetheless, the number, nature, strength, and interrelation of distinct identity motives remains contested. This chapter focuses on one key pair of motives involved in self-evaluation: self-enhancement and self-assessment. The former denotes the drive to see oneself positively, the latter, the drive to see oneself accurately. Probable signs and dynamic effects of both motives abound. Examples of self-enhancement include above-average effects and cognitive dissonance; examples of self-assessment include the respective attenuation of these by semantic precision and self-affirmation. Often, the self-enhancement “accelerator” competes with the self-assessment “brake” in this way, and several conditions have been established under which one or the other motive predominates. As regards the relative adaptiveness of self-enhancement or self-assessment, the findings are complex and mixed. However, moderate self-enhancement often promotes psychological and physical well-being, albeit at the expense of interpersonal relations, probably because it serves to sustain good spirits and goal-pursuit. Many other identity motives have been postulated. These include drives for meaning, continuity, coherence, communion, and agency. Such motives cannot be completely reduced to self-enhancement and self-assessment, nor vice versa. Still, self-enhancement and self-assessment partly pervade other identity motives: the latter cannot be easily satisfied without also entailing tolerably favorable implications for self, nor unless sufficient warrant exists to conclude they really have been satisfied.

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What Is Identity?

Normal adult human beings experience the *existential intuition*: they explicitly apprehend that

they are something (Tallis, 2004). The familiarity of this experience belies its strangeness. The physical world ultimately consists of atomic particles moving in fields of force. Yet, parts of this world—recently evolved two-legged organisms with complex brains—have somehow become aware of this world and of themselves.

The existential intuition lies at the root of people's *psychological identity*, the motivational dynamics of which are the topic of this chapter. Before reviewing these dynamics, we outline our conception of psychological identity, so that it can be fruitfully compared and contrasted with the many others offered in this volume. Our conception is designed to be inclusive and to accommodate a variety of theories and findings. After doing so, we proceed (a) to outline identity motives, (b) to explore the dynamics of two of them in detail, (c) to examine some of the key consequences they entail, and (d) to discuss how various identity motives might be classified and what roles they might play.

The Roots of Psychological Identity

Psychological identity differs from logical identity. Every distinct thing possesses an objective logical identity: it trivially is what it is. However, some things, namely human beings, also possess a subjective psychological identity: part of what they are, at any point in time, is also who they construe themselves as being. Otherwise put, whereas all things can be described, from the outside, in terms of "It is X," human beings can be further described, from the inside, in terms of "I am X."¹

How does psychological identity (hereafter "identity") arise in the human mind and brain? The complete answer may lie beyond our cognitive ken (McGinn, 1999). But at least two interlocking cognitive capacities, together with their neural substrates, are likely to be preconditions for the emergence of identity.

One is the capacity for *symbolic language* (Deacon, 1998; Pinker, 2008). Human beings are adept at representing objects with symbols, and at flexibly and creatively manipulating

those symbols in rule-governed ways to convey propositional meanings that are either true or false. All spoken and written communication, not to mention mathematics and logic, rely on this fruitful union of reference and syntax.

The other is the capacity for *reflective thought* (Piaget, 2001; Strack & Deutsch, 2004). Whereas non-human animals, by and large, are mentally shackled to the concrete, the actual, and the here-and-now, human beings can freely contemplate the abstract, the possible, and the temporally distant (Lieberman & Trope, 2008). Hence, their minds can embrace the conceptual and intangible, the hypothetical and counterfactual, the future and past.

Equipped with these capacities, human beings subjectively construe themselves in sophisticated but distinctive ways. We now consider some of these.

Dimensions of Self-Construal

People's spontaneous self-descriptions (Kuhn & McPartland, 1954) typically make mention, not only of occasional attributes, but also of *enduring characteristics*, such as traits and habits (Holmberg, Markus, Herzog, & Franks, 1997). Such characteristics, being atemporal, must be encoded into semantic memory (i.e., memory for abstract attributes). Intriguingly, clinical and experimental studies show that semantic memory is not only functionally distinct from episodic memory (i.e., memory for concrete events), but is also capable of supporting self-construals even when episodic memory is badly disrupted (Kihlstrom, Beer, & Klein, 2003). That said, autobiographical recollections undeniably enrich self-construals, and a perennial theme running through the relevant literature is either that they are, or should be, integrated into a meaningful life narrative (McAdams, Chapter 5, this volume). Regardless of their mnemonic basis, however, people's self-construals are rich, articulate, and distinctive.

But people do not only construe themselves as they are or were, but they also construe

themselves as how they might be (Higgins, 1987) or might have been (Roese, 1997). Such “possible selves” (Vignoles, Manzi, Regalia, Jemmolo, & Scabini, 2008; Oyserman & James, Chapter 6, this volume), whether hypothetical or counterfactual, are as much a part of the psychological landscape as the actual self is: they furnish the framework for interpreting and evaluating it. Complex comparisons ensue (Suls & Wheeler, 2007), with information drawn from the social world (Taylor, Neter, & Wayment, 1995), personal introspections (Sedikides & Skowronski, 1995), and theories about abilities (Dweck, 1999).

Human beings’ self-construals are unique in another way: they readily extend beyond personal boundaries to encompass other persons (Chen, Boucher, & Kraus, Chapter 7, this volume) and groups (Spears, Chapter 9, this volume). That is, people can categorize themselves, not only as standalone individuals, but also as partners in a relationship or as members of a collective (Sedikides & Brewer, 2001). People can even mentally merge with inanimate consumer goods (Dittmar, Chapter 31, this volume), abstract social roles (Stets & Burke, 2003; Skorikov & Vondracek, Chapter 29, this volume), and geographical locations (Droseltis & Vignoles, 2010).

The Core of Identity

Now we come to the main point. Identity amounts to more than just the sheer totality of ways in which people could construe themselves—whether semantically or episodically, actually or possibly, individually or collectively. The answer to the question “Who am I?” is in practice not infinitely long. Accordingly, a useful definition of identity should encompass only a consequential subset of potential self-construals—in particular, those that are relatively (a) *central* as opposed to peripheral, (b) *essential* as opposed to accidental, and (c) *important* as opposed to immaterial (Markus, 1977; Sedikides & Green, 2000). What do these three properties mean?

First, central self-construals occupy the foreground of the mind, having been made *acutely or chronically accessible* (Sedikides & Skowronski, 1990) by salient cues (McGuire & McGuire, 1988; Spears, Chapter 9, this volume) or personality dispositions (Bem, 1981).² Thus, a solitary male among females in a transient group, or a male who is habitually gender-schematic (i.e., typically thinks in terms of gender), would more readily tag themselves as male. Second, essential self-construals are those that refer to characteristics subjectively seen as *intrinsic* or *inevitable* (Haslam, Bastian, & Bissett, 2004). They imply a naïve theory about what necessarily one is or can be (Dweck, 1999). Gender identity would again be a good example (Frable, 1997; see also Bussey, Chapter 25, this volume; Dillon, Worthington, & Moradi, Chapter 27, this volume). Finally, important self-construals are those that *matter* to people: they are imbued with motivation (Sedikides & Gregg, 2003). For example, people in some cultures deem masculine or independent traits to be worth striving for, whereas people in other cultures place more value on feminine or interdependent traits (Fernandez, Paez, & Gonzalez, 2005; for a review, see Smith, Chapter 11, this volume).

As self-construals become more central, essential, and important—properties liable to be empirically correlated—they come to constitute people’s prototypical identity. Subjectively, this means that people will regard such self-construals as “theirs” and be committed to them (Abelson, 1986; Kroger & Marcia, Chapter 2, this volume; Luyckx, Schwartz, Goossen, Beyers, & Missotten, Chapter 4, this volume); objectively, it means that those self-construals will be more impactful, both psychologically and behaviorally (Crocker & Wolfe, 2001; Sedikides & Skowronski, 1993; Swann, Chang-Schneider, & McClarty, 2007). All sorts of self-construals generated by people’s cognitive capacities provide potential grist for the identity mill: from remembered experiences to projected plans, from personal passions to social commitments, from current values to anticipated feelings. However, only a consequential subset of that content ends up

getting ground by that mill. This, we submit, is people's identity.

Distinguishing Identity and Self

If this, then, is people's identity, what is their "self?" As with "identity," there is little consensus about the meaning of this naturally fuzzy term (Baumeister, 1998). Different researchers either advocate a preferred shade of meaning from a reasonable spectrum or else simply assume that its meaning is already clear enough. Fortunately, this lack of consensus does not prevent empirical progress, perhaps because the umbrella terms "self" and "identity" gesture toward broad areas of enquiry as much as they denote discrete phenomena.

Nonetheless, we attempt one clarification here. We assert that self-construals do *not* fully constitute the self. It follows that, because identity consists of a consequential subset of self-construals, identity does not fully constitute the self either. Rather, identity and self-construals are merely aspects of the self.

The impression that the self amounts to nothing more than identity or self-construals may be fostered by use of "self" as shorthand for terms like "self-concept." For example, Sedikides and Brewer (2001, p. 1) state that "... the self-concept consists of three fundamental self-representations: the individual self, the relational self, and the collective self" (see also Chen et al., Chapter 7, this volume; Spears, Chapter 9, this volume). Such shorthand is harmless, so long as it does not lead to inadvertent equivocation, or prompt the mistaken inference that the self is a purely cognitive entity. For example, Kihlstrom et al. (2003) seem to draw precisely this inference when they state that "Although the self [...] is a thorny metaphysical problem, cognitive psychology [holds that]... [t]he self is a mental representation of oneself, including all that one knows about oneself [p. 59]."

But suppose the self really were identical to self-construals or identity. Who would then be there to entertain them? The answer is: no one. But this is incoherent: mental content cannot be

free-floating. An underlying self, to ground such mental content, must be posited (Searle, 2008). Even when self-construals shift to a collective level (Spears, Chapter 9, this volume)—so that "we" construals replace "me" construals—some primordial self must still entertain those construals (Gaertner, Sedikides, & O'Mara, 2008). Moreover, this would be the very same self who experiences emotions and desires, or who acts or refrains from acting. In brief, self is a locus of coordinated cognition, volition, and action (Gregg, Sedikides, & Hart, 2008; Higgins, 1987).

Identity Motives

Human beings, then, do not merely coolly contemplate who they are; rather, they avidly take an interest in it. Their identity matters to them. Why? The answer is straightforward: identity-relevant self-construals carry affective consequences (Leary, 2007). So people seek to construe themselves in ways that augment the pleasantness, or diminish the unpleasantness, of those consequences. But what types of self-construals do people seek? Otherwise put, what are the key motives underlying people's identity?

Three Key Motives

Three fundamental *self-evaluation motives* (or *self-motives*, for short) have been postulated (Baumeister, 1998; Sedikides & Strube, 1997; Taylor et al., 1995).³ First, people can be concerned with the accuracy of their identities: they can seek to self-assess by favoring true self-construals over false ones (Trope, 1986). Second, people can be concerned with valence of their identities: they can seek to self-enhance by favoring positive self-construals over negative ones (Sedikides & Gregg, 2008). Third, people can be concerned with the consistency of their identities: they can seek to self-verify by favoring familiar self-construals over novel ones (Swann, Rentfrow, & Guinn, 2003).

In addition, each self-motive can, so to speak, operate in either direction: in pursuit of a desired identity, or in flight from a feared one (Elliot & Mapes, 2005; Higgins, 1987). For example, people can self-enhance either by promoting the positivity of their identity (i.e., engaging in opportunistic self-aggrandizement) or by preventing their identity from becoming negative (i.e., engaging in self-protection against self-threat; Alicke & Sedikides, 2009). However, these priorities need not be equally urgent. In particular, protecting one's self is more imperative than promoting it (Roese & Olson, 2007). For example, perceptions of not embodying one's "undesired self" predict well-being better than perceptions of embodying one's "ideal self" (Ogilvie, 1987; Oyserman & James, Chapter 6, this volume), and people consider themselves superior to others even more in terms of lacking vices than in having virtues (Hoorens, 1996). Given the generality of this motivational asymmetry (Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Finkenauer, & Vohs, 2001; but see Sedikides & Green, 2009), it would probably also characterize the motives to self-assess and self-verify, although empirical testing awaits.

What hedonic benefits might accrue from satisfying each of the three self-motives? First, knowing that one's identity is accurate—fostered by impartial self-assessment—should forestall the anxiety that being uncertain about oneself would create (Hogg, 2007). Second, believing that one's identity is consistent—fostered by a bias toward self-verification—should forestall the confusion that finding oneself to be unpredictable would cause (Swann et al., 2003). Third, evaluating one's identity as positive—fostered by a bias toward self-enhancement—should forestall the pain that being critical of oneself would induce (Leary & Leder, 2009).

Note too that these self-motives can compete. For example, suppose my existing self-conception was positive, stable, and justified. All three self-motives would then be satisfied. But suppose I now received information about myself that was both credible and critical, I would then have to choose between satisfying the motive to self-enhance, on the one hand, and

the motives to self-assess and self-verify, on the other.

Accordingly, various research paradigms have pitted one self-motive against another in order to gauge their relative strength. Taking feedback-seeking as an index of motive priority, it turns out that each self-motive can, on occasion, overpower the other. For example, people sometimes choose feedback more on the basis of its diagnosticity rather than its positivity (i.e., they prioritize self-assessment; Trope, 1986); or they sometimes choose to ask themselves questions that yield positive rather than diagnostic or confirmatory answers (i.e., they prioritize self-enhancement; Sedikides, 1993); or they sometimes choose negative confirming feedback over positive disconfirming feedback (i.e., they prioritize self-verification; Swann et al., 2003).

Later, we address the self-verification motive in particular, and consider further identity motives. But first we deal with the motives to self-enhance and self-assess. We contend that both are potent and pervasive. We further contend that many dynamics underlying identity can be efficiently understood in terms of the tension between them (for a fuller exposition, see Sedikides & Gregg, 2003, 2008).

Evidence for the Motive to Self-Enhance

Phenomena vary in how definitely they implicate a motive to self-enhance. Some provide circumstantial evidence, others more definite indications. The former type—which we term *prima facie signs*—include several aggregate effects and personality traits; the latter type—which we term *processing dynamics*—are demonstrated in experimental or quasi-experimental designs.

Prima facie signs can be both obvious and subtle. Obvious ones include various forms of *normative self-aggrandizement*. For example, people self-servingly take credit for successes while denying responsibility for failures (Mezulis, Abramson, Hyde, & Hankin, 2004), and they evaluate themselves favorably the world over (Schmitt & Allik, 2005). People also display a triad of positive illusions (Taylor & Brown,

1988), respectively reflecting inflated perceptions of (a) their own merits (Alicke, Vredenburg, Hiatt, & Govorun, 2001), (b) their levels of personal control (Fenton-O’Creevy, Nicholson, Soane, & Willman, 2003), and (c) their future prospects (Helweg-Larsen & Sheppard, 2001). The first positive illusion is typified by the *better-than-average effect* (Alicke & Govorun, 2005), where most people rate themselves as superior to others on a variety of desirable dimensions—including (ironically) the dimension of being bias-free (Pronin, Gilovich, & Ross, 2004).

A more subtle prima facie sign is *implicit self-positivity* (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995). Things linked to the self—such as one’s name, face, possessions, or group memberships—spontaneously take on a positive valence (Gebauer, Riketta, Broemer, & Maio, 2008). Moreover, by capitalizing upon this Midas-like effect, indirect measures of self-esteem can be devised, key among them being the *Name Letter Task* (Koole & DeHart, 2007) and the *Implicit Association Test* (Greenwald & Farnham, 2000). Although such indirect measures correlate only modestly with traditional self-report measures (Rudolph, Schröder-Abé, Schütz, Gregg, & Sedikides, 2008), they reveal evidence of robust preferences for self that hold up cross-culturally (Yamaguchi et al., 2007). More astonishingly still, people gravitate toward locations, occupations, and partners whose names resemble their own (Jones, Pelham, Carvallo, & Mirenberg, 2004; Pelham, Mirenberg, & Jones, 2002).

Do such prima facie signs reflect motivated self-enhancement? Alternative explanations, of a drier cognitive sort, can be posited. For example, name letter preferences may reflect, not so much enhanced self-liking, as greater familiarity with more frequently encountered indices of self. If so, a confounded property of the indices themselves, rather than the entity to which they refer, would drive the effect.⁴ Similarly, the better-than-average effect may be driven by an array of known artifacts (Hamamura, Heine, & Takemoto, 2007). For example, single things (e.g., one-self) are rated more favorably than sets of things (e.g., other people; Klar & Giladi, 1997), and

respondents rely more on information about themselves than others when making self–other comparisons (Eiser, Pahl, & Prins, 2001). In addition, although judgments about commonplace virtues and abilities elicit better-than-average effects, judgments about rarer virtues and abilities elicit *worse-than-average effects* (Moore, 2007).

Nonetheless, cognitive factors alone do not fully account for such prima facie signs (Alicke & Sedikides, 2009). First, such signs persist, albeit in attenuated form, when particular confounds are controlled. For example, people still rate themselves somewhat more positively than other specific individuals (Alicke, Klotz, Breitenbecher, Yurak, & Vredenburg, 1995). Second, such signs exhibit dynamics that defy purely cognitive explanations. For example, implicit self-esteem decreases following ego-threat (Jones, Pelham, Mirenberg, & Hetts, 2002). Third, although it is scientifically appropriate to test motivational hypotheses rigorously by offering well-articulated cognitive alternatives, those hypotheses remain a priori plausible. For instance, are parents’ judgments that their own children are superior to other people’s children—judgments that covary with parents’ own self-esteem—likely to be solely attributable to cognitive factors (Wegner & Fowers, 2008)?

In any event, the case for the potency and pervasiveness of the motive to self-enhance rests upon more telling evidence, which directly implicates processing dynamics. In this regard, two types of motivated bias merit mention: *memory selectivity* (Sanitioso, Kunda, & Fong, 1990) and *partisan reasoning* (Lord, Ross, & Lepper, 1979). An example of the first bias is people’s forgetting of unfavorable (but not favorable) behavioral predictions, made about them (but not others), when they concern central (but not peripheral) aspects of their identity (Sedikides & Green, 2000). An example of the second bias is people’s thinking harder and longer about, and being more likely to doubt and check, information that threatens them compared to information that reassures them (Ditto & Lopez, 1992). In the first case, the past is warped to preserve positive identity in the present; in the second case, the present

is warped to promote positive identity in the future.

Still more convincingly, self-enhancing dynamics exert behavioral as well as psychological effects. In particular, people engage in *self-handicapping* (Jones & Berglas, 1978). Afraid they may perform poorly without excuse (e.g., on an examination), they duly act so as to provide one (e.g., by drinking beforehand), thereby sabotaging their own performance (Zuckerman & Tsai, 2005), but preserving their self-regard (McCrea, 2008). This form of handicapping—*discounting*—involves self-protection; the self-promoting equivalent—*augmenting*—involves hindering one's performance so as to triumph despite the hindrance (Rhodewalt, Morf, Hazlett, & Fairfield, 1991).

In addition, people will go so far as to sabotage the performance of close others for egoistical reasons (Pemberton & Sedikides, 2001). Here, the *self-evaluation maintenance model* (Tesser, 1988) provides some relevant theoretical gloss. The model states, first, that social comparisons with close others matter more; second, that superior or inferior performance by close others in identity-relevant domains threatens or boosts the self; and third, that similar performance in identity-irrelevant domains does the reverse. For example, a friend's success at securing (or failure to secure) a salary raise will matter more than a stranger's success (or failure) will; but if securing a salary raise is also an important part of one's identity, then a friend's success will serve as a source of shame (via *comparison*, a contrast judgment), whereas if it is not, it will serve as a source of pride (via *reflection*, an assimilative judgment). Various predictions of the model are well borne out, and the dynamics it specifies push for complementarity of abilities in close relationships (Beach, Whitaker, Jones, & Tesser, 2001).

Another important phenomenon to which the motive to self-enhance contributes is *cognitive dissonance* (Cooper, 2007). The classic laboratory finding was this: participants, induced to deceive a confederate into believing that a boring activity (which they had themselves performed

earlier) was interesting, concluded in retrospect that the activity was not so boring after all. Such shifts in attitude were originally put down to a motive to avoid incompatible beliefs (i.e., between beliefs about claims and experiences; Festinger, 1957). However, subsequent reformulations, backed up by abundant evidence, indicate that dissonance effects are largely driven by the perception that one has voluntarily and foreseeably caused harm to others (i.e., by misleading someone; Cooper & Fazio, 1984), thereby violating identity-related standards (Aronson, 1969; Stone & Cooper, 2001), and evoking the unpleasant affect that prompts remedial attitude change (Losch & Cacioppo, 1990). Thus, cognitive dissonance is mostly about self-protective rationalization: it is not merely "cognitive." In addition, given that honesty is a normatively important standard, public assertions and behavior can be a potent source of identity change via dissonance processes (Schlenker, Dlugolecki, & Doherty, 1994). Finally, when people voluntarily make sacrifices to acquire an identity or to achieve a goal, their commitment to that identity and goal intensify, lest they have to conclude with embarrassment that their sacrifices were misplaced (Axsom & Cooper, 1985).

Suppose that self-enhancement truly is a motive. If so, then satisfying it should attenuate or eliminate the phenomena to which it gives rise, just as satisfying hunger with one food attenuates or eliminates the eating of other food (Sedikides & Gregg, 2008). Such is the case. For example, if people engage in *self-affirmation* (Sherman & Cohen, 2006)—that is, indicate, list, or elaborate upon values central to their identity—then the standard effects of cognitive dissonance are short-circuited. Self-affirmation also reduces levels of partisan reasoning (Cohen, Aronson, & Steele, 2000) and of defensive social comparisons (Tesser, 2000). Moreover, various identity motives, as either measures or manipulations, can flexibly compensate for each other in this way (Kumashiro & Sedikides, 2005; Schmeichel & Martens, 2005; Tesser, 2000). Such substitutability suggests a common motivational core, one that implicates

the motive to self-enhance, but whose precise nature can be debated.

Evidence for the Motive to Self-Assess

Everyday observation suggests that people are not shameless self-aggrandizers: they display only moderate positive illusions (Sedikides & Gregg, 2008). We contend that this is mainly because the motive to self-assess keeps the motive to self-enhance in check, and vice versa. Borrowing a handy distinction from the philosophical lexicon (Searle, 2004, p. 172), we could further characterize the motives to self-enhance and self-assess as having opposing *directions of fit*. Specifically, whereas the motive to self-enhance has a *world-to-mind* direction of fit—that is, it aims to make how one actually is match how one construes oneself—the motive to self-assess has a *mind-to-world* direction of fit—that is, it aims to make how one construes oneself match how one actually is. Otherwise put, the motive to self-enhance prompts people to defy reality, whereas the motive to self-assess prompts people to defer to it. We now review the relevant evidence for self-assessment, mostly establishing the conditions under which modesty prevails (Sedikides, Gregg, & Hart, 2007).

First, people exhibit better-than-average effects on ambiguous traits but not on well-defined ones (Dunning, Meyerowitz, & Holzberg, 1989), and they exaggerate their academic grades when their recollection is fuzzy rather than clear (Willard & Gramzow, 2008). Thus, when there is little room for mental manoeuvre, people dutifully self-assess. Second, when people write down reasons why they might or might not possess a particular personality trait (i.e., engage in explanatory introspection; Sedikides, Horton, & Gregg, 2007), they rate themselves less positively on those traits. Such an activity evidently encourages even-handed thinking about self. Third, being made socially accountable—by having to justify specific self-evaluations to others—curtails self-enhancement, with the effect being statistically mediated by greater

attention to weaknesses (Sedikides, Herbst, Hardin, & Dardis, 2002). Again, when prompted to consider hard facts about themselves, people realistically incorporate those facts into their judgments, although this may reflect pragmatism as well as motivation. Finally, the fact that people with negative self-views disdain favorable feedback about themselves (Swann et al., 2003) is consistent, not only with a motive to self-verify existing self-views, but also with a motive to self-assess on the basis of credible evidence (Gregg, De Waal-Andrews, & Sedikides, 2010). The voluntary seeking out of diagnostic over favorable feedback (Trope, 1980) also obviously implicates a motive to self-assess.

Whereas the motive to self-assess requires the use of reason, the motive to self-enhance need not. Hence, when cognitive resources are limited, the latter should prevail over the former: the “brake” being released, the “accelerator” takes over. This is exactly what happens. For example, people distracted or made mentally busy endorse more positive traits and deny more negative ones, and get faster at doing both (Paulhus, Graf, & VanSelbst, 1989; Paulhus & Levitt, 1987). In addition, people with negative self-views, who select negative feedback when they have time to think, nonetheless select positive feedback under cognitive load (Swann, Hixon, Stein-Seroussi, & Gilbert, 1990). Finally, people who lack cognitive ability in a domain—and hence meta-cognitive capacity to accurately assess their ability—typically overestimate that ability (Kruger & Dunning, 1999).

Not all self-effacement (i.e., the opposite of self-enhancement) reflects variations in motive to self-assess. The motive to self-enhance can itself be assuaged: the “accelerator” being released, the “brake” can take over. Affirming the self, as discussed above, can increase openness to potentially self-threatening information that would otherwise be dismissed (Sherman & Cohen, 2006).

However, the motives to self-enhance and self-assess need not necessarily operate at odds with one another. Sometimes self-assessment can actually facilitate self-enhancement. This happens when people strive to improve their

standing on some attribute (Sedikides, 2009), given that a typical precondition for succeeding is knowing one's true current standing. Thus, self-enhancement can be *tactical* (i.e., indirect) as well as *candid* (i.e., direct; Sedikides & Strube, 1997): one can self-assess now to enable the improvement that will allow subsequent self-enhancement—a form of delayed self-gratification. Yet not all self-improvement may be tactical: the growth and expansion of the self may be intrinsically rewarding (Pyszczynski, Greenberg, & Goldenberg, 2003). Either way, the phenomenon of self-improvement illustrates the significance of possible future selves to identity dynamics (Markus & Nurius, 1986; Sedikides & Hepper, 2009; see Oyserman & James, Chapter 6, this volume).

It has been argued that members of collectivistic cultures, if they self-enhance at all, do so less than members of individualistic cultures (Heine & Hamamura, 2007), an argument that has sparked debate. On the one hand, members of both cultures reliably regard themselves as above-average on traits valued in their own culture (Sedikides, Gaertner, & Toguchi, 2003; Sedikides, Gaertner, & Vevea, 2005), and implicitly prefer themselves to others (Yamaguchi et al., 2007). Moreover, members of both cultures also show evidence of threat-based dynamics (Greenberg, Solomon, & Arndt, 2008). On the other hand, members of collectivist cultures refrain from self-enhancement, relative to members of individualistic cultures, when it comes to self-serving attributions and social comparisons (Heine & Hamamura, 2007). Complicating matters further, members of collectivist cultures may expect close others to self-enhance on their behalf, even if they do not self-enhance themselves (Muramoto, 2003).

Ultimately, it cannot be simply concluded from the fact that ostensible signs of self-enhancement are less pronounced in collectivist cultures that the motive to self-enhance is weaker. It could be equally strong, but the antagonistic motive to self-assess stronger still—because, for example, collectivistic cultures lay greater emphasis on self-improvement as a means of tactically self-enhancing, and

such self-improvement requires preparatory self-assessment (Heine & Raineri, 2009). It could also be that self-enhancement occurs, but is less frankly expressed, in collectivist cultures where modesty norms prevail (Kurman & Sriram, 2002). Indeed, modesty itself may even serve a source of self-enhancement in such cultures. Consistent with this contention, although modesty correlates negatively with direct measures of explicit self-esteem in collectivistic and individualistic cultures alike, it correlates positively with indirect measures of self-esteem in collectivistic cultures alone (Cai et al., in press).

Consequences of the Motives to Self-Enhance and Self-Assess

We have seen that the motives to self-enhance and self-assess loom large in the dynamics of identity. But what consequences, good or bad, do these motives have? Here, we focus on a single potential consequence: levels of psychological well-being or adaptation. Note, however, that the consequences of identity dynamics range much wider. They are apparent in such diverse domains as organizational processes (Haslam & Ellemers, Chapter 30, this volume), consumer behavior (Dittmar, Chapter 31, this volume), and group violence (Moshman, Chapter 39, this volume), to name but a few.

Some prefatory points are in order. First, given the psychological significance of both motives, each is liable to be beneficial at least some of the time. Second, given the complexity of both the human mind and social world, they may also be occasionally harmful. Third, that the motive to self-assess would be beneficial is unsurprising: contact with reality, including with the reality of oneself, is an obvious foundation of both mental health (Maslow, 1950) and sound judgment (Dunning, Heath, & Suls, 2004). The challenge, rather, is to elucidate the benefits of the motive to self-enhance, which works to undermine strict rationality. Fourth, the consequences of the two motives may vary depending on whether one is dealing with *prima facie* signs

of their presence (e.g., self-ratings and personality traits) or processing dynamics (e.g., partisan processing and post hoc rationalization). One reason is that the former, but not the latter, reflect *faits accomplis* about people. This means that the former may index, not only people's wish to be a particular way, but also their ability to end up that way, making the underlying causality harder to disentangle. For example, a person may have high self-esteem, not only because they like to self-enhance, but also because they are capable of self-enhancing: hence, high self-esteem would be only an impure index of their motive to self-enhance. Fifth, the precise operationalization of self-enhancement and self-assessment may make a difference. For example, inflated self-views can be operationalized by comparing people's self-ratings either (a) to the midpoint of the scale (Alicke & Govorun, 2005), (b) to their ratings of other people (Taylor & Brown, 1988), (c) to other people's ratings of them (Colvin & Block, 1994), or (d) to some objective standard (Willard & Gramzow, 2009). Each index, except perhaps the last, has idiosyncratic impurities that likely moderate what it predicts.

Bearing all these caveats in mind, then, what does the evidence suggest? Let us begin with normative self-aggrandizement and self-assessment. Which is better? The answer is intriguingly two sided. On the one hand, moderately inflated ratings of one's own attributes, control over one's fate, and future prospects—in absolute terms or relative to others—do predict good psychological adjustment (Gillham, Shatté, Reivich, & Seligman, 2001; Maddux & Gosselin, 2003; Taylor & Brown, 1988). Such inflated ratings also predict successful coping with serious illnesses and with other major forms of adversity (Updegraff & Taylor, 2000). On the other hand, thinking better of oneself than others do appears to predict poorer social and academic adjustment (Colvin, Block, & Funder, 1995). Muddying the waters further, some studies find that, across diverse operationalizations of self-enhancement, a positive linear association emerges with a range of psychosocial outcomes (Taylor, Lerner, Sherman, Sage, & McDowell, 2003), whereas other studies

find that, although self-enhancement predicts better adaptation to highly stressful events, it also appears to predict impaired social relationships (Bonanno, Field, Kovacevic, & Kaltman, 2002; Bonanno, Rennieke, & Dekel, 2005).

The complications continue. For example, if self-enhancement is operationalized as an overly positive view of oneself, persisting even after the positivity of one's views of others and the positivity of others' views of oneself have been taken into account, then it negatively predicts occupational performance (Lonnqvist, Leikas, Verkaslo, & Paunonen, 2008). However, if self-enhancement is operationalized as the private reporting of exaggerated grade point averages (which can be objectively determined), then it actually predicts stronger academic motivation and ultimately better subsequent grades (Willard & Gramzow, 2009).

Summing up these mixed findings, one can still conclude that *prima facie* signs of self-enhancement predict positive outcomes better than a firm advocate of psychological realism would expect. In particular, such signs almost always entail better psychological health (e.g., happiness, fewer psychiatric symptoms) and sometimes entail better objective adjustment (e.g., coping and physical health). An occasional link to social maladjustment seems to be the main downside. Roughly, the same picture emerges if one looks at self-esteem (Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger, & Vohs, 2003). It seems that antisocial behavior is mainly engaged in by people with high self-esteem (Baumeister, Smart, & Boden, 1996). Yet overall, such people are also less prone to delinquency (Donnellan, Trzesniewski, Robins, Moffitt, & Caspi, 2005) and less likely to blow minor relationship problems out of proportion (Murray, Rose, Bellavia, Holmes, & Kusche, 2002).

Such mixed findings may partly derive from the fact that there is more to self-esteem than whether it is high or low: its *quality* may matter too, something that conventional measures may miss or inconsistently capture. Accordingly, researchers have drawn a distinction between *secure* self-esteem and its more

fragile or *defensive* counterpart (Heppner & Kernis, [Chapter 15](#), this volume), and that distinction has been operationalized in various ways.

One operationalization has been *narcissism*, considered as a normally distributed individual difference rather than as a categorical personality disorder (Foster & Campbell, 2007). On the one hand, “normal” narcissism correlates with adaptive personality traits in virtue of variance it shares with self-esteem (Sedikides, Rudich, Gregg, Kumashiro, & Rusbult, 2004). On the other hand, it also correlates with subtle indices of fragility and defensiveness. One of these is a second operationalization: *self-evaluative instability* (Kernis & Goldman, 2003). Narcissists’ affective states, even though chronically more positive, also fluctuate more (Bogart, Benotsch, & Pavlovic, 2004). A further operationalization is *lower implicit self-esteem* (Koole & DeHart, 2007). This construct predicts both greater affective variability in general (Conner & Barrett, 2005) and higher levels of narcissism in particular (Gregg & Sedikides, 2010), although the latter pattern is disputed. Moreover, both narcissism and self-evaluative instability predict antisocial behavior above and beyond levels of self-esteem (Bushman & Baumeister, 1998; Kernis, Granneman, & Barclay, 1989). Further accounts of fragile self-esteem refer to what it is based on. In particular, some *contingencies of self-worth* (Crocker & Wolfe, 2001) may be relatively adaptive (e.g., God’s unconditional love), whereas others may be relatively maladaptive (e.g., physical appearance). Alternatively, some people’s self-esteem may be more contingent overall than other people’s (Kernis & Goldman, 2006). Finally, some people may evince greater *self-compassion* than others when coming to terms with their inevitable imperfections. Having self-compassion confers adaptive benefits above and beyond self-esteem, and is inversely associated with other indices of fragile self-esteem (Neff & Vonk, 2009).

Moving on to processing dynamics, a similarly two-sided picture emerges. On the one hand, people who portray themselves egotistically are less well-liked—especially in the long run—than people who portray themselves modestly

(Sedikides et al., 2007). Moreover, the desire to maintain a positive self-image, especially in the eyes of others, is at the root of many imprudently health-impairing activities, such as sun tanning which elevates cancer risk (Leary, Tchividjian, & Kraxberger, 1994). Furthermore, partisan reasoning—helping to insulate the self against bad news and opinion invalidation—can result in a failure to pay heed to information critical for averting potentially fatal outcomes (Ditto, Scepansky, Munro, Apanovitch, & Lockhart, 1998). Finally, people with higher self-esteem are more prone to rationalize health-impairing habits such as smoking (Gibbons, Eggleston, & Benthin, 1997).

On the other hand, when people are permitted to affirm important values—an activity that in some sense also involves enhancing the self by reminding oneself of one’s true identity—many of the above biases disappear, as defensiveness is replaced by openness (Harris, Mayle, Mabbott, & Napper, 2007). Indeed, value-based self-affirmation seems to promote a range of benefits, from increasing school grades (Cohen, Garcia, Apfel, & Master, 2006) to improving immune system parameters (Creswell et al., 2005). How should this benign process be characterized? Perhaps it involves the self’s fundamental needs—the target of key identity-relevant motivations (Vignoles, Regalia, Manzi, Gollidge, & Scabini, 2006)—being satisfied (Soenens & Vansteenkiske, [Chapter 17](#), this volume). There is a further interesting wrinkle here: self-affirmation effects do not appear to be mediated by state self-esteem (Sherman & Cohen, 2006; but see Rudman, Dohn, & Fairchild, 2007, implicating implicit self-esteem as a possible mediator). This reinforces the view that self-enhancement may come in different flavors, some perhaps more adaptive than others. In particular, self-affirmation may attenuate the need to self-enhance rather than satisfying the desire to do so; it may boost the underlying quality of self-esteem rather than its sheer quantity. Moreover, it may do so by satisfying more particular motives, such as for relatedness or affiliation (Crocker, Niiya, & Mischkowski, 2008; Kumashiro & Sedikides, 2005).

That said, the distinction between more or less adaptive self-enhancement may be hard to draw. It could be that satisfying fundamental needs is adaptive, in the sense that it fosters optimal psychological flourishing (Heppner et al., 2009; Waterman, Chapter 16, this volume) or more benign social attitudes (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2001). However, from an evolutionary standpoint (Kirkpatrick & Ellis, 2001), successful adaptation may require the experience of psychological states that are aversive, or the exhibition of social behaviors that is antisocial. For example, the painful drop in state self-esteem occasioned by social exclusion may encourage efforts to reintegrate socially so as to mitigate that pain (Leary & Baumeister, 2000). And the existential terror of death may be well alleviated by the adoption of a meaningful worldview, whose standards of value require that the members of some marginal social groups be unjustly condemned (Greenberg et al., 2008). The “purpose” of adaptations is to secure the survival and reproduction of organisms, not to guarantee a psychosocial utopia (Dawkins, 1976).

Such grand functions aside, there may be a simpler reason why people exhibit self-enhancement bias rather than being wholly rational self-assessors. Essential to survival and reproduction is the capacity to persevere despite setbacks. Self-enhancement covaries both with positive mood (Raghunathan & Trope, 2002) and with greater persistence (Sandelands, Brocker, & Blynn, 1988). So perhaps evaluating oneself positively helps to induce and maintain pleasant feelings and goal-directedness—the psychic fuel that people need to keep going. Moreover, it is significant that self-enhancement primarily kicks in, not before a decision has been made, but after that decision has been taken, as well as when a situation or identity is seen as unchangeable (Armor & Taylor, 2003). Thus, self-enhancement appears to be giving people the affective resources needed to decisively commit themselves to a course of action, or to reconcile themselves to where they now stand or to who they now are (Harmon-Jones, 1999). In essence, then, the motive to self-enhance may function as a sort of anti-dithering and anti-rumination device, enabling people to

keep operating when strictly rational assessment of themselves would stymie them.

The Motive to Self-Verify

Having reviewed the motives to self-enhance and self-assess at length, we now return to the third member of our original trio: the motive to self-verify. This can be defined as the desire to discover that one’s identity is already as one construes it, rather than to discover that it merits a favorable evaluation, or to discover whether or not it is objectively accurate. The main evidence for its existence seems strong: behavioral feedback choices. For example, when people with negative self-views are given the option of reading one of two contrasting accounts of their personality, they mainly opt for the less favorable account; or when given the option of meeting one of two people who view them differently, they mainly opt for the person who takes the less favorable view (Kwang & Swann, 2010). Moreover, the preferences that such people report for feedback and partners parallel their objective choices. So, among people with negative self-views, in whom the motives to verify and enhance identity should compete, the former seems capable of overriding the latter.

More specifically, the dueling motives are said to engender an “affective-cognitive cross-fire,” such that the motive to self-verify (its expression requiring comparisons of self and feedback) registers predominantly on cognitive indices, whereas the motive to self-enhance (its expression requiring only the reflexive processing of feedback valence) registers predominantly on evaluative indices (Swann et al., 1990). Moreover, several predicted moderator effects also implicate a motive to self-verify. For example, the more identity-defining a negative self-view is, the keener someone who possesses it tends to be, to remain in the company of someone else who shares it (Swann & Pelham, 2002).

Nonetheless, Gregg (2009) recently argued that many of the key findings cited in support of *self-verification theory* are equivocal. His *raison oblige theory* (ROT) posits a simpler possibility:

that people with negative self-views mostly opt for self-verifying (i.e., unfavorable) over self-refuting (i.e., favorable) information, not because they want their existing self-views to be true, but rather because—in virtue of earnestly holding their self-views—they cannot help but consider information at odds with them as “inadmissible.” Accordingly, they deem unfavorable self-verifying information to be more worthy of consideration, and hence of subsequent selection, than favorable self-refuting information. Simply put, people with negative self-views often find themselves rationally obliged to take on board information about themselves that they would prefer *not* to be part of their identity.

One way of characterizing this state of affairs would be to say that, among people with negative self-views, the felt desire to self-enhance pleasingly is being overpowered by the felt duty to self-assess accurately. If so, there would be no need to postulate a motive to self-verify, whose world-to-mind direction of fit aimed at conclusively confirming a pre-existing identity. Rather, it would suffice to postulate a motive to self-assess, whose mind-to-world direction of fit aimed at correctly extrapolating from a pre-existing identity.

Supporting ROT, Gregg et al. (2010) found in that people with positive and negative self-views did not consistently differ in how much they wanted favorable versus unfavorable feedback about them *to be true*, only in how plausible they found that feedback to be. In one study, for example, people with negative self-views who opted to read an unfavorable personality profile over a favorable one (the majority) subsequently maintained that, although they found the chosen unfavorable profile to be more plausible, they still would have preferred the rejected favorable profile to be true. Question: if opting for unfavorable over favorable feedback is taken as evidence that the motive to self-verify has prevailed over the motive to self-enhance, then why would a desire for favorable feedback to be true at the same time prevail over the desire for unfavorable feedback to be true? Note that responses to enquiries about one’s desire for feedback to be true are as much cognitive as they are affective in character; hence,

they cannot be explained away in terms of the cognitive–affective crossfire.

Whatever the final resolution of the matter, it is undeniable that old identities are often abandoned, and new identities often embraced. For example, young adults (Arnett, 2000), and people who are open to experience (Tesch & Cameron, 1987), are especially inclined to explore their identities flexibly rather than committing themselves to one identity definitely (Kroger & Marcia, Chapter 2, this volume; Luyckx et al., Chapter 4, this volume). In addition, people who fall in love typically undergo dramatic self-concept transformations (i.e., *self-expansion*; Aron, Paris, & Aron, 1995); yet they reputedly relish, and even seek to repeat, this identity-disrupting experience. Hence, even if a motive to self-verify exists, it is not so strong as to preclude many voluntary shifts in identity that are repeated or dramatic.

Other Identity Motives

Number, Nature, and Nomenclature

In presenting only three self-motives, we might stand accused of painting an oddly minimalist picture of identity-relevant motivation. In contrast, Vignoles (Vignoles et al., 2006; Chapter 18, this volume), persuasively argues that sufficient theoretical and empirical reason exists to postulate no fewer than six identity motives: *self-esteem*, *distinctiveness*, *continuity*, *belongingness*, *efficacy*, and *meaning*. One reason is that Vignoles and colleagues endorse a more inclusive conception of identity than we do, and seek to address, not only the process of self-evaluation, but also the process of self-definition. Moreover, several of their six identity motives find fully fledged exposition within specific theories (e.g., belongingness in *sociometer theory*: Leary & Baumeister, 2000; meaning in *terror management theory*: Greenberg et al., 2008), and further additions might even be contemplated (e.g., autonomy in *self-determination theory*: Soenens & Vansteenkiste, Chapter 17, this volume). To help make sense of things, one might draw the

following distinction. Our trio of self-motives constitute a special class: they are inherently about appraisals of oneself. In contrast, identity motives, considered broadly, need not be: despite having an important bearing on appraisals of oneself, they may nonetheless be about something else. For example, whereas the motive to self-enhance is directed at maintaining the positivity of one's self-views—a subjective psychological state—the motive to belong is directed at maintaining level of social inclusion—an objective social state. Both motives are subjective; but, whereas the former also has a subjective goal, the latter has an objective one.

But how many identity motives are there altogether? Alas, precise enumeration is currently impossible. No “periodic table” of identity motives yet exists that definitively describes the natural lines of fracture between identity motives or the hierarchical structure underlying them. The situation thus lags behind that in related fields of psychological research (e.g., personality: John, Naumann, & Soto, 2008; or values: Schwartz, 1992). Indeed, current models of identity motives are arguably on a par with models of matter in ancient Greece, in which supposed elements (e.g., earth, air, fire, and water) were empirically distinguished on the basis of ostensible dissimilarities, and a priori arguments then advanced by for the overriding primacy of one or another (Osborne, 2004).

Some identity researchers have indeed valiantly attempted to distil a “master” motive. For instance, Heine, Proulx, and Vohs (2006) have contended that human beings, given their cognitive sophistication, fundamentally strive to *maintain meaning*—that is, seek to preserve expected relations between elements.⁵ How might such a “master” motive underlie, say the motive to self-enhance, often alternatively construed (including by Heine and colleagues) as the desire to maintain self-esteem?

One well-supported functional theory states that fluctuations in state self-esteem track the integrity of important social relations (Leary & Baumeister, 2000). From a meaning-maintenance perspective, the severing of such expected

relations should be cognitively disorienting, and, for that reason, emotionally aversive. Yet surely social relations, and other contingencies of self-esteem (Crocker & Wolfe, 2001), matter over and above any contribution they make to the integrity of mental representations alone (MacDonald & Leary, 2005). After all, rejection and failure still hurt, even when expected, whereas acceptance and success still reassure, even when unexpected. Hence, the motive to maintain meaning cannot fully subsume the motive to self-enhance.

Even properly distinguishing between different identity motives presents a challenge. Consider the alleged motive to *reduce uncertainty* about oneself or one's world, espoused by a range of psychologists under several guises (Kruglanski & Webster, 1996), and empirically shown to have various consequences, including fostering identification with social groups (Hogg, 2007) and increasing levels of zealous conviction (McGregor, Haji, Nash, & Teper, 2008). Should this motive—clearly identity-relevant—be considered an example of the motive to self-assess, to self-verify, both, or neither? It is hard to say. In principle, self-uncertainty could be reduced by seeking out objectively accurate information about oneself. However, it could also be reduced by seeking biased confirmation that one remains who one expected oneself to be. Moreover, self-uncertainty could also be reduced by unreflectively adopting *any* available self-construal; yet this would entail neither self-assessment nor self-verification strictly speaking, involving as it would neither a dogged search after truth nor a dogmatic adherence to a preconception.

Given such complications, we refrain here from attempting any definitive reduction, or proposing any final taxonomy, of identity motives. Rather, we confine ourselves to making a modest proposal: many identity motives can often be characterized in terms of the twin self-motives to self-enhance and self-assess. This is not to claim that other identity motives ultimately reduce to these self-motives; it is merely to claim that the former are, at least in part, pervaded by the latter. How so?

Consider Vignoles's aforementioned set of identity motives. Would people strive to be distinctive, effective, and accepted if doing so respectively entailed standing out for an unseemly reason (e.g., being hideously ugly), bringing about some tragic outcome (e.g., triggering a nuclear war), or gaining the support of a hateful group (e.g., being fêted by Nazis)? Equally, would people strive to construct a subjective narrative that insults them (e.g., portrays them as an invariable loser) or an objective worldview that dismays them (e.g., portrays their life as pointless)? Hardly. Our point is this: to satisfy any of the posited identity motives, an outcome must entail tolerably favorable implications for the self. True, other identity motives need not always implicate the motive to self-enhance, and they may occasionally even dominate the motive to self-enhance. But typically, we suggest, the motive to self-enhance pervades other identity motives.

What about the motive to self-assess? We argued earlier, in the context of *raison oblige* theory (Gregg, 2009), that this motive can manifest itself as a felt obligation to respect reality, as a type of "brake" to counter the self-enhancement "accelerator." For example, people may find themselves compelled to believe, in virtue of being rational beings, that they are not as distinctive, effective, accepted as they would wish, nor is their life story or existential position as congenial as they would desire. Accordingly, the motive to self-assess, in this form, can pervade other identity motives: it pushes for ensuring that people pay due attention to the conditions required for them to be satisfied in reality.

Of course, the motive to self-assess also has appetitive manifestations. People may be genuinely curious about and interested in themselves (Luyckx, Goossens, & Soenens, 2006; Soenens & Vansteenkiste, Chapter 17, this volume). However, given the likely generality of the motivational asymmetry discussed earlier (Baumeister et al., 2001), people may more often seek to minimize the falsehood of their self-views than to maximize their accuracy of their self-views.

Identity, Affect, and Agency Are Intertwined

The motive to self-assess has a cognitive goal: establishing the objective truth about oneself. Other posited identity motives also have cognitive goals: specifically, the motive to self-verify aims at confirming subjective views about who one is (Swann et al., 2003), the motive for continuity at devising a coherent story about who one is (McAdams, Chapter 5, this volume), and the motive for meaning at generating a defensible account of the world. (But note some relevant differences too: the first motive seeks to establish cognitive coherence via identity maintenance, the second, despite identity change, and the third, beyond one's own identity.) It seems likely a priori that people do seek a coherent identity of some sort: They want to think of themselves (or at least, to avoid failing to think of themselves) in terms of a set of basic self-construals that intelligibly fit together.

However, it should be remembered that, as argued at the beginning of this chapter, identity is but a cognitive aspect of a larger self, one that also encompasses affect and agency. Hence, as identity forms and changes, as it develops or disintegrates, it never does so in isolation, but always in tandem with other self processes. Much evidence attests to the intimate links between various aspects of the self. For example, construing oneself clearly is linked to regarding oneself positively (a cognitive-affective link; Campbell et al., 1996) and regarding oneself positively is linked to persistence under adversity (an affective-agentic link; Baumeister et al., 2003).

This fact that identity is embedded within a broader self raises a thorny question: to what extent are disruptions of identity responsible in themselves for the outcomes that they predict? Are they causal determinants or epiphenomenal markers? The matter is empirically challenging to resolve. But one should not overlook the possibility that aspects of the self other than identity could exert independent or interactive effects on the outcomes that disruptions of identity predict. Take the classic identity crisis (Erikson, 1975).

By definition, it represents a crisis in cognitive coherence. But it is also typically intertwined with (a) a *self-positivity crisis*, where people find themselves obliged to entertain shamefully negative self-evaluations (Tangney, 1991), and (b) a *self-goals crisis*, where people find themselves unable to act so as to fulfill crucial basic needs (Soenens & Vansteenkiske, Chapter 17, this volume). In other words, people who wonder “Who am I?” will also wonder “Why am I inadequate?” and “Why can’t I make progress?”

By way of illustration, consider the plight of adolescents who, in a repressive society, find themselves spontaneously inclined to embrace a homosexual orientation or identify with another gender (Diamond, Butterworth, & Pardo, Chapter 26, this volume; Savin-Williams, Chapter 28, this volume). Their society refuses to recognize them, frowns upon their conduct, imposes sanctions on them. As a result, not only are these minorities more likely to have trouble defining who they are sexually (i.e., a cognitive problem), they are also more likely to have trouble evaluating their sexuality positively (i.e., an affective problem) and achieving the goal of expressing their sexuality freely (i.e., an agency problem).⁶ Hence, the problems they experience flourishing psychologically are unlikely to be the result of cognitive incoherence alone: social devaluation and behavioral constraint are also likely to be involved.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have (a) articulated a conception of identity in the context of a broader self; (b) surveyed the motivational basis of identity with a particular focus on the motives to self-enhance and self-assess; (c) reviewed the evidence that both motives are potent and commonplace; (d) examined some of the consequences they entail; and finally (e) discussed how identity motives in general should be classified, and where the motives to self-enhance and self-assess fit into the picture. We now suggest the following take-home messages.

First, identity is a remarkably multifaceted thing. Second, there is nonetheless more to the self than the self-construals that constitute

identity. Third, many motives likely underlie identity, but no firm taxonomy yet exists. Fourth, the motives to self-assess and self-enhance nonetheless partly pervade many such motives, by moderating the criteria other motives must satisfy. Fifth and finally, although abundant evidence implicates these motives, their consequences and functionality are complex.

Notes

1. Psychological identity does not exactly correspond to what philosophers discuss under the rubric of personal identity (Perry, 1975). There, the primary concern is with what makes someone the person they are now (synchronic identity) or the same person over time (diachronic identity). Here, the primary concern is with what a person *takes* themselves to be, whatever or whenever they happen to be (Lampinen, Odegard, & Leding, 2003). In other words, psychological identity is a construction, but nonetheless a construction amenable to empirical investigation.
2. A case could be made that chronically *available* self-construals also constitute identity, even if infrequently accessed (Sedikides & Skowronski, 1990).
3. Readers may note that we have omitted mention here of the *self-improvement* motive; this temporary omission will be remedied shortly.
4. Name letter preferences persist even when normative letter frequency, which alone might account for the effect, is controlled (Nuttin, 1987). However, no study has yet controlled for the objective frequency with which people personally encounter their names, although one study has shown that subjective frequency does not explain it (Hoorens & Nuttin, 1993).
5. Heine et al. (2006) arguably define meaning too narrowly in terms of *expected* relations. Humans strive after meaning, not merely by accommodating reality to rigid expectations, but by accommodating expectations to surprising reality. Were this not so, there would be no scientists, only dogmatists. By

emphasizing expectation of *confirmation*, the meaning-maintenance model becomes vulnerable to the same criticisms leveled here at self-verification theory. In fact, people often seek to achieve new understandings of the world (outlooks) and of themselves (identities); they do not merely seek to preserve those understandings they already have.

6. In this example, society exerts pressure on individuals to embrace a majority identity that inhibits their natural proclivities, and thereby impairs their psychological functioning. Soenens and Vansteenkiste (Chapter 17, this volume) note that people can also put pressure *on themselves* to embrace such sub-optimal identities, through maladaptive identifications.

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Abstract

Self-esteem has been empirically investigated extensively and has become deeply ingrained in the social and popular conscience. Varied definitions of self-esteem across disciplines and perspectives and inconsistent empirical findings with self-esteem have yielded a messy research literature and have produced many lingering questions. In this chapter, we briefly review the “mess” of self-esteem, first focusing on its inconsistent empirical findings. Then, we propose a differentiated view of high self-esteem as being either fragile or secure, and how this differentiated view can help “clear the waters” of self-esteem research. Next, we highlight self-esteem’s importance in personal and cultural identity processes, examining in particular potential cultural changes influenced by the concept of high self-esteem. Finally, we discuss where self-esteem comes from and how we can cultivate “healthy” self-esteem, and we discuss two individual difference measures—authenticity and mindfulness—that relate to secure self-esteem processes.

Introduction

Uttering the word “self-esteem” likely elicits strong reactions. Social psychologists, politicians, educators, journalists, reality television

stars—all (probably) have little in common except for their exploration of the concept of self-esteem. Because of this exploration across disciplines and mediums over many decades, self-esteem has become an intuitive concept, a term deeply ingrained in the social and popular conscience (Hewitt, 1998; Owens & Stryker, 2001). When referring to self-esteem most generally, we find it somewhat easy to discuss, as if there is a common ground; that is, everyone seems to know what self-esteem is intuitively. In fact, simply asking people if they have high self-esteem correlates highly with more detailed psychometric measures of self-esteem (Robins, Hendin, & Trzesniewski, 2001).

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[†]Michael H. Kernis passed away during the formulation of this chapter. He is included as an author to acknowledge his immense influence on what was written, as well as to honor his memory and his passion for self-esteem research.

Paradoxically, however, self-esteem has proven more difficult to define theoretically, and definitions vary widely. Some take a componential approach, arguing that self-esteem is the sum evaluation of one's specific self-attributes or accomplishments (James, 1890). Others think about self-esteem in terms of underlying constructs, especially "worthiness" and "competence" (Mruk, 1995; Tafarodi & Swann, 2001), or in terms of multiple dimensions such as positive and negative self-evaluations (Owens, 1994). Often, self-esteem is conflated with other related constructs; for example, the empirical and intervention literature often uses the terms self-concept and self-esteem interchangeably (Damon & Hart, 1982; Haney & Durlak, 1998) or uses cognitive processes hypothesized to bolster self-esteem (e.g., self-enhancement) interchangeably with self-esteem itself (e.g., Taylor & Brown, 1988). Likewise, the popular literature has often conflated self-esteem with things like confidence or efficacy (e.g., Branden, 1994). Finally, Rosenberg (1965) put forth the notion of self-esteem as being a global and stable sense of one's worth, that is, an attitude or feeling about oneself. Throughout this chapter, drawing on Rosenberg's (1965) frequently used measure of self-esteem, we generally regard self-esteem level as a global (self-) evaluation of one's self and self-worth. Overall, am I a person of worth? If my answer is yes, I have a high level of self-esteem.

As can be seen, definitions of self-esteem have varied widely through the years, contributing to problems and "messiness" with self-esteem research. In this chapter, we briefly review the mess of self-esteem, first focusing on its inconsistent empirical findings. Importantly, we propose a differentiated view of high self-esteem as being either fragile or secure, and how this differentiated view can help clear the waters of self-esteem research. Then, we highlight self-esteem's importance in personal and cultural identity processes, examining in particular potential cultural changes influenced by the concept of high self-esteem. Finally, we discuss where self-esteem comes from and how we can cultivate "healthy" self-esteem; here we note two

individual difference measures—authenticity and mindfulness—that relate to secure self-esteem processes.

Self-Esteem: How Did It Become Such a Mess?

The combination of varied definitions of self-esteem, and the prominence of self-esteem across disciplines and perspectives, has yielded a messy research literature. Over the last several decades, this messy literature has translated into wild shifts in lay and scientific thought. In particular, popular opinion and empirical investigation have swung the pendulum of thought from championing self-esteem as the cure-all of social ills (Mecca, Smelser, & Vasconcellos, 1989) to shunning self-esteem as a waste of time (Baumeister, Krueger, Campbell, & Vohs, 2003; Hewitt, 1998).

One important event which helped push self-esteem to the forefront of American consciousness was the passing of a key piece of legislation in California. In a review of existing literature on the links between self-esteem and social problems—ranging from academic failure to teenage pregnancy, crime and violence, and welfare dependency—the authors of this legislation concluded that, although the strictly empirical links between self-esteem and social problems were inconsistent, improving self-esteem would help individuals function in society (Mecca et al., 1989). As a result, legislation was passed in California to create the "California Task Force to Promote Self-Esteem and Personal and Social Responsibility." This program, implemented in schools statewide, intended to improve self-esteem through various programs and, as a result, decrease social problems. Popular self-esteem author Branden (1994) expressed similar ideas, claiming that self-esteem has widespread impact on both professional (job performance) and personal (relationship functioning) domains. Empirically, also, high self-esteem and other related self-processes were linked to good mental health and subjective well-being (Taylor & Brown, 1988). More specifically, self-esteem level was particularly implicated in

depression, with numerous studies linking relatively low levels of self-esteem to relatively high levels of depression (Roberts & Monroe, 1992; and, more recently, Orth, Robins, Trzesniewski, Maes, & Schmitt, 2009).

However, other research revealed that high self-esteem often held weak or negligible relationships to outcome variables of interest and, at times, even held relationships with variables opposite to hypotheses. For example, while low self-esteem was theoretically implicated in aggressive behavior, self-esteem level often had no empirical relationship with aggressive outcomes (e.g., Bushman & Baumeister, 1998). If anything, there was perhaps a “dark side” to high self-esteem (Baumeister, Smart, & Boden, 1996), where extremely positive self-views set people up to be defensive and aggressive in reaction to insults and negative feedback. Similarly, research linked maintenance of high self-esteem to prejudice toward outgroups (e.g., Fein & Spencer, 1997), and to multiple cognitive “tricks” (e.g., attributing successes to self and failures to others; Larson, 1977).

Research on low self-esteem includes inconsistencies as well. First, low self-esteem is often not low at all, statistically, at least in individualistic societies (see Heine, Lehman, Markus, & Kitayama, 1999, for discussion of cultural variation). Individuals characterized as low in self-esteem in non-clinical samples typically score around the theoretical midpoint on traditional self-esteem scales (Baumeister, Tice, & Hutton, 1989). This tendency, plus work linking low self-esteem to low self-concept clarity (Campbell, 1990), suggests that low self-esteem individuals have lukewarm or moderate feelings about themselves (Baumeister et al., 1989). However, others suggest that the typically moderate scores that reflect low self-esteem may mask a deeper negativity that is being stifled for social desirability reasons (Hoyle, Kernis, Leary, & Baldwin, 1999), and, in line with this, relatively low self-esteem is linked to depression (e.g., Orth et al., 2009). The exact conceptual nature of low self-esteem still remains unclear, and this lack of clarity contributes further to confusion about the nature of self-esteem, both low and high.

Despite its efforts, the “self-esteem movement” to boost global self-esteem in California’s schools, ushered in by the aforementioned legislation, may have produced little effect on students’ academic performance and numerous other outcomes, contrary to original hypotheses and hopes (Baumeister et al., 2003; but see Owens, 1994, for a discussion of bidimensional self-esteem and these outcomes for youth). Furthermore, Hewitt (1998) describes how such legislation ushered in a flurry of “conceptual entrepreneurs” who took the idea of self-esteem and packaged it in ways that were unsupported by research. While launching the notion of self-esteem to the forefront of American consciousness, this widespread presentation of self-esteem has done little to advance its legitimacy, especially among researchers. Suffering from empirical weaknesses (e.g., inferring causation from correlational results; see Damon & Hart, 1982), and falling prey to the drastic distillation that often takes place when scientific findings are translated to the popular media (Hewitt, 1998), self-esteem’s influence was often overstated, leaving people disappointed when self-esteem did not cure personal or societal problems. Exemplifying this, the idea of self-esteem enhancement programs in schools appears to be losing steam, as opinions among educators and school systems regarding its utility conflict (see Colvin, 1999).

Self-Esteem: A Heterogeneous Construct

In the wake of this murky water of self-esteem research, especially regarding whether high self-esteem is unequivocally good or whether it contains a dark side, a new view of high self-esteem emerged, one where high self-esteem is viewed as a heterogeneous construct rather than a unidimensional label (Back et al., 2009; Bosson, Brown, Zeigler-Hill, & Swann, 2003; Bosson, Swann, & Pennebaker, 2000; Deci & Ryan, 1995; Jordan, Spencer, & Zanna, 2002, 2005; Jordan, Spencer, Zanna, Hoshino-Browne, & Correll, 2003; Owens, 1994;

Zeigler-Hill, 2006). In particular, in one formulation of the heterogeneity of self-esteem, Kernis (2003) characterized an individual's generally positive views of self-worth as either *fragile* or *secure*. Importantly, this distinction between fragility and security has implications and potential explanatory power for the psychosocial, behavioral, and health outcomes that global self-esteem level often predicted inconsistently. To state the case simply and presage the theoretical argument, all high self-esteem is not created equal.

Fragile Versus Secure High Self-Esteem

In general, high self-esteem that is fragile is characterized by vulnerability to external influences. If the self is "constructed," we can play out this metaphor literally, imagining self-esteem as one "city" among many structures of the self that are constructed over time and from moment-to-moment. In this case, we can imagine fragile high self-esteem as a city under siege: it is tenuous, must be bolstered to stay high, and must be defended vigorously in the face of threats (Rosenberg & Owens, 2001). Attacks on this city of fragile self-worth may come in the form of negative feedback or evaluations, social rejections or ostracisms, or confrontations with negative aspects of one's own identity; and defensive maneuvers ensue, for example, anger and hostility (Kernis, Granneman, & Barclay, 1989); reactivity (Kernis, Cornell, Sun, Berry, & Harlow, 1993); rationalization and distortion (Kernis, Lakey, & Heppner, 2008). In contrast, individuals with secure high self-esteem appear to genuinely be happy with themselves as they are and in spite of external influences. Instead of a city under siege, secure high self-esteem is a city in peace time—a city that is *secure*. Attacks on the city walls of secure self-worth do not incite such defensive maneuvers as we see with fragile self-esteem; rather these reactions are reduced in individuals with secure high self-esteem.

In his integrative paper, Kernis (2003) delineated three categories or specific markers of self-esteem fragility and security beyond global

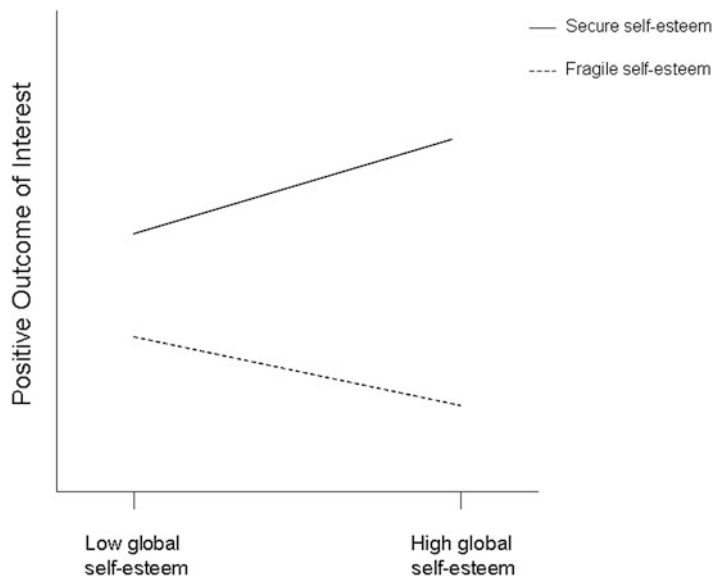
self-esteem level: self-esteem instability, self-esteem contingency, and self-esteem discrepancy. These three categories are detailed in the sections below, each of which includes a theoretical description of the category, the fragile and secure formulation of the constructs, measurement of the constructs, and research relevant to each individual marker, as well as relatively new research spanning all three markers simultaneously. In addition, this research sheds some light on the potential downsides to defensive bolstering of one's fragile high self-esteem.

As a guideline for understanding the investigation of secure and fragile high self-esteem, across all three categories, the fragile and secure formulation takes the following general form. Two variables are measured—global self-esteem level and the particular fragility marker. Typically, global self-esteem and the fragility marker are used together to predict an outcome of interest (to examine the independent effects of each variable). Also, typically, an interaction between global self-esteem and the fragility marker is used to predict the outcome of interest; this interaction illustrates whether the effects of global self-esteem *depend on* the measured fragility marker. The general hypothesis states that among individuals with high self-esteem, those who are also fragile have more negative (or less positive) outcomes than those who are secure (see Fig. 15.1 for a general illustration). In the absence of such an interaction, we expect that the particular fragility marker will have independent effects on the outcome of interest, even while including self-esteem level. Both outcomes are observed in the literature, and research described in the following sections highlights independent effects first (i.e., effects over and above global level) and then interaction effects (i.e., effects of fragility among individuals with high self-esteem).

Self-Esteem Instability

Self-esteem instability refers to the barometric (Rosenberg, 1986) or short-term fluctuations an individual may experience in their contextually based feelings of self-worth. Individual differences exist in the extent to which a

Fig. 15.1 Illustration of the hypothesized general results of global self-esteem and self-esteem fragility markers for predicting positive outcomes. *Note:* Specific hypotheses are often withheld for the effects of fragility versus security on low self-esteem, and these effects vary (see, e.g., Kernis et al., 2008)



person's feelings of worth vary across relatively small intervals—from morning to evening, from day-to-day, and in response to life's events. The magnitude of these fluctuations constitutes the (in)stability of an individual's self-esteem. Great fluctuations reflect instability while small fluctuations reflect stability. In Kernis' (2003) nomenclature, an individual with generally high but unstable feelings of self-worth has one marker of fragile high self-esteem, while an individual with generally high but stable feelings of self-worth has one marker of secure high self-esteem.

Empirically, great care is often taken to distinguish the global, trait-level self-esteem and the instability of one's self-esteem. To assess fluctuations in self-esteem, Kernis and colleagues (see, e.g., Kernis et al., 2008) ask participants to complete a Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965) in a naturalistic context twice a day over the course of 4 or 5 days, each time completing the measure according to how they feel "right then" and "at that moment." The standard deviation of these momentary assessments results in a measure of self-esteem instability. This distinct set of instructions ("right now" versus "typically or generally") yields a construct that is distinct from global, trait-level self-esteem. Instability of self-esteem and global self-esteem level are also statistically distinct, correlating

only moderately, typically in the range of -0.30 to -0.40 . Recently, a new measure of instability of self-esteem has been proposed (Chabrol, Rousseau, & Callahan, 2006). This measure is a 4-item self-report assessment, where respondents rate their agreement or disagreement with statements such as "Sometimes I feel worthless; at other times I feel that I am worthwhile." While functionally appealing—considering that a 4-item assessment is less costly in time and resources compared to the typical week-long assessment—this measure requires respondents to be *aware* of their fluctuations in self-esteem while the ecological assessment does not. That is, the 4-item measure asks participants to reflect on their self-esteem and whether or not it changes a lot, while the week-long momentary assessments simply ask "how are you feeling right now?" It is unknown whether this requirement of awareness is indeed a significant factor; however, preliminary research with this 4-item measure is promising (see Chabrol et al., 2006).

Notably, the construct of self-esteem instability has proved useful and informative in predicting psychological outcomes over and above global self-esteem level in interesting ways. Over and above global self-esteem, instability of self-esteem has been linked to greater anger and hostility proneness (Kernis et al., 1989),

depression in the face of daily hassles (Kernis et al., 1998), and reactivity to both positive and negative events, especially those that concern self-esteem and social rejection (Greenier et al., 1999). Moreover, Kernis, Paradise, Whitaker, Wheatman, and Goldman (2000) found that individuals with unstable self-esteem possess lower self-concept clarity and engage in goal-related behaviors for less self-determined reasons than do individuals with stable self-esteem. In other words, across many studies, relatively high self-esteem instability predicts more negative outcomes for individuals independently of self-esteem level.

Importantly, when the interaction between self-esteem level and self-esteem stability is examined, research reveals that, in particular, individuals with high but unstable self-esteem demonstrate a fragility in their generally positive views of themselves. For example, compared to those with high and stable self-esteem, individuals with high unstable self-esteem are more self-aggrandizing and more boastful of successes (Kernis, Greenier, Herlocker, Whisenhunt, & Abend, 1997). In addition, high unstable self-esteem appears to promote a broad and maladaptive reactivity to day-to-day activities and events, especially when these activities and events involve the self or self-worth. This reactivity is evidenced by individuals with unstable high self-esteem showing more favorable reactions to positive feedback and less favorable reactions to negative feedback compared to those with high stable self-esteem (Kernis et al., 1993), and unstable high self-esteem resulting in greater desires to “get even” in response to hypothetical partner transgressions (see Kernis & Goldman, 2006a). In other words, across several studies, the link between high self-esteem and positive outcomes depends on instability of self-esteem (see Fig. 15.1).

Instability of self-esteem is the most widely researched of the markers of self-esteem fragility to be discussed here. The importance of self-esteem instability over and above self-esteem level for both psychological and interpersonal functioning is now well established. In addition, this research on instability of self-esteem

ushered in research on instability of other important constructs. For example, Gable and Nezlek (1998) demonstrated that levels of well-being and day-to-day instability in well-being played independent roles in risk for depression. Indeed, instability of self-esteem may reflect a more general factor of personality instability (Nezlek, 2006). Instability of self-esteem and other personality-level constructs and their impacts on well-being and identity processes is a fruitful avenue for future research.

In summary, the stability of one’s self-esteem is a distinct construct from one’s global level of self-esteem, and stability is an important factor to consider when contemplating the empirical investigation of self-esteem. The combination of high self-esteem and unstable self-esteem has been described conceptually as one form of fragile high self-esteem, and empirical findings to date largely support this conception. Whereas individuals with high but unstable self-esteem exhibit poor psychological outcomes and multiple maladaptive responses to daily activities and feedback, individuals with high but stable self-esteem have better outcomes. Taken together, these and related findings indicate that individuals with unstable self-esteem possess fragile feelings of self-worth and that they are highly reactive to self-relevant events, in a destructive rather than a constructive way.

Self-Esteem Contingency

Self-esteem contingency refers to the extent to which individuals link or base their feelings of self-worth on one or a number of external sources, such as performance outcomes, acceptance, achievement, etc. (Crocker & Wolfe, 2001; Deci & Ryan, 1995). Interestingly, contingencies of one’s self-worth are perhaps the most fundamental issue when considering issues of fragility of worth. Self-esteem that is highly contingent upon such external inputs naturally yields self-esteem that is unstable, as self-esteem is tossed about by the ups and downs of life. Importantly, as the studies reviewed below demonstrate, high but highly contingent self-esteem is fragile because positive self-worth is dependent upon these external standards and evaporates when

one does not meet them (Deci & Ryan, 1995; Kernis, 2003).

In general, the empirical investigation of self-esteem contingencies falls into two broad categories. From one perspective, researchers take a within-persons approach, and investigate specific domains in which individuals' self-esteem is contingent. From this perspective, various aspects of one's identity, through developmental processes and by motivational factors, become more important and more central to one's sense of self; therefore, one's self-esteem is more closely tied to and dependent upon successes and failures in these identity-relevant domains. As a result, self-esteem and subsequent functioning invariably suffer when identity-relevant and high contingency domains are threatened.

Abundant research supports this link between threat and functioning decrements across cognitive, affective, behavioral, and interpersonal domains. As one example, consider college students, for whom academic success is often very central to their identity, and thus, their self-esteem is highly contingent upon success in this domain. In one study, such academically contingent college students experienced global self-esteem decrements when they received rejections from graduate schools to which they had applied (Crocker, Sommers, & Luhtanen, 2002). Similarly, extending to effects on interpersonal relationships, college students with high academic performance contingencies became less likeable and less supportive, as perceived by their partners, after they received negative academic performance feedback (Park & Crocker, 2005). Likewise, individuals high in contingent self-worth based on others' approval seek excessive relational reassurance from their partner and interpret benign information as rejecting, both of which serve to undermine their relationships (Crocker & Park, 2004). In addition to domains of academic performance and approval of others, this approach posits five other primary domains of contingency in college students: appearance, competition, family support, God's love, and virtue (Crocker & Wolfe, 2001). This research clearly demonstrates that threats in a domain in

which one's contingency is high result in defensive reactions and self-esteem decrements.

While Crocker and colleagues, the champions of this approach to self-esteem contingencies, have demonstrated the utility of this approach, it is only one approach to the study of self-esteem contingencies as mentioned at the beginning of this section. While this approach assumes a contingency of worth in all people, another between-persons approach assumes that people vary in their overall contingency of self-esteem. That is, an alternative view focuses on individual differences in the overall extent to which one's feelings of self-esteem are contingent (Deci & Ryan, 1995; Kernis, 2003) and does not examine specific domains of contingencies per se. In this vein, Paradise and Kernis (1999) created a measure (the Contingent Self-Esteem Scale; see Kernis & Goldman, 2006b) to assess the dispositional tendency to link feelings of self-worth to performance outcomes, evaluations by others, or meeting certain standards. Using this measure, researchers have demonstrated that contingent self-esteem mediates the relationship between external environmental pressures and drinking behaviors (Neighbors, Larimer, Markman Geisner, & Knee, 2004). Indeed, individuals with highly contingent self-esteem fall prey to external pressures for alcohol consumption, drink more frequently, and report greater drinking problems than do individuals with less contingent self-esteem. Other research demonstrates that individuals high in contingent self-esteem feel especially bad following attractiveness-based social comparisons (e.g., ads from women's magazines), irrespective of self-esteem level or self-reported feelings of attractiveness (Patrick, Neighbors, & Knee, 2004). Finally, Paradise (1999) found that individuals with highly contingent self-esteem, regardless of self-esteem level, become especially angry and hostile in response to evaluative threat.

In a similar spirit, other researchers have utilized a between-persons approach to measure individual differences in overall tendencies to base happiness, self-worth, and self-esteem on outcomes and external sources. For example,

McIntosh and colleagues (McIntosh, Harlow, & Martin, 1995; McIntosh, Martin, & Jones, 1997) found individual differences in the extent to which people linked happiness and positive mood states to completing goals and to salient life events. Whereas some people reported that their happiness was highly contingent on meeting certain goals, other people reported that they would be happy even if some of their goals were not met. Individuals high in “linking,” akin to high contingency of self-esteem, were shown to ruminate more and be more depressed in the face of daily hassles. Relatedly, Knee and colleagues somewhat bridge both perspectives on self-esteem contingency, investigating individual differences in tendencies to base self-esteem on the successes or failures of one’s romantic relationships (a specific domain), which they call relationship contingent self-esteem (Knee, Canevello, Bush, & Cook, 2008). This type of self-esteem contingency is also linked to many negative outcomes, including typically lower global self-esteem, more negative emotions, more attachment anxiety, and tendencies to view situations as controlling rather than autonomous.

Contingency of self-esteem is an important factor for delineating generally high self-esteem that is fragile rather than secure. As with the stability of self-esteem, when considered in concert with high levels of global trait self-esteem, highly contingent self-esteem appears to be linked to outcomes suggestive of fragile feelings of self-worth. In one recent study, we (Heppner & Kernis, 2009) investigated the self-serving bias, that is, the tendency for individuals to attribute their successes to internal causes and their failures to external causes. Self-esteem protection (in the case of failure) and enhancement (in the case of success) are explanations offered for this consistently observed attributional bias. However, if self-esteem was not on the line and did not require protection and/or enhancement, that is, if self-esteem was secure rather than fragile, perhaps this self-serving bias would be reduced in those individuals. This was indeed the case. Eighty-six participants randomly assigned to a success or failure condition on a “cognitive functioning task” later explained their performance on

the task in terms of various internal and external attributions. Prior to this, participants completed measures of both level and contingency of self-esteem. Among participants with generally high level of self-esteem, those with high contingency (fragile high self-esteem) exhibited the typical self-serving responses: those in the failure group took less responsibility for their performance, and they ascribed their performance significantly less to internal factors such as ability and effort, while those in the success group took more responsibility for their performance, and they ascribed their performance significantly more to internal factors of ability and effort. In contrast, among individuals with high level of self-esteem but relatively low levels of contingency (secure high self-esteem), this difference was reduced to the extent that there were no significant differences between success and failure groups when making attributions for their task performance.

This suggests that individuals’ high self-esteem that is also contingent is fragile, as these individuals enhanced or defended their esteem, with self-serving attributions following success or failure. In contrast, individuals with high but less contingent self-esteem did not show these differences in attributions following success and failure. Although more research with contingency from this between-persons approach is needed, this moderation of the self-serving bias supports contingency as another marker of fragility of self-esteem.

Self-Esteem Discrepancy (Implicit–Explicit)

In addition to measuring the stability of one’s self-esteem, or the extent to which one’s self-esteem is based on external standards as separate constructs from one’s global trait self-esteem, the study of self-esteem has also greatly advanced from studying individuals’ non-conscious, implicit self-esteem. Implicit self-esteem is generally considered to be “affective associations about the self” (Pelham et al., 2005, p. 85) that are automatic, nonconscious, and learned through repeated associations over time (see also Greenwald & Banaji, 1995; Greenwald, Bellezza, & Banaji, 1988; Spalding & Hardin,

1999). Although debate still swirls about the nature and measurement of the construct of implicit self-esteem (e.g., Bosson et al., 2000), implicit self-esteem is linked to striking effects. For example, Pelham, Mirenberg, and Jones (2002) explored how implicit liking for the letters in one's own name (one common measure of implicit self-esteem) was linked to major life decisions ranging from the cities in which one lives to the career a person undertakes.¹

Importantly, generally high or positive explicit self-esteem in concert with low or negative implicit self-esteem (i.e., explicit and implicit self-esteem are discrepant) captures another potential form of fragile rather than secure high self-esteem. Epstein and Morling (1995) suggest that individuals with discordant implicit and explicit self-esteem will easily be threatened by negative self-relevant information and engage in heightened defensive processing, whereas this is not the case for individuals with congruent implicit and explicit self-esteem. Consistent with this view, Bosson et al. (2003) found that, compared to individuals with concordant (high) explicit and implicit self-esteem, individuals with high explicit and low implicit self-esteem displayed greater self-enhancement following unflattering feedback, greater unrealistic optimism for the future, and greater stated concordance between their actual and ideal selves. Likewise, Jordan et al. (2003) reported that participants with discrepant high explicit and low implicit self-esteem displayed higher levels of narcissism, greater dissonance reduction following choice, and more in-group biases, both with groups created arbitrarily (Jordan et al., 2003) and existing ethnic groups (Jordan et al., 2005), all processes related to defensiveness (see also Zeigler-Hill, 2006). In other research, Kernis et al. (2005) found that after priming positive or negative implicit self-esteem, those whose primed (implicit) self-esteem was discrepant with their trait (explicit) self-esteem level self-promoted more and exhibited greater out-group derogation. Interestingly, in this study, this effect occurred in both directions of discrepancy: high explicit SE primed with low implicit SE and low explicit SE primed with

high implicit SE. However, generally the fragility and/or defensiveness literature focuses on the discrepancy between high explicit self-esteem and low implicit self-esteem, as this direction of discrepancy has more theoretical significance and more consistent links to outcomes of interest.

More recent research calls into question the ubiquity of the relationship between discrepant implicit/explicit self-esteem and heightened defensiveness. Research on the implicit attitudes of narcissists represents one area of contention. Narcissists are often considered defensive individuals with inflated explicit self-esteem who do not like themselves deep down inside (i.e., have low implicit self-esteem; e.g., Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001). This psychodynamic view is often supported in the empirical literature (e.g., Jordan et al., 2003; Zeigler-Hill, 2006). However, to the extent that narcissists possess low implicit self-esteem, findings reported by Campbell, Bosson, Goheen, Lakey, and Kernis (2007) suggest that it may be limited to self-aspects tied to communion and not to agency. That is, narcissists indicate high implicit self-esteem when the items used to gauge implicit self-esteem relate to things like power and assertiveness, rather than things like being friendly and cooperative (see Bosson et al., 2008, for further discussion of narcissism and implicit self-esteem). In addition, others have shown that people sometimes do, in fact, possess awareness of their valenced associations with self (Gawronski, Hofmann, & Wilbur, 2006) and that discrepancies between implicit and explicit self-esteem may reflect self-presentational effects on explicit self-reports rather than fragile self-esteem per se (Olson, Fazio, & Hermann, 2007); both of these findings suggest that implicit self-esteem, as often measured, may be less "implicit" than originally thought.

Taken together, while considerable research supports the assertion that high explicit self-esteem paired with low implicit self-esteem reflects fragile high self-esteem, other research casts some doubt on its generality. If discrepancies in explicit and implicit self-esteem do represent a marker of self-esteem fragility, future research should continue to bear out a number of issues: (1) the existence of individuals

whose implicit and explicit self-esteem matches (i.e., is concordant) and does not match (i.e., is discrepant) in valence, (2) the predictive value of this discrepancy or concordance for defensive outcomes, and (3) the differential implications of discrepancies in one direction (e.g., high explicit and low implicit) versus another (e.g., low explicit and high implicit, as found in Kernis et al., 2005).

Interestingly, this marker or category of (potential) self-esteem fragility may offer the most room for flexibility or improvement (i.e., a place in which to intervene and boost implicit self-esteem). For example, simple associative learning, such as pairing self-related words with smiling faces can result in enhanced implicit self-esteem (Baccus, Baldwin, & Packer, 2004). Similarly, Dijksterhuis (2004) utilized subliminal evaluative conditioning to boost implicit self-esteem as evidenced across three different measures of implicit esteem. Theoretically, then, a person with this particular marker of fragility could be conditioned to improve their implicit self-esteem and, thus, decrease their fragility and improve their defensive outcomes. However, Baccus et al. (2004) note that individuals with discordant self-esteem to begin with were less responsive to their implicit conditioning. Future research in this area is needed.

An Integrative Empirical Look at Fragile and Secure Self-Esteem

The data and theory just reviewed support the perspective that self-esteem has multiple components and that to understand fully its place in psychological functioning, we must understand all of them. Although differences exist among these components, research and theory support the contention that each reflects an aspect of self-esteem fragility and/or vulnerability. Consistent with this assertion, researchers have found interrelations among these components. For example, research conducted in our lab indicates that measures of instability and contingency of self-esteem correlate significantly, for example, $r(109) = 0.25$, $p < 0.01$ (Kernis, Heppner, Cascio, & Davis, 2007;

see also Kernis et al., 2008). In addition, variability in daily competence self-evaluations relates to variability in daily global self-esteem, especially if individuals' self-esteem is contingent on the domain of competence (Kernis et al., 1993, Study 2). Moreover, relatively unstable self-esteem is associated with (at least one measure of) implicit self-esteem, such that higher implicit self-esteem relates to less unstable self-esteem ($r = -0.25$, $p < 0.01$; Zeigler-Hill, 2006).

Recently, researchers have taken a broader, more inclusive empirical view and examined all three markers of the fragile versus secure high self-esteem distinction in relation to the same set of defensive outcomes to begin to understand whether a common, underlying fragility versus security is at work to distinguish among individuals with high self-esteem. In one such study, we (Kernis et al., 2008) examined fragile and secure self-esteem and its impact on verbal defensiveness. One hundred participants first completed self-report measures of four self-esteem measures: self-esteem level (Rosenberg, 1965), self-esteem contingency (Paradise & Kernis, 1999), implicit self-esteem (Nuttin, 1987), and self-esteem stability (e.g., Kernis et al., 1989). Then, participants underwent a one-on-one interview designed to assess their level of verbal defensiveness about negative events from their past (Feldman Barrett, Williams, & Fong, 2002). Following Feldman Barrett, Cleveland, Conner, and Williams (2000), the interviews followed a structured format. Trained interviewers asked participants a series of 25 questions: the first 5 questions were relatively neutral (e.g., "How accepted did you feel growing up?"), the last 5 were gradually restoring (e.g., "Tell me about your most enjoyable experience."), and the 15 questions between were mildly to moderately stressful. These questions elicited specific instances of unpleasant experiences or actions undertaken by the participant (e.g., "Tell me about a time when you have secretly acted in a self-destructive way"; "Describe a time when you have felt less sexually desirable than a friend."). We trained each interviewer extensively to elicit specific and concrete events from participants, and to follow up on verbal inconsistencies. We

conducted numerous practice interview sessions to achieve a high level of uniformity across interviewers.

Participants' responses were audio-recorded and later scored by trained coders for levels of "distortion" and "awareness." Distortion refers to an individual's attempts to alter the specific content of the thoughts or feelings that enter consciousness; awareness refers to an individual's attempt to avoid or limit the extent to which the threat enters consciousness (Feldman Barrett et al., 2000). These two scores comprised a verbal defensiveness score which ranged from 0 to 3, whereby high levels of distortion and low levels of awareness were scored highly defensive (3) and low levels of distortion and high levels of awareness were scored relatively low in defensiveness (0; for transcribed sample responses and scores, see Kernis et al., 2008). Results of a series of hierarchical regressions revealed that among individuals with generally high levels of self-esteem, those with secure self-esteem, in any of its forms—stable, low contingent, or high (concordant) implicit—were the least verbally defensive when confronted with negative aspects of themselves and their pasts. On the contrary, individuals with high but fragile self-esteem, in any of its forms—unstable, high contingent, or low (discrepant) implicit—were significantly more verbally defensive than their secure counterparts when confronted with these negative parts of themselves. Thus, this study provided the first evidence linking fragile self-esteem across three different markers to increased defensiveness following self-threat.

Fragile Self-Esteem, Verbal Defensiveness, and Psychological Well-Being

Some researchers claim that defensive, self-protective, and self-promoting strategies are universal (see Gregg, Sedikides, & Gebauer, Chapter 14, this volume), and are actually markers of healthy psychological functioning (Taylor & Brown, 1988). To the extent that defensiveness is adaptive and reflective of optimal

functioning, greater tendencies toward defensiveness should correlate positively with measures of well-being. However, in the above verbal defensiveness study, this clearly was not the case. Verbal defensiveness (i.e., self-protective verbal behavior when faced with a negative self-aspect or past action) correlated negatively with total scores on Ryff's (1989) multicomponent measure of psychological functioning, as well as on the Life Satisfaction Scale (both $r_s(99) = -0.25, p < 0.05$). In combination, these findings support the view that heightened defensiveness reflects insecurity, fragility, and suboptimal functioning, rather than healthy psychological functioning (see also Deci & Ryan, 2000). However, future research is needed with alternative operational definitions of "defensiveness" and "self-enhancement" to disentangle the role of positive illusions versus objectivity in psychological well-being.

Other findings link specific markers of secure self-esteem with well-being. Paradise and Kernis (2002) administered Ryff's (1989) multicomponent measure of psychological well-being along with measures of level and stability of self-esteem. Their findings indicated that whereas individuals with stable high self-esteem reported that they functioned in a highly autonomous manner, possessed a clear sense of meaning in their lives, related effectively within both their physical and social environments, and were highly self-accepting, the same was less true of individuals with unstable high self-esteem. Similarly, both level and instability of self-esteem had independent effects on attachment anxiety, such that individuals with high and stable self-esteem exhibited the lowest levels of attachment anxiety, an important factor for interpersonal functioning (Foster, Kernis, & Goldman, 2007).

Feeling good about oneself does in fact feel good, and we are not suggesting that something is wrong with individuals when they want to feel good about themselves. Instead, we are suggesting that when feeling good about themselves becomes a *prime directive*, excessive defensiveness and self-promotion are likely to follow, the accompanying self-esteem is likely to be fragile rather than secure, and any benefits to

psychological health will be transient. Instead, when high self-esteem is secure, self-esteem is no longer an end in itself and therefore does not detract from one's health, well-being, and relationships. Harter (2003) echoes this in her work with children and adolescents. Likewise, Crocker and colleagues (e.g., Crocker & Park, 2004) have written extensively from a similar viewpoint regarding the detrimental impacts of the *pursuit* of self-esteem, noting that "the pursuit of self-esteem interferes with relatedness, learning, autonomy, self-regulation, and mental and physical health" (p. 407) and that paradoxically "when people are driven by their ego (i.e., by concerns about their worth and value), they tend to create the opposite of what they really want" (Crocker, 2006, p. 119). Self-determination theorists echo the same sentiment regarding the paradox of self-esteem: "Those who need it, don't have it; those who have it, don't need it" (Ryan & Brown, 2006, p. 127). In other words, the *pursuit* of self-esteem inevitably yields fragile, rather than secure self-esteem, while those with secure high self-esteem do not seem to pursue self-esteem as an end to itself (see also Soenens & Vansteenkiste, Chapter 17, this volume).²

Self-Esteem and Identity Processes

Self-Esteem and Personal Identity

The concept of self-esteem is an integral aspect of the study of identity, and self-esteem holds a prominent place among several identity theories from disparate perspectives. Self-esteem is implicated both as a driving force behind identity construction (i.e., as an identity motive) and as an outcome to examine when particular aspects of identity are threatened. However, like the link between self-esteem and behavioral and psychosocial outcomes, the specific role of self-esteem in identity development and maintenance varies across theories and researchers.

First, work on identity motives (Vignoles, Manzi, Regalia, Jemmolo, & Scabini, 2008; Vignoles, Regalia, Manzi, Gollidge, & Scabini, 2006) points to the need for self-esteem (i.e., the

desire to construct an identity where one feels good about oneself) as important for multiple facets of the construction of identity, including what people consider central to self, what people communicate to others in their life about themselves, and for being happy and fulfilled. While considered only one of six important identity motives, self-esteem is considered the most universally accepted (Vignoles et al., 2006). Similarly, Gregg et al. (Chapter 14, this volume) suggest that the motive to self-enhance is one of two "pervasive" identity motives. That is, to become central to one's identity, a particular concept or objective must confer a favorable outcome to the self-image. Hence, they cite a litany of observed psychological phenomena that support the pervasive and typically automatic nature of self-enhancement. This view, too, would seem to place positive self-esteem as a primary force in identity construction, whether consciously or unconsciously.

From a different point of view, when identity is formed and constructed in a supportive environment with unconditional regard from close others (Assor, Roth, & Deci, 2004; Rogers, 1959), self-esteem (and, more importantly, "healthy" self-esteem) can be thought of as a natural outgrowth of identity exploration and the satisfaction of psychological needs (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Sheldon, 2004). As echoed by Soenens and Vansteenkiste (Chapter 17, this volume), in our view, constructing an identity based on feeling good about oneself limits one's potential for growth and exploration. Furthermore, this may contribute to a sense of self-worth that is fragile (e.g., vulnerable to the opinions of others and to external standards and benchmarks) rather than secure. Nevertheless, empirical evidence questioning the ubiquitous self-esteem/self-enhancement motive is lacking (but see Heppner & Kernis, 2009; Kernis et al., 2008).

Identity is not only influenced by self-esteem, but rather, the relationship between identity and self-esteem is bidirectional. Threats to important aspects of identity affect one's self-esteem. For example, perceived discrimination among minorities is linked to decreased global self-esteem (Greene, Way, & Pahl, 2006).

Likewise, when one's idea of self as a good student is threatened (e.g., through bad grades), an individual's global self-esteem decreases (Crocker, Karpinski, Quinn, & Chase, 2003). However, as already described, from our view, these kinds of responses to identity threats should be reduced if an individual's global self-esteem is secure, rather than fragile. Again, a dearth of research in this particular area limits the conclusions we can make regarding multiple forms of self-esteem and their specific identity implications.

Self-esteem clearly plays a role in theories of identity formation and in maintenance of one's identity. While self-esteem's place in identity theories may vary considerably across schools of thought, more consistent research exists displaying the link between identity threats and self-esteem implications. With mostly speculation available as to the nature of the self-esteem that is implicated in such research, we offer that the research on self-esteem in identity motives and processes would benefit from a consideration of high self-esteem as having multiple forms outlined above. This consideration, plus a consideration of how secure versus fragile self-esteem is formed and cultivated, discussed below, may have important ramifications for identity research across the board—in identity motives, identity exploration and formation, and reactions to identity threats.

Self-Esteem and Cultural Identity

Beyond personal identity, self-esteem has played an important role in a shifting cultural identity toward one of self-focus and exploration of self-feelings (Hewitt, 1998; Owens & Stryker, 2001). The shift toward the cultural importance of self-esteem and self-focus more broadly has not been universally praised. Initially considered a plausible and intuitive way to improve behavior and psychological outcomes, educational, recreational, and parenting practices began promoting ideas of specialness and of achievement without limits (Twenge, 2006; Young-Eisendrath, 2008). This resulted in an increased focus on the

“self” and of boosting self-esteem, and simultaneously, books lauding the merits of self-esteem dominated bookshelves. More recently literature on the trouble with self-esteem is emerging in greater numbers and force. Hewitt (1998) discusses the “myth of self-esteem,” citing the varied lay definitions and conceptions of self-esteem found across people. Young-Eisendrath (2008) explicates the “self-esteem trap” through her experiences as a psychotherapist. Twenge (2006) articulates an overarching trend of the rise in cultural importance of self-esteem and a constellation of other self-focused notions, dubbing the cohort born from the 1970s to the 2000s “Generation Me.” Twenge and Campbell (2009) recently took this work one step further, paralleling the trajectory of increasing self-esteem and self-focus with an increase in narcissism and tying these increases to significant cultural shifts such as the recent obsession with fame, wealth, and celebrity, and even to social and economic problems (e.g., the mortgage crisis).

In addition to some trepidation in the popular literature, empirical examinations of generational trends suggest that positive self-views of children and college students, in particular, have steadily risen over the last several decades (Twenge & Campbell, 2001), and that this rise in self-esteem is related to an inflated, unfounded sense of self-esteem—that is, narcissism (Twenge, Konrath, Foster, Campbell, & Bushman, 2008a, 2008b). What's more, this increased narcissism co-occurs with generational increases in negative psychological functioning indices such as psychopathology (Twenge et al., 2010) and anxiety (Twenge, 2000). On the other hand, other researchers question the veracity of these generational trends (Trzesniewski & Donnellan, 2009), and researchers continue to show that high global self-esteem predicts a number of positive psychosocial and behavioral outcomes. For example, global level of self-esteem has been linked to psychological functioning indices such as depression (Roberts & Monroe, 1992), and recently this link was made more compelling with prospective predictions (Orth et al., 2009). And, in support of the original intentions of the California self-esteem legislation, more

recent research links relatively low global self-esteem to problem behavior and delinquency (Donnellan, Trzesniewski, Robins, Moffitt, & Caspi, 2005), as well as to an increased risk for poorer health and bleaker job prospects later in life (Trzesniewski et al., 2006). In line with Swann, Chang-Schneider, and McClarty (2007), who argue that more specific self-evaluations will yield better, more consistent predictions between self-views and psychosocial and behavioral outcomes, we contend that precisely these debates regarding the advantages and disadvantages of high self-esteem may be informed by examining high self-esteem in terms of its fragility versus security, and, importantly by separating fragility and narcissism from secure high self-esteem.

Notably, in considering the future of self-esteem as an important predictor of psychological outcomes, the fragile versus secure self-esteem distinction proffers a new line of inquiry regarding self-esteem. If it is heterogeneous in nature, and if efforts to boost self-esteem have been ineffective (Baumeister et al., 2003) or backfired (Twenge, 2006), what appears to be the important question is not *how much* you have but *how* you have it (Crocker & Park, 2004). How do you come to hold a positive view of yourself? Is self-esteem a prime directive, a pursuit in itself, a goal to be achieved and upheld, or is self-esteem a given and therefore not a concern (Sheldon, 2004; see also Soenens & Vansteenkiste, Chapter 17, this volume)? Future research which examines global self-esteem in combination with multiple markers of self-esteem fragility and security may help explain how a cultural shift toward self-esteem focus has not produced all of its intended benefits.

Predicting and Cultivating High Secure Self-Esteem

Given the potential downside or ineffectiveness of attempting to boost self-esteem, it becomes critically important to examine how we predict self-esteem, where self-esteem comes from, and how we can cultivate high self-esteem that is secure, and therefore less prone to

defensiveness and poor psychological outcomes. Through this lens, the varied and sometimes disparate definitions of self-esteem are highlighted once again. In particular, theoretical and operational definitions of self-esteem vary in their hypothesized sources or determinants. As previewed above, some theorists and researchers have taken a componential or sum-total approach. James (1890) first articulated this notion arguing that self-esteem was merely the ratio of one's successes in life to one's "pretensions" (strivings/values). As can be seen, this formulation of self-esteem lends itself toward measuring, from our view, contingent self-esteem—self-esteem that is based on accomplishments and matching to standards.

Other perspectives on self-esteem emphasize one broad domain of functioning as the critical determinant of self-esteem. Sociometer theory (Leary & Baumeister, 2000), for example, highlights the role of the "need to belong" in self-esteem dynamics. In this framework, self-esteem functions as a notification system for whether one is being included in and accepted by valued groups. Thus, inclusion (or high relational value) would yield high self-esteem, while exclusion (or low relational value) would yield low self-esteem. From this perspective, self-esteem is more of a by-product of another process (i.e., feeling valued by others or not; for a review, see Leary, 2005). Obviously, sociometer theory emphasizes the influence of other people on our self-esteem. From our view, other's perceptions of us and actions toward us surely do influence self-esteem. However, we suggest that individual differences exist in the extent of this influence such that individuals with more secure self-esteem would be less affected, at least behaviorally, by others' influences (Kernis & Goldman, 2006b). Moreover, we agree that the influence of others on our self-esteem during formative periods (of childhood and adolescence) plays a direct role in the development of secure versus fragile self-esteem (e.g., Assor et al., 2004; Kernis, Brown, & Brody, 2000). We will return to this point below.

So, where does secure self-esteem come from? What is it driven by? According to

self-determination theory (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 2000), secure high self-esteem arises naturally out of the satisfaction of three basic psychological needs. Rather than presuming that humans are driven by a desire to avoid negative states, SDT posits that humans are orientated toward growth and integration, and that experiences that provide us with feelings of autonomy, competence, and relatedness (i.e., relational value) provide the soil from which secure self-esteem and optimal functioning should grow (e.g., Deci & Ryan, 1995; Moller, Friedman, & Deci, 2006; see also Soenens & Vansteenkiste, Chapter 17, this volume). The relative absence of the satisfaction of these three “psychological needs” is thought to interfere with healthy self-esteem and lead people to focus on satisfying various contingencies of self-worth that undermine self-esteem (Moller et al., 2006), and to regulate behavior less intrinsically (Ryan & Deci, 2000; see also Soenens & Vansteenkiste, Chapter 17, this volume). Indeed, people high in dispositional autonomy tend to have high dispositional self-esteem (Deci & Ryan, 1985). In contrast to SDT, sociometer theory argues that satisfying autonomy and competence needs relates to self-esteem only indirectly—only through their influence on relational value/inclusion. That is, although factors like autonomy and competence may correlate with self-esteem these relationships will disappear after controlling for relatedness. Some studies (Heppner, Kernis, Nezelek et al., 2008; Reis, Sheldon, Gable, Roscoe, & Ryan, 2000) have demonstrated that statistically, this is not the case; factors other than relatedness, such as autonomy, competence, and authenticity (feeling like you are your “true self,” which we return to below) predict self-esteem even when relatedness factors are accounted for (but see Leary, 2005). In our view, the satisfaction of all three psychological needs—autonomy, competence, and relatedness—leads to secure self-esteem, as well as a felt sense of connection with the “true self.” We explore how secure self-esteem and the “true self” are tied together below.

In addition to, and intimately related to, the satisfaction of psychological needs as a source of healthy self-esteem, relationships with one’s

parents/caregivers in childhood and adolescence provide a specific temporal and situational instance in which researchers have tested the link between satisfaction of psychological needs and resulting self-esteem. Kernis, Brown et al. (2000) examined 11- to 12-year-old children’s global level of self-esteem, their self-esteem instability, and their perceived patterns of communication with their parents. Results revealed that perceptions of fathers’ communications were linked to children’s concurrent self-esteem level and instability. Specifically, children who perceived their fathers to be highly critical, to call them names, and to use guilt arousal and love withdrawal for control (i.e., were not autonomy supportive) had more *unstable* self-esteem, a form of fragility. Likewise, Assor et al. (2004) assessed college students’ retrospective accounts of their parents’ use of unconditional positive regard versus conditional positive regard (e.g., “As a child or adolescent, I often felt that my mother’s affection for me depended on my academic success.”). Students who recalled more use of conditional regard by their parents also reported greater fluctuations in self-esteem and self-worth, as well as more introjected and less-identified self-regulation, and more shame and guilt after failure. Thus, autonomy supportive environments with unconditional positive regard appear to promote secure rather than fragile self-esteem.

In summary, not only is the picture of individuals who have high self-esteem heterogeneous and differentiated, it appears that the picture of determinants and inputs to self-esteem is also complex and heterogeneous. These complexities, however, are critical to examine, as the cultivation of high and secure self-esteem, either through parenting practices or through environmental and social inputs, should lead to a more definitive link between self-esteem and behavioral, physical, and psychosocial outcomes. Furthermore, to avoid the potential downsides of previous widespread interventions (Baumeister et al., 2003; Twenge, 2006), it is critical to examine these complexities in order to develop an empirically based and effective way to cultivate high self-esteem that is secure, rather than high self-esteem that is fragile.

Self-Esteem, the “True Self,” and Mindfulness

A person’s connection with the “self,” through knowledge of her core values and beliefs, through the way she processes information about herself, through her reflection of her core values in her behavior, and through her desires to let close others know “the real her,” are intimately tied to self-esteem—her overall global assessment of herself. Importantly, varieties in this connection with oneself help delineate individuals with fragile versus secure self-esteem. This connection with self can be captured by two individual differences known as authenticity (e.g., Kernis, 2003) and mindfulness (e.g., Brown & Ryan, 2003). In this section, we describe these two individual differences, their relations to fragile versus secure self-esteem, and their complementary relations to defensiveness versus openness and psychological functioning. Finally, we describe fragile versus secure self-esteem, authenticity, and mindfulness as a system of variables that elucidate an individual’s connection with self and cultivate positive psychological functioning.

Authenticity

Kernis and Goldman (2006a; also, Goldman & Kernis, 2002; Kernis, 2003) describe *authenticity* as the unobstructed operation of one’s true or core self in one’s daily enterprise, and they propose the construct as a useful individual difference measure for “delineating the adaptive features of [secure high] self esteem” (Kernis, 2003, p. 13). Dispositional authenticity is comprised of four distinct, but interrelated components: awareness, unbiased processing, behavior, and relational orientation (Kernis & Goldman, 2005, 2006a). *Awareness* refers to being aware of one’s feelings, motives and desires, strengths and weaknesses, and self-relevant cognitions. It also involves being motivated to learn about oneself, to be aware of inherent dualities in one’s personality aspects, and to have trust in one’s self-knowledge. *Unbiased processing* involves being

objective when processing information related to one’s positive and negative attributes and qualities. Stated differently, it involves not denying, minimizing, exaggerating, or ignoring positive or negative self-evaluative information, regardless of whether the information is externally provided or internally generated. *Behavior* refers to acting in accord with one’s values, preferences, and needs as opposed to acting merely to please others or attain rewards or avoid punishments. In addition, behavioral authenticity involves the free and natural expression of one’s feelings, motives, and inclinations, and sensitivity to the fit between one’s self and the dictates of the environment. *Relational orientation* involves valuing and engaging in openness and truthfulness in one’s close relationships. In other words, it involves being genuine and not fake in one’s close relationships and allowing close others to see the real you, both good and bad.

The concept of authenticity shares philosophical and empirical roots, and overlaps theoretically, with several other notable constructs. Much like the conceptualization of secure and fragile self-esteem, the conceptualization of authenticity draws heavily on SDT, especially the construct of autonomy. However, the construct of autonomy emphasizes an individual’s personal experience of choice, freedom, and volition, while authenticity, as a whole, is more about a connection with a felt “true self” (see also Waterman, Chapter 16, this volume). In some sense, authenticity is required to achieve autonomy (one must know oneself to choose behaviors in line with core values). On the other hand, it seems authenticity grows out of the satisfaction of psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Along these lines, Waterman (Chapter 16, this volume) notes that achieving personal expressiveness (i.e., authenticity) requires autonomous choice of one’s activities, but also that felt authenticity reinforces these autonomous choices. This disentanglement deserves more attention; however, in our research (Heppner, Kernis, Nezlek, et al., 2008), authenticity does appear to be a separable construct from autonomy. In addition, the concept of authenticity is related to Sheldon and

colleagues' (Sheldon & Elliot, 1999) notion of self-concordance. Self-concordance is the pursuit of goals that satisfy basic psychological needs and reflect one's core interests and values. In our view, self-concordance refers more specifically to this process of goal selection and attainment, whereas authenticity refers to behaving in accord with one's true self, across multiple domains and across multiple levels of behavior. Thus, although a person who scores highly in dispositional authenticity would also likely pursue self-concordant goals, a person's pursuit of self-concordant goals does not conceptualize the whole of authentic behavior. Finally, Waterman's construct of personal expressiveness (1990; see also Waterman, Chapter 16, this volume) is also closely aligned with dispositional authenticity. While conceived of quite broadly, personal expressiveness is commonly measured a bit more narrowly in terms of a person's ratings about specific actions that they pursue (e.g., Schwartz, Mullis, Waterman, & Dunham, 2000). Authenticity, as measured in the Authenticity Inventory (Kernis & Goldman, 2006a), attempts to capture more generally an individual's knowledge of and connection with a "true self," as well as his/her authentic behavior and relationships. Given the number of constructs that are similar to authenticity and the vast outcomes they have predicted, we feel that this lends further support to the role of connection to a "true self" in psychological well-being.

Returning to the relationship between authenticity and self-esteem, dispositional authenticity as a whole, and each of its subcomponents individually, do indeed relate directly to global self-esteem level, as well as to a number of indices of positive psychological functioning including life satisfaction, positive affect, self-actualization, vitality, self-concept clarity, and adaptive coping strategies (Kernis & Goldman, 2006a). A daily sense of felt authenticity also predicts more positive daily feelings of self-esteem, even when controlling for the daily satisfaction of autonomy, competence, and relatedness needs (Heppner, Kernis, Nezelek, et al., 2008). Importantly, authenticity relates inversely to self-esteem contingency and to self-esteem instability,

two markers of self-esteem fragility (r s range from -0.34 to -0.58 , $p < 0.01$; see Kernis & Goldman, 2006a). Authenticity also relates to markers of an open exploration of one's identity, including greater identity integration, and less identity diffusion and self-concept differentiation (Kernis & Goldman, 2006a).

Mindfulness

Mindfulness refers to an enhanced attention and awareness of immediate experience (Brown & Ryan, 2003; Brown, Ryan, & Creswell, 2007), a purposeful, moment-to-moment awareness (Kabat-Zinn, 2003), and being mindful confers numerous physical and psychological benefits. Dispositional mindfulness predicts lower neuroticism, depression, anxiety, and unpleasant affect as well as higher self-esteem, vitality, and self-determination (Brown & Ryan, 2003, Study 1), while state mindfulness relates to higher state autonomy and pleasant affect and to lower state unpleasant affect (Brown & Ryan, 2003, Study 4). Mindfulness also relates to various aspects or markers of effective self-regulation, including reduced reactivity to affective stimuli (Creswell, Way, Eisenberger, & Lieberman, 2007), less-automatized responding and better performance on tasks which require control of attention (Wenk-Sormaz, 2005), and higher dispositional self-control and less overconfidence (Lakey, Campbell, Brown, & Goodie, 2007). Furthermore, like authenticity, in our research trait mindfulness is consistently inversely related to markers of self-esteem fragility, including self-esteem instability (e.g., $r(108) = -0.22$, $p < 0.02$) and self-esteem contingency (e.g., $r(108) = -0.38$, $p < 0.001$; Kernis et al., 2007).

Mindfulness is also conceptually related to the construct of authenticity. Mindfulness, too, entails *awareness* and *unbiased processing*, but in a somewhat broader context. Mindfulness concerns individuals' heightened awareness and unbiased processing not only of internal stimuli and aspects of self-knowledge and identity (like authenticity), but also with awareness and processing of environmental stimuli, as has

often been emphasized in previous mindfulness research (e.g., Langer, 1989). Important for the present purposes, mindful people experience their present moments in an open and relatively non-defensive manner (Hodgins & Knee, 2002). Similarly, authentic people strive to know themselves “warts and all,” and they strive for close others to see the “real” them, rather than to present themselves in the most positive light. It stands to reason, then, that mindful and authentic people faced with threats to their self-worth will exhibit little need to defensively or aggressively bolster their self-esteem, much as individuals with secure high self-esteem. Some preliminary studies support this notion.

First, highly authentic and mindful individuals exhibit relatively low levels of verbal defensiveness. In one study (Lakey et al., 2007), using the same verbal defensiveness paradigm described earlier, participants first completed measures of dispositional authenticity and dispositional mindfulness. Several weeks later, participants underwent an interview to assess verbal defensiveness. Authenticity and mindfulness related positively to each other ($r(99) = 0.48, p < 0.01$) and both constructs related negatively to verbal defensiveness ($r_s = -0.25$ and $-0.29, p < 0.01$). Moreover, mindfulness fully accounted for the relationship between dispositional authenticity and verbal defensiveness. We discuss the interplay of these variables in the section below.

A second relevant pair of studies examined the implications of mindfulness for buffering another defensive response—aggression and hostility. Anger and aggressive behavior often reflect an attempt to restore one’s damaged feelings of self-worth following threat (Feshbach, 1970). Similarly, hostile cognitions and affect occur frequently following a (perceived) social or physical threat (DeWall, Twenge, Gitter, & Baumeister, 2009; Dodge, Murphy, & Buchsbaum, 1984; Epps & Kendall, 1995). We (Heppner, Kernis, Lakey, et al., 2008) investigated both dispositional and situationally induced mindfulness and its impact on aggressive tendencies. First, we measured dispositional mindfulness, self-reported aggressiveness (Buss & Perry, 1992), and hostile attributional tendencies with a

measure we created (see Heppner, Kernis, Lakey, et al., 2008, for a description). Relatively high levels of mindfulness related to relatively low levels of multiple components of self-reported aggressiveness, including hostility, jealousy, and verbal aggression (but not physical aggression). Likewise, mindfulness scores inversely related to hostile attributions for ambiguous hypothetical threats, including less expected anger, less intent attributed to the perpetrator, and less desire to retaliate against the perpetrator.

In another study, participants conversed with one another purportedly in an effort to choose future teammates for a later task. Experimenters randomly assigned undergraduate students to one of three conditions. Participants in the *acceptance* condition were informed that fellow participants wanted to work with them, so that they would be a part of a group in the upcoming computer-based task. Participants in the *rejection* condition were informed that fellow participants did not want to work with them, so that they would be the “individual” on the next task. Participants in the *mindfulness-rejection* condition received the same feedback as did individuals in the rejection condition. However, immediately prior to receiving the feedback, they completed a mindfulness induction task. Specifically, they followed along with a scripted “raisin-eating” task adapted from Kabat-Zinn’s mindfulness-based stress reduction program (see, e.g., Kabat-Zinn, 1990). In this exercise, participants initially examine a raisin carefully, noticing its shape, texture, and color; then, participants slowly and thoroughly chew, taste, and swallow the raisin. In this way, the task brings about a state of heightened attention and awareness to an ordinarily mundane activity (eating) that often is done with little attention or awareness. Experimenters guided participants through the exercise once, and then left to allow participants to practice on their own for 5 min.

All participants then “competed” in a computer-based reaction-time task used extensively in previous aggression research (e.g., Bushman, 1995; Bushman & Baumeister, 1998; Twenge, Baumeister, Tice, & Stucke, 2001). Participants selected the duration and intensity of noise (i.e., aggression) that they would deliver

to their opponents should they win a particular reaction-time trial. Statistical comparisons between the groups showed that aggression levels in the rejection-only condition were significantly higher than both the acceptance and mindfulness-rejection conditions, while there was no difference in aggression levels between the acceptance and mindfulness-rejection conditions. These findings indicate that a temporary induction of mindfulness was sufficient to produce lower levels of aggression in the face of a potent social rejection.

Convergent evidence is provided by a brain imaging study (specifically, functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging—fMRI) of dispositional mindfulness and manipulations of inclusion or exclusion (Creswell, Eisenberger, & Lieberman, 2006, cited in Brown et al., 2007). Participants virtually tossed a ball to other “participants” in an online game (actually controlled by the computer). In one block of the game, participants were included in the game, while in another block of the game they were excluded from the game. Participants relatively high in mindfulness perceived less social rejection during the exclusion block of the game. Moreover, this mindfulness to perceived rejection link was accounted for by reduced activity in the dorsal Anterior Cingulate Cortex (dACC), a brain region activated by experiences of “social pain” (Eisenberger, Lieberman, & Williams, 2003). Similarly, in another study, highly mindful individuals were less reactive to emotionally threatening stimuli (Creswell et al., 2007).

Mindfulness, Authenticity, and Self-Esteem: A System of Variables

Mindfulness, authenticity, and self-esteem, particularly in its secure forms, share common theoretical underpinnings and at times even terminology, and the studies reviewed here show that these variables predict similar (sometimes identical) outcomes. Still, correlations among these constructs are consistently modest suggesting that they are not interchangeable. Using this focused group of distinct yet interrelated

individual difference measures helps us tap into the system of self-evaluation and self-concept exploration and predict important outcomes that have potentially important ramifications for health and well-being, such as variation in openness and defensiveness in processing of threat. However, we are left to wonder, how exactly do these variables fit together? Without a complete set of answers, we offer a few considerations and a conceptual model to help organize these considerations (see Fig. 15.2).

First, as explicated throughout this chapter, self-esteem (in any form or considering any marker) is both an outcome and a predictor in this system. Indeed, in studies reported here it was examined in both ways. The quality of one’s self-esteem is an important predictor of how one reacts to threats or challenges to one’s self-worth, challenges that we all encounter every day. In addition, treating self-esteem as an outcome and figuring out what makes you feel good about yourself “at the end of the day” is important as well. Self-esteem, especially secure high self-esteem, may not only help predict some aspects of well-being, but it may best be thought of as an indicator of eudaimonic well-being (Waterman, Chapter 16, this volume), providing evidence of the satisfaction of basic psychological needs, while fragile self-esteem is a sign that such needs are not being met (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Indeed, daily self-reported levels of psychological needs and felt authenticity predicted self-esteem, even while controlling for same-day levels of (more hedonic) pleasant and unpleasant affect (Heppner, Kernis, Nezzlek, et al., 2008).

In the same way, authenticity and mindfulness also can act as outcomes and predictors in the system, both as forces of change, reverberating through the system, and as outcomes, affected by the other variables. For example, mindful individuals are more likely to process both their positive and negative qualities in a less-biased manner. This increased self-knowledge allows them to know themselves in an authentic way and to behave in accordance with that self-knowledge. As a result, their self-esteem is less tossed about by day-to-day occurrences and is less dependent upon external standards (i.e., is more secure).

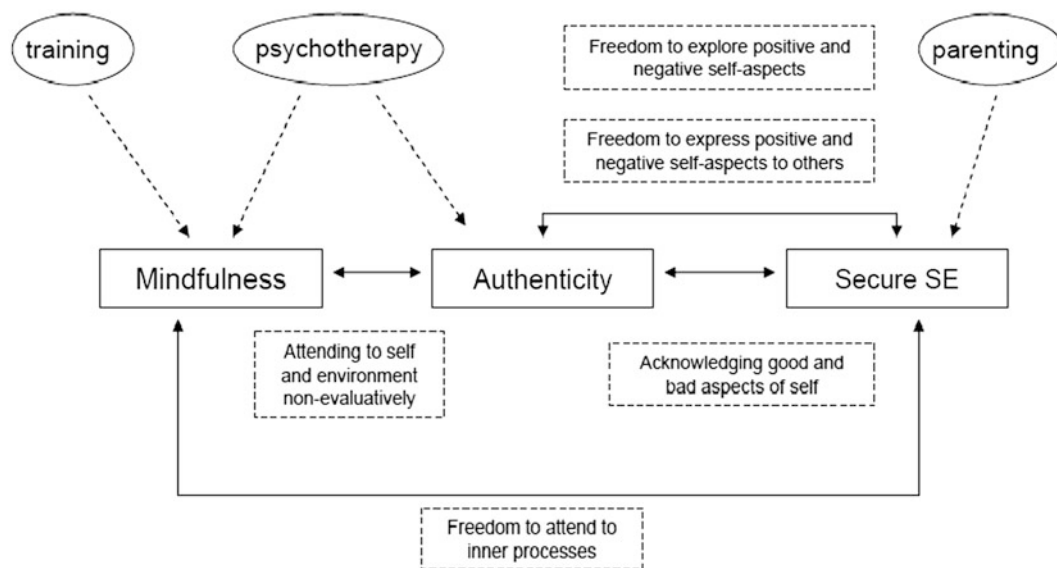


Fig. 15.2 A conceptual model of the interplay between mindfulness, authenticity, and secure self-esteem and their influence

On the other hand, using secure self-esteem as a starting point, individuals with secure rather than fragile self-esteem may feel the freedom to explore both their positive and negative qualities, allowing them to know themselves more fully and wanting significant others to know them (higher authenticity), and also encouraging them to be present to their current experience and more easily attend to their inner processes (higher mindfulness).

Second, mindfulness is both the broadest and narrowest construct in this “system.” It is broad in that, unlike authenticity and self-esteem, which are inherently self-relevant, mindfulness as a construct can be applied outside the self to broader cognition and behavior, not just to those that are self-relevant. On the other hand, mindfulness is the narrowest construct in that it is the most “fleeting,” applying itself only in the present moment. As mentioned above, there are theoretical similarities between mindfulness and authenticity, particularly between the awareness and unbiased processing theorized to comprise authenticity. However, they differ in that mindfulness is more general, reflecting a process of relating to the environment and to each moment, while authenticity reflects a process of relating

to the self, which is inherently mindful (Lakey, Kernis, Heppner, & Lance, 2008). Reflective of this theoretical relationship, Lakey et al. (2008) found that the link between authenticity and less verbal defensiveness, described above, was indirect, fully accounted for by the process of being mindful.

Third, this “system” is malleable, and not just in the generic ways in which all human systems and processes are fluid, bound to change and adapt. Instead, we can *directly* effect a change in the way we evaluate ourselves and our situations through specific strategies to increase mindfulness, authenticity, and “optimal” self-esteem (i.e., secure high self-esteem). Ryan and Brown (2006) suggest psychotherapy and other informal interpersonal contexts (i.e., relationships) may provide environments where a person can be non-contingently valued and thus optimal self-esteem may be cultivated. In addition, training in mindfulness, through exercise and meditation, directly increases attention and awareness, and secure self-esteem arises. Indeed, in one simple, straightforward study described above (Heppner, Kernis, Lakey, et al., 2008, Study 2) we demonstrated that the small act of eating a raisin in a mindful way buffered people’s aggressive

behavior following a powerful social rejection procedure, well-validated to cause aggression in previous research. Many questions remain—questions of mechanisms and eliminating alternative explanations—but mindfulness inductions and training in particular offer potentially powerful and broad applications that can reverberate throughout the self-system.

New Directions

We started the chapter by stating that “everyone seems to ‘know’ what self-esteem is.” Perhaps this is not exactly the case; rather, perhaps what everyone “knows” is a different sense of self-esteem. Because of the popular and widespread nature of the concept of self-esteem, it may be helpful to investigate individual differences in theories of self-esteem. In the same way that theories of personality traits like intelligence greatly impact motivation and behavior, as well as our reactions to success and failure (Dweck & Leggett, 1988), individuals’ own theories or notions about self-esteem may influence their reactions to self-esteem and ego threats. We (Heppner, vanDellen, & Martin, 2010) are currently collecting and analyzing data regarding college students’ perceptions of self-esteem, how they define it and conceptualize it, and what experiences they had with self-esteem education. In this way, we hope to determine how the self-esteem movement has shaped knowledge and perceptions of self-esteem, particularly if it has contributed to the cultivation of fragile rather than secure self-esteem. Furthermore, we hope to determine whether a person’s lay conception of self-esteem predicts self-esteem relevant outcomes comparably to an individual’s actual level of self-esteem, as traditionally measured.

In addition, the heterogeneity of high self-esteem should be investigated more fully and particularly with a broader life-span focus. Harter (2003) makes a similar plea for psychologists to better integrate developmental approaches. The particular issues involved with the study of the heterogeneity among individuals with high self-esteem critically need such an integration. This is highlighted here through the dearth of

research available on multiple forms of high self-esteem and their implications for specific identity processes. In line with this, we also began the chapter with the example of the California self-esteem movement. While intending to improve self-esteem—and thus the lives of children and the welfare of greater society—such policies, in concert with other cultural changes, may have been ineffective or may even have backfired. Apparent generational increases in levels of self-esteem (Twenge & Campbell, 2001) co-occur with negative personality characteristics such as entitlement and narcissism (Twenge et al., 2008a), high self-esteem that is extremely vulnerable to threat. Incorporating a developmental focus will provide the chance for a solid, empirically based understanding of the dynamics of self-esteem change that may help us foster certain kinds of self-esteem (secure) over others (fragile).

Finally, we would like to encourage other researchers to examine multiple markers of self-esteem fragility versus security. Given the statistical power needed to examine these multiple markers, in addition to level of global self-esteem, this is not an easy task, but it is a much-needed addition to the literature. Repeated studies with multiple markers of fragility will (a) give further support to (or fail to support) this fragile versus secure framework, (b) help us to understand the interplay among markers of fragility versus security, and ultimately (c) provide clearer insight into the scope (and limits) of outcomes that self-esteem does impact.

Despite shifts in public opinion and discrepancies in the empirical literature, self-esteem remains a highly researched topic. We hope that the continued advancement of multiple forms of high self-esteem as fragile versus secure contributes to our understanding of openness, defensiveness, and psychological health and well-being.

Notes

1. These researchers refer to these effects as implicit egotism. In their view, this is a general tendency for all people to like themselves and therefore like their names and other concepts

central to self, and this general tendency is used as the basis for exploring these effects. As will be seen, we argue that some people do not exhibit this implicit egotism (i.e., high implicit self-esteem) and that level of implicit self-esteem in combination with level of explicit self-esteem has important effects.

2. Readers may be wondering where low self-esteem fits in to fragility versus security of self-esteem. Admittedly, the fragile versus secure framework focuses on individuals with fragile or secure *high* self-esteem. Conceptual and empirical reasons exist for this. First, as already mentioned, the precise nature of low self-esteem is still unclear. Low self-esteem typically is reflected by midpoint (rather than low) scores on self-esteem scales and may best be characterized by lukewarm feelings toward self (Baumeister et al., 1989). As a result, low self-esteem as traditionally measured may represent a qualitatively different construct from high self-esteem, rather than the lower end of a self-esteem continuum. Consistent with this, low self-esteem interacts differently with markers of self-esteem fragility versus security, even when predicting the same outcome. For example, Kernis et al., 2008 demonstrated that among individuals with relatively low self-esteem, verbal defensiveness scores depended on stability of self-esteem, such that low but stable self-esteem predicted significantly lower levels of verbal defensiveness, than low but unstable self-esteem. Conversely, among individuals with relatively low self-esteem, verbal defensiveness scores did not differ based on either self-esteem contingency or implicit-explicit discrepancies. In other studies, individuals with unstable low self-esteem seem to fare better than do individuals with stable low self-esteem, whereas in other cases the reverse is true (Paradise & Kernis, 2002; for a review, see Kernis, 1993). Because of this lack of clarity and consistency, here and elsewhere we focus on distinctions among forms of *high* self-esteem, as does the self-esteem fragility versus security framework.

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Abstract

Work on eudaimonistic identity theory began in an effort to answer the question: How is an individual trying to answer identity-related questions to know which of the many identity alternatives available is the “better” choice to make? Central to eudaimonistic philosophy is the construct of the daimon or “true self,” those potentials of each individual that represent the best that the person is able to become. “Living in truth to the daimon” is said to give rise to a particular form of happiness, termed eudaimonia, a set of subjective experiences I have labeled “feelings of personal expressiveness” (Waterman, 1990, 1993). In this chapter, I briefly review philosophical perspectives regarding the daimon and eudaimonia, starting with their origins in classical Hellenic philosophy, most notably in Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*, and in the work of contemporary eudaimonistic philosophers and personality theorists. The constructs and principles of eudaimonistic identity theory are also presented. The goal of identity formation is identified as discovering the nature of one’s daimon and includes (a) the discovery of personal potentials, (b) choosing one’s purposes in living, and (c) finding opportunities to act upon those potentials and purposes in living. Marcia’s identity status paradigm is discussed as providing descriptions of the various ways in which individuals address the task of identity formation and the implications of the processes involved for the likelihood of achieving a successful outcome. Further, I propose that the construct of intrinsic motivation is central to understanding the how individuals come to recognize those personal potentials that represent better outcomes to the task of identity formation. Feelings of personal expressiveness (eudaimonia), flow, interest, and hedonic enjoyment constitute a constellation of subjective component experienced when engaged in intrinsically motivated

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activities. Important contextual predictors of intrinsic motivation include self-determination, a balance of challenges and skills, opportunities to act upon self-realization values, and effort. The contributions of these subjective experiences and predictors to the goals and processes of identity formation will be explored.

Eudaimonic identity theory, as presented in this chapter, had its origins in the consideration of two questions implicit in Erikson's writings: (a) In the task of identity formation, do some potential identity elements represent "better" resolutions to an identity crisis than others? (b) If so, how are the "better" choices to be recognized? In the context of these questions, I (Waterman, 1984) described two metaphors for how individuals might approach the task of identity development. These metaphors were "self-construction" and "self-discovery." Individuals engaged in a process of self-construction are seeking to create something that did not previously exist. Self-construction entails selecting from among an array of possibilities those particular elements deemed to be of value (see Berzonsky, Chapter 3, this volume, for an explication of the self-construction perspective). The philosophical underpinnings of this view of identity formation are derived from existentialism. In contrast, if one is engaged in a process of self-discovery, the task at hand is to "find oneself." That which is to be found is something that already exists—and the task is to recognize and understand it. Discovery is the process of making the unknown known. If a "true self" exists prior to its discovery, then this true self can serve as a standard for what should be considered "better" identity choices. Better choices are ones consistent with, and expressive of, one's true nature. The metaphor of self-discovery is closely linked with eudaimonist philosophy. The implications of this philosophical perspective for identity formation will be the focus of this chapter.

Philosophical Foundations of Eudaimonic Identity Theory

Aristotle on Eudaimonia

Aristotle (1985), in his *Nicomachean Ethics*, takes as a starting point that each of us wants the best possible life, and he used the term *eudaimonia* to refer to the type of life considered to be the best, or the most worthwhile or most desirable (Ackrill, 1973). The usual English translation of *eudaimonia* is as *happiness*, thereby raising the question as to how happiness is to be understood (Cooper, 1975; Kraut, 1979; Tatarkiewicz, 1976).

In contemporary usage, the term "happiness" is generally considered to refer to the subjective condition of hedonic happiness, or *hedonia*. Hedonia includes "the belief that one is getting the important things one wants, as well as certain pleasant affects that normally go along with this belief" (Kraut, 1979, p. 178). The most thorough expression of hedonism as an ethical theory was advanced by Aristippus of Cyrene in the third century B.C.E., who held that "pleasure is the *sole* good, but also that only one's own physical, positive, momentary pleasure is a good, and is so regardless of its cause" (Tatarkiewicz, 1976, p. 317).

Aristotle emphatically rejected this Cyrenaic view of happiness: "The many, the most vulgar, seemingly conceive the good and happiness as pleasure, and hence they also like the life of gratification. Here they appear completely slavish, since the life they decide on is a life of grazing animals" (Aristotle, 1985, p. 7). In contrast to this view of hedonism, in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle offered the proposition that *eudaimonia*

(happiness) is “activity expressing virtue” (p. 284), where virtue may be thought to be the best within us, or excellence (Ackrill, 1973; McDowell, 1980). According to Telfer (1980), eudaimonia embodies the idea, not that one is pleased with one’s life, but that one has “what is worth desiring and worth having in life” (p. 37). Thus, rather than referring to a subjective state, considered in this way, eudaimonia is an objective statement as to the proper ends for each person. Philosophers employing an objective approach to understanding eudaimonia prefer translating the term as “flourishing” rather than as happiness (Rasmussen, 1999; Snow, 2008; Spencer, 2007).

If the best within us, personal excellence, is taken to be that which is worth desiring and having in life, it follows that each of us should strive to identify that course or direction in life representing the best within us. Eudaimonism is a normative ethical system, that is, a statement as to how one ought to live. We have a responsibility to recognize and live in accordance with our daimon or “true self.” The daimon refers to the potentialities of each person, the realization of which represents the greatest fulfillment in living of which each of us is capable. The daimon is an ideal, in the sense of being an excellence and a perfection toward which we can strive, and, hence, it can provide meaning and direction to our lives. With respect to identity formation, eudaimonist philosophy points to self-realization as a principal criterion for determining what constitutes better identity choices. Thus, from this perspective, identity formation is a process of self-discovery, the goal of which is to recognize and understand the nature of our personal daimon, that is, what constitutes our best potentials, as well as how we may best express those potentials in the ways we choose to live. (Similar ideas are presented in Soenens & Vansteenkiste, Chapter 17, this volume).

If psychologists and other social scientists are to be able to make productive use of eudaimonist constructs, those constructs must be rendered in a form that lends itself to empirical investigation (Waterman, 1990b, 2008). Contemporary eudaimonist philosophy can be helpful in this regard.

Contemporary Philosophical Perspectives on Eudaimonia

Because Aristotle’s primary concern was the proper ends that should be pursued in life, he contrasted hedonia and eudaimonia as normative conditions rather than as subjective states. However, it seems an unremarkable observation that we may reflect upon whether or not we have identified our best potentials and are doing those things necessary for their development. We feel good about ourselves when we can affirm that we are moving toward self-realization (and feel frustrated when we judge that we are not). Such positive cognitive and affective experiences can be deemed as constituting a subjective state of eudaimonia which can be distinguished from the subjective experiences of hedonia (pleasure).

Contemporary eudaimonist philosophers, including Kraut (1979) and Norton (1976), are explicit in viewing eudaimonia as involving a distinctive set of subjective experiences. For example, Norton (1976) wrote about eudaimonia as the feeling of “being where one wants to be, doing what one wants to do” (p. 216), where what is wanted is to be taken as something worth doing. Eudaimonia as a constellation of subjective experiences includes feelings of rightness about one’s actions, centeredness in what one is doing, strength of purpose, competence, fulfillment, being who one really is, and doing what one was meant to do. I (Waterman, 1990a) have referred to such experiences as *feelings of personal expressiveness*. In sum, eudaimonia, and its psychological representation as personal expressiveness, is not only an objective statement as to how one ought to live, but also a highly positive cognitive–affective subjective condition.

Telfer (1980), a contemporary eudaimonist philosopher, has written about the relationship of eudaimonia to hedonia. She sees eudaimonia as a sufficient, but not necessary, condition for experiences of hedonia. Whereas hedonia will arise from getting those things a person wants from *any* source, eudaimonia will be experienced only in connection with a limited set of specific sources, such as activities associated with self-realization and expressions of virtue. Because

self-realization and expressing virtue may be among the things that a person wants, it follows that there will be an asymmetrical relationship between eudaimonia and hedonia. When eudaimonia is present, hedonia should also always be present. When the things a person wants are unrelated to self-realization and virtue, success in attaining them should give rise to hedonia, but not eudaimonia (Waterman, 2008). This is an empirically testable proposition—and empirical tests have been supportive (more on this below).

What Constitutes the Daimon (the True Self)?

It is the concept of the daimon that renders ethical eudaimonism an essentialist philosophy. To speak of the daimon in terms of personal potentials capable of guiding action in the direction of self-realization and self-fulfillment would appear to invite considering it to have concrete, physical existence. In part, this is a carryover from its philosophical origins. Like the Roman *genii* (tutelary gods), the daimon was conceived as originating externally to the individual as a kind of guiding spirit provided at birth. But the concept was later internalized, as reflected in the view of Heraclitus that “man’s character is his daimon” (May, 1969, p. 133). If the daimon is viewed as a preexisting element in ourselves, then it is a reference to our personal nature, and something that we do not get to choose. Some brief speculations regarding its origins are in order here.

To be consistent with the standards of contemporary theories, the daimon should be interpreted as comprised of a number of interrelated psychological processes. If it is accepted that individuals possess certain potentialities (some of which are universal and some of which are unique) by virtue of their physiology and/or experience, then the daimon refers to those processes, both intuitive and reasoned, by which those potentials are discovered and come to attain the status of personally concordant goals that are to be actualized. May (1969) writes about the biological basis of the daimon, and Norton (1976) discusses

the role played by genetic inheritance. The concept of *aptitude* embodies the idea that potentials are biologically grounded and is well accepted within psychology. Aptitudes are, however, generally treated as relatively passive qualities that may be identified through psychological testing, rather than a process with attendant affective and motivational elements. The daimon, in contrast, includes the idea that the subjective experiences accompanying actions consistent with our aptitudes are immediately distinguishable from those experienced when engaged in activities unrelated to our latent talents. Feelings of personal expressiveness (eudaimonia) thus serve to reinforce activities consistent with our aptitudes, promoting similar activity in the future. On the other hand, in the absence of eudaimonia, the reinforcement for continuing efforts regarding a given activity is likely to be dependent on external factors such as encouragement from others, praise, or material rewards for continued performance. Phrased in this way, it is evident that the concept of the daimon, identity as a process of self-discovery, and the pursuit of self-realization are concepts closely allied with the construct of *intrinsic motivation* (see Soenens & Vansteenkiste, Chapter 17, this volume). For a more extended discussion of the nature of the daimon, readers are referred to Waterman (1990a).

Subjective and Objective Elements of Eudaimonia Within Eudaimonic Identity Theory

As discussed above, eudaimonia has been interpreted by philosophers to have subjective and objective referents. Elements of both types of meaning are embodied within eudaimonic identity theory, and the two are inextricably interrelated. The process of self-discovery entails efforts directed toward the recognition of one’s daimon, that is, one’s best personal potentials or aptitudes. Efforts at self-realization involve striving to act on the basis of those potentials. Such actions are consistent with objective definitions of eudaimonia. Simultaneously, these actions give rise to those subjective experiences identified as feelings of personal expressiveness

(eudaimonia), which then serve to identify and reinforce behaviors advancing the process of self-discovery.

Eudaimonic identity theory, similar to eudaimonist philosophy from which it was derived, is normative in that it embodies a statement as to how a person ought to live. Subjective experiences of eudaimonia (feelings of personal expressiveness), while involving significant positive affect, are not to be viewed as an end in itself, that is, a goal to be attained for its own sake. From a normative perspective, the value of these experiences arises in connection with their function as a signifier that one is engaging in some activity consistent with one's best potentials. It is the ongoing, progressive realization of those potentials that gives purpose and meaning to life and that is the true end to be sought with respect to quality of life.

Eudaimonia and the Making of Ethical Choices

Whereas Aristotle saw eudaimonia as an objective state of living a life of excellence and virtue, viewing eudaimonia as a subjective and objective construct associated with the fulfillment of personal potentials (self-realization) leaves open the question as to whether such potentials are inherently ethical. Both philosophers (Hobbes, 1651/1950; Nietzsche, 1967) and psychologists (Freud, 1923/1962; May, 1969) have recognized the existence of destructive as well as creative potentials within human nature. If the daimon includes both types of potentials, then both ethical and unethical activities may be experienced as personally expressive. We may have talents for the manipulation of others, for aggression, and for any of a variety of criminal undertakings. But the same set of potentials can be expressed in varying ways. A talent for manipulation of others may be expressed through Machiavellian self-enhancement or through helping others as a motivational trainer. A talent for aggression may lead to combative interpersonal relationships or may be sublimated into a successful career in professional sports. A talent for criminal activity may lead to committing crimes or may serve as a basis

for successful criminal detection or the writing of crime novels. Aptitudes or talents are not good or bad in themselves; rather, how personal potentials are expressed determines whether self-realization is ethical or not. Under such circumstances, self-realization is not, and cannot be, used as a guide for determining what is ethical. Some other philosophical standard, such as Kant's (1785/2003) categorical imperative, Rawls' (2001) decision-making behind a veil of ignorance, or Habermas' (1984) ideal speech situation, must be introduced to distinguish ethical from unethical conduct.

Foundations of Eudaimonic Identity Theory in Classical Theories of Personality

Concepts derived from eudaimonic philosophy have played a prominent role in a broad range of classical theories of personality, though rarely have such connections been specified by the theorists themselves.

The Daimon

The neo-analytic theorist Karen Horney (1950) reflected on the multiple levels of the self, distinguishing the (a) idealized self, the way in which we would like to think of ourselves, (b) the actual self, the way in which we think we are, and (c) the real self, our true capacities and capabilities whether we recognize them or not. It is the real self that corresponds to the philosophic concept of the daimon. Horney (1950) defined the real self as "the central inner force common to all human beings and yet unique to each, which is the deep source of growth. . . [that is] free, healthy development in accordance with the potentials of one's generic and individual nature" (p. 17). Like the daimon, the real self should be considered a "given" for each person, and as with all capacities it must be developed over time. Horney made the point that a supportive atmosphere, first within the family, and later within the larger community, is essential if those potentialities are to be successfully developed.

Rollo May (1969) was the personality theorist who devoted the most explicit attention to the construct of the daimon. He described the daimon as “any natural function which has the power to take over the whole person. . . . The daimon can either be creative or destructive and is normally both” (May, 1969, p. 123). In this he reminds readers that human potentials are not invariably benign and constructive, but involve passions that forcefully seek expression. This makes all the more important the exercise of conscious self-control and self-determination in the process of finding ethically appropriate forms for such expression, limits that Fromm (1947) and Erikson (1964) also discuss. According to May (1969), the psychological cost of denying expression of the daimon because of the possibilities for excess or abuse is apathy. To deny the daimon is to deny the best within us.

May (1969) wrote that “Aristotle comes closest to ‘taming’ the daimon in his conception of ‘eudaimonistic’ ethics. Happiness—or eudaimonism—is to live in harmony with one’s daimon. Nowadays we would relate eudaimonism to the state of integration of potentialities and other aspects of one’s being with behavior” (p. 126). Although it is this more benign understanding of the daimon that is embodied within eudaimonic identity theory, May’s points about the strength of eudaimonic passions should not be ignored. These points explain the intensity of feelings experienced when one is actively engaged in personally expressive undertakings. They also explain the risks that may be encountered when such pursuits become obsessive and ultimately self-destructive or destructive of others (Vallerand, 2008). Aristotle was clearly aware of such risks and advocated reason and moderation (“the golden mean”) as the surest way for avoiding the problems of excessive passion.

self-actualization in terms of a driving life force leading to the maximizing one’s abilities and determining the course of one’s life. (At the conceptual level, the terms self-realization and self-actualization are virtual synonyms, though their operational definitions in psychological research have varied.) Carl Rogers (1959) described the actualizing tendency as a natural inclination on the part of individuals who are “fully functioning” toward engaging in activities consistent with self-fulfillment. This inclination was said to be mediated by the organismic valuing process, a mechanism by which the person comes to identify those ways of acting that are most likely to result in such fulfillment. Although Rogers did not spell out the process by which recognition of potentially fulfilling activities is attained, within eudaimonic identity theory, subjective experiences of eudaimonia are specified as that process.

The most extensive theoretical discussion of self-actualization was provided by Maslow (1968), who defined self-actualization as “ongoing actualization of potentials, capacities, and talents, as fulfillment of mission (or call, fate, destiny, or vocation), as a fuller knowledge of, and acceptance of, the person’s intrinsic nature, as an increasing trend toward unity, integration, or synergy within the person” (p. 25). The person’s “intrinsic nature” about which Maslow wrote corresponds to the “daimon” or true self. Further, Maslow establishes a direct linkage of personal potentials with purposes-in-living. The most meaningful and rewarding activities, those most strongly associated with self-actualization, will be those that advance one’s most highly valued potentials because they are integral to the person’s mission in life. Maslow (1968) also provided insightful descriptions of the psychological characteristics expressed by individuals most strongly motivated by self-actualization.

Self-Realization/Self-Actualization

For Horney (1950), the epitome of psychological health lay in the discovery of the nature of the real self and the pursuit of self-realization. Earlier, Kurt Goldstein (1939/1995) had defined

Meaning and Purpose in Life

As a normative philosophy, eudaimonism identifies meaning and purpose in life with striving for excellence in pursuit of self-realization. Among personality theorists, the theme of meaning and

purpose has been most notably emphasized by those working from an existential perspective. For example, Viktor Frankl (1959) viewed the will to find meaning in life as the principal human motivation. Erich Fromm (1947) described the dilemma of the human situation associated with the need to find meaning in life. “If [man] faces the truth without panic, he will recognize there is no meaning in life except the meaning man gives his life by the unfolding of his powers by living productively” (p. 53). Fromm did not specify what powers he attributed to the person here, but it is plausible that the reference is to the potentials of one’s generic and individual nature discussed by Horney. Fromm’s point here was not only that such potentials must be identified and developed into talents, but that decisions must be made concerning the uses to which those talents are to be put. Fromm emphasized that this involves making ethical choices, with attendant moral responsibility. Given the weight of such decisions, there may develop a desire to “escape from freedom” by having others determine how one ought to live (Fromm, 1941). Sartre (1943, p. 547) termed this living in “bad faith.”

Subjective Experiences of Eudaimonia

Parallel to philosophers’ descriptions of subjective experiences of eudaimonia, Maslow (1968) wrote of *b-cognition*, or peak experiences, as most often occurring in conjunction with self-actualization. Peak experiences are the most intense, joyous moments in a person’s life. There is a sense of being fully in the moment, of merging with the situation, a loss of self-consciousness, and a non-judgmental sense of acceptance of the “rightness” of the event. It is also worth noting here that Maslow (1973) thought of peak experiences as “acute identity experiences” (p. 254), those times in a person’s life when one is most oneself.

More recently, Csikszentmihalyi (1990) described flow, or optimal experience, in terms similar to those used by Maslow. Flow experiences entail (a) the merging of action and awareness, (b) having clear goals and feedback, (c) concentration on the task at hand, (d) the

loss of self-consciousness, (e) transformations of the sense of time, and (f) the paradox of feeling in control in situations that objectively involve risk (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). The most consistent predictor of the circumstances likely to induce flow is engagement in activities characterized by a high level of challenge to which the person brings a high level of existing skill. An important implication here is that with increasing participation in such activities, skill levels will increase still further and challenge levels decrease. Eventually, this developing imbalance between challenge and skill levels reduces the likelihood that flow experiences will result. The only way by which flow can be restored is through an increase in the level of challenges undertaken. In this way, the desire to continue to experience flow results in a natural progression in the development of one’s talents. This mirrors the progressive development of the potentials constituting the daimon and may be a key element in that process.

The Implications of Eudaimonic Functioning for Quality of Life

It is a generally accepted proposition that psychological problems arising early in life make it unlikely that an individual will recognize personal potentials, find meaning and purpose in life, or function on the basis of self-realization/self-actualization. In turn, thwarting eudaimonic functioning is seen as resulting in psychological problems. For example, Horney (1950) wrote that when there is a sizeable discrepancy between the actual and real selves, the person feels alienated in the activities undertaken. Irrespective of whether the person experiences success in those activities, there is a persistent feeling to the effect “Why am I doing this, this is not who I really am.” Such self-alienation can be overcome only through developing a better recognition of those potentialities that are intrinsic to person’s individual nature. Sizeable discrepancies between the idealized self and the real self result in guilt over what the person lacks the capability to do well—guilt that can be overcome only through developing a more realistic recognition

of one's strengths and limitations. Similarly, Rogers (1959) described that when individuals are motivated to fulfill others' expectations of them, that is, act on the basis of conditions of worth, rather than the actualizing tendency, the result would be a defensive distorting and denial of experiences and attendant unhappiness and lack of personal fulfillment. Anxiety, depression, apathy, alienation, and other debilitating psychological states have in common an absence of eudaimonic functioning (Waterman et al., 2010).

Though differing extensively in their particulars, the various psychotherapies based on these personality theories share the view that interventions directed toward ameliorating problems in living will increase the prospects for the development of eudaimonic functioning. However, for these theorists, the absence of problems is not considered psychological health. Whereas addressing problems is a necessary step for eudaimonic functioning to become possible, it is emerging success with respect to such functioning that is the basis for quality of life (Keyes, 2003).

Eudaimonic Identity Theory: Goals for the Task of Identity Formation

The central objective of eudaimonic identity theory is to apply a eudaimonist philosophical perspective, along with corresponding elements from classical personality theories, to the understanding of the psychosocial task of identity formation. From that perspective, three goals for that task can be readily identified: (a) discovering and developing one's personal potentials, (b) choosing one's purposes in life, and (c) finding opportunities for the implementation of those potentials and purposes.

Discovering and Developing One's Personal Potentials

Generic human nature refers to those capacities common to all people (or nearly all people) such

as the abilities to develop locomotion, communication via language, and reasoning. In contrast, patterns of potential talents, skills, and interests are unique (or nearly unique) to each person and constitute our individual human nature. We appear to be able to learn and perform some activities much more readily than is typical for us, whereas there are other activities that we find difficult to master no matter the extent of effort that we invest in them. Similarly, we find ourselves far more interested in some of the activities to which we are exposed than in other activities to which we have comparable exposure. Often, such differences appear on the very first time we are exposed to a particular activity.

We are not born with knowledge of either our generic human nature or our individual human nature. With respect to generic human capacities (for example, to walk, to talk), such abilities unfold epigenetically as a function of biological maturation in a supportive physical and social environment. Awareness of those capacities arises concurrently with their development. The same cannot be said for the development of our individual human nature. Here we must first reflect upon which among a multitude of possible abilities represent our potential talents and interests, and we must make conscious choices to pursue opportunities for their development. Hence, the first step toward making better identity decisions is to discover who we are, that is, to identify our best personal potentials.

As indicated in the discussion of the daimon, the standard for comparison for personal potentials is internal, that is, a person's best potentials refer those things that the person can do better than other things that he/she is capable of doing. But how is the person to discover, to recognize, what those best potentials are?

It is traditional to think of learning about personal aptitudes as a trial-and-error, or more precisely, a trial-and-success process. During development, beginning in childhood, we are exposed to a wide array of activities, some of which we become able to do relatively well, whereas others are more difficult for us, and our relative performance is poorer. Because of these differences in relative success, we are encouraged

by others to continue activities in the areas of our success and discouraged from further pursuit of skills in areas in which our performance is lagging or less successful. Further, our own positive feelings accompanying success, and negative feelings accompanying failure, reinforce maintaining involvement in those activities at which we do relatively well and discontinuing involvement when we are doing poorly. This trial-and-success process undoubtedly contributes to our learning about ourselves and our relative capabilities. However, there are several problems with viewing this process as the principal mechanism for identifying our potentials.

The process of trial and success is of necessity a gradual one and one that is highly dependent on the feedback received from other people about our performance and abilities. Our first efforts at any activity are very unlikely to be accompanied by any significant degree of success. Virtually by definition, the state of being a novice in any undertaking means that we do not know how that activity is to be done well or properly. The first successes we achieve are more likely to be a function of chance rather than skill. Thus, it is not our own potential talent that accounts for the early feedback we are likely to receive. It is the feedback that we receive from others who witness our efforts that will likely play the larger role with regard to whether we are encouraged or discouraged to continue pursuit of any given area. The people giving us that feedback are not necessarily disinterested, objective observers striving for accuracy in the feedback they provide. Parents, in the desire to have their children think well of themselves, are often uncritical in their praise and encouragement. There are, of course, parents who are overly critical, those for whom anything their children do is never done quite well enough. The same can be said for other relatives. Teachers are likely to be more objective, and often more knowledgeable, than parents in their assessments, but they too have an agenda as to what they wish to see children learn and do. They may not be particularly cognizant of a student's skills in areas outside of their own particular areas of interest. All in all, the process

of trial and success appears rather inefficient for the purpose of discovering one's best potentials. Real talents may go unrecognized, and much of the feedback provided by others may be misleading.

The trial-and-success process also does not take into consideration that we often have initial reactions to types of activities, sometimes positive, sometimes negative, that appear independent of whether or not we have had success, or have had positive or negative feedback, on that first occasion. There are some activities for which we feel an immediate connection—that we experience as challenging in the most positive sense of that term. Such activities prompt us to ask: “Why didn't I know about this before?” We are eager to continue our involvement in such activities because we find them “fun.”

Looking at this problem from a eudaimonic perspective, the strong, positive connections to particular activities on a first exposure appear to exemplify experiences of eudaimonia. Such activities are self-defining, identity-related experiences specifically because some elements in the particular activity have meshed with some aspects of the person's aptitudes or latent talents. Success on that first occasion is not necessary for that connection to be present, nor is positive feedback integral to the process. Rather, the activity simply “feels right” to the person. It is not being argued here that such first experiences are infallible indicators of a person's best potentials, but merely that they are useful predictors. If subsequent exposure to the same activity yields the same eudaimonic experiences, involvement in it will almost certainly intensify. If later occasions fail to generate comparable feelings of eudaimonia, interest in the activity is very likely to wane.

The development of skills and talents is not a process that simply involves moving from one success to another. Rather, it requires time, effort, and the willingness to tolerate frustration when obstacles to improvement are encountered. Because feelings of eudaimonia are a function of the connection a person feels with the activity, they are more consistent and durable than the elation associated with some particular success or dejection occasioned by a particular failure.

It is eudaimonia that sustains involvement in an activity across the vicissitudes of the outcomes on varying occasions.

As previously mentioned, the eudaimonic process just described will be recognized as closely linked to the concept of intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Deci and Ryan (1985) posit autonomy (self-determination), competence, and interest as key elements for the understanding of intrinsic motivation (see Soenens & Vansteenkiste, Chapter 17, this volume). Similarly, as noted earlier, Csikszentmihalyi (1990) discusses the balance of challenges and skills and flow experiences as integral to the deep involvement in activities characteristic of intrinsic motivation. I (Waterman, 2005) added effort as an element in the understanding of intrinsic motivation, given that individuals are willing to expend considerably more energy in the pursuit of intrinsically motivated activities than they do in other areas of their lives. Eudaimonic identity theory builds upon this foundation and can be used to explain elements in intrinsic motivation not dealt with in earlier theoretical accounts.

A key problem with respect to the understanding of intrinsic motivation has been that of selectivity. It is not that activities are, in themselves, intrinsically motivating. The same activities that some individuals experience as intrinsically motivating (e.g., rock climbing, solving math problems, performing on stage), others will experience indifferently, while still others consider actively aversive (Waterman, 1990a). Clearly, it must be something about the fit of the activity with characteristics of the person that is responsible for intrinsic motivation. Eudaimonic theory, particularly the construct of the daimon, provides us with a language with which to understand the nature of that fit. Intrinsic motivation should be experienced when activities tap into those personal potentials for which we have a latent talent (aptitude), that is, those activities that we have a stronger potential to do well compared to other things we might undertake. The immediate connection we feel under those circumstances is one aspect of eudaimonia. Such experiences are spontaneous, in the sense that they do not rely on external sources of reinforcement.

There is ample empirical evidence regarding the ways in which intrinsic motivation can be undermined when it is present (Deci & Ryan, 1985) but findings are thin when it comes to creating intrinsic motivation for activities when it is initially lacking (see Soenens & Vansteenkiste, Chapter 17, this volume). This is consistent with the view that daimonic potentials are aspects of each person's intrinsic nature, and thus differ from person to person. When potentials for a given type of activity are not among a person's relative strengths, intrinsic motivation, the development of concordant activity-related goals, and experiences of eudaimonia are not to be expected.

With regard to intrinsic motivation, there is ample evidence that we will maintain involvement in activities without external rewards if we have made an autonomous choice to engage in them and will be less likely to do so when participation is accompanied by pressures from external sources (Waterman, Schwartz, & Conti, 2008). But why do we choose to engage in some activities but not others in the similar absence of external pressures? It is certainly true that evidence of intrinsic motivation is more often present for activities that we perform well than for activities which we perform poorly. However, almost everyone can identify activities that they perform relatively well but about which they are indifferent rather than intrinsically motivated. Our interest in activities is selective and often appears to be so even on a first exposure.

If the balance of challenge and skills could, in itself, account for flow experiences and intrinsic motivation, then it should be possible, as Csikszentmihalyi (1990) had hoped, that any activity might be structured in such a way as to be intrinsically motivating through a process of manipulating the level of challenge provided to match the level of skill a person possesses. This has not turned out to be the case. We appear to care far more about the balance of challenges and skills in areas corresponding to our interests than to such balances occurring in other areas. Similarly, the effort that we are willing to put into various types of activities varies quite substantially. We strive hard to improve performance for things we care about and look to minimize effort

when interest is lacking. The key variable that can be used to resolve this problem of selectivity with respect to the various elements of intrinsic motivation is self-realization. When there is a perception that an activity involves the development of our best potentials, it gives rise to experiences of personal expressiveness (eudaimonia) (Waterman et al., 2003). We then autonomously choose to pursue that activity, care about the balance of challenges and skills involved, and become willing to invest considerable effort in its performance. In the absence of perceived relevance to self-realization, intrinsic motivation does not seem to emerge despite the best efforts of others to create it.

Choosing Purposes in Living

The task of identity formation is not completed with the discovery and development of those talents and skills that we have come to recognize as our best potentials. What we are to do with those developing potentials must still be determined. Here the task is somewhat different. For example, a talent for music may be expressed through performance, composing, or becoming a music critic. Choices must be made with respect to instrument, genre, and artistic/recognition/commercial objectives. In other words, it is necessary to choose what we are seeking to accomplish in our lives—our purposes in life. If we are to achieve any substantial success in fulfilling such purposes, the objectives must be compatible with our talents and skills, that is, our individual human nature. To choose to pursue objectives not supported by our capabilities is a prescription for frustration and failure.

With regard to the discovery of personal potentials, what we presumably learn is something about ourselves that exists within our individual nature, that is, some aspect of our genetic predisposition. When it comes to choosing particular guiding principles in our lives and purposes in life, it is plausible that there are again predispositions available to guide our choices. Whether differences in the relative strength of inclination toward various possible

purposes in life are a function of biological factors or previous life experiences is a topic that can be touched upon only briefly here. The salient point is that, if such inclinations exist prior to choosing a self-defining course of action, they can serve effectively as criteria for making “better” identity choices.

It is possible that some of the goals toward which we might devote our talents fall more in line with natural inclinations compared to other goals we might choose. If so, when making identity choices, exploration among possible life goals is again a process of self-discovery (Schwartz, 2002). However, it is also true that the goals most readily available to us are heavily context-dependent. If it is musical talent that we are seeking to express, we will be heavily influenced by the musical genres to which we are exposed during our developmental years. If classical, jazz, rock, rap, country, and pop are the genres that we hear growing up, those will be the options we see as available to us. The wider the array of such options, the more likely it is that choices among them will be perceived as an identity choice. A wider array of options also creates a greater role for the expression of natural inclinations. Someone with great creative potential for jazz may have only indifferent potential with respect to country music and vice versa.

It should also be recognized that differences among musical genres are strongly associated with corresponding lifestyles. The day-to-day lives of classical musicians will likely be far different from those of members of a rock band. When choosing life goals, our preferences for lifestyles will, almost certainly, play a substantial role. We may recognize that we have the potential to be very good in some particular undertaking while simultaneously recognizing that choosing that particular direction in life would not be a good fit for how we wish to live. Again, what we perceive to be our natural inclinations, here with respect to lifestyle preferences, may play a substantial role in the identity choices that we make.

With respect to lifestyles, again what we are exposed to during our developmental years will likely play a substantial role in determining our preferences. We are inclined to prefer the familiar to the unknown. We know how to enact some

lifestyles because we have grown up with them and have learned their intricacies. Lifestyles that are relatively unknown appear riskier to us; there is a greater chance of making mistakes and suffering failures. This provides a ready explanation for the relatively conventional goal-related decisions that most people choose to make. It is also true, however, that some people have a greater tolerance for risk than others, one consequence of which may be the choice of a less conventional lifestyle. Tolerance for risk is a personality variable that brings us back once again to the matter of individual human nature. Two children, growing up in the same family, going to the same schools, and exposed to the same media, may make very different life choices in part because of natural inclinations to prefer some modes of functioning over others.

With respect to the importance of developmental contexts for the choice of purposes in life, it is appropriate to adopt a broad perspective. Sources of influence include, but are not limited to, parents, siblings, members of a person's extended family, friends, romantic partners, the parents of friends and romantic partners, teachers, religious leaders, other community leaders, and people to whom one is exposed through various media. To the extent that we learn about the goal-related decisions made by these sources of influence, their choices become options we may consider when choosing the direction toward which to devote our personal potentials.

The perspective advanced here serves to tie eudaimonic identity theory with the extensive theoretical and empirical literature on purposes in life (Crumbaugh & Maholick, 1964; Emmons, 1999). Also relevant to this discussion is Sheldon's concept of self-concordant goals (Sheldon & Elliot, 1999), a construct rooted in self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2002). Self-concordance refers to "the feelings of ownership that people have (or do not have) regarding their self-initiated goals" (Sheldon & Houser-Marko, 2001, p. 152). Such goals are said to generate intrinsic interest and identity congruence. Thus, self-concordance, like eudaimonia, links personal expressiveness with identity functioning.

Finding Opportunities for the Implementation of Potentials and Purposes in Life

The task of identity formation is still not finished with the discovery and development of personal potentials and the making of decisions regarding the purposes toward which those potentials are to be employed. It remains to be determined what opportunities are afforded within our societal context for enacting one's potentials and purposes. Open societies that allow for role mobility and flexibility will afford a wider range of opportunities, making it easier to implement identity-related choices. Closed, hierarchically structured societies characterized by rigid, ascribed roles will likely make individual decisions considerably more difficult, even impossible, for many or even most of their members to implement, and this may be true even for those at the upper levels of the hierarchy. Where opportunities for the implementation of preferred identity choices are restricted or nonexistent, the remaining options available may be limited to emigration to a society affording a wider array of possibilities, reconciling oneself to enacting less expressive aspects of one's being, or endeavoring to change the culture in ways that will allow one to become who one wishes to be. These alternatives may or may not be available, but even if they are available, they may impose costs considerably greater than the benefits likely to be derived from them.

In the sections that follow, I will elaborate in some detail on the strategies that can enhance the likelihood of successfully pursuing the goals associated with eudaimonic identity formation and functioning.

Eudaimonic Identity Theory: Processes of Identity Formation

Building on the work of Erikson (1963, 1968), Marcia (1966, 1980) developed a methodology for studying the various processes that may be involved in developing a sense of personal identity (see Kroger & Marcia, Chapter 2, this volume). Marcia's identity status paradigm is based

on two conceptual dimensions initially discussed by Erikson: (a) crisis (exploration) and (b) commitment. Crisis (exploration) involves the consideration of an array of alternative possible identity elements in a given domain of identity concern (for example, vocation, religious beliefs, parenting). Commitment entails making firm choices with respect to particular identity elements that one then regards as aspects of one's self-definition and sees oneself acting upon either currently or in the future. In the presentation that follows, the focus will be upon three processes of identity formation as described by Marcia and colleagues (Marcia, 1966; Marcia, Waterman, Matteson, Archer, & Orlofsky, 1993): (a) active exploration leading to commitment (the moratorium and identity achievement statuses), (b) commitment developed through identification with significant others (the foreclosure status), and (c) leaving the identity question unresolved (the identity diffusion status). It should be noted that the processes to be discussed here correspond to a considerable extent with the identity processing styles discussed by Berzonsky (see Berzonsky, Chapter 3, this volume, for a presentation of theory and research pertaining to the use of the various identity styles).

Exploration Leading to Commitment

The process seen by Erikson (1968) and Marcia (1966) as offering the greatest promise for successful identity formation is that involving a period of exploration followed by establishing firm identity commitments. Exploration entails actively acquiring information about each of the identity alternatives being considered within a given domain, weighing their potential benefits and costs, and forming some sense of how good a fit each possibility is with the conception of who one is—that is, one's individual human nature. Exploration may be subjectively experienced as an exciting, invigorating opportunity to make important life choices or an anxiety-arousing circumstance due to the large number of unknowns that must be factored into the decision-making process (Luyckx et al., 2008). There is generally a

desire to have the exploration resolved as rapidly as feasible so that one can get on with the activities of building one's future life. However, there may be countervailing desires not to shut the exploration process down too soon lest one become locked into something that will prove to be a "poor" choice.

Once the person reaches a point of believing that sufficient information has been acquired to reach a decision, a commitment to some particular identity element will be formed. That decision may be tentative at first, but with opportunities for implementation, it will likely become increasingly firm, as evidence of a good fit with personal potentials, interests, and inclination becomes apparent. However, if subsequent events fail to confirm the "goodness of fit" of an identity decision with one's individual human nature, the decision itself may be reversed, initiating a further period of exploration and experimentation with alternative possibilities (Stephen, Fraser, & Marcia, 1992; Waterman, 1982; see also Luyckx, Schwartz, Beyers, Goossens, & Missotten, Chapter 4, this volume). This process of evaluation and re-evaluation will likely continue until the person recognizes that a good fit within an identity domain has been established or until it is decided that there is no good option on the horizon. In identity status terminology, the former course of events involves repeated movement from the moratorium into the identity achievement status (and back into moratorium) until a stable commitment is established (Stephen et al., 1992). The latter course entails eventual movement into the identity diffusion status, at least until some more promising possibility becomes available.

Identification with Significant Others Leading to Commitment

An alternative path to the formation of identity commitments involves the process of identification. From an early age, children seek to be like significant others in their lives, such as parents, other family members, teachers, media figures, and respected leaders in their

communities. These identifications often provide the first potential identity elements in various domains of identity concern. Some parents, particularly those employing an authoritarian parenting style, seek to encourage such identification and discourage consideration of alternative identity elements, especially alternatives inconsistent with familial traditions (Soenens, Luyckx, Vansteenkiste, Duriez, & Goossens, 2008). Similarly, closed societies seek to discourage consideration of possible goals, values, and beliefs inconsistent with traditional standards. The result can be the carrying forward of identification-based identity elements into adulthood with little or no thought having been given to alternatives. In identity status terminology, individuals developing their identity in this way would be said to be foreclosed. It should be noted that the strength of the commitments formed through identification are typically as strong, and in some instances stronger and more rigidly held, than those that emerge out of a process of exploration. What is particularly significant from a eudaimonic perspective is that the criteria for the adoption of identity elements through identification do not include whether the elements involved constitute a good fit with the nature of the person. Although the existence of a good fit is not precluded when identity development occurs through identification, the likelihood of such a fit is less probable than when exploration of alternatives has occurred prior to the forming of commitments. It follows that functioning in the foreclosure status will provide a less substantial foundation for well-being than will functioning in the identity achievement status (Hofer, Kärtner, Chasiotis, Busch, & Kiessling, 2007; Schwartz, Mullis, Waterman, & Dunham, 2000; Waterman, 2007).

Leaving Identity Questions Unresolved

Not everyone seeks to establish firm identity commitments. According to Erikson's (1963) epigenetic principle, if the outcomes of earlier developmental stages have been largely unsuccessful, there will be little confidence that the task

of identity formation can be handled successfully, and either (a) little effort will be devoted to the task or (b) what effort is expended will tend to be unsystematic and disorganized (Schwartz, Côté, & Arnett, 2005). When individuals feel helpless, fearful, depressed, alienated, or are psychologically troubled in other ways, the resolution of identity questions is not likely to be a high priority. In identity status terminology, individuals not seeking a resolution to identity questions are said to be in the identity diffusion status.

A Developmental Perspective on Identity Formation

I (Waterman, 1982) developed a model for describing patterns of identity change over time. Everyone begins in the identity diffusion status as there is a point in time prior to the consideration of ideas pertaining to careers, religious beliefs, sex-role attitudes, etc. From there, movement may occur into the foreclosure status, if there is strong identification with model figures, or into the moratorium status, when questions arise concerning how to define oneself. Conceptually, movement into the identity achievement status requires passage through a period of moratorium. The following types of movement between statuses are considered progressive: $D \rightarrow F$; $D \rightarrow M$; $F \rightarrow M$; $M \rightarrow A$. Movement between statuses of the following types is considered regressive: $F \rightarrow D$; $M \rightarrow D$; $A \rightarrow D$; $A \rightarrow M$. Stability in identity statuses exists when status assignments are unchanged: $D \rightarrow D$; $F \rightarrow F$; $M \rightarrow M$; $A \rightarrow A$. Reviews of the literature on identity formation yield support for the following conclusions: (a) Across the high school and college years, stability in the identity statuses is the most evident pattern; (b) The foreclosure status is most likely to prove stable, whereas the moratorium status is least stable; (c) Progressive shifts across the identity statuses occur more frequently than are regressive shifts, with the identity diffusion and foreclosure statuses decreasing in frequency and the identity achievement status increasing in frequency, and (d) Slow development of identity results in

lower levels of psychological well-being than does more rapid progress through the identity statuses (Meeus, 1996; Meeus et al., 1999; 2010; Waterman, 1982, 1993a). The pattern of findings with respect to progressive changes in identity is consistent with a eudaimonic perspective in that over time there is likely to be increasing success with respect to self-discovery and that successful self-discovery promotes personal well-being.

A Eudaimonic Critique of the Identity Status Paradigm

Whereas the identity status paradigm provides a set of categories for the ways in which individuals proceed with the task of identity formation, its use as a distinct typology for classifying individuals is problematic. Virtually everyone employs a mixture of the various processes in different domains of identity concern. Thus, individuals typically differ, not in type, but in the extent to which each of the identity-related processes are employed. This pattern of findings has led many researchers on identity-related themes to treat exploration and commitment as continuous measures rather than as a basis on which to establish categories (Crocetti, Rubini, Luyckx, & Meeus, 2008; Luyckx, Goossens, Soenens, Beyers, & Vansteenkiste, 2005, 2008). Through the use of continuous measures, the impact of these two dimensions of identity functioning can be better studied with respect to the extent of the contribution that each makes to the quality of life.

There is little disagreement that the development of identity commitments, whether through exploration or identification, is more likely to be associated with successful functioning compared to leaving identity questions unresolved. And the greater the proportion of identity-relevant domains in which identity commitments are established, the higher the probability of successful functioning. However, from a eudaimonic perspective, it is not the establishment of identity commitments, per se, that will be associated with successful functioning, but rather the extent to which any commitments formed are expressive of the person's individual human nature (Waterman

et al., 2010). The central premise of eudaimonic identity theory is that "better" identity choices are one's consistent with the daimon, that is, the person's potential talents and inclinations. Identity commitments incompatible with personal potentials and inclinations may well prove to be a source of frustration in a person's life, rather than a benefit. This led Waterman (1992, 1993b) to propose a third defining dimension to identity, the personal expressiveness of identity commitments, to supplement those originally offered by Erikson and Marcia. In empirical investigations employing the three defining dimensions of identity functioning, almost all of the research conducted to date has used continuous measures. It is to this body of research literature that I now turn.

Assessment of Eudaimonic Functioning

Waterman and colleagues (Waterman, 1998; Waterman et al., 2010) have developed two instruments for assessing eudaimonic functioning. As discussed above, in the philosophical literature, eudaimonia has been defined in both subjective and objective terms. The instruments described here incorporate assessment of both types of definitional elements.

The Personally Expressive Activities Questionnaire (PEAQ; Waterman, 1998) was designed to assess functioning in terms of the types of self-defining activities in which individuals engage. In the most frequently used version of the PEAQ, respondents are asked first to identify five activities that they would use to describe themselves to another person. Such activities can be considered aspects of the person's self-definition (identity) and therefore, personally salient. They then respond to a series of questions about the nature of those activities and their subjective feelings while engaged in them. Four types of subjective experiences are assessed: (a) feelings of personal expressiveness (eudaimonia), (b) flow experiences, (c) interest, and (d) hedonic enjoyment. Four objective elements of eudaimonic functioning associated with intrinsic motivation

are also assessed: (a) self-realization values, (b) self-determination (autonomy), (c) the balance of challenges and skills present, and (d) the level of effort invested. This format allows for the determination of the relationship between the subjective and objective elements of eudaimonic functioning at the level of specific activities.

The second instrument developed, the Questionnaire for Eudaimonic Well-being (QEWB; Waterman et al., 2010), is designed to assess eudaimonic functioning at the level of the person, rather than in terms of types of activities. The 21 items comprising the scale include material pertaining both to subjective experiences of eudaimonia and to the objective elements of eudaimonic functioning included in the PEAQ. Scores on the QEWB can be used along with continuous, person-level measures of identity exploration and identity commitment in studies investigating the relative contributions of the three defining dimensions of identity to quality of psychological functioning.

I now turn to a review of the research literature evaluating hypotheses derived from eudaimonic identity theory. This review covers studies using the PEAQ and the QEWB, as well as other instruments developed to assess delimited aspects of eudaimonic functioning such as purpose in life (Crumbaugh & Maholick, 1964) and the adoption of self-concordant goals (Sheldon & Elliot, 1999).

Research Testing Hypotheses Drawn from Eudaimonic Identity Theory

Hypothesis 1. Eudaimonia, as a distinctive subjective conception of happiness, is posited as a function of a person's pursuit of self-realization, that is, the identification and development of what are perceived to be the person's best potentials. Therefore, at the level of the activity, subjective experiences of eudaimonia should be strongly related to the extent to which one identifies self-realization values embodied within the activities being rated. Further, given the hypothesized association between eudaimonia and intrinsic motivation, subjective experiences of eudaimonia

should be positively correlated with other predictor and subjective experience variables for intrinsic motivation (Waterman et al., 2008).

Strong support has been obtained for both parts of this hypothesis using the PEAQ. Findings from several series of studies (Waterman, 1993c; Waterman et al., 2003, 2008) revealed correlations of eudaimonia with self-realization values ranging from 0.49 to 0.66. Scores for eudaimonia were also strongly correlated with measures of self-determination, with the level of effort invested in activities, and less strongly, but still significantly, with the balance of challenges and skills encountered on the activities that participants identified and rated. Similarly, eudaimonia scores were strongly correlated with other subjective experience measures for intrinsic motivation including interest, flow experiences, and hedonic enjoyment (hedonia).

Hypothesis 2. If eudaimonia and hedonia are related but distinguishable forms of happiness, there should be a strong positive correlation between measures of these two subjective states. However, as Telfer (1980) reasoned, this relationship should be asymmetrical, given that occasions giving rise to eudaimonia should at the same time give rise to hedonia, whereas the presence of hedonia does not necessarily imply that eudaimonia will also be experienced.

In studies using the PEAQ, the correlation for the scales measuring eudaimonia and hedonia typically falls in the range of 0.75–0.85 (Waterman, 1993c; Waterman et al., 2008). Further, the predicted asymmetry of the two conceptions of happiness was also consistently found, with activities rated high on eudaimonia almost always accompanied by high scores on hedonia, whereas the proportion of activities rated high on hedonia but low on eudaimonia is substantial.

Hypothesis 3. If eudaimonia and hedonia are distinguishable, it should be possible to demonstrate reliable differences between them in relation to an array of variables specified within eudaimonic identity theory. Specifically, compared to hedonia, eudaimonia should be more strongly associated with self-realization values and other variables associated with

intrinsic motivation. Conversely, the variables more strongly correlated with hedonia should be conceptually unrelated to either self-realization or intrinsic motivation.

Given the very strong positive correlation between measures of eudaimonia and hedonia, it might be expected to be difficult to demonstrate discriminative validity for these scales. However, the results of studies employing the PEAQ have consistently found significant differences in the strength of correlations of the two scales with a variety of outcome variables (Waterman, 1993c; Waterman et al., 2008). Significantly higher correlations with eudaimonia than with hedonia have been found for such variables as (a) having clear goals, (b) level of effort, (c) the presence of a balance of challenges and skills when engaged in an activity, and (d) self-realization values, among others. Significantly higher correlations with hedonia than eudaimonia have been found for (a) feeling relaxed, (b) losing track of time, (c) forgetting personal problems, (d) self-determination, and (e) level of interest, among others. It should be noted that some variables theoretically linked to intrinsic motivation are more strongly associated with eudaimonia (e.g., balance of challenges and skills, effort, and self-realization values), whereas others are more strongly correlated with hedonia (e.g., self-determination, level of interest, and some aspects of flow experiences). This pattern suggests that a partial reconceptualization of the nature of intrinsic motivation should be explored, but doing so is beyond the scope of this chapter (see Waterman et al., 2008 for a more extensive discussion).

Hypothesis 4. Subjective experiences of eudaimonia (feelings of personal expressiveness) and associated self-realization values should be associated with reports of subjective well-being, psychological well-being, and other variables indicative of effective psychological functioning.

Waterman (2007), using the PEAQ, reported positive associations of both feelings of personal expressiveness and self-realization values with measures of optimism and Ryff's (1989) Scales of Psychological Well-being. Similar findings were obtained from a large-scale study involving

use of the QEWB (Waterman et al., 2010). In addition to positive correlations with Ryff's measures of psychological well-being, scores on the QEWB were positively correlated with measures of self-esteem and an internal locus of control, and negatively correlated with indices of general anxiety, social anxiety, and depression. Steger, Kashdan, and Oishi (2007) found that eudaimonically motivated behaviors were more consistently related to global life satisfaction and positive affect than were hedonically motivated behaviors. Further evidence in support of this hypothesis has been reported by Coatsworth, Palen, Sharp, and Ferrer-Wreder (2006) and by Palen and Coatsworth (2007) in research using a variation of the PEAQ with adolescents.

Hypothesis 5. Individuals who have established identity commitments should be more likely to report experiences of eudaimonia, the expression of self-realization values, the pursuit of self-concordant goals, and higher levels of well-being in comparison to those who have not, as yet, established identity commitments. Specifically, because the identity achievement status involves the exploration of alternative potential identity elements, there should be a strong linkage of the identity achievement status with eudaimonic functioning whereas the identity diffusion status, indicative of a lack of concern with identity choices, should be negatively associated with eudaimonic functioning. More broadly, the identity achievement status should be positively associated with the quality of psychosocial functioning and well-being, whereas the identity diffusion status should be negatively correlated with indices of such variables. (Given the role played by external influences with respect to the commitments characterizing the foreclosure status, its linkage with eudaimonic functioning is considered indeterminant. Similarly, no prediction is made regarding the association of the moratorium status with eudaimonic functioning.)

Support for this hypothesis regarding the relationship of the identity statuses with respect to eudaimonic functioning has been obtained from a variety of sources. In two college samples, Schwartz et al. (2000), using the PEAQ to assess

personal expressiveness (eudaimonia) and the Ego Identity Process Questionnaire to determine identity status, found identity achievers to score highest on eudaimonia whereas identity diffusions scored lowest. Those in the moratorium and foreclosure status were intermediate with respect to eudaimonia scores. A corresponding linkage was also reported with a measure of identity styles, with respondents using an informational identity style (associated with identity achievement) scoring highest on eudaimonia whereas those with a diffuse/avoidant style scoring lowest. Other studies providing supporting evidence for the association of identity achievement and measures of well-being have been conducted by Schwartz (2006) and by Waterman (2004, 2007). Waterman (2007) also found the identity achievement status to be positively correlated with reports of self-realization values, whereas identity diffusion scores were negatively correlated with self-realization.

Additional evidence for the association of eudaimonic functioning with identity-related variables was obtained from research employing the QEWB (Waterman et al., 2010). Findings indicated that higher scores on the QEWB were strongly and positively related to measures of overall identity functioning and to the presence of identity commitments, and positively, but less strongly related to exploration of identity alternatives in breadth and in depth, and negatively related to ruminative exploration, that is, obsessive and strongly conflicted consideration of alternatives.

The evidence in support of the relationship of the identity statuses with measures of psychosocial functioning is extensive (see Marcia et al., 1993, for a review). Individuals in the identity achievement status have been consistently found to function more favorably on a wide variety of variables compared to those in the identity diffusion status. Such variables include more advanced development in terms of ego functioning, moral reasoning, and Erikson's psychosocial stages, greater self-esteem, less anxiety and depression, and less risk-taking behavior. More recently, a positive association of identity achievement with subjective well-being

has been demonstrated in samples of college students from Germany and Cameroon (Hofer et al., 2007), India (Tung & Sandhu, 2005), and the United States (Waterman, 2007). Waterman (2007) also demonstrated a positive association of the identity achievement status with Ryff's measures of psychological well-being, including scales for autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relationships, purpose-in-life, and self-acceptance. The identity diffusion status was negatively correlated with each of these scales. Similar findings have been reported by Meeus (1996), with differences in well-being among the statuses increasing with age.

Hypothesis 6. According to eudaimonic identity theory, it is not identity commitment, per se, that is related to the quality of psychosocial functioning—but specifically commitments that are consistent with the daimon, that is, those associated with eudaimonic functioning. Given that both identity commitment and eudaimonic functioning have been demonstrated to be associated with positive psychosocial outcomes, it should be possible to demonstrate that, controlling for eudaimonic functioning, the relationship of identity commitments (and identity exploration) with such outcomes attenuates, whereas controlling for identity commitments (and identity exploration) the relationship of eudaimonic functioning to positive psychosocial outcomes remains strong.

Support for this hypothesis was found using the same large-scale data set employed by Waterman et al. (2010). The strongest zero-order correlations of identity-related functions with the quality of psychosocial functioning were found for eudaimonic well-being, followed by identity commitment variables, and then identity exploration variables. When controlling for QEWB scores and measures of exploration in breadth and in depth, the correlations of identity commitment indices with self-esteem, internal locus of control, and other psychosocial functioning variables were found to be markedly reduced, whereas, when controlling for both identity commitment and identity exploration, the associations of QEWB scores with psychosocial functioning were largely unaffected.

Hypothesis 7. Individuals who have established a clear sense of purpose in life should report greater well-being than those who have not.

Another tenet of eudaimonic identity theory is that experiences of eudaimonia provide a basis for individuals to establish a personally meaningful sense of purpose in life. It should therefore be anticipated that indices of purpose in life should be positively associated with successful identity formation and other indices of effective psychological functioning. A positive association of purpose in life with identity formation has been identified in several studies using a variety of instruments to assess identity (Côté & Levine, 1983; Schwartz, Zamboanga, Wang, & Olthuis, 2009; Simmons, 1983). Similarly, Li (2006) found that scores on a measure of purpose in life, as an aspect of psychological well-being, were related positively to use of Berzonsky's (Chapter 3, this volume) informational identity style and negatively to the diffuse-avoidant style.

There is ample evidence that, compared to those scoring low on purpose in life, those individuals scoring high on measures of purpose in life function more effectively with respect to life satisfaction (Zika & Chamberlain, 1992), positive and negative affect (Keyes, Shmotkin, & Ryff, 2002; Schmutte & Ryff, 1997; Zika & Chamberlain, 1992), positive self-image (Shek, 1992, 1993), and other aspects of psychological well-being (Ryff, 1989; Shek, 1992, 1993; Zika & Chamberlain, 1992). Measures of purpose in life have also been reported to be negatively correlated with psychological distress and a variety of indicators of psychological and psychiatric problems (Moomal, 1999; Schmutte & Ryff, 1997; Shek, 1992, 1993).

Hypothesis 8. Given the link between eudaimonia and intrinsic motivation, it follows that the pursuit of self-concordant goals, that is, those with which an individual personally identifies, should be associated with greater overall levels of well-being than striving to fulfill goals not experienced as self-concordant.

In several studies, the pursuit of self-concordant goals was demonstrated as

a significant predictor of goal attainment and goal attainment in turn predicted gains in subjective well-being (Sheldon, 2008; Sheldon & Elliot, 1999; Sheldon & Houser-Marko, 2001; Smith, Ntoumanis, & Duda, 2007). This association of self-concordance with subjective well-being has been demonstrated in both Western and Eastern cultures (Sheldon et al., 2004). In addition, striving to attain self-concordant goals has been shown to be associated with positive self-evaluations and greater life satisfaction (Judge, Bono, Erez, & Locke, 2005).

Hypothesis 9. Increases in the level of self-realization over time should be accompanied by increases in experiences of eudaimonia, whereas decreases in self-realization should be associated with decreases in eudaimonia.

In a three-wave longitudinal study involving use of the PEAQ, Schwartz and Waterman (2006) demonstrated that increasing levels of self-realization were accompanied by increasing levels of eudaimonia and, correspondingly, that decreases in self-realization were associated with decreasing levels of eudaimonia. This was consistent across the periods from Time 1 to Time 2 and Time 2 to Time 3. Similar, but somewhat more modest, patterns of correlated changes were observed for the relationship of self-realization with flow experiences.

Summary and Directions for Future Research

To this point, the research evidence consistent with hypotheses drawn from eudaimonic identity theory has been substantial. Eudaimonia, as a conception of happiness, can be reliably distinguished from hedonic enjoyment. Eudaimonia has been demonstrated to occur in conjunction with the pursuit of self-realization and with intrinsic motivation. There is a linkage of experiences of eudaimonia with successful identity formation—specifically with the identity achievement status. Although there is evidence that the identity achievement status is itself associated with the adoption of self-realization values, psychological well-being, and

other effective psychological functioning, that association appears based to a substantially greater degree on eudaimonic functioning rather than on the presence of identity commitments per se. The presence of purpose in life and the pursuit of self-concordant goals, both aspects of eudaimonic functioning, have been demonstrated to be associated with variables indexing well-being. A start has been made with respect to tracing variables predictive of changes in eudaimonic functioning over time.

There are, however, many research questions yet to be investigated, pertaining to the potential of eudaimonic functioning for promoting successful identity formation. The theory emerged from considerations as to how developing individuals might recognize those available identity elements that represent better choices for their lives. Toward that end, future research should be directed toward gaining an understanding as to how family-related variables, such as parenting practices, may increase or decrease the likelihood that children will have experiences of eudaimonia early in their lives and may help or hinder the adoption of self-realization values. There is a need to understand community and cultural contexts that promote or hinder eudaimonic functioning and, in turn, its role in the process of identity formation. To date, several hypotheses consistent with eudaimonic identity theory have received support in studies conducted in both Western and Eastern cultural contexts. Far more research needs to be conducted with respect to determining the generalizability of findings across cultural groups.

Because no one is born with knowledge of those potentials that represent opportunities for personal excellence, eudaimonia should be considered a developmental construct. It remains to be determined whether there are recognizable stages in the development of eudaimonic functioning. Is extensive identity exploration a necessary step in the process of development (and if so, what kind of exploration?), or is it possible that early identified interests hold greater promise for subsequent identity formation?

If, as the theory and research reviewed here suggests, eudaimonic functioning holds great

promise for successful identity formation and subsequent subjective and psychological well-being, then there is reason to explore how such functioning can be promoted within families, schools, and communities. If there are indeed “better” identity choices that developing individuals can make for their lives, schools are well situated to help students recognize the signifiers of those alternatives. To do that, research is needed to determine how such an objective can be realized.

A Philosophical Epilogue

Aristotle’s analysis of eudaimonia—placing excellence and virtue at the center of a life well-lived—constitutes a deontological philosophical claim as to how a person *ought* to live. Eudaimonic identity theory, derived as it is from philosophical eudaimonism, should be considered a normative theory, that is, one that contains prescriptive statements as to how one ought to form a sense of personal identity. As Hume (1739/1912) demonstrated in his discussion of the “is-ought problem,” the merits of deontological claims rest entirely on the strength of the logical reasoning advanced to support them. Because individuals act in particular ways, with particular consequences, does not justify a claim that they *ought* to act in such a fashion. Thus, empirical data regarding how people actually function with regard to personal expressiveness or self-realization cannot serve as a basis concluding that such are the proper ends of human functioning and therefore should constitute the basis for identity formation. Psychology and other social sciences do not have a role to play at this level.

However, Aristotle and contemporary eudaimonist philosophers are making a second type of claim as well. Eudaimonist philosophy includes the proposition that, if people act on the basis of the development and expression of their best potentials, this will yield particular types of consequences with respect to happiness and well-being. This type of claim is empirically testable and falls within the province of the social

sciences. Does engaging in behaviors directed toward self-realization actually yield the types of benefits attributed to such activities? To date, eudaimonic identity theory and the hypotheses derived from it have received broad empirical support. As such, the research findings provide guidance as to how “better” identity choices may be made. In turn, the research findings provide support for the philosophical conceptual framework from which this program of research was derived. This bodes well for future efforts to employ eudaimonist philosophy as an inspiration for developing and evaluating hypotheses with regard to the quality of human functioning.

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When Is Identity Congruent with the Self? A Self-Determination Theory Perspective

17

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Abstract

Within the identity literature, self and identity are often used as interchangeable terms. In contrast, in self-determination theory (SDT; Ryan & Deci, 2003) both terms have a differentiated meaning and it is maintained that identities may vary in the extent to which they are congruent with the basic growth tendencies of the self that are fueled by the basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Specifically, the level of congruence between identities and the self is said to depend on (a) the motives underlying one's identity commitments (i.e., pressure versus volition) and (b) the content of the goals defining one's identity (i.e., extrinsic versus intrinsic). It is argued in SDT that both the motives and the goals behind one's identity are important for optimal functioning because of their linkage with basic need satisfaction. This chapter (a) compares the SDT view on identity development with prevailing models of identity formation, and with constructivist models of identity in particular, and (b) reviews research relevant to the idea that identities need to be congruent with the self in order to foster well-being and adjustment.

Ever since Erikson's (1968) formulations about identity development there is a general consensus among psychologists that identity formation represents a core feature of personality development during adolescence and through the life span. However, there is less agreement about

the specific processes and dynamics involved in this developmental task. In particular, there is a longstanding debate in the identity literature between proponents of a "discovery" perspective on identity and proponents of a "construction" perspective on identity (Schwartz, Kurtines, & Montgomery, 2005; Waterman, 1984). According to proponents of the discovery perspective, the ultimate goal for individuals is to develop and cultivate those identity-relevant choices that are aligned with their true or authentic self (Waterman, 1984, Chapter 16, this volume).

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In contrast, scholars advocating the construction perspective deny the existence of a true self. The criterion to evaluate whether identity development has been successful is not whether one's identity represents an underlying true self but whether the identity one has constructed has pragmatic value, that is, whether it is useful in enabling people to meet life challenges (Berzonsky, 1986, Chapter 3, this volume).

Against the background of this debate, this chapter discusses formulations about identity development from self-determination theory (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Vansteenkiste, Ryan, & Deci, 2008), a broadband and empirically grounded theory of personality development and motivation. Although originally SDT was primarily concerned with the interplay between external contingencies (e.g., rewards) and inherently satisfying exploratory behavior (Deci, 1975), the theory steadily expanded over the past four decades and has been applied in various domains, such as education, sports, employment, and psychotherapy. Although SDT was not developed with the direct aim of studying identity formation, several of its core principles seem directly relevant to this developmental task.

Much like Erikson's (1968) theory and the discovery perspective on identity formation (Waterman, 1984), SDT involves an organismic perspective on human development where the *self* is viewed as an innate and natural *process* that guides one toward more integrated and optimal functioning. In SDT it is argued that one's identity may or may not be congruent with the self and its basic growth tendencies (La Guardia, 2009; Ryan & Deci, 2003). As such, according to SDT the terms identity and self cannot be used interchangeably as they have a distinct meaning.

We first discuss some of Erikson's original formulations about identity development and then turn to a discussion of the SDT perspective on identity development. This discussion extends Ryan and Deci's (2003) initial SDT account of identity development by more explicitly pointing out similarities and differences between the SDT

viewpoint and prevailing developmental theories on identity such as Erikson's theory and Marcia's (1980) identity status paradigm. Finally, we compare the SDT view with a number of prevailing constructivist models of identity, such as identity control theory (Kerpelman, Pittman, & Lamke, 1997) and Berzonsky's (1989, 1990) identity styles theory.

Erikson's Theory of Identity Development

Central to Erikson's (1968) formulations about identity development (see Kroger & Marcia, Chapter 2, this volume) is the idea that people build their identity on the basis of childhood identifications. Initially, children adopt particular values, ideas, and preferences from socialization figures (typically parents) in a rather literal, fragmented, and primitive manner, a process that Erikson (1968) referred to as *introjection*. During adolescence, individuals gradually start to explore their identity in a thorough and personal fashion. During this period of exploration, which Erikson (1968) referred to as a psychosocial moratorium, adolescents transform their childhood identifications into a coherent and personally meaningful identity.

Erikson (1968) noted that one's resulting sense of identity is more than the sum of one's early identifications: rather, a well-integrated identity refers to a Gestalt, which "arises from the selective repudiation and mutual assimilation of childhood identifications and their absorption in a new configuration" (Erikson, 1968, p. 159). According to Erikson, for identity formation to be successful, individuals thus need to go through a process of internalization where identifications are assimilated into a set of coherent and unique commitments that are felt to reflect "who one is." Such a crystallized set of commitments provides people with a sense of sameness and continuity. It also gives direction to life and allows individuals to organize their aspirations in a purposeful manner. Conversely, when

people fail to make personally endorsed commitments, they risk ending up in a state of identity confusion, characterized by uncertainty and aimlessness.

Erikson's (1968) view was later made amenable to empirical research by Marcia (1966, 1980; Kroger & Marcia, Chapter 2, this volume) who defined identity as a self-structure, that is, as a person's internal representation of who he/she is in terms of life goals, attitudes, and abilities. Marcia (1966) highlighted two aspects from Erikson's theory on identity formation, that is, commitment and exploration. Commitment was defined by Marcia (1966) as the extent to which individuals adhere to and invest in identity-relevant choices. Exploration refers to individuals' consideration of different options and possibilities before making choices or commitments. By crossing these two dimensions, Marcia (1966, 1980) defined four identity statuses, that is, achievement (i.e., commitment with exploration), foreclosure (i.e., commitment without exploration), moratorium (i.e., exploration without commitment), and diffusion (i.e., lack of both commitment and exploration).

Marcia's operationalization of Erikson's theory initiated and stimulated abundant research on adolescent identity development. However, due to this focus on the identity statuses, the process of internalization as emphasized by Erikson (1968) became somewhat neglected. From Erikson's perspective, it makes a difference whether commitments are adopted on the basis of coincidental situational circumstances and/or pressuring demands or whether commitments reflect an integrated system of personally endorsed values and preferences. These differences in the internalization of commitments are not explicitly captured in measures based on Marcia's typology of identity statuses. Erikson's notion of successful identity formation as a process of internalization does play a major role in discovery models of identity (Waterman, 1984, Chapter 16, this volume) and in the SDT perspective on identity development.

A Self-Determination Theory Perspective on Identity Formation

Meta-theoretical Assumptions

To understand the SDT view on identity development, we first discuss its meta-theoretical and anthropological assumptions. First, SDT assumes that human beings actively contribute to their own development and should not be considered passive recipients that are completely determined by external forces. Second, human beings have an innate tendency to grow and to move forward, thereby increasingly developing differentiated, organized, and integrated identity structures. Third, this growth does not take place in a social vacuum, but the growth-oriented organism develops in a continuous interaction with the social environment, which can either foster or undermine one's growth (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000).

SDT argues that the *self* represents human beings' growth-oriented tendency. Thus, the self is essentially viewed as a developmental tendency to evolve toward growth and toward higher levels of integration and organization. Further, it is maintained that the satisfaction of innate, psychological needs provides the energy necessary for this integrative process to take place. For reasons of parsimony, three basic psychological needs are distinguished: the need for competence, that is, the need to feel effective in realizing and obtaining desired outcomes (White, 1959); the need for autonomy, that is, the need to experience a sense of volition and psychological freedom in one's actions (deCharms, 1968); and the need for relatedness, that is, the need to feel connected with other people and to be genuinely accepted in interpersonal relations (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). These needs are considered universal and essential, not only because they contribute to the integrative process of the self, but also because they represent necessary ingredients for one's well-being and health. When these needs are satisfied, people will flourish and display signs of healthy and adaptive functioning.

When these needs are thwarted, people become vulnerable to less than optimal adjustment or, in severe cases, even to psychopathology (Ryan, Deci, Grolnick, & La Guardia, 2006). Below we will argue that need satisfaction represents a key factor that will facilitate the development of a well-integrated identity, whereas need thwarting will impede identity development or even give rise to identity diffusion.

These claims about the nature of human development converge with the anthropological assumptions in Erikson's (1968) theory. Erikson's belief in the process of organismic growth is expressed most explicitly in his formulations about the epigenetic principle of development. According to Erikson, human development arises from an innate and universal ground plan that, given adequate environmental support, gradually unfolds and drives people toward higher and more sophisticated modes of functioning at inter-related levels (e.g., cognitive, social, and emotional). Much like SDT, Erikson emphasized that this process of maturation occurs in a constant reciprocal interaction with the social environment, such that adequate environmental support not only creates the necessary conditions for maturation to take place but that maturation also affords new and increasingly satisfying opportunities to interact with the social environment: "It is important to realize that in the sequence of his most personal experiences the healthy child, given a reasonable amount of proper guidance, can be trusted to obey inner laws of development, laws which create a succession of potentialities for significant interaction with those persons who tend and respond to him and those institutions which are ready for him" (Erikson, 1968, p. 93).

In SDT it is assumed that individuals' growth tendency (i.e., the self), which is energized by the satisfaction of one's basic psychological needs, is manifested in three ways (Vansteenkiste, Niemiec, & Soenens, 2010), that is, as (a) intrinsic motivation, (b) internalization, and (c) the adoption of growth-promoting values. Whereas both intrinsic motivation and internalization deal with the quality of the motives underlying people's actions and commitments (i.e., autonomous versus controlled), the adoption of

growth-promoting values deals with the type of goals people pursue (i.e., intrinsic versus extrinsic).

Consistent with Marcia's (1980) definition, we view identity as the set of characteristics, values, aspirations, and representations that people use to define themselves. SDT posits that individuals' identity may or may not be consistent with individuals' growth tendency (i.e., the self). Specifically, as outlined in greater detail in the following paragraphs, the level of consistency between self and identity is said to depend on the extent to which one's identity is driven by the three manifestations of the self. SDT's view on the self differs from other theories about self and identity in a number of ways. First, by delineating the self from identity SDT differs from the practice common in the identity literature of using "identity" and "self" as largely interchangeable terms. Second, in SDT the self is viewed as a lifelong developmental tendency toward growth rather than as the outcome of the developmental task of identity formation. In this respect, SDT also differs from the discovery perspective on identity development (Waterman, 1984, Chapter 16, this volume). Although SDT and the discovery perspective on identity share many features, the discovery perspective has been criticized by some for having a rather reified view on identity, that is, a view where one's identity is a predetermined "thing," waiting to be discovered. Berzonsky (1986), for instance, argued that the term "authentic self" suggests that people have an innate and predetermined identity that needs to be discovered as one grows older. In SDT, the self is not viewed as such a predetermined and fixed set of authentic values and interests. Instead, the self in SDT refers to individuals' natural inclination for growth and it is assumed that this growth tendency can manifest itself in many forms. The content of one's identity is likely to be determined by a complex interaction between genetic dispositions (e.g., talents and preferences) and responses by the social environment. Moreover, the content of a person's identity may also shift across time. Thus, in SDT it is not argued that the content of individuals' identity is innate, determined, and ready to be

discovered. It is argued, however, that individuals' identity may or may not be consistent with the self as an organismic growth tendency. When an identity provides opportunities for need satisfaction, it is said to reflect the self. In contrast, when an identity detracts from need satisfaction, it is said to be alien to the self. Having made these conceptual remarks, we now turn to a discussion of the "why" of identity formation (dealing with the motives behind identity formation) and the "what" of identity formation (dealing with the values behind identity formation).

The "Why" of Identity Formation

As outlined by Marcia (1980), individuals engage in different types of identity "work" in the process of constructing a personal identity, the most important of which is exploratory behavior. We argue that individuals can have different motives to engage in the exploration of identity-relevant alternatives and choices. In addition, individuals can have different motives to adopt and hold on to identity commitments. Further, we argue that motives for identity exploration are positively related to motives for identity commitment (Assor, Cohen-Malayeve, Kaplan, & Friedman, 2005). For instance, it seems likely that people who felt pressured to explore identity options will adopt and protect their identity commitments with a sense of pressure and coercion once their identity is established (La Guardia, 2009).

Intrinsic Motivation

Some activities are intrinsically motivated, that is, they are pursued for the inherent enjoyment experienced in the activities themselves. When intrinsically motivated, people experience their behavior as inherently enjoyable or satisfying, which contributes to their well-being and optimal functioning (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The growth-oriented process of intrinsic motivation is relevant for the process of identity formation in at least two ways. First, most of the exploratory behavior that is readily apparent in toddlers and that is displayed by adolescents who are in

the process of searching a well-fitting identity is intrinsically motivated. Spontaneous curiosity and the eagerness to master new challenges are key motives to explore the outer world and to find out which identity options are most interesting. This notion is consistent with Kashdan and colleagues' claim that the exploration of novel and challenging opportunities is typically driven by curiosity and intrinsic motivation (Kashdan & Fincham, 2004; Kashdan, Rose, & Fincham, 2004).

Second, not only the explorative behavior itself, but also the subsequent making of identity-relevant commitments and choices may directly follow from people's natural inclinations and interests, hence representing a direct manifestation of the self. An adolescent who embarks on a psychology study because he is genuinely curious about human nature and because he anticipates that studying psychology will be an interesting challenge is making an identity-relevant choice on the basis of intrinsic motivation. Intrinsically motivated behaviors are engaged in with a sense of spontaneity, willingness, and autonomy. In attributional terms, they are characterized by an internal perceived locus of causality (deCharms, 1968).

Internalization Process

However, many behaviors displayed in daily life are extrinsically rather than intrinsically motivated. Extrinsically motivated behaviors have a means-end structure, that is, these behaviors are functional in obtaining a particular outcome that is separable from the activity itself. Yet, extrinsically motivated behaviors vary in the extent to which they have been internalized, that is, in the extent to which they are congruent with the self and, as such, provide opportunities for need satisfaction. The process of internalization refers to the tendency to transform socially valued mores, norms, and rules into personally endorsed values and self-regulations (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan, 1993). Translated to the process of identity formation, this means that both one's exploratory behavior and the making of identity-relevant commitments and choices can be more or less internalized in nature.

Consistent with Erikson's (1968) writings, SDT maintains that, whereas some people pursue, adopt, and maintain identity commitments that are consistent with the self and that reflect their preferences and sensibilities, others pursue identity commitments that are alien to the self (Ryan & Deci, 2003). Different from Erikson, SDT provides a detailed and empirically grounded account of the process of internalization, which is represented as a continuum consisting of four types of regulation that reflect increasing internalization and integration.

At the lowest level of the continuum, people's behaviors, values, and beliefs are said to be externally regulated. With external regulation, people engage in exploratory behaviors or adopt identity commitments because they feel pressured from without. Their behavior is driven by attempts to obtain external contingencies (e.g., a reward) or to avoid punishment, criticism, and disapproval. The value of the behavior or identity element is not internalized at all, as it does not even reside in the person. For instance, an adolescent may gather information about law studies because this provides him with approval from his parents who always wanted their son to be a lawyer. Externally regulated commitments are not consistent with the self and are only maintained as long as the externally controlling pressures (e.g., from socializing agents or peers) are present. As such, one may even argue that externally regulated commitments cannot be considered real commitments and are not even part of one's identity. Such "commitments" have not been internalized at all and are not used by people to define who they are.

One step further on the internalization continuum, people adopt an identity on the basis of introjected motives. Introjection entails a regulatory mode where people have "taken in" a value, yet do not fully accept this value as their own. Although the regulation resides in the person, it is not fully congruent with the self and the basic psychological needs. Specifically, introjection may cause an inner conflict stemming from the approach-avoidance conflict one is facing when being driven by introjected motives. People with an introjected regulation would adopt identity commitments to avoid feelings such as

shame, guilt, disappointment, and inferiority or to increase their feelings of self-worth and pride. At the same time, because of the stressful and conflicting feelings associated with internally pressuring forces such as shame and guilt, people would rather renounce the further pursuit of those commitments, thus developing an ambiguous orientation toward their identity. To illustrate, a last year high-school student might be exploring different future study possibilities to avoid feeling guilty for making the wrong choice. It is striking that both Erikson (1968) and SDT scholars use the term *introjection* to refer to a rather constricted type of regulation reflecting only partial internalization. Although introjected identity commitments, relative to externally regulated commitments, might be longer adhered to, the adherence is likely to be rigid and obsessive. Because one's identity is not fully congruent with the self, it is of a rather unstable and insecure nature (see also the literature on insecure self-esteem, e.g., Heppner & Kernis, Chapter 15, this volume), leading one to react defensively against any person who challenges one's adopted identity (Hodgins & Knee, 2002). Because both an external and an introjected regulation are accompanied by feelings of pressure and alienation, they are both considered expressions of a controlled mode of functioning.

Introjection is a particularly interesting type of regulation because it illustrates the necessity of distinguishing between the terms *identity* and *self*. Indeed, introjection is a critical point on the internalization continuum because, although identity commitments that have been introjected reside in the person and, as such, are part of one's identity, these commitments are not fully congruent with the self. Specifically, the case of introjection illustrates that, in SDT, the distinction between an external and an internal regulation of commitments is considered less critical than the distinction between a controlled and an autonomous regulation of commitments. Although an introjected mode of regulation is internal in nature (i.e., people try to meet intrapersonal demands), it comes with feelings of pressure and thus represents a controlled type of functioning. Research has shown that introjection

is associated with more defensiveness, less persistence, and less well-being relative to the fully internalized and autonomous types of regulation (Assor, Vansteenkiste, & Kaplan, 2009; Koestner & Losier, 2002). This suggests that people can function less than optimally even when their behavior is internally regulated.

A relatively more autonomous type of regulation is *identification*. When people identify with the value of a commitment or choice, they feel volitional in maintaining and behaving on the basis of that commitment because they experience the commitment as a reflection of who they are. When people understand the personal relevance of their behavior and their identity-relevant choices, they have accepted the behavioral regulation as their own, that is, they have almost fully internalized the behavioral regulation. For instance, a last year high-school student might explore different study possibilities at the university because he believes it is truly important to be well informed before making any identity choice. Or, an emerging adult may choose to leave the parental home to live independently and consider his new-found residential independence as an identity-relevant choice that he fully endorses (Kins, Beyers, Soenens, & Vansteenkiste, 2009).

A final step toward full internalization requires the integration of the identified regulation with the other self-endorsed aspects of one's identity. *Integrated regulation* refers to the process of bringing together various personal values and identity-relevant commitments in a meaningful manner, which might require considerable effort and a high level of reflection and self-awareness. Behaviors and commitments that are integrated are not only valued and meaningful (i.e., identified with), but are brought into alignment with other self-endorsed values and goals. In some instances people identify with the personal importance of an activity, but the identification is still compartmentalized and inconsistent with other self-endorsed values and goals. For instance, a person may endorse an individualistic and highly competitive attitude at work yet display a compassionate and caring attitude toward his family members. Most likely, these two interpersonal orientations will not be experienced

by the person as expressions of a single underlying, deeply held set of values but would instead be experienced as compartmentalized or isolated. As such, a lack of integration is antithetical to the feeling of temporal-spatial continuity that would characterize successful resolution of the identity crisis (Erikson, 1968).

To sum up, in SDT internalization represents the process through which identity-relevant explorations and commitments are increasingly brought into alignment with the self. SDT's position on the role of internalization in identity formation is akin to both the discovery perspective on identity and to Erikson's theory. It is assumed that, the more exploratory behaviors and identity commitments are undergirded by autonomous and well-internalized (relative to controlled) motives, the more these behaviors and commitments will satisfy the basic needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness, which, in turn, will foster well-being and adjustment (Luyckx, Vansteenkiste, Goossens, & Duriez, 2009). Specifically, individuals with autonomous (rather than controlled) commitments are likely to experience a greater sense of psychological freedom in carrying out identity-relevant activities, become more skilled at them, and get more social support from others while engaging in them.

An important issue to address in future work is how motives for identity exploration are related to the motivational dynamics behind the internalization of identity commitments (Assor et al., 2005). We hypothesize that, on average, a thorough and deliberate exploration of identity alternatives is essential to arrive at well-internalized, secure, and need-satisfying identity commitments. This is because identity exploration would enhance the likelihood of discovering identity-relevant preferences and choices that are deeply and genuinely satisfying.

We would, however, like to qualify this hypothesis in two ways. First, the formation of high-quality (i.e., autonomous and well-integrated) commitments may not necessarily require a long and systematic process of exploration. This is because identity-relevant choices and commitments that have been made intuitively and instantly (i.e., without going

through an extended phase of reflection and questioning) can also be highly need satisfying. This might particularly be the case with choices based on intrinsically motivating activities. We speculate that exploration is particularly important for choices and commitments that are not immediately and intrinsically appealing, that is, for choices and commitments that need to be internalized and integrated.

Second, identity commitments arrived at through exploration may not necessarily be well-internalized or autonomous in nature, because some forms of identity exploration are driven by controlled rather than autonomous motives. A pressured type of exploration can take the form of compliance, where adolescents experience the external demand to explore. Or, alternatively, it can take the form of defiance, where adolescents explore in an attempt to react against environmental pressures to commit to choices they do not endorse. Such controlled types of exploration are likely to be either superficial or rather radical in nature (Assor et al., 2005). In the case of radical exploration, adolescents question their commitments in a highly emotional and oppositional fashion. Both superficial and radical explorations are unlikely to result in identity commitments that reflect one's abiding values and preferences. In contrast, when adolescents explore their identity for autonomous reasons, they are more likely to engage in an open-minded and reflective type of identity exploration, such that one's identity choices more accurately reflect deeply held values and preferences.

Contrasting the SDT Perspective on Motives for Identity with Other Views

To provide some further conceptual clarification to SDT's unique view on motives for identity development, we briefly contrast the SDT perspective with two commonly cited views on identity, stating (a) that people typically build an identity to obtain a sense of self-esteem, and (b) that it is most adaptive in current post-modern society to adopt a chameleon-like and fragmented identity.

Self-Esteem as an Identity Motive

Several identity scholars claim that identity development is to a large extent driven by a desire for self-esteem (Sedikides & Gregg, 2003; Sedikides & Strube, 1997; Gregg et al., Chapter 14, this volume). According to these scholars, the protection and enhancement of self-esteem is not only a highly endorsed and almost universal motive for self-development, it is also an adaptive motive fostering well-being and adjustment.

These claims are inconsistent with the SDT perspective on identity. According to SDT, when people are driven by attempts to enhance their self-esteem or to avoid lowered self-esteem, they are functioning on the basis of an introjected regulation (Deci & Ryan, 2000). This is because the active pursuit of self-worth is likely to invoke ego-involved concerns which in turn create feelings of internal pressure and conflict (Niemic, Ryan, & Brown, 2008; Ryan, 1982; Ryan & Brown, 2003). Specifically, when driven by self-worth concerns individuals would engage in conditional self-acceptance; they would only evaluate themselves positively (and may even engage in self-aggrandizement) when their behaviors meet their standards. Conversely, they would devalue themselves with feelings of self-criticism and inferiority when they fail to meet their identity-related standards. The fragile and contingent sense of self-esteem resulting from the active pursuit of self-worth would not only result in a half-hearted and constricted type of behavioral engagement but would also have a cost in terms of emotional problems (Assor, Roth, & Deci, 2004; Heppner & Kernis, Chapter 15, this volume). As such, the pursuit of self-esteem is not considered a healthy motive in SDT.

It should be noted that this view does not deny the possibility that identity development can contribute to self-esteem. Indeed, it is likely that feelings of positive self-worth and competence will follow when individuals have developed a clear and coherent identity. Ironically, however, identity development is less likely to be successful and to contribute to self-esteem when the pursuit of self-esteem provided the initial impetus and motivation for identity formation. In this

regard, Sheldon (2004) advocated the use of “a sidelong approach” to self-esteem where people avoid focusing on self-esteem as a central and highly conscious motive for their endeavors. When people instead focus on their authentic interests and values while pursuing goals or identity-relevant choices, self-esteem is likely to follow as an unintended by-product of the goal pursuit. In sum, although self-esteem may be an adaptive developmental outcome of successful identity construction, SDT contends that identity development may be hampered when it is motivated by self-esteem concerns.

Post-Modern Views on Identity Development

Sociologists and philosophers have noted that the post-modern era is characterized by proliferation of different societal views, lifestyles, and identity possibilities (Braeckman, 2000). Psychologists made a similar analysis. For instance, Cushman (1990) argued that the self, which he viewed largely as a function of the dominant cultural norms and rules, “experiences a significant absence of community, tradition, and shared meaning” in the post-war era (p. 600). In existential psychological terms, the gradually lessening impact of social structures has created an *existential vacuum*. Several researchers (e.g., Arnett, 2002) recognize that, in the absence of unifying and institutionalized systems of meaning, people nowadays are faced with the task of choosing among a wide and exponentially increasing variety of lifestyles, values, and roles.

Some post-modern psychologists argue that the most adaptive response to the increased complexity of modern-day society is to adopt a chameleon-like identity that consists of different (and potentially incoherent) commitments in different life contexts and that fluctuates across time as the demands of life change (Gergen, 1991). This view is inconsistent with the theory of Erikson (1968) which highlights the idea of an identity configuration, that is, a set of multiple identifications that have been integrated through processes of assimilation, absorption, and organization (Schachter, 2004). It is also inconsistent with the organismic approach of

SDT in which the experience of multiple but compartmentalized identity commitments is viewed as fragmentation and represents non-optimal functioning (Ryan & Deci, 2003). Indeed, the concepts of identified and integrated regulation on the internalization continuum were precisely distinguished from one another to make this point. Although a particular identity might be personally endorsed, it might still be relatively isolated and even conflicting with other personally subscribed identity commitments. The lack of harmony that characterizes these co-existing commitments suggests that they are not fully integrated and therefore not fully consistent with the self.

The argument that the adoption of a chameleon-like identity represents a non-optimal response to the task of identity formation constitutes yet a different reason why the concept of identity needs to be conceptually differentiated from the growth-oriented self, as conceived within SDT. The self as the process of self-regulation and integration is an ongoing, fundamental, and innate process that has been operational throughout the history of mankind. From such a perspective, the self can never be empty as the self does not need to be constructed on the basis of prevailing norms and rules, as conceived by Cushman (1990). However, we do acknowledge that the integrative work of the self as a process can be hindered by societal pressures. Specifically, the increasing number of identity routes and lifestyle options may—at least for some people (e.g., people struggling with indecisiveness)—place the self-integrative process under pressure. Recognizing the increasing difficulty for people to achieve a sense of unity and integration does not imply, however, that the self as such would be empty.

Empirical Findings on the Autonomous (Versus Controlled) Regulation of Identity

Research supports the idea that when people regulate identity-relevant goals on the basis of autonomous or volitional rather than controlled or

pressured reasons, they are more likely to experience well-being and vitality. For instance, in line with the work of Emmons (1986), Sheldon and colleagues assessed the motives and quality of internalization behind individuals' self-generated life goals, which increases the personal significance of the goals being rated. For each of these goals, participants are asked to rate the extent to which they engage in these goals for autonomous or controlled motives. Sheldon and Kasser (1995) found that, compared with controlled reasons, autonomous reasons for pursuing life goals were related positively to a variety of well-being and healthy personality outcomes, including openness, empathy, self-actualization, and vitality. In subsequent longitudinal studies by Sheldon and Elliot (1998, 1999), autonomous motives behind one's goal pursuit were found to positively predict effort investment in one's goal, goal attainment, need satisfaction, and well-being, whereas controlled reasons for goal pursuit did not predict goal attainment and were unrelated or negatively related to need satisfaction and well-being.

Another body of work worth mentioning in this context is Waterman's (1993, 2005, Chapter 16, this volume) research on personal expressiveness. Drawing from Aristotle's philosophical formulations on eudaimonia and from the discovery perspective on identity, Waterman (1993) defined personal expressiveness as a subjective state associated with activities that are consistent with one's daimon, that is, the core of individuals' potentialities. Similar to well-integrated activities and commitments, personally expressive activities would come with feelings of self-realization and well-being. Personal expressiveness has indeed been found to relate to adaptive outcomes and processes such as intrinsic motivation, flow, self-actualization, and vitality (e.g., Waterman, 1993, 2005).

In a more direct examination of the motivational dynamics underlying the making of identity commitments, Soenens, Berzonsky, Vansteenkiste, Dunkel, and Papini (submitted) examined the relative contribution of the strength of identity commitments and the motives behind these identity commitments in the prediction of late adolescents' well-being. Consistent with

previous research (Marcia, 1980), the strength of identity commitments was related positively to a number of well-being variables (i.e., self-esteem, agency, and absence of depressive symptoms). Importantly, the motives behind commitment added to the prediction over and above the effect of commitment per se, with autonomous motives relating positively and controlled motives relating negatively to well-being.

Increasingly, research is also showing that the beneficial outcomes associated with an autonomously regulated identity generalize across cultures. SDT has sometimes been mistakenly interpreted as arguing that people need to develop a separate, unique, and independent identity, that is, an identity that differentiates people from others. Such an independent orientation would be less common and less adaptive for people in collectivist cultures who tend to emphasize and value interdependence rather than independence (e.g., Markus, Kitayama, & Heiman 1996; Suh, Diener, Oishi, & Triandis, 1998; for a review, see Smith, Chapter 11, this volume). However, autonomy as understood in SDT is different from people's tendency to build their identity on the basis of independent and individualist values or on the basis of interdependent or collectivist values (Ryan, 1993). Chirkov, Ryan, Kim, and Kaplan (2003), for instance, asked respondents from different nations (Korea, Russia, Turkey, and the United States) to rate how much they endorse individualist and collectivist practices. Next, respondents were also asked to indicate why they endorse those values, that is, for autonomous or controlled reasons. In each of the four nations studied, it was found that the endorsement of cultural values for autonomous rather than controlled reasons contributed to well-being beyond the effect of the cultural values per se. Such findings indicate that both individualist and collectivist values can be more or less internalized (i.e., regulated on the basis of autonomous rather than controlled motives) and that the level of internalization is universally beneficial for well-being.

Together, there is increasing empirical evidence that not all identity-relevant goals or commitments are created equally. Those

identity commitments that are pursued for intrinsic motives, that are well internalized (i.e., autonomous), or that are experienced as personally expressive, appear to contribute to positive well-being and adjustment whereas commitments that are poorly internalized (i.e., controlled) relate to decreased well-being and developmental problems. Notably, whereas a number of studies have addressed the motivational dynamics behind the making of commitments, no research has been conducted on individuals' motives for identity exploration. It seems worthwhile to examine in future research whether there are qualitative differences (i.e., autonomous and controlled) in individuals' motives for identity exploration and whether these differences relate to the quantity and quality of identity commitments and to personal well-being.

The “What” of Identity Formation

The processes of intrinsic motivation and internalization deal with the reasons *why* people explore different identity options or adopt and hold on to particular choices and commitments. Apart from the reasons underlying people's identity commitments, the content (i.e., *what*) of people's identity-relevant choices and aspirations may be more or less congruent with the growth tendencies of the self (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Kasser, 2002; Vansteenkiste, Soenens, & Duriez, 2008).

Identity Commitments Based on Intrinsic Rather than Extrinsic Goals

Some people primarily direct their identity commitments toward intrinsic goals, such as community contribution, self-development, and affiliation. For instance, a last year high-school student might choose to embark on medical studies because he wants to make a difference for children in underdeveloped countries. Intrinsic goals reflect a “being orientation” focused on the actualization of one's personal interests, values, and potential (Kasser, 2002). Intrinsic goals are labeled intrinsic because these goals are more likely to lead the person to have experiences

that can satisfy inherent psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Put differently, intrinsic goal pursuit is more *inherently* related to basic need satisfaction.

Other people organize their identity commitments predominantly around extrinsic goals (e.g., financial success, social recognition, and physical appeal). For instance, a last year high-school student might decide to study medicine to become financially successful. *Extrinsic goals* exemplify salient aspects of capitalism and consumer culture, in which fame, money, and a perfect physical appearance are often portrayed as ultimate signs of success (Kasser & Ryan, 1993, 1996; Dittmar, Chapter 31, this volume). Extrinsic goals involve a “having orientation” and their appeal mostly lies within the anticipated power, admiration, and sense of worth that might be obtained by realizing them. Extrinsic goals are considered extrinsic because they will often drive people away from opportunities to satisfy the basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness.

Let us take an example to illustrate how goal-content is related to basic need satisfaction (see Vansteenkiste et al., 2008 for a more extensive discussion). A boy who considers good looks as an important identity element is likely to feel pressured to meet the prevailing cultural expectations about attractiveness advertised in the media, thus undermining his need for autonomy. In addition, driven by the goal of physical attractiveness, he is likely to compare himself to others and to perceive others as competitors. The feelings of jealousy and the objectifying stance toward others resulting from this competitive interpersonal orientation are likely to undermine his need for relatedness. Further, he is unlikely to ever feel capable of fully accomplishing his goal of being beautiful, such that his need for competence becomes chronically frustrated.

Several other researchers have—at least implicitly—pointed to the possible problems associated with the pursuit of extrinsic goals. For instance, Dittmar (2007, Chapter 31, this volume) argued that the consumption industry spreads the myth that the ideal and happy life involves

building an identity that is centered around the pursuit and achievement of material wealth and the perfect body. Dittmar equally emphasized the critical role of social comparison to social standards and ideals when extrinsic aspirations such as “the material good life” and “the body perfect” are adopted. Because modern-day ideals for material success and thin-ideal attainment are excessively high, most people fall short of meeting these ideals. As a consequence, when oriented toward extrinsic goals, people will almost invariably experience a discrepancy between their actual identity and their ideal identity. This discrepancy would then result in negative feelings and, in the long run, in a pervasive sense of identity deficit and subsequent maladjustment (Dittmar, 2007; Kasser, 2002).

It is important to note that individuals’ most fundamental and deep-held goals will ultimately determine whether one’s identity provides opportunities for need satisfaction or not. This is important because the goals people display at the surface may not always be the goals they hold deep down. For example, a person may appear to be oriented toward community contribution because he volunteers in charity organizations, yet he may use this engagement as a way to gain recognition and popularity (i.e., an extrinsic goal). The fundamental goal of this person—referred to by Ryan, Huta, and Deci (2008) as the first-order goal—is extrinsic rather than intrinsic in nature. As a consequence, this person’s identity is mainly colored by extrinsic aspirations and may, as such, detract the person from need-satisfying experiences.

Empirical Findings on the Intrinsic (Versus Extrinsic) Goal Contents Underlying Identity

A growing number of studies provide evidence for the claim that building an identity centered around intrinsic, rather than extrinsic, goals yields more personal and social benefits. Research addressing this hypothesis has typically relied on the Aspiration Index (Kasser & Ryan, 1993, 1996), a questionnaire providing scores for a number of intrinsic and extrinsic goals. Studies have consistently shown that the more

extrinsic (versus intrinsic) life goals occupied a central place in people’s goal structures, the more people tended to experience lower psychological well-being (e.g., Kasser & Ryan, 1993; Ryan, Sheldon & Kasser, 1995) and higher psychological ill-being (e.g., Kasser & Ahuvia, 2002; Kasser & Ryan, 1993). These results have been obtained across the life span and in various countries across the world. The harmful effects of the pursuit of extrinsic goals are not limited to individuals’ personal well-being but also extend to their interpersonal functioning. In their close relationships with others, extrinsically oriented individuals are more likely to use their friends to get ahead in life and they engage in more conflictual and less trustful romantic relationships (Kasser & Ryan, 2001).

Further, it has been shown that the negative interpersonal attitudes and behaviors of extrinsically oriented individuals also have an impact on larger groups in society such as foreigners and immigrants. Duriez, Vansteenkiste, Soenens, and De Witte (2007) found a strong and positive association between an extrinsic versus intrinsic goal orientation and racial prejudice. Duriez et al. demonstrated that this association was longitudinally mediated by a Social Dominance Orientation (SDO), that is, an orientation characteristic of individuals with a preference for a society that is divided into clearly delineated and hierarchically organized groups. The association between extrinsic (versus intrinsic) goal pursuit and SDO suggests that extrinsically oriented individuals are prejudiced because they perceive the world as a highly competitive place where one needs to devalue others to obtain scarce goods.

Finally, an extrinsic (relative to intrinsic) value orientation is negatively related to behaviors that are beneficial to society as a whole and to the environment. Brown and Kasser (2005) demonstrated that such a value orientation negatively predicted the engagement in pro-ecological behaviors, and was associated with an enlarged ecological footprint. Similarly, Richins and Dawson (1992) found materialism to negatively predict a lifestyle characterized by low consumption and ecological responsibility.

Threats to Identity Security as an Antecedent of Extrinsic Goal Pursuit

It has been argued that the pursuit of extrinsic goals is determined at least partly by the extent to which such goals are promoted in one's direct environment (modeling) and the extent to which people feel insecure and psychologically threatened (Kasser, 2002). Within the current analysis, we focus especially on the latter developmental source. The idea that psychological threat prompts extrinsic goal behaviors implies that when people feel insecure about their identity they might be more likely to gear themselves toward extrinsic goals because those goals may hold the promise of immediate relief from such existential threat. Because extrinsic goals are increasingly promoted by mass media in Western society and globally (Kasser, Kanner, Cohn, & Ryan, 2007), they are often highly visible and salient, and may as such be perceived as attractive routes to happiness and self-worth.

Addressing the idea that identity insecurity is involved in the processes associated with pursuit of extrinsic goals (and materialism in particular), Kasser and Kasser (2001) analyzed the dreams of people low and high in materialism and found that highly materialistic individuals dreamt more frequently about insecurity themes, such as death. Kasser and Sheldon (2000) experimentally manipulated feelings of existential insecurity by having students write about their own death. They found that, relative to control participants, those asked to ponder on their own death, expected to earn more money in the future and to spend more money for pleasure. Participants in the death manipulation condition also displayed a more greedy orientation. Extending this line of work, Sheldon and Kasser (2008) showed that the experimental induction of economic and existential threat led to a stronger endorsement of extrinsic, relative to intrinsic, goals. Thus, extrinsic goals are typically valued as a means to compensate for psychological insecurity.

Why would people hold on to extrinsic goals given that they provide little, if any, well-being benefits? Extrinsic goals seem to have an addictive feature because people believe that such goals will bring need satisfaction and happiness,

a phenomenon referred to as affective forecasting (Sheldon, Gunz, Nichols, & Ferguson, 2010). However, people rarely feel capable of fully realizing their extrinsic goals and, even if they do, the accomplishment of such goals brings short-lived rather than deep and long-lasting satisfaction. To cope with the subsequent feelings of discontent and insecurity, people typically embrace their extrinsic goals even stronger, thereby getting trapped in a negative vicious cycle which has been referred to by Dittmar (2007) as "the cage within."

Distinguishing Goals from Motives

Both motives (i.e., autonomous and controlled) and goals (i.e., intrinsic and extrinsic) are conceptually related in that the pursuit of intrinsic goals is often based on autonomous reasons, whereas the pursuit of extrinsic goals is often guided by controlled reasons. Research typically found correlations around 0.30 between intrinsic goal striving and autonomous regulation and between extrinsic goal striving and controlled regulation (Sebire, Standage, & Vansteenkiste, 2008, 2009; Sheldon & Kasser, 1995; Sheldon, Ryan, Deci, & Kasser, 2004). These correlations suggest that intrinsic versus extrinsic goals and autonomous versus controlled regulations represent related yet distinct process (Deci & Ryan, 2000). For instance, it is possible to donate for charity (i.e., an intrinsic goal) to avoid feeling guilty for not doing so (i.e., controlled regulation) or because one fully endorses the importance of charity (i.e., autonomous regulation). Although research has shown that the content of goal pursuit and the motives for goal pursuit are not fully independent, it has also been shown that both predict independent variance in well-being (e.g., Sheldon & Kasser, 1995). Apparently, both autonomous (relative to controlled) motives and intrinsic (relative to extrinsic) goals represent crucial ingredients for optimal development.

Although at least some studies examined associations between identity processes (identity insecurity in particular) and extrinsic (versus intrinsic) goals, it should be noted that research on identity and the content of identity-relevant goals is scarce. Future researchers may want to

examine associations between Marcia's (1966) identity statuses and extrinsic (versus intrinsic) goals. We predict that although both adolescents in the foreclosure and diffusion statuses may be prone to adopt extrinsic goals, they might do so for different reasons. As they are highly sensitive to societal and interpersonal expectations and approval, foreclosed adolescents would adopt extrinsic goals because these goals are highly valued and promoted, at least in contemporaneous individualistic societies. In contrast, diffused adolescents would adopt extrinsic goals because, as discussed earlier, such goals hold the promise of providing an immediate and readymade solution for the feelings of existential emptiness and threat that come with a poorly developed and shallow identity. For diffused adolescents, extrinsic goals would thus represent a compensatory mechanism to cope with their identity insecurity.

Comparing SDT with Constructivist Identity Theories and Models

Contrary to SDT's organismic view on identity, the meta-theoretical assumptions of which are largely consistent with a discovery metaphor of identity (Waterman, 1984), most of the prevailing models in identity research are constructivist in nature and are based on the construction metaphor of identity formation (Berzonsky, 1986). Common to these constructivist models is the idea that individuals create, maintain, and revise their identity through a process of monitoring, comparing, and incorporating of feedback received from the social environment. In these models, it is assumed that people actively interact with the social environment to build their identity from a blank slate. In Berzonsky's model in particular, the ultimate criterion to evaluate successful identity formation is whether one's identity has pragmatic value, that is, whether it effectively helps people to adjust to life challenges and to meet requirements of the social environment (Berzonsky, 1986, 1990, Chapter 3, this volume). Below, we briefly discuss a number of constructivist models that currently prevail in the literature and compare these with SDT's

organismic identity model. Finally, we describe how identity construction processes and organismic identity processes may interact to predict adaptive development and adjustment.

Prominent Constructivist Models of Identity Formation

Identity Control Theory

One overarching constructivist model of identity is identity control theory (Grotevant, 1987; Kerpelman et al., 1997; Serpe & Stryker, Chapter 10, this volume). This theory assumes that people compare their identity standards—that is, the self-defining labels that denote who people think they are—to perceptions of themselves obtained through social information and feedback. People would continuously compare their internal identity standards to how they are perceived by others and would maintain or alter their identity standards depending on the outcome of this comparison process (Kerpelman et al., 1997). In case there is a match or convergence between identity standards and social perceptions, one would maintain one's identity because it then adequately represents oneself in the social world and, as such, has pragmatic value in providing meaning and in solving problems. In case there is a discrepancy (or error) between identity standards and the social feedback received about oneself, however, one's identity needs to be adjusted. Identity formation thus entails a process of trying to find equilibrium between internal identity standards and social experiences.

Based on cognitive developmental theory (Piaget, 1977), it has been proposed that this dynamic equilibrium is maintained through the processes of identity assimilation and identity accommodation (Whitbourne & Collins, 1998; Whitbourne, Sneed, & Skultety, 2002). Identity assimilation refers to the interpretation of identity-relevant social information in terms of already established identity standards, such that one's identity standards do not need to be altered. Identity assimilation may be functional and even adaptive as long as there are only minor discrepancies between identity standards

and social information. However, when discrepancies are large, one's identity may be in need of a more thorough revision. Revision of one's identity is achieved through the process of accommodation, which involves substantially altering one's identity standard or even replacing it with a new standard such that one's newly adopted identity fits again with the social environment.

Berzonsky's Identity Style Model

Another prominent representative of constructivist thinking about identity is Berzonsky's identity style model. Much like identity control theory, Berzonsky (1989, 1990, Chapter 3, this volume) focuses on the social-cognitive processes through which people build, evaluate, and refine their identity constructions. Rather than outlining the general mechanisms (e.g., discrepancy reduction) that underlie identity formation, Berzonsky focuses on interpersonal differences in the way people cognitively approach the process of identity exploration. Specifically, he distinguishes between three identity styles.

An information-oriented identity style is typical of individuals who actively seek out information and deliberately evaluate information before making a commitment. Using a rational, open, and cognitively complex style of information processing, these individuals would flexibly switch back and forth between assimilation and accommodation. A normative style is typical of individuals who orient themselves toward expectations from significant others and social norms when making identity decisions. They tend to hold on rigidly to the commitments that they adopted from significant others, thereby defending their rigid self-views against discrepant information. Hence, they use a predominantly assimilative cognitive style. A diffuse-avoidant style is characteristic of individuals who procrastinate identity choices. Because they do not personally explore identity alternatives and options, they typically fail to arrive at solid and personally endorsed commitments. Instead, they tend to adjust their identity standards to situational demands in a chameleon-like fashion, thereby using a predominantly accommodative cognitive style.

Similarities and Differences Between Constructivist Models and the SDT View on Identity

The constructivist identity models and the SDT perspective on identity formation share some common features. First, both perspectives share the idea that people actively contribute to their own development and, as such, differ from the view defended by behaviorists that human development is passively determined by the social environment through processes of reinforcement and stimulus-response associations.

Second, both perspectives highlight the importance of the social environment in developing a sense of personal identity. Whereas constructivist models emphasize the role of the social environment as a source of social feedback that continuously interacts with individuals' self-representations (through assimilation and accommodation), SDT stresses that interpersonal factors contribute to (or potentially hinder) the processes of internalization and integration. Whereas controlling interpersonal environments would detract from internalization and adaptive identity formation, autonomy-supportive and need-satisfying environments would create opportunities for the integrative and growth-oriented tendencies of the self to function optimally (Grolnick, Deci, & Ryan, 1997; Ryan & Deci, 2003).

In spite of these similarities, there are also a number of differences between both perspectives. Perhaps the most important difference is that SDT assumes a fundamental and innate growth-oriented human tendency (i.e., the self) whereas this is not necessarily the case in constructivist models. This difference in perspective has at least three consequences. First, constructivist models and SDT highlight a different criterion to evaluate adaptive identity development. Whereas constructivist models stress the importance of functional and pragmatic utility, SDT emphasizes the importance of the degree to which identity behaviors and commitments are experienced as need satisfying. Importantly, in some cases, identity development meets one criterion but not the

other, and vice versa. For instance, for a child raised in an authoritarian home it may seem like a pragmatic choice to comply with parental demands and to adopt the parents' values into his identity without questioning those values. Such a "normative" response may help the child to avoid conflict and may even yield parental recognition and praise. It is questionable, however, whether this child's rule-abiding and submissive orientation is need satisfying because the child might feel pressured to adopt the parents' values and, as such, may not experience a sense of autonomy.

Second, constructivist models sometimes imply a *relativistic* perspective on identity evaluation (e.g., Berzonsky, 1986, 1990, Chapter 3, this volume). In a relativistic perspective, any identity commitment or any style of exploring one's options can be beneficial or detrimental, as its effectiveness depends on the level of discrepancy that one experiences between one's identity and the feedback received from the social environment. For instance, it could be argued that a normative identity style is beneficial in highly structured environments such as the army. In contrast, it follows from organismic models such as SDT that people can evaluate their identity in *absolute* terms; that is, the key factor to evaluate identity commitments is whether they are consistent with individuals' growth tendency, as reflected, for instance, in feelings of intrinsic enjoyment in the pursuit of an identity-related goal. As such, SDT entails a *universalistic* viewpoint where the adaptive value of a particular identity choice primarily depends on whether one's identity is consistent with the basic psychological needs of the self. Identity commitments that are regulated by autonomous (rather than controlled) motives and commitments that are based on intrinsic (rather than extrinsic) goals would be conducive to adjustment, irrespective of the level of fit between individuals' motives and goals and those of the social environment.

As an example, this organismic position implies that a person who adopted his identity out of internally demanding motives (i.e., introjection) is at risk for decreased well-being, even when his environment would be controlling in nature or would strongly appeal to internal

imperatives such as guilt, shame, and loyalty. Similarly, a person who built his identity around extrinsic goals would be at risk for maladjustment, even when his extrinsic identity fits well with extrinsic goals that prevail in his social environment. Consistent with this universalistic reasoning, several studies have shown that the undermining effects of extrinsic, relative to intrinsic, goal pursuit were also present when people were in a social environment that strongly supported and encouraged extrinsic goals, such as business schools (Vansteenkiste, Duriez, Simons, & Soenens, 2006), law schools (Sheldon et al., 2004), and the world of fashion (Meyer, Enstrom, Harstveit, Bowles, & Beevers, 2007).

One may object to this reasoning by arguing that a lack of fit between one's identity and the social environment may have negative ramifications for the need for relatedness because it may alienate a person from the environment. A lack of fit may not always frustrate one's need for relatedness, however. A person who is able to keep an intrinsic interest in his work even though he is in a highly competitive and controlling workplace might be more likely to have high-quality interpersonal relations at work compared to a colleague who feels controlled to work. Conversely, a situation of person-environment fit may not always provide opportunities for satisfaction of the need for relatedness. A person who strongly endorses materialistic values within a materialism-oriented social environment is not likely to build genuine and mutually satisfying interpersonal relationships. Instead, this person seems likely to view others as competitors and rivals, an attitude that may undermine rather than facilitate the need for relatedness.

A third consequence of the fact that constructivist models typically do not assume the existence of an innate growth tendency is that constructivist models are less clear about the processes that energize identity formation. Constructivist models illuminate *how* people construct their identity without specifying the source of energy that may foster this identity work. In a similar vein, Schwartz (2002) argued that constructivist models primarily deal with the path or process of identity formation, at the expense of

attention for the driving forces behind identity formation. Many of the identity-related processes involved in constructivist models (e.g., exploring identity alternatives and choosing among different possible commitments) are energy consuming. Constructivist models have difficulty answering the question where people get the energy to engage in these processes and how individual differences in engagement in identity construction processes can be explained. The concepts of self and basic need satisfaction help to answer these questions. In SDT, the self is viewed as a source of energy and growth that, ideally, provides individuals with opportunities to use increasingly sophisticated strategies of self-regulation, including strategies of identity construction (Luyckx et al., 2009; Ryan & Deci, 2003). When people's basic psychological needs are satisfied, they would have the vitality and energy necessary to engage in identity construction strategies. In contrast, when people's needs are thwarted, they may be more likely to take less energy-consuming shortcuts on the path to identity formation, thereby either defensively guarding their identity against any form of change (i.e., a predominantly assimilative mode) or adopting volatile and situation-specific identity commitments (i.e., a predominantly accommodative mode). Although such shortcuts may yield some short-term benefits, they represent derivative and compensatory modes of identity construction that, in the long run, may fail to result in a well-balanced identity.

The Combined and Interactive Role of Identity Construction and Identity Discovery Processes

As we argued in the preceding paragraph, in at least some respects SDT and constructivist models of identity are based on diverging meta-theoretical and anthropological assumptions. Although both perspectives may not be fully compatible at a fundamental meta-theoretical level, we do believe that the processes forwarded within both perspectives are (a)

real and important and (b) mutually related in meaningful ways (see Schwartz, 2002 for a similar view). Specifically, we argue that the *how* of identity formation, as conceived within constructivist models, will vary as a function of the psychological energy available to the self, as conceived within SDT's organismic identity model. As argued in the preceding paragraph, processes of identity construction may be at least partially fueled by organismic processes such as internalization and need satisfaction.

Consistent with this hypothesis, it has been found that personality orientations and interpersonal factors that satisfy basic psychological needs relate positively to the use of more sophisticated identity construction processes, whereas factors that thwart need satisfaction are related to immature or defensive identity strategies. Soenens, Berzonsky, Vansteenkiste, Beyers, and Goossens (2005), for instance, found that an autonomous causality orientation—reflecting a person's dispositional tendency to function in a volitional fashion—is positively related to an information-oriented identity style whereas a controlled causality orientation was related to a normative identity style. It has also been found that need-thwarting parenting undermines individuals' identity construction capabilities. Controlling and intrusive parenting, for instance, has been found to relate to decreased commitment making capabilities (Luyckx, Soenens, Vansteenkiste, Berzonsky, & Goossens, 2007) and to a diffuse-avoidant style (Dunkel, Soenens, Berzonsky, & Papini, 2009; Smits et al., 2008).

In addition, it can be predicted that the type of goals people adopt (i.e., intrinsic versus extrinsic) will be relevant to the quality of identity construction processes. Specifically, because the pursuit of extrinsic goals would be unrelated to need satisfaction or might even frustrate the basic needs, it would inhibit the use of identity construction processes that require vitality and openness of functioning. Instead, the pursuit of extrinsic goals would activate derivative and relatively more defensive ways of processing identity-relevant information. Consistent with these hypotheses, Smits, Soenens, Luyckx, Duriez, and Goossens (2007) found that

both the personal pursuit of extrinsic (versus intrinsic) goals and the parental promotion of extrinsic goals were negatively related to an information-oriented identity style and positively related to the normative and diffuse-avoidant identity styles.

In a more direct examination of the idea that basic need satisfaction fosters adaptive identity construction processes, Luyckx et al. (2009) found positive associations between a measure of satisfaction of the three needs and commitment making, identification with commitment, and exploration (both in depth and in breadth). Satisfaction of the three needs related negatively to ruminative exploration, a type of exploration characterized by repetitive and excessive brooding typically resulting in a lack of firm commitments (see Luyckx, Schwartz, Goossens, Beyers, & Missotten, Chapter 4, this volume).

Research is thus increasingly confirming that need satisfaction and need-supportive factors foster adaptive identity construction. Conversely, adaptive identity construction processes may also create opportunities for need satisfaction and volitional functioning (Ryan & Deci, 2003). In line with this, Schwartz, Mullis, Waterman, and Dunham (2000) have shown that, compared to individuals with a diffuse-avoidant style, individuals with an information-oriented identity style are more likely to experience their choices and activities as personally expressive. Finally, Luyckx et al. (2009) found that global need satisfaction did not only predict identity construction prospectively but was also significantly predicted by some of the identity construction variables. Exploration in breadth, for instance, was found to predict increasing levels of global need satisfaction, supporting the idea that exploration increases the likelihood of making need-satisfying identity choices. In sum, need satisfaction and identity construction are not mutually exclusive but appear to be mutually reinforcing one another in a reciprocal fashion. These findings and formulations are also in line with the developmental model proposed by Schwartz (2002) in which it is argued that processes of identity construction and identity discovery represent reciprocally related and

essential ingredients for adaptive identity development and self-realization.

Apart from merely examining associations between need satisfaction and processes of identity construction, some studies have also examined need satisfaction as a moderator of identity construction processes. The latter studies typically address the idea that the effectiveness and the adaptive value of processes of identity construction depend on whether these processes occur under need-satisfying or need-thwarting conditions. Luyckx, Soenens, Berzonsky et al. (2007), for instance, examined whether the effects of an information-oriented style would be moderated by an autonomous causality orientation in predicting commitment and well-being. It was found that an information-oriented identity style was only positively related to confidence about one's commitments and to self-esteem under conditions of high autonomy. Smits, Soenens, Vansteenkiste, Luyckx, and Goossens (2010) expanded on these findings by directly measuring the motives behind the use of information-oriented and normative identity styles. It was found that, when these identity styles were pursued for relatively more autonomous (versus controlled) motives, they were related to higher well-being and more solid commitments. It seems therefore that a mentally effortful style (i.e., the information-oriented style) pays off primarily under conditions of autonomous (rather than controlled) motivation. Conversely, the disadvantages of a less mature and more defensive style (i.e., the normative style) seem to be offset at least partially when this style is used on the basis of autonomous (versus controlled) motives. Together, these findings suggest that processes of identity construction and processes of identity discovery interact in complex ways to predict identity-relevant outcomes and general adjustment.

Conclusion

In the identity literature, self and identity are sometimes used as interchangeable terms. In contrast, in SDT, both terms have a differentiated meaning. The self is viewed as an innate and natural process that guides

one toward more integrated and optimal functioning and that is reflected most directly in and sustained by the satisfaction of three basic human needs. Individuals' *identity*—the internal self-structure representing who one believes one is (Marcia, 1980)—may or may not be congruent with the self and its basic growth tendencies. By differentiating the concept of identity from the process of self, as conceptualized within SDT, it becomes clear that not all identity commitments are created equally. Depending on the reasons underlying one's identity (i.e., autonomous versus controlled) and the content of goals around which people build their identity (i.e., intrinsic versus extrinsic), individuals are more or less likely to function optimally. Moreover, by viewing the basic psychological needs associated with the self as the energetic basis for identity construction, it becomes clear that processes of need satisfaction (a) help to elucidate whether and to what extent people will make use of effective or immature identity strategies and (b) provide more insight into the conditions that influence whether particular identity construction strategies are adaptive or maladaptive.

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Abstract

In this chapter, I review the literature on motivated identity construction, drawing together insights and evidence from diverse theoretical perspectives, and I propose the foundations of an integrative model. Evidence suggests that people are motivated not only to see themselves in a positive light (the self-esteem motive), but also to believe that their identities are continuous over time despite significant life changes (the continuity motive), that they are distinguished from other people (the distinctiveness motive), that their lives are meaningful (the meaning motive), that they are competent and capable of influencing their environments (the efficacy motive), and that they are included and accepted within their social contexts (the belonging motive). Each of these motives has a theoretical basis for universality, but different cultures may develop different ways of satisfying them, so that the same underlying motives may have very different consequences in different cultural contexts. People are not necessarily aware of their identity motives, and there is often little or no correlation between people's self-reported motives and the results of more implicit measures. Paying attention to the multiplicity of identity motives will potentially enrich applications of identity theories in virtually any domain.

Since identity first became a topic for social scientific enquiry around the beginning of the twentieth century (e.g., Cooley, 1902; James, 1892), a significant focus of theory and research

has been to look at the ways in which individuals and groups actively construct and maintain their images of themselves (e.g., Bernstein, 2005; Cerulo, 1997; Giddens, 1991; Gregg, Sedikides, & Gebauer, Chapter 14, this volume; Spears, Chapter 9, this volume). People utilize a huge variety of strategies to claim or defend particular aspects of their identities: they take credit for their successes and avoid blame for their failures,

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buy consumer goods that symbolize their desired identities, participate in risky health behaviors that they expect will make them more acceptable to others, choose relationship partners who see them as they see themselves, aggress against those who have evaluated them negatively, treat members of their own groups more favorably than members of other groups, and participate in wars or even acts of genocide (e.g., Abrams & Hogg, 1988; Baumeister, Smart, & Boden, 1996; Braun & Wicklund, 1989; Bushman & Baumeister, 1998; Campbell & Sedikides, 1999; Leary, Tchividjian, & Kraxberger, 1994; Swann, 1987).

However, theories are often surprisingly vague or inconsistent about what exactly it is that people are trying to construct, maintain, or defend when they do all these things. In other words, what are the key properties of a satisfactory identity? Some theories assume that identity processes are largely guided by the need to develop, maintain, and enhance a sense of self-esteem (see Gregg et al., Chapter 14, this volume; Heppner & Kernis, Chapter 15, this volume). However, it is increasingly argued that self-esteem is not the whole story. Other psychological motives or needs may also shape how we see ourselves, affecting our thoughts, feelings, and actions (e.g., Abrams & Hogg, 1988; Aharpour & Brown, 2002; Breakwell, 1987; Snyder & Fromkin, 1980; S.E. Taylor, Neter & Wayment, 1995). Unfortunately, the literature on these motives is very fragmented: a bewildering variety of motivational constructs have been proposed by theorists focusing on different aspects of identity and working in different applied domains, with little attempt to integrate these ideas or to test them against each other. In this chapter, I draw together evidence from a number of these perspectives and I propose the foundations of an integrative model of motivated identity construction. In particular, I review theoretical arguments and evidence suggesting that people are motivated to construct identities characterized by feelings of self-esteem, continuity, distinctiveness, meaning, efficacy, and belonging.

Identity as a Personal and Social Construction

The concept of *identity* may be defined in many ways (see Vignoles, Schwartz, & Luyckx, Chapter 1, this volume). Here, I use the term to refer to *all aspects of the image of oneself—as represented in cognition, emotion, and discourse*. In the following paragraphs I will unpack several implications of this definition of identity.

First, the contents of identity can be very broad, extending far beyond the physical limits of the person. As proposed by James (1892), “*In its widest possible sense, [. . .] a man’s Me is the sum total of all that he CAN call his, not only his body and his psychic powers, but his clothes and his house, his wife and children, his ancestors and friends, his reputation and works, his lands and horses, and yacht and bank account*” (p. 177). Research has corroborated this view, showing that people often treat as “part of themselves” not only significant others—partners, family members, and close friends, as well as members of their social groups and categories—but also material possessions, places, and even the brands they use (Aron, Aron, Tudor, & Nelson, 1991; Droseltis & Vignoles, 2010; Tropp & Wright, 2001; Dittmar, Chapter 31, this volume).

Second, according to this definition, identity is not an “objective truth” to be discovered (cf. Waterman, Chapter 16, this volume); it is an idea—or rather a set of ideas—that people construct and reconstruct actively throughout the life span, involving a complex interplay of cognitive, affective, and communication processes, within particular local contexts as well as a wider historical and cultural context (see Bamberg, De Fina, & Schiffrin, Chapter 8, this volume; Berzonsky, Chapter 3, this volume; Burkitt, Chapter 12, this volume; Serpe & Stryker, Chapter 10, this volume; Smith, Chapter 11, this volume). Thus, aspects of identity are not fixed or predetermined: there is always the potential for change, and it is always possible that things could have been different. But this is not to say that the meanings

that people give to themselves are somehow arbitrary or unimportant, nor that they are necessarily unstable.

Opponents of a constructionist perspective sometimes portray this as meaning that people start their lives with a blank slate for an identity, with the implication that the contents of the resulting identity would therefore be mainly arbitrary or even accidental. Of course, in a purely cognitive sense, the “blank slate” theory seems likely to be true—as far as we can tell, nobody is born with a pre-formed self-concept. Yet, many of the building blocks for constructing identity are present at birth—not just the genetic dispositions of the individual, but a huge amount of social and cultural resources provided by parents, friends, relatives, and the wider social and historical context. Indeed, the social processes of constructing an identity begin long before birth, as parents, friends, and relatives begin choosing names, imagining what the child will be like, and so on—drawing on locally and culturally available representations of the typical characteristics of a person of this gender, family, class, ethnicity, and nationality. Thus, even to the extent that the private self-concept is drawn on a blank slate, every individual starts with a particular set of chalks to draw with, and these are very far from random.

Nor does a constructionist perspective mean that the contents of identity are trivial or unimportant. On the contrary, people go to all sorts of lengths to maintain and defend the identities they have constructed, so that the potential for change and variation is often not very apparent. To defend particular aspects of their identities, people willingly get involved in all sorts of highly concrete and consequential actions, including risking or sacrificing their own lives, as well as taking the lives of others (e.g., Baumeister et al., 1996; Leary et al., 1994; Schwartz, Dunkel, & Waterman, 2009). Thus, identities themselves may be constructed rather than “real,” but the psychological processes and social actions by which people construct, maintain, and defend them are absolutely real, as are their consequences.

The Concept and Measurement of Identity Motives

If people are constantly striving to construct, maintain, and defend a satisfactory sense of identity, and if these strivings have such major consequences—sometimes even a matter of life and death—then it seems crucial to understand which forms of identity are more “satisfactory” and which are less so. Is the preference for one construction of identity over another based purely on the idiosyncrasies of particular individual or cultural worldviews, or is it possible to identify a more general set of principles that make some forms of identity preferable over others?

Theorists have proposed that identity construction is guided by various general principles, which seem to have motivational or need-like properties (e.g., Breakwell, 1986; Brewer, 1991; Chandler, Lalonde, Sokol, & Hallett, 2003; Hogg, 2007; Sedikides & Strube, 1997). Although the terminology used differs across perspectives, I will refer to these principles here as *identity motives*. Identity motives are defined as *tendencies toward certain identity states and away from others, which guide the processes of identity definition and enactment* (Vignoles, Regalia, Manzi, Golledge, & Scabini, 2006). Unlike physiological needs such as hunger, identity motives are not necessarily biologically hardwired—they might equally have originated as cultural adaptations to pervasive human concerns about social organization and/or the meaning of existence. Still, identity motives are expected to function similarly to physiological needs, in at least three ways:

- (1) that motive satisfaction will typically have positive implications, whereas frustration will typically have negative implications for psychological well-being;
- (2) that people will typically desire and strive for forms of identity that satisfy these motives, whereas they will typically dislike and try to avoid those that frustrate them; and
- (3) that temporary or chronic situations that elicit frustration of these motives will typically lead to intensified strivings to satisfy them.

Identity Motives and Basic Human Needs

Some theorists have argued that identity processes evolved to serve more general or basic human needs, including personal survival (e.g., Sedikides & Skowronski, 2000), avoiding uncertainty (e.g., Hogg, 2007), suppressing fears about mortality (e.g., Pyszczynski, Greenberg, Solomon, Arndt, & Schimel, 2004), and maintaining social relationships (e.g., Leary, 2005; Ryan & Deci, 2003). Without disagreeing with any of these arguments, it seems important to note that the concept of identity motives here is not simply equated with basic needs. In particular, none of the needs described above is exclusively relevant to identity processes: identity is just one of many domains of psychological functioning that may be influenced by basic needs, and—at least in some of these perspectives—identity dynamics are not seen as a main motivating influence on behavior. In contrast, the concept of identity motives entails that identity dynamics have a direct, causal role in motivating behavior. Whereas basic needs push for certain ways of acting, which may have some consequent impact on identity and well-being, identity motives push for certain ways of *seeing oneself*, which may thus necessitate engaging in certain actions.

Nevertheless, in principle, the constructs of basic needs and identity motives are not mutually exclusive—in fact, the two constructs are complementary. At a simple level, it is easy to imagine that people are driven by basic needs as well as by identity motives. However, more crucially, as I will discuss below, each of the identity motives reviewed in this chapter is likely to have come into being because it has some adaptive function in satisfying one or more basic needs. For example, having a sense of positive self-esteem may be beneficial in suppressing fears about mortality (Pyszczynski et al., 2004), and having a distinctive and meaningful sense of identity may be especially important for reducing uncertainty (Hogg, 2007).

Detecting the Operation of Identity Motives

Notably, it is likely that people often will be unaware of their identity motives, for several reasons. Many identity maintenance strategies involve biased thinking or forms of self-deception (see Gregg et al., Chapter 14, this volume), and so these strategies may only be successful in protecting a desired self-image to the extent that people remain unaware of the motives underlying them: if I were aware that I am only attributing my exam failure to bad luck rather than poor preparation in order to protect my self-esteem, then it would be harder to believe in such an attribution and thus my self-esteem would not be protected. Moreover, even without engaging in self-deception, people may be unaware of their identity motives simply because they operate at a higher level of abstraction than the level at which people focus their everyday concerns (see Carver & Scheier, 1982): my underlying motive to feel competent might be personally instantiated in a set of more specific and concrete goals—getting a new paper accepted for publication, improving my teaching ratings, or throwing a good birthday party for my son—and I am likely to focus my attention more on these specific, personalized goals than on the relatively abstract, generic motives which underlie them. Furthermore, to the extent that most people, most of the time, are relatively adept at satisfying these motives automatically and without the need for reflection, identity motives may quite rarely come into conscious awareness—generally functioning “below-radar” except in situations when they are frustrated. Thus, even if identity motives are not necessarily inaccessible to consciousness, people often may be unaware of them.

This raises an important issue for empirical research into identity motives, as it suggests that we cannot take people’s self-reports of their identity motives at face value. Someone who claims not to be concerned about self-esteem may be saying this to protect their self-esteem, and someone who claims to enjoy being unique and different from others may be saying this to conform with the norms of an individualist

culture (e.g., Jetten, Postmes, & McAuliffe, 2002; Salvatore & Prentice, 2011). Nevertheless, the presence of identity motives can be inferred from their predictable effects on identity processes and structures, which reflect the three characteristic functions of identity motives listed earlier.

A first line of evidence comes from studies investigating the relationship between motive satisfaction and subjective well-being. This relationship can be explored on a number of levels. For example, studies into individual differences show that people with higher self-esteem tend to report greater life-satisfaction and positive emotions (reviewed by Diener, Oishi, & Lucas, 2003). Moreover, the same relationship can also be observed when looking at fluctuation over time within individuals: on days when an individual's self-esteem is higher, her/his subjective well-being is also typically higher (see Heppner & Kernis, Chapter 15, this volume).

A second line of evidence involves the documentation of directional biases in how people process information about themselves and others. People often selectively attribute their successes to internal factors and their failures to external factors (Zuckerman, 1979). Moreover, across a wide variety of evaluative dimensions, a majority of people believe they are "better than average," which would be a mathematical impossibility (Alicke, Klotz, Breitenbecher, Yurak, & Vredenburg, 1995), and when they learn about these motivational biases most people believe that they personally are "less biased than average" (Pronin, Gilovich, & Ross, 2004). Thus, the self-system has been likened to a totalitarian political regime, fabricating and revising personal history (Greenwald, 1980). Perhaps more benignly, people also tend to see as most important and self-defining—and enact most to others—those parts of their identities that best satisfy their identity motives, whereas they tend to marginalize those parts of their identities that frustrate their identity motives (Vignoles et al., 2006).

A third line of evidence comes from studies into the effects of threatening or affirming aspects of the self-concept. Threats to individual and group identities have been shown to result in a variety of responses, including

changes in attributions, group identification, self-stereotyping, social attitudes, prejudice, and even violence (Baumeister et al., 1996; Ethier & Deaux, 1994; Fein & Spencer, 1997; Pickett, Bonner, & Coleman, 2002). However, many of these outcomes are avoidable if people are given the opportunity to cope with the threat by affirming or enhancing other aspects of the self-image (Sherman & Cohen, 2006).

Key Theoretical Approaches

Claims about the motivational underpinnings of identity processes have evolved more or less independently within separate bodies of existing literature. I provide a brief outline of three areas of research that have been especially influential, as well as a fourth perspective that is less well-known.

Self-Evaluation Motives

One body of research has focused on the cognitive processes by which people evaluate themselves, in response to positive and negative information (reviewed by Gregg et al., Chapter 14, this volume). Research has suggested the existence of up to four distinct motives influencing self-evaluation. Focusing on social comparison processes, S. E. Taylor and colleagues (1995) argued that self-evaluation is guided at different times by motives for *self-enhancement* (aiming for positive current self-views), *self-assessment* (aiming for accurate self-views), *self-verification* (aiming for stable or consistent self-views), and *self-improvement* (aiming for growth, or for positive future self-views). Nevertheless, several influential attempts have been made to reduce this list to a smaller number: for example, Gregg et al. (Chapter 14, this volume) argue for just two overarching motives, self-enhancement and self-assessment, while Sedikides and Strube (1997) proposed that all four motives directly or indirectly serve the motive for self-esteem—and thus self-enhancement is

the single dominant motive for self-evaluation processes.

Without going into the details of all the findings and arguments, it seems that self-enhancement gives way to accurate self-assessment only rarely, except in situations where there is some perceived possibility of self-improvement (e.g., Dauenheimer, Stahlberg, Spreeman, & Sedikides, 2002; J. D. Green, Pinter, & Sedikides, 2005; S. E. Taylor et al., 1995); thus, self-assessment arguably might be viewed as a “first stage” in the self-improvement process, rather than as a separate motive in its own right. However, self-improvement serves a common purpose with self-enhancement—namely increasing the positivity of self-views, whether now or in the future—in fact, one can imagine that I might enhance my self-esteem in the present by thinking that I will improve myself in the future, even if I will never actually take the behavioral steps needed to make the improvement happen! Thus, both self-assessment and self-improvement arguably can be viewed as indirect routes to self-enhancement (Sedikides & Strube, 1997).

A more significant challenge to the proposed supremacy of self-enhancement seems to come from the self-verification motive, as this can lead those with low existing self-esteem to pay more attention, or give more credence, to negative than to positive information when they evaluate themselves (e.g., Swann, Griffin, Predmore, & Gaines, 1987). Thus, it seems that people will sometimes sacrifice potential gains in self-esteem in the interest of maintaining self-consistency (but see Gregg et al., Chapter 14, this volume). Even so, to the extent that most people most of the time tend to see themselves moderately positively—at least in Western cultures—this motive will more often lead to the verification of positive than of negative self-views.

Thus, it seems likely that the most prevalent motivational influence on self-evaluation processes is the motive for self-esteem. Yet, perhaps this is not especially surprising, given that the focus of the self-evaluation literature is on processes of self-evaluation, and not on identity construction more generally. Indeed, studies

focusing on a wider range of identity processes and outcomes provide evidence that appears to support a wider range of identity motives.

Social Identity Motives

Another body of literature focuses on group identities and intergroup relations (reviewed by Spears, Chapter 9, this volume). Although motivation was not a primary concern of the original theorists, social identity theory makes an explicit assumption that “individuals strive to maintain or enhance their self-esteem” (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, p. 40). Abrams and Hogg (1988) famously argued that social identity theory contained an implicit “self-esteem hypothesis” involving two corollaries: (1) that “successful intergroup discrimination will enhance social identity, and hence self-esteem” and (2) that “low or threatened self-esteem will promote intergroup discrimination because of the ‘need’ for positive self-esteem” (p. 320; but see Turner & Onorato, 1999). However, research has yielded inconsistent results, partly owing to confusion about the measurement of specific aspects of self-esteem (Rubin & Hewstone, 1998).

Subsequent theorists have proposed various motivational extensions of social identity theory. One line of thinking is that group identity processes are often directed toward creating meaningful identities (e.g., Hogg, 2007; B. Simon, 2004; Spears, Jetten, Scheepers, & Cihangir, 2009). Spears et al. (2009) present a series of studies focusing on the process of creating a new group: participants typically discriminated against members of another group only when the identity of their own group was portrayed as meaningless, suggesting that they were seeking to differentiate their group from the other group in order to construct meaningful group identities. Along similar lines, uncertainty-identity theory (Hogg, 2007) proposes that many aspects of group processes and intergroup relations are driven by a need to reduce subjective uncertainty—which can be satisfied by constructing a meaningful identity. Supporting this theory, people typically show heightened

in-group identification and intergroup discrimination under conditions where meanings of the self-concept and the social context are unclear (e.g., Grieve & Hogg, 1999; Mullin & Hogg, 1999). In particular, uncertainty motivates identification with those groups that provide a clearly defined meaning to the identities of their members (e.g., Hogg, Sherman, Dierselhuis, Maitner & Moffitt, 2007; see also Schwartz et al., 2009).

Another line of thinking is that social identity processes are driven mainly by an interplay of motives for *distinctiveness* and for *belonging* (Brewer, 1991; Hornsey & Jetten, 2004). Although these motives are often seen as acting in opposition, one way of resolving this is through group membership. Optimal distinctiveness theory (ODT: Brewer, 1991) proposes that the belonging need can be met through inclusion in groups, and the distinctiveness need through differentiating one's group from other groups. Pickett, Silver, and Brewer (2002) found that participants increased identification with smaller (i.e., more distinctive) groups when their sense of distinctiveness had been threatened, and with larger (i.e., more inclusive) groups when their sense of belonging had been threatened. Moreover, people defend the boundaries of their groups—by discriminating both against members of other groups and against deviant members of their own groups—especially when group distinctiveness is threatened (Hornsey & Hogg, 2000; Jetten, Spears, & Manstead, 1997) or when their own inclusion in the group is not assured (Maass, Cadinu, Guarnieri, & Grasselli, 2003; Schmitt & Branscombe, 2001).

Thus, based on the research to date, it seems plausible that social identity processes may serve a number of motives—for self-esteem, for meaning, for distinctiveness, and for belonging. Crucially, evidence suggests that both uncertainty reduction and optimal distinctiveness strivings occur independently of—or even at the expense of—self-esteem: in some circumstances, people will sacrifice self-esteem in order to achieve an identity that is distinctive or meaningful (Brewer, Manzi, & Shaw, 1993; Hogg & Svensson, 2006, as cited by Hogg, 2007; Reid & Hogg, 2005). Nevertheless, the interplay of these four motives

as they influence social identity processes in different contexts remains to be investigated in greater depth.

Self-Determination Theory and “Basic Needs”

An increasingly influential perspective in personality psychology is self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Although originally conceived as a theory of behavior, not a theory of self, this perspective has been extended to make predictions about identity processes (Ryan & Deci, 2003; Soenens & Vansteenkiste, Chapter 17, this volume). The theory proposes three “basic needs,” understood to be common to all humans: people need to feel that their actions are not coerced (the need for *autonomy*), that they are capable (the need for *competence*), and that they are connected to others (the need for *relatedness*). Satisfaction of these needs has been shown to predict individual differences in well-being, as well as within-person variation in well-being over time (e.g., Reis, Sheldon, Gable, Roscoe, & Ryan, 2000). Behaviors or activities that fulfill these needs are typically experienced as especially rewarding or satisfying, and thus people feel especially motivated to continue them (e.g., Patrick, Knee, Canevello, & Lonsbary, 2007).

Over time, it seems likely that such patterns of repeated and rewarding behavior will come to be “internalized” and integrated into an individual's sense of self. Thus, basic needs are theorized to have an indirect influence on identity formation. However, research into the internalization process has tended to focus on people's thoughts and feelings about their behaviors, rather than focusing on identity per se (reviewed by Ryan & Deci, 2003; Soenens & Vansteenkiste, Chapter 17, this volume). Thus, self-determination researchers have yet to provide empirical evidence to support fully their theoretical account of the influence of basic needs on identity formation. Moreover, the theory seems most relevant to those aspects of identity that are closely linked to the performance of particular behaviors—that is, role identities, such as relationships and occupations.

It is less clear whether similar predictions could be derived regarding other kinds of identity content that are not based on behavior, such as body image or nationality.

Only one study, to my knowledge, has directly tested the relation between the three basic needs and processes of identity formation. Luyckx, Vansteenkiste, Goossens, and Duriez (2009) found that individual differences in “total need satisfaction” (a composite measure of feelings of autonomy, competence, and relatedness) predicted subsequent engagement in several processes of identity formation—especially the process of “identification with commitment” (see Luyckx, Schwartz, Goossens, Beyers, & Missotten, Chapter 4, this volume). In further analyses, where satisfaction of each of the three needs was measured separately, feelings of competence and relatedness, but not autonomy, contributed uniquely to predicting identification with commitment (Koen Luyckx, personal communication, January, 2010). This shows that need satisfaction can facilitate identity construction, but the study does not test whether the three basic needs *guide* identity construction in the manner of identity motives—in the sense that people would be more likely to explore and commit to those forms of identity that promise or provide greater need satisfaction.

I should reiterate that the concept of basic needs underlying self-determination theory differs from the construct of identity motives. Ryan and Deci (2003) portray identity mainly as an outcome of the process of need satisfaction, but not as a desirable end in itself. Although they acknowledge that people sometimes strive to maintain or enhance their identities, they view this as a maladaptive response to the frustration of one or more basic needs. In contrast, theories of identity motives view identity maintenance and enhancement as universal and largely inevitable processes. Admittedly, people’s strategies for maintaining their identities can sometimes have negative repercussions for themselves and for those around them—as noted at the beginning of this chapter—but they can also be beneficial. For example, enhancing self-esteem can give

a person the confidence and optimism to overcome obstacles and achieve his or her goals (S. E. Taylor & Brown, 1988). Thus, rather than try to avoid such identity-driven processes, perhaps positive outcomes can be sought more effectively by trying to channel people toward satisfying their identity motives in adaptive ways, rather than in damaging ways.

Identity Process Theory

My own perspective on identity motives owes an especially significant debt to *identity process theory*, which was originally developed by Breakwell (1986, 1993) as a theoretical framework for her research into identity threat and coping. According to this theory, identity—which encompasses both personal and social aspects—is the dynamic outcome of cognitive processes occurring over time within particular (and changing) social, cultural, and historical contexts. Crucially, the operation of these processes is understood to be guided by *identity principles*, which refer to the motivational basis of identity. Like most identity theories, identity process theory includes a self-esteem principle, but it does not suggest that identity processes are motivated solely to achieve self-esteem. In her original formulation of the theory, Breakwell (1986) listed three principles, *self-esteem*, *distinctiveness*, and *continuity*; subsequently an *efficacy* principle was added (Breakwell, 1993).

According to Breakwell (1986), an identity threat exists when the identity processes are unable to comply with the identity principles—in other words, in any situation where feelings of self-esteem, distinctiveness, continuity, and/or efficacy are undermined or are in some way insecure. Situations of threat are understood to lead to the adoption of *coping strategies*, defined as anything that the individual does in order to respond to an identity threat. Strategies may be on one of three levels: intra-psychic strategies, involving revising the identity structure; interpersonal coping strategies, involving changing one’s relationships with others; and intergroup coping strategies, involving group-level behavior. The

latter include the strategies of social mobility, social competition, and social creativity theorized within social identity theory as responses to the threat posed by membership in disadvantaged groups (see Spears, Chapter 9, this volume). Applications of the theory have addressed an extremely wide range of types of identity threat, including conflicts among religious, ethnic, and sexual identities (Jaspal & Cinnirella, 2010), the forced relocation of a mining community (Speller, Lyons & Twigger-Ross, 2002), and the political changes associated with European integration (Breakwell, 1996).

Situations of identity threat provide a useful context for studying the processes shaping identity, because they offer empirical access to identity change (Deaux, 1993), but the theory implies that identity principles operate at all times, not only under conditions of threat. Vignoles, Chrysochoou, and Breakwell (2002) tested this claim in a study of identity among parish priests. Specifically, we used identity motives to predict the organization of multiple aspects of identity into subjective identity structures. Supporting a self-esteem model, the priests perceived those identity aspects with which they associated the greatest sense of self-esteem as especially central to their identities. However, we then added ratings of distinctiveness, continuity, and efficacy as further predictors of perceived centrality. Supporting identity process theory, this model was a statistically significant improvement over the self-esteem model, and all four motives contributed significantly and uniquely to the prediction of subjective identity structures.

Theoretically, the *processes* shaping identity are understood to be universal, biologically grounded, and content-free, but Breakwell (1987) has described the *principles* guiding these processes as “reifications of what society regards as acceptable endstates for identity” (p. 107), rather than essential or universal principles. Thus, she has emphasized that the principles listed above may not be relevant in every culture or historical epoch, nor is it likely that they form an exhaustive list of principles operating within our own culture. This definition of identity principles as societal values internalized by the individual has

encouraged several researchers to propose additional identity principles that they see as especially relevant to the populations and research questions they are studying. For example, in their studies of identity among sexual minorities, Markowe (1996) has argued for two further principles, a “need for authenticity and integrity” and a “need for affiliation,” and Jaspal and Cinnirella (2010) have suggested adding a “coherence” principle to the theory (see also Vignoles et al., 2002).

Arguably, this flexibility of the theory is a strength, but it also poses problems for both its parsimony and coherence. When applying the theory to a new cultural setting, it is theoretically conceivable that a completely different set of identity principles may apply. Moreover, by proposing that identity principles are dependent on “social value,” the logic of claiming that identity processes are guided by more than just self-esteem concerns is arguably undermined. Given that people’s self-esteem is often thought to be based on the extent to which they believe they are living up to what is valued within their immediate social and wider cultural context (e.g., Leary, 2005; Pyszczynski et al., 2004; Sedikides, Gaertner, & Toguchi, 2003), continuity, distinctiveness, and efficacy could be reduced theoretically to the status of “facets” of self-esteem, in the context of a society where these qualities happen to be valued.

Toward an Integrated Model of Identity Motives

Over the past few years, I have been developing an integrated theoretical model of motivational influences on identity construction, maintenance, and defense. The model extends identity process theory by including motivational constructs derived from other perspectives, but it departs from identity process theory in providing a different account of the nature, origins, and cultural variability of identity motives. The theory is currently a “work in progress,” but I refer to it here as *motivated identity construction theory*.

Motivated identity construction theory starts from the premise that identity is both a personal and a social construction, as outlined at the start of this chapter. Following Reicher (2000), I consider identity as the outcome of complementary processes of *identity definition* and *identity enactment*. People do not just *define* their identities on a private, cognitive level, they also *enact* them for both real and imagined audiences, and this social process of claiming a certain kind of identity—and having one's claims recognized or not—is a central part of identity construction (see also Bem, 1972; Marková, 1987; Ryan & Deci, 2003; Swann, 1987; Licata, Sanchez-Mazas, & Green, Chapter 38, this volume; Serpe & Stryker, Chapter 10, this volume). These processes occur within a particular intersection of local and wider contexts, and the prevailing ways of thinking and talking within these contexts make certain identity categories available or desirable, and others less so. Nevertheless, people may challenge the range of identity categories available or question the meanings given to them (e.g., Kitzinger & Wilkinson, 1995).

Although the content of identity is drawn largely from the social environment, I argue that any form of identity must satisfy certain requirements in order to be adaptive or useful. These requirements take on a motivational character, guiding the processes of identity construction and maintenance and influencing psychological well-being. Specifically, the theory predicts that people in all societies will be motivated not only to see themselves in a positive light (the *self-esteem motive*), but also to believe that their identities are continuous over time despite significant life changes (the *continuity motive*), that they are distinguished from other people (the *distinctiveness motive*), that their lives are meaningful (the *meaning motive*), that they are competent and capable of influencing their environments (the *efficacy motive*), and that they are included and accepted by others (the *belonging motive*). All six motives are predicted to be universal; however, different societies may evolve different ways of satisfying each motive, leading to considerable cross-cultural variation in the outcomes of identity processes.

Crucially, this common set of identity motives is also understood to apply across different levels and domains of identity. Thus, there is no need to create separate identity theories, or posit different sets of identity motives, in order to theorize about individual, relational, or group identity processes, to understand people's identification with possessions or places, or to study the role of identity in such diverse domains as education, family processes, consumer behavior, societal cohesion, or international relations.

The Self-Esteem Motive

As an illustration, consider the motive for *self-esteem*. This motive is involved in an enormous range of theories and empirical findings (for reviews, see Gregg et al., Chapter 14, this volume; Heppner & Kernis, Chapter 15, this volume). As discussed earlier, people show a wide range of cognitive biases that maintain and enhance self-esteem, and these biases are typically intensified in situations when self-esteem is undermined or insecure. People typically desire possible future identities that promise greater self-esteem, whereas they fear those that promise lower self-esteem (Vignoles, Manzi, Regalia, Jemmolo, & Scabini, 2008), and they perceive as especially self-defining those aspects of their current identities that provide greater self-esteem (Vignoles et al., 2006). Moreover, a person's level of self-esteem appears to have a long-term causal influence on psychological well-being and psychosocial adaptation (e.g., Orth, Robins, & Roberts, 2008; Trzesniewski et al., 2006).

Self-esteem strivings have also been implicated theoretically in intergroup relations (Abrams & Hogg, 1988; but see Spears, Chapter 9, this volume). Various theorists have argued for the importance of distinguishing between personal self-esteem—one's self-worth as an individual—and collective self-esteem—the perceived worth of one's group—when looking at intergroup relations (e.g., Rubin & Hewstone, 1998). However, perhaps surprisingly, it turns out that personal self-esteem is a stronger predictor than collective self-esteem of

bias against other groups (Aberson, Healy, & Romero, 2000), and threats to *individual* self-worth lead to increased discrimination against members of other groups (Fein & Spencer, 1997). Hence, it seems appropriate to view personal and social identity processes as influenced by a common motive for self-esteem, rather than by separate “individual-level” and “group-level” motives.

Theoretically, there are reasons to view this motive as universally adaptive, helping people to avoid anxiety and to persevere despite setbacks (Pyszczynski et al., 2004; Sedikides & Skowronski, 2000; see Gregg et al., Chapter 14, this volume). However, cross-cultural researchers have questioned its generality, noting that many of the classic research findings of self-esteem maintenance and enhancement processes are not replicated when Western studies are transposed to non-Western cultures (Heine, Lehmann, Markus, & Kitayama, 1999). Subsequent research has suggested a more nuanced view. It now seems that people in non-Western cultural contexts do strive for positive self-regard, but that they may use different strategies (Heine et al., 2001; Muramoto, 2003) and emphasize different value dimensions (Brown & Kobayashi, 2002; Sedikides et al., 2003) in doing so. Indeed, members of collectivist cultures may derive positive self-regard by portraying themselves in a modest light: ironically, this suggests that acts of self-criticism may actually protect rather than undermine self-esteem (Kurman, 2003). Thus, seemingly very different cognitions and behaviors may be manifestations of the same underlying motive as it plays out in different cultural contexts.

Recently, Vignoles et al. (2011) examined the bases of self-esteem among late adolescents across 19 nations. In more individualistic nations, participants derived self-esteem to a greater extent from those aspects of identity that provided greater feelings of autonomy (or control over one’s own life), whereas in more collectivist nations, they derived self-esteem to a greater extent from aspects of identity that related more to doing one’s duty. In other words, participants derived self-esteem from those aspects of their identity that were most consistent with cultural

value priorities. Interestingly, these effects were found while controlling statistically for the effects of individuals’ personal value priorities. Thus, it seems that the bases of self-esteem are defined collectively, reflecting what is valued normatively within a cultural group, rather than being constructed individually based on one’s personal values.

Motivational Bases of Identity Definition

Although the motive for self-esteem seems well supported by theoretical arguments and by empirical research, motivated identity construction theory proposes that it is not the only motivational influence on identity processes, nor is it necessarily the most important one. Arguably, more fundamental to identity processes than the need for esteem, although perhaps less visible under normal circumstances, are the identity motives for *continuity*, *distinctiveness*, and *subjective meaning*, each of which plays a crucial role in processes of identity definition. Two further motives, for *efficacy* and *belonging*, are theorized to play an especially strong role in processes of identity enactment, and I will discuss these further on.

Continuity: The *continuity motive* refers to the need to feel a sense of connection between one’s past, present, and future identities. The sense of temporal–spatial continuity is an extremely important facet of identity (Apter, 1983; Codol, 1981; Côté, 2009; James, 1892). Indeed, Erikson (1968) defined identity itself as “a *subjective sense of an invigorating sameness and continuity*” (p. 19). Philosophers see the establishment of continuity over time as a defining property of the identities of objects and people (e.g., C. Taylor, 1989; Wiggins, 2001). More pragmatically, if people were not perceived as connected in any way to their past and future selves, they could not be held accountable for their past actions, nor could they form future goals—to the obvious detriment of both individual functioning and social coordination (Chandler et al., 2003). Thus, continuity of identity is adaptive for individuals and for social groupings.

Yet, in the identities of persons and of groups, continuity is not a “given”—it has to be established against a backdrop of constant change. Individuals experience both physical and psychological changes throughout their lives. All human social groupings are also in an endless state of change and flux: members enter and leave, through birth, death, and social mobility; and histories of many groups are characterized by recurring debates and changes in the boundaries and meanings of group identity. Thus, continuity cannot be equated with “stability.” Continuity is not the absence of change, but that there is some conceptual thread connecting past, present, and future time-slices of identity, *despite* the occurrence of change (Breakwell, 1987).

Empirical evidence suggests that the need for continuity does indeed function as an identity motive. People typically perceive as especially central and self-defining those parts of their identities with which they associate a greater sense of self-continuity (Vignoles et al., 2006) and they desire possible future selves that promise to maintain self-continuity, whereas they fear those that threaten to undermine it (Vignoles et al., 2008). People pay more attention to information that is consistent with their existing self-conceptions, recall it better, and interpret it as more reliable (Shrauger, 1975), and they often seek to occupy and to create social contexts that provide self-confirming feedback (Swann, 1987). Conversely, the lack of subjective continuity has been associated with various indicators of psychological distress, including negative affect (Rosenberg, 1986), feelings of dissociation (Lampinen, Odegard, & Leding, 2004) and even suicide (Chandler et al., 2003), as well as attempts to increase personal consistency (McGregor, Zanna, Holmes, & Spencer, 2001).

Like self-esteem, a sense of continuity can be constructed in various ways. Chandler and colleagues (2003) have explored the strategies used by adolescents to assert their continuity over time, when confronted with the fact that they have changed. They concluded that these strategies become increasingly sophisticated with age, but they also distinguished between two broad approaches to constructing continuity,

termed *essentialist* and *narrativist*. The essentialist approach is based on the belief in some stable and enduring, essential “core” of identity; thus, continuity is maintained by denying or trivializing change (see Swann, 1987). In the *narrativist* approach, the sense of continuity is based on establishing a coherent storyline in order to connect together different parts of one’s life; in this way, even major changes can be accommodated into a coherent story using narrative devices such as “turning points” (see McAdams, Chapter 5, this volume), or through social procedures such as “rites of passage” (van Gennep, 1908/1977).

Although not traditionally considered within the social identity literature, evidence is starting to emerge for the importance of perceiving continuity in one’s group identities. Forms of group identity continuity predict both group identification (e.g., Sani et al., 2007; Sani, Herrera, & Bowe, 2009) and individual well-being (e.g., Haslam et al., 2008; Sani, Bowe, & Herrera, 2008). Like individual continuity, group continuity appears to have at least two dimensions—one focused on stability over time (maintaining the group’s values and heritage), and the other focused on narrative linkage (connectedness of events in the group’s history; Sani et al., 2007).

Both essentialist and *narrativist* continuity warrants can be viewed as attempts to use logic or reason to justify the existence of a continuing identity despite change. Yet, when they are not explicitly challenged to do so, people may not need to resort to reasoned argument in order to maintain a sense of self-continuity. Vignoles, Sani, and Easterbrook (2010) propose that subjective continuity may be maintained by any process that allows an individual to feel connected or “in touch” with their past and future selves. For example, Sedikides, Wildschut, Routledge, and Arndt (2010) studied the role of nostalgia as a potential source of continuity maintenance. In one study, they showed that priming nostalgic thoughts leads to an increased sense of self-continuity. Moreover, people appear to use nostalgia as a mechanism for reconnecting with their past selves when feelings of self-continuity are insufficient or under threat: in two further studies, they showed that experimentally priming a

sense of discontinuity leads to increased nostalgic thoughts, and that individuals who have experienced more continuity-disrupting life-events tend to report more nostalgic thoughts.

Some evidence suggests that continuity seeking is moderated by culture. Compared to Westerners, members of East Asian cultures are less likely to show consistency across situations in their self-descriptions (e.g., Cousins, 1989; see Smith, Chapter 11, this volume). Tafarodi, Lo, Yamaguchi, Lee, and Katsura (2004) found that East Asian participants placed less subjective importance on a continuous “inner self” than did Canadians. Does this mean that the continuity motive could be limited to those cultural environments where the concept of an essential, inner self is emphasized and valued? In contrast with this position, the theoretical arguments above suggest that self-continuity should be adaptive in *any* cultural environment.

Cross-cultural evidence is currently limited, but it seems that members of different cultural groups may construct self-continuity in different ways, but not necessarily to a different extent. English and Chen (2007) studied cross-situational consistency in self-descriptions among Americans of European and Asian descent. Compared to European Americans, Asian Americans showed significantly more variation across relational contexts, yet *within* each context, they showed a similar level of stability over time. Thus, the lower cross-situational consistency found among East Asians in previous studies may simply reflect a greater attention to context, rather than a lower need for temporal self-continuity in this population. Chandler and colleagues (2003) reported differences in continuity warranting strategies between indigenous Canadian adolescents and Canadian adolescents of European descent. European Canadians were more likely to use essentialist approaches to justify their continuity over time, whereas indigenous Canadians were more likely to use narrative approaches. Further research is needed to examine the range of continuity maintenance strategies that may be used across a wider range of cultures, as well as the cultural beliefs and values that may moderate their use.

Distinctiveness: The distinctiveness motive pushes people to see themselves as distinguished in some way from others (Vignoles, Chrysoschoou, & Breakwell, 2000; for a recent review, see Vignoles, 2009). Many authors have portrayed distinctiveness as a defining property of identity (e.g., Apter, 1983; Codol, 1981; James, 1892). Semiologists teach that the meaning of any concept lies in what distinguishes it from other, related concepts (Saussure, undated, as cited in Culler, 1976). Thus, what it means to someone to be a British person, or a musician, or a Muslim depends in large measure on what they see as distinguishing Britishness from other nationalities, musicians from non-musicians, or Islam from other religions (Vignoles et al., 2000). Beyond its necessity for meaning-making, distinctiveness may also carry survival benefits (for a discussion, see Burris & Rempel, 2004). Moreover, there are likely practical benefits to any social grouping of having an effective way to distinguish among individuals within the group: this creates the possibility for social coordination, whereby group members can play complementary roles toward a common goal, rather than just imitating the behavior of other group members.

These arguments suggest that the motive for distinctiveness will be universal, not for any biological reason, but in the sense that distinctiveness-seeking will be a necessary feature of the human condition. To the extent that human beings are meaning-making and socially organized animals, every society must find a way of distinguishing its members from each other, and individuals must strive to maintain their distinctiveness in order to have a meaningful sense of who they are and to function effectively in society.

Studies have catalogued numerous ways in which people construct and maintain a sense of individual distinctiveness. People typically remember information better if it distinguishes the self from others (Leyens, Yzerbyt, & Rogier, 1997), are most likely to mention their more distinctive attributes when asked to describe themselves (McGuire & Padawer-Singer, 1976), and consider their more distinctive attributes as especially self-defining (Turnbull, Miller, &

McFarland, 1990; Vignoles et al., 2006). When feelings of distinctiveness are threatened or undermined, people report more negative emotions (Fromkin, 1972), are faster to recognize uniqueness-related words as self-descriptive (Markus & Kunda, 1986), evaluate scarce and novel experiences more positively (Fromkin, 1970), distance themselves physically from others (Snyder & Endelman, 1979), and increase their identification with smaller groups (Pickett, Silver, et al., 2002). Developmental studies suggest that the distinction between self and others arises very early in life (Stern, 1985). Adolescents in highly “enmeshed” families—where differentiation between family members is impeded—are especially prone to a variety of psychological and social problems (Barber & Buehler, 1996), and the loss of distinctiveness in some forms of psychosis may be experienced as a “loss of self” (Apter, 1983).

People also use various strategies to preserve the distinctiveness of their group identities. Especially, when group distinctiveness is under threat, they perceive their group in stereotypical terms (van Rijswijk, Haslam, & Ellemers, 2006), and they discriminate against members of the group who deviate from group norms (Marques & Páez, 1994), against perceived impostors who transgress the group’s boundary (Jetten, Summerville, Hornsey, & Mewse, 2005), and against members of other groups (Jetten, Spears, & Postmes, 2004; Ojala & Nesdale, 2004). Conversely, affirming the differences between groups can lead to reduced prejudice (Zárate & Garza, 2002). Spears, Jetten, and Scheepers (2002) have argued that individual and group differentiation are separate motives. However, “trade-offs” between interpersonal and intergroup distinctiveness suggest that these are alternative means of satisfying a single motive. People describe their groups as more diverse, and themselves as less stereotypical of their groups, when the group is larger—thus enhancing individual distinctiveness when less group distinctiveness is available (Brewer, 1993; Brewer & Weber, 1994). Threats to group distinctiveness can lead those who identify less with a group to differentiate themselves as individuals (Spears,

Doosje, & Ellemers, 1997). Conversely, threats to individual distinctiveness can lead to increased identification with distinctive groups and tightening of group boundaries (Pickett, Silver, et al., 2002).

Some theorists have suggested that distinctiveness-seeking is a recent historical development tied to the rise of individualistic values in Western nations (Snyder & Fromkin, 1980), and that the motive for distinctiveness may be weaker or absent among people living in collectivist cultures (Triandis, 1995). Yet, there is little direct evidence for either claim (for a recent review, see Vignoles, 2009). In contrast, Vignoles et al. (2000) proposed that the motive for distinctiveness is universal, but that distinctiveness may be constructed in different ways according to cultural beliefs, values, and norms: namely through difference, separateness, or social position. Western psychologists usually understand distinctiveness in terms of *difference*—distinctiveness in qualities such as abilities, opinions, personality, and appearance. In contrast, *social position* refers to distinctiveness in one’s place within social relationships, including kinship ties, friendships, roles, and social status. *Separateness* refers to distinctiveness in terms of distance from others, encompassing physical and symbolic boundaries, and feelings of privacy, independence, and isolation. Vignoles (2009) proposed that all three sources will be detectable within most or all cultural systems, but that difference and separateness will be emphasized and valued more in individualistic contexts, whereas social position will be emphasized and valued more in collectivist contexts. Recent results from our study of late adolescents in 19 nations support these predictions (Becker et al., 2010). In multilevel analyses, the distinctiveness motive was at least as strong in collectivist nations as in individualist nations. However, distinctiveness was associated more strongly with difference and separateness in more individualist nations and more strongly with social position in more collectivist nations. These effects were found while controlling for individuals’ own individualism–collectivism. Thus, as with

positive self-regard, it seems that the emphasis on different sources of distinctiveness is a collective—and thus genuinely cultural—process, rather than an individual one.

Subjective meaning: Although continuity and distinctiveness may give an identity “meaning” in a technical, semantic sense of the term, having these properties does not ensure that the identity will be experienced as subjectively meaningful. The *meaning motive* refers to the need to find significance or purpose in one’s existence (Baumeister, 1991). Many theorists have portrayed the search for meaning as an essential feature of human nature, proposing that the sense that one’s existence is meaningful is a core component of psychological well-being (Bartlett, 1932; Frankl, 1962; for recent reviews, see Heine, Proulx, & Vohs, 2006; Steger, 2009; van den Bos, 2009; Waterman, Chapter 16, this volume). Heine et al. (2006) argue that meaning-making has adaptive benefits for humans, allowing actions to take on significance beyond their immediate physical context.

Seeing oneself as a meaningful part of a meaningful world may be especially important when people are faced with traumatic or unpredictable events. Achieving a sense of coherence and purpose, rather than seeing the events of one’s life as random and arbitrary, seems essential if one is to avoid descending into paralyzing feelings of anxiety or hopelessness. Hence, it is no surprise that the search for meaning appears to play a crucial role in coping with traumatic and unpredictable events, such as military combat (Harmand, Ashlock, & Miller, 1993), terminal illness (S. E. Taylor, 1983), and bereavement (Golsworthy & Coyle, 1999). Moreover, as reviewed earlier, people seek to identify with groups that have very clearly defined meanings, especially under conditions of subjective uncertainty (see Hogg, 2007).

Research has shown that the perceived presence of meaning in one’s life is associated with various indices of psychological well-being (Steger & Frazier, 2005; Steger, Kawabata, Shimai, & Otake, 2008; Steger, Oishi, & Kashdan, 2009)—although some findings question whether it is perceived meaning that

causes well-being or vice versa (King, Hicks, Krull, & Del Gaiso, 2006). When people’s perceptions of meaning are undermined—for example by pointing out inconsistencies in their lives—they seek to re-affirm meaning, even in unrelated domains (e.g., McGregor & Marigold, 2003; McGregor et al., 2001; Proulx & Heine, 2006).

Heine et al. (2006) point out that people often cope in quite similar ways with various threatening situations, including self-esteem threats, feelings of uncertainty, interpersonal rejection, and mortality salience, and they suggest that all of these can be explained, at least in part, by a common underlying need to construct and maintain a sense of meaning. Moreover, they argue that the construction of meaning logically precedes these other constructs: for example, one cannot evaluate oneself (necessary for self-esteem) if one does not have a meaning system providing value dimensions for this purpose (see Pyszczynski et al., 2004). Nevertheless, Heine and colleagues stop short of arguing that all of these processes are fully reducible to meaning maintenance: “although a desire to maintain meaning cuts across all of these psychological processes there is more to each of these processes than just a motivation for meaning” (2006, p. 102). Consistent with this, my own research into identity motives (described later) suggests that the meaning motive has a strong and pervasive influence on identity definition, but it does not subsume the influence of other motives.

The meaning motive has received very little direct cross-cultural attention. In the only study of which I am aware, Steger et al. (2008) found that the presence of meaning in life was associated with happiness to a similar degree in the USA and in Japan; American participants also reported feeling less happy if they were searching for meaning in their lives, whereas this effect was not found among the Japanese participants. Thus, in keeping with their greater cultural focus on self-improvement (see Heine et al., 2001), Japanese participants’ well-being was not undermined by wanting their lives to be more meaningful than was currently the case.

More generally, it seems likely that the meaning motive will follow a similar pattern to those reviewed earlier: it is hard to imagine a society in which people did not value or strive for a sense of meaning, but it is clear from numerous cross-cultural studies that people in different cultures construct different kinds of meaning for themselves and for the world they live in (Heine et al., 2006). However, it also seems plausible to imagine that some societies may be better adapted than others to fulfill meaning needs. In particular, one might predict that the meaning motive will be aroused especially in societies with looser social structures and norms, where individuals are expected to find their own meanings, compared to those with more rigid social structures and more prescriptive social norms (Côté & Levine, 2002).

Motivational Bases of Identity Enactment

Feelings of continuity, distinctiveness, and meaning may help individuals to define themselves as objects of awareness, but two further motives may be more relevant to the enactment of identities in the world: people need to see themselves as capable of acting on their world (the motive for *efficacy*) and as recognized and accepted by others (the motive for *belonging*). Both of these motives have been described elsewhere as “basic human needs” (e.g., Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Deci & Ryan, 2000). Yet, I argue that they can also be conceptualized as identity motives: that people strive to *see themselves* in these ways, and that these images of oneself, and not just one’s actual levels of competence and social acceptance, have important implications for well-being and for behavior.¹

Efficacy: The motive for *efficacy* pushes for feelings of competence and control. Experiences of efficacy have been theorized as another defining feature of identity—to have a sense of self is to experience oneself not just as an “object” but also as a “subject” or “actor,” capable of influencing one’s environment (Apter, 1983; Codol, 1981). There are obvious adaptive benefits of

being competent and in control in any given situation. However, there may also be important benefits of *seeing* oneself in this way. Self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1997) proposes that beliefs about one’s capability of producing a desired outcome can enhance actual performance, because people with higher self-efficacy beliefs tend to set higher goals for themselves, try harder, and persist more when faced with setbacks. Thus, it is better to be an optimist than a realist.

Experiences of influencing one’s surroundings are thought to be an early and important precursor of the sense of self in infancy (Stern, 1985). Feelings of competence and control are strong predictors of subjective well-being (Reis et al., 2000), satisfaction with life-events (Sheldon, Elliot, Kim, & Kasser, 2001), and security in relationships (La Guardia, Ryan, Couchman & Deci, 2000). In contrast, feelings of helplessness or lack of efficacy have been associated with depression, anorexia, and even cases of sudden, unexplained death (Baard, Deci, & Ryan, 2004; Baumeister, 1991; Seligman, 1975). Self-efficacy beliefs have been associated with reductions in risky behavior among adolescents, as well as better physical health and increased life span (Bandura, 1997; Caprara, Regalia, & Bandura, 2002; Rodin & Langer, 1977).

The studies cited above provide evidence for the adaptive benefits of self-efficacy, showing that existing feelings of self-efficacy can enhance motivation for a range of behaviors. However, self-efficacy theorists have typically paid less attention to the idea that people are motivated to maintain or enhance feelings of self-efficacy, or to defend such feelings when they are undermined or threatened. One exception is a recent paper by Sheldon and Gunz (2009). Extending self-determination theory, they proposed that the three basic needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness would function as motives: that people would increase their efforts to satisfy each need in circumstances when that need was frustrated. In a set of three studies, using cross-sectional, experimental, and longitudinal methods, they found that people reported a heightened desire for competence when feelings of competence were low, and when feelings of either

competence or autonomy had been undermined experimentally.

Further evidence that people regulate their feeling of self-efficacy might be inferred from studies in the self-evaluation literature. Measures and manipulations of perceived competence are frequently used to operationalize theoretical predictions about self-esteem. Studies have shown that people often create illusions of competence and control—overestimating their control over events, treating situations of chance as situations of skill, or underestimating the time it will take them to accomplish desired goals (e.g., Langer, 1975; S. E. Taylor & Brown, 1988). Moreover, one of the most common ways of manipulating self-esteem threat in experimental studies is to engineer failure experiences or give participants negative feedback about their competence using bogus tests of ability or intelligence (reviewed by Leary, Terry, Allen, & Tate, 2009). Typically, it is assumed that this will threaten self-esteem, since competence is an important basis for self-esteem (Gecas & Schwalbe, 1983). Yet, self-liking and self-competence do not always go together (Tafarodi & Swann, 2001), and people vary in the extent to which their self-esteem is contingent on qualities such as intelligence (Hayes, Schimel, & Williams, 2008). Hence, it is often unclear whether the defensive reactions found in these studies should be interpreted as striving to maintain positive self-evaluation or to maintain feelings of efficacy.

Theoretically, the benefits of feeling competent are likely to generalize across cultures. However, there may be differences in what forms of competence are most salient or valued in different cultural contexts. Markus and Kitayama (2003) distinguished between “dis-joint” and “conjoint” forms of agency. They suggested that the former, where agency is seen as located within the individual, may be more prevalent in individualistic cultures, whereas the latter, where agency is seen as arising from the combined and coordinated efforts of multiple individuals, may be more prevalent in collectivist cultures. These differences in the construction of agency were illustrated when comparing American and Japanese media portrayals of

athletic performance, and when American and Japanese students were asked to select information they would wish to see in a media report (Markus, Uchida, Omoregie, Townsend, & Kitayama, 2006).

Belonging: Finally, the *belonging motive* refers to the need to maintain or enhance feelings of closeness to others, or social acceptance, both in interpersonal relationships and within groups. Baumeister and Leary (1995) identified the need to belong as a “fundamental human motivation” (p. 497), whose sphere of influence—like that of efficacy—is not restricted to identity processes (see also Deci & Ryan, 2000). Nevertheless, the belonging motive is a core construct in several theories of identity motivation (Brewer, 1991; Leary, 2005; Snyder & Fromkin, 1980). Indeed, Ryan and Deci (2003) proposed that “the principal function of identity formation is fostering the experience of secure belongingness or *relatedness*” (p. 254).

The evolutionary benefits of social inclusion are obvious. Human beings have evolved as a social species, and are very poorly adapted for survival alone; thus, we exist in a state of “obligatory interdependence” in which the motive for belonging plays an essential and adaptive role (Brewer & Caporael, 2006a, 2006b). Consistent with this, people who are excluded socially typically show a desire for “social reconnection” and initiate strategies toward forming new relationships, although they do not necessarily seek to repair relationships with the people who have excluded them (Maner, DeWall, Baumeister, & Schaller, 2007; Sheldon & Gunz, 2009).

When direct social contact is unavailable, people also maintain *feelings* of belonging through various indirect strategies. Thus, feelings of loneliness or rejection typically lead to a variety of coping strategies, including increased sensitivity and heightened memory for social events (Gardner, Pickett, & Brewer, 2000; Pickett & Gardner, 2005), increased identification with larger/inclusive groups (Knowles & Gardner, 2008; Pickett, Silver, et al., 2002), self-stereotyping (Pickett, Bonner, et al., 2002), overestimating consensus for one’s beliefs (L. Simon et al., 1997), talking or singing to oneself

(Jonason, Webster, & Lindsey, 2008), and using the television for company (Derrick, Gabriel, & Hugenberg, 2009).

The need for belonging is also closely linked to self-esteem dynamics. Sociometer theory (Leary, 2005) proposes that the self-esteem system evolved as a mechanism to help people avoid social rejection. Specifically, it is argued that changes in self-esteem track (or “monitor”) changes in one’s relational value. Thus, a drop in self-esteem signals that one may be at risk of rejection, providing an impetus to make oneself more acceptable to others—and thus the risk of rejection is averted. Leary has reviewed a wealth of research evidence showing that belonging concerns are pervasively reflected in dimensions and processes of self-esteem. Moreover, a recent longitudinal study has shown that self-esteem is predicted prospectively by others’ liking, but that the reverse is not true (Srivastava & Beer, 2005). Leary, Schreindorfer, and Haupt (1995) reinterpreted many supposed effects of low self-esteem, including depression, substance abuse, delinquency, and eating disorders, as reactions to real or imagined rejection by others; and Leary et al. (2009) have noted that many of the threat manipulations used in studies of self-esteem maintenance involve presenting negative feedback to participants in a socially visible manner—thus, self-esteem threat is confounded with the threat of relational devaluation, and results may be open to reinterpretation as showing belonging maintenance. Yet, even if the dynamics of belonging are often experienced psychologically in terms of self-esteem, threats to belonging cannot be compensated by affirming other dimensions of self-esteem, indicating that belonging is a motive in its own right (Knowles, Lucas, Molden, Gardner, & Dean, 2010).

The relationship between motives for belonging and for distinctiveness is especially interesting. Theorists have often viewed these two motives as fundamentally conflicting. Uniqueness theory (Snyder & Fromkin, 1980) proposes that people prefer to be moderately, but not extremely, different from others, because the need for uniqueness (which relates to distinctiveness) is balanced by a desire for similarity

(which relates to belonging). Similarly, optimal distinctiveness theory (Brewer, 1991) proposes that group identity processes are driven by a need for *differentiation* and a need for *inclusion*, understood to act in opposition to each other: “optimal distinctiveness” occurs at a point of equilibrium between the two needs, which will normally be a state of moderate distinctiveness. Thus, both theories claim that humans are in an inevitable state of motivational conflict between these two needs (for similar arguments, see Adams & Marshall, 1996; Bosma & Kunnen, 2001).

However, both theories rely on particular constructions of the two motives that lead to their opposition. Uniqueness theory understands distinctiveness as difference, which is opposed with similarity. Optimal distinctiveness theory understands distinctiveness in terms of group size: the larger the group, the more inclusion; the smaller the group, the more differentiation. But once the two motives are conceptualized more fully, a different picture emerges. Some constructions of distinctiveness and belonging are logically opposed—difference with similarity, separation with closeness, exclusiveness with inclusiveness of groups—but this is by no means inevitable. Distinctiveness in terms of social position actually relies on being embedded within a network of relationships (Vignoles, 2009); acceptance by others can make one feel that one’s differences are recognized (R. J. Green & Werner, 1996). Hornsey and Jetten (2004) review numerous ways in which people use group memberships to satisfy both motives simultaneously.

It is more or less impossible to imagine a culture where people would not have a need for belonging. Triandis (1995) has suggested that the need for belonging may be stronger in collectivist than in individualist cultures; yet, virtually all of the research evidence reviewed above comes from the individualistic cultures of North America and Western Europe, showing that the belonging need is pervasively present in individualist cultures. Indeed, an alternative possibility is that the belonging need might be more strongly aroused in individualist nations, considering that less stable patterns of social relationships may

result in a greater chance of motive frustration (Lo, Helwig, Chen, Ohashi, & Cheng, 2009).

It seems likely that the belonging motive—like others—will have different implications according to the forms of relationship that are most prevalent and most valued in different cultural contexts (Fiske, 2004). For example, Brewer and Yuki (2007) discuss the different meanings of social groups in Western and Eastern cultures. Groups in North America often take the form of social categories, with identification, loyalty, and trust based on perceived similarity to other group members and fit with the category prototype; in contrast, groups in Japan more commonly take the form of social networks, with identification, loyalty, and trust based on perceptions and knowledge of the relational structure, interconnections, and differences among group members (Yuki, 2003; Yuki, Maddux, Brewer, & Takemura, 2005).

Empirical Evidence for Multiple Motives

Motivational Influences on Identity Definition, Enactment, and Affect

Although the theory and evidence seem compelling for each of these motives on its own, relatively few studies have looked at the effects of more than one motive in combination. Yet, it seems important to know whether each of them really contributes *uniquely* to the dynamics of identity construction, or whether a shorter list of motives might be more parsimonious (Gregg et al., Chapter 14, this volume). Studying motives together also brings several other questions to the fore: Are some motives stronger than others? Are some motives particularly relevant to specific identity domains or processes? How often do these motives conflict with each other, and how do people respond when different motives make contradictory demands on identity construction?

A few studies have used experimental methods to pit two or more identity motives against each other. For example, Swann and colleagues (1987) tested participants' reactions to positive

and negative feedback as a function of their pre-existing self-views. Participants were happiest when they received positive feedback—irrespective of their pre-existing self-views—supporting the influence of the motive for self-enhancement (i.e., positive self-regard) on affective reactions. However, cognitive reactions were very different: participants found the feedback trustworthy and informative to the extent that it confirmed their prior self-views—even if the feedback was negative. Thus, it seemed that participants were prepared to sacrifice a potential gain in self-esteem in the interests of maintaining self-continuity. Similarly, Brewer et al. (1993) presented results suggesting that people will sacrifice self-esteem to protect their distinctiveness: when feelings of distinctiveness were undermined, participants reduced their identification with a group that was positively valued but not distinctive.

These studies provide evidence for the independent influence of multiple motives on identity processes. If continuity or distinctiveness were only important as a means to self-esteem, then participants would not be willing to sacrifice self-esteem in the service of these motives. However, studies such as these tend to require rather specific and artificial situations, in order to pit the relevant motives against each other. Moreover, it is hard to imagine an experimental design that could successfully separate the influences of more than two or three motives.

Hence, Vignoles and colleagues have developed a new approach to measuring identity motives, by looking at their effects on the outcomes of identity definition and enactment processes (Vignoles et al., 2002, 2006). Our methodology assumes that different aspects of identity (e.g., “father,” “social scientist,” “poor at sport”) vary in their perceived centrality and importance (i.e., identity definition), and in the extent to which they are presented to others in social interactions (i.e., identity enactment). Those identity aspects that satisfy identity motives tend to be perceived as especially central and self-defining, and are more likely to be emphasized in self-presentation, whereas those that frustrate

identity motives are more likely to be perceived as marginal and kept hidden from others.

Numerous studies now provide converging evidence for the role of four motives in shaping identity definition. Vignoles and colleagues (2006) explored the influence of multiple motives on identity definition in four studies, finding that research participants rated as most central and self-defining those aspects of their current identities that best satisfied motives for self-esteem, continuity, distinctiveness, and meaning. Each of these four motives made a significant and substantial *unique* contribution to predicting subjective identity structures, after accounting for the influence of the other motives in the model—thus, none of these four motives is reducible to any of the others. Recently, we have replicated these findings in a study of late adolescents from 19 nations spanning Europe, Asia, South America, Africa, and the Middle East (Vignoles, Becker et al., 2010). Results are consistent across individual, relational, and group levels of identity (Vignoles et al., 2006, Study 2), as well as domains of the “extended self”: people identify with possessions and with places to the extent that they satisfy the same four identity motives (Droseltis & Vignoles, 2010; Vignoles et al., 2010).

Feelings of belonging and efficacy were also related to the perceived centrality of identity aspects in these studies, but effects tended to be smaller and did not always reach statistical significance. Longitudinal analyses suggested that feelings of both efficacy and belonging, as well as meaning, had an indirect impact on this dimension of identity definition, through their contribution to feelings of self-esteem (Vignoles et al., 2006, Study 4). The indirect effect of belonging provides some support for Leary’s (2005) proposal that the self-esteem system monitors and helps people to regulate their relational value—belonging concerns might be the underlying cause, but self-esteem has the more proximal influence on identity construction. However, the fact that self-esteem was predicted also by feelings of efficacy and of meaning indicates that the self-esteem system is not exclusively tuned to monitor relational value.

In several studies, we have also examined motivational predictors of identity enactment, reflecting the behavioral and self-presentational side of identity construction (Vignoles, Becker et al., 2010; Vignoles et al., 2006, Study 4). In longitudinal analyses, identity enactment shows a bidirectional relationship with identity definition: that is, people report showing to others especially those parts of their identities that they perceive as most self-defining, but they also come to perceive as most self-defining especially those parts of their identities that they show to others (see Swann, 1987). But motivational predictors of identity enactment differ from the predictors of identity definition: people report showing to others especially those aspects of their identities that satisfy motives for self-esteem and belonging. Efficacy was a significant predictor in our original study (Vignoles et al., 2006, Study 4), although the role of this motive has been less well supported subsequently (Vignoles, Becker et al., 2010).

We have also looked at the influence of these motives on affective dimensions of identity, predicting people’s happiness about existing aspects of their identity, as well as their desired and feared possible future identities (see Oyserman & James, Chapter 6, this volume). People are happiest with those aspects of their identities, as well as with material possessions, that satisfy three motives: for self-esteem, efficacy, and meaning (Vignoles, Becker et al., 2010; Vignoles, Dittmar et al., 2010; Vignoles et al., 2006). People typically desire those possible identities that promise feelings of self-esteem, efficacy, meaning, and continuity, whereas they fear those that promise frustration of the same four motives (Vignoles et al., 2008). As before, the motive for belonging typically showed indirect effects through self-esteem in these studies.

Thus, it seems that each of the six identity motives theorized above influences the processes by which identity is constructed and maintained, but different combinations of motives have a stronger impact on different identity processes. In particular, motives for continuity, distinctiveness, and meaning are especially relevant to identity definition, whereas motives for belonging and

efficacy are mainly relevant to identity enactment. Only self-esteem appears consistently relevant to both identity definition and enactment processes. As discussed earlier, several theorists have argued on philosophical grounds that both continuity and distinctiveness are necessary preconditions for a meaningful sense of identity; from a humanistic perspective, it is unsurprising that identity definition should be guided also by a search for *subjective* meaning, and not just fulfilling these “technical” criteria. In contrast, both efficacy and belonging are more clearly relevant to a person’s relationship with the external world: efficacy refers to a person’s capacity to act *on* the world, and belonging refers to their having a place *within* the world. Thus, it makes sense that these motives are of greater relevance to identity enactment.

Individual Differences in Motive Strength

We have also extended our methodological approach to look at individual differences in motive strength. Because people are not necessarily aware of their identity motives, measuring such individual differences has been problematic in the past. This is illustrated by the problems encountered in attempts to operationalize the “self-esteem hypothesis” to predict individual differences in intergroup discrimination. Abrams and Hogg (1988) proposed that individuals with lower pre-existing self-esteem would be likely to show intergroup discrimination, on the assumption that their need for self-esteem would be more frustrated. In contrast, Stangor and Thompson (2002) made the equally plausible prediction that individuals with *higher* self-esteem would show greater in-group favoritism, on the grounds that people with higher self-esteem are typically more adept at using self-enhancement strategies. Thus, *level* of self-esteem clearly is not sufficient to measure the strength of the *motive* for self-esteem.

As discussed earlier, nor is it viable simply to ask people how strongly they desire a sense of self-esteem, continuity, distinctiveness, and so

on. Explicit measures of “need strength” may provide information about people’s subjective values, but they do not necessarily reveal anything about their underlying motives; to measure the latter, a more subtle form of measurement may be more useful. Vignoles and Moncaster (2007) adapted the methodology described earlier to create implicit measures of individual differences in the strengths of identity motives. To illustrate, consider the finding mentioned above that people generally perceive as especially self-defining those aspects of their identities that provided a sense of self-esteem. If this pattern in the data is interpreted as evidence for a self-esteem motive, then it should follow that the pattern will be stronger among those with a higher need for self-esteem, and weaker among those with a lower need for self-esteem. Thus, correlations between motive satisfaction and identity definition (or enactment) ratings of multiple identity aspects can be calculated for each individual, and used as an implicit measure of individual differences in strength of any given identity motive.

Initial findings show that these implicit measures are unrelated to explicit measures of people’s beliefs about their identity motives, such as “need for uniqueness” or “need to belong” scales (e.g., Eriksson, Becker, & Vignoles, *in press*). Nevertheless, the implicit measures predict various outcomes. Vignoles and Deas (2002) found that people with a stronger continuity motive were less willing to consider cosmetic surgery. Thorpe (2003) found that people with a stronger belonging motive scored higher on a measure of socially desirable responding, and Kelly (2004) found that people showed a stronger belonging motive after being asked to recall experiences of ostracism—expected to arouse this motive. Petavratzi (2004) found that people with a stronger distinctiveness motive tended to prefer more distinctive relationship partners. Vignoles and Moncaster (2007) found that the strength of both distinctiveness and belonging motives predicted national in-group favoritism, but only among those who were more highly identified with their nation. Thus, these implicit measures are not measuring people’s beliefs about their motives, but they have some predictive utility.

Although still in its infancy, research into implicit measures of motive strength seems to be an important avenue for future development.

Applications of an Integrated Model

Clearly, a single, integrated model of motivated identity construction processes, relevant to multiple domains of identity and identity-seeking behavior, represents a gain in theoretical parsimony; but there are also significant potential practical benefits of this approach. In particular, a more comprehensive understanding of identity motives provides a more complete theoretical toolkit to help understand identity-related processes in the real world and thus potentially to design more effective strategies for intervention. Although the main focus of my own work in this area has been theoretical, I will give two examples to illustrate the potential benefits of this model for understanding and for intervention.

The first example involves national identity and attitudes toward immigration. Recent studies have shown that people who hold essentialist concepts of nationhood (where national identity is based on ethnicity/ancestry) are more likely to hold negative and prejudiced views of immigrants (see Licata et al., [Chapter 38](#), this volume). However, the motivational basis of this relationship has remained unclear. Motivational theories of intergroup relations have focused largely on motives for self-esteem, meaning, distinctiveness, and belonging, but Naidoo, Pehrson, and Vignoles (2010) hypothesized that the link between national essentialism and prejudice against immigrants might be explained better by the continuity motive—on the basis that immigration undermines the continuity of national identity when it is defined in terms of ancestry. Consistent with this, in a study of British adults, we found that the essentialism–prejudice link was moderated by individual differences in the strength of the continuity motive: among those with a weaker identity motive for self-continuity, the link was absent. Thus, we were able to improve our understanding of this intergroup

phenomenon by relating it to a motive that had not previously been considered in the intergroup relations literature.

A second illustration is an intervention study conducted by May and Vignoles (2010) in which we aimed to enhance intentions to donate blood among young people. Based on Vignoles and colleagues' (2008) findings about the motivational bases of desired and feared possible future identities, we created an information leaflet portraying to participants a possible identity as a blood donor, that would provide feelings of self-esteem, efficacy, continuity, and meaning. We measured proximal (“next week”) and distal (“in the near future”) intentions to donate blood, as well as motivational properties of the possible future self as blood donor, which clustered onto two dimensions: (1) potential esteem and efficacy and (2) potential continuity and meaning. Our leaflet did not affect distal intentions, which were generally high in any case, and were predicted by potential esteem and efficacy. However, our leaflet did increase proximal intentions to donate blood, even compared to a leaflet currently used by the British blood donation service; and this effect was accounted for by a change in beliefs about the possible feelings of continuity and meaning to be derived from blood donation. These results suggest that an attempt to boost intentions based only on the promise of increased self-esteem would not have been successful. Thus, taking account of multiple identity motives enhanced our intervention.

Beyond these two illustrations, I suggest that a clearer and more comprehensive understanding of identity motives has the capacity to enhance applied research and interventions in any domain where identity processes are important: spanning areas as diverse as health promotion, family processes, consumer behavior, civic participation, and terrorism. In each of these areas, motivated identity construction theory can help to illuminate the kinds of identity categories that people will seek to occupy, the kinds of events that will threaten people's sense of identity, as well as the kinds of actions they might undertake in order to construct, maintain, or defend a satisfactory sense of identity.

Conclusion

To conclude, evidence supports the existence of at least six identity motives—for self-esteem, continuity, distinctiveness, meaning, efficacy, and belonging. All six motives have a theoretical basis for universality, but different cultures may develop different ways of satisfying each one, so that the same underlying motives may have very different consequences in different cultural contexts. Undoubtedly, future research will refine this model, and it is possible that additional motives may be found, or that finer distinctions may be drawn within the existing motives. Yet, it is clear already that multiple motives are involved in identity processes: people do not only seek self-esteem when they construct, maintain, and defend their identities. Paying attention to the multiplicity of identity motives can help us better to predict and understand identity-related outcomes, and ultimately to change them for the better.

Note

1. Readers familiar with self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000) may be surprised at the omission of *autonomy* from the list of identity motives reviewed here. It is important to reiterate that self-determination theorists understand autonomy, competence, and relatedness as basic human needs, and there is no reason to assume that there will be a one-to-one correspondence between basic needs and identity motives. The question is whether or not the autonomy need would lead people to strive for certain ways of seeing themselves. Theoretical definitions of autonomy vary widely, but if autonomy is understood in terms of psychological freedom—or the absence of coercion—then one possible version of an “autonomy motive” would lead to an emphasis on achieved identities (such as life-choices), as opposed to ascribed ones (such as one’s gender or nationality). Yet, even in the case of ascribed identities, people have

considerable freedom in how they define these identities, and in the extent to which they identify with them, and people often experience their ascribed identities as highly central and motivating. Moreover, in the domain of cultural values, Chirkov, Ryan, Kim, and Kaplan (2003) have emphasized that it is how people relate to their values that determines the level of autonomy, not the content of the values themselves: thus, if values are fully internalized, there is no contradiction in the idea that one might autonomously endorse values that restrict one’s objective freedom. Translating this into the domain of identity, it seems that the autonomy need might play a role in the processes by which people form an identity, but it does not prescribe the features of the identity that they will form, and hence it seems questionable whether it fits the current definition of an identity motive.

Acknowledgments Preparation of this chapter was supported by the Economic and Social Research Council (UK) grant number RES-062-23-1300. I thank Maja Becker, Rupert Brown, Claudia Cerrina, Matt Easterbrook, Jochen Gebauer, Ellinor Owe, Jonas Rees, and Linda Tip for their useful comments on a previous draft.

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Part IV

Moral and Spiritual Domains

Sam A. Hardy and Gustavo Carlo

Abstract

Moral identity is a construct at the intersection of moral development and identity formation. It is thought to be a source of moral motivation linking moral reasoning (our judgments about whether certain actions are right or wrong) to behavior. In other words, people with a stronger sense of moral identity will be more likely to do what they know is right, and more likely to show enduring moral commitments. In this chapter, we first discuss several conceptualizations of moral identity. Some scholars conceptualize moral identity as a trait-like tendency to view morality as central to one's explicit sense of identity. Others argue that underlying moral identity is a network of cognitively accessible moral schemas which aid in the processing of social information in moral situations. Second, we review moral exemplar studies, narrative studies, correlational studies, and experimental studies linking moral identity to moral action and enduring moral commitments. Third, we discuss the development of moral identity. Although most work suggests that moral identity primarily emerges in adolescence and young adulthood, we also point to some earlier foundations. Lastly, we note some skepticism regarding the moral identity concept, and outline directions for future research.

What is at the root of heroic moral acts and lifelong moral commitment? During World War II, potentially hundreds of thousands of people not of the Jewish faith helped Jews hide and survive ethnic cleansing under Nazi occupation, putting themselves and their families at risk. Other individuals, such as Mahatma Gandhi, Mother Teresa, and Bishop Desmond

Tutu, are world-renowned for their persistent and far-reaching dedication to moral causes. Furthermore, millions throughout the world live praiseworthy lives of moral integrity, often in the face of great opposition. How are we to understand such commitment to morality? Can identity theory and research help us in this regard?

Most work on morality over the past half century has stemmed from Kohlberg's (1969) Cognitive Developmental Theory, which emphasized moral reasoning—defined as the capacity to make judgments about whether certain actions are right or wrong. But, several factors have

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led to greater interest in the role of identity in morality. First, moral reasoning is only a modest predictor of moral action (Blasi, 1980). Second, highly moral people do not have unusually sophisticated moral reasoning capacities (Colby & Damon, 1992). Hence, scholars such as Blasi (1980, 1983), Rest (1983), and even Kohlberg himself (Kohlberg & Candee, 1984), saw the need to identify moderators and mediators of links between moral reasoning and moral action. *Moral identity*, one such construct, capitalizes on identity theory and research to improve our understanding of moral motivation and commitment. In this chapter, we (1) outline various conceptions of moral identity; (2) identify psychological and behavioral outcomes of moral identity; and (3) discuss the processes and predictors of moral identity formation.

Conceptualizing Moral Identity

Defining moral identity is a formidable task, as the construct intersects two rich and highly abstract literatures: identity and morality. Generally, moral identity involves the importance or salience of morality to a person's identity. However, there are diverse perspectives on the details of what this means. Most approaches to moral identity can be classified as *character perspectives* or *social cognitive perspectives* (Lapsley, 2008; Monin & Jordan, 2009; Shao, Aquino, & Freeman, 2008). This distinction roughly aligns with the two disciplines of personality psychology: trait approaches and social cognitive approaches (Lapsley & Hill, 2009).

Character Perspectives

Approaches classified as character or “personological” perspectives are those that describe moral identity as a trait-like individual difference in the degree to which morality is central to one's identity and unified with one's personal values and goals. A great starting point for this approach to moral identity is the work of Augusto Blasi

(1983, 1984, 1995, 2004a). He drew attention to the potential gap between moral understanding and moral action, and argued that moral identity may help bridge that gap (Walker, 2004).

Blasi's Self Model: Blasi's (1983) Self Model of links between moral judgment and action has three components. First, before leading to moral action, a moral judgment may pass through a *judgment of responsibility*, such that an action is not only seen as moral, but as necessary for the individual—as his or her responsibility (cf. Kohlberg & Candee, 1984). Second, the criteria for judgments of responsibility often stem from the structure of the self. More specifically, what Blasi called *moral identity* reflects individual differences in the extent to which being moral is central or essential to one's sense of self. The third component of the Self Model is *self-consistency*, the natural human tendency to want to live consistently with one's sense of self. When a person's self is centered on moral concerns, this inclination serves as a key moral motivation. In summary, Blasi postulated that moral judgments might more reliably predict moral behavior if they are filtered through responsibility judgments based on moral identity, and propelled into action via the tendency toward self-consistency (for discussions of the Self Model, see Frimer & Walker, 2008; Hardy & Carlo, 2005; Walker, 2004).

Underlying Blasi's Self Model are his ideas about the structure of identity (Blasi, 1993, 2004b; Blasi & Glodis, 1995), based heavily on Erikson's (1968) notion of identity and Loewinger's (1976) work on ego development. Blasi argues that people differ both in terms of the issues around which they base their identities (identity contents—the things that make up one's identity) and the way they subjectively experience their identity (identity structure—the organization, maturity, and phenomenological experience of one's identity; others have made similar distinctions—see Berzonsky, Chapter 3, this volume; Oyserman & James, Chapter 6, this volume; Soenens & Vansteenkiste, Chapter 17, this volume). As subjective identity matures, the sense of self becomes based more on internal, psychological identity contents (e.g., values and goals) than external identity contents

(e.g., physical characteristics, relationships, and behavior; see Damon & Hart, 1988). The self also becomes more organized and unified, with hierarchical organization of identity contents such that some are chosen as more central and essential than others (see Stryker & Serpe, Chapter 10, this volume; Vignoles, Chapter 18, this volume). Additionally, there is an increased sense of agency over one's self, such that the identity contents one cares most about are actively appropriated into the core self (similar to the notion of self-regulation or internalization in Self-Determination Theory; Soenens & Vansteenkiste, Chapter 17, this volume). Hence, with mature subjective identity there is a greater desire for self-consistency—fidelity with one's core self is seen as a necessity and self-inconsistency elicits intense negative affect (see Schlenker, Miller, & Johnson, 2009; Stryker & Serpe, Chapter 10, this volume; Vignoles, Chapter 18, this volume; Waterman, Chapter 16, this volume).

For Blasi, then, the structure of identity provides the key mechanism by which identity can serve as a source of motivation for moral action. For some people, morality is not simply about what is right or wrong, it is self-defining. Such individuals have identity contents which are moral (e.g., moral principles). However, even among individuals with moral identity contents, there is variability in how these contents are experienced. In other words, links between moral identity contents and moral action might be moderated by subjective identity maturity. More specifically, when individuals with mature subjective identity appropriate moral identity contents, the heightened sense of agency, self-consistency, and commitment to actualize one's core self can act as a powerful source of moral motivation. This has not been empirically tested.

Moral identity as unity between self and moral goals: Congruent with Blasi's ideas, Anne Colby and William Damon (1992) focused on moral identity as the unity of the moral and self systems. In their qualitative study of individuals known for exemplary moral commitments (i.e., moral exemplars), they found that such people experienced

a unity between self and morality such that their own personal interests and desires were synonymous with their sense of what was morally right. In other words, moral exemplars “seamlessly integrate their commitments with their personal concerns, so that the fulfillment of one implies the fulfillment of the other” (Colby & Damon, 1992, p. 300). Perhaps moral commitments for such individuals are personally expressive, or what Waterman (Chapter 16, this volume) calls “eudaimonistic.”

Such integration of personal and moral goals can serve as a powerful source of moral motivation and commitment (Colby & Damon, 1992; Frimer & Walker, 2009). Moral commitments are not seen as a sacrifice requiring self-denial because the self is defined with a moral center. Rather, moral exemplars would be denying the self only by failing to follow their moral sense. They do not perceive a dilemma or choice involved regarding their exemplary moral commitments; they are simply doing what they must do (see also Monroe, 2001). This enables them to act with certainty and spontaneity, with little fear, doubt, or hesitation.

Moral identity as altruistic personality: Some see moral identity as at the heart of, or nearly synonymous with an “altruistic personality” (Carlo, PytlikZillig, Roesch, & Dienstbier, 2009; Staub, 2005). The altruistic personality is a set of other-oriented tendencies or traits, such as empathy, social responsibility, and moral reasoning, which motivate prosocial behaviors and mitigate antisocial behaviors (whether deliberately or automatically; for reviews, see Carlo et al., 2009; Dovidio, Piliavin, Shroeder, & Penner, 2006). Care exemplars are individuals known for such altruistic personalities (Colby & Damon, 1992; Oliner & Oliner, 1988; Walker & Frimer, 2007). Driving or unifying the other-oriented tendencies of such individuals is a personal investment in helping others—indeed a sense of moral or altruistic identity.

Narrative moral identity: There is growing interest in narrative approaches to identity, which see a person's life story as a key component of identity (McAdams, Chapter 5, this volume). While some are skeptical of the usefulness of

narrative approaches for understanding moral identity (Blasi, 2004a), others are quite intrigued (Frimer & Walker, 2009; McAdams, 2009; Pratt, Arnold, & Lawford, 2009). Pratt and colleagues argue that the essence of moral identity may be the extent to which moral values and moral themes are integrally woven throughout the fabric of our self-narratives. Studies of moral exemplars seem to echo the importance of such morally laden narratives to moral functioning (Colby & Damon, 1992).

Social Cognitive Perspectives

In recent years a number of scholars have attempted to draw on social cognitive theory to better understand moral identity (Cervone & Tripathi, 2009; Lapsley & Hill, 2009). Social cognitive theorists view personality as a dynamic system of cognitive–affective processes that interact with situational influences (Bandura, 1986; Mischel, 1968). Thus, these approaches attempt to find social cognitive mechanisms that underlie moral functioning.

Moral identity as chronically accessible moral schemas: Schemas are knowledge structures in the mind that can represent various aspects of ourselves, our relationships, and our experiences. Schemas that are more cognitively accessible are more readily activated for use in processing social information (Higgins, 1999). Moral identity may entail moral schemas being chronically accessible for interpreting and responding to social situations (Gibbs, 2009; Lapsley & Lasky, 2001; Lapsley & Narvaez, 2004; Narvaez, Lapsley, Hagele, & Lasky, 2006). Moral schemas seen by individuals as important to their sense of identity may also be those that are chronically accessible (Lapsley & Narvaez, 2004). This notion received some empirical validation recently (Aquino, Freeman, Reed, Lim, & Felps, 2009), and is in line with work on attitudes suggesting that importance and accessibility are moderators of attitude–behavior relations, with importance generally preceding accessibility (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005).

Accessibility of moral schemas enables automaticity in moral responding and what might be seen as *moral expertise* (Narvaez & Lapsley, 2005). In other words, accessibility of moral schemas allows individuals to be more sensitive to moral aspects of situations, and to interpret and respond to those situations more quickly in light of their moral commitments. Moral exemplars may be experts in morality as others are experts at chess or piano. The high level of certainty and the lack of hesitancy that characterize their moral actions may be due to rich networks of accessible moral schemas (Lapsley & Narvaez, 2004; Narvaez & Lapsley, 2005).

Moral identity as a self-important social identity: One moral schema that may be most relevant to moral identity is an individual's conception of what it means to be a moral person (Aquino & Reed, 2002; Hitlin, Chapter 20, this volume; Stets & Carter, 2006). Social psychologists suggest we have different social identities for the various groups to which we belong (*group-based identities*), the roles we participate in (*role-based identities*), and the kind of people we want to portray ourselves as to others (*person identities*; Stets & Carter, 2006; see also Spears, Chapter 9, this volume; Stryker & Serpe, Chapter 10, this volume). These social identities are organized into a social self-schema, with some being more important to the self than others. Moral identity might be considered a potential “person” social identity organized around traits characteristic of a moral person. Two facets of this are the contents making up a person's moral identity (the traits he or she uses to describe a moral person) and the centrality of that moral identity to his or her self (Aquino & Freeman, 2009; Aquino & Reed, 2002; Stets & Carter, 2006). The more a person's moral identity is central to the self, the larger role it will play in behaviors and commitments (Stets, Carter, Harrod, Cerven, & Abrutyn, 2008). However, situational factors can influence the degree to which the moral identity is activated (Aquino & Freeman, 2009; Aquino et al., 2009; Monin & Jordan, 2009).

Moral identity as commitment to moral social roles: Some see moral identity as the degree to

which moral actions and social roles are important to the self (Hart Atkins, & Frod, 1999; Kurtines, Mayock, Pollard, Lanza, & Carlo, 1991). In other words, rather than seeing moral identity as a “person” social identity (as above), they see it as one or more “role-based” social identities regarding the actions and roles most salient to us. In line with this, Hart and colleagues (Hart, 2005) use volunteer service as a marker or proxy for moral identity. Similarly, in their study of blood donors Piliavin and Callero (1991) used the centrality of the “blood donor” role to the self as an indicator of an “altruistic identity.”

Moral identity as moral self-representations in autobiographical memory: The self is often seen as the organization of mental representations of self stored in autobiographical memory (Kihlstrom, Beer, & Klein, 2003). These self-representations, which include information about time, place, and role, are stored in memory aided by emotion. Thus, part of having a moral identity may involve self-representations being infused with moral meaning through moral emotions, and being stored and organized in one’s autobiographical memory to create a moral self-narrative (Damasio, 1994; Lapsley, 2008; Reimer, 2003; Reimer & Wade-Stein, 2004). Anticipated consequences of possible actions are evaluated based on emotions associated with this moral self-narrative regarding similar situations and outcomes in the past. Thus, “somatic markers” or physiological correlates of moral emotion guide decision-making by providing moral intuitions that point toward and motivate moral actions.

Moral identity as a moral ideal self: Possible selves, like the desired or ideal self and the dreaded or feared self, are self-schemas that motivate future behaviors (Oyserman & James, Chapter 6, this volume). The desired self is a representation of the self one ideally wants to become in the future, and thus acts as a goal pulling the individual in a certain direction. The dreaded self, on the other hand, is the type of person one wants to avoid becoming. Part of having a moral identity might be the degree to which one’s desired self is moral (and perhaps one’s dreaded self is immoral). In this way, having a moral identity entails a commitment to being and becoming

what one sees as a moral person. However, little empirical work has examined this possibility.

Alternative Perspectives

Moral identity from an identity status paradigm: Much of the theory and research on identity formation may enrich understanding of moral identity. First, work stemming from Erikson’s (1968) ideas sees identity formation as involving exploration and commitment. For example, from the identity statuses paradigm (Kroger & Marcia, Chapter 2, this volume), a person who has not made moral commitments might be in identity diffusion. An individual who dogmatically accepts moral principles taught by his or her parents or religion might fall under foreclosure. However, as individuals seek to personally validate moral principles through reflection and real-world experience (i.e., acting on moral principles and observing the consequences), they are in identity moratorium. Once they appropriate certain moral principles and commitments as their own, and see them as self-defining, they have reached identity achievement.

One of the primary domains of identity commitments the identity status paradigm has emphasized is ideological commitment. Although the measures have focused on commitments to religious and political views, and career choice, it seems this also encompasses moral principles. In this sense, a person with a strong moral identity might be one who has critically reflected on (i.e., explored) various moral principles and then made commitments to those moral principles seen as most important and self-defining.

One extension of the identity status paradigm further refines commitment and exploration to allow greater attention to processes rather than states of identity (Luyckx, Schwartz, Goossens, Beyers, & Missotten, Chapter 4, this volume). As part of this, they differentiate making commitments from further identification with those commitments. As people experiment with and elaborate on moral commitments they have made, those commitments deepen. This might explain the unity between personal and moral

goals experienced by moral exemplars (Colby & Damon, 1992).

A second extension of the identity status paradigm, the *identity styles* model, focuses on three approaches to processing identity-relevant information: informational, normative, and diffuse-avoidant (see Berzonsky, Chapter 3, this volume). People with an informational orientation deliberately grapple with various “moral” principles and commitments to determine which should define them. On the other hand, normative-oriented individuals automatically adopt whatever moral principles and commitments seem consistent with norms held by people they care about. Lastly, diffuse-avoidant orientated people procrastinate thoughts of moral principles and commitments, and are driven more by situational factors. In short, the identity styles differ in the extent to which they may facilitate the processes of moral identity formation.

Moral identity from a relational perspective: Although there are a number of uses of the term “relational” (for review, see Chen et al., Chapter 7, this volume), what we are proposing here is a “strong relationality,” where one’s identity is not merely influenced by relationships but partially constituted by them (Slife, 2004). According to this approach, rather than being “self-contained objects” (Slife, 2004, p. 160) that internalize abstractions (e.g., moral values) from the outside, we are a “nexus of relationships” (Slife, 2004, p. 166), and are engaged in practices that are embedded in particular contexts (with the context construed broadly to include not only the immediate context, but also the historical context, for example). Thus, relationships are more fundamental to our experience and our nature than abstractions.

In terms of identity, a “relationist identity allows for individual uniqueness, but it does so through a distinct nexus of relationships rather than a distinct set of beliefs and values” (Slife, 2004, p. 166). Similarly, morality is not fundamentally about abstract universal moral principles that we must learn to apply to specific situations; rather, it is about context-dependent truths that we must learn to be sensitive to and respond to (Slife & Richardson, 2008). Further,

identity is unavoidably moral (i.e., there is no such thing as an amoral identity) in that morality is inherently a part of our world, and our identity is the framework from which we view and relate to the world (Taylor, 1989). Thus, a person with a moral identity is not a self-contained individual who appropriates moral principles into his or her sense of self, and carries a stable and explicit moral identity around with him or her. Rather, a person with a moral identity is one whose framework (i.e., identity) is aligned with the moral truths of his or her particular relational context, and who is committed to living truthfully to that framework (Williams & Olson, 2008). Additionally, a person with a moral identity values relationships to others and the community, and uses such relationships as moral compasses.

Potential Integrations

Work to compare and contrast these perspectives is nascent, so it is still unclear to what extent they are compatible, and if not, which best captures the phenomena of moral identity. From social cognitive perspectives, underlying the moral identity described by character perspectives is a network of moral schemas (Aquino & Freeman, 2009; Lapsley & Narvaez, 2004; Shao et al., 2008). In other words, moral issues that may be explicitly important to a person’s identity are likely undergirded by cognitively accessible moral schemas. However, some worry this unnecessarily reduces moral identity to cognitive representations, thus not fully capturing or perhaps even allowing for the intentional and agentic nature of the self (Blasi, 2001; Campbell, Christopher, & Bickhard, 2002).

Another fundamental difference between the perspectives is the extent to which moral identity is seen as stable or variable across situations. Whereas the character perspectives see moral identity as a more stable and trait-like individual difference, social cognitive perspectives see it as more fluid, or “moment to moment,” and situated in and influenced by the context (Aquino & Freeman, 2009; Lapsley & Narvaez, 2004; Monin & Jordan, 2009). Moral schemas which underlie

moral identity must be activated in the situation for use in information processing. From a social cognitive perspective one possible integration is that what is relatively stable is the self-centrality or self-importance and chronic accessibility of moral schemas, but situational cues influence the likelihood that these schemas will be activated (Aquino et al., 2009). However, given that character perspectives generally question the presence or utility of schemas, this integration may not work for them (see Blasi, 2001).

In short, while some efforts at integration are being made, particularly among social cognitive scholars, it is unclear yet how much mileage will come from these resolutions. At the heart of the issue are fundamental differences in assumptions about the nature of morality and the self that may prevent satisfactory integration of these perspectives. For instance, from a relational perspective, moral identity is not even contained within the individual, but actually partially constituted by the context (Slife, 2004).

Linking Moral Identity to Moral Action

Moral identity may be an important source of moral motivation; in fact, some argue that it may be the best predictor of moral commitment and moral actions (Damon & Hart, 1992). The exact mechanisms involved depend on how moral identity is conceptualized. Such mechanisms might include self-consistency (e.g., Blasi, 2004a), autobiographical memory (e.g., Reimer, 2003), goals (e.g., Colby & Damon, 1992), and moral schemas (e.g., Narvaez & Lapsley, 2005). These mechanisms are in line with more general ideas about identity as a motivator of action (e.g., McAdams, Chapter 5, this volume.; Oyserman & James, Chapter 6, this volume; Soenens & Vansteenkiste, Chapter 17, this volume; Stryker & Serpe, Chapter 10, this volume; Vignoles, Chapter 18, this volume). Although few mechanisms of moral identity have been systematically examined, empirical work has fairly consistently found moderately strong links between moral identity and moral action. Four types of studies provide information about outcomes of

moral identity: moral exemplar studies, narrative studies, correlational studies, and experimental studies. While some of these studies take a character approach (e.g., Colby & Damon, 1992; Hart & Fegley, 1995), others are from a social cognitive orientation (e.g., Aquino, Reed, Thau, & Freeman, 2007; Stets & Carter, 2006). Across perspectives, findings consistently link moral identity to morally relevant outcomes.

Moral Exemplar Studies

In these studies, exemplary moral individuals are identified through a nomination process and studied in detail using qualitative and quantitative methods, and, in some cases, moral exemplars are compared to a control group of non-exemplars. In one in-depth qualitative study, adult moral exemplars expressed almost complete integration of their self and moral goals (i.e., what they personally desired was in line with what they knew was right), such that morality was central to their identity; this strong moral identity seemed at the heart of their extensive lifelong moral commitments (Colby & Damon, 1992). In multi-method studies of adolescent morality, moral exemplars more frequently described themselves using moral trait terms and moral goals than comparison adolescents, incorporated their ideal selves into their actual selves more so than did comparison youth (Hart & Fegley, 1995; Reimer & Wade-Stein, 2004), and showed greater overlap between their descriptions of their actions and their personal goals (Reimer, Goudelock, & Walker, 2009). So, moral exemplars define themselves more in terms of moral traits, moral goals, and personal ideals than others, and see greater integrity between such self-important goals and their own actions.

Narrative Studies

Recently, some have used a narrative approach to better understand moral identity. As part of narrative interviews in two different studies, Pratt and colleagues (Pratt et al., 2009) asked participants

(adolescents and young adults) to tell various types of life stories. These stories were each rated for salience of moral identity, as indicated by things such as concern for the needs and rights of others. In one study, moral identity was cross-sectionally related to generative concern (a person's desires, commitments, and actions directed toward making a difference in the world), and in the other study it longitudinally predicted generative concern and community service several years later.

Frimer and Walker (2009) used structured interviews to collect self-understanding narratives, and then coded them for values orientations based on Schwartz's (1992) circumplex model of universal values. The centrality of morality to identity was indexed as the degree to which communal (universalism and benevolence) and agentic (power and achievement) value orientations co-occurred in the same "chunks" of a self-narrative rather than in different portions of the narrative. In other words, this co-occurrence of communal and agentic value orientations suggests reconciliation of self-oriented and moral or other-oriented goals. Degree of moral centrality predicted self-report and behavioral measures of moral behavior.

Correlational Studies

One of the primary challenges of studying moral identity is that it is difficult to adequately measure such a rich construct. The only survey measure that has been extensively evaluated for reliability and validity is a 10-item, self-report scale designed by Aquino and Reed (2002). This measure involves (1) presenting participants with a list of nine moral traits, (2) asking them to visualize a person with those traits (their self or someone else) and how that person would think, feel, and act, and (3) having them rate statements such as, "It would make me feel good to be a person who has these characteristics." The prompt to imagine someone with a certain set of moral traits is thought to activate the person's moral identity schema (their image of what it means to be a moral person), then the items allow them to rate

their agreement with 10 statements pertaining to that schema. Based on the properties of identity outlined by Erikson (1968), two 5-item subscales were identified: symbolization and internalization. Symbolization is the extent to which people see themselves as outwardly displaying a moral social identity to the world, whereas internalization is the relative centrality of a moral social identity in their overall self-schema.

Generally, internalization is more strongly related to morally relevant behavior than symbolization. Perhaps internalization is more autonomous or self-regulated whereas symbolization is more focused on self-presentation. Among adults, both internalization and symbolization positively predicted self-report volunteerism (Aquino & Reed, 2002). However, among adolescents, only internalization predicted actual donation behavior. In another series of studies, internalization but not symbolization predicted various moral responses to out-group members: felt moral obligation toward out-group members, willingness to extend love and status to strangers, perceived worthiness of relief efforts for out-group members, willingness to donate money to relief efforts for out-group members, and willingness to forgive out-group members of violence (Reed & Aquino, 2003). More recently, those higher on moral disengagement (the tendency to rationalize immoral action in a way that maintains one's sense of moral integrity) were less likely to think that the best response to the perpetrators of the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Center would be to kill them (versus forgiving, helping, imprisoning, or fining them; Aquino et al., 2007). This effect was moderated by the internalization aspect of moral identity such that those higher in internalization were less likely to rationalize killing the perpetrators (cf. Moshman, Chapter 39, this volume). Lastly, among adolescents, internalization and symbolization related positively to felt moral obligation to out-group members, and negatively to social dominance orientation (preference for group inequality; Hardy, Bhattacharjee, Aquino, & Reed, 2010).

Another research group conducted an interesting study looking at the independent and

interactive effects of moral judgment and moral identity (assessed using Aquino and Reed's measure) on moral action (Reynolds & Ceranic, 2007). They hypothesized that when social consensus is high regarding a moral issue, moral identity is more likely to predict behavior independent of moral judgment, but, when social consensus is low, moral identity and moral judgment will interact in predicting behavior. Specifically, in situations of low consensus, stronger moral identity and greater preference for consequentialism (i.e., focus on consequences as basis for morality) will lead to consequentialist behaviors, whereas stronger moral identity paired with an affinity for formalism (i.e., focus on obligation to moral principles as basis for morality) will result in more formalistic moral action. They found partial support for these hypotheses, with findings generally more robust for internalization than symbolization. In terms of direct effects of moral identity, neither dimension related to cheating or responses to business-related ethical dilemmas, internalization negatively predicted self-reported unethical business behaviors (symbolization was positively related), and symbolization (but not internalization) was linked to self-reported charitable giving. Again, perhaps symbolization is partially about self-presentation—that is, wanting to look good to others. A number of the proposed interactions with moral judgment were also found, particularly for internalization.

In addition to Aquino and Reed's (2002) moral identity scale, the other most common way to quantitatively assess moral identity has been to have people rate the importance of various moral and non-moral values to their sense of self (e.g., Barriga, Morrison, Liau, & Gibbs, 2001; Hardy, 2006; Pratt, Hunsberger, Pancer, & Alisat, 2003). Moral identity scores are then typically computed by subtracting the mean of the ratings for non-moral values from the mean of the moral values. There is no standard scale (rather, each study has used slightly different instructions, response options, and values), and minimal work has been done to validate these measures. In general, studies using such measures have reported links between moral identity and morally relevant action and emotions:

moral identity negatively predicted teens' antisocial behaviors (Barriga et al., 2001), positively predicted teens' community involvement activities (Pratt et al., 2003), and positively predicted young adults' prosocial behaviors (Hardy, 2006).

Another quantitative measurement approach in developmental and social psychology entails the administration of a set of personality measures conceptually associated with moral behaviors (Carlo et al., 2009; Dovidio et al., 2006; Staub, 2005). Several studies yield evidence that a composite of altruistic or prosocial personality measures reliably predict a range of prosocial behaviors, including long-term volunteerism, assisting someone who is suffering, and willingness to risk one's own life rather than put others at risk. For example, Carlo, Eisenberg, Troyer, Switzer, and Speer (1991) showed that a composite of altruistic personality measures was associated with selflessly motivated helping (relieving a stranger's suffering when given a chance to escape easily from the situation) but not egoistically motivated helping. Based on this approach, Penner and his colleagues (Penner, Fritzsche, Craiger, & Freifeld, 1995) developed a standardized measure of a "prosocial personality" (which includes measures of sympathy, perspective taking, social responsibility, ascription of responsibility, prosocial behaviors) and several studies demonstrate the reliability and validity of this measure (see Dovidio et al., 2006).

In sociological social psychology, Jan Stets and colleagues (2006; Stets et al., 2008) have used a social identity approach similar to that of Aquino and Reed (2002) to examine outcomes of moral identity. They assessed the extent to which people had a social identity characterized by moral traits (i.e., whether they see themselves as moral), and then the salience of that moral identity (i.e., its importance relative to other social identities). In one study, participants were asked to recall a number of moral situations they have been in, and then report the action they took and how they felt afterward (Stets & Carter, 2006). Moral identity predicted the likelihood to report moral responses to the moral situations. Further, when people reported having not taken the moral action, moral identity predicted the

extent of negative emotions felt (e.g., guilt). In a second study, moral identity (but not moral identity salience) predicted likelihood of moral actions—but neither predicted moral emotion in response to moral or immoral actions (Stets et al., 2008). Perhaps this lack of findings for moral identity salience is due to limitations of the measure, which involved having participants report how they would identify themselves to another person when meeting for the first time by choosing from a list of descriptors (e.g., friend, student, and moral person). It is unclear how many people who have a salient moral identity would actually choose “moral person” as their primary descriptor in an initial encounter.

Lastly, Perugini and Leone (2009) looked at the role of explicit and implicit moral identity in predicting deliberative and spontaneous moral action. Explicit moral identity was assessed using self-reports of moral personality characteristics (e.g., honesty), and implicit moral identity using an implicit associations test (IAT) with moral-immoral as the target category and me-others as the paired category. Deliberative moral action was measured as responses to moral dilemmas. Spontaneous moral action was assessed using a behavioral measure where individuals were “accidentally” compensated two lottery tickets rather than one for participation in the study, and the experimenter observed whether or not they returned the “extra” ticket. Explicit moral identity predicted deliberative moral actions while implicit moral identity predicted spontaneous moral actions, in line with dual processing models suggesting somewhat independent explicit and implicit processing linking attitudes and behaviors (Wilson, Lindsey, & Schooler, 2000).

Experimental Studies

Only a few studies provide experimental tests of moral identity. In one such study, Aquino and colleagues (2007) sought to understand how moral identity and moral disengagement might influence affective responses to prisoner abuse. They primed moral identity by having participant

write brief stories about themselves using certain trait terms, with one group being given the nine moral trait terms from Aquino and Reed’s (2002) moral identity measure, and the other group given positive but non-moral traits (e.g., happy). Participants also completed a measure of moral disengagement and, following reading a news article about abuse of Iraqi prisoners by US troops, completed a measure of current negative affect. While the moral identity prime did not directly predict negative affect, there was an interaction with moral disengagement. In the non-prime condition those higher on moral disengagement experienced less negative affect in response to the abuse story; there was no such relation in the prime condition. Priming moral identity thus reduced the effectiveness of moral disengagement.

In a more recent set of four studies, Aquino and colleagues (2009) elucidated the role of situations in links between moral identity and action. In the first study, priming moral identity predicted intention to act morally; however, this effect was stronger in people for whom moral identity was less central to their self (as measured by the internalization scale from their self-report moral identity measure). Furthermore, the link between moral identity centrality and moral action intentions was mediated by the chronic accessibility of the moral identity self-schema. So, when being a moral person is important to one’s identity, moral schemas are more chronically accessible and, thus, priming is less necessary.

Conversely, in a second study, situational factors that elicited self-interest motives decreased the accessibility of the moral identity schema and thus increased intentions to lie—but the effect of self-interest on accessibility was greater for those with high moral identity centrality. The third study showed that magnitude of financial incentives for performance predicted likelihood of lying in a business negotiation for those higher on moral identity centrality, but not for those lower on centrality. This shows that the beneficial effects of moral identity can be overridden by competing situational pressures.

The fourth study combined many elements of these prior studies. To start, some participants

received a moral identity prime, and others did not. Then, in groups of five, participants were involved in a decision task that pitted self-interest against the interests of the group. The task involved a series of 20 decisions. Over time they were given feedback (manipulated by the researchers) suggesting that the others in their group were making self-interested decisions—providing an increasing situational pressure against moral action. The outcome variable was the number of times the participants made cooperative decisions that benefited the group. Initially (early in the sequence of decisions), those high on moral identity cooperated the same regardless of experimental condition, whereas those low on moral identity cooperated more in the moral identity prime condition than the control condition. However, this pattern changed over time as participants received feedback about others acting self-interestedly. By the end of the experiment, for those high on moral identity centrality, the prime condition showed greater cooperation; but, for those low on moral identity centrality there were no differences between the prime and control conditions. So, initially (in the absence of strong self-interest motives) the prime best helped those low on moral identity to cooperate; however, in the face of temptations to defect, the prime helped those with high moral identity stay true to their commitments. In sum, the centrality and accessibility of the moral identity self-schema, and interactions among them, are important in predicting moral action.

Moral Identity Formation

If moral identity is an important component of moral functioning, an understanding of how it develops will be theoretically and practically useful. Each approach to conceptualizing moral identity leads to different ideas about the processes and predictors of moral identity formation. Although relevant theory and research has thus far stemmed largely from character perspectives, developmental work from social cognitive perspectives is emerging.

Moral Identity Formation from Character Perspectives

From character perspectives moral identity formation involves the merging of moral and identity development, rather than a unique developmental system (e.g., Bergman, 2004; Damon, 1984; Hart, 2005). In fact, it may be that morality and identity are two facets of the same developmental system (Davidson & Youniss, 1991). The developmental paths are so congruent that some view moral identity as the goal of both moral and identity development (Blasi, 1993; Damon & Hart, 1992; Erikson, 1968; Moshman, 2005). Thus, although maturity of moral understanding is important in its own right, integration with identity may yield greater motivation and commitment. Moreover, although identity can be grounded on any identity contents, it may be ideal for identity to be based on morality, which enables better relationships with self and others.

Although much of the talk about moral identity formation focuses on adolescence, there is some evidence for the presence of early precursors or forms of moral identity in childhood (see Thompson, 2009). For instance, as children comply with parental demands or rules, they begin to see themselves as “good” boys or girls (Kochanska, 2002). Preschoolers with this moral component to their sense of self are more likely to endorse statements describing themselves as individuals who feel badly about doing the wrong thing, apologize and try to make amends for their own wrongdoing, and are concerned about others’ wrongdoing. Furthermore, the affective bases of moral identity (e.g., empathy, guilt, shame) emerge early in life (Hoffman, 2000; Kochanska, 2002), and their integration with moral ideals and with one’s sense of self are fundamental to moral identity formation. Thus, it seems that certain aspects of a moral sense of self can be identified in childhood, although no work has specifically linked these early childhood processes to adolescent moral identity.

Throughout childhood and adolescence, developments in moral understanding and identity pave the way for further integration of the moral and self systems. Moral understanding

development involves a shift toward interpersonal and ideological thinking about moral issues (Lapsley, 1996; Moshman, 2005). Thus, compared to children, adolescents are more sensitive to the expectations, attitudes, and needs of others, and feel a greater responsibility to others. Additionally, morality for adolescents is more principled in nature, and less focused on external factors like punishment and reciprocity, which are more characteristic of childhood morality. The move toward a morality based on ideology and social responsibility primes the moral system for integration with identity.

Maturation in the identity system involves at least two major shifts that open up the way for integration with morality (Damon, 1984; Damon & Hart, 1992). First, in early adolescence the self becomes understood more from a social personality perspective, emphasizing interactions with others (Damon & Hart, 1988). Many facets of social interaction that can characterize self-understanding at this stage are morally relevant—such as being kind, thoughtful, and generous. Second, during late adolescence, the self becomes more ideologically defined, such as being based on one's moral principles, religious beliefs, or political views (Damon & Hart, 1988). In other words, adolescents construct an ideological theory of themselves that likely includes moral dimensions. Thus, as identity becomes more social and ideological in nature, it is primed for integration with morality.

The integration of morality and self during adolescence and beyond is also enabled by the growing sense of agency and responsibility. Although children have a rudimentary understanding of right and wrong, they feel less responsible for doing what is right than adolescents (e.g., children often anticipate feeling good following transgressions; Nunner-Winkler, 2007). This disconnect of morality from the self may be partly due to an immature sense of agency. Without mature agency, there is less awareness that one can appropriate certain identity contents (e.g., moral principles) as central to one's sense of identity, and distance oneself from other less desirable identity contents (e.g., negative

personal characteristics; Blasi, 2001). Thus, children feel less accountable, less ownership over their actions and identities, and less concern for self-consistency. Instead, children are primarily externally regulated, driven more by impulses or desires, external consequences, and the perceptions of others, than by internal moral standards (Blasi, 2001; cf. Soenens & Vansteenkiste, Chapter 17, this volume). Thus, although early precursors of moral identity are evident in children, it is clear there is still room to grow (Thompson, 2009).

Empirical studies from character perspectives indicate that moral identity formation is associated with certain individual characteristics and developmental contexts, as well as opportunities for moral action (see Hart, 2005). In terms of individual characteristics, academic achievement was a positive predictor while internalizing (e.g., withdrawing and feeling worthless) was a negative predictor of moral identity (as assessed by participation in community service) 2 years later (Hart et al., 1999). Additionally, young adult moral exemplars in social organizations were higher than comparisons on trait agreeableness, and more advanced in moral reasoning, faith development, adult attachment, and identity formation (Matsuba & Walker, 2004). Similarly, Canadian recipients of awards for bravery or altruism differed from comparisons on a number of aspects of their life narratives, including greater salience of themes of personal agency (e.g., self-mastery), connection to others (including childhood attachments to caregivers), positive emotions (e.g., hope and optimism), and overcoming and learning from adversity (Walker & Frimer, 2007). Thus, certain personality characteristics may better enable moral identity formation.

In terms of developmental contexts, religious involvement and effective parenting are predictive of moral identity. Hart and Atkins (2004) found that youth involved in community service (their moral identity proxy) tended to be more religious. Regarding parenting, parental involvement (Hart et al., 1999), parental demandingness (Pratt et al., 2003), and overall family support

(Hart, Atkins, & Ford, 1998) were longitudinal predictors of moral identity. Inductive discipline, which helps children appreciate the consequences of their actions to self and others, is related to the internalization of moral values (Hoffman, 2000). Similarly, parental warmth was positively linked to the greater internalization of moral values into the self (Hardy, Padilla-Walker, & Carlo, 2008).

Colby and Damon's (1992) qualitative moral exemplar study also revealed compelling insights regarding the role of social relationships on moral identity formation. Many of their moral exemplars, when asked to look back on their life paths, noted how both positive and negative relationships had a salient impact on their moral commitments. For instance, parents and other role models provided scaffolding for moral identity formation by channeling or persuading them toward valuing certain values and goals. Even in adulthood, interactions with family and peers which often challenged their worldviews resulted in gradual transformations of their values and goals. On the other hand, interactions with others who held opposing views also led exemplars to transform, articulate, and strengthen their values and goals throughout life. Thus, moral identity formation can occur through social interactions over the life course.

The integration of morality and identity can also be encouraged by providing opportunities for learning and acting on moral principles—such as community service and other prosocial actions. From a character perspective, acting on moral principles is one way individuals learn to value such principles and see themselves as capable of making a difference in the world (Hart, 2005). For example, Youniss and Yate's (1997) ethnographic study of youth volunteering at a soup kitchen as part of a high school social justice class showed that such experiences can transform moral identity in youth. Similarly, two longitudinal studies have shown community involvement (i.e., political involvement, community service, and kindness toward others; Pratt et al., 2003) and involvement in clubs and teams (Hart et al., 1999) to be predictive of moral identity 2 years later.

Social Cognitive Perspectives on Moral Identity Formation

Moral identity formation from social cognitive perspectives hinges on the building of rich networks of chronically accessible moral schemas (Lapsley & Narvaez, 2004). Moral schemas include prototypes, such as one's mental image of what it means to be a moral person, action scripts or event representations for specific morally relevant behaviors, and possible selves. Compared to adolescents, children likely have fewer moral schemas, and those they have may be less elaborate and less accessible for information processing. Thus, they are less able to promptly and appropriately respond to moral situations. In other words, if moral maturity is seen as a form of expertise (Narvaez & Lapsley, 2005), most children are novices.

Little is known about the development of moral prototypes because most work has focused on adults (e.g., Walker & Pitts, 1998). However, a recent study of adolescents provides some evidence for developmental trends in that older teens may have more nuanced descriptions of moral personhood than younger teens (Hardy, Walker, Skalski, Olsen, & Basinger, in press). Further, work on other prototypes (e.g., images of adolescents who drink alcohol) has demonstrated a potential role for the socialization or modeling of prototypes, particularly by parents (Gerrard, Gibbons, Zhao, Russell, & Reis-Bergan, 1999). So, at any given phase of development a person's mental image of what it means to be a moral person seems contingent on cognitive maturity (e.g., language and abstract thought) and social learning.

In addition to the content and structure of moral prototypes (Hardy et al., in press), there is individual variability in the degree to which prototypes are important to the self and cognitively accessible (Aquino et al., 2009). In other words, individuals differ in the extent to which their image of what it means to be a moral person is an important social identity for them (Aquino & Reed, 2002; Stets & Carter, 2006), and this importance should then lead to greater cognitive accessibility for information processing (Bizer &

Kroznick, 2001). As with other social cognitions such as attitudes and values (Grolnick, Deci, & Ryan, 1997), the importance of the moral prototypes to the self can be facilitated or hindered by contexts such as the family environment (Hardy et al., 2010).

While some scholars see moral prototypes as fundamental to moral identity formation (Aquino & Reed, 2002; Stets & Carter, 2006), for others the schemas most critical to moral identity are mental representations of moral actions (Lapsley & Narvaez, 2004; Reimer, 2003). Scripts or event representations of moral actions develop through social experiences children have (e.g., helping someone who is hurt or volunteering at a homeless shelter; Lapsley & Narvaez, 2004). Event representations of enacted or observed moral actions form behavioral scripts in autobiographical memory that make engaging in those behaviors more automatic, and the self-evaluative and moral affect linked to these schemas pull individuals toward or away from similar behaviors in the future (Reimer, 2003). These processes can be facilitated by personal reflection and dialogue with caregivers and others about the meaning of the experiences (Lapsley & Hill, 2009; Lapsley & Narvaez, 2004; Narvaez & Lapsley, 2005; Thompson, 2009).

Lastly, beginning in adolescence individuals also form self-schemas related to the type of person they fear becoming (i.e., feared or dreaded self) and the type of person they want to be (i.e., ideal, desired, or hoped-for self; Markus & Nurius, 1986; Oyserman & James, Chapter 6, this volume). When activated, these *possible selves* serve as goal states that individuals want to move toward or away from. Thus, part of moral identity formation from a social cognitive perspective may involve the construction of possible selves laden with moral meaning or comprised of moral dimensions. For example, there may be individual differences in the amount of overlap between one's mental image of a moral person and one's mental image of the type of person he or she wants to become. This may be one way in which the degree to which morality is integrated into a person's self-system can provide moral motivation.

Models of Moral Identity Formation

A few scholars have proposed models of moral identity formation (Bergman, 2004; Damon, 2000; Hart, 2005). While Bergman and Damon's models likely would be classified under character perspectives, Hart's model may have elements of both character and social cognitive perspectives. All three try to map out processes involved with the integration of morality and identity (Hart's model is the most elaborated and researched and thus will be discussed in more detail here). Hart (2005) includes individual and contextual predictors at two different layers of proximity to moral identity. The more distal layer includes enduring personality characteristics (e.g., empathy) and social structures (e.g., family) that are the background or foundation of child and adolescent development. These factors show considerable stability over time, are relatively resistant to change, and are largely outside of the person's volitional control. The more proximal layer includes factors that more directly influence moral identity formation and ultimately constitute moral identity. These include moral judgments and attitudes, self-understanding and identity commitments, and opportunities for moral action. Such factors are more malleable and are under individual control. Personality and social structures influence moral identity formation primarily through these mediating factors. Additionally, relations between moral identity and the mediating factors (i.e., moral cognitions, self and identity, and opportunity) are reciprocal.

Conclusion

This chapter reviewed theory and research on conceptions of moral identity, outcomes of moral identity, and the processes and predictors of moral identity formation. So, what do we know about moral identity? First, we know that although moral identity entails a unity or integration of a person's sense of identity and morality, there are diverse ways to describe and account for this (Lapsley, 2008; Monin & Jordan, 2009; Shao et al., 2008). Second, we know that moral identity is associated with a range of moral emotions and

actions—this has been demonstrated using diverse methodologies, including experimental design. Third, we know that situational factors can moderate links between moral identity and moral action. Fourth, we have some limited knowledge of potential mechanisms by which moral identity leads to action, such as self-consistency and chronically accessible moral schemas. Fifth, we know that moral identity formation involves some sort of integration of identity formation and moral development processes, although it is still unclear whether these processes are ever distinct. Sixth, we have identified a number of predictors of moral identity, including parenting, religion, personality, moral reasoning, identity status, and involvement in moral and prosocial action, among others.

Skepticism of Moral Identity

Although the research reported above seems promising, moral identity is not without its skeptics. Most criticism of the concept has emerged from social domain theorists (Nucci, 2004; Turiel, 2002). To them, the discrepancy between moral judgment and moral action is not of critical importance. Rather, in a given situation there are multiple judgments at work—moral (i.e., obligatory notions of justice and rights), conventional (i.e., norm-based, socially prescribed issues), prudential (i.e., issues of safety), and personal (i.e., arbitrary notions of one's preferences), and it is the coordination of these judgments that matters most. Thus, they are hesitant to include other personality variables that may unnecessarily complicate morality.

While a more extensive response to Nucci's critique is available elsewhere (Bergman, 2004), we will note a few of our observations here. We appreciate the attention social domain theorists grant to the complexities of thought and behavior in real situations, but they do not sufficiently account for individual differences in labeling certain actions as moral. Further, it is unclear what leads individuals to prioritize a moral judgment over other sorts of judgments. Perhaps those with

a stronger sense of moral identity are more likely to emphasize congruence with moral judgments over conventional, prudential, and personal judgments. Put differently, while the primary focus of social domain theory is to understand the parameters of the moral domain of judgments and actions, moral identity can be viewed as a means to link moral judgments to moral conduct.

Despite this skepticism, we argue that moral identity is an important area of theory and research. First, research on moral identity offers an efficient way to integrate the moral psychology and identity literatures. Second, moral identity demonstrates one way in which self-concept is relevant to, and may motivate, social outcomes. Third, a moral identity framework can integrate and broaden much of the existing work on moral development, which has tended to focus narrowly on single dimensions of morality. Fourth, a moral identity approach brings to the forefront motivational processes that may hold critical clues for understanding moral commitment. Finally, moral identity may lead to promising innovations in moral education, given the potential role of bridging the moral judgment–moral action gap.

Future Directions

Thus far, much understanding has been gained from the research on moral identity but there are important challenges and gaps for future research. First, much more measurement development is needed. Moral identity is generally assessed with self-report surveys (e.g., Hardy et al., 2010), or indirectly, as moral exemplarity (i.e., identifying someone who is a highly moral person; e.g., Matsuba & Walker, 2004) or involvement in community service (e.g., Hart et al., 1999). Surveys may only tap a small part of what it means to have a moral identity, and indirect approaches assume that people who volunteer or are morally exemplary have a moral identity. An exception is the interview measure of moral identity recently developed by Frimer and Walker (2009), which may provide a richer assessment technique. Second, more sophisticated study designs are needed to better infer

cause and effect relations. For example, most studies are either cross-sectional (e.g., Hardy et al., 2010) or include at most two occasions of measurement (e.g., Pratt et al., 2003), limiting the ability to examine development. And third, our knowledge on moral identity is still rather scant. In particular, we know little about cultural differences in moral identity, the neurological bases for moral identity, the degree to which moral identity is stable across situations and time, the processes by which moral identity develops, the mechanisms by which moral identity leads to action, and the interplay of moral cognitions (e.g., moral reasoning) and emotions (e.g., empathy, guilt) in moral identity. Perhaps most importantly, little has been done to compare and contrast, or seek to integrate, the various approaches to moral identity. As theory and research on moral identity continues to progress, we are eager to see what emerges.

Acknowledgments We are indebted to Augusto Blasi, Darcia Narvaez, Lawrence Walker, the editors, and an anonymous reviewer for their feedback on earlier drafts of this manuscript. Additionally, we appreciate Ryan Funk and Michael Williams for help with editing.

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Abstract

This chapter outlines a theoretical backdrop for incorporating research on human values into the study of the self. The chapter takes a sociological, interactional perspective suggesting that socially shaped patterns can be empirically determined underlying the supposedly idiosyncratic notion of “personal identity.” Human beings anchor their sense of self across situations within feelings of right and wrong and the importance they place on various abstract, desirable goals. Values allow the study of this aspect of personal identity and allow bridges to be built with the long-standing sociological literature on the relationship of social structure and individuals’ values. I illustrate how this focus on the moral dimension of values operates at two well-established levels of the self – cognition and emotion – and sets the stage for the broad development of a theory of the moral actor over time.

In the range of sociological assumptions about human nature, scholars rarely focus on the moral dimension of social actors. This aspect of personhood has been at the root of philosophical discussion for millennia and is important in many areas of psychological thought. However, current theories of the self have not paid adequate attention to the self’s moral aspects, despite early work by James (1892), Mead (1934), and others that explicitly called attention to the moral dimensions of social action. Advances in the understanding of values, long dormant but

recently undergoing a partial resurgence, anchor the growing understanding of the moral self (see Hardy & Carlo, [Chapter 19](#), this volume). Individuals’ value structures represent moral intuitions about prohibited and desired behaviors that are only sometimes able to be articulated (e.g., Rokeach, 1973). Incorporating values into the self provides a mechanism through which consistency and inconsistency in social action are plausible and predictable, actors’ internal experiences are linked to social structure, and cognitive and emotional dimensions are integrated within one’s overall sense of self.

Values represent empirically accessible mechanisms that frame actors’ moral intuitions and narrative self-constructions in terms of the actors themselves as moral beings. Values represent a powerful mechanism through which one’s

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location in the social environment becomes internalized, whereby demonstrated commonalities in social outlooks based on social position or group identity shape the self (see Hitlin & Piliavin, 2004). That social structures are enacted and recreated through individual action is widely understood, but with a few exceptions (e.g., Blasi, 1984) the moral dimension of this activity has been neglected compared to piecemeal aspects of the self like self-esteem and self-efficacy, what Tesser, Crepaz, Beach, Cornell, and Collins (2000) refer to as the self-zoo. Individuals develop an intuitive, reflexively accessible sense of noble and ignoble goals that judge, evaluate, and legitimate behavior within situations or upon reflection afterward. Over time, we construct patterned understandings of ourselves as existing within moral frameworks that constrain desirable action. Values form a core of the self, become instantiated through intuitions and self-narratives, and frame actors' interpretations, judgments, and action.

This chapter posits a sociological perspective on the core psychological issue of morality. Sociology, once the driving discipline for the study of values (see Spates, 1983; Wuthnow, 2008), currently is characterized by a surprising shortage of exploration about morality (Calhoun, 1991; Holstein & Gubrium, 2000; Smith, 2003). Values, viewed as an internalized representation of cultural moral ideals, may differ across societies but do so within a bounded range shaped by evolutionarily necessary aspects that stem from life in surviving social groups (Schwartz, 1992). Understood sociologically, a sense of personal identity anchored in values captures internalized representations of social affiliation, location, or group membership. This chapter incorporates morality into notions of identity by tracing the contours of a sociologically sensitive model of the self's moral core – that is, personal identity. This perspective offers at least two important contributions to the study of the moral aspects of identity. First, compared to the typical focus on altruism, values offer the possibility of a broader understanding of what is considered moral. Second, values have been extensively linked to individuals' social-structural position

and group membership, suggesting that values are a core mechanism through which social positions become internalized. For example, social class, coupled with one's occupational type, shapes the values parents teach to their children (e.g., Kohn, 1959; Kohn & Schooler, 1983). Thus, this approach links identity to social structure through the development of personal values.

In this chapter, I defend the proposition – certainly accepted in philosophical work, if less commonly in social psychological theories – that personal identity is intrinsically moral. Additionally, it is a concept that bridges two understandings of identity, what I summarize elsewhere as “ego” versus “social” (Hitlin & Lancianese, 2008). The “ego” dimension draws on traditionally psychological scholars, such as Erikson (1968) and Piaget (1960), and captures a sense of coherence across life experiences (see also Côté, 1997; Kroger & Marcia, Chapter 2, this volume); the “social” dimension is based on either roles or social commonalities among members of groups (see Serpe & Stryker, Chapter 10, this volume; Spears, Chapter 9, this volume). Synthesizing these two dimensions of identity through the concept of values offers the empirical possibility of studying the self's moral dimension. After explaining the utility of values for studying the moral self, I illustrate how this focus on the moral dimension of self at two well-established levels of the self – cognition and emotion – allows for the broad development of a theory of the moral actor over time.

The Problem: The Current Amoral Conception of the Social Actor

A sociological understanding of the self largely traces back to the work of George Herbert Mead (1934, 1938), who is lesser known for an admittedly brief focus on the ways in which moral values become implicated within social interaction. This strand is also found in Weber's (1922/1978) concern with individuals providing action with meaning. Within his typology of action, Weber highlighted “value-rational” actions, indicating that such actions make sense

to actors given the moral principle they are pursuing; suicide bombers are acting morally from a particular perspective. This concern with the moral dimension of social actors and social action has largely faded from current sociological theorizing (Smith, 2003), though it remains active in one notable research tradition in psychology (see Hardy & Carlo, Chapter 19, this volume).

Whereas “ego” identity scholars – who tend to be psychologists – focus on inner sameness and continuity within the individual (see Kroger & Marcia, Chapter 2, this volume), the sociological equivalent is rooted in the notion of the self. “Self” is a generalized term often employed without carefully delineated referents (Katzko, 2003), yet is ubiquitous in sociological theorizing. The self, as employed in these theoretical traditions, is the internalized, subjective-yet-agentic link between individuals and social environments (see Joas, 2000). It represents an important mechanism through which social positions become internalized and translated into situated behavior. The self is a socially constructed product of symbolic actors interacting within social environments (see Stryker & Serpe, Chapter 10, this volume)¹ and allows for a sense of agentic control that can be absent from personality-based models of behavior. As decades of data demonstrate, supposedly stable personality attributes are not able to explain empirical evidence for vast intra-individual variation in behaviors across situations and over the life course (Mischel, 2004). Sociologists are often left, however, with a peculiar conception of the individual as a holder of separate social and role identities and rarely as a cohesive person (Hewitt, 1989); sociology is rarely concerned with the Eriksonian notion of continuity across roles. Sociologists have not spent enough time theorizing “how people shape their doings in each given situation to have meaning as they move among situations” (Katz, 1999, p. 324).² Put differently, with the exception of the tradition of symbolic interactionism proffered by Blumer (1969) and his adherents, sociological models tend to be less concerned with individual variation and initiation of action than with their overwhelmingly structurally patterned regularities as observed in behavior over time.

The term “identity” is often employed as a placeholder for other social processes (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000), and the use of this term to mean so many different things makes cross-disciplinary dialogue quite difficult. Some authors in the “ego” identity tradition, notably Erikson (1968), discuss moral concerns as constituting a portion of people’s reported sense of coherence (e.g., Dunkel, 2005), but this conception finds its clearest articulation in the work of the philosopher Charles Taylor (1988). As I will try to show throughout the present chapter, values offer the opportunity for future empirical work to refine these theoretical claims in light of the vast research literature (summarized below). Actors’ moral senses are frameworks for evaluation of self and others, and offer a cohesive cognitive–emotional core that allows for both consistency *and* situationally influenced variation in social action across the life course.

Other scholars focus on a “moral identity” construct (see Hardy & Carlo, Chapter 19, this volume; Stets & Carter, 2006), but there are reasons to prefer a notion of the moral self based in values rather than in “moral identity.” The concept of moral identity defines morality along conventional, prosocial lines (emphasizing qualities such as honesty, conscientiousness, and altruism). This approach is imbued with cultural presuppositions that distract one from the exploration of the *range* of moral motivations. In the “moral identity” approach, people who are motivated by, for instance, self-interest or hedonism are considered “un-”moral. But reifying a single brand of morality, no matter how common, precludes the possibility that some people orient themselves toward unconventional moral codes that comprise significant aspects of their self-concept and that guide their resulting behavior. For instance, an individual who is strongly focused on achievement – and who “steps over others” to reach the top – might view his or her actions as quite moral, though he or she would not score well on traditional measures of moral identity. By focusing on “the” moral identity, we overlook the conflicting goals and values that social actors face.

The Value of Values

Human beings make moral judgments, differentiating between behaviors that “ought” (or “ought not”) to occur. A moral judgment is more fundamental than simply labeling something “good” or “bad”; it carries an implication of what the world and its inhabitants should be like. Morality is a broad concept, one that constitutes the “inhibitive” and “proactive” elements of moral agency (Bandura, 1999). Early on in socialization, we acquire a basic sense that certain actions are taboo or forbidden. Alternatively, we can discuss morality as focused on something laudable, such as the virtues debated by philosophers. Although a society’s set of prohibitions is likely circumscribed, the list of proactive goals is broad and ranges from concrete to abstract goals (e.g., peace, justice, self-fulfillment, or tradition) that overlap and even contradict. Values – “conceptions of the desirable” (in Parsons’s (1937) term) – represent the proactive aspect of the moral agent, namely those ideals that she or he views as most worthwhile to pursue.

Values refer to variably important goals that transcend situations and that act as guiding principles for people’s (or other social entities; Schwartz, 1994) decisions and behavior. Values represent orientations toward solving the problems that social groups necessarily face, such as individual autonomy, preserving the social fabric, and managing relations with the natural and social worlds (Schwartz, 2004b). Values refer and relate to many different domains (such as work and family), attitudes, ideologies, and belief systems (Maio, Olson, Bernard, & Luke, 2003; Rohan, 2000). Scholarly interest in values appears to have undergone something of a resurgence (for overviews, see Hitlin & Piliavin, 2004; Karp, 2000; Maio et al., 2003; Marini, 2000; Rohan, 2000; Schwartz, 2004a; Wuthnow, 2008).

Schwartz has studied values around the world and consistently found that people in over 70 nations (Schwartz, 2004b) recognize the following 10 values, each defined in terms of the motivational goal that underlies it (Schwartz & Bilsky, 1987, 1990). The primary content of a value is the

type of goal or motivational concern it expresses, and these goals map quite nicely onto notions of morally laudable behaviors and outcomes.

Achievement: competitive personal success

Hedonism: self-centered sensual gratification

Stimulation: risk taking and adventure

Self-direction: autonomous thought and action

Universalism: tolerance and concern for welfare of all others

Benevolence: welfare for those with whom one is in frequent contact

Conformity: self-restraint, subordinating one’s inclinations to others’ expectations

Tradition: traditional and religious activities

Security: stability, safety, and harmony of society, relationships, and self

Power: status and prestige; control people and resources

One other value that Schwartz terms “spirituality” is inconsistently located across samples, and thus is omitted from his basic scheme. These values can be arrayed in a circular fashion, whereby values that are adjacent to each other (power and achievement) share aspects and reflect opposite goals compared with others in the circle (e.g., conformity is the opposite of hedonism). This general array has been supported by different methodological approaches (for details, see Kasser & Ryan, 1996; Oishi, Schimack, Diener, & Suh, 1998; Pakizeh, Gebauer, & Maio, 2007). Because of its cross-cultural support and psychological depth, I will draw on this conceptual approach toward values for my argument, rather than drawing from other influential approaches (e.g., Hechter, Ranger-Moore, Jasso, & Horne, 1999; Inglehart & Baker, 2000; Rokeach, 1973).³

Values are best understood as organized components that mutually constrain each other (Hodges & Geyer, 2006); values are, in a theoretical sense, a zero-sum game, with larger focus on one dimension suggesting a resultantly less important focus on their opposites. Values’ universal recognition stems from the commonalities of human social interaction across different contexts and cultures (Schwartz & Bilsky, 1987, 1990). For example, every social group needs to cooperate, develop a minimal amount of trust,

and deal with other necessary aspects of collective survival. Particular cultures may prioritize the values differently, but the list of values is cross-culturally consistent. Moreover, values are not the sole determinants of behavior. Values exist at the global, ideological level and thus represent distal causal forces affecting individual action to the extent an individual has internalized those values (Eyal et al., 2009; Schwartz, 1996). They are more abstract (Howard, 1995; Rokeach, 1973) and durable (Konty & Dunham, 1997) than are attitudes and thus are even more distally related to action (see also Maio & Olson, 2000).

Values situate us in moral space. They are cognitive–emotional frameworks underlying self-perception and social interaction. Values have stable (but not fixed) properties that allow conceptualization of the self as unified yet situationally enacted, with space for change across the life course. Values are symbolic tools that reinforce our experiences of coherence across social and group identities as well as across social situations. Importantly, values are empirically measurable, leading to the potential to empirically investigate the moral self.

Values also involve a cognitive component (Rokeach, 1973), but as William James (1892) points out, we do not experience values as cold, cognitive imperatives. Values include strong motivational affect because of their perceived importance. Values operate dynamically through action (Joas, 2000) and represent an important influence on behavior within and across situations (e.g., Blankenship & Wegener, 2008). Their emotional, intuitive aspect – stemming from the fundamental perception of self-evident “rightness” – becomes important in understanding the place of values within the self.

The accumulated scholarship on values, and on moral development more broadly, posits both universal elements of, and culture-specific variation in, their development and exercise. The self has similar universal and culture-specific properties (e.g., Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1995), suggesting ways to merge literatures on the self and values. Scholars have suggested the importance of values for the self (Gecas,

2000; Kasser, 2002; Rohan, 2000; Smith, 1991; Turner, 1968), but these implications have not been extensively theorized nor empirically studied. Put differently, although there is cultural variation in the symbolic content from which people derive their sense of self, there are also universal aspects of personhood. Reflexivity, the ability for a social actor to view herself as others see her, is a fundamental, universal property of the self (Callero, 2003; Mead, 1934; Wiley, 1994). The self as the seat of individual agency not only is limited to a modern, Western conception of self but stems from the fundamentally social nature of human actors. Three trans-cultural human experiences form the basis for selfhood (Baumeister, 1999): (a) reflexive consciousness, (b) interpersonal being (member of groups and relationships), and (c) self as executive functioning agent (making choices).

Personal Identity and the Self

The concept of personal identity (Deaux, 1992; Hewitt, 1989; Hitlin, 2003) becomes the anchor for a synthesis of self and values. In contrast to social identities, personal identity comprises those supposedly idiosyncratic aspects of an individual’s experiences, temperament, and development. For instance, there are many similarities between two people occupying the role of “student.” But they differ in their sense of personal identity – the history, experiences, orientations, and behavioral intentions that characterize them like no other individuals.

One’s personal identity is experienced as constitutive of one’s sense of self. To change an aspect of one’s history or core orientations is to fundamentally change the person; it is something different than changing a hairstyle or sports team allegiance. Were I to value something different, to suddenly find something immoral that I previously believed was moral, I would experience a fundamental shift in my sense of who I “really” am. Personal identity is intertwined with a sense of authenticity (see Heppner & Kernis, Chapter 15, this volume; Soenens & Vansteenkiste, Chapter 17, this

volume; Waterman, [Chapter 16](#), this volume), which is a primary motivational aspect of the self (Gecas, [1986](#), [1991](#)). Experiences of authenticity, which are intensively real and personal, are socially shaped (e.g., Turner, [1976](#)). We feel a range of emotions, reactions, and perceive social feedback as a consequence of our behavior. Translating into classic debates about the essentialist versus constructivist self, I adopt a constructivist position, anchoring those constructions within social groups, institutions, and cultures more than might be typical in many psychological circles. Given that these experiences are anchored in values, however, there are likely biological elements (e.g., Bilsky & Schwartz, [1994](#)) that interact with social-structural forces (and constraints). The key issue is that these feelings are constructed over the course of one's life based on one's interactions, and those interactions are socially shaped and patterned. Even though these are socially constructed, they feel like universal truths (Joas, [2000](#)).

From a sociological perspective, these feelings are developed by and constructed within social commitments, the basis of the "social" identity approach. People feel inauthentic if they fail to live up to important social commitments; a teacher who fails to instruct students well, or a father whose children become disciplinary problems, is far from agnostic about shortcomings of performing their roles. However, people do not dispassionately analyze such violations as simple mistakes; rather we feel that we have committed significant violations to ourselves and others. The accompanying negative emotions (see Tangney, Steuwig, & Mashek, [2007](#)) signify disturbed moral valences and the enactment or violation of important self-meanings (Blasi, [1999](#)). These moral reactions, anchored in our emotions, constitute our sense of personal identity. Moral outlooks are experienced as constitutive of who one is both as an individual and as a member of a community. As I endeavor to demonstrate, cross-culturally recognized values form the basis for individual moral orientations (Nisan, [1984](#); Schwartz, [2004a](#)); values are derived socially but are experienced personally.

Personal identity organizes the orientations and experiences that constitute each individual as a unique entity. It is the internal barometer from which patterned senses of right, wrong, and the desirable are developed. Personal identity suggests the possibility – an important Western belief – of an enduring, patterned, cross-situational moral orientation, an essential self that exists outside of situations. It signifies non-conscious intuitions that provide feedback about the moral propriety of actual or imagined interactions and behaviors. Moral intuitions involve "the sudden appearance in consciousness, or at the fringe of consciousness, of an evaluative feeling (like-dislike, good-bad) about the character or actions of a person, without any conscious awareness of having gone through steps of search, weighing evidence, or inferring a conclusion" (Haidt & Bjorklund, [2008](#), p. 188). Personal identity involves what MacIntyre ([1981](#)) refers to as "continuities of each individual's history" that lead to a sense of integration that is vital for understanding people as moral agents over time. Personal identity is an umbrella term for pre-reflective patterns of habit and intuitions that are based in fundamental proactive and prohibitive moral orientations. Actions are a mixture of personal dispositions and situational influences, but there are patterns in how we judge people and situations. Some individuals are more predisposed to "see" situations as calling for benevolent action, whereas others are more likely to interpret the world through a window of self-interestedness (e.g., Simpson & Willer, [2008](#)). Rather than appealing to vague intuitions, placing values at the center of personal identity offers the opportunity to anchor these perceptions within a sociological understanding of the self, based on extensive literatures about how social class, occupation, family, and other aspects of context influence individual values (see Hitlin & Piliavin, [2004](#)).

Moral situations are inherently ambiguous; otherwise, behavioral scripts would be obvious (Walker, [2000](#)). However, scholars suggest that what might be ambiguous to an outsider seems straightforward for those who are moral

exemplars (Colby & Damon, 1992). This suggests that, contrary to purely situationist accounts of human behavior (e.g., Kelley et al., 2003), individual perceptions matter. The argument advanced here is that a portion of these perceptions involves individual values, shaped by cultural values, that contribute to explaining why different people attend to different aspects of their social environments. These principles – of which values are theoretically and empirically at the core – operate as cognitive–emotional filters for incoming information. We cognitively notice “facts” that fit with our precognitions, and we are motivated (in part) to verify our view of ourselves (Gregg, Sedikides, & Gebauer, Chapter 14, this volume; Swann, 1983). These frameworks are not deterministic of future action; people innovate and shift habits throughout the life course. But our personal identity, anchored in values, dictates what “facts” we observe or what arguments seem persuasive in moral situations. These informational assumptions (Turiel, 2002) shape judgment and action, both when time allows for deliberation and when sudden responses are necessitated (Berzonsky, Chapter 3, this volume). An advantage of viewing personal identity through the lens of values is that values consist of both emotional and cognitive components. Interaction is typically not guided by fully articulated thoughts, but rather by vague notions and internal sensations. These moral intuitions are anchored in cross-situationally stable value structures, which themselves are anchored in social networks, communities, and a wider culture. We can ask people to report their abstract values apart from situational context, as the Schwartz empirical method does, which leads to a trans-situational sense of personal identity removed from context. Our sense of right and wrong exists apart from and outside of concrete situations that may test those senses. The empirically interesting questions, however, revolve around which aspects of personal identity are implicated in different situations. To what extent, we might ask, does an individual’s strong valuing of benevolence (caring about others) shape actions across contexts where demonstrating such caring might be difficult?

Blasi (1984) suggests that moral judgment is largely a cognitive process motivated by a desire for self-consistency (see also Schwalbe, 1991). If we see ourselves in a particular way, actions that fail to live up to that self-definition will lead to uncomfortable feelings of inconsistency. This is part of the story, but it also represents an overly cognitive version of models of the self and action. The place of moral intuition also involves one’s self; we want our intuitions and cognitions to match our view of ourselves as moral beings. When a social object (e.g., an action, an issue, or a person’s behavior) strikes us as morally wrong or laudable, we feel something deeper than a simple cognitive evaluation, something experienced as more central to ourselves. Erikson’s (1968) work notably focused on the complex interrelation of social life, concrete situations, internal feelings, and a sense of personal continuity. But I am positing a firmer internal barometer of personal identity – based on relatively stable values – across situations than Erikson did (see Stevens, 2008). From my perspective, it is not the case that one has more or less a sense of personal identity, as Erikson postulated (Kroger, 2000; see Kroger & Marcia, Chapter 2, this volume), but that this sense of identity can be anchored in different values. This leads to another set of empirical questions – the extent to which some people might hold no strong values, and as such are relatively less motivated by particular social outcomes. The thesis advanced here proposes that all people have some values that are important and thus that it makes little sense to say a given person has a “stronger” personal identity than do others. Someone else may more strongly be focused on hedonistic goals than I am, but I in turn may value universalistic ends. This differs from the sense that someone else might be “more” of a Yankees fan than I am, in theory, but these questions require empirical investigation.

Personal identity is thus a combination of personality factors and self-reflected understandings that circumscribe potential action. When a social situation becomes odd or problematic, we do not simply try to maximize utility; as decades of sociological work in the tradition of Erving Goffman (e.g., 1959) suggest, we attempt

to “repair” situations based on the identities we are claiming in that context. Interactional claims and biographical histories are linked with our moral intuitions that discriminate among various behavioral choices as feeling “like us” or not. We may act in a manner distinct from our typical activity, but later on discuss how we “weren’t ourselves.” Values and moral intuitions form the referent for adjudications between actions that “are” and “are not” ourselves (see Turner, 1976 on a related point). Values serve as important emotional *and* cognitive referents about what is a “real” sense of self, and they are linked to and shaped by important social identities. Most of the time, our situated self is circumscribed enough, both by social–structural pressures and by individual biography, that our subjective sense of proper behavior is relatively straightforward. It is precisely in situations of role ambiguity, where it is not clear what action is proscribed by the relevant social identity, where we see the importance of our moral horizons (see Hitlin & Elder, 2007); when situated identities do not suffice, we fall back on our value-based personal identity to adjudicate between better and worse behavioral options.

Personal Identity, Moral Horizons, and Narrative Self-understanding

This moral core is self-reflexively accessible through examining intuitive emotional reactions. To communicate such experiences, however, we translate them – to ourselves and others – into narratives. These narratives are the articulation of core emotional experiences of aligning oneself with valued principles (see McAdams, Chapter 5, this volume). This moral sense remains consistent across social and role identities and serves as the barometer that individuals use to guide situated behavior. We have a variety of legitimating discourses available to justify actions (Bandura, 1991; Rokeach, 1973; Swidler, 2001), but these discourses are not randomly chosen. Core intuitions tap into beliefs and feelings about the world, and often become narrated only after the fact – in a pragmatic fashion – when we reflect

upon our actions. Reflected feedback becomes appropriated to ourselves and forms the basis for moral feelings (e.g., pride or shame). If we ask people to describe their personal identity, they will present a narrative based on feelings, roles, group memberships, and cultural discourses. This version – or any point-in-time version – of the self involves what Wegner (2002) refers to the self as a “public relations agent,” convincing others (and ourselves) of a plausible coherence through narrative (see also Bamberg, Schiffrin, & De Fina, Chapter 8, this volume; Lewis, 1997). We make up a story about how our actions, across a variety of situations, fit together, forming what John Dewey (1922) suggested was a “useful fiction” of ourselves. Contrary to many “essentialist” perspectives, from the perspective I am advocating here, personal identity is not a “thing” but rather a loop of thought, feeling, intention, and memory (Dennett, 2003). Morality is, I have been arguing, at the core of this loop, the filter through which our moral horizons comprise an apparently stable, though actually flexible, sense of self. We need stances on moral issues and principles to develop a sense of personal integrity (e.g., Honneth, 2005).

McAdams (Chapter 5, this volume) offers a psychologically sensitive model linking narrative to these various thoughts, feelings, and identities based on social commitments and group identification (see also McAdams, 1995, 2001). Narrative operates on top of what McAdams terms “basic traits” and “characteristic adaptations” (goals, values, beliefs, and life concerns). McAdams stresses that a personal narrative is necessary to understand ourselves across time; we tell stories about where we are, where we have been, and how the past and the present relate to where we are going. These stories are not simply self-generated but draw from the various cultural plots and understandings that are available to us (e.g., Somers & Gibson, 1994).

Personal identity, our sense of who we are and are not, is not a fixed entity. Feelings, intuitions, and emotions may not always neatly line up with beliefs, goals, and ideals. However, in constructing narratives, we can create an illusion of linearity and coherence across the disparate

experiences, situations, and roles that make up a human life. We edit, omit, and reconstruct events to create such a narrative that allows us to seamlessly take today's self and link it to yesterday's self.⁴ These narratives frame, reflect, and reciprocally shape the self's moral vantage point, what Charles Taylor (1989) refers to as moral horizons (see also Holstein & Gubrium, 2000). The moral aspect of personal identity, anchored in values, frames the intuitions we have and the narratives we create about these intuitions.

Taylor's "horizon" metaphor is instructive. He describes "identity" in the Eriksonian sense of the word (elsewhere Taylor uses the term "self" in its broader social science understanding), as the portion of self without which the world would not be intelligible. Our identity commitments, Taylor suggests, provide frameworks "within which they can determine where they stand on questions of what is good, or worthwhile, or admirable, or of value (1994, pp. 27–28). It makes no sense to talk about a person without understanding those goals and values through which she or he makes sense of her or his life (Smith, 2003), what Damasio (1999) refers to as a "continuity of reference." Taylor's work, while not fully sociological, builds to a more-than-cognitive view of the self by focusing on the importance of moral horizons (Calhoun, 1991).

Values serve as primary horizons for shaping individuals' sense of self. Over time, consistencies in moral outlook shape feeling, perception, and action within interactions and act as cognitive–emotional signposts for novel situations. Certain lines of action feel "right" and are experienced as genuine expressions of our self. When situationally plausible, we engage in actions that reflect our values. Over time, repeated observations of actions and consequences contribute to a narrative self-understanding that, in turn, frames future situations. This core sense is not re-constituted from scratch in each situation; rather, it acts spontaneously but not randomly. Situational pressures may dampen one's ability to act in line with core values, yet these values still serve as internal barometers, horizons, or instantaneous referents through which we orient ourselves to situations;

we feel "real" when we discuss our values with others (Pronin, Fleming, & Steffel, 2008). Moral horizons constitute primary frames by which selves obtain coherence.

Values are realized in moments of self-formation (Joas, 2000). They shape the evaluative standards through which we situate ourselves in moral space and reflexively evaluate ourselves, our actions, and others. Values are what Taylor (1994) calls "hypergoods," meta-analytical schemata for adjudicating about social reality, the ways we decide which of two "good" things may be best. For example, I may like ice cream and being fit. Hypergoods help us figure out which good is most personally pressing, though situations may make one or the other momentarily salient (Ainslie, 2001). It makes no sense to discuss personal identity without understanding these evaluative structures, fundamentally social but experienced as a vital part of the self. Values imbue objects with positive or negative valences and, as such, determine (or at least weight) decisions made within action (e.g., Feather, 1992).

Mechanisms of the Moral Aspects of Personal Identity

We can start to refine potential mechanisms through which personal values influence situated behavior and narrative self-understandings that, in turn, influence self-construction over the life course. Although values are typically measured as ideals, people experience them physiologically (e.g., Batson, Engel, & Fridell, 1999); neurologists suggest that values anchor the experience of oneself as a distinct entity (Damasio, 1999). The primary nature of a morally orienting self suggests a predisposition for the very act of valuing, a property found in children (e.g., Kagan, 1994 [1984]), and thus something that – like the notion of the self – appears as characteristic of our species.

Developmentally, the internalization of moral standards becomes more and more reflected in an individual's notion of self (e.g., Kohlberg, 1981). In children, morality and the self begin as two

separate conceptual systems, but these two developmental domains become increasingly interrelated during adolescence (Keller & Edelstein, 1993). Younger children are especially sensitive to the opinions of others, but typically by age 10, children understand and make use of abstract principles like justice and equality. By adolescence, they accept more responsibility for others' welfare and begin to assemble personal theories of morality, though they often hold too rigidly to these theories with limited recognition of nuance. By adulthood, these personal moral systems are assimilated into the person's sense of self (Damon, 1984).

Research supporting the social intuitionist model (SIM) (Haidt, 2001) demonstrates that moral reactions occur much more quickly than can be explained through cognitive processing; only after experiencing a moral intuition do we search for cognitive rationalizations that can support that judgment. We have immediate reactions to the rightness, wrongness, or general desirability of objects and actions. The SIM focuses on instantaneous moral judgments and ways in which these core reactions can, given the right social circumstances, shift over time (Haidt & Joseph, 2004). Moral reasoning and judgment do not shift solely based on logic or self-reflection (though philosophers might argue otherwise), but rather social engagement, dialogue, and potentially peer pressure. The notion of moral intuitions has received neurological support (Damasio, 1999; Greene & Haidt, 2002) and fits with anthropological suggestions that "gut" moral feelings are similar to the way primates demonstrate empathy (de Waal, 1996, 2005). A strength of incorporating the SIM is its focus on the social aspect of changes in intuitions over time. Our moral intuitions are constitutive of who we are, but as personal identity changes over time, so too can these intuitions. Empirical evidence supports the idea that shifts in moral intuitions occur through important others' attempts to persuade us (Haidt, 2003). These attempts operate not only at a cognitive level – the way in which some psychologists argue that morality develops (e.g., Colby & Kohlberg, 1984; Kohlberg & Candee, 1984; Kohlberg, 1981;

Nunner-Winkler, 1993) – but also through sheer social pressures.

"Moral exemplars," individuals who exhibit extremely prosocial behaviors (Colby & Damon, 1995; Damon & Hart, 1992), inform this discussion. People selected as having highly developed moral (prosocial) senses (e.g., American Civil Rights pioneers, those who opposed the Nazis) report that their actions in moral situations felt obligatory; they did not suggest they had deliberated over their laudable behaviors. Both their interpretations and their intuitions contributed to their behaving in ways that we consider moral. Some people, based on their internal moral horizons, are predisposed to interpret and react to situations along prosocial lines (e.g., Monroe & Epperson, 1994). Such individuals receive moral "credit" from others for actions that they, themselves, felt were obligatory. These individuals report broader concern for the welfare of others than is typical (Colby & Damon, 1995). We might expect that they would score high on universalistic values. When moral concerns are invoked, action is not seen as optional; self-horizons are cognitively and intuitively felt as obligatory.

This conception addresses issues regarding situations that do not align neatly with prior expectations. Social identities circumscribe routine behavior (see Serpe & Stryker, Chapter 10, this volume), but some situations require novel reactions or choices. Roles may conflict, multiple life options may be ahead of us, and we may face situations where multiple value systems are relevant. Such choices are rarely straightforward and often engage conflicting values (Turiel, 2002), and this is a basic part of social life (Berlin, 1990). Morality involves deciding among various moral demands, not just the extent to which we privilege prosocial behaviors and ideals. By incorporating a notion of values as part of a cross-culturally recognizable, socially derived system of possible moral preferences, we create a fuller picture of social life. In America's abortion debate, for example, personal freedom – a core American value – is at the root of both sides' framings; the issue is which person's autonomy, mother or unborn child, takes precedence. The

debate is not about the value itself but rather about the informational assumptions that dovetail with actors' moral intuitions about the rightness or wrongness of each side of the debate or about whose needs are more important. The analytical question becomes answering how people decide from among competing values alongside their interpretive habits, beliefs, and informational assumptions.

Conclusion

Ancient thinkers privileged morality as humanity's distinguishing feature (Kagan, 2004). Social scientists (with notable exceptions, discussed here) have largely moved away from Durkheim's goal of a sociology of morality (but see Hitlin & Vaisey, 2010). Perspectives and empirical tools useful for this enterprise are scattered across social science disciplines, and integrating them would be of great help in constructing a sociology of morality. This chapter offers an attempt in this direction, to allow analysis of actors' moral dimension based on a proper understanding of the place of values within personal identity. Individuals' values form moral self-horizons, framed by moral intuitions and informational assumptions. These horizons contribute to a sense of having a core self and shift the focus toward understanding individuals' achieved sense of coherence (echoed in McAdams' work in [Chapter 5](#), this volume).

Values constitute a vital aspect of the core of the self from which people agentically assemble and structure important social identities to create the "useful fiction" of a coherent self. There are pre-reflective consistencies in the frameworks through which we define situations that lead to consistencies in behavior and intuitive responses across situations. Of course, members of a society are differentially able to select themselves into situations that will allow them to develop (and will allow others to ascribe to them) various social identities. These social groupings have patterned influences on value formation and thus individuals' moral frameworks. Some of what we mean by "working class," or "Hispanic," certainly has

to do with shared horizons of interpretation and understanding of their positions in social space (e.g., Waters, 1990).

Morality has its abstract aspects, the things philosophers and legal scholars debate, but to realize values in any meaningful way, action is required (Joas, 1985; Mead, 1932). Over time, we create coherent self-narratives from culturally available symbolic material. This implicates our personal identity, which is – at its core – a moral entity, framed by values providing cognitive–emotional horizons through which we understand and evaluate ourselves and others (see also Archer, 2000). A pragmatically informed model of the self posits values as the anchor for personal identity as well as the ongoing, habitual responses incorporated into one's moral character. This character develops as we enact social roles, within and across situations.

Embedded within this chapter is a wider call for the study of morality to go beyond a focus on conventionally prosocial behavior to explore structural patterns in moral codes and their appropriation into the self. The inherent prosocial bias of the term "moral" limits exploration. Virtues like truthfulness and modesty are not universally privileged, nor do most ethical systems advocate blind adherence to these virtues. We have a great deal to learn about moral development within societies, including patterned variation across groups within that society. Future work on identity should focus on these patterns and processes. We can learn more about social preconditions that socially structured relationships have on moral development, as well as how these processes may be culturally and historically variable (Calhoun, 1991). We should explore how, when, and under what circumstances do individuals and social groups identify with certain values over others.

Finally, moral aspirations are never fully attainable. They signify goals that humans consistently struggle to achieve (Calhoun, 1994). These struggles, and the ideals that motivate them, are largely the essence of the human condition. The study of values offers

the possibility of beginning to systematize the links between self and society, social role and group membership, and the variety of potentially competing moral ideals that people face in their lives.

Notes

1. This is a cursory overview of the literature on the self. For further reviews, see Callero (2003) and Owens (2003).
2. Let me note, following Kohn (1989), that these criticisms of sociological approaches do not exempt psychological approaches from their own lack of focus on core human concerns, like obscuring issues of social structure, power, ethnicity, and other influences on personal identity.
3. See any of the Schwartz citations for details on empirical measurement.
4. The editors of the handbook suggest that scholars like Erikson or Marcia are looking at the self from a “macro” point of view, theorizing a unification that is more complicated the closer one looks, much as objects look solid until viewed through a microscope whereby they are clearly not solid at all.

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Abstract

Interest in spirituality, and its relation and relevance to identity as per the theories of Erikson and Marcia, has been on the increase in recent years. While the available studies suggest that spirituality has import for identity development, the literature is somewhat limited due to problems with conceptualization and measurement of spirituality. This chapter attempts to address this problem by introducing readers to the empirically derived five-dimensional model of spirituality developed by MacDonald (2000). After overviewing MacDonald's measurement model and some of its supporting research, attention is then given to the creation of a new biopsychosocial model of spirituality that integrates all five major components of the construct and explicates how they relate to, and are affected by, spiritual identity development. To foster scientific study, the chapter ends with a proposal for a three-dimensional model of spiritual identity which identifies biosocial factors influencing the emergence of spiritual identity.

Although spirituality and identity are intimately linked in the spiritual and religious literature (e.g., see Byrom, 1990; Cleary, 1989; Suzuki, 1957; Suzuki, Fromm, & DeMartino, 1960; Wilber, 1980), scientific investigation into their relation and relevance to each other has not garnered much attention until fairly recently (e.g., Chae, Kelly, Brown, & Bolden, 2004; Lerner, Roeser, & Phelps, 2008; Poll & Smith, 2003;

Templeton & Eccles, 2006; Zinder, 2007). This is not to say that the topic has been ignored by psychologists or other social scientists; ideas regarding the relation of identity to spirituality and religion can be found in the work of many seminal thinkers and researchers (e.g., Allport, 1955; Jung, 1967, 1969; Maslow, 1970, 1971). However, with only a few exceptions, virtually none of these earlier efforts have resulted in any systematic study on the topic.

When one examines the current literature, it quickly becomes apparent that Erik Erikson's (1980) lifespan psychosocial theory and Marcia's (1966) model of identity status have come

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to serve as the dominant conceptual frameworks for studying spirituality and identity (e.g., Hunsberger, Pratt, & Pancer, 2001; Marcia, 1993; Markstrom, 1999; Tisdell, 2002; Kroger & Marcia, Chapter 2, this volume). This comes as no surprise given that these theories have been the primary catalysts for much research and theoretical work on identity development in general. And, akin to other areas of identity research, these theories seem to hold potential for illuminating the role of spirituality in identity formation.

For instance, using an adaptation of Marcia's (1966) identity status model (see Kroger & Marcia, Chapter 2, this volume), Kiesling, Sorell, Montgomery, and Colwell (2006) studied role salience (i.e., the importance of spirituality to one's sense of identity) and role flexibility (i.e., the extent to which consideration has been given to changing one's sense of spiritual identity) in a sample of 28 adults identified as being spiritually devout. Using a detailed interview protocol, Kiesling et al., obtained information about the motivational, emotional, and behavioral aspects of a variety of social roles related to different aspects of identity, including spiritual identity. In their study, spiritual identity was defined as "a role-related aspect of an individual's overall sense of ego identity" (p. 1270) that is concerned with questions regarding the meaning and ultimate purpose of existence.

Content analysis of their interview data resulted in the identification of three main themes, which were labeled salience/meaning (i.e., centrality and meaning of spiritual identity in relation to a person's overall identity), influence/investment (i.e., the extent to which people's motivational and affective states relate to and influence their commitment to their sense of spiritual identity), and reflectiveness/continuity and change (i.e., whether or not people reflect upon their spiritual identity and perceive it as remaining the same or changing over time). Participants were then categorized into three of the four identity statuses within Marcia's (1966) model – foreclosed, moratorium, and achieved; 11 participants were assigned to the foreclosed group, 4 were placed in moratorium, and 13 in achievement.

None of the participants were categorized as identity diffused with respect to their spiritual identity. Applying the themes to each of the identity categories, Kiesling et al. (2006) found several important points of difference across the groups.

For instance, they observed that individuals in the foreclosed group viewed spiritual identity as inherited and a part of childhood, and that these individuals tend to rely on authority and family to define this aspect of their identity. Those in the moratorium group, alternatively, did not rely on authority to define truth. Moreover, unlike the foreclosed participants who were motivated to have a secure relationship with a higher power, individuals in identity moratorium were motivated to develop spiritual identity due to its perceived psychological benefit and/or in response to intellectual and ethical considerations. Those in the achieved group tended to see spiritual identity as a choice and demonstrated the highest level of motivation and affective intensity. In contrast to foreclosed individuals who were not able to imagine the implications of abandoning their spiritual identity, those within the achieved status were able to anticipate the consequences of losing this aspect of their personal identity. Finally, for both the foreclosed and achieved groups, spiritual identity was perceived as having a marked impact on daily behavior and perceptions of self-worth, whereas the spiritual identity of individuals in moratorium seemed to exert a less consistent impact on daily behavior and ratings of self-worth.

Based on their results, Kiesling et al. (2006) concluded that spiritual identity is an important part of ego identity in adults. More specifically, they state that (a) spirituality appears to nurture a sense of connection either with a higher power, with a spiritual community, or with highly valued aspects of self, (b) interactions with significant others have a notable effect on how spirituality is used for meaning-making, (c) efforts to engender positive traits (e.g., compassion) and to deemphasize negative traits (e.g., greed) influence the construction of spiritual identity, (d) intentional effort is required to develop and foster spiritual identity, and (e) spiritual identity

seems to show patterns of change and consistency in a way comparable to other aspects of identity.

In contrast to Kiesling et al. (2006), who framed their study and their conceptualization of spiritual identity exclusively in terms of identity status theory, Poll and Smith (2003) attempted to approach the topic in a more integrative fashion. Starting with the ideas of William James (1890, 1902), they drew from Eriksonian psychosocial theory, other psychodynamic theories, and from cognitive, narrative, and systems perspectives to arrive at their own model of spiritual identity development.

Borrowing from the theistic assumptions of Richards and Bergin (1997), which include belief in the existence of God and of a soul, Poll and Smith used their integrated theory to define spiritual identity as “an individual’s belief that she or he is an eternal being and connected to God” (p. 129). They maintain that the primary mechanism responsible for the emergence of spiritual identity is the interaction of spiritual experiences, which occur throughout the lifespan, with intentional efforts on the part of the person to incorporate and integrate such experiences into a constructed sense of self. Poll and Smith further assert that the development of spiritual identity is not necessarily linear; though spiritual development can and does occur in early life, it is possible for spiritual identity to emerge in adulthood through what they refer to as a “second birth” or rebirth. They also contend that the extent to which spiritual identity can affect functioning and well-being is a result of the match or congruence between a person’s experiences and behavior and her/his perception of God.

Within this framework, Poll and Smith propose a four-stage lifespan model of spiritual identity development, which begins with the stage called Pre-awareness. During this stage, individuals do not have any conscious awareness of themselves as eternal beings in relationship to God. Further, they do not tend to think of themselves in spiritual terms, regardless of whether or not they have had spiritual experiences. In the second stage, called Awakening, a period of crisis, conflict, and/or learning prompts

individuals to begin thinking of themselves as spiritual beings. The quality of this awareness, however, is viewed as fragmented, inconsistent, and generally situation-specific (e.g., a person only thinks of God when involved in a crisis). During Recognition, the third stage, recollections of earlier spiritual experiences are compared to the experiences arising during the Awakening phase, and the individual begins to generalize across situations and starts to develop a more stable sense of spiritual identity. However, the salience and importance of this emerging spiritual sense of self is still not fully expressed. Rather, other aspects of identity will typically be given more weight and attention (e.g., those based on various social roles and relationships). Lastly, in the fourth stage, called Integration, Poll and Smith indicate that spiritual experiences become fused with one’s self-concept. This, in turn, results in the emergence of a lasting and coherent sense of spiritual identity. In this phase, spirituality comes to occupy a core place in a person’s overall sense of identity.

In addition to these two studies, which are discussed to illustrate the potential of identity theory for developing our understanding of spiritual identity, a number of additional studies have been published and further shed light on the role of spirituality in identity formation in different populations, such as women, adolescents, and various ethnic groups (e.g., Fukuyama & Sevig, 2002; Paranjpe, 1998). In terms of ethnicity, research suggests that compared to white Americans, African Americans appear to consider spirituality to be more of a core component of their self-concepts and ethnic identities (Chae et al., 2004; Markstrom, 1999; Zinder, 2007). For adolescents, evidence indicates that spirituality and religion are not only important to their overall sense of identity, but that spirituality and religion seem to be associated to a range of positive outcomes (Juang & Syed, 2008).

Problems with Current Spirituality Research

Although the current work on spiritual identity appears promising, research involving spirituality

as a whole is characterized by a pervasive and persistent shortcoming – namely, the problem of adequately defining what spirituality is in the first place. As noted by myself and others (e.g., MacDonald, 2000; MacDonald & Friedman, 2002; Zinnbauer et al., 1997; Roehlkepartain, Benson, & Scales, Chapter 22, this volume), there is a considerable degree of divergence in how spirituality is conceptualized, both as a general domain of functioning and as a component of other aspects of human functioning (e.g., spiritual well-being, spiritual intelligence, spiritual identity). These inconsistencies, in turn, introduce ambiguity in the meaning of research findings and, by extension, have a markedly negative impact on the generation of a cumulative body of scientific knowledge. In fact, the murkiness and inconsistencies in its definition are so pervasive that it has led some investigators to suggest that spirituality should be abandoned as a scientific construct altogether (e.g., Hoge, 1996; Koenig, 2008).

Take, for instance, the definitions of spiritual identity advanced by Kiesling et al. (2006) and Poll and Smith (2003). Although it may be argued that both of these research groups developed their definitions based upon the assumption that spirituality and religion are different but related (a view that has become increasingly accepted among religion and spirituality researchers over the past 10 years; see Hill et al., 2000; MacDonald & Friedman, 2001), it is apparent that they are not defining spiritual identity in the same way. For Kiesling et al., it is defined in a manner that treats spirituality as a unidimensional and psychologized concept within which spiritual identity is reduced to a social role with ostensible existential overtones (e.g., they define it primarily in terms of meaning-making). In essence, it could be contended that they “fit” their definition of spirituality to the theory of identity they were using. Slife, Hope, and Nebeker (1999) have criticized much of the available research on the grounds that conceptions of spirituality and associated constructs like spiritual identity are often modified to accommodate specific scientific interests without due consideration being given

to the broader and substantive philosophy-of-science issues that encompass spirituality studies (e.g., can the transcendent or God truly be studied scientifically?).

Poll and Smith, on the other hand, appear to adopt a somewhat more sophisticated definition of spirituality, differentiating spiritual experience from spiritual beliefs and identity and proposing a mechanism through which they interact. Their multicomponent approach to spiritual identity is more in line with trends seen in the development of conceptual and measurement models where spirituality is defined in multidimensional terms (MacDonald & Friedman, 2002). Unfortunately, their utilization of Judeo-Christian concepts in their definition of spiritual identity raises issues not only about whether or not spirituality can be genuinely and meaningfully construed as different from religion, but also whether or not theological concepts have a place within science (Helminiak, 2008; Slife et al., 1999). Notwithstanding such philosophy of science considerations, by adopting a clearly Judeo-Christian set of assumptions about the existence and nature of God and the soul, Poll and Smith may be seen as limiting their theory to sociocultural contexts and populations for which the Judeo-Christian worldview is the predominant way of understanding spirituality. That is, their model may not apply as well to people from differing religious and spiritual traditions.

A Taxonomic Model of Spirituality

Undoubtedly, there are numerous challenges to studying spirituality scientifically, including, but certainly not limited to, the determination of whether or not it is (a) the same or different from religion, (b) capable of being operationalized with theistic or theological concepts (e.g., divine, sacred, transcendent, God) in a manner that is consistent with the assumptions and methods of naturalistic science (Helminiak, 2008; Hill et al., 2000; MacDonald, 2009; Slife et al., 1999), and (c) best viewed as a wholly positive domain of human functioning (as opposed

to one that has both health-promoting and health-compromising expressions; Grof & Grof, 1990; Hunt, Dougan, Grant, & House, 2002; MacDonald, 2009; MacDonald & Friedman, 2002). However, despite such challenges, there has been some movement toward the development of measurement models that permit productive theory construction and empirical research. One of the more promising ones is a five-dimensional model that I proposed over a decade ago (MacDonald, 1997, 2000).

Recognizing the need for a comprehensive framework for organizing the burgeoning literature on spirituality, and borrowing from the empirical methodologies used in devising taxonomic models of personality (e.g., the Five Factor model of personality; Costa & McCrae, 1992, 1995), I created a multidimensional descriptive model based upon a series of conjoint factor analyses involving a total of 19 different extant measures of spirituality and related constructs. At the same time, I constructed a self-report instrument, called the Expressions of Spirituality Inventory (ESI), to assess the five factors that were found across the multiple-factor analyses. Descriptions of each dimension, along with sample items from the ESI, can be found in Table 21.1.

As reported in MacDonald (1997, 2000), each of the dimensions comprising the model have been shown to be factorially robust (e.g., they were observed to emerge in factor analyses across measures and samples), and despite some significant inter-correlations among them, each was found to be conceptually unique. Evidence for uniqueness was obtained through factor analyses of ESI items and through the finding of differential patterns of correlations between the ESI dimension scores and measures of conceptually related constructs. For instance, out of the five dimensions, ESI Religiousness tends to produce the strongest correlations (magnitudes ranging from 0.50s to 0.80s) with measures of explicitly religious constructs (e.g., intrinsic religious orientation, religious faith, personal piety). ESI Cognitive Orientation toward Spirituality has tended to correlate highest to non-religious measures of spirituality (e.g., $r = 0.70$ has been found between this dimension and the trait

of Self-Transcendence within the seven-factor model of Temperament and Character developed by Cloninger, Svrakic, & Przybeck, 1993). The ESI Experiential/Phenomenological Dimension has been found to be most strongly associated to measures of spiritual, mystical, and peak experiences. ESI Paranormal Beliefs has been shown to consistently and strongly correlate to measures of belief in supernatural phenomena and abilities. Finally, ESI Existential Well-Being has been observed to be most strongly and significantly associated with explicit measures of existential and well-being constructs and strongly but negatively correlated with measures of psychological distress and dysfunction (e.g., Kassab & MacDonald, 2010; MacDonald, 2000; MacDonald & Holland, 2002a, 2002b, 2002c, 2003). In the initial psychometric examination of the ESI, it was found that scores on the various dimensions demonstrate satisfactory inter-item reliability and generally good discriminant, convergent, factorial, and criterion validity. Of particular importance were analyses showing that the ESI does not appear to be unduly confounded by institutionalized religion: whereas scores from three of the five dimensions (all but Paranormal Beliefs and Existential Well-Being) were observed to be significantly higher for people reporting membership in an organized religion as compared to those who did not report an affiliation, there were no meaningful or consistent differences found across religious affiliation groupings (MacDonald, 2000). Further, in a work in progress (MacDonald et al., 2010), the ESI has been found to demonstrate satisfactory factorial validity across cultures, languages, and faith systems as observed in preliminary confirmatory factor analyses done with samples drawn from the United States, Poland, Slovakia, Uganda, India, Korea, and Japan.

The ESI, and the dimensional model that it operationalizes, may be viewed as a significant step forward for spirituality studies for at least three reasons. First, it embodies one of the most inclusive and comprehensive descriptions of spirituality currently available in the literature. In fact, in a manner similar to the Five Factor Model of personality (Costa & McCrae, 1995), it may

Table 21.1 Description of the ESI dimensions

ESI Dimension	Example of item content
<i>Cognitive orientation toward spirituality (COS)</i>	
Non-religious beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions about the reality, nature, and importance of spirituality to day-to-day personal functioning and well-being	Spirituality is an essential part of human existence I am a spiritual person
<i>Experiential/Phenomenological dimension (EPD)</i>	
Experiences considered to be spiritual in nature. Includes experiences labeled mystical, religious, transpersonal, peak, and transcendent as well as core phenomenological descriptive features associated with such experiences	I have had an experience during which the nature of reality became apparent to me I have had an experience in which I seemed to transcend space and time
<i>Existential well-being (EWB)</i>	
Sense of meaning and purpose and perception of self as efficacious and able to handle the inherent challenges of existence	I am not comfortable with myself (-) I seldom feel tense about things
<i>Paranormal beliefs (PAR)</i>	
Beliefs regarding the existence of paranormal phenomena including ESP. Also includes belief in witchcraft and spiritualism (i.e., ghosts)	It is possible to communicate with the dead Dreams can sometimes be used to predict the future
<i>Religiousness (REL)</i>	
Expression of spirituality through genuine religious belief, practice, and lifestyle (e.g., prayer, meditation, attendance of religious services). Akin to the concept of intrinsic religious orientation	I believe that God or a higher power is responsible for my existence I practice some form of prayer

Note: (-) means item is negatively phrased.

be viewed as a taxonomy of spirituality; it identifies and describes several of the core components of spirituality as a domain of human functioning. Of the measures that MacDonald (1997, 2000) factor analyzed, none were found to contribute to all five dimensions, including some instruments that were themselves explicitly constructed to be comprehensive multidimensional measures (e.g., Spiritual Orientation Inventory from Elkins, Hedstrom, Hughes, Leaf, & Saunders, 1988; and the Spirituality Assessment Scale from Howden, 1992). The ESI therefore represents an important advance over previously available measures of spirituality.

As a side note, though the inclusion of Paranormal Beliefs may appear problematic, as I have argued elsewhere (MacDonald, 1997, 2000), practically all religious and spiritual systems, both Eastern and Western, accommodate belief

in the emergence of unusual abilities (e.g., miracles, mind reading, levitation, precognition) as a product of advanced spiritual development. Consequently, I reasoned that it was important to have Paranormal Beliefs represented in the model. Also, the inclusion of Religiousness in the model may cause some confusion, especially for those unfamiliar with research and theory in the psychology of religion. In particular, some may view its inclusion as suggesting that religion in its totality is treated as a part of spirituality. Such a perception would be inaccurate. Within my model, Religiousness relates specifically to what is better known as intrinsic religious orientation, a construct concerning involvement in, and commitment to, religious beliefs and practices simply for their own sake rather than extrinsic religiosity (i.e., involvement in religion for personal or social gain; see

Allport & Ross, 1967). Finally, some questions may be raised with regard to Existential Well-Being. Examination of the description of the dimension and sample item content as provided in Table 21.1 suggests that it might be better viewed in terms of general well-being and not as something specific to spirituality. This was something with which I struggled when initially developing the model. For example, in MacDonald (1997), Existential Well-Being was also labeled Positive Self-Appraisal, and extensive discussion was given to its appropriateness for inclusion as part of the construct domain of spirituality. However, despite its appearance as an index of general well-being, based upon the factor analytic findings as well as the correlations between measures explicitly designed to measure existential and spiritual well-being, I concluded that such a dimension appears to be embedded in a significant number of existing measures of spirituality. As such, if my factor model were to embody all major components of spirituality as found in available assessment instruments, then Existential Well-Being would need to remain in the model. Consequently, concerns about the inclusion of existential well-being, or any other well-being construct (e.g., religious well-being, spiritual-well-being), in the domain of spirituality need to extend beyond the ESI and my model to the broader spirituality measurement literature (see Koenig, 2008, for a discussion of the problems related to the potential confound of well-being with spirituality).

Second, the model has been utilized with a fair degree of success as a framework for organizing available empirical research on the relation of spirituality to health and well-being. When reviewing the health research from the perspective of my model, MacDonald and Friedman (2002) suggested that different patterns of relations emerge depending on how spirituality is conceptualized. In particular, some dimensions show reasonably consistent positive associations to health (e.g., Cognitive Orientation toward Spirituality, Religiousness, Existential Well-Being), whereas others show mixed to negative associations (e.g., Experiential/Phenomenological Dimension and

Paranormal Beliefs). Studies using the ESI itself have generally replicated this differential directionality of associations to health and pathology across the dimensions (e.g., MacDonald & Holland, 2002a, 2002b, 2002c, 2003).

Third, and of perhaps greatest relevance to this chapter, the model explicitly incorporated item content related to spiritual identity (defined in general terms as the extent to which a person sees spirituality contributing to his/her sense of self or self-concept), when developing the ESI and found that this item content substantively contributed to the model. In particular, when the ESI items were factor analyzed, items concerning spiritual identity were found to consistently and strongly load on Cognitive Orientation toward Spirituality (COS), a dimension that relates to beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions regarding the meaning and relevance of spirituality to one's life and personal functioning (e.g., lifestyle choices, coping with stressors, and problem-solving). By extension, empirical findings involving COS may be seen as generally applicable to studies on spiritual identity. Incidentally, COS has been found to be highly correlated with measures of religiousness (including ESI Religiousness), and to some measures of religious well-being and moderately correlated with measures of spiritual experience (including the ESI Experiential/Phenomenological Dimension; MacDonald, 2000).

Using the Taxonomic Model of Spirituality to Generate a Directional Model of Spirituality and Spiritual Identity

Though my taxonomic model appears to serve as a good framework for delineating the content domain of spirituality, it may be criticized on the grounds that it is atheoretical and merely descriptive. Consequently, although it may be useful for identifying patterns of empirical relationship between spirituality and various aspects of functioning, the model does not really provide a theoretical basis for explaining any such relationships. For this model to be of maximum

utility, the dimensions need to be theoretically contextualized so that their relations to functioning can be explained. Fortunately, the available literature seems to provide some guidance in this regard. In fact, it appears that the dimensions can be organized into a directional biopsychosocial model.

Spiritual experiences, represented as the Experiential/Phenomenological Dimension in my model, have been found in both clinical and non-clinical populations to have stable neuroanatomical correlates in the frontal, temporal, and parietal lobes through both electroencephalography (EEG) and more sophisticated brain-imaging techniques such as positron emission tomography (PET), single photon emission computed tomography (SPECT), and functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) (Beauregard & O'Leary, 2007; Newberg, D'Aquili, & Rause, 2001; Persinger, 1984). The reliability of these findings has led some investigators to conjecture that not only are our nervous systems hardwired to create spiritual experiences, but that these experiences are naturally occurring phenomena that are accessible to investigation through scientific methodologies (e.g., Beauregard & O'Leary, 2007; Newberg et al., 2001).

As a logical extension of this perspective, it may be argued that spiritual experiences are part of our innate developmental potential and can be understood as potent causal agents in the expression of spirituality as manifested in other forms, including spiritual identity. It is important to emphasize that spiritual experiences, while themselves being an aspect of spirituality, may or may not result in the development of a spiritual identity or lead to the emergence of spiritual or religious beliefs and practices as reflected in the other dimensions of my model. As noted by Poll and Smith (2003), whose theory of spiritual identity development attributes a similar causal function to spiritual experiences, the extent to which spiritual experiences result in a sense of spiritual identity depends on whether or not the experiences are viewed as being of a spiritual nature rather than reflective of problems in functioning (such as a psychotic disorder; see Clarke, 2001).

In contrast, the Religiousness dimension appears to be more cogently linked to socialization processes concerning spirituality (see Roehlkepartain, Benson, & Scales, Chapter 22, this volume, for additional perspectives on socialization influences). That is, religion in general appears to be best viewed as a social vehicle through which we learn language, concepts, and practices that not only facilitate an understanding of spirituality in general (including spiritual experiences), but also contribute to the further unfolding of spirituality in an experiential way (e.g., by learning meditation, a practitioner may volitionally induce spiritual experiences). Of course, it should be kept in mind that participation in, and socialization by, religious institutions alone may not be sufficient to activate spiritual experiences and to contribute to the emergence of other expressions of spirituality (Grof & Grof, 1990). Nevertheless, taken together, it appears reasonable to view Religiousness and the Experiential/Phenomenological Dimension as important, discrete, but related components of spirituality that embody biological (nature) and socialization (learning, nurture) mechanisms. These mechanisms, in turn, interact and lead to the emergence of other aspects of spirituality, most notably those expressions involving beliefs, identity, and behavior (MacDonald, 2000).

Directing attention to the dimensions of COS and Paranormal Beliefs, respectively, it appears that these two dimensions are similar in that they primarily concern beliefs and attitudes rather than experiences, behaviors, or practices. In the case of COS, the beliefs relate to the existence and importance of spirituality to life and daily functioning, whereas for Paranormal Beliefs, the beliefs center upon the assumption that human beings have the ability to engage in activities (e.g., such as predicting the future, moving objects with one's mind, or reincarnation) that do not conform to the usual processes, mechanisms, and rules of cause-and-effect subscribed to by science. Although some elements of COS involve ways in which an individual may incorporate spirituality into his/her own personal choices and behaviors (e.g., the ESI contains such items as "I

am more aware of my lifestyle choices because of my spirituality” and “I consider the spiritual consequences of a choice when making a decision”; also see Table 21.1), it is also comprised of general beliefs about the relevance and significance of spirituality without reference to the person’s own functioning (e.g., consider such ESI items as “Spirituality gives life focus and direction” and “A spiritual life has many rewards”). Paranormal Beliefs are similar to these latter COS items; it does not relate to an individual’s belief that he or she specifically can perform unusual acts that defy conventional understanding about reality. Instead, it concerns beliefs that people in general are capable of such acts (see Table 21.1 for sample ESI items).

In light of the content of these two dimensions of spirituality, one may contend that both COS and Paranormal Beliefs reflect internalized cognitive schema (i.e., mental representations or structures that organize information and shape perceptual processes). These schema, in turn, may be viewed as contributing to ego states and operations (e.g., they causally influence how people perceive, and ascribe meaning to experience of self and others as well as how people adapt and cope with stressors) (Hine, 1997), including one’s sense of identity. It is noteworthy that when I (MacDonald, 1997, 2000) examined the inter-correlations among the ESI dimensions, COS was found to be strongly associated with Religiousness and moderately correlated with the Experiential/Phenomenological Dimension (EPD), and Paranormal Beliefs was moderately correlated to the EPD. This suggests that both EPD and Religiousness may be seen as core causal components of spirituality that contribute to the manifestation of spirituality in terms of beliefs, attitudes, and perception of one’s identity.

Lastly, there is Existential Well-being (EWB). This fifth dimension differs from all others in that its content exclusively relates to perceptions of one’s own functioning (see Table 21.1 for sample items from the ESI). More specifically, EWB seems to encompass evaluative perceptions concerning the degree to which individuals see themselves as coping and adapting

adequately to stressors and life events. Also unlike the other aspects of spirituality, EWB has been found to be minimally associated with any other ESI dimension (MacDonald, 2000; Migdal, 2007).

When these characterizations of the ESI dimensions are considered collectively, it appears possible to organize them to create a directional model of spirituality comprised of three levels. The first level is comprised of Religiousness and the Experiential/ Phenomenological Dimension and may be seen as representing the core biosocial mechanisms that influence the development of mental structures and associated ego functions and perceptual processes. These resulting structures, functions, and processes, in turn, make up the second level of spirituality that is operationalized in terms of COS and Paranormal Beliefs. The third level, consisting of EWB, relates to expressions of spirituality as manifested in appraisals of one’s own functioning and sense of satisfaction with one’s perceived competencies and ability to live effectively (e.g., having a sense of meaning and purpose and felt control over one’s life).

Whereas both Religiousness and the Experiential/Phenomenological Dimension have direct effects on Cognitive Orientation toward Spirituality and Paranormal Beliefs in my proposed directional model, Existential Well-being presents a challenge; While it seems to be embedded in many extant definitions and measures of spirituality and, as I stated above, may be seen as a component of spirituality (albeit a controversial one; see MacDonald, 1997 and Koenig, 2008 for extended discussions of this issue), within my research, it has been found to be minimally correlated with the other ESI dimensions. If there is no empirical association between EWB and other major expressions of spirituality, then it seems difficult to justify a model that proposes a direct connection. However, under the assumption that EWB is a legitimate dimension of spirituality, it seems that an argument can be made for incorporating EWB into the overall model by viewing it as an indirect product of other components of spirituality operating through personality and

social influences shown in the literature to have relevance to spirituality. Included among such influences are social support, optimism, extraversion, emotional stability, locus of control, and ego boundary permeability.

Social support and optimism are mentioned because of studies that show them to have a moderating influence on the relation of spirituality to adjustment (Haber, Jacob, & Spangler, 2007; Salsman, Brown, Brechting, & Carlson, 2005; Weber & Cummings, 2003; Yakushko, 2005). Extraversion and emotional stability (the inverse of neuroticism), as represented in Five Factor Model of Personality (Costa & McCrae, 1992) have been found in empirical studies to associate to EWB as well as other dimensions of spirituality (e.g., the Experiential/Phenomenological Dimension) (MacDonald, 2000; MacDonald & Holland, 2003).

Though lacking explicit support in the literature, locus of control is included on rational grounds. In particular, it seems that the extent to which a person adopts an internal locus of control may be linked to both his/her internalized sense of spirituality and to the extent to which he/she feels capable of effectively addressing existential issues of life (e.g., finding meaning and purpose, coping with death). Unpublished empirical findings that I have obtained (MacDonald & Kassab, 2010) support this line of reasoning – external locus of control is significantly negatively correlated with EWB, Cognitive Orientation toward Spirituality, and Religiousness.

Finally, ego permeability is included to accommodate ways in which ego boundaries (i.e., psychological boundaries that demarcate self from not-self) function and impact how people experience themselves. Ego permeability may be seen as the quality of one's ego boundaries, and relates to the extent to which these boundaries permit information and psychological material from the environment and/or different parts of the mind (e.g., the unconscious) to move in and out of conscious awareness. Although many concepts have been advanced in the literature over the past six decades that

relate to ego permeability including regression-in-the-service-of-the-ego, ego permissiveness, openness-to-experience, and transliminality (e.g., see MacDonald, Holland, & Holland, 2005), little attention has been given to such concepts in theory and research on both identity and spirituality. Extant research indicates that ego permeability is positively related to higher levels of spiritual experiences and to both positive and negative states of functioning (Hartmann, 1991; Houran, Thalbourne, & Lange, 2003; Hunt et al., 2002; MacDonald et al., 2005; Thalbourne & Delin, 1994). In the context of my directional model, ego permeability can be seen as influencing both the frequency and intensity of spiritual experiences, and a person's awareness of beliefs and attitudes (i.e., personal mental schema) contributing to one's sense of identity. In turn, the heightened access to these experiences and one's core beliefs about self play out in how a person evaluates himself/herself in terms of EWB (e.g., people who view themselves as inherently spiritual beings by virtue of spiritual experiences and awareness of their beliefs about their sense of personal identity are more likely to base judgements about themselves and their quality of life on such beliefs).

Although spirituality defined in terms of the four ESI dimensions of Religiousness, Experiential/Phenomenological Dimension, Cognitive Orientation toward Spirituality, and Paranormal Beliefs is proposed here as indirectly effecting levels of Existential Well-being through these social and personality variables, it is important to note that the relation of all five ESI dimensions to each other may be further influenced by demographic characteristics. Research suggests that the manner in which spirituality is expressed may vary as a function of age and ethnicity. For instance, in terms of age, Heintz and Baruss (2001) used the ESI to compare a sample of people in late life (mean age = 72.6 years) to the sample used to develop the ESI (mean age = 21.0 years) and found that the older sample scored significantly higher on ESI Cognitive Orientation toward Spirituality, Religiousness, and EWB, and significantly lower on Paranormal Beliefs. No significant differences were found on the

Experiential/Phenomenological Dimension. In regard to ethnicity, evidence suggests that African Americans tend to demonstrate a stronger identification with spirituality than whites (Chae et al., 2004; Zinder, 2007). Considering these findings, it appears that age and ethnicity may be treated as potential moderating variables (i.e., age and ethnicity may differentially affect how the ESI dimensions relate to each other). Additional studies need to be done to establish if the relation of the four ESI dimensions to EWB in fact varies across both age and cultural groups.

The inclusion of EWB in the model can also be substantiated in another way. As argued by Poll and Smith (2003), and as postulated by identity theories (e.g., Eriksonian psychosocial theory), crises, conflict, and/or challenges that arise due to development through the lifespan can serve as catalysts for self-reflection and psychological change. Within the context of spirituality, such crises have been described by some clinicians and scholars in terms of a “spiritual emergency” (e.g., Grof & Grof, 1990). Since EWB involves appraisal of one’s functioning, it could be reasoned that lower levels of EWB may be associated with problems in functioning that are consistent with experiencing difficulties in coping with such crises. If this is accurate, then it may be that lower levels of EWB could prompt a review and revision of beliefs and values (i.e., mental schema as found in COS and Paranormal Beliefs) that, in turn, contribute to a positive change in self-appraisal manifested in higher EWB. Stated in another and more direct manner, personal crises may result in lower perceived happiness, which leads one to look inward and to turn to one’s sense of spirituality as a way of finding a resolution to the crisis. This then results in greater development of one’s spirituality that fosters a heightened sense of meaning and purpose in life and higher levels of personal happiness. When levels of EWB are high, it would be expected that a person would not feel compelled to engage himself/herself in a process of examination of one’s identity and spirituality, given that there is already a perceived sense of personal happiness.

In support of this possibility, research has shown that higher levels of EWB may be associated with “positive illusions” (or positive self-serving bias in self-perception; see Taylor & Brown, 1988), as reflected in the finding of significant positive correlations between EWB and scores on measures of self-deceptive enhancement and social desirability (MacDonald, 1997, 2000). Positive illusions have been noted as contributing to tendencies to be less self-aware and to engage in less critical self-examination. At the same time, they are linked with higher levels of reported well-being (Huber & MacDonald, 2010). Thus, lower levels of EWB could influence other aspects of spirituality and could be shown with a path leading from EWB back to COS.

Specific Application of the Model to Spiritual Identity The directional model discussed thus far represents an effort to fully integrate and explicate possible causal relations among the broad dimensions of spirituality that make up my taxonomy (MacDonald, 1997, 2000). However, as noted earlier, spiritual identity seems to be most relevant to one dimension, COS. Given the location of COS in the full model, it appears possible to provide a more parsimonious directional model that applies to spiritual identity. Specifically, Religiousness and the Experiential/Phenomenological Dimension serve as the social and biological causal factors that exert both direct and indirect effects on the formation and maintenance of spiritual identity as manifested in COS. For the Experiential/Phenomenological Dimension, the frequency and intensity of spiritual experiences, and their impact on spiritual identity, is partly the result of ego permeability such that people with more permissive ego boundaries will be more likely to report greater numbers of spiritual experiences and to have a sense of spiritual identity. For Religiousness, in addition to the direct effects of the doctrine and practices of a faith system on spiritual identity, the extent to which these components are internalized and maintained is influenced by social support

variables including family and community values, beliefs, and lifestyle practices. Psychosocial theories of development assert that the degree to which one's personal experiences, values/beliefs, and behaviors are perceived as consistent with those social groups and/or institutions to which a person belongs helps to define and reinforce one's sense of identity and one's roles and place within those groups and institutions. This line of reasoning would seem to apply to the development of spiritual identity.

Conclusion

Even though spiritual identity has become the focus of increasing research efforts, available theory and research does not provide a very coherent picture of what spiritual identity is and how it relates to the broader literature on spirituality. The directional model of spirituality and spiritual identity presented in this chapter represents an effort toward utilizing a state-of-the-art taxonomic model of spirituality (MacDonald, 1997, 2000) to organize our understanding as to how the various aspects of spirituality work together, both directly and indirectly, in shaping spiritual identity. A particular strength of the model is that it readily lends itself to empirical investigation – all concepts included can be measured through existing paper-and-pencil tests. At the same time, the model is consistent with conventional identity theory and allows for the application of multiple theoretical approaches to the study of spiritual identity without excluding any important components of spirituality. It is my hope that researchers interested in spiritual identity are able to use the ideas presented here to further investigation into this emerging area of empirical study in a manner which does justice to the complexity of spirituality as a unique domain of human functioning.

Acknowledgments The author would like to thank Dr. Harris Friedman, Dr. Catherine Tsagarakis, Nore Gjolaj, Jacek Brewczynski, the editors, and the anonymous reviewer for their helpful comments on earlier versions of this chapter.

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Abstract

Examining how spirit develops as part of identity development can deepen our understanding of how meaning, purpose, connectedness, and authentic living contribute to human thriving – and what happens when they go awry. However, research in this field has been limited by a conflation of “religion” and “spirituality” both theoretically and empirically, limited data on spirituality outside of Western contexts or Judeo-Christian religious traditions, and an emphasis on individual development with little regard to interaction with developmental systems, ecologies, or contexts. By examining the intersection of spiritual development, identity development, and ecological approaches to human development, this chapter proposes integrating more robust understandings of spiritual development into current approaches to adolescent identity formation while also deepening theoretical approaches to spiritual development by grounding them in ecological contexts, including family; peers and mentors; school; youth organizations; religious communities; and the natural world. It draws on preliminary findings from a study of 7,200 youth aged 12–25 in eight countries that suggest that this integration may be fruitful for future research.

Some of the most exquisite and important phenomena of human life are also among the most difficult to investigate in the behavioral sciences. Among these are the following: (a) how persons explore the mysteries of the self and of the universe; (b) the capacity to apprehend beauty and benevolence; (c) the experiences of awe and

wonder; (d) the inclination to seek community and connectedness; and (e) the capacity for persons to find joy, purpose, and hope in life. These phenomena themselves, and the processes that energize and guide them, are fundamental to what it means to be human.

Religion, in its many historical and contemporary manifestations, has informed these phenomena, but it is not synonymous with them (MacDonald, [Chapter 21](#), this volume). These are manifestations of spirit (from the Latin *spiritus*, meaning breath). Spirit – or how one finds and

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expresses one's breath or life energy – is central to understanding humanness (Johnson, 2008). By examining how spirit develops and flourishes (or goes awry), we have the potential to tap the deep resources of meaning, purpose, connectedness, and authentic living that are embedded in what we call spiritual development.

There appears to be a growing international interest in the science of spiritual development among children and adolescents, bolstered in part by the emerging research suggesting that spirituality and spiritual development play important roles in human development and thriving. However, most current research on adolescent spiritual development has been constrained by critical limitations (see Roehlkepartain, King, Wagener, & Benson, 2006). These include the following: (a) conflating “religion” and “spirituality”; (b) limited data regarding spirituality among young people outside of Western contexts or Judeo-Christian religious traditions; (c) a preponderance of research that focuses on individual development with little regard to interaction with developmental systems or ecologies; and (d) conducting research with limited measures and without robust undergirding theoretical frameworks or foundations (Benson, 2006; Rew & Wong, 2006; MacDonald, Chapter 21, this volume).

This chapter seeks to address these limitations by examining the intersection of three concepts: spiritual development, identity development, and ecological approaches to human development. In doing so, we seek to make a theoretical case for both integrating more robust understandings of spiritual development into current approaches to adolescent identity formation and deepening theoretical approaches to spiritual development by grounding them in ecological approaches. Throughout the chapter, we offer findings with multi-country samples of adolescents that suggest that this integration may be fruitful for future research.

Definitional Issues in Spiritual Development

A major challenge is that, despite a number of helpful explorations (e.g., Hill & Pargament,

2003; Hill et al., 2000; MacDonald, 2000; Slater, Hall, & Edwards, 2001; Zinnbauer et al., 1997), there is little consensus on the boundaries or dimensions of the domain of spiritual development (or spirituality and other related terms). In the social sciences, spirituality was historically viewed as a dimension of religious experience (James, 1902). However, as Wulff (1997) suggests, the meaning of religion has evolved to focus more on the institutional, beliefs, and rituals and practices, with spirituality being increasingly seen as referring to experiential or subjective phenomena (see MacDonald, Chapter 21, this volume for a thorough exploration of the definitional issues).

Rather than focusing on beliefs, experiences, and practices (the typical approach to defining “spirituality”), we seek to identify and measure core processes in human development that can best be described as spiritual *development*. Drawing on Coles (1990) and Rizzuto (1979), and other scholars, this approach hypothesizes that spiritual development is a human wellspring out of which emerges the pursuit of meaning, connectedness to others and to the sacred, purpose in life, and contributions to society. Each and all of these functions can be informed and shaped by religious – and other – systems of ideas, practices, and cultural narratives. In addition, these core processes are integrally linked with identity development.

Several operating hypotheses have guided our work to date, including the following: (a) spiritual development is an intrinsic part of being human. It includes processes that are manifested in many diverse ways among individuals, cultures, traditions, and historical periods. (b) Spiritual development involves both an inward journey (inner experiences and/or connections to the infinite or unseen) and an outward journey (being expressed in daily activities, relationships, and actions). In this sense, it involves complex interactions between contextual variables and individual developmental processes. (c) Spiritual development is a dynamic, non-linear process that varies across individual and cultural differences. (d) Although spiritual development is a unique stream of human development, it cannot be separated from other aspects

of development, such as physical, emotional, and cognitive development. And (e) spiritual development can be conceptually distinguished from religious development or formation, though the two are integrally linked in the lived experiences of many (though not all) people, traditions, and cultures (see MacDonald, [Chapter 21](#), this volume).

Several of these assumptions or hypotheses merit further explication. First, it is important to unpack the relationship between spiritual development and religion. We propose that spiritual development can occur with or without explicit religious beliefs, practices, or community (also see Saucier & Skrzypińska, [2006](#)). However, many people utilize or access religion as a guiding narrative and normative community for their spiritual development. When this occurs, one's spiritual development can be closely aligned with one's religious beliefs, identity, and worldview. However, one can develop spiritually without religious institutions, beliefs, or practices. Furthermore, the broader ecology of community, relationships, and social norms also shapes spiritual development. Thus, these two phenomena are related and overlapping, but they may also be different.

Another important framing of our approach to spiritual development has been to cast it as a component of optimal development, which is also called thriving (Benson & Scales, [2009](#)) or flourishing (Keyes & Haidt, [2003](#)). Often associated with positive psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, [2000](#); Snyder & Lopez, [2005](#)), this strength-based approach counterbalances an overemphasis in the social sciences on pathologies and deficits with a focus on identifying and nourishing human capacities, such as life satisfaction, hope, generosity, connectedness, self-regulation, and prosocial orientation. Within the field of identity theory and development, this approach particularly resonates with Waterman's ([1993](#); [Chapter 16](#), this volume) emphasis on personal expressiveness (*eudaimonia*).

This is not to say, however, that all spiritual commitments, beliefs, practices, and experiences are positive and life giving. As suggested by the inclusion of religious and spiritual problem in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental*

Disorders (DSM-IV-TR) (American Psychiatric Association, [2000](#)), certain forms of spiritual beliefs, practices, and experiences can distort reality or cause harm to self or others. These harmful effects can include narcissism, conflict-ridden or authoritarian spiritual practices, denial of reality, spiritual delusions, or terrorism (Hill et al., [2000](#); Wagener & Malony, [2006](#)). Others have focused on meditative, mystical, paranormal experiences (such as precognition or communicating with the spirit world), psychedelic-induced trances (including using psychoactive drugs such as opiates or LSD), or other unusual consciousness events that can cause physical and psychological harm [which Grof & Grof ([1989](#)) describe as “spiritual emergences or emergency”].

Though we emphasize the positive potential of spiritual development, the social sciences through most of the twentieth century either ignored this domain of life or attended only to eclectic issues, including pathological expressions (MacDonald, [2000](#)). So rather than minimizing the potential for pathology, we seek to articulate underlying developmental processes of *normal* spiritual development, which may be shaped, either positively or negatively, through a wide range of influences, beliefs, and practices.

Toward a New Framework of Adolescent Spiritual Development

In many respects, the scientific study of spiritual development is not new. Since the late 1800s, scholars such as William James, G. Stanley Hall, J. H. Leuba, Edwin Starbuck, Max Weber, and Emile Durkheim have examined the role of religion (and, more recently, spirituality) in human development and society. However, for a variety of reasons, it was marginalized in social sciences through much of the twentieth century (see Davie, [2003](#); Paloutzian, [1996](#)).

An important movement in reclaiming spirituality in the social sciences was transpersonal psychology, which emerged in the 1960s. This network emphasized on integrating Eastern and Western thought and studying mystical

and metaphysical experiences (e.g., Hartelius, Caplan, & Rardin, 2007). Though he no longer associates with transpersonal psychology, Wilber's (e.g., 2000) integrated theory of development has been particularly influential, though it is rarely cited in mainstream developmental and psychological studies.

In addition, a number of recent contributions in developmental sciences have advanced the literature on child and adolescent spiritual development. For example, for the first time since it began publication in 1946, the *Handbook of Child Psychology* includes a chapter on spiritual development in its sixth edition (Oser, Scarlett, & Bucher, 2006). That same year, Sage released the first *Handbook of Spiritual Development in Childhood and Adolescence* (Roehlkepartain et al., 2006) and the *Encyclopedia of Religious and Spiritual Development in Childhood and Adolescence* (Dowling & Scarlett, 2006).

In 2006, Search Institute launched the Center for Spiritual Development in Childhood and Adolescence to develop grounded theory and systematic research aimed at explicating an understanding of spiritual development as an integral component of human development, particularly during childhood and adolescence. To begin these theory-building efforts, we conducted extensive focus groups with youth, parents, and youth workers in 13 countries (Kimball, Mannes, & Hackel, 2009) and engaged an international network of 119 scientific, theological/philosophical, and practice advisors in a Web-based consensus-building process around the processes of spiritual development (Roehlkepartain, 2009). Using a Web-based adaptation of the Delphi Technique (Dalkey, 1969), advisors ranked potential dimensions of spiritual development to identify those that they believed were most important. This process yielded the broad, if preliminary, outlines of a theoretical framework shown in Table 22.1.

Though this process did not result in a consensus definition of spiritual development, one definitional approach that generated significant support was that *spiritual development is a constant, ongoing, and dynamic interplay*

between one's inward journey and one's outward journey. In other words, spiritual development presses us to look outward to connect or embed our lives with all of life, while also compelling us to look inward to accept or discover our potential to grow, learn, contribute, and matter (Soenens & Vansteenkiste, Chapter 17, this volume; Waterman, Chapter 16, this volume). This approach, then, may suggest that "spirit" is an intrinsic capacity that propels young people to link their discovery of self and the world in pursuit of a flourishing life.

This framework shares many features of other multi-dimensional models of spirituality, including MacDonald's (Chapter 21, this volume) work. The unique contribution of the proposed theoretical model lies in (a) its focus on adolescence; (a) its grounding in qualitative data from youth in multiple contexts and cultures; (c) the engagement of experts from multiple disciplines, contexts, and traditions in developing this shared conceptual approach; and (d) a focus on core developmental processes, rather than spiritual beliefs, practices, or experiences (all of which interactively influence and give expression to these core processes in a bidirectional interplay). In other words, the core developmental processes dynamically interact with the beliefs, practices, relationships, and contexts in which the young person is embedded, with each influencing the other (Benson, Roehlkepartain, & Scales, in press; Benson & Scales, 2009; Lerner, Roeser, & Phelps, 2008).

These emphases make the approach we outline below somewhat distinct. As the field matures and additional testing of various models and approaches is completed in diverse cultures and contexts with diverse populations, we would anticipate that the most robust elements of various models will emerge. In the meantime, we propose the need for ongoing exploration by different scholars, with each seeking to be clear about the underlying assumptions and theories behind a particular approach. Such a discovery process offers great potential to enrich the field's overall understanding of this dimension of human development.

Table 22.1 Theoretical framework of dynamics of spiritual development

Awareness or awakening – Developing an awareness of one’s inherent strength as well as developing an awareness of the beauty and majesty of the universe. This involves both (a) awareness of one’s inherent strengths and capacities (self-awareness) and (b) awareness of the world, including awareness of the beauty and majesty of the universe, often experienced through the awe and wonder that draws one to see self in as part of something larger (Shiota, Keltner, & Mossman, 2007). Dimensions include the following:

- Accepting, seeking, creating, or experiencing a reason for being or a sense of meaning and purpose
- Being present to oneself, others, the world, and/or one’s sense of transcendent reality
- Forming a worldview regarding major life questions, such as the purpose of existence, life and death, and the existence or the non-existence of the divine or God
- Living in awareness of something beyond the immediacy of everyday life
- Experiencing enlightenment, awakening, liberation, salvation, or other experiences of transcendence or deepening
- Accepting or discovering one’s potential to grow, contribute, and matter

Interconnecting and belonging – Developing the perspective that life is interconnected and interdependent, and seeking, accepting, or experiencing significance in relationships to and interdependence with others, the world, or one’s sense of the transcendent (often including an understanding of God or a higher power). This may include the following:

- Experiencing a sense of empathy, responsibility, and/or love for others, for humanity, and for the world
- Finding significance in relationships to others, the world, or one’s sense of the transcendent
- Finding, accepting, or creating deeper significance and meaning in everyday experiences and relationships
- Linking oneself to narratives, communities, mentors, beliefs, traditions, and/or practices that remain significant over time

Living a life of strength – Developing a life orientation grounded in hope, purpose, and gratitude so that one authentically expresses one’s identity, passions, values, and creativity through relationships, activities, and/or practices. This may include the following:

- Engaging in relationships, activities, and/or practices that shape bonds with oneself, family, community, humanity, the world, and/or that which one believes to be transcendent
- Living out one’s beliefs, values, and commitments in daily life
- Experiencing or cultivating hope, meaning, or resilience in the midst of hardship, conflict, confusion, or suffering
- Living out an orientation to life in response to that which one perceives to be worthy of dedication and/or veneration
- Attending to spiritual questions, challenges, and struggles
- Expressing one’s essence, passions, value, and creativity in the world as a way of showing veneration or expressing one’s sense of transcendence

Findings from Recent Global Research

The framework of core spiritual developmental processes outlined in Table 22.1 (above) provided the conceptual foundation for a survey instrument that we, our colleagues, and our research partners administered to more than 7,200 youth (ages 12–25) in eight countries in 2008 (Australia, Canada, Cameroon, India, Thailand, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, and the United States). Though this field test involved convenience samples in

only a few nations (and thus might not be generalizable beyond those samples), it involves a culturally and religiously diverse sample of young people, allowing for preliminary insights into patterns of spiritual development in their lives (Roehlkepartain, Benson, Scales, Kimball, & King, 2008).

We have begun using this data set to test the theory of core spiritual developmental processes posited through our consensus-building process and grounded in findings from focus groups with youth (Kimball et al., 2009). We explore several

hypotheses: (a) there are core developmental processes or tasks that are salient across traditions and cultures (including the eight nations and five self-reported religious affiliations in our sample: Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Muslim, and agnostic/atheist/none); (b) young people's experiences of these processes correlate with positive developmental outcomes; (c) these processes explain variance in youth outcomes over and above young people's self-reported religiousness; and (d) these processes tend to become more integrated as young people age.

We began our analyses using items associated with the major constructs identified through the consensus-building process with advisors described above and shown in Table 22.1. We then conceptually and theoretically divided the concept of "awareness" into two constructs (self and world). This yielded four measures that approximate the terrain of spiritual development that grew out of the consensus-building process with international advisors (shown in Table 22.1): awareness or awakening: self; awareness or awakening: world; interconnecting and belonging; and living a life of strength. Several of our initial hypotheses have been supported by preliminary analyses. However, ongoing analyses are needed to either confirm or challenge the first hypothesis (regarding the salience of these spiritual developmental processes across all eight countries as well as the diverse religious traditions in the sample).

Evidence supporting the second hypothesis (b) is clearer (and consistent with previous research): young people reporting higher levels of various components of spiritual development consistently report lower levels of high-risk behaviors and higher levels of academic success, physical and psychosocial health, and civic engagement. Indeed, the results of 85% of analyses testing the effect of spiritual developmental processes on developmental outcomes were in the hypothesized direction. These patterns generalized across the samples in the eight countries and across religious affiliations. Furthermore, youth who most successfully integrated the four dimensions of spirituality proposed here (as evidenced by scoring high on all four) exhibit relative strength on this same range of outcomes.

Third, as hypothesized (c), the integration of these four processes described above can occur without active engagement with religious and spiritual traditions. After controlling for gender, age, and religious engagement, the four dimensions of spiritual development significantly explain variance on each of the indicators of thriving, health, and risk behaviors included in the study. This suggests that these four processes of spiritual development – both individually and collectively – have explanatory value over and above religious engagement and belief. Indeed, about 20% of the aggregated sample reported high levels of the four dimensions of spiritual development but were not affiliated with organized religion.

Fourth (hypothesis d), healthy development, we would argue, moves in the direction of integration (see Soenens & Vansteenkiste, Chapter 17, this volume), with the four core processes of spiritual development becoming increasingly interrelated. One proximal test of this is to examine whether the percentage of youth who demonstrate this integration (evidenced by higher scores on all four dimensions) increases with age. This hypothesis is supported when comparing youth ages 12–14, 15–17, 18–21, and 22–25 who score high on all four of the processes (see Table 22.2).

Although this was a cross-sectional study, and so *developmental* processes can only be inferred, integration becomes stronger with each advance in age, suggesting promising grounds for further investigation with longitudinal samples. In addition, we recognize that this is only one way to show "integration," and one theoretically could have high scores without these dimensions/processes being integrated or interacting with each other. It is also true that "integration" might not even require a "high" score on each process, because developmental systems theory would suggest that the optimal level of each of these processes would vary with the individual and her or his relation to context. Thus, high levels of interconnectedness and living a life of strength might be necessary for optimal spiritual development in one specific person–context system, but a high level of cognitive awareness of self might not be.

Table 22.2 Youth scoring high on four spiritual developmental processes, by age

Age of respondent	High score on all four processes (%)
12–14	16
15–17	18
18–21	21
22–25	27

In another case, connectedness and a life of strength might be impossible without a high level of self and world awareness. In both cases, though, person–context systems are “integrated” in a way that effectively promotes growth. So, further analyses are needed to shed light on the nature of the relations among these processes, both variable-centered analyses that illuminate group averages and person-centered analyses that uncover the diverse meanings of the descriptor, “integrated.”

The core spiritual developmental processes on which the above analyses are focused provide a starting point for theoretically exploring the person–context interactions underlying spiritual development. How are these processes shaped by family, peer groups, mentors, religious communities, and their narratives; the mass media; music; art; and the social norms that permeate and potentially connect multiple socializing systems? What happens when these processes are shaped primarily by harmful or misanthropic forces? Or how is healthy development augmented when young people’s own sense of agency and vocation is positively nurtured and reinforced by life-affirming people and places? With these kinds of questions in mind, we now turn to a theoretical exploration of some of the contexts in young people’s “spiritual ecologies.” These potentially link with the growing theoretical and empirical literature that embeds identity development within a dynamic ecological context.

Person–Context Dynamics in Spiritual Development

Three persistent critiques of current theory and research on spiritual development (which echo discussions related to identity development) are (a) that they too often reflect an individualistic,

Western worldview that focuses narrowly on the self and self-fulfillment; (b) that they presume that a spiritual tradition or identity is “inherited,” rather than being actively shaped by the person as agent of her or his own development; and (c) that they describe linear, predictable pathways that do not account for the dynamic processes of spiritual formation or the interplay of persons and their contexts. The theoretical framework described above begins to address this question. In addition, a number of identity development theories further illuminate the dynamic interplay between individuals and their environments.

Spiritual Development as Relational, Socially Embedded Processes

The individualistic focus of many conceptualizations of spirituality reflects what Markus and Kitayama (1991) describe as the “self-ways” dominant in English-speaking, Western societies. This bias “has obscured attention to the powerful ways in which religion and spirituality guide and influence relational life” (Mattis & Jagers, 2001, p. 520; also see Mattis, Ahluwalia, Cowie, & Kirkland-Harris, 2006; Templeton & Eccles, 2006).

In contrast, most contemporary theorists agree that identity formation occurs through countless interactions between persons and their physical and social environments (e.g., Bosma & Kunnen, 2001). This understanding draws on ecological–developmental approaches, such as ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), developmental systems theory (Ford & Lerner, 1992; Lerner, Lerner, De Stefanis, & Apfel, 2001), co-constructionist perspectives on identity development (Berman, Schwartz, Kurtines, & Berman, 2001), and identity capital (Côté, 1996), or other current theoretical approaches. Similarly,

a growing number of approaches to spirituality and spiritual development (e.g., Hay & Nye, 1998; Ho, 1995; Nicolas & DeSilva, 2008) are consistent with these perspectives.

Baltes and Baltes (1990) offer a key theoretical approach to understanding the interaction between the person and the world, one that is relevant to spiritual development. Called “selective optimization with compensation,” this theory holds that persons select, from among a range of potential resources, a subset that can help them to reach their own personal goals. This process of selection involves both one’s preferences *and* the availability of options within one’s social ecology. Compensation emphasizes the ways in which one adapts to maintain functioning in the face of losses or barriers that limit options. Similarly, self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Soenens & Vansteenkiste, Chapter 17, this volume) describes how social conditions impact whether people become actively engaged and proactive or passive and alienated.

Although these theories were not focused explicitly on spiritual development, the principles apply, particularly when efforts are made to optimize broader environments in which spiritual development can flourish. For example, persons, communities, and contexts that seek to nurture spiritual development may or may not be “in sync” developmentally with adolescents. Furthermore, both adolescents and the contexts in which they function must adapt to changing sociocultural dynamics, including the increased diversity of religious and spiritual beliefs, practices, and narratives.

Young People as Active Agents in Their Own Spiritual Development

To say that spiritual development is embedded in relationships and through the dynamic interplay of person and context in no way minimizes the active role that young people play as agents of their own development. Indeed, personal agency is foundational to identity (and spiritual) formation (Schwartz, Côté, & Arnett, 2005).

How personal agency is manifested informs how we understand the processes of spiritual development.

Numerous identity theorists have conceptualized identity development as involving both active and passive processes (Blos, 1979; Erikson, 1968). For example, Marcia (1966, 1980) argued that adolescents form identity passively by accepting the roles and self-images provided by others (foreclosure). Blos (1979) described passive identity formation as resisting making choices about identity (diffusion). Active identity develops based on a searching process and is associated with self-assurance, self-certainty, and a sense of mastery (Adams, Gullotta, & Montemayor, 1992). Luyckx, Goossens, and Soenens (2006) have advanced our understanding of identity development by identifying four structural dimensions of identity formation: commitment making, identification with commitment, exploration in depth, and exploration in breadth that integrate identity formation and identity evaluation and embed them in a developmental context (see Luyckx, Schwartz, Goossens, Beyers, & Missotten, Chapter 4, this volume).

In addition, Waterman’s (1993, Chapter 16, this volume) focus on personal expressiveness (*eudaimonia*) offers important possibilities for enriching how theories of spiritual development approach active personal agency. Waterman summarizes the goals of identity formation as discovery of personal potential, choosing purposes in living, and finding opportunities to live out that purpose. This structure resonates with our theoretical framework that links self-awareness and other awareness with living a life of strength. Similarly, Benson and Scales (2009) have described the theory and measurement of *thriving* in adolescence as involving the identification and nurturing of one’s deep personal interests or “sparks” (akin to our awareness process, or Waterman’s discovery of personal potential), the support received from others to pursue them (our interdependence/aconnection process), and the contribution one makes to others and to society through the pursuit of one’s sparks (part of the process of living a life of strength and

purpose). One of the strongest thriving markers for both middle- and high-school students was their affirmation of a transcendent force and the importance of their spirituality in affecting daily actions. Thus, this conceptualization of thriving explicitly connects aspects of identity development with aspects of spiritual development.

Several researchers have focused on religious identity processes (not specifically spiritual development), finding that individuals tend to proceed toward achievement during emerging adulthood (Meeus, Iedema, Helsen, & Vollebergh, 1999), particularly if they have an intrinsic religious orientation (DeHaan & Schulenberg, 1997). Sanders (1998) found that college students with a diffused religious identity (low commitment and low exploration) reported lower levels of faith maturity than did those with a religious identity characterized by moratorium, foreclosure, or achievement. Those reporting achievement (high commitment and high exploration) were most likely to be engaged in service to humanity.

We would anticipate that similar patterns would be evident when examining dynamics of spiritual development as distinct from religious identity. In focus groups with 171 adolescents (ages 12–19) in 13 countries, participants often reported that they are rarely encouraged to engage in active spiritual exploration; rather, they are typically expected to adopt the religious beliefs, practices, and worldviews of their families and traditions (Kimball et al., 2009), with “commitment” to a particular worldview or religious tradition and “discovery” of one’s own path and worldview being perceived as competing, rather than complementary, goals.

Spiritual Development as Dynamic, Nonlinear Processes

Finally, these multiple, interacting influences and variables challenge understandings of spiritual development that build on linear or stage theories. Meeus et al. (1999) note that unidirectional interpretations of identity development that move from lower to higher statuses are

inadequate. A similar critique has challenged approaches to spiritual development that focus on stages of development (Fowler, 1981) or progressive/maturational models of spiritual development (Scarlett, 2006). Theory and research on spiritual development is less advanced, however, in articulating the possible pathways and patterns of development through adolescence. We anticipate that trajectories could parallel the stable, regressive, progressive, and fluctuating patterns of identity formation that van Hoof (1999) identified and that Meeus and colleagues (2010) demonstrated in a five-wave longitudinal study of ages 12–20.

Exploring the Ecologies of Spiritual Development

Young people interact with multiple ecological resources, influences, and contexts as they shape their own personal and collective (or social or group) spiritual identities. Individuals actively or passively exercise their personal agency in shaping, and being shaped by, the people and places around them, with those closest to them likely having the greatest influence. In this section, we introduce a range of illustrative contexts, resources, and influences that young people selectively optimize for their own development, beginning with interpersonal contexts (e.g., families, peers) and social–structural contexts (e.g., institutions, culture, and place).

Family

Family (including parents, siblings, grandparents, and other extended family) is a primary context for spiritual development (Boyatzis, Dollahite, & Marks, 2006; Dollahite, Marks, & Goodman, 2004; Mahoney, Pargament, Tarakeshwar, & Swank, 2001). In Search Institute’s exploratory study of spiritual development in eight countries (described above), young people surveyed were most likely to point toward family when asked to identify who helps them most in their spiritual life. In total, when forced to select the single

most significant influence, 44% of the youth surveyed selected this option, compared to just 14% of youth who indicated that their religious institution (church, synagogue, mosque, temple, or other religious or spiritual place) helped them the most (Roehlkepartain et al., 2008).

Through parental modeling, rituals, narratives, conversations, and other family practices and dynamics, the family plays a vital role not only in the direction, formative interactions, rituals, and practices that shape spiritual development and identity but also in socializing adolescents to seek out (or not to seek out) other resources, relationships, and opportunities that will further affect the adolescent's development. These may include the kinds of activities in which he or she participates and the people with whom the young person spends time.

The centrality of the family is particularly salient in a relational, ecological approach to spiritual development. Indeed, Black (2004) noted that, in the Hindu and Buddhist traditions (as well as others), "self" is defined as a part of a family, not primarily as an individual person who is influenced by family. Thus, individual autonomy, valued more in the West, carries less weight than does an internalized sense of interconnectedness and following family traditions, teachings, and guidelines (also see Smith, Chapter 11, this volume, on cross-cultural perspectives).

Boyatzis et al. (2006) adopt a sociocultural approach to families and spiritual development, moving beyond "transmission" models that focus only on parental influence on their children's spiritual (and religious) development. Shifting to bidirectional, transactional models changes one's assumptions about power dynamics in families as well as the place of the child within the family. For example, Boyatzis and Janicki (2003) found that children initiated half of all family conversations related to religion. This shift also reflects an important emphasis on the adolescent's agency in actively shaping spiritual identity, both of the self and the family.

Another vital dynamic in the family's role in spiritual development is generativity (Boyatzis et al., 2006; Scabini & Manzi, Chapter 23, this volume). "Generative spirituality is a

transcendent connection with the next generation that flows from and encourages convictions of abiding care for that generation" (Boyatzis et al., 2006, p. 304). These scholars point to three aspects of generative spirituality for families: a shared spiritual paradigm, shared spiritual practices, and a shared spiritual community. As a result, although generativity does not necessarily involve spirituality, it can nonetheless transmit spiritual attitudes and orientations.

Recent research has also begun to emphasize the role of the extended family in spiritual and religious development. For example, a three-generational longitudinal study in the United States found that grandparents, independent of the influence of parents, influence their grandchildren's religious beliefs and practices into young adulthood, suggesting that grandparents serve as independent and joint agents of *religious* socialization (Bengtson, Copen, Putney, & Silverstein, 2009). Whether and how extended family shapes *spiritual* development remains untested, but theoretically important.

Peers and Mentors

Extending beyond the family, young people are embedded in a broader web of relationships and interactions that also are integral to spiritual development. Though there is a long history of (and strong theoretical rationale for) recognizing the role of non-family adults and peers in shaping spiritual development, research examining these relationships has been scant. Schwartz, Bukowski, and Aoki (2006) examined the multiple ways in which peers, mentors, and spiritual leaders can complement (or compensate for) family interactions in shaping spiritual development and suggested that these relationships may be not only transactional but also transformational, with friendship enriching spiritual development and spirituality strengthening friendships. For example, having friends and mentors who both model and verbally share their spirituality has been found to strengthen young people's own spiritual commitments (Schwartz et al., 2006). From the other direction, many of the expressions of

a spiritual life and commitment (e.g., joy, compassion, empathy, care, justice) can enrich and deepen friendships, even when the content of those friendships is not explicitly spiritual.

Community-Based Socializing Institutions

Beyond the interpersonal relationships in families and with mentors and peers, a variety of socializing institutions are also important contexts that interact with young people's spiritual lives. Each of these, alone or in combination, potentially informs spiritual developmental processes through norms and rituals, the relationships that form between the young person and the people in these social institutions, the narratives and belief systems that are present, the physical space and aesthetics, and other factors. We introduce several of these contexts as illustrative, recognizing that there are others and that the most salient institutions vary by culture, tradition, context, and young person.

Schools. The role of schools in spiritual development is a matter of considerable debate and varies considerably across different societies and nations. For example, Letendre and Akiba (2001) found that Japanese teachers were much more likely than US teachers to say that students' spiritual development impacted their academic abilities. In fact, US teachers rated it as having the least impact, whereas Japanese teachers rated it as having a relatively strong impact. The authors attributed this difference to a cultural norm in Japan where spirituality permeates the culture as a whole, whereas in the United States, mandates regarding separation of church and state are perceived as precluding addressing spiritual issues in schools.

Much of the research and practice related to schools and spiritual development has occurred in Europe, particularly the United Kingdom, where education in spirituality has become part of law (Minney, 1991). Within this environment, Meehan (2002) reviewed a variety of educational practices that likely create conducive environments for spiritual development (as a core part of

human development) without promoting a sectarian religious agenda. These include an emphasis on quality relationships, encouraging youth to ask and pursue questions, promoting imagination and creativity, and offering silence and reflection. He also highlights a number of places where spiritual development can be explicitly integrated into the school curriculum, including arts, mathematics, language arts, and science. If we understand spiritual development as involving young people's sense of themselves and their place in the world, their sense of meaning, purpose, and contribution, their curiosity and quest for understanding the world around them, their sense of connectedness to others and to the universe, then it becomes more self-evident how schools affect, either positively or negatively, the spiritual journey.

Youth development organizations. In many contexts, young people have opportunities to participate in sports, arts, outdoor education, camping, leadership development, service clubs, and other programs and organizations focused on providing positive opportunities and relationships for youth outside of school. Many of these organizations recognize the importance of holistic development, and they may even have mandates to nurture young people to grow in body, mind, and spirit. But with few exceptions, they struggle with how to address the spiritual dimension of development, particularly if they seek to engage young people from a wide variety of religious and cultural traditions (Garza, Artman, Roehlkepartain, Garst, & Bialeschki, 2007). Among the challenges is the lack of clear guidelines, understanding of lines of authority, or consensus on appropriate practices to guide whether and how to acknowledge or attend to young people's spiritual development (Green, 2008; Pittman, Garza, Yohalem, & Artman, 2008).

In addition, Green (2008) argues that the emphasis on measurement and behavioral outcomes for youth programs undermines their strength in nurturing development, character, and values. She writes, "Classic youth work is voluntary and predicated on the principle that the young person is in control and has the resources or can get the resources he or she needs, and

the role of the youth worker is to facilitate this process” (p. 64).

Engaging in young people’s spiritual development has the potential to reclaim a central role in youth development programs and practices in attending to deeper issues of character and identity. This engagement could take many forms, depending on the nature and purpose of the program. At a basic level, it might involve equipping youth workers to be open to and supportive of young people’s spiritual questions and journey without imposing their own beliefs on the young people. It could also involve creating time, places, and opportunities in which young people can reflect on and nurture the core spiritual developmental processes of awareness, interdependence/connecting, and living a life of strength and purpose. This may include, for example, opportunities to engage in social action and reflecting on these experiences in light of their spiritual paths. Most important, however, may be to create contexts in which youth find their own voice and are active agents in shaping their experiences in partnership with the adult allies.

Religious communities. In some senses, religious congregations (churches, mosques, synagogues, temples, ashrams, and others) are the institutions in many societies with a specific and unique commitment to nurturing the spiritual life, albeit within a particular narrative, ideology, and community of practice. Thus, they represent a crucible for exploring the dynamic interplay of numerous processes in spiritual development (Roehlkepartain & Patel, 2006).

A number of studies have documented the contributions of religious institutions to identity formation, religious development, spiritual development, and other life outcomes. King and Furrow (2004) explored religious communities as sources of social capital, which involves interpersonal, associational, and cultural social ties and resources that are embedded in particular contexts. King and Furrow found that much of the relationship between religious commitment and moral outcomes is mediated through the amount of social capital present in religious institutions (also see King, 2003; Smith & Denton, 2006; Wagener, Furrow, & King, 2003). A national

study of US adults identified part of the mechanism for this role of social capital. Adults who more frequently attended religious services were much more likely than those who attended infrequently or never to rate a variety of ways of engaging with young people (e.g., having meaningful conversations with them, talking about personal values and religious beliefs, offering guidance on decision making) as important, and also to say that the adults they knew engaged with youth in these ways. That is, religiously involved adults felt more personal and social motivation to engage with other people’s children in a number of ways that help shape the youths’ identities (Scales et al., 2003). Thus, young people who participate in religious communities have access to the structural, relational, and cognitive dimensions of social capital that is embedded in religious institutions, which, in turn, contributes to their moral development.

Similarly, other researchers in the United States have found that involvement in religious institutions uniquely contributes to identity development when compared to involvement in other youth activities such as sports, arts, or service to others. For example, 66% of youth who described their experiences in faith-based activities endorsed the item “This activity got me thinking about who I am,” compared with 33% of students who described their experiences in the other organized activities (Larson, Hansen, & Moneta, 2006) (The sample was divided based on self-reported levels of engagement, and respondents focused their responses on particular activities, even if they are involved in several).

These studies each point to the potential of religious communities to contribute to the development of spiritual identity, potentially offering their members a sense of connectedness to each other and something beyond themselves, a shared narrative and worldview, and a role model and expectations for how one lives one’s life. The question remains, of course, about the extent to which religious communities actually fulfill this potential for young people, particularly in light of declining youth participation in religious contexts in many parts of the world. In addition, much less is known about how specific beliefs

and practices within a particular religious context (such as extreme authoritarianism) may undermine or misdirect healthy spiritual development.

Physical Place and the Natural World

Though it is often overlooked as a resource and shaping context, physical place appears to be particularly salient in young people's spiritual development. Search Institute's international survey found being outside and in nature to be a primary place where many young people say they nurture their spiritual lives (Roehlkepartain et al., 2008) – a much more common response than being in a religious community. Other research has shown that youth consider camping to be a spiritual experience, whether or not the camp is religiously affiliated (Henderson & Bialeschki, 2008). These findings resonate with Sheldrake's (2001) case for "place" as a factor in identity development. He writes, "The concept of 'place' refers not simply to geographical location but also to a dialectical relationship between environment and human narrative. 'Place' is any space that has the capacity to be remembered and to evoke what is most precious" (p. 43).

Of course, the notion of a sacred connection to earth, water, and animal life has a rich history in many indigenous cultures (Abrams, 1997), and specific places take on spiritual significance in every community, whether it is called "spiritual" or not. Weil (1977), a philosopher, wrote, "To be rooted [firmly established and having a sense of belonging] is perhaps the most important and least recognized need of the human soul" (p. 41). Giving young people access to such places (particularly in settings where the streets are unsafe or unwelcoming) becomes an important resource for young people's spiritual development.

Shared Myths and Narratives

The myths and narratives that shape life and meaning making involve a lifelong creative process in which persons actively create (whether consciously or not) a story, using source material

that can come from many institutions, places, and relationships (McAdams, 1993, Chapter 5, this volume). For some, this source material includes the myths, narratives, sacred texts, symbols, and worldview of their religious tradition. For others, political and philosophical narratives are most formative. Often, these narratives live in the music, art, rituals, and stories told by elders, and in the crucible of relationships.

Culture, Ethnicity, and Globalization

Individuals potentially participate in, learn from, respond to, and integrate multiple cultures. There may be national culture and cultures of identity and religious cultures, each providing scripts and norms shaping the spiritual developmental process. Culture informs inherited texts, narratives, stories, language, symbols, rituals, and norms that shape identity – and are central in spiritual development.

Taking multiple cultures seriously has great potential to strengthen the theory and research on spiritual development by challenging both the assumption that worldview and practice are essentially the same (and presumed to be like one's own experience) and, on the other hand, avoiding approaching other worldviews as either "exotic curiosities" or antidotes to the "spiritual emptiness" (Ho, 1995, p. 115) they may experience within their inherited tradition or culture. For example, Mattis et al. (2006) challenge the widespread enlightenment assumption that assumes a separation between sacred and secular domains of life, noting that, for many cultural groups, religion and spirituality are perceived as inextricably bound and interwoven with each other and with the whole culture.

Taking these cultural differences seriously both enriches and challenges our assumptions about spiritual development. Gottlieb (2006) illustrates this potential through her anthropological examination of the place of the spirit in the Beng culture of Ivory Coast in West Africa. Gottlieb describes a society where children are viewed as closer to the spirit world because of the cultural assumption of reincarnation. Rather

than being an abstract concept, this worldview permeates their respect for children, how adults interact with children, and virtually all areas of community and family life. Other similarly rich examinations of particular people, times, and places will enrich the field as scholars broaden our understanding of spiritual development in its many manifestations.

Beyond the issues of examining specific and diverse cultures as a way of enriching our understanding of spiritual development, scholars have begun turning their attention to globalization and its potential impact on identity (Arnett, 2002; Jensen, Arnett, & McKenzie, Chapter 13, this volume). Globalization provides a broader array of influences, narratives, and relationships from which young people draw in shaping their identities and spiritual paths. Arnett (2002) argues that many people now develop bicultural identities (also see Huynh, Nguyen, & Benet-Martínez, Chapter 35, this volume) that include a local identity and an identity linked to the global culture. Jensen (2003) views this globalization as presenting both opportunities and challenges for identity formation, as young people seek to integrate diverse, sometimes conflicting, beliefs and behaviors from different socializing influences. At the same time, they have the opportunity to develop new skills and attitudes that equip them to function effectively in a multicultural world. A solution to this challenge may lie in what Erlich (2000) called “ethical neopluralism,” which consists of “a healthy mix of wide moral consensus and tolerance for diversity of ethical positions within that consensus” (p. 304). This could involve synthesizing a worldview from various belief systems, or it could stimulate deeper exploration of one’s own tradition or philosophy, prompted by genuine engagement with other perspectives (e.g., Avest, 2009; Patel, 2007).

Significant Life Events and Changes

Finally, spiritual development is shaped by a wide range of personal, historical, and cultural events. Elder’s (1999) life-course theory reminds us that specific times and places shape the

content, patterns, and directions of people’s lives. Furthermore, different people experience historical change in different ways, which uniquely shapes their developmental trajectory and life course.

Thus, age-related developmental tasks inform goals and priorities and what one chooses to select and to optimize. In addition, life events – some representing the tragic side of life and some representing its generous and healing side – can have a powerful impact on a person’s spiritual pathways. In this sense, Antonovsky’s (1991) concept of sense of coherence has important implications for the intersection of spiritual and identity development. This theory sheds light on how individuals comprehend and manage internal and external stimuli, and how they make meaning from those experiences. How young people begin to understand themselves and their place and purpose in the world based on what happens around them and to them is central to their spiritual identity formation. These issues also lie at the heart of how humans develop a coherent worldview that helps them manage stress and contributes to their overall health and well-being.

Conclusion

Though the underlying dynamics of spiritual development have been part of the human experience for millennia, the social sciences are in their infancy in seeking to understand the developmental processes underlying spiritual identity formation in adolescence, particularly within a global context. Much of what is known is limited to particular disciplines, contexts, or traditions. Developing a multi-disciplinary and global field of inquiry and network of scholars remains an important challenge for the field.

Emerging theory and research continue to underscore the salience and power of this dimension of human identity development in the lives of young people, their families, and their communities. By grappling with this understudied dimension of human identity, we enrich our understanding of what it means to be human and the conditions under which young people – and the families, communities,

and cultures in which they are embedded – can flourish.

Acknowledgments The writing of this chapter, and the research behind it, was supported by the John Templeton Foundation, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA.

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Part V
Family, Gender, and Sexuality

Eugenia Scabini and Claudia Manzi

Abstract

Family is a unique relationship context that influences the contents and processes of identity. The identity of individuals emerges, at least in part, from being members of a family. Moreover, the family context influences not only the development of one's personal identity as a family member but also other aspects of personal identity. Family is not a neutral environment for identity development. On the contrary, it deeply affects the individual process, starting during adolescence, that leads to the development of one's identity (Grotevant & Cooper, 1986). In this chapter, first we briefly review the main theories that have tried to outline a definition of family, from which we have derived our own definition. Second, we analyze the concept of family identity. We address the topic of family identity at three different levels: (1) at the group level, which is the specific identity of the family as a group; (2) at the couple subsystem level, since the couple has its own identity and, thus, its own set of potentials to be pursued; (3) at the individual subsystem level, which is the component of individual identity that comes from being part of a specific family group. Finally, we aim to describe family members' identity processes and how they are affected by the family system and in particular by the process of mutual differentiation.

Family bonds are important in all human societies. The relational context of family is uniquely important in the study of identity processes: interdisciplinary perspectives have documented the

preeminent role that family plays in the acquisition of social understanding, caregiving, health, and well-being. In this chapter, we attempt to demonstrate that the family is a unique relationship context that influences the contents and processes of identity. The family has been studied from different theoretical perspectives such as sociology, anthropology, and psychology. The goal of our approach is to integrate these three

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different points of view into an original perspective called the relational–symbolic model (Cigoli & Scabini, 2006).

The aim of this chapter is threefold: first, we delineate the defining features of the family as a system and as the most important naturally occurring group in society. Thus, we will briefly review the main theories that have tried to delineate the definition of family and from which we have derived our own definition of family. In the second part of the chapter, we analyze the concept of family identity at three different levels: at the level of the family as a group, at the dyadic level of couple relationships, and at the level of individual family members. Finally, we aim to describe family members' identity processes and how they are affected by the family system. We will also focus on the reciprocal influences between the family system and family members' identities.

Defining Features of the Family

Theoretical Roots: Family as a Unit, Group, and System

The family is a highly complex social organism that mirrors and actively interacts with its social and cultural context. It has, therefore, assumed various forms, as documented by both historical research (Laslett & Wall, 1972) and cross-cultural comparisons of families from different cultural backgrounds (Georgas, Berry, van de Vijver, Kagitcibasi, & Poortinga, 2006). As a result of its multifaceted nature, it is difficult to identify what are the “basic characteristics” of the family (i.e., the invariant aspects that operate across different family forms).

During the first few decades of the twentieth century, sociologists first identified the defining features of the family as a unity of interacting personalities (e.g., Burgess, 1926; Cooley, 1909). But it was a psychologist, Kurt Lewin, who, through his new conceptualization of the group, supplied the conceptual categories for making the family a subject of study in the social sciences.

Lewin (1951) defined the group as a “dynamic whole.” The term *whole* means that it is different from the sum of its members, or parts: more specifically, the group, and therefore the family, has definite properties of its own, which differ from the properties of its parts or from the sum of its parts. The term *dynamic* underlines the fact that what is most important is not the similarity of group members, but rather their interdependence with and connectedness to one another.

Field theory, as developed by Lewin, makes it possible to view the relational properties of a group in terms of the relationship between the parts and the whole. The family is a well-organized group with a high degree of unity. Its members play different roles within the whole, that is, the family. Hence, social psychology, especially in its focus on group memberships and intergroup relations (see, e.g., Haslam & Ellemers, Chapter 30, this volume; Spears, Chapter 9, this volume), can inform the study of the family. In fact, for many years, the family was presented as the most significant example of a small natural group (Levine & Moreland, 2006).

After Lewin, interest in groups as real social entities waned in favor of studies of ad hoc artificial groups (e.g., Asch, 1956; Moscovici & Zavalloni, 1969; Tajfel, Billig, Bundy, & Flament, 1971). Consequently, family scholars showed increasing dissatisfaction with the concept of the family as a small group, and started to highlight the differences between the family and other types of groups. The greatest differences were attributed to two elements: *function* and *temporal dimension*. Whereas the function of groups, especially work groups, is their efficiency and productivity, the role of the family is in the development of its members, and in the development of the family as an entity unto itself. With regard to the temporal dimension, it has been observed that most other small social groups generally have a limited lifetime, whereas the family—by definition—has a past, a present, and a future (Klein & White, 1996; Olson, Russell, & Sprenkle, 1983).

The second important perspective which has played a crucial role in family literature, together with field theory, is family systems theory (e.g., Bateson, 1973; Bowen, 1966; Haley, 1976; Minuchin, 1974). Family systems theory has been a reference point for both researchers and family therapists, and has been continually updated and revised over the years. In the beginning, this approach also linked basic family characteristics to concepts of unity, interaction, and relationship (e.g., von Bertalanffy, 1968). In fact, this theory has attempted to balance the idea of (a) family as a whole with its own irreducible features, with (b) the fact that, at the same time, the family exists only when its components interact with each other.

Family components have been conceived in terms of subsystems: for example, the married couple is a subsystem, as is the sibling system. Moreover, each individual is seen as a subsystem in her/his own right, because s/he is a family member with a certain degree of autonomy, but still interdependent with other members and with the functioning of the family system. Within the family, the various subsystems interact, thereby influencing and shaping the family system as a whole. We will see in the next section how being part of these systems, and being part of a specific subsystem, inform one's individual identity.

The concept of systems, analogous to Lewin's field concept, highlights the properties of the whole and represents an important epistemological revolution. This concept has been used in a general sense, concentrating on identifying the basic family patterns of interaction (Beavers & Voeller, 1983; Olson et al., 1983) and focusing mainly on what is happening here and now, but failing to consider family history and the influence of the sociocultural context in which the family is embedded. Only since the 1990s has this issue received major attention, for example, in Bronfenbrenner's (1989) Ecological Systems Theory, McGoldrick and colleagues' family life-cycle model (McGoldrick & Carter, 2003), and the relational-symbolic model by Scabini and Cigoli (2000 and Cigoli & Scabini, 2006).

In sum, both field theory and systems theory have contributed to making the family an

object of study in psychology and sociology, even if these theories have not been able to identify properly the characteristics that make the family a specific system and a specific group, different from other systems and groups with whom it interacts and with its own features and functions.

The Organizational/Relational Principle

The last few decades have witnessed the emergence of a more complex view of family, and the definition of family has been more clearly delineated. As stated by Klein and White (1996), in order to develop a theory about how families work, one must first define what family is and must identify the distinguishing features of the family. In particular, the relational-symbolic model (Cigoli & Scabini, 2006) delineates the distinctive characteristics both of the family as a system and of its subsystems, taking into account the meanings that different cultures ascribe to these characteristics. To introduce our perspective on family, we will use the concepts of organization and relationship, and then we will provide our specific view of family.

The term "organization," as used by Sroufe and Fleeson (1988), refers to the fact that the family is an organized system with an internal hierarchy that permeates its relationships—and, in particular, its intergenerational relationships—and that interacts purposively with the socio-cultural context. Specifically, the family system organizes *primary relationships*. In the next paragraphs, we explain what we mean by relationship and what we mean by primary.

A family *relationship* binds people together over time, even without their being aware; it refers to what has been established (and continues to be agreed), implicitly or explicitly, with regard to values, meanings, rituals, and the assignment of roles. In this vein, the concept of relationship is on a higher level from that of interaction. As a necessary starting point, we can define *interaction* as the ordinary exchange between family members and examine the communication exchange that occurs between them in the present (here and now) (Haley, 1973; Eisler,

Dare, & Szmukler, 1988). However, family relationships cannot be reduced to a mere sequence of observable, reciprocal measurable interactions. The relational level comprises meanings that transcend those that emerge from interaction (Hinde, 1997; Szapocznik, Rio, Hervis, Mitrani, Kurtines, & Faraci, 1991).

The distinguishing characteristic of family relationships is that they are *primary*. Following Cooley (1909) we define the family as a primary group because it is “fundamental in forming the social nature and ideals of the individual” (p. 25). Specifically, we argue that family relationships can be understood as primary in two ways:

- a. Family relationships cut across basic divisions of humankind, such as gender and generational differences, and they give rise to future generations that are essential for the survival of society. Following this reasoning, we focus here on nuclear and extended versions of the heterosexual family with biological children, which are the most widespread family forms across countries. We acknowledge that this definition of the family is controversial at the present time and that different types of close relationships do not fit in this definition, but we wish to make our definition clear so that the reader is better able to follow the ideas we present in this chapter. Alternative family forms are examined in other chapters of this volume (e.g., Grotevant & Von Korff, Chapter 24, this volume; Savin-Williams, Chapter 28, this volume).
- b. Family membership imposes strong constraints on individual development. One can escape from a role within the family, but not from family membership. For example, children have no choice about being born into a family and to their parents. Family members may *act* as if they were not bonded to one another, as if they were outside the family group—for example, they can sever their relationships because of conflicts, or decide not to keep in touch with other members of the family—but even when they act as if family relationships are optional, “they do so to the detriment of their own sense of identity” (Walsh, 2003, p. 377).

In sum, building from these concepts of organization and relationship, we define the family as an organization of primary relationships that connects and binds together different genders and different generations to give rise to a new generation. The connection between generations includes both parent–child relationships and relationships between family lineages, both paternal and maternal (i.e., family history). In fact, our perspective outlines the intergenerational side of relationships, which means that we take into consideration the role of different generations in order to understand current patterns of family functioning.

Another particular feature of our perspective is the attention to specific dynamics of exchange between the family and its cultural context. From our perspective, this pattern of exchange is defined not only in terms of person–context reciprocal influence, but also in terms of transmission between generations. We state, in fact, that there is a deep connection between the exchange between generations in a family and the exchange between generations in society. A good example is the transition to adulthood in southern Europe. In this transition the exchange between family generations takes a protective form, reflected in a prolonged cohabitation of young adults with their parents. This pattern compensates for the negative exchange between generations in societies characterized by injustice and unfairness. In fact, over the past decades, the welfare states of these countries have supported the active generation, now adult or elderly, yet they are no longer able to do the same for the younger generation that is about to cross the threshold of adulthood (Cigoli & Scabini, 2006).

The Family Identity

Having clarified the definition of family, we shall now illustrate what we mean by family identity. Our definition of identity here is close to Waterman’s (Chapter 16, this volume) concept of “daimon” or true self. Thus, with the term family identity we refer to the family’s true nature,

to the family's potentialities, the realization of which represents the best fulfillment it is capable of. In other words, when we refer to family identity we talk about the patterns of those dimensions that differentiate the family from other important entities and constitute its unique set of potentials and represent its deep nature.

We will address the topic of family identity at three different levels:

1. at the group level, that is, the specific identity of the family as a group;
2. at the couple subsystem level, in fact, each family subsystem, and especially the couple, has its own identity and, thus, its set of potentials to be pursued;
3. at the individual subsystem level, that is, the component of individual identity that comes from being part of a specific family group.

We will explain each of these concepts related to family identity in the following paragraphs.

Family Identity as a Group: The Symbolic Dimension and the Caring Principle

Earlier in this chapter, we clarified our definition of family, focusing our attention on the structural characteristics of the family. However, to speak of family identity, we have to refer not only to the structural features of its bonds but also to the symbolic qualities of these bonds. By symbolic qualities, we refer to those aspects of the family bond that make this bond properly human and that, if respected within a particular family, make the family function well. In fact, depending on whether the family achieves its symbolic potentials, it may produce positive or negative individual outcomes. For example, if family relationships are warm and supportive, family members are likely to display positive psychosocial and health outcomes (e.g., Feaster & Szapocznik, 2002; Passmore, Fogarty, Bourke, & Baker-Evans, 2005). However, chaotic or distant relationships between or among family members are related to distress, substance use, and poor health (Dishion, Capaldi, & Yoerger, 1999; Stouthamer-Loeber, Wei, Homish, & Loeber, 2002).

Research in family psychology underscores the symbolic qualities of the family bond in terms of intimacy (Cordova, Gee, & Warren, 2005; Feeney, Noller, & Ward, 1998; Moss & Schwebel, 1993), emotional support (Burleson & Mortenson, 2003; Cutrona, 1996; Lawrence et al., 2008), satisfaction (Bradbury, Fincham, & Beach, 2000), and empathy (Losoya & Eisenberg, 2001; Soenens, Duriez, Vansteenkiste, & Goossens, 2007). Other aspects that are receiving increased attention are commitment (Bradbury, Karney, Iafate, & Donato, 2010; Iafate, Donato, & Bertoni, 2010), family obligation (Freeberg & Stein, 1996; Fuligni, Alvarez, Bachman, & Ruble, 2005; Stein, 2009), filial responsibility (Dellmann-Jenkins & Brittain, 2003; Kuperminc, Jurkovic, & Casey, 2009), and family values (Barni, 2009; Grusec, Goodnow, & Kuczynski, 2000).

From our perspective, these constructs seem to reflect two different, but not opposing, dimensions of the family bond: the emotional-affective dimension and ethical-legal dimension.¹ When one or both of these dimensions of the family bond is absent, it produces high levels of distress in family members. Hence, the quality of family relationships is determined by the degree of co-presence of those affective and ethical characteristics that converge in what we call the principle of caring: caring for the other person and for the relationship. The emotional-affective side of the bond is rooted in the presence of trust-hope, and the ethical side in justice-loyalty (Jurkovic, 1998).

Erikson (1968, 1982) viewed trust and hope as properties of the developing person that are supported by the family in its fostering of personal growth (Meltzer & Harris, 1983). Within the study of close relationships, trust has become increasingly important in recent decades (Borawski, Ievers-Landis, Lovegreen, & Trapl, 2003; Crocetti, Rubini, & Meuss, 2008; Kerr, Stattin, & Trost, 1999).

The importance of justice and loyalty in family relationships is a key concept in the intergenerational and contextual approach introduced by Boszormenyi-Nagy and Spark (1973). These authors see family as a system of credit-debit and obligations that cross generations like

invisible threads making up a family's connective tissue.

In the relational–symbolic model, *both* the affective *and* ethical dimensions of family relationships are considered important; the family bond rests on a foundation of trust and hope, and develops if it respects justice, loyalty, and obligation. Every culture expresses the affective and ethical aspects of the family bond in its own way and may attribute greater value to one rather than another. In many Western cultures, we have shifted from a strong focus on ethical–legal aspects to a point where affective–emotional aspects are considered decidedly more important, and so we find this characteristic in all family relationships (Levine, Sato, Hashimoto, & Verma, 1995). However, both the affective and ethical components are important (e.g., Finley & Schwartz, 2006). In brief, the family fulfills its identity if it can keep its affective and ethical bonds (both of which are essential parts of the caring principle) alive: that is, if it respects its symbolic qualities.

It is worth noting that it may be especially valuable to study family identity at the group level during transition periods (e.g., transition to parenthood, transition to adulthood), which test and reveal the strengths and weaknesses of family bonds. As stated by Cowan and Cowan (2003), the study of transitional periods provides important opportunities for family researchers and clinicians because, on the one hand, they function as “natural experiments” to test hypotheses on family relationships, and, on the other hand, they can be “opportune moments to consider preventive interventions that could be helpful in moving families closer to adaptive positions” (p. 430). The transition periods within a family are also crucial moments for identity redefinition.

Family Subsystem Identity: The Couple Identity

We have focused until now on the identity of the family as a group. Now we consider a specific subsystem identity, namely couple identity. From the point of view of family systems theory, the

couple is a subsystem and so, when a couple is formed, properties of the new couple bond change and are different from the sum of the individual partners' identities. This has been highlighted in Acitelli's and colleagues' work, where it is clear that the marital bond produces a new form of identity (Acitelli, Rogers, & Knee, 1999). From this perspective, couple identity involves the extent to which the relationship itself is seen as an entity (rather than seeing only two individuals). Hence, partners in close relationships incorporate into their self-concepts the connection between the self and the other, i.e., their relationship (Badr, Acitelli, & Carmack Taylor, 2007). Similar to what happens in group identification (Brewer, 2007), individuals engaged in an important (intimate) relationship develop a sense of “we-ness.” Note that the couple identity, as an aspect of individual identity, changes with major life transitions and assumes different features at different stages of life (e.g., marriage, childbirth, etc.).

Another consequence of being involved in a couple relationship is that the individual tends to include the other's attributes and the relationship in their mental representation of self. Agnew, Arriaga, and Wilson (2008) maintain that, as one's commitment to a relationship develops, cognitive structures representing the self become restructured. People start to perceive themselves less as individuals and more as part of a pluralistic self-and-partner collective, and they develop a couple-oriented identity. According to the self-expansion model (Aron & Aron, 1986; Aron, Aron, Tudor, & Nelson, 1991), in close relationships a process of inclusion of the other within the self occurs; the self expands to include the other's characteristics such as resources, perspectives, and identities (Aron et al., 2004; cf. Chen, Boucher, & Kraus, Chapter 7, this volume). This mental representation of the self-in-relationship is referred to as *cognitive interdependence*.

However, our perspective adds another aspect to the couple's identity. The couple's new identity is not only a result of the encounter between two personalities, but also an encounter between two family histories. From this point of view, in order to create a true identity, the couple must

be able to differentiate itself from the families of origin; to do so, it must have a certain autonomy in exercising its function and a certain amount of decisional power (e.g., Bowen, 1978; Cowan & Cowan, 2005).

Autonomy and decisional power vary greatly among cultures both within the marital relationship and in the relationship of the couple with the families of origin. For example, in many Islamic cultures, marriages are arranged rather than chosen, and the power balance between the two spouses seems unequal, with the woman being subordinated to her husband (Jen'nan Ghazal, 2004; Zaidi & Shuraydi, 2002). Moreover in these cultures, and in Hindu and Confucian cultures, the marital couple has little autonomy and little decisional power vis-à-vis the families of origin—and this was once true of Western cultures as well. In most contemporary Western cultures, on the other hand, power within a couple is equal (the two spouses have equal rights and obligations), and the couple is seen as autonomous and separate from the families of origin (Georgas et al., 2006). Nonetheless, the family of origin does exercise its influence. In fact, several theoretical approaches have provided insight into how some family-of-origin characteristics may shape the way partners enter their adult romantic relationships, and several models have provided evidence of the effects of family of origin on the offspring's couple relationship (Bryant & Conger, 2002; Busby, Gardner, & Taniguchi, 2005; Mallinckrodt, 2000; Sabatelli & Bartle-Haring, 2003).

Relationships with the family of origin become even more significant when the marital couple becomes a parental couple. In particular, as a parental couple it becomes “a linear bridge” between family generations (Hill, 1970), and carries out the function of mediator between generations (Cigoli & Scabini, 2006). In particular, a couple is mediator between its children and its parents (Brambilla, Manzi, & Regalia, 2010). Such mediation is influenced by the specific contexts in which the couple lives and works. In sum, a couple's identity is fulfilled when the couple has succeeded in building a sense of wellness in connection with previous family history, through a process of personal re-elaboration of

the positive and negative carried over from the family of origin.

Individual Identity Within the Family

Vignoles, Regalia, Manzi, Golledge, and Scabini (2006) define identity as the subjective concept of oneself as a person. Starting from this definition, we can state that individual identity within the family refers to aspects of self related to (1) belonging to a specific family and (2) the specific identity role played within different family subsystems, e.g., couple relationship, sibling relationship, and parent-child relationship.

With respect to the first concept, family identity at the individual level may be seen as a particular social identity and implies the perception of one's family as an ingroup (Banker & Gaertner, 1998) and the sense of identification with this group (Soliz & Harwood, 2006). The family, in fact, is inherently a shared ingroup for all members and can be considered as “generally the most salient ingroup category in the lives of individuals” (Lay et al., 1998, p. 434). We have to remember that being part of one's family group is very different than many other group memberships. As we have already stated, family membership cannot be psychologically cancelled. This means that individual identity always involves being part of one's family, even if individuals choose to disassociate from it.

The concept of family social identity has been used recently to study the intergroup relationship within the family context. In fact, even if family members share a common family identity, they also possess identities signifying intergroup boundaries within the family (Harwood, Soliz, & Lin, 2006). Such intergroup boundaries may be superseded when family identity (i.e., a common ingroup) is salient (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000). Soliz and Harwood (2006), for example, have studied the intergroup relationship between different generations (youth and elder) within the family context.

Regarding the role identities that individuals play within family subsystems, we should also highlight that family identity is an intricate mix of many interdependent relationships. So, being

a sister, a wife, a mother, and a daughter are not role identities independent of each other. For example, one's identity as a parent may be linked both to one's identity as a partner and also to one's identity as a son/daughter. Thus, parents are also "offspring" of the preceding generation (the grandparents), and their identities are also affected by their own parental and filial relationships, within an intergenerational chain (Cigoli & Scabini, 2006).

Among the different types of relations and roles that a person may serve within his/her life, the most important is the filial relation. Everyone is a son or a daughter, even if they may not become a partner or a parent. The term "filial" involves both the relationship between offspring and each individual parent (mother and father), and the relationship between maternal and paternal lineages. We can assert, therefore, that the "psychic field" of the filial relation is much wider than the dual space created by the relationship between parents and offspring: it is at least a trigenerational system (McGoldrick & Carter, 2003) or, more simply, a multigenerational system (Cigoli & Scabini, 2006). In fact, the family system shows a sort of intergenerational continuity; functional and dysfunctional patterns tend to be repeated across generations, even if not in a deterministic way.

According to Cowan and Cowan (2005), four types of theoretical explanations of intergenerational continuity dominate the current scene. First, some of the repetition of relationship patterns across generations seems to be affected by genetic and other biological mechanisms (Caspi et al., 2002; Plomin, 1994). Second, psychoanalytic formulations propose that both the child's identification with the same-sex parent and the internalization of that parent's superego (i.e., the ethical principles of the parent) provide guidelines for what constitutes appropriate behavior in family relationships (Fraiberg, 1975; Freud, 1922). Third, attachment theory assumes that adults have developed "working models" of parent-child relationships based on experiences with key attachment figures in their families of origin (Bowlby, 1988; Van Ijzendoorn, 1992). These working models lead to the repetition of secure or insecure patterns of attachment in the

next generation. Fourth, social learning theorists (Bandura, 1977; Patterson, 1975) offer an explanation of intergenerational transmission on the basis that children learn patterns of family behavior by observing adults interacting with others and noting which behaviors are reinforced or punished, that they tend to repeat when they form their own families.

Each of these explanations of intergenerational transmission assumes that the parent-child relationship influences individual identity because it determines the individual's access to family heritage (at different levels: genes, unconscious contents, relational schemas, behaviors).

Our specific perspective is that individuals develop a filial identity through a personal internalization of the family heritage, which leads the individual to gain a special and unique place in the family history. If the child does not achieve a personal re-elaboration of the family values and heritage, this may end in two possible negative outcomes. On the one hand, he/she may interrupt the intergenerational transmission by refusing the family heritage a priori; on the other hand, he/she may simply incorporate the parental standards into his/her self-system without any personal re-elaboration.

Zentner and Renaud (2007) outlined that the task of building identity within the family involves three main component processes: family transposition (what the parents want to transmit to their children), filial accurate perception (the extent to which the child receives the message that the parent intended to transmit), and individual re-elaboration (the extent to which the child reconsiders the patterns from her/his family of origin). In the next section, we will see that, from our perspective, the re-elaboration process is not reducible to cognitive elaboration, but deals with the affective and ethic symbolic dimensions of the family.

Building Identity in the Family Context: Individuation and Differentiation Processes

We have now discussed the defining features of the family and the meaning of family identity

at the family group level and at the family subsystem level (both dyads and individuals). We have seen that both dyad and individual identities emerge, at least in part, from being members of a family and that this implies a process of internalization of family heritage. But not only is the family identity developed within the family context; we could say, in fact, that the whole subsystem identity, for example the couple identity, is developed mainly within the family context. In other words, the family context influences the development of not just one's personal identity as a family member, but also other aspects of personal identity, such as, for example, one's professional identity. Family is not a neutral environment in which identity development takes place. In contrast, it deeply affects the individual process, starting during adolescence, that leads to the development of one's identity (Grotevant & Cooper, 1986).

Scholars interested in the topic of how identity develops within the family context have focused their attention mainly on the individuation process—whereby young people begin to explore (or discover) who they might become. The classic theories of Blos (1967) and Kroger (1985), rooted in psychoanalytic theory, define the individuation process in terms of separation—stating that adolescents must separate from their parents in order to develop an identity. These theories assume that the adolescent must adopt a “rebellious” position in order to individuate. Other authors stress instead the stable connection between adolescents and their parents as providing the optimal context for individuation (see Grotevant & Cooper, 1986; Youniss & Smollar, 1985). Recently, Meeus, Iedema, Maassen, and Engels (2005) empirically supported this second perspective. In this vein, the individuation process has been redefined as a task of gaining autonomy while maintaining relatedness to parents (Kruse & Walper, 2008).

In the family literature, the process of individuation has been viewed from a systemic perspective. According to this approach, we should distinguish the individuation process from the differentiation process. The former is located at the individual level, whereas the latter is located

at the family system level and regulates distance between family members (i.e., the degree the family system allows the individuation process of its members) (Sabatelli & Mazor, 1985).

Many authors agree that, to understand identity development within the family context, the individuation process and the differentiation process have to be considered together, as a systemic co-construction process (e.g., Buhl, 2008). In order to understand how individual family members define their identities within the family context, we must keep in mind the interdependence that characterizes the family. Thus, not only individuals, but the whole family system is involved in the process of identity subsystem definition. This is why, in the symbolic-relational perspective, we more appropriately use the term mutual differentiation. In the next section, we will analyze what we mean by this process.

The Mutual Differentiation Process

Mutual differentiation is the dialectic process of individuals and families freeing themselves from each other, *but* still remaining emotionally related. It is a relational process that deals with the ethical and affective symbolic properties of the family system. We use the term *mutual* because, as family subsystems and the overall family system grow together, the process of the family subsystem's identity development involves both the family system and the family subsystems, and their relations. Thus, it is not just the individual or the family dyads that have to individuate from the family, but the family must also permit and encourage this process (see also Stierlin, 1974). We also use the term *differentiation* because, for the family and its subsystems to function adequately, they should satisfy the basic human needs of relatedness, autonomy, and distinctiveness. These needs have been conceptualized in many theories to be related to the definition of adult identity.

The *relatedness need* refers to the “desire to feel connected with others” (Ryan & Deci, 2000) and the need to maintain or enhance feelings of closeness to, or acceptance by, other

people, whether in dyadic relationships or within ingroups (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). This need has been identified as a fundamental human motivation (e.g., Deci & Ryan, 2000). The relatedness motive has been included in several theories of identity motivation (Brewer, 1991; Leary & Baumeister, 2000; Snyder & Fromkin, 1980). Bauer and McAdams (2000) propose that the need for relatedness, together with autonomy and competence needs, point individuals toward an well-defined identity structure.

Within the family, the need to belong is satisfied by the presence of strong family bonds, which include feelings and behaviors such as emotional closeness, support, nurturance, and so on. This is the dimension that we call *family cohesion*, the sense of closeness, intimacy and belonging shared within the family, which represents the expression of the emotional–affective pole of family relations. Low levels of family cohesion are labeled *family disengagement* (e.g., Anderson & Sabatelli, 1992; Olson, 1982).

The autonomy need has been defined within self-determination theory by its primary etymological meaning of self-governance, or rule by the self (e.g., Ryan & Deci, 2006). Autonomy is considered a basic psychological need (along with relatedness and competence), and its effects on individual functioning have been shown to be pervasive (Ryan & Deci, 2006). In relation to identity development, it has been shown that those who are autonomy-oriented organize their behavioral regulation by taking elective interest in possibilities and choices (see Soenens & Vansteenkiste, Chapter 17, this volume).

Finally, the *distinctiveness need* pushes toward the establishment and maintenance of a sense of differentiation from others (Vignoles, Chrysoschoou, & Breakwell, 2000) and of uniqueness (Snyder & Fromkin, 1980). Vignoles et al. (2000) define this need as the *motive* that pushes toward the establishment and maintenance of a sense of differentiation from others. The distinctiveness dimension deals with the basic human need of developing a unique identity. Culture may determine (in part) the sources from which the distinctiveness need may be fulfilled, but some form of distinctiveness

is logically necessary in order to develop a meaningful sense of self (Codol, 1981), and hence the motive is theorized to be universal (see Vignoles, Chapter 18, this volume).

In the family literature, qualities of the family system that satisfy or threaten both the basic human needs of distinctiveness and autonomy fall under a common umbrella (multidimensional) construct, called *family enmeshment*. Family enmeshment is defined as a particular *characteristic* of the family bond, reflecting the extent to which family members' interpersonal boundaries are violated or respected in the family context. In particular, Scabini (1985) has emphasized the importance of considering interpersonal boundaries within the family. This kind of boundary reflects the amount of respect for the psychological individuality of each person in the family: when an individual's boundaries are not respected, his or her ability to feel, develop opinions, and make decisions within the family is negatively impacted. Family enmeshment is related to the ethical pole of family relations because it is strongly linked with the absence of a sense of justice, recognition, and respect for individual identity (see Barber et al., 2008).

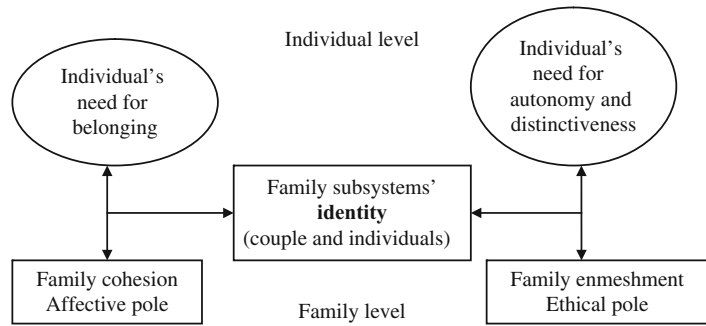
Figure 23.1 shows the relational–symbolic perspective on the mutual differentiation process.

Cohesion and Enmeshment in the Family Literature

There is substantial disagreement among family scholars about the nature of the relationship between the two domains of family cohesion and family enmeshment. Or, in other words, whether these constructs form a single dimension (where family enmeshment represents extremely high levels of cohesion) or two separate ones (low versus high family cohesion, and low versus high family enmeshment).

In Olson's circumplex model, family cohesion and family enmeshment are seen as aspects of a single dimension, assuming that a high level of cohesion constitutes a lack of family differentiation or, in other words, family enmeshment

Fig. 23.1 Mutual differentiation process: identity is the outcome of the relationship between individual and family system on the dimensions of belonging and distinctiveness



(e.g., Minuchin, 1974; Olson, 1982). These theorists propose a curvilinear relationship between cohesion and optimal family functioning: intermediate levels of cohesion are considered most adaptive, whereas both high and low extremes (often referred to as enmeshment and disengagement, respectively) are thought to be maladaptive. On the other hand, many scholars have argued that the one-dimensional model leads to an unclear and partial view of individual and family processes, and that the optimal situation is where a combination of *both* closeness *and* respect for autonomy and distinctiveness is achieved for individuals and for families (e.g., Green & Werner, 1996).

Thus, the one-dimensional model, with family enmeshment at one end and family cohesion at the other, has been criticized in the family literature. Starting from previous theories of the family system and the concepts of boundaries and enmeshment, Green and Werner (1996) criticized the assumption that enmeshment (lack of self–other differentiation) and disengagement (which is supposed to involve too much self–other differentiation, that is, too much individuation) represent opposing ends of the same continuum. Their theoretical model views the cohesion–enmeshment domain of family functioning as entailing not a single dimension but rather two independent orthogonal dimensions: intrusiveness (blurring or violation of boundaries) and closeness–caregiving (relationship-enhancing behaviors such as warmth and nurturance). Thus, from this perspective, higher levels of relatedness and low levels of intrusiveness are adaptive in the family

context—but a family can be highly cohesive *and* can promote individual autonomy.

Empirical studies have tended to refute the one-dimensional model (e.g., Barber & Buehler, 1996; Manzi, Vignoles, Regalia, & Scabini, 2006). Hence, authors have begun to disentangle concepts of cohesion (at individual or family level) and enmeshment (at individual or family level), both theoretically and empirically (e.g., Gavazzi, 1993; Green & Werner, 1996). Recently, some authors have stated that a better comprehension of the relationship between these two dimensions of the family functioning may be gained through a better understanding of the multidimensionality of the construct of family enmeshment. In fact, this construct is an umbrella term for a variety of parenting practices and family processes. Some of these aspects may be in opposition with family cohesion, others may not be. In the following section we address this issue and present two studies in which different dimensions of family enmeshment have been analyzed empirically. One of these studies has also addressed how culture impacts these different dimensions.

In fact, there is a substantial agreement in the literature that culture affects the meaning and the relationship between these poles (Kagitçibasi, 2005; Trommsdorff, 2005). As we have seen, however, there is still confusion about the definition of these dimensions and about the way to interpret the impact of culture on them. What is the human experience of relatedness? What is the human experience of differentiating? Are these universal human experiences, or not? The answers to these questions are very important

in understanding the process of building identity within the family.

The Multidimensional Model of Family Enmeshment

Few studies have tested empirically the multidimensionality of family enmeshment. Soenens, Vansteenkiste, et al. (2007) provide evidence for the distinction between the dimension of promotion of volitional functioning and promotion of independence in a sample of Belgian students. *Promotion of volitional functioning* within the family context (Grolnick, Ryan, & Deci, 1991) as opposed to conditional regard (e.g., Assor, Roth, & Deci, 2004) refers to the degree to which parents allow their children to make *autonomous decisions* about their lives or, the opposite, the degree to which they are manipulative and intrusive. This dimension of parenting is related to the individual need for autonomy (as theorized in self-determination theory: see Soenens & Vansteenkiste, Chapter 17, this volume), and interferes with the individual's decision-making process. An example item to measure this construct is: "My mother/father allows me to decide things for myself" or "My mother/father insists upon doing things her/his way (reverse coded)."

The construct of *promotion of independence* in the family context, as conceptualized by Silk, Morris, Kanaya, and Steinberg (2003), involves the degree to which families promote distinctiveness, or, the opposite, intrude on the cognitive sphere of its members by imposing contents, values, and worldviews. The promotion of the *independence* dimension may be related to the individual's cognitive boundaries, that is, whether and how others interfere with individual self-representation. An example item to measure this construct is: "My mother/father emphasizes that it is important to get my ideas across even if others don't like it" or "My mother/father pushes me to think independently." In their study, Soenens and colleagues found that perceived promotion of volitional functioning uniquely predicted adjustment, whereas perceived promotion of independence did not. Volitional

functioning therefore represents autonomous and self-directed thinking, whereas independence does not necessarily do the same.

Starting from these findings, Manzi, Regalia, Soenens, Fincham, and Scabini (2011) conducted a cross-cultural study to disentangle four different dimensions of family enmeshment taken from different authors in the literature: promotion of volitional functioning, promotion of independence, family separation, and psychological control. They also explored how culture affected the relationship between these dimensions, and between these dimensions and individual well-being.

The first two dimensions—promotion of independence and promotion of volitional functioning—were the same as in Soenens and colleagues' (2007) study. The construct of *family separation* was taken from Bloom (1985) and measures the degree to which the family promotes physical separation between its members: in other words, the degree to which the family allows individual members to pass time on their own and to organize their time independently. The *separation* dimension deals with individual *physical and temporal boundaries*, that is, if and how others interfere in the individual organization of personal time and space. Its opposite is proximity. An example item to measure this construct is: "Family members find it hard to get away from each other."

Finally, *family psychological control* (Barber, 1996) deals with the family's respect for the worth of each individual family member. In this case, the sense of identity is deeply affected, and the individual develops a negative sense of self.² Individuals with a negative sense of the self are not able to perceive their own self as positive and distinct from important others, and they are also characterized by high levels of emotional interactivity with important others (Green & Werner, 1996). An example item to measure this construct is: "My mother/father brings up past mistakes when she/he criticizes me."³

The study was conducted in four different countries: Italy and Belgium, two Western European countries with differing family cultures; as well as the United States and China.

Participants were first-year university students. Results suggest an interesting pattern. In all four countries, participants' perceptions clearly differentiated among the four constructs of promotion of volitional functioning, promotion of independence, separation and psychological control within the family context, providing empirical evidence for the theoretical disentanglement of these dimensions of family differentiation. As expected, results also indicated that culture moderated the relationships among these dimensions. To better understand these patterns, Manzi and colleagues also explored how these four dimensions were related to depression (see Fig. 23.2).

Manzi et al. found that parental psychological control was the most important and positive predictor of individual depression in all four countries. In fact, this dimension was the only direct predictor of depression in all four countries. Moreover, in all four countries, there was a significant indirect effect of promotion of volitional functioning, through family psychological control, on depression. For Belgian, American, and Italian participants, promotion of independence also had a significant indirect effect on depression, again mediated by psychological control, but this was not the case in the Chinese sample. Finally, only for the Belgian and North American samples did family separation have

a negative indirect impact on depression. For Chinese participants, family separation was unrelated to depression, whereas for Italians, family separation was indirectly but positively related to depression.

In summary, this study suggests that we can meaningfully disentangle four dimensions of family enmeshment: family separation, family promotion of independence, family promotion of volitional functioning, and family psychological control. Moreover, culture may impact the ways in which these dimensions are interpreted and interrelated across cultures. In particular, family psychological control (negatively) and family promotion of volitional functioning (positively) seem to be “universally” valued and equally important for the individual and for his/her well-being. Family promotion of independence seems to be important for individuals in Western countries but not in the Chinese context. This result is consistent with the assumption that Eastern societies promote a less independent self-construal (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Finally, family separation seems to be valued as an indicator of family distinctiveness only in Belgium and the United States—the two most individualistic countries in the sample. For Chinese and Italians, however, separation from the family may not be perceived as a positive indicator of family functioning. On the contrary, especially

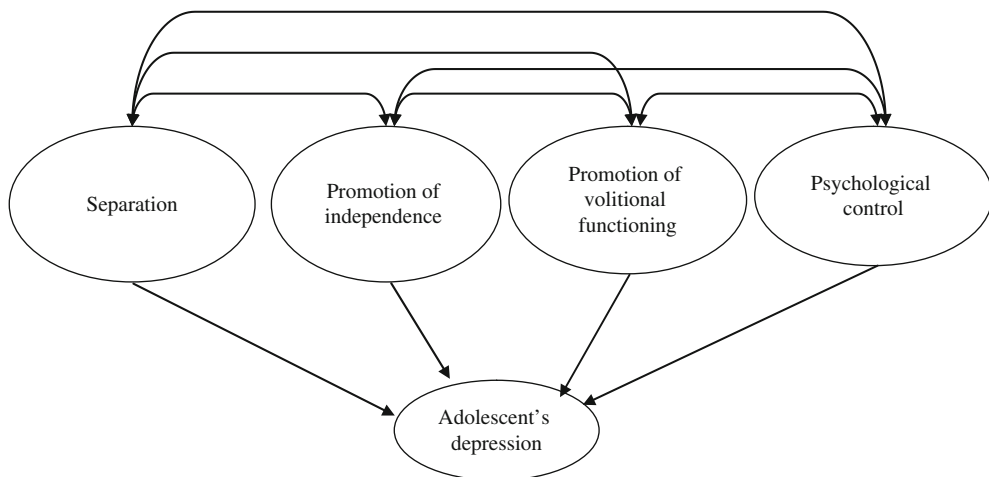


Fig. 23.2 Model tested by Manzi et al. (2011)

in Italian culture, it could be perceived as problematic.

Building Couple Identity Within the Family Context

Before concluding this final section on how family may affect identity development, we would like to direct attention to an insufficiently studied field of research: how the couple subsystem defines its identity in the context of the partners' families of origin. Earlier, we noted that the new couple has to develop its own identity within the family context. The mutual differentiation process is typically linked to the individual identity development during adolescence, but it could also easily be applied to the couple subsystem. Cigoli and Scabini (2006) argue that couple functioning, similar to individual functioning, involves an individuation process. As the adolescent develops his/her identity within the family, building clear individual boundaries, the same happens for the couple, which must differentiate itself from each partner's family of origin and must build clear and well-defined identity boundaries.

Until now, little effort has been made to explore empirically the process of couple identity formation and how the family of origin may affect this process. An exception is a recent study by Manzi, Parise, Iafrate, and Vignoles (2010). In this study, it was proposed that family enmeshment may affect the process of partners including each other into their sense of self. The longitudinal study, conducted in a sample of more than 350 couples, showed interesting results. First, for both women and men, higher levels of enmeshment with the family of origin were predictive of lower levels of "inclusion of the partner into the self" (after Aron & Aron, 1986). That is, coming from a family with high levels of enmeshment may pose a barrier to a couple's functioning and, in particular, to the development of a couple identity. A second interesting result was that each partner's level of family enmeshment was predictive of both partners' couple satisfaction. In other words, high levels of family enmeshment

for the male partner also predicted lower couple satisfaction in the female partner, and vice versa.

Results of this study clearly show that, similar to what occurs for individual identity, family of origin may affect the couple's identity development. Moreover, it outlines not only the importance of intergenerational relations, but also the strong interdependence between the two lineages when a new couple is created (Sabatelli & Bartle-Haring, 2003).

Conclusions

In this chapter, we have addressed the topic of identity and family processes. Our starting point was to show that family is a particular group and that it has a specific identity as a group. We referred to the relational-symbolic model developed by Cigoli and Scabini (2006) to delineate the defining features of the family and the concept of family identity at the individual, couple, and group levels. We have also stressed how the identities of family subsystems (individuals and dyads) are built within the family through the mutual differentiation process. In this process, both the family system and the family subsystem interconnect to satisfy the basic human needs to belong, to be autonomous, and to be distinct, which are all essential for identity development (cf. Adams & Marshall, 1996).

At the intervention level, we could say that what we have so far seen theoretically is also relevant for systemic-relational clinical practice. The goal of this kind of intervention is to help the family and family subsystems build clear and defined boundaries in order to provide a clear sense of identity among family members (Bowen, 1978). Such intervention programs are usually preventive in nature and are especially useful in dealing with family transitions (see Cowan & Cowan, 2005). Most of these training programs have been developed to help families increase their relational skills linked to couple and parent-child bonds such as conflict management, communication, and intimacy (see Bodenmann & Shantinah, 2004; Olson & Olson, 1999; Patterson & Forgatch, 1987;

Webster-Stratton, 1981). These programs may indirectly promote a better-defined sense of identity within the family. Only a few efforts, however, have been devoted to the redefinition of identity after the most important family life-cycle transitions. A good example in such an intervention is the “Becoming a Family Project” developed by Cowan and Cowan (1992), which represents the first training program for the transition to parenthood. The title itself directs particular attention to the link between family processes and the psychological birth of a new family member. In this project, aspects of identity are treated as emerging issues in order to understand and manage the transition to parenthood (see also Manzi, Vignoles, & Regalia, 2010, regarding the study of identity change after family transition).

In conclusion, we would like to stress once more the importance of the ways in which culture affects the relationship between family dynamics and identity development. We believe that, within the family context, it is meaningful to search for universal characteristics but that culture affects how these are displayed and how they develop. This is particularly important for those who want to research or promote family processes and identity development in a multicultural society and for those who are looking for tools to guide and intervene.

showed that people with negative self-views embrace negative rather than positive partners, this for the desire of self-stability. However, the theory leaves unclear why a person may develop a negative rather than a positive self-view in the first place. Here, we suggest that a negative sense of self can result from negative family patterns and, in particular, an intrusive and controlling relationship with parents.

3. In the family psychology literature, there is an ongoing debate on how the construct of psychological control is related to the construct of promotion of volitional functioning. Recently, Soenens, Vansteenkiste, and Sierens (2009) proposed to consider promotion of volitional functioning as the opposite end of psychological control—in other words, they stated that parents promoting autonomy necessarily do not enact controlling and manipulative behaviors. Here, following Barber’s conceptualization of the psychological control construct (Barber, 2002; Barber et al., 2008), we consider promotion of volitional functioning and psychological control as two different, even if related constructs. They are related because both pertain to the dimension of family differentiation. They are different because psychological control affects the child’s sense of self, whereas promotion of volitional functioning is related to the child’s capacity to make autonomous choices.

Notes

1. Other scholars have proposed similar, but not identical, categorizations of family-relational components (see, for example, Finley & Schwartz, 2004).
2. Note that within social psychology literature on identity, self-verification theory (Swann, Chang-Schneider, & Angulo, 2007) has focused its attention on the positive and negative sense of self. Specifically in the famous Mr. Nice and Mr. Nasty study, positive and negative sense of self were studied in relation to close relationships. The study

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Harold D. Grotevant and Lynn Von Korff

Abstract

Adoptive identity addresses these questions: “Who am I as an adopted person?” and “What does being adopted mean to me, and how does this fit into my understanding of my self, relationships, family, and culture?” The process of identity construction is observed in adoptive identity exploration, as adopted persons reflect on the meaning of adoption in their lives, take active steps to gather information that will enhance this understanding, and construct a meaningful narrative. A highly developed narrative is internally consistent, reflects multiple points of view, and has been developed through a process of exploration and reflection. Despite the increasing popular interest in adoptive identity, relevant theories and supportive research are still emerging. This chapter begins with an overview of the four worlds of adoption: domestic infant adoption, domestic adoption from the public child welfare system, international adoption, and kinship adoption. Knowledge of commonalities and differences across these types of adoption is critical for understanding adoptive identity. Next follows a discussion of the family, community, and societal contexts in which adoptive identity development occurs. The chapter then turns to identity theory. Our approach is grounded in Eriksonian and narrative theories, and incorporates recent theoretical work by Von Korff (2008) on the role of affect in adoptive identity. Finally, several promising approaches to identity intervention are discussed in the context of cautions, because the path toward adoptive identity is not linear and may extend well into adulthood. The chapter concludes with a discussion of future prospects in adoptive identity theory and research.

For many adopted persons, the question of identity is interwoven with specific questions about one’s lineage, such as “Who are my biological parents?” “Where was I born?” “What were my earliest days like?” and “What is my genetic heritage?” All of us, adopted or not, learn about

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our origins through stories told to us by family members (Bohanek, Marin, Fivush, & Duke, 2006). For adopted persons, family stories are often missing information about them because the information is unavailable or has been withheld. Thus, it should not be a surprise that much of the literature (e.g., popular, memoir, clinical) on identity and adoption is about missing information – such as unknown origins or relatives, or unknown or unknowable health or genetic history. However, identity refers to more than the amount of information one has; it is the story that one constructs with that information.

Adoptive identity addresses these questions: “Who am I as an adopted person?” and “What does being adopted mean to me, and how does this fit into my understanding of my self, relationships, family, and culture?” A narrative approach to adoptive identity development focuses on meaning-making (Grotevant, 1993, 1997; Grotevant, Dunbar, Kohler, & Esau, 2000; Von Korff, 2008; Bamberg, DeFina, & Schiffrin, Chapter 8, this volume; McAdams, Chapter 5, this volume). How is an adoptee’s narrative socially constructed, and how does that narrative help the person know where he or she fits into the world?

The process of meaning-making is observed in adoptive identity exploration, as adopted persons reflect on the meaning of adoption in their lives, take active steps to gather information that will enhance this understanding, and construct a meaningful narrative. The quality of the narrative is reflected in its coherence (Polkinghorne, 1988; McAdams, Chapter 5, this volume). A highly developed narrative is internally consistent, reflects multiple points of view, and has been developed through a process of exploration and reflection (Dunbar & Grotevant, 2004; Von Korff, 2008). Despite the increasing popular interest in adoptive identity, relevant theories and supportive research are still emerging. This chapter begins with an overview of the four worlds of adoption: domestic infant adoption, domestic adoption from the public child welfare system, international adoption, and kinship adoption. Knowledge of commonalities and differences

across these different types of adoption is critical for understanding adoptive identity. Next, we discuss the family, community, and societal contexts in which adoptive identity development occurs. The chapter then turns to identity theory. Our approach is grounded in Eriksonian and narrative theories and incorporates recent theoretical work by Von Korff (2008) on the role of affect in adoptive identity. Finally, we present perspectives on identity intervention and discuss several promising approaches and cautions. The chapter concludes with a discussion of future prospects in adoptive identity theory and research.

Diverse Worlds of Adoption: Backdrop to Understanding Identity Development

In North America and Western Europe, the term “adoption” is used to describe very different circumstances: the infant voluntarily placed by her unmarried birth parents so that she would have greater economic and educational advantages than they felt they could provide; the teenager who was removed from his parents’ home by social services because of sexual abuse, subsequently placed in foster care, and then declared eligible by the courts for permanent adoption; the child orphaned as a result of the AIDS epidemic in Africa, moved to an institution, and subsequently adopted by a family in the United States; and the teenager whose parents divorced and married other people, and whose stepfather legally adopted her. What these children have in common is that the rights and responsibilities of their birth parents were legally terminated and transferred to others who will raise them. But adopted persons bring with them different amounts of knowledge about their birth families, as well as widely divergent experiences that serve as building blocks as they go about constructing their adoptive identities.

In short, adoption as a family form is intimately connected to circumstances of culture, history, economics, and ideology. Thus, understanding adoptive identity requires a working

knowledge of the different worlds of adoption, because the worlds differ by characteristics of the child and of the adoptive parents (e.g., age, health, gender, country of origin); differences between the child and the adoptive parents (e.g., racial, ethnic, or personality differences); reasons for the child's placement (e.g., poverty, voluntary or involuntary removal of the child from the birthparents' home, parental death, parental divorce); and characteristics of the intermediary creating the adoptive placement (e.g., private (non-governmental) agency, public child welfare service). Understanding these differences among types of adoption, and among individual adoptees, provides an important backdrop for the study of adoptive identity.

Four distinctive types of adoption predominate in North America and Western Europe today: domestic adoption of infants, domestic adoption from the public child welfare system, international adoption, and kinship adoption. The following sketches of the four worlds of adoption highlight the different identity challenges that await adopted persons in each of these situations.

Domestic Adoption of Infants

Infants are placed for adoption within their countries of origin for a number of reasons, but most commonly because the child's birth parents feel that they cannot provide the kind of home they would want for their child. Such parents might be young, still in school, or in occupations that would not provide the resources needed to raise a child. Others might not be in a committed relationship and might want their child to be raised in a two-parent home. Still other birth mothers might find themselves pregnant as a result of rape or incest, and may neither be willing to raise their child nor to terminate the pregnancy. Placements of these types are frequently termed "voluntary," because the birth parent(s) make the decision to place the child for adoption. Infant placements still occur within the United States but are rare in Western Europe, where the social safety net provides economic resources that make it more feasible for single parents to raise children.

The past few decades have seen a shift in infant placements toward arrangements characterized by openness, or contact between the child's adoptive family and birth relatives. Advocates of open adoption typically cite the facilitation of identity development as one of the advantages of this arrangement. Closed adoptions, in which children had no identifying information about their birth relatives, created a variety of identity-relevant concerns for children who grew up in that system. Clinical literature (e.g., Riley & Meeks, 2006) and memoirs (e.g., Lifton, 1975) have highlighted the struggles that many adopted persons felt because they knew nothing of their origins in a society that is heavily oriented toward biological ties (e.g., Wegar, 1997) and the importance of genetics in health (e.g., Finkler, Skrzynia, & Evans, 2003). The most common identity-relevant issues in domestic infant adoption include "searching" (a broad concept referring to activities that range from searching for information about relatives to searching for the relatives themselves) and forging an identity as a member of two families.

Domestic Adoption from the Public Child Welfare System

Unlike the situation where birth parents make an adoption plan for their child, children are sometimes removed from their homes by the child welfare system because the parents are judged to be unfit due to abuse and/or neglect. In the United States, a system of concurrent planning is used, in which there are attempts to assist the child's family (e.g., through drug treatment, job assistance, counseling) so that he or she can return home. If these attempts are unsuccessful, parental rights are terminated and the child becomes available for adoption. These children may live in one or many more foster homes between being removed from their families and placed for adoption (McRoy, Lynch, Chanmugam, Madden, & Ayers-Lopez, 2009). This world of adoption evokes its own set of identity issues: Where does the child fit? Who are

his or her parents? How does one develop a clear sense of self when being moved from one foster family to another, changing schools and neighborhoods each time? How does a child maintain contact with birth relatives who are not considered harmful to the child, such as siblings or grandparents (e.g., Neil, 2004)? How does this contact contribute to the child's emerging sense of identity? How does the child reconcile his or her relationship with abusive or neglectful parents whose rights have been terminated?

International Adoption

Humanitarian efforts to find homes for children in orphanages following World War II and the Korean War set the stage for the broader practice of contemporary international (also referred to as intercountry or transnational) adoption (Selman, 2009). A different set of identity-related concerns emerges for these children. How do they make meaning of the fact that they look different than their adoptive parents? How do they understand their connection to adoptive and birth families who do not share a common language, set of cultural practices, or national heritage? How does a young adult make meaning of the ethical issues surrounding international adoption, such as economic disparities or social policies that persuade women to place their babies for adoption? A growing number of internationally adopted children are searching for birth relatives or information about them (e.g., Tieman, van der Ende, & Verhulst, 2008). How does one do this across cultural divides and norms that may bring shame or even danger to a child's birth parents?

Kinship Adoption

Many children whose biological parents cannot parent them are raised informally by relatives or are legally adopted by kin such as grandparents or stepparents. In the case of stepparent adoption, the child may continue to live with one biological parent, and so many of the identity questions that characterize the other worlds

of adoption take different forms. Identity questions may arise around the child's relations to the parent(s) whose rights were terminated, either voluntarily or involuntarily. What does it mean to a teenage girl when her biological father allows someone else to adopt her? What does it mean to a child, adopted by his stepfather, to have a new last name and a new set of relatives?

This brief venture into the four different worlds of adoption has highlighted the context-sensitivity of adoptive identity. It also underscores the need to look beyond the word "adoption" to understand the adopted person's unique family circumstances.

Family and Broader Contexts of Adoptive Identity Development

Family Contexts

Family environments set the stage for adolescent identity formation, shaping children through a process of mutual influence (Erikson, 1963, 1968, 1980). As children reach adolescence, they redefine their relationships with their parents or guardians. Adolescents begin to develop autonomy with respect to these relationships; they leave childhood behind, modifying old commitments and forming new ones in the realms of school, work, relationships, and ideology (Cooper, 1999; Grotevant, 1998; Grotevant & Cooper, 1998).

Adoptive identity is also negotiated and enacted in relational contexts within families. The early socialization process for adopted children usually engages the child with a family adoption story or narrative (Brodzinsky, Lang, & Smith, 1995). The story, which typically contains information about birth parents and circumstances surrounding adoption, communicates the "facts" that the adoptive parents wish to disclose at that time, as well as subtle positive or negative cues about the child's birth parents and their circumstances. All of the features of the story are likely to influence the child's developing narrative. In the early years, the family serves as a source of interpretation for the child through

stories, artifacts (photos, gifts, etc.), songs, written material, and social affiliations. The family narrative is influenced by adoption professionals' advice to parents about what should be told, how much, and when (Wrobel, Kohler, Grotevant, & McRoy, 2003). The family's comfort with acknowledging that adoptive parenting is inherently different from biological parenting (e.g., Kirk, 1981), and their comfort with discussing adoption, also serve as part of the context.

Adopted children and adolescents may come to reconsider their received family narrative over time in several ways. With the development of abstract reasoning, they may begin to reflect on the complex legal, societal, relational, and sexual meanings involved in adoption (Brodzinsky, Singer, & Braff, 1984). Missing information, such as the identities of birth parents or reasons for the adoptive placement, may raise questions about the family narrative. If a child had not been told about the adoption or about important aspects of the adoption, discovering these details could lead to questions about why it was necessary to keep this information secret. Further, secrets about important personal information, and the misleading family narratives associated with such secrets, may undermine a child's sense of self and family belonging (Brown-Smith, 1998) and, in some cases, may be experienced as traumatic (e.g., Fisher, 1973; Morgan, 2008). Even when children are raised to believe that adoption is a valid way to build a family, uninformed comments from others about adoption may challenge this view or prompt questions about why the family's narrative differs from that of others. As adolescents consider these issues and reframe their family adoption narrative, they begin to integrate adoptive identity into their larger sense of self (Grotevant, 1997).

Adoption often becomes "visible" within families because of real or perceived differences in physical appearance, abilities, or personality. Within biologically related families, similarities and differences are frequently attributed to heredity; if there is no one in the immediate family whom the child resembles, the similarity may be attributed to an extended family member. In adoptive families, parent-child similarities and

differences are obviously not due to heredity. When nothing is known about the child's birth parents, attributions are sometimes still made to hypothesized characteristics of birth family members: "Your mother must have had hair just like that" (see Perry, 2006). Differences tend to be more visible in families with children adopted transracially or transnationally.

How families deal with difference plays an important role in adoptive identity development. Kaye (1990) examined discourse processes in families considered "high distinguishing" (i.e., emphasizing the difference between adoptive and biological status) and "low distinguishing" (minimizing the difference between the two). Examining transcripts of family discussions, Kaye asked whether the adolescent's freedom to express views about adoption that were different from his or her parents' views might be related to the adoptee's identity formation. He found that both emphasizing and minimizing differences were associated with family problems and with low adolescent self-esteem, and that both discourse styles may have negative consequences for identity development. When differences were acknowledged without being emphasized, adolescents' real experiences of difference were validated, while their connection to the adoptive family was simultaneously underscored.

Community and Societal Contexts

Adoptive identity cannot be understood without placing it in the context of societal attitudes toward kinship. Social scientists such as Schneider (1980) and Wegar (1997) have argued that Western societies base kinship ties primarily, if not exclusively, on blood relations. When biological relationships are emphasized, adopted persons are put in a problematic position, because their familial ties are grounded in social, rather than biological, relations (Leon, 2002).

The boundaries between adoptive and biological parenthood are being blurred as an increasing number of infant adoptions are open from the beginning. In open adoptions, birth mothers may choose the parents who adopt their child, and

the adoptive parents may be present at the birth. Even if the parties do not plan extensive contact after the placement, they have met and they know how to contact each other. There is no pretense of the child's "passing" as a biological child of the adoptive parents. Participation in such arrangements implies that adoptive parents are aware that their family's boundaries extend beyond the household to an adoptive kinship network, consisting of the adopted child, adoptive family members, and birth family members. In fact, some adoptive parents have found that open adoption enhanced their role as parents, giving them opportunities to talk directly with their children about their origins, medical histories, and birth relatives (Von Korff, Grotevant, Koh, & Samek, 2010).

Although all family relationships present opportunities for secrets and conflicts to occur, the nature of open adoptions reduces the likelihood of secrets related to the circumstances of adoption, because the relevant parties are known to each other. Even though there may be fewer secrets about biology or heritage in open adoptions, this does not mean that all of the children's questions are answered. An open adoption does not reduce the questioning that accompanies adolescence. In fact, we have found that all adopted children are curious about their birth families, but that children in arrangements with different degrees of openness are curious about different things (Wrobel & Dillon, 2009). For example, children in confidential adoptions may wonder who their birth parents are and what they look like, whereas children in open adoptions may wonder when their birth parents will visit next and whether their birth parents will share details about their birth and placement.

Adopting children across racial or national lines makes families bicultural or multicultural, although some families embrace this transformation more than others. The racial and cultural composition of the family's community will determine whether their status is a source of visible difference or not. Depending on the community context, adopted children may experience a range of reactions, from open arms to teasing or denigration. The "fit" of the adoptive

family with its community context will have an impact on the identity development of its children (McGinnis, 2009). For example, Cheri Register, an American parent of two daughters adopted from Korea, wrote a book about her experience with family-community fit titled *Are Those Kids Really Yours?* (Register, 1991). The title echoed the many encounters she had had with strangers in the grocery store, airport, and neighborhood. It speaks to the issue of self-in-context, and not only the child's identity but also the identity of the whole family (Suter, 2008). Lee (2003) has underscored the salience of this dilemma, labeling it the "transracial adoption paradox." For children adopted by White parents across racial or ethnic lines, the child or adolescent may be viewed by the larger society as an ethnic minority or a person of color. However, they may be perceived by some (and perhaps by themselves) as members of the majority culture, because they were adopted into a White family and grew up in that context.

These sometimes contradictory experiences can affect the way in which identity development proceeds for adolescents and young adults. More specifically, in a recent study of Korean adoptees, Shiao and Tuan (2008) found that ethnic identity exploration during early adulthood was contingent on adoptees' freedom from family responsibilities and personal problems, proximity to opportunities for exploration, belief that their "racial visibility" placed limits on their acceptance by others, and openness to interacting with other Asians.

Even when children adopted transracially or internationally are accepted in their communities, they may encounter challenges to their emerging sense of identity when they move into different contexts. For example, a Korean child adopted into a predominantly White, rural community may have access to status and acceptance associated with the "white privilege" (McIntosh, 1988) of his or her adoptive parents (i.e., the transracial adoption paradox; Lee, 2003). However, if the child attends college in a large multicultural urban area, others may respond socially in ways that challenge his or her identity (Meier, 1999). All of a sudden, he or she may be regarded

as a “person of color,” a label discordant with his or her self-view. Through social interactions, adopted adolescents may begin to identify or align themselves with their biological parents’ racial or ethnic groups, but may find they do not fit in because they do not know the language or cultural values. Adolescents may also seek out adoption-related groups and affiliation with the “adoption community” when they move into contexts where their adoptive status or family and community membership is questioned. The availability of numerous adoption-related websites, blogs, and Internet chat rooms has made it possible for adolescents to participate in this exploration separately from their family, even before they leave home.

If the child was adopted transracially or internationally, is there a community of similar individuals with whom the child (and perhaps the family) can identify and interact? The availability of the community itself is only one piece of the puzzle; the child and parents must be interested in interacting with the community, and the community itself must be welcoming. For example, in regions where there is a high concentration of families who have adopted from Korea, there are Korean culture camps offered in the summer, often organized by adoptive parents or adoption agencies. Although many children benefit from them and love to attend, other children want nothing to do with them. Similarly, members of the child’s ethnic community may not be interested in interacting with the adopted child, who is different from them as well as from his or her adoptive parents (Meier, 1998). This experience of non-acceptance also influences identity development.

Adoptive Identity Theory: A New Synthesis

Eriksonian Foundations

Identity versus role confusion is the fifth stage in Erikson’s epigenetic theory of psychosocial development (Erikson, 1963, 1968, 1980;

Kroger & Marcia, [Chapter 2](#), this volume). This life stage, which coincides with adolescence and the transition to adulthood, represents the period when youth experience major neurological, emotional, and cognitive changes, while also being called upon to explore and make decisions about education and career, ideology, and interpersonal relationships. Theory holds that a coherent and meaningful sense of identity, formed in concert with one’s social and cultural environment, is central to healthy psychological adjustment during this developmental stage and beyond (see also Berzonsky, [Chapter 3](#), this volume; Luyckx, Schwartz, Goossens, Beyers, & Missotten, [Chapter 4](#), this volume; Waterman, [Chapter 16](#), this volume).

Erikson’s theory of development is epigenetic: the central themes of each developmental stage – trust versus mistrust, autonomy versus shame, initiative versus guilt, and so on – influence current and subsequent developmental stages (Erikson, 1968). Additionally, themes central to each stage are revisited throughout the life cycle. Thus, identity development is a lifelong process, occurring at the intersection between the individual and his or her social context (Erikson, 1980; Graafsma, Bosma, Grotevant, & deLevita, 1994).

Erikson’s theory of development is also psychosocial. The challenges involved in each developmental stage arise from the interaction of individual development (physiological, cognitive, emotional) and societal demands and expectations. In contemporary Western societies, adolescence and emerging adulthood represent the time of life during which youth are expected to move forward toward occupational futures (as they make decisions about educational paths and economic self-sufficiency), toward becoming responsible citizens (through developing political and value stances), and toward becoming mature relationship partners (as they consider decisions about family formation; Arnett, 2000).

Identity development is dynamic and complex because each of these identity domains (e.g., occupational, political, relational) has its own developmental course (Bosma, 1985; Grotevant, 1987), and each waxes and wanes in importance

over time (Goossens, 2001; Meeus, 1996). Most of the domains studied by identity researchers well into the 1990s concerned aspects of identity over which adolescents have some degree of choice, such as occupation, religion, political values, and views of themselves in relationships (see Kroger & Marcia, Chapter 2, this volume). More recently, there has been interest in understanding assigned identities, where the individual has little or no choice about a particular identity domain, such as gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or adoptive status (Grotevant, 1992; see also Bussey, Chapter 25, this volume; Savin-Williams, Chapter 28, this volume; Umaña-Taylor, Chapter 33, this volume). What is important, then, is not the choice about whether to take on this identity – but rather, the need to determine, “What does this identity mean to me?”

Adoptive Identity Development: A Narrative Approach

Because adoptive status is assigned rather than chosen, adoptive identity development involves “coming to terms” with adoption in the context of the family and culture into which one has been adopted (Grotevant, 1997). As reviewed at the beginning of this chapter, adoptive identity addresses these questions: “Who am I as an adopted person?” “What does being adopted mean to me?” and “How does this fit into my understanding of my self, relationships, family, and culture?” The overall process of identity development may be more complex for adopted than non-adopted persons, because this additional layer of issues requires consideration.

Like other aspects of identity, adoptive identity development is stimulated during adolescence by factors internal and external to the developing person. Cognitive (e.g., hypothetical reasoning) and biological changes (leading to sexual interest and activity) evoke curiosity in adopted individuals about their origins and the implications that their past might have for their future (Wrobel & Dillon, 2009). Thus, adolescence is a normative time for adoptive identity exploration. However, individuals’ evolving

sense of self continues to interact with contextual challenges across the life course, making adoptive identity development a lifelong task. For example, a serious illness may raise new questions if the adopted person does not have medical history information about one or both birth parents and the death of one’s adoptive parents may lead to pursuit of birth relatives.

We take a narrative approach toward adoptive identity development (Grotevant, 1993, 1997; Grotevant et al., 2000; Von Korff, 2008). Narrative psychology focuses on meaning-making (McAdams, Chapter 5, this volume). How is one’s narrative socially constructed, and how does that narrative help the person know where he or she fits into the world? The process of meaning-making is evident in adoptive identity exploration, as adopted persons reflect on the meaning and impact of adoption on their lives, take active steps to gather information that will enhance that understanding, and construct a meaningful narrative. Thus, exploration is the “work” of identity. A number of psychological and contextual factors influence adolescents’ propensity to explore, while cognitive and affective outcomes of exploration also influence future orientation toward exploration and help to reshape one’s identity narrative (Grotevant, 1987).

Emotion and Narrative Adoptive Identity Development

As we have emphasized, narrative identity is constructed as young people tell unique stories about the self, stories that create and communicate a sense of meaning to the self and to others (McAdams, Chapter 5, this volume). Von Korff (2008) built on seminal ideas in narrative identity research (Bosma & Kunnen, 2001; Bruner, 1990; Singer, 2004) by proposing links between research and theory on emotion and the interactive family processes that are at the heart of the construction of narrative identity. A fundamental premise of this model is that identity forms over time as parents facilitate social interactions that are *emotionally meaningful* to their children.

Adoption provides an ideal context to examine this model for two reasons. First, openness arrangements – the different levels of contact taking place between adoptive and birth family members – offer a rich and powerful source of variation in family context because of the dramatically different amounts of information shared and types of contact experienced across families. These diverse openness arrangements present different relational contexts in which adoptive identity development occurs. Second, contact between children’s adoptive and birth relatives provides an emotionally vivid and meaningful form of social interaction for adoptees. Young people who have been adopted experience a range of emotions during contact with birth family members. In our research, adolescents who had met their birthmothers reported feeling pleasure, happiness, or contentment (27%); anxiety or apprehension (24%); and joy, elation, or extreme happiness (14%) after the meetings (Grotevant et al., 2007).

Emotional experiences are critical to narrative identity formation because they lead to conversation sharing. People who experience emotions generally tell the story of their experiences to others, repeatedly, sharing them most often with family members (Rimé, 1995, 2007). Given the large range and number of emotions associated with contact with birth family members, contact should involve a relatively greater number of opportunities for adopted persons to participate in meaningful adoption-related storytelling about the self with their adoptive family members during childhood and adolescence. Adoption-related conversation between adoptees and their family members, particularly adoptive parents, is proposed to be a key factor in the process of adoptive identity formation. Identity research holds that conversational sharing plays a role in narrative identity formation by providing young people with opportunities to reconstruct past events (McLean, Pasupathi, & Pals, 2007; Polkinghorne, 1988). During conversation, people rehearse, recall, and invent information consistent with their understanding and neglect or forget information that is inconsistent with it (Pasupathi, 2001; Riessman, 1993). Conversations about

adoption between adoptive parents and adopted children, sparked by emotions, are likely to be particularly important during adolescence – the period when autobiographical reasoning develops (Habermas & Bluck, 2000) in concert with narrative identity (McAdams, 1985).

Characteristics associated with parent–child adoption-related conversations, such as elaboration and frequency, should be associated with the level of coherence in adoptive identity narratives. Qualities in parent–child (Fivush, 2001; Reese, 2002) and peer-to-peer conversation have been shown to help children construct self-stories, playing a role in processes linked to the development of autobiographical reasoning (Pasupathi & Hoyt, 2009; Pasupathi, Stallworth, & Murdoch, 1998) and self-concept (Pasupathi, Alderman, & Shaw, 2007). In addition, the way in which young people interpret and give meaning to their emotional experiences and the way they label their emotions (e.g., joy, anxiety, elation, apprehension) changes as they share, reshape, and reinterpret them in conversation with parents and others (Bellelli et al., 1995). Thus, emotional expression serves as a means of organizing identity narratives, and of conveying meaning to the self and others (Haviland & Kahlbaugh, 2004).

From Identity Theory to Measurement

Erikson’s theory of development, including his definition of identity, not only draws heavily from psychoanalytic theory, but also includes eco-systemic and anthropological elements. Erikson wisely revised his theory in response to social change, personal experience, and ideas from the biological sciences and the humanities – incorporating what he learned from Lewin, Benedict, and Bateson; and by observing family interactions in the laboratory, in the homes of his clients, and in non-European cultures, such as the Sioux and Yurok Indian Tribes. Erikson’s work serves as a springboard for several interrelated lines of identity research. Some identity researchers draw primarily from Erikson’s psychodynamic framework (Marcia, 2001), others primarily from his sociological or anthropological framework (Côté

& Levine, 2002), while others, including our own, draw from his developmental life span or narrative framework (Dunbar & Grotevant, 2004; Grotevant, 1987, 1993; McAdams, 2001; Von Korff, 2008).

Our views about adoptive identity development have been worked out in the context of our Minnesota/Texas Adoption Research Project (MTARP), a longitudinal study of adoptive kinship networks varying in degree of contact between adoptive and birth family members (see Grotevant & McRoy, 1998; Grotevant, Perry, & McRoy, 2005). Our approach to the measurement of adoptive identity is linked tightly to our theoretical foundations in developmental and narrative psychology. Because adoptive identity may include many different aspects of the adoptive experience that differ across respondents, we assess adoptive identity through a broad-ranging interview. The entire adoptive identity interview is used as the basis for coding three key indicators of narrative adoptive identity: identity exploration, which represents the process of identity development; and internal consistency and flexibility, which represent narrative coherence (Von Korff, Grotevant, & Friese, 2007). These indicators were drawn from two earlier-developed systems: the narrative coding system of the Family Narrative Consortium (Fiese et al., 1999) and the coding system for assessing identity exploration (Grotevant & Cooper, 1981). Latent profile analysis (*Mplus* version 5.1, Muthén & Muthén, 2008) was used to confirm that these three indicators form one underlying latent construct representing “narrative adoptive identity.” Results were consistent for sample data collected during two salient developmental periods, middle adolescence and emerging adulthood (Von Korff & Grotevant, 2007).

Depth of adoptive identity exploration refers to the degree to which participants reflect on the meaning of adoption or of being adopted, or are actively engaged in a process of gathering information or decision-making about what adoption means in their life. Specifically, exploration includes contrasting how one thought about something in the past in comparison to the present; contrasting one’s own role, ideas, thoughts, or actions with those of others;

reflecting on the meaning or implications of adoption or being adopted; gathering information on any aspect of adoption or being adopted; and describing the process of making a decision about, experimenting with, or questioning an issue related to adoption or being adopted. An example of one contrast statement is, “She [birth-mother] is a lot like me in an astonishing amount of ways. It’s funny because I believed that your environment had more to do with your behavior than genetics, but looking at my birthmother and our similarities, I really rethink that particular argument.”¹

A narrative is highly *internally consistent* when it includes examples that support personal theories or themes, as well as synthesizing statements that pull the narrative together. An example of an emerging adult’s personal theme is, “It is important to recognize distinctions between adoptive and biological parents,” and an example of one statement that supports this personal theme is, “. . . don’t be threatened if your child wants to find his/her biological parents. They may be naturally curious and they aren’t looking to replace you.” A narrative lacks internal consistency when it has few or no examples, lacks synthesizing statements, or includes contradictions that are unexplained or unrecognized (Fiese et al., 1999).

Flexibility refers to the degree to which participants view issues as others might see them. Participants with flexible narratives consider the complex nature of issues and relationships, such as, “Yeah, there was, you know, just growing up, I’ve kind of tried to put it all behind me and realize that, yeah, he’s [birth father] made his mistakes. He’s got his own demons.” Inflexible narratives adhere rigidly to a story-line and consider relationships only from the person’s own vantage point.

Adoptive Identity Interventions

Adoption educators, clinicians, and researchers have suggested a number of approaches to intervention with adopted persons. Some are preventive in nature, whereas others are therapeutic. This section provides a brief overview of several

approaches. We begin, however, with some general orienting statements about working with adopted persons.

Our own research has demonstrated that there are highly varied identity narratives among adoptees, even within gender and age groups (e.g., Dunbar & Grotevant, 2004; Von Korff, 2008). Consequently, those who work with adopted persons should guard against a “one-size-fits-all” approach, assuming that adoption is equally salient to all adoptees or that all experience the same feelings with equal intensity. Likewise, it should make us cautious about rushing to intervene as if we knew what was optimal for adoptees, because the path toward adoptive identity is not linear and may extend well into adulthood.

Differences in the salience of adoptive identity, in comparison to other identity domains, may be linked to interest in activities such as exploring adoption-related careers (e.g., social worker) and viewing adoption as linked to one’s religion (e.g., It was God’s will that I was adopted by this particular family). Searching for birth relatives may be perceived as a necessary activity for some adolescents to feel “complete,” but it may be seen as irrelevant to others. Although it may be useful to connect some internationally adopted youth with organized cultural resources such as culture camps or homeland tours, some may not be comfortable with these activities. Because there is no single course for adoptive identity development, the design of interventions must take into account adolescents’ individual characteristics and goals, as well as the specific family and community resources available to them. In addition, those working with adoptees should be aware of the different levels of background information available to their clients as a function of their type of adoption (e.g., international versus domestic; open versus closed) and the degree to which adoption is discussed openly within their family. Specific suggestions for working with adopted children and adolescents in school settings may be found in Wrobel, Hendrickson, and Grotevant (2006).

When adopted persons experience challenges in adoptive identity development, it is typically because they perceive a lack of complete and

accurate information about themselves, especially about their placement and foster care histories prior to adoption, their birth parents, their health histories, their genetic backgrounds, and the reasons they were placed for adoption. Availability of this information varies by type of adoption. Persons adopted domestically as infants have the potential for having or obtaining the most information. As more domestic adoptions involve contact with birth relatives, the amount of information shared will increase. However, some states in the United States still have closed records, and many adults adopted between the 1930s and 1980s have little or no information about their backgrounds. Children placed through the child welfare system face a different set of identity challenges. Depending on their age when they were removed from their birth families, children may still remember their birth parents, siblings, and other relatives. Some children have been in many foster homes, but may lose information about prior placements each time they move. For children adopted internationally, information will vary by country of origin. Children who were abandoned will have no information; those raised by foster parents or well-run children’s homes may have quite a bit.

Despite adoptees’ lack of information, there appear to be alternative pathways to adoptive identity formation. Consistent with Von Korff’s (2008) theory of emotion and narrative adoptive identity formation, contact with birth relatives may be only one of many forms of meaningful adoption-related social interactions available to help young people develop coherent and meaningful narrative adoptive identity. Through the efforts of their adoptive parents, young people may also have friendships with people whose cultural background is similar to theirs, associations with cultural institutions, and ties to post-adoption support services offered by agencies. These activities may lead to increased opportunities for adoptees to engage in meaningful adoption-related conversation with others, enhancing their ability to explore and reflect on adoptive identity. Future research should examine the many ways in which adoptees and adoptive parents integrate different types of

adoption-related social interactions that enhance narrative adoptive identity formation into their daily family lives.

A straightforward intervention that deals with the lack of background information is preparation of a “lifebook” for each adopted child. Lifebooks contain documents, photos, notes, greeting cards, school awards, report cards, art work, and other memorabilia that will help children know and keep more of their histories. Ideally, the lifebook would be started at the child’s birth and then kept up by social workers, foster parents, and adoptive parents throughout the child’s life. The lifebook would accompany the child from one placement to the next, no matter how many placements there might be. Although there may always be open questions for adoptees, this straightforward preventive or promotive intervention could contribute significantly to adoptive identity development (e.g., Backhaus, 1984) by providing adoptees with an account of their personal history. Because narrative adoptive identity is co-constructed between the adopted person and the individuals in their lives who matter to them, lifebooks will likely be most beneficial when combined with opportunities to converse with significant others about the meaning and significance of their experiences.

Social-construction and narrative approaches to identity have also highlighted the therapeutic value of writing. In a series of experimental studies, Pennebaker (1997) showed that writing about emotion-laden topics can produce beneficial changes in immune function, heart rate, distress, and a range of other physical and psychological outcomes. The adoption field is known for its many memoirs, documentaries, blogs, and other forms of personal expression. The writers and artists themselves acknowledge the benefits that they gain from their work. For example, in a blog titled “Bijou’s Odyssey – Not Quite There Yet,” [<http://bijousodyssey.wordpress.com>], the author is quite clear about the personal benefits of writing: (a) free therapy – “This blog is an outlet: the public can choose to read it or not, I can choose to discard useless comments”; (b) enlightenment – “I somehow feel I have the responsibility to work toward change in the adoption realm”;

and (c) support – “The written word of blogging adoptees and parents who relinquished children continue to keep me going through the perplexity of search, reunion etc. It is nice to know I’m not the only people-pleasing, diplomatic reject-ee out there.”

Pasupathi (2001) proposed a model linking the social construction of one’s personal past to healthy adult development. She posited that conversational recounting with other people contributes to the social construction of autobiographical memory. She stated that “the social construction of the past in conversation opens the door for maintaining stability in one’s identity or incorporating change” (p. 661). Further, she noted that reminiscence therapy for older adults is based on the assumption that recall and integration of past experiences contribute to successful aging. Research by Taft and Nehrke (1990) has shown that reminiscence and structured life review can contribute to the achievement of ego integrity in older adults. Systematic research exploring links between interventions such as writing and reminiscence with adoptive identity development for adolescents and young adults would be very timely.

Taken together, the work on therapeutic writing, narrative identity processing, and conversational recounting supports the use of techniques such as journaling, blogging, writing, talk therapy, open discussions with family and friends, and engagement with support groups as potential identity interventions for adoptees. Controlled studies are needed to establish the specific benefits experienced by those involved in adoption. Nevertheless, anecdotal accounts are strong, and the existing research is suggestive enough that such research would be worth conducting.

Finally, some interventions are specific to certain populations of adoptees. Between 1948 and 2006, over 400,000 children were brought to the United States for adoption from other countries (Selman, 2009). Many of these children were adopted by White parents across cultural and racial lines. In the early days of international adoption, the primary concern of parents was for the child’s health and safety. As Western countries have gained more experience with

international adoption, and as concerns about cultural identity have become more salient, parents have sought different ways of helping their children retain or develop some sense of the culture of their home country. Some parents have acknowledged that the act of adopting a child from another culture necessarily makes their family multicultural, opening up the need for the family to engage the child's cultural community in terms of contact with friends, experience with the food and language of the child's culture, and acquaintance with the child's cultural history (e.g., Carstens & Julia, 2000; Hanigan Scroggs & Heitfield, 2001; Huh & Reid, 2000).

In recent years, groups of adoptive parents have banded together to provide culturally relevant interventions for their children, such as culture camps and homeland tours. Culture camps typically bring together a number of children from the same culture, along with their families, for a concentrated period of time, to experience being with children who look like each other, eat foods from their culture, learn about cultural customs, and learn the language. There is some evidence that culture camps can improve children's sense of ethnic identity (e.g., Huh & Reid, 2000). However, adoptive parents report that some children are much more interested than others in activities such as culture camps and homeland tours.

As the population of international adoptees becomes older, many are turning to each other for ongoing support and opportunities to engage in identity work. In the past decade, adult Korean adoptees have formed informal and formal associations across the world and have organized periodic "gatherings" (McGinnis, 2009). The first was held in 1999 in Washington, DC, and hosted nearly 400 adults adopted between 1955 and 1985, with the explicit purpose of creating an opportunity for these pioneers in intercountry adoption to share their experiences (Freundlich & Lieberthal, 2000). Subsequent gatherings have grown larger and have met around the world. They have the obvious advantage of providing many opportunities for ongoing social construction of identity, both in structured workshops and in informal socialization with

peers. Since then, a number of organizations have been created by adults adopted from China, India, the Philippines, and Vietnam (to name a few), for the purpose of creating community and sharing experiences. These pioneers of intercountry adoption are also providing new information on those factors that may be helpful in forming healthy adoptive and ethnic identities (McGinnis, 2009).

Future Prospects and Directions

The story of identity development in adoptees begins with innate curiosity, is nurtured in family communication about adoption, and proceeds in rounds of exploration and consolidation that are driven by many factors, including the barriers and facilitators encountered along the way (Grotevant, 1987; Wrobel & Dillon, 2009). As we emphasized in our introduction, adopted persons have different amounts of knowledge and widely divergent experiences that serve as building blocks helping them construct and reconstruct their adoptive identities. Future research may reveal that understanding these differences in experiences among adoptees is critical to the study of adoptive identity.

For example, contrast two experiences drawn from the four worlds of adoption. Children placed for adoption at an early age benefit from hearing stories about their early adoption experiences, which can help shape their adoption narratives. Nevertheless, these children may lack specific information about their birth families and their pre-placement origin. On the other hand, children living with a succession of foster families may know the identity of birth family members, but lack specific information about their life experiences and, even after adoption, may not have access to adults who know and can tell stories of their early experiences, making it more difficult for these children to shape their sense of identity based on their past experience. Adoptive identity presents as a fascinating and challenging domain, because content varies from person to person while cultural and historical shifts in thinking about adoption strongly influence what

people feel is appropriate to know or want to know.

Thus, although our understanding of adoptive identity has progressed over the past decade, this area is ripe for future development. As is true for many other areas of identity scholarship, new and better measures are needed. We developed a set of rating scales for coding adoptive identity narratives (Von Korff et al., 2007), but work remains in comparing this measure to other existing identity measures.

Further research is also needed in several other areas. First, we need further understanding of the role of family processes in adoptive identity development. Current work on family communication and the barriers and facilitators affecting curiosity and information seeking (e.g., Wrobel & Dillon, 2009; Wrobel, Grotevant, & Von Korff, 2009) in adoptees is very promising. Second, more research is needed at the intersection of adoptive and ethnic identities. Particularly for persons adopted across national or cultural lines, the issues of adoption and ethnicity are often difficult to separate. First person accounts often deal with the two issues as a package, and further theorizing about their intersection would be useful (e.g., Koh, 2008). Third, more research is needed to understand how adoptive identity development evolves over the life span. The middle adult years, often characterized by a reordering of priorities and goals in line with one's life purpose and meaning, may be a rich period in which to examine how adopted adults revisit or explore for the first time aspects of their adoptive identity. Finally, research could beneficially test the effectiveness of some of the interventions discussed above. At present, there is little systematic evidence about how such interventions work or when interventions would be warranted, especially given the differing experience of adoptees across the four worlds of adoption. We still have much to learn about the fascinating process of adoptive identity development and its nonlinear and lifelong nature.

Acknowledgments The authors gratefully acknowledge the adoptive parents, adopted adolescents, and birth mothers who participated in the longitudinal Minnesota-Texas

Adoption Research Project and who have contributed significantly to our understanding of adoptive identity. Funding for the Minnesota-Texas Adoption Research Project has come from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (R01-HD-049859), National Science Foundation (BCS-0443590), William T. Grant Foundation (7146), Minnesota Agricultural Experiment Station, Office of Population Affairs of the US Department of Health and Human Services, and the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health. During the preparation of this chapter, both authors were supported by funds from the Rudd Family Foundation Chair in Psychology at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Thanks also to Holly Grant, Bibiana Koh, Hollee McGinnis, Danila Musante, Di Samek, and Susan Krauss Whitbourne, who provided comments on the first draft of this chapter.

Note

1. Quotations are taken from identity interviews from the Minnesota-Texas Adoption Research Project, but are de-identified in order to ensure confidentiality.

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Abstract

Gender features strongly in most societies and is a significant aspect of self-definition for most people. Following a brief description of views on gender identity from the perspectives of humanistic social science, sociology, and psychology, this chapter provides an analysis of gender identity development from the perspective of social cognitive theory. Social cognitive theory describes how gender conceptions are developed and transformed across the life span. Through a combination of personal and sociostructural factors, people construct self-conceptions of gender, which influence gender-related conduct through the motivational and self-regulatory processes associated with gender identity. A broad range of social influences including parents, peers, the media, and other social systems contribute to the development of gender conceptions and to the self-regulatory processes linked to them. However, people are not simply products of the varying social systems that impinge on them. Rather, it is shown that people contribute to transforming their gender conceptions and bringing about social change. Gender roles are changing through people's actions which affect the social subsystems that influence the development and transformation of gender identity.

Gender is fundamental to the organization of society. From the moment of birth, children's gender is an important aspect of their lives in that it influences how parents treat them, the names they are given, and how they are dressed. As children age, other adults and peers

interact differently with children depending on their gender (Bussey & Bandura, 1999; Leaper & Friedman, 2007; Raley & Bianchi, 2006). The educational system and the media further contribute to this differentiation (Buchmann, DiPrete, & McDaniel, 2008; Gill, 2007). From these gendered experiences, gender stereotypes are learned and gender identity develops and transforms over the life course.

The view of gender identity presented in this chapter is based on social cognitive theory where gender identity is viewed as part of a person's

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broader concept of his or her personal identity (Bussey & Bandura, 1999). From this perspective, identity formation is not fixed at any point in time, but rather it is an ongoing process that transforms over the life course. Before presenting an analysis of gender identity development based on this theoretical perspective, a brief analysis of the major alternative approaches to gender identity is provided. Following this, the key tenets of social cognitive theory are presented. It is shown that a significant part of the self-conception that people develop relates to their gender. Importantly, gender identity is not just a personal matter, but there is a social aspect as well. The social influences that contribute to the development and maintenance of gender identity are considered. Finally, as gender roles are undergoing extensive change, the implications for gender identity are discussed.

Theoretical Perspectives

Before briefly examining the different theoretical perspectives, a comment about the terminology adopted in this chapter is warranted. There has been extensive discussion about the use of the terms “sex” and “gender” (Deaux, 1993; Segal, 2010; West & Zimmerman, 1987). Sex has typically been used when referring to biologically based differences between males and females and gender when referring to socially influenced differences. It is increasingly apparent, however, that such a clear-cut distinction is not supported by the evidence. Many of the differences between men and women are the product of both biological and social factors. Also, it has been shown that even differences which manifest early in development and which are often assumed to be biologically determined (e.g., spatial ability) can be modified through experience and training (Barnett & Rivers, 2004; Conner, Schackman, & Serbin, 1978). Therefore, in this chapter, the more inclusive term, gender, is used without any assumption as to whether differences between males and females are solely attributable to biological or social factors. Further, it will become apparent from the ensuing discussion

of the different theoretical approaches to gender identity that there is no commonly agreed definition of gender identity.

There are several major theoretical approaches to the conceptualization of gender identity. Some focus on the individual characteristics of the person, whereas others focus on social roles and social structures. Some approaches only consider the acquisition of gender identity during the early childhood years, whereas others focus mainly on adulthood. After presenting these approaches, a comprehensive social cognitive theory model of gender identity will be presented which spans the life course, taking into account both personal and social factors.

Humanistic Social Science and Sociological Perspectives

There has been considerable discussion within the humanistic social science disciplines about gender identity, or masculinities and femininities as it is sometimes described in this literature (Connell, 1995; Schrock & Schwalbe, 2009; Segal, 2010). Scholars from these disciplines, however, do not speak with a united voice. For some, gender differences are the product of a gendered division of labor and sociostructural practices that support status and power differences. In West and Zimmerman’s (1987) view of “doing gender,” gender differences are a result of what one does, not what one is. It is posited that gender differences are predicated on the differing power relations between the genders rather than on natural preordained differences. The social arrangements that support these gender differences—for example, occupational stratification and segregation with women mainly assuming lower status positions—are seen as legitimating natural explanations for these differences. This is quite a departure from earlier accounts in which masculinity and femininity were viewed as complementary. Rather than unequal power relations between men and women, the division of labor was believed to give rise to this complementarity, particularly in the family, where the husband-father adopted the instrumental role

and the wife-mother adopted the expressive role (Parsons & Bales, 1955).

Feminist scholars have long debated gender differences and gender identity. Most cultural feminists focus on empowering women by valuing their positive qualities such as nurturing, caring, and cooperation (Worrell, 1996). Many radical feminists support this stance, but also posit that a change in societal structures, particularly in the patriarchal family, is needed to reduce the major source of domination and oppression (Shelton & Agger, 1993). Increasingly, however, research demonstrating gender similarities is at odds with a strict mapping of masculinity to males and femininity to females. In addition to the similarities between men and women, there are great differences among men and among women, depending on their socioeconomic status, ethnicity, and education. Acknowledging this, gender theorists recognize the diversity within masculine and feminine identities while questioning the biological underpinnings of gender differences. Butler takes these views further in her claim that: "There is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very 'expressions' that are said to be its results" (Butler, 1990, p. 25). It is argued that not all people of the same-gender category are alike. By simply categorizing people on the basis of gender, it is all too easy to legitimize the link between gender and biological sex.

Psychological Perspectives

In contrast with the humanistic focus on debating how gender identities should be conceptualized and how they are embedded in societal structures, psychological perspectives have tended to focus more on the processes by which individuals relate to whichever conceptions of gender are prevailing in their social contexts—including how individuals come to see themselves in gender-differentiated ways and adopt gender-differentiated behaviors in the first place. In Kohlberg's (1966) developmental theory, gender identity is ascribed a key role in

the gender development process. This approach to gender identity centers on children's learning to gender-label themselves and others, and understanding that this aspect of the self persists over time and across different situations. Kohlberg's theory posits that gender constancy, which is the understanding that gender identity is stable and does not change over time and in different situations, provides the motivation to engage in gender-stereotypic behavior. As most children acquire gender constancy understanding between the ages of 5 and 7 years, Kohlberg's perspective assumes there is little or no variability in gender identity beyond this age. However, if this fixed gender identity is the major motivator guiding enactment of gendered behavior, it is difficult to account for the variation in such behavior adopted by older children and adults. Further, evidence for the role of gender constancy in the enactment of gendered behaviors and preferences in the first few years of life is lacking. In fact, children develop preferences for and behave in ways similar to their own gender well before they have achieved gender constancy (Bussey & Bandura, 1999; Ruble, Martin, & Berenbaum, 2006).

Also focusing on the childhood years is Martin and Halverson's (1981) gender schema theory approach. Gender identity in this theory refers to children labeling themselves and others as a boy or a girl. This approach posits that gender labeling enables children to develop schemas that are then used to motivate them to engage in similar activities and pursuits to those of their gender (Martin, Ruble, & Szkrybalo, 2002). To attain cognitive consistency, children are motivated to behave in ways compatible with gender stereotypes. This theory can more ably account for the variability in the adoption of gender roles as the content and reliance on gender schemas varies across children and contexts. In this approach, gender schemas are accorded most significance in guiding behavior, and although gender identity may guide the development of gender schemas, it does not seem to play as strong a role in subsequent gender development.

In another version of gender schema theory (Bem, 1981), greater emphasis is accorded

to individual variability in the reliance on gender schemas rather than on factors associated with how they are developed. In this approach, gender identity refers to a person's masculinity or femininity as measured by self-descriptive personality traits. Traits regarded as masculine include instrumental characteristics such as independence and dominance and those regarded as feminine include characteristics such as nurturance and being sensitive to the needs of others. People are designated as gender schematic if they score high on one scale (either masculinity or femininity) and low on the other. Although instrumentality and expressivity are differentially related to men and women in that men typically score higher than women on instrumentality and women typically score higher than men on expressivity, Spence (1984; Spence & Buckner, 1995) has questioned whether instrumentality and expressivity measure masculinity and femininity, respectively. Spence along with others contends that masculinity and femininity are difficult to define while noting that lay people's conceptions of these terms extend beyond a consideration of personality traits (Deaux & Lewis, 1984; Helgeson, 1994; Spence & Buckner, 1995). In studies involving lay people, gender differences in social roles, occupations, physical appearance, interests, and biological characteristics are all deemed part of masculinity and femininity. It therefore seems that Bem's measure is more an assessment of self-perceived gender-related personality attributes than a measure of masculinity and femininity or gender identity.

Other approaches, developed with adults, have focused on identification with social categories. Social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; see Spears, Chapter 9, this volume) posits that assignment to a group, even on an arbitrary basis, produces allegiance to the group. People's perceptions of in-group similarities and out-group differences serve to promote in-group identification and favoritism. In the sphere of gender relations, there is considerable support for these processes with adults and some support for them with children. Powlishta (1995) found that boys and girls rated themselves as more similar to others of their gender and that girls showed higher

levels of in-group favoritism than did boys. On the other hand, Parish and Bryant (1978) found that adolescent boys favored the other gender more than they favored their own gender.

Self-categorization theory (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987) developed from the social identity theory approach similarly proposes that in-group similarities are highlighted and differences from the out-group are maximized. However, self-categorization theory adopts a more dynamic approach by positing that self-categorization is situation-dependent. For example, when age is salient, children are expected to self-categorize as children rather than as adults; when gender is salient, children are expected to self-categorize as either boys or girls. Consistent with this approach, Grace, David, and Ryan (2008) showed that children emulated models of the same gender when gender was made salient, and that they emulated models of the same age when age was made salient. This approach invests considerable power in the situation to guide individuals' preferences and behavior. Typically, however, people do not adopt all of the characteristics of the group with whom they identify. From the self-categorization perspective, it is unclear how people decide which aspects of the identified group they will adopt.

Other approaches have emphasized the multidimensionality of identification with a group, such as with ethnicity, race, or gender. In the approach taken by Ashmore, Deaux, and McLaughlin-Volpe (2004), for example, collective identity rather than social identity is used to emphasize an individual's identification with a particular group. Apart from believing that one shares membership with others in a group or category, this approach is also predicated on the notion that cognitive beliefs are jointly held by members of a group. Ashmore et al. (2004) specified a number of elements of collective identification: self-categorization, evaluation, importance, attachment, sense of independence, social embeddedness, behavioral involvement, and content and meaning. Although this is a comprehensive approach which draws on many different theories of identity, there is no consensus on the common elements associated

with any collective identity. Additionally, this approach is not informative about developmental processes and how and under what circumstances identities may transform. It is a static appraisal of a person's current endorsement of the elements that are believed to comprise collective identification.

In keeping with a multidimensional approach to gender identity, Egan and Perry (2001) showed empirically that various components of gender identity—knowledge of one's gender, gender compatibility (self-perceptions of gender typicality and feeling contented with one's gender), felt pressure (feeling pressured from others to conform to gender stereotypes), and intergroup bias (believing that one's own gender is superior to the other)—were not strongly related to each other. This approach shares some similarity with the multidimensional approach of Ashmore et al. (2004) in that children rated their self-perceptions on a variety of dimensions. For example, the gender typicality dimension refers to children's perceived similarity to those of their own gender. Children's score on this dimension was one of the stronger indicators of their psychological adjustment. Children who believed they were more similar to their own gender fared better on a number of adjustment indices. This finding has been replicated cross-culturally in Mainland China (Yu & Xie, 2010). This multidimensional approach of Egan and Perry, despite being tested with children, pays little attention to the developmental antecedents of gender identity.

Although a thorough evaluation of these different approaches to gender identity is beyond the scope of this chapter, it is clear from the analysis of the developmental theories that more attention needs to be given to gender identity beyond the early childhood years. It is also evident that greater consideration of developmental processes is required from the social identity and self-categorization approaches. Further, Ashmore et al. (2004) also noted that it is important for the multidimensional approach to consider the variability of gender identity across time and situation. Global ratings of each of the elements of the collective category, such as gender

typicality, provide little indication of their importance in different contexts. At the other end of the spectrum, although the humanistic social science and sociological approaches provide important insights into the sociostructural influences on gender identity, they focus less on the personal determinants of gender identity.

Social Cognitive Theory

From the social cognitive theory perspective, identity formation is an important aspect of human development, as it plays a central role in human agency (Bandura, 2008). People develop conceptions of themselves from their experiences, including transactions with others, and their self-reflections. Gender identity is seen as one of the most pervasive and enduring aspects of personal and social identity. From the moment of birth, interactions with others are influenced by gender. Therefore, it is hardly surprising that gender identity has an important influence on self-conceptions and life courses. Gender identity, like other aspects of identity, is not just an intrapsychic matter (see Vignoles, Schwartz, & Luyckx, Chapter 1, this volume). Social factors contribute to the way people are treated and how they respond. Gender is an important determinant of social interaction in most societies, although its influence is stronger in some societies than in others (Whiting & Edwards, 1988). The stronger its influence, the more people develop goals and aspirations based on gender and regulate their behavior according to their gender.

From this viewpoint, gender identity is part of the broader conception of the self, which in turn represents a central feature of human functioning. Moreover, gender identity development is not simply understood as an unfolding of biological dictates, nor is it under the exclusive influence of environmental forces. Rather, it is posited that individuals direct their life paths through their capacity for forethought and cognitive self-regulation. They not only choose their life course, but they *create* environments to attain their life goals within the existing

sociostructural opportunities and constraints. Individuals actively construct their identity during their early years and continue to develop and transform their identity across their life span.

The social cognitive view differs from most developmental theories in which gender identity has been primarily associated with children's knowledge of their biological sex (Powlishta, Sen, Serbin, Poulin-Dubois, & Eichstedt, 2001). Most of these theories have taken a biologically deterministic view by assuming that, once self-labeling as a boy or a girl occurs, children's understanding of gender links the biological and the psychological. It is postulated that "children's recognition of their biological sex is almost invariably accompanied by the development of what has been called gender identity, a basic existential sense and acceptance of themselves as male or female" (Spence & Buckner, 1995, p. 115).

In social cognitive theory it is posited that, although one's biological sex is fixed from birth, gender identity does not follow a linear and predictable age-related pattern based on biological assignment and age-related cognitions linked to one's biological sex. Gender identity is viewed as multifaceted rather than as monolithic; it varies across individuals and across the life span within a given individual. Gender identity develops not only from self-knowledge of one's biological sex, but also from an interplay between personal and social factors. The physical differentiation between the genders is amplified in most cultures by gender-differentiated dress and activities and the associated gender-differentiated social consequences (Whiting & Edwards, 1988). This differentiation heightens gender distinctions and contributes to the important role of gender in the construction of one's identity.

Gender identity involves the self-representation of a gendered self, mediated by self-regulatory processes. Gender identity is informed by knowledge of one's biological sex and of the beliefs associated with gender, how one is perceived and treated by others depending on one's gender, and an understanding of the collective basis of gender. The self-regulatory processes associated

with gender enable people to regulate their behavior in different contexts. The agentic self-representation of gender includes personal standards related to gender, the appraisal of one's capabilities based on one's gender, long-term goals and aspirations based on gender, positive and negative outcome expectations for life choices based on gender, and the actual and perceived environmental constraints and opportunities.

From this view, gender identity involves much more than simply acquiring knowledge about one's own gender and about the other gender at an early age. Rather, from the social cognitive theory perspective, gender identity is conceptualized as an ongoing process that may change across the life span and as societal views about gender change. What it means to be highly identified with one's gender varies across the life span. Also, while two people may equally identify with their gender, the pattern of gender-related behaviors they display may be quite different.

In the agentic social cognitive view, individuals develop their gender identity from personal and social influences. These influences interact bi-directionally in a model of reciprocal interaction affecting, as well as being affected by, gender-related conduct. In the model of triadic reciprocal causation (Bandura, 1986; Bussey & Bandura, 1999), *personal*, *behavioral*, and *environmental* factors operate as interacting determinants influencing each other bi-directionally. The *personal* contribution includes biological proclivities, self-conceptions, goals, behavioral and judgmental standards, and self-regulatory processes associated with gender identity; the *environmental* contribution refers to the broad array of social influences such as parental and peer influences, the media, educational and occupational systems that are encountered daily and that impact on gender identity; *behavior* refers to activity patterns that are gender-related. In this model of triadic causation there is no fixed pattern of reciprocal interaction. Personal factors, for example, can influence the environment just by their physical presence. A person's gender is sufficient to influence

others' interaction with her/him and the opportunities s/he is afforded in life. The contribution of each of the components depends on the activities, situations, sociostructural constraints, and opportunities involved. When societal conditions dictate strong adherence to gender roles, there is little leeway for personal factors, such as gender identity, to influence choice of activities and lifestyle. The relative strength of each of the components of the triadic model is expected to vary over time, across situational circumstances (e.g., cultural contexts), and across activity domains.

Currently, particularly in Western countries, gender roles are undergoing significant change (Segal, 2010; Twenge, 1997). Men are becoming increasingly involved in the care of young children, from pushing strollers to changing diapers, something that was a rarity a few decades ago. Young girls are eschewing dolls in favor of electronic games and women are heading up multinational corporations and assuming high political office in greater numbers. The social changes underway are transforming the fixed, traditional notions of masculinity and femininity grounded in a rigid conception of gender roles. Although gender differentiation remains important in most societies, the expression of gender roles has changed remarkably over the past several decades. Amidst such changing gender roles, the influence of gender identity in daily life varies depending on the context and on the significance of gender identity in a person's life.

In the following sections, an analysis of the development of gender identity and its regulation is presented. Once children are knowledgeable of their own and others' gender, gender identity is shown to regulate gender-related activities through three main sociocognitive processes: outcome expectations related to gendered conduct, self-evaluative standards, and self-efficacy beliefs. As will be shown later, three modes of social influence—modeling, enactive experience, and direct tuition—affect the development of not only gender conceptions and competencies but also the three major sociocognitive regulators of gendered conduct.

Acquiring and Understanding of Gender Conceptions

Before infants can demonstrate awareness of their own gender, they gain considerable knowledge about gender and begin to display traditional gender-related preferences. Adults treat infants quite differently based on their gender (Leaper, 2002). These gendered transactions experienced by the infant provide the setting for the emergence of gender identity.

During the first year, infants can discriminate between male and female faces (Cornell, 1974; Fagan & Singer, 1979; Leinbach & Fagot, 1993) and between male and female voices (Miller, 1983; Miller, Younger, & Morse, 1982). They also show the emergence of intermodal gender knowledge, that is, infants are able to associate male and female faces with male and female voices, respectively (Poulin-Dubois, Serbin, Kenyon, & Derbyshire, 1994).

In the second year, children begin to show a preference for activities and objects stereotypically related to their gender (Caldera, Huston, & O'Brien, 1989; O'Brien & Huston, 1985; Roopnarine, 1986). Starting from about 18 months, both boys and girls look longer at gender-stereotypical objects associated with their own gender than at objects stereotypically associated with the other gender (Serbin, Poulin-Dubois, Colburne, Sen, & Eichstedt, 2001).

By 3 years of age, most children have some awareness of gender stereotypes (Kuhn, Nash, & Bruckner, 1978; Serbin, Poulin-Dubois, & Eichstedt, 2002; Weinraub et al., 1984). Poulin-Dubois, Serbin, Eichstedt, Sen, and Beissel (2002) found that girls demonstrated stereotype knowledge earlier than did boys. In particular, by 24 months girls were aware of the association between gender-stereotypical household activities and the gender of the person who characteristically performs such activities. Boys, however, did not demonstrate such knowledge until 31 months—and then only for male stereotyped activities.

Although infants can discriminate between the two sexes during the first year and by the second year show gender-stereotypic preferences in that

they look more at objects linked to their own than the other gender, it seems unlikely that knowledge of gender stereotypes is guiding their gender preferences. In the study by Serbin et al. (2001), both boys and girls of 18 months preferred to look at activities associated with their own gender. However, only girls of 18 and 24 months formed associations between a person's gender category and gender-stereotypical objects. That is, after seeing a male-related object, they looked more at the male than at the female face and after seeing a female-related object they looked more at the female than at the male face. Boys even as old as 24 months did not show any evidence of associating gender categories and gender-stereotypical objects, even though they preferred to look at objects associated with their own gender. This suggests that the preference for same-gender-stereotypical objects is more the result of parents providing their infants with same-gender-stereotypical toys and encouraging their use than this preference being guided by infants' cognitive categorization of the gender association of the preferred object. Parents respond approvingly toward their children when they engage in same-gender-stereotypical activities and disapprovingly when they engage in activities stereotypically related to the other gender (Caldera et al., 1989; Fagot, Leinbach, & O'Boyle, 1992; Leaper & Friedman, 2007). There is also stronger disapproval by parents of cross-gendered conduct by boys than by girls (Sandnabba & Ahlberg, 1999). This is mirrored by boys' stronger preference for same-gender activities than is evident for girls (Blakemore, LaRue, & Olejnik, 1979). This asymmetry in children's gender preferences is more consistent with an asymmetry in social influences than with an asymmetry in gender knowledge. The social pressures for gender conformity are stronger for boys than they are for girls; however, girls are more knowledgeable of the gender association of the activities than are boys (Serbin et al., 2002).

Thus, as argued by Bussey and Bandura (1999), children choose activities associated with gender stereotypes before they have a conception of their own gender or are even knowledgeable about the gender stereotypes. Once they have

developed a conception of their own gender, however, they are increasingly able to self-regulate their behavior on this basis. It is shown in the following section that the emergence of gender identity is a gradual process and that there is no automatic link between gender identity and the enactment of gender-related activities. Rather, in the social cognitive agentic view of gender identity, gender-related conduct is initially regulated by anticipated outcomes of how significant others are expected to react to varying displays of gendered conduct. During the course of development, regulatory control increasingly shifts to self-regulatory control—guided by conceptions of one's capability to engage in the activity (self-efficacy) and self-reactions to one's gendered conduct.

The Development of Gender Identity and Its Regulatory Control

It takes time for children to develop knowledge of their gender. As described above, children gain considerable gender-related knowledge before this occurs. They prefer activities that are associated with their gender and they develop substantial knowledge of gender stereotypes. Of course, children's ability to label their own gender and that of others is of great importance in the process of developing gender identity.

The emergence of gender identity begins once infants are able to recognize themselves. This happens at about 18 months (Lewis & Brooks-Gunn, 1979). The acquisition of language skills further heightens the salience of gender. Children first develop knowledge of gender labels for adults before they develop them for children. At 18 months, when girls but not boys, heard the word "man" they looked longer at a photograph of a man than of a woman and when they heard the word "lady," they looked longer at a photograph of a woman than of a man. Although boys and girls of this age looked longer at a boy face when they heard the word "boy," they did not look longer at a girl's face when they heard the word "girl" (Poulin-Dubois, Serbin, & Derbyshire, 1998). Leinbach and Fagot (1986)

found that by 24 months, most children could discriminate the gender labels for boys and girls by pointing to appropriate photographs.

Most research on gender labeling has assessed children's gender labeling of others or used a composite assessment of their gender labeling of self and other without differentiating between the two types of labeling (Kohlberg, 1966; Ruble et al., 2006). In a study of the emergence of gender labeling, Zosuls et al. (2009) assessed children's self and other gender labeling from mothers' diaries of their child's language development. They found that a small percentage of children, mainly girls, self-labeled their gender by 21 months. However, children showed some evidence of gendered play at 17 months—before they had demonstrated gender self-labeling. In Thompson's (1975) classic study of the emergence of gender understanding, the focus was not just on self-labeling, but also on children's ability to categorize themselves on the basis of gender by sorting and labeling their own and others' photographs. Most children between 24 and 26 months did not consistently sort their own photograph on the basis of gender, although they were able to associate gender-stereotypic activities with pictures of males and females. Thus, children's knowledge of gender stereotypes was more advanced than their gender self-categorization. By 36 months, most children could label others' gender, self-categorize their own gender, and were aware of gender-role stereotypes. However, knowledge of gender stereotypes was unrelated to children's ability to classify their own gender category.

From the social cognitive theory perspective, gender identity involves more than learning to gender-label self and others. It is part of the broader emerging conception of self that occurs during the first 2 years of life (Bandura, 2008). During these years, infants develop a personal sense of agency through enabling strategies provided particularly by parents. Through intentional guidance and the provision of tasks that allow infants to produce effects through actions and to master tasks on their own, infants develop a sense of personhood. As we will see later, children's gender is one of the most

important influences on the way parents treat them. Thus, the construction of gender identity is not just a personal process, but also a social process involving not only parents but a range of social influences including the media, peers, teachers, and others. In the early years, however, parental influence is paramount. Parents highlight their son's and daughter's names and treat them as distinct persons; they also verbally label their child's gender and link activities with that gender. Not only do parents contribute to their children learning about their gender, but they underscore its importance in the child's life.

The broadening understanding of gender from the personal to the collective basis provides children with a social connection to other members of their gender. By their third year, children begin to form into groups with children of their own gender (Maccoby, 1998). Increasingly, over the childhood years, gender segregation characterizes children's groups and is an important arena in which children acquire gender-related skills and concepts. The marked gender segregation that occurs in peer interactions underscores the emphasis placed on gender in most societies. The more time that children spend in gender-segregated peer interaction, the more gender-typed they become, and the more they anticipate positive social outcomes for gender-stereotypic conduct (Martin & Fabes, 2001).

Further testimony to children's understanding of the collective aspects of their gender is their belief that other members of their gender share certain attributes and have similar preferences as their own and experience the same consequences for the same gender-related behavior as they do (Bauer & Coyne, 1997; Gelman, Collman, & Maccoby, 1986). From about 3 years of age, children begin to realize that they are treated in similar ways to others of their gender (Bussey & Bandura, 1992). By observing how others respond to members of their own gender, children are able to anticipate how others would respond to them. Children soon realize that the same outcomes are likely to happen to them as have happened to other members of their gender for performing the same behavior (Bussey & Bandura, 1984).

The increasing gender segregation that typically occurs over the middle-school years serves to highlight further the likely outcomes for particular behaviors associated with one's gender. As noted by Bigler, Brown, and Markell (2001), for a social category to take on personal importance for children, it needs to be both perceptually salient and functionally significant. Gender, as we have seen, is not only a perceptually salient category but is also associated with important social consequences. Indeed, the social consequences associated with gender are pervasive (see Bussey & Bandura, 1999). Hence, it is not surprising that gender is viewed as one of the more enduring and central categorizations that people make (Deaux & Stewart, 2001).

Gender categories, however, are not monolithic entities; not all females are the same and not all males are the same. Although the realization of the collective basis of gender is important, there is variability in the extent to which individuals are similar to others of their gender. There are not two distinct human groups of males and females with no overlapping characteristics. The actual differences between the genders in many areas of functioning are small and have been diminishing over the past two decades (Hyde, Lindberg, Linn, Ellis, & Williams, 2008). In fact, the degree of overlap between the genders in their cognitive, social, and psychological functioning is almost as great as the variability between the groups (Barnett & Rivers, 2004). For example, although on average men marginally outperform women on quantitative tasks, in fact, many women score higher than men and many men score lower than women on these tasks. The commonality in many of the behaviors performed by males and females becomes increasingly evident to children as they age and are exposed to varying social experiences. They realize that the categories of male and female are not fixed entities such that all males behave in one way and all females behave in another way. Not all girls or boys look the same; they vary in physical appearance such as hair color, skin color, height, and many other personal characteristics such as whether they are funny or aggressive. Children learn that there is wide variation

among those who are categorized as the same gender.

For some children, belonging to a gender category will take on more significance than for other children. From the social cognitive theory perspective, gender is not expected to be as central to the identity of some children as it is for others. The centrality of children's gender identity will depend on the extent to which they anticipate approval from others and anticipate feelings of pride for behaving in ways similar to those of their gender, and on the extent to which they believe they are capable of undertaking activities performed by others of their gender, all of which may vary in different contexts. This is different from other approaches where people make global ratings of the centrality of a collective category, such as gender, for themselves, without reference to specific contexts (Ashmore et al., 2004).

Therefore, despite most people's awareness of their gender, there is considerable variation in the extent to which their gender is central to their identity and in the extent to which they behave in gendered ways. Children and adults do not adopt all aspects of behavior associated with their gender category. Apart from the differentiation across individuals at a given point in time, there is also variation within individuals across the life course (Priess, Lindberg, & Hyde, 2009). This variation is due, in part, to the extent to which people exercise self-regulatory processes associated with gender identity, their gender-related goals, and the different social contexts that they choose and those in which they find themselves.

From the social cognitive theory perspective, variation in the influence of gender identity on gendered conduct is linked to the exercise of personal influence operating through self-regulatory processes. People develop self-standards for conduct along gender lines, they appraise their capabilities for different pursuits depending on the gender-relatedness of the pursuit, and they anticipate positive and negative outcomes for courses of action depending on the gender linkage of the behavior. Of course, the gender linkage of various pursuits and activities varies at different historical times and in different cultures. For

example, in most Western societies women are regarded as more emotionally expressive than men. However, in Iran, a Middle Eastern culture, the reverse is true: men are regarded as more emotionally expressive than women (Epstein, 1997). As already stated, once children begin to self-regulate their gendered conduct, this is initially based on anticipated social sanctions, but later it is increasingly based on anticipated self-sanctions and self-efficacy beliefs. By bringing to bear such contextually informed sociocognitive processes the expression of gender identity varies for different people in different situations. The more that these processes are engaged, the greater the extent to which gender identity is expected to influence gender-related conduct.

Self-Regulation Based on Gender

Gender-related social sanctions. In most societies, gender-differentiated behavior is heavily socially sanctioned. Males and females are treated differently when they perform the same activities. Consequently, early in the course of development, children begin to anticipate social outcomes, such as approval and disapproval, for performing certain activities depending on their gender (Bussey & Bandura, 1992). These anticipatory outcomes are constructed from the evaluative social outcomes such as praise and criticism that they experience, from what they are told about the likely outcomes, and from observing the outcomes that others receive from parents, peers, and the media. Parents, for example, emphasize the importance of the gender category by explicitly stating the anticipated consequences based on gender, "Don't do that. Other people will laugh because it is for girls."

Children's development of anticipated outcomes is further broadened once they know their gender and that of others and realize that they share similar outcomes for the same behavior with other members of their gender and different outcomes from those received by the other gender. Children learn that the same activity performed by a girl may lead to approval but disapproval if it is performed by a boy.

Social consequences not only convey information about the likely outcomes of courses of action, but they provide the motivational incentives for choosing particular courses of action (Bandura, 1986; Bussey & Bandura, 1999). Such anticipatory outcomes provide the motivation to enact gendered conduct. In particular, when children realize that they belong to a larger social group of same-gendered people and that there are pervasive consequences linked to gender, their gender takes on special significance. Consequently, the more that children experience social consequences for gender-related conduct, the more likely that their gender will influence the extent to which they anticipate social outcomes such as approval and praise for gender-related conduct. This is more the case for boys, as fathers are especially likely to inform their sons of the anticipated outcomes of their behavior based on their gender (Raag & Rackliff, 1998) and children sanction boys more than girls for engaging in activities associated with the other gender (Blakemore, 2003). The more differentiation there is between the genders within a given context or society, the more the social consequences for activities and pursuits differ by gender and the more likely that gender identity provides the basis for the regulation of conduct and activities.

Gender self-sanctions. During the course of development, children's gendered conduct increasingly becomes regulated by self-sanctions, based on personal standards (Bussey & Bandura, 1992). However, although self-sanctions take on increasing significance, social sanctions remain important regulators across the life span. Once personal standards are developed, they provide the guidance for gender-related conduct; anticipatory self-sanctions, such as self-approval and self-criticism, provide the motivation. That is, anticipatory self-sanctions motivate the alignment of one's conduct with one's standards. Anticipation of self-approval for same-gender-related activities and anticipatory self-criticism for other-gender-related activities keep one's gendered conduct in line with personal standards.

Although most children are raised in traditional families and societies, in a world of

changing gender roles, there is greater possibility for variation in the self-regulation of gender-related conduct. For some individuals, gender has less influence on the development of their self-conceptions than it has for others. Among those individuals for whom gender identity is central, self-regulatory processes are more pervasively embedded in the gender domain. From the social cognitive theory perspective, self-regulation involves three main components: self-monitoring, self-judgment of behavior based on personal standards, and self-evaluation (Bandura, 1986; Bussey & Bandura, 1999).

Self-monitoring is the first step in the exercise of self-influence. As children become aware of the considerable social significance associated with gender, they increasingly monitor their behavior on this basis (Serbin & Sprafkin, 1986). As we will see, the social significance of gender is conveyed by multiple social influences including parents, peers, and the media. Because boys are more heavily sanctioned than girls for not conforming to gender-stereotypic conduct, they are more likely than girls to monitor their behavior on the basis of gender. Boys have an added incentive to monitor their behavior on the basis of gender, because within most societies, males are accorded higher power and status than females (Bussey & Bandura, 1999).

Although self-monitoring sets the stage for the self-regulation of gender-related conduct, by itself self-monitoring provides little basis for self-evaluation. It is through self-judgments of one's behavior on the basis of one's personal standards for gender-related conduct that self-sanctions guide conduct. When people measure up to their standards, they react with self-approval, and when they violate their standards, they react with self-censure (Bandura, 2008). Indeed, acting in accord with gendered personal standards promotes well-being and positive self-appraisal (Witt & Wood, 2010).

Through varied social experiences, children develop their own gender-linked standards. Because of the wide range of potential social experiences, there is considerable diversity in the gender-related standards that children assume for themselves. As reviewed later in this chapter,

these gender-related standards are informed by social sources such as parents, peers, and the media.

Individuals are able to self-regulate the extent to which their own behavior conforms to gender stereotypes. Among those individuals for whom gender is central to their identity, self-monitoring, personal standards, and self-sanctions are likely to be more strongly linked to gender. Such people are more likely to monitor their own behavior on the basis of its gender-relatedness, and if they have developed personal standards that value gender-related conduct, they will anticipate greater self-worth for behaving similarly to others of their gender. Importantly, societal gender roles are not static; they change and people are more or less likely to modify their gender standards depending on the value they ascribe to the changing gender roles.

Regulatory self-efficacy beliefs. One of the core concepts in the agentic regulation of human functioning is self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997). During the course of development, children develop beliefs about their ability to perform gender-related conduct. Self-efficacy refers to people's beliefs about their ability to think and act in specific ways and at certain levels of attainment. For people to exercise agency over their lives, they need to believe in their capabilities to achieve certain goals and to act in specific ways. Without such beliefs, people are unlikely to have any intentional influence over their life course. Therefore, self-efficacy beliefs are central sociocognitive regulators of gendered conduct (Bussey & Bandura, 1999). Unless individuals believe they are able to engage in a particular activity, they are unlikely to attempt it or develop the skills that will lead to eventual mastery of the activity.

The importance of self-efficacy for affecting human functioning across the life span and across a diverse array of human functioning has been verified through meta-analyses (Moritz, Feltz, Fahrback, & Mack, 2000; Multon, Brown, & Lent, 1991; Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). Self-efficacy has also been shown to play a major role in the gender domain. For example, gender differences in self-efficacy beliefs have been obtained

for emotional well-being. Bandura, Pastorelli, Barbaranelli, and Caprara (1999) showed that low social self-efficacy is a stronger contributor to depression in girls than in boys. Gender differences in perceived self-efficacy are abundant in the achievement domain (Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli, 2001; Eccles, Freedman-Doan, Frome, Jacobs, & Yoon, 2000; Eccles & Wigfield, 2002; Leaper & Friedman, 2007). These effects have far-reaching implications in educational and occupational settings.

Gender plays a significant role in the development of self-efficacy beliefs. People construct beliefs by synthesizing information from four sources: mastery experiences (successful activity performance), vicarious experiences (modeling), social persuasion (encouragement about one's capabilities), and physiological and emotional states (Bandura, 1997). The way in which this information is synthesized is influenced, to a greater or lesser degree, by gender (Bussey & Bandura, 1999). In the following paragraphs, each of these four sources is discussed in more detail.

The first source of influence is through mastery experiences. These experiences are considered the most effective means for developing personal efficacy (Bandura, 1997). During the course of development, children are provided with considerable opportunities to master activities associated with their own gender. Parents routinely provide children with activities and experiences that are stereotypically associated with their gender (Leaper, 2002). Children therefore typically develop greater proficiencies at activities that are stereotypically associated with their own than the other gender. Success at same-gender-typed tasks and failure at other-gender-typed tasks serves to verify the importance of one's gender in the self-appraisal of one's capabilities. Unless children are encouraged to master activities associated with the other gender, they will not only fail to develop skills associated with those tasks, but they will likely attribute their poor performance to their gender. Children and adults are usually less likely to persevere and develop the skills and competencies associated with tasks typically performed by the other gender.

Further, self-efficacy beliefs are influenced by the way in which one's performance is appraised by others and oneself. The same level of performance can be appraised as a success by one student and as a failure by another (Lopez, Lent, Brown, & Gore, 1997). Similarly, boys and girls may appraise their performance differently when performing the same activity depending on its gender association. For example, in the achievement domain, although girls in elementary school typically outperform boys in science (Britner & Pajares, 2001), girls develop lower self-efficacy beliefs for science and math than do boys. In turn, the lower math self-efficacy beliefs of female undergraduates in comparison with male undergraduates may explain their poorer math performance (Pajares & Miller, 1994). It is therefore apparent that gender self-conceptions play an important part in self-conceptions of ability. Peer groups that are highly gender-segregated provide an important arena for further mastery of activities associated with one's own gender. These experiences all serve to promote the development of self-efficacy beliefs associated with one's gender.

The next most effective means for developing self-efficacy beliefs is through vicarious experiences, particularly social modeling. The greater the similarity between the model and the observer, the greater the likelihood that the observer's self-efficacy will increase through watching the model succeed. Gender is an important basis of similarity between model and observer. For example, in one study, women were more likely to raise their physical self-efficacy beliefs and muscular endurance when they saw a female rather than a male model display physical stamina (Gould & Weiss, 1981). Female scientists who observed their mothers engage in technological activities reported that this influenced their self-efficacy beliefs for engaging in scientific pursuits (Zeldin & Pajares, 2000). Through seeing others of one's gender master certain activities, observers develop beliefs about their own capabilities. Observers are more likely to boost their efficacy for performing tasks, even those linked to the other gender, if they observe members of their own gender perform well at

them. However, there is little opportunity to see such models in highly gender-segregated societies, where there is strong demarcation between the activities performed by men and those performed by women. Under such circumstances, self-efficacy beliefs are more likely to be based on one's gender than on one's ability.

Social persuasion is the third means for influencing self-efficacy beliefs. Parents often actively encourage children to engage in activities that are congruent with their gender by stating that it is an activity that most children of their gender are able to perform. Social persuasion can also undermine efficacy. For example, when girls' poor performance on math tasks is ascribed to their gender, their beliefs in their efficacy to perform well on math tasks are likely to be lowered (Dweck, 2002).

The final source of self-efficacy beliefs is physiological states such as anxiety, stress, and mood. Students' confidence is more likely to be boosted when they experience, or anticipate experiencing, less stress and anxiety when they perform a particular activity. This is important because negative mood states and anxiety can interfere with performance, thereby lowering self-efficacy beliefs. A certain degree of arousal can be beneficial in the performance of complex tasks and activities, however, it is the interpretation of the physiological states that can be debilitating or enhancing. Girls in elementary school typically reported higher levels of anxiety about their performance in science classes than did boys (Britner & Pajares, 2006). In such situations girls are prone to perceive anxiety as reflecting their lack of competence at science. However, by highlighting other females who are accomplished in this sphere and providing mentoring for girls, teachers can help to alleviate the negative impact of anxiety on girls' self-efficacy beliefs thereby maintaining their performance in science and other "male" subjects.

When gender is a significant aspect of identity, self-efficacy beliefs are strongly influenced by gender. Women who strongly identify with the stereotypic female role hold lower self-efficacy beliefs for succeeding at male-dominated occupations than those who are less identified with

this role (Matsui, Ikeda, & Ohnishi, 1989). In situations where the female gender stereotype was made salient, high- and low-gender-identified women did not differ in their self-efficacy beliefs for being successful in feminine-typed occupations. However, when the female gender-stereotype was not made salient, the more weakly gender-identified women reported lower self-efficacy beliefs for successfully performing in feminine-typed occupations than did more highly gender-identified women (Oswald, 2008). In general, the more that people's self-conceptions are based on their gender, the greater the difference in their self-efficacy beliefs for successfully performing those activities stereotypically associated with their own than with the other gender. Whereas for people whose self-conceptions are less based on their gender, there is little difference in their self-efficacy beliefs for engaging in same or other gender activities (Matsui et al., 1989).

Social Influences on the Development of Gender Identity

Many social influences including parents, peers, and the media work in concert to emphasize the importance of gender. All these influences contribute to the development of gender identity and the sociocognitive motivators associated with gender identity through the three major modes of social influence: modeling, enactive experience, and direct tuition. These same sources of influence operate across the life span and provide different information that is relevant at different times in the life course and as social conditions change.

Modeling. Modeling of gender roles is pervasive in most societies. It provides information about expected conduct based on gender and serves to highlight the importance of gender in various activities. Gender roles are modeled by parents, peers, and teachers in children's immediate environment as well as by more distal models portrayed on television, in movies, in books, and on the internet. According to social cognitive theory, people do not simply emulate models' behavior in its entirety. Rather,

from this view, four processes govern the selective emulation of models: attentional processes, retention processes, production processes, and motivational processes (Bandura, 1986). People pay attention to different models and to different aspects of modeled behavior, they selectively commit the modeled behavior to memory, their capacity to emulate modeled behavior varies, and their enactment of the modeled activity depends on anticipated social and self-sanctions and self-efficacy beliefs associated with enacting it.

In most societies there is a marked differentiation in the activities modeled by males and females. The more highly gender-segregated the society, the more males and females display different behaviors (Maccoby, 1998; Munroe & Romney, 2006; Whiting & Edwards, 1988). Models therefore provide important information about gender-differentiated behavior. Although boys and girls observe both genders, because of the social sanctions associated with gender-related conduct, they often choose to pay more attention to models of their own gender. Indeed, as noted earlier, from a young age, children prefer to attend to same-gender models than to other-gender models (Bussey & Bandura, 1984). However, because there is typically more enforcement of gender conformity for boys than for girls, boys pay more attention to same-gender models than do girls (Slaby & Frey, 1975).

Apart from attending to models, people need to rehearse the information observed and commit it to memory. The more society is gender-differentiated and the more one is motivated to conform to stereotypic gender roles, the more one is likely to think about and rehearse modeled behavior associated with one's own gender and the more one is likely also to develop the necessary skills and competencies to reproduce the modeled activity. However, simply having the ability to enact behavior displayed by others does not mean that this will be carried out, unless one is motivated to do so.

The fourth process governing modeled behavior encompasses motivational processes. People are motivated to emulate behaviors that produce valued outcomes. In most societies conformity

to stereotypic gender roles is valued. The more that one sees others of one's gender receiving favorable outcomes for the enactment of certain behaviors and unfavorable outcomes for the enactment of others, the more gender becomes an important determinant of which models to emulate. People also use the model's gender as a guide for developing their self-efficacy beliefs. As discussed earlier, for example, women are more likely to increase their self-efficacy beliefs for lifting weights if they see other women lift comparable weights (Gould & Weiss, 1981).

It is apparent that modeling of gender-differentiated conduct plays an important role in highlighting the significance of one's gender. This is particularly so when highly differentiated conduct displayed by male and female models is accompanied by differentiated social approval and disapproval. These displays not only convey information about gender stereotypes, but they also strengthen the importance of gender identity, further contributing to acquiring gender stereotypes and being influenced by them. Of course, just as modeling can promote the status quo in relation to gender-differentiated conduct and can strengthen the importance of gender identity, models can also serve as a vehicle of social change. Successful collective action by the less powerful to reduce inequitable social practices has been effectively used by campaigners of social change. In one such instance, women in India fought for the rights of their daughters to be educated after listening to a radio serial drama in which the cultural norms associated with girls' education were challenged (Bandura, 2006).

Enactive experience. Through children's enactment of various types of gender-linked conduct, they learn to abstract that there are social sanctions tied to gender-related conduct. A girl learns, for example, that if she performs the same behavior as performed by most girls, this typically meets with social approval and acceptance. However, if she performs the same behavior that most boys perform, this typically meets with censure and disapproval. Through abstracting and synthesizing the various evaluative reactions to gender-related behavior, children begin to realize the significance of the gender of the person

performing the behavior. This influences whether they believe that their similar performances will meet with approval or disapproval. The more that sanctioning of behavior is based on gender, the more that self-regulatory processes related to gender are used to guide behavior. Therefore, in those societies, and for those individuals, where social sanctions are pervasively based on gender, gender identity is more likely to influence the enactment of a wide range of activities.

Direct tuition. Direct tuition is an important mode of social influence that affects developing gender conceptions. Children are informed about the associations between activities and gender. Early in a child's life, parents direct their children to select certain activities on the basis of the activity's gender linkage, for example, "No, that's not for you, it's a boys' toy." There is widespread social consensus about the gender associations of activities, books, and movies and this information is often directly conveyed to people throughout their lives. Such gender demarcation serves to further highlight the significance of gender and gender identity.

These three modes of social influence, modeling, enactive experience, and direct tuition are used by parents, peers, and the media to guide gender identity development. From these influences, children not only learn to label their gender and that of others, but they also begin to regulate their gendered conduct on the basis of their gender identity.

Parental influences. Parents convey information to their children about their gender that contributes to the formation of their gender identity using all three modes of social influence discussed above. Typically, this occurs in a highly gendered context created by parents. Before they even begin to interact with their young infant, parents often have structured their child's life in a highly gendered way. The infant's room is furnished, clothes are purchased, and the infant named according to the infant's gender (Etaugh & Liss, 1992; Pomerleau, Bolduc, Malcuit, & Cossette, 1990). As the child ages, parents continue to provide play activities that are associated with their gender (Leaper & Friedman, 2007).

Apart from the gender-differentiated structures that parents put in place for their young, mothers and fathers typically model different activities (Kujawski & Bower, 1993; Langlois, Ritter, Roggman, & Vaughn, 1991; Serbin et al., 2002). This serves to highlight the differences between the two genders. By 24 months, infants have begun to appreciate the highly gender-differentiated conduct of most mothers and fathers (Serbin et al., 2002).

Parents' evaluative reactions to children's conduct are also highly gender differentiating. Those parents who espouse stereotypic gender values encourage gender-related activities in their children (Blakemore, 1998; Fagot et al., 1992; Katz, 1996; Weisner & Wilson-Mitchell, 1990). The asymmetry between the genders is further evident here too, in that boys are more strongly sanctioned for cross-gendered conduct than are girls, and fathers more strongly enforce gender-stereotypic conduct in their sons than in their daughters (Bussey & Bandura, 1999; Kane, 2006; Leaper, 2002; Raley & Bianchi, 2006). For children, and particularly for boys, gender is used as a basis for parental socialization practices. Although children in the early years may not see a link between their gender identity and the activities they select, parents certainly do. It is not surprising that children develop this knowledge early on, particularly when growing up in gender-stereotypic families.

Parents exert a strong influence on children's development of gender conceptions by directly instructing their children in gender labeling. They label the child's gender and practice this self-labeling with them. They also label the gender of others. Gender labeling takes on more prominence in gender-typed families than in egalitarian ones (Fagot et al., 1992; Stennes, Burch, Sen, & Bauer, 2005). Parents also use the child's gender to direct their conduct. Parents instruct their children on the appropriateness of specific activities depending on their gender, for example, "that's not a boy's toy" or "boys don't cry" (Leaper, 2002). This instruction is stronger for boys than for girls and stronger from fathers than from mothers (see Leaper & Friedman, 2007).

and characterizes the gender asymmetry in the broader society.

As children age, parents provide subtle messages to their children about their capabilities based on gender. Parents' beliefs about their children's competencies are as much influenced by their gender as by their actual competencies in academic and sporting domains (Fredricks & Eccles, 2002). Parents tend to underestimate their daughters' sporting and math competencies while overestimating them for their sons. The longitudinal research of Eccles and her colleagues (Eccles et al., 2000) shows that, over time, girls' self-conceptions of their math ability decline to match their parents' expectations. This decline in girls' beliefs in their self-competence has far-reaching effects on their choice of college majors and occupational choices. In this way, girls' gender identity impacts their future career choices by diminishing their self-efficacy beliefs associated with math- and science-related occupations. Boys too develop self-conceptions of their ability based on their gender. They are less likely than girls to enter the highly feminized caring (e.g., nursing) and teaching occupations (Watt, 2010).

It is noteworthy that girls' gender identity does not always lead to lower self-efficacy beliefs for math and science. In families where children are encouraged to excel in non-gender-stereotypic subjects, self-efficacy beliefs are less likely to be undermined and the attendant effects on course selection and occupational choice are unaffected. In egalitarian families, girls are more likely to do well at science and math than in more stereotypic families (Updegraff, McHale, & Crouter, 1996). Zeldin and Pajares (2000) found that the encouragement that women scientists received from their parents was important in shaping and maintaining their self-efficacy in male-dominated domains. Such experiences helped women mobilize the necessary confidence to face and overcome academic and social obstacles. One father encouraged his daughter to pursue a career in engineering, "He was very good at math and always encouraged me in math and science, and I thought I could do anything the boys could do" (pp. 227–228). Another father encouraged his daughter's perseverance with math, "we would

work through the problems together, and he really emphasized that it just takes practice. You just practice and pretty soon you start to see a pattern" (p. 228).

Peer influences. As we have already seen, one of the hallmarks of middle childhood is the extensive gender segregation that occurs in the peer group. This provides a fertile arena in which to learn about the importance of gender and the activities that are associated with each gender. The more time that children spend interacting with same-gender peers, the more gender-typed they become (Martin & Fabes, 2001). They emulate same-gender peers, are directed to conform to gender-stereotypical activities, and are positively evaluated when they do conform (Bussey & Perry, 1982; Leaper & Friedman, 2007; Martin & Fabes, 2001).

The influence of gender on children's social relationships contributes to the development and maintenance of gender identity. From as early as 30 months, children's playmates are increasingly of the same gender as themselves. Gender-segregated play begins at this time and increases during the middle childhood years (Leaper, 1994; Maccoby, 2002). This segregation makes gender even more salient as boys and girls seek to differentiate themselves from each other in conformity with societal expectations. The two genders differ on the basis of dress, names, and activities. It is not surprising that gender differences flourish in this gender-segregated culture that emerges early in children's development (Maccoby, 1998). The difference between genders is highly salient and not conforming to conduct consistent with one's gender carries severe repercussions, especially for boys (Blakemore, 2003; Martin, 1989; Thorne, 1993). Play in same-gender groups further heightens the relevance of one's gender in everyday interaction. Typically, in such same-gender groups, children learn gender-typed play patterns and develop skills and competencies and self-efficacy beliefs associated with such conduct.

Despite the substantial evidence showing that interaction with peers contributes to learning and enacting traditional gender roles and highlights the differences between the genders, children

can also subvert this process by selecting their own peer groups to master activities of their choice. Women scientists who have successfully navigated male-dominated science and technological careers have provided interesting insights into their peer-group experiences (Zeldin & Pajares, 2000). They highlighted the importance of forming peer subgroups at school that supported their scientific and technological interests. These girls self-selected into groups such as the math or the chemistry club to associate with and receive support from girls with similar interests. This course of action enabled girls who like math and science to avoid the typical negative reactions from girls who do not like science (Breakwell, Vignoles, & Robertson, 2003). One woman who pursued a math-related career described her experience with her chosen peer group in the following way, "Well, in high school, my friends were a little bit more the high achiever types, and we all went through the math classes together. Some of my good friends were in math" (Zeldin & Pajares, 2000, p. 232). By creating their own peer-group environments, these girls were able to develop their self-efficacy and competence in male-dominated fields within a supportive and encouraging environment.

Media influences. The media is not gender-neutral. In the previous century, females were underrepresented in most forms of media including television, radio, books, and movies. In the current electronic era, this underrepresentation continues, despite the greater range of media content available on the internet (Leaper & Friedman, 2007; Signorielli, 2001; Signorielli & Bacue, 1999). Although more recently there has been some increase in female representation on television and a decrease in the portrayal of gender-role stereotypes, males and females largely continue to be portrayed in gender-stereotypic ways, particularly in their dress styles, occupations, and personality characteristics. There is a focus on young, slim women and muscular men (Signorielli & Bacue, 1999), and women more than men are portrayed as engaging in domestic duties and as sex objects (Coltrane & Messineo, 2000).

The gender of child actors in television advertisements is highlighted by their gender-differentiated activities so that some activities are designated "for boys" and others "for girls." Boys demonstrate their preference for action-oriented and aggressive activities and girls demonstrate their preference for nurturant activities directed toward dolls and fashion and beauty products (Signorielli, 2001). Boys' activities are directed toward sports, future occupations, and activities away from the home, whereas girls are still directed toward domestic activities and self-grooming. Perhaps the most gender-differentiated area in the media is sports. Male athletes are far more likely than female athletes to receive media coverage both on and off the field. In fact, some studies report that as little of 10% of sports coverage is devoted to female athletes (Koivula, 1999). Males are portrayed as aggressive, dominant, and powerful. These representations further contribute to gender differentiation and highlight the significance of gender in the sports arena.

In recent years, greater gender equity in the representation of characters in children's books has been achieved. However, females are still underrepresented as main characters and in illustrations, and children are still presented in gender-stereotypic roles (Diekman & Murnen, 2004; Gooden & Gooden, 2001). Teenage books for girls focus on relationships and body image rather than cultivating activities and interests that build skills and competencies (Malkin, Wornian, & Chrisler, 1999). Females are significantly underrepresented in music and video games, and if they are depicted, they are often portrayed as sex objects (Sommers-Flanagan, Sommers-Flanagan, & Davis, 1993).

The pervasiveness of gender differentiation in the media highlights the social significance of gender. Greater television viewing is typically associated with greater exposure to stereotypic gender behavior and with the subsequent development of more gender-stereotypic conceptions (Anderson, Huston, Schmitt, Linebarger, & Wright, 2001; Davies, Spencer, Quinn, & Gerhardstein, 2002; Morgan & Shanahan, 1997; Ward, 2003). Davies et al. (2002) showed that after watching gender-stereotypic television

commercials women performed more poorly on a math test than women who watched counter-stereotypic commercials. It was further shown that this effect was particularly strong among women who thought about women in more gender-stereotypical ways. After viewing gender-stereotypical commercials, women were also less interested in pursuing future careers such as engineering and computer science that were reliant on proficiency in math. This underscores the earlier discussion showing that watching the performances of similar others is a potent source for informing beliefs about one's competence. Thus, the media's depiction of males and females engaging in gender-stereotypic behavior increases the salience of gender and influences people's beliefs about others' reactions, their own reactions, and self-efficacy beliefs for conduct based on their gender.

The continuing underrepresentation of women and their depiction in less powerful and authoritative roles than men does not provide support or incentives for women to master activities beyond stereotypic gender roles or to master activities that are highly valued by society. Despite the recent rhetoric of "girl power," the media continues to highlight the sexuality and physical appearance of women and girls rather than their competencies and achievements (Gill, 2007). Boys are more likely to spend time playing computer games, watching sports, and highly aggressive action programs, whereas girls spend more time watching relationship-focused programs (Lemish, Liebes, & Seidmann, 2001; Subrahmanyam, Kraut, Greenfield, & Gross, 2001). Further, it has been shown that the more central gender is to one's self-concept, the more likely one will seek out highly gender-stereotypic media—this further contributes to gender self-conceptions and the regulation of behavior along gender lines. Conversely, those for whom gender is a less pervasive influence on their self-conceptions may seek to watch less stereotypic media content (Ochman, 1996; Thompson & Zerbinos, 1997; Ward & Friedman, 2006). Although not as readily available through the mass media, there are pockets of the media that present more gender-equitable content. The

internet, for example, provides access to such content worldwide. This enables people to transcend their immediate environment and discover more gender-equitable media depictions that present a wider range of possibilities unrestricted by stereotypic conceptions of gender.

Transforming Gender Identity

It is evident from the foregoing discussion that gender identity is not fixed at any one point in time. According to some developmental theories of gender identity, once developed there is little variation in gender identity across the life course. However, it is argued here that gender identity varies across the life course. The influence of gender identity is exercised through the sociocognitive motivators of social sanctions, self-sanctions, and self-efficacy beliefs linked to gender. Personal change is effected through changes to the sociocognitive motivators, as a result of reflecting on and evaluating the relevance of experience and changing sociostructural arrangements in society.

As children mature cognitively and expand their social experiences, not only do they begin to realize that the two genders are treated differently, but they also begin to understand that there are power and status differences between males and females (Katz, 1996). This differential value accorded the two genders is apparent to children as young as 5 years of age, and it is more apparent to girls than it is to boys (Brown & Bigler, 2004). It is therefore evident that, from an early age, children begin to reflect on their experiences of belonging to a particular gender and the positive and negative discrimination associated with it.

Not all people accept the restrictions imposed by their gender. As noted earlier, from the social cognitive theory perspective, people can create or choose their own environments. For example, women who wish to achieve in math and science subjects may seek peer groups and mentors who are supportive of such endeavors (Zeldin & Pajares, 2000). In such environments, individuals develop their competencies and self-efficacy

beliefs and personal standards for activities that would not be encouraged elsewhere.

At a broader level, history is replete with examples of those with less power and social advantage taking collective action to remedy their situation. Drawing on their collective gender identity, women have been able to build their collective self-efficacy beliefs to mobilize actions to change social structures and thus bring about greater gender equality. Collective self-efficacy is of particular importance in the gender domain, because gender is a collective as well as a social category. Collective efficacy relating to gender identity refers to individuals' beliefs in their ability to work together with other members of their gender to achieve specific goals (Bandura, 1997). It operates similarly to personal efficacy in that it influences the amount of effort people expend in performing a task, how much they persevere when confronted with difficulties, and their vulnerability to discouragement. However, the focus of analysis is beliefs about the group rather than about the individual.

Collective efficacy has been shown to influence performance outcomes across a range of domains (see Fernandez-Ballesteros, Diez-Nicolas, Caprara, Barbaranelli, & Bandura, 2002). In this context, the collective action of women has led to permanent changes in laws and policies relating to gender discrimination. For example, early in the twentieth century the suffragettes mobilized collectively to gain the vote for women. Later, the Women's Movement of the 1960s sought further to reduce discrimination. Women demanded access to education, increased work opportunities, and reproductive freedom, and they challenged the normalcy of domestic violence and women's unpaid labor in the domestic sphere (Biaggio, 2000).

Gender roles continue to change. By the 1980s the restrictiveness of masculinity was being questioned as "Men's Studies" came into prominence (Segal, 2010). Increasingly, men are broadening their self-conceptions (in terms of toughness, independence, assertiveness), pursuits, and interests beyond those that are stereotypically associated with men (Segal, 2010). Men have also increased their involvement in childcare and

homemaking (Giele & Holst, 2004). Although many of the activities that fathers undertake with their children are more instrumental (discipline, protecting, monitoring schoolwork) than expressive (caregiving, emotional development, spiritual development), some fathers are involved in more expressive forms of fathering; both types of involvement are perceived as nurturant by fathers and their children (Finley & Schwartz, 2004, 2006). Women's circumstances have changed too. There now are numerous female heads of state, and there are many women serving in public life. Women are not only active in the political domain, but they also occupy influential roles in universities, on boards of large businesses, and in the medical field. They now participate in most occupations, including the military. The marked gender segregation of the workforce characteristic of previous centuries is easing. Young girls can aspire to high political office and find suitable role models to inform their aspirations. The changing nature of work from the hunter-gatherer days that required strong physical capabilities has meant that women face fewer barriers in their occupational choice (Wood & Eagly, 2002). The reduction of gender differences in abilities has further enabled some blurring of the demarcation of occupational choice based on gender. However, there still remains substantial gender discrimination.

Participation in sports provides an example of how legislative changes as well as changing societal views affect the gender association of activities and the ensuing linkage of gender identity with such participation. Sporting participation for most of the twentieth century has been the province of men. However, in the United States, since the 1972 enactment of Title IX of the US Civil Rights Act, there has been a dramatic increase in high school girls' participation in sport. It has jumped from 1 in 27 to 1 in 2.5, while boys' participation rate has remained at 1 in 2 (Women's Sports Foundation, 2007). Most of the sports have been played in gender-segregated groups. However, this segregation is starting to weaken, particularly in younger age groups. Still, many parents believe that sons are more competent than their daughters

at sports (Fredricks & Eccles, 2002), and the media focuses on professional male athletes and often condones their aggressive and dominant behavior (Tenenbaum, Stewart, Singer, & Duda, 1996). Males continue to draw their popularity and prestige from sports, whereas this is much less true for girls (Suitor & Reavis, 1995). In male sporting groups teammates strongly enforce the enactment of masculine gender stereotypes of aggression and drinking (Olrich, 1996). Although the impediment to women's sports participation was attenuated through the removal of structural barriers to their participation by Title IX, it takes time for other social influences such as parents, peers, and the media to value and encourage such participation. The greater the participation of women in sports and the less that sports participation is gender-segregated, the weaker is the link between gender identity and sports participation. This is not because children's knowledge of their gender has changed. Rather, once girls are encouraged to the same extent as boys to participate in sports, they feel pride in their sporting achievements, and hold high self-efficacy beliefs for such conduct and gender identity is less likely to be a determining influence on sports participation.

How does this blurring of gender roles impact gender identity? As reviewed in this chapter, the perceptual salience of the gender category is important for gender identity formation. To maintain a category (such as gender) such that it is an important aspect of one's identity, the category must have functional significance. As gender segregation and gender differentiation attenuate and the genders are treated more equally, gender identity would be expected to play a less pervasive role in most people's lives. This does not mean that a person's gender is not of importance; rather, it need not dictate every aspect of a person's life. Once gender is less pervasively tied to activities, a person's gender may be less of a major determinant of how others respond to them, how they respond to themselves, and the skills and competencies and self-efficacy beliefs that they develop across a wide variety of domains.

Biological sex is a defining characteristic as are other characteristics such as eye color. Eye

color, however, is not a collective category that carries the same social significance as gender. Historically, biological differences between the genders were important as women spent a large part of their adult life having and rearing children while men were involved in activities outside the home that often required considerable physical strength. Scientific advances enabling women to control their reproduction have meant that women do not need to be solely responsible for raising children and keeping house. The changing circumstances of women have seen them develop skills and competencies equivalent to those developed by men (Barnett & Rivers, 2004). Although there are more men than women in technology and science, women are increasingly nominated for Nobel Prizes. Moreover, we are at a point in time when neuroscience research is showing the malleability of the human brain. Even if there are differences between male and female infants' brains, it is increasingly possible that developing skills associated with the other gender will attenuate differences in brain functioning between the genders. These possibilities challenge earlier essentialist positions that argue for a strong biological contribution to gender differences. Regardless of their "biological predisposition," increasing numbers of men are expressing nurturance and engaging in more caregiving activities with their children than has occurred in the past. Once nurturance is appreciated for its human value rather than being more associated with one gender than the other, there will be less social restraint from expressing nurturance independent of one's gender.

Conclusion

It has been argued in this chapter that gender is a collective category in which social influences build on biological differences between the genders to heighten gender differentiation. It was shown that people are treated differently depending on their gender by the various social subsystems they encounter across the life span. Within these contexts there is considerable variability in people's self-development and the gender identity they

assume for themselves. Although people's knowledge of their gender rarely changes across the life course, the relative influence of their gender identity on their overall functioning depends on the prevailing social conditions and their engagement of self-regulation processes related to gender. In cultural contexts where gender equity is valued and legally sanctioned, people have considerably more leeway in the extent to which gender influences their identity and life course. In other cultural contexts, where women have few rights, there is little choice about the pervasive influence of gender on women's identity and life course. However, even within the most restrictive social conditions, it is possible for an undervalued group such as women to mobilize collective resources to challenge the status quo so that they can exercise greater agency over their identity and life course.

Acknowledgments I wish to thank Albert Bandura for his extensive comments on an earlier draft of this chapter.

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Abstract

In this chapter, we review and critique how conventional models of gender and sexual identity development have represented the experiences of transgender individuals, and we argue for an expanded model of transgender identity development which can accommodate the diversity of their lived realities. *Transgender* is a broad category typically used to denote any individual whose gender identity or presentation either violates conventional conceptualizations of “male” or “female” or mixes different aspects of male and female role and identity. Despite increasing social scientific acknowledgment and investigation of transgender experience, most contemporary perspectives presume that the primary identity dilemma for transgender individuals is a conflict between one’s psychological gender and one’s biological sex, such that the normative and healthy endpoint of transgender identity development is the achievement of a stable, integrated, unambiguous identification as 100% male or 100% female, often achieved via some form of physical transformation aimed at bringing one’s psychological gender and one’s physical gender presentation into alignment. Yet there is increasing evidence that such dichotomous models of gender fail to accommodate the true complexity and diversity of transgender experience. Hence, in this chapter we argue for broader, more flexible models of gender identity development among transgender individuals which can accommodate the fact that for some of these individuals, identity development will have a linear trajectory leading to a singular outcome, whereas for others, identity development may be a recursive process that accommodates multiple and shifting identity states over time. We explore the implications of such an expanded model of identity development for clinical practice and intervention with transgender individuals.

By the age of 3 or 4, most children have developed a clear sense of gender identity – that is, an enduring sense of themselves as male or female – which persists throughout their lifespan. Yet for transgender individuals, this is not the case.

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Transgender is a broad category typically used to denote any individual whose gender-related identification or external gender presentation conflicts in some way with their birth sex, and who therefore violates conventional standards of unequivocal “male” or “female” identity and behavior. The very fact that the present volume includes a chapter on transgender identity signifies the enormous changes that have occurred in psychological research on gender identity and its development and expression. In recent years, empirical research on the experiences of children, adolescents, and adults who violate conventional norms for gender-typical behavior, or who are consciously questioning their gender identity, has increased dramatically (Bockting & Coleman, 2007; Denny, Leli, & Drescher, 2004; Grossman & D’Augelli, 2006; Halberstam, 2005; S. Hines, 2007; Johnson, 2007; Lev, 2004; Mallon & DeCrescenzo, 2006; Seil, 2004; Wren, 2002).

Nonetheless, contemporary views of gender-transgressive individuals tend to interpret their experiences through a rigid and dichotomous model of gender which presumes that the primary identity dilemma for transgender individuals is a conflict between one’s psychological gender and one’s biological sex. To be sure, this is quite commonly the case for *transsexual* individuals, who typically report feeling that they are “trapped in the wrong body” and who seek to bring their psychological sense of gender and their physical sex into alignment through a combination of physical transformation (via clothes, makeup, demeanor, hormones, or surgery) and a formal change in legal status. Yet, although transsexualism might be the most widely known form of transgender experience (among both psychologists and laypeople alike), it is certainly not the only one. In fact, the word and concept “transgender” came into use specifically because many individuals with more complex and ambiguous experiences of gender identity – for example, individuals who feel that they are *both* male and female, or *neither* – were poorly described by models of transsexualism. Moreover, individuals with new forms of gender blending and bending continue to stretch

the range and variety of identities that fit under the transgender umbrella.

Hence, our goal in this chapter is to provide an introduction to the diversity of transgender experience, review previous research on the development of transgender identity, and argue for broad, dynamic, and flexible models of transgender identity. Such flexibility is critical if such models will successfully accommodate all forms of transgender expression, from individuals who seek to change their gender expression, either permanently or temporarily, to those who seek to blend their gender expression, to those who seek altogether novel forms of context-dependent gender identity and presentation. Specifically, we maintain that identity models organized around *the process of change and transition itself*, rather than the presumed goal of achieving a stable and socially intelligible “new gender,” will be more successful in describing the diverse experiences of transgender individuals and in guiding future research on their healthy development and self-actualization.

Sex and Gender: Concepts Defined

Academic psychology continues to use the terms sex and gender relatively interchangeably (M. Hines, 2004; Schaefer & Wheeler, 1995), yet the two terms are semantically distinct. *Sex* is most often used to describe one’s status as male or female (Deaux, 1993; Ruble, Martin, & Berenbaum, 2006), determined biologically via sex chromosomes and assessed at birth by the appearance of external genitalia (which generally suffices, except for rare disorders of sexual differentiation in which there may be disjunctures between chromosomal sex and genital morphology). In contrast, *gender* refers to the trait characteristics and behaviors culturally associated with one’s sex (Fausto-Sterling, 2000; M. Hines, 2004). Gender also refers to a person’s subjective judgments and inferences about sex including stereotypes, roles, presentation, and expressions of masculinity and femininity (Deaux, 1993; Ruble et al., 2006). Gender *identity* represents

a person's sense of self as a boy/man or a girl/woman. As such, it carries an expected set of role behaviors, attitudes, dress style, and appearance. Gender identity is implicitly presumed to develop in a manner that corresponds directly with biological sex, such that boys develop male identities and girls develop female identities (Money & Ehrhardt, 1972; Zucker & Bradley, 1995).

Before proceeding, it bears noting that this overall framework relies on a central assumption – that sex is a “natural category” individuals are *born* with, whereas gender represents the cultural meanings attached to that category – which has come under fire over the years. Queer theorists such as Butler (1990) have criticized this framework for reifying the distinction between biology (sex) and culture (gender), for naturalizing categorical distinctions between “male” and “female” bodies and biology, and for obscuring the manner in which social discourse constructs and creates *sex* in the same way that it creates *gender*. Fausto-Sterling (1993), similarly, has argued that the notion of “two and only two” sexes is a cultural rather than a “natural” phenomenon, and that we might just as well posit five biological “sexes,” based on the surprisingly high number of children born with ambiguous or mixed genitalia. We will revisit critiques of the sex/gender binary later on; for now, we employ it for the sake of clarity and consistency, while noting its shortcomings.

Developmental research on gender identity typically focuses on the age and the processes by which children develop understanding in three major domains: categorical sex differences (Ruble et al., 2007), self-awareness and constancy of biological sex (Kohlberg, 1966), and gender-congruent role behaviors (Bem, 1983). Research suggests that consistent labeling of men and women as “male” or “female” occurs by age three, and that stability in one's own self-labeling as male or female occurs between age 3 and 5, although there continue to be conflicting findings on the specific timing of the latter milestone (Maccoby, 1990; Ruble et al., 2007; for a more extensive review of research on normative gender identity, see Bussey, Chapter 25, this volume).

Children and adults who fail to develop a stable, psychological sense of gender that corresponds with their biological sex, and who meet certain cross-gender behavioral traits, may be diagnosed with *gender identity disorder (GID)* (American Psychiatric Association, 2000; Carroll, Gilroy, & Ryan, 2002; Levine et al., 1999). According to the most recent version of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV), GID is characterized by “a strong and persistent cross-gender identification” (Criteria A), by a “persistent discomfort with [one's biological] sex or a sense of inappropriateness in the gender role of that sex” (Criteria B), “not concurrent with a physical intersex condition” (Criteria C), and by “clinically significant distress” (American Psychiatric Association, 2000, p. 581). Cross-gender identification may also be demonstrated by preferences for gender nonconforming roles in fantasy play, for wearing the clothing of the opposite sex, and/or the desire to engage in activities associated with the opposite sex (such as standing to urinate among girls and sitting to urinate among boys).

Often, though not always, a child with GID will spontaneously state, sometimes as early as 2 or 3 years of age, that his/her true gender identity does not match his/her biological sex (Strong, Singh, & Randall, 2000; Zucker & Bradley, 1995). The DSM-IV revised its definition of GID diagnosis to distinguish childhood manifestations from adolescent and adult manifestation, while still acknowledging that GID may persist across the life course (American Psychiatric Association, 2000; Zucker, 2005a). Although not all adolescents and adults who meet the clinical criteria for GID consider themselves transsexual, it is safe to say that the vast majority of self-identified transsexuals meet the clinical criteria for GID. The clinical criteria carry substantial weight, because the American medical community polices access to hormonal treatment and sex reassignment surgery fairly rigidly, restricting it to transsexual adults who meet the strict criteria for GID or gender dysphoria (Denny et al., 2004; Seil, 2004), such as early appearing and persistent gender confusion, intense and consistent motivation to be the opposite sex (and

not simply to periodically dress as the opposite-sex, as is characteristic of transvestitism), intense discomfort or dislike of one's body, and persistence of these subjective experiences in the face of directed attempts at "retraining" (Bockting, Knudson, & Goldberg, 2007; Devor, 2004; Docter & Fleming, 2001; Lippa, 2001; Schaefer & Wheeler, 1995). Notably, transsexual individuals meeting these clinical criteria typically report markedly improved psychological outcomes after undergoing surgical transitions, reporting higher levels of self-esteem and more positive body images (Wolfradt & Neumann, 2001).

In contrast, the vast range of transgender-identified individuals who claim that they are "both" or "neither" male/female, or who adopt complex constellations of male/female identification and presentation, are not considered by the medical community to be appropriate candidates for sex reassignment. In fact, many such individuals do not seek complete sex reassignment at all, preferring instead to modify selected parts of their body (such as breasts or facial hair) or to forgo physical change altogether and focus on modifications in their social status and legal standing (Bilodeau, 2005; Lev, 2004). This is consistent with the fact that such individuals typically reject the notion that they are simply "trapped in the wrong body" and hence do not view a wholesale substitution of one gender identification for the other as a personal goal or as a potential solution to any experiences of distress or discomfort they might face. It is this group of gender-fluid individuals that poses a fundamental dilemma to our attempts to develop broad-based models of transgender identity development.

From Transgender Experience to Transgender Identity

Transsexualism yields fairly straightforward suppositions and predictions regarding normative identity development: whereas the average boy or girl seeks and achieves a clear, consistent, and enduring sense of gender identity between the ages of 2 and 5, the transsexual individual

must revisit this process repeatedly in the context of his/her gender transformation. Transsexual identity development, then, may not entail the development of a *transsexual* identity at all, but movement *through* a transsexual or transgender identity to a new identity as unequivocally male or female (Bockting & Coleman, 2007; Wilson, 2002). The highest form of success, within this context, is to "pass": to accomplish such a complete change in gender status that the individual's history of questioning and confusion is replaced by – or more accurately, transformed into – a lived authenticity. Many transsexuals wish *not* to be thought of as "a woman who used to be a man," or "a man who used to be a woman," but simply a "woman" or a "man," with the body and legal status to match (e.g., Girchick, 2008; Wilson, 2002). Of course, this is not uniformly the case. Some transsexuals maintain a strong connection to the transsexual community even after completing a full gender change, and some maintain identity labels (such as "transman" or "transwoman") that acknowledge their history of gender transition.

Decisions about whether to embrace or "move beyond" one's history of gender transition might be moderated by developmental status. An increasing number of individuals are self-identifying as transgender and seeking sex reassignment at earlier ages (Zucker, Bradley, Owen-Anderson, Kibblewhite, & Cantor, 2008). Some of these youth adopt intermediate identities such as "tranny boys," suggesting that they perceive mixed, fluid, and ambiguous gender presentations as potentially stable identity outcomes. Little is currently known about the full range of factors which influence transsexual youths' and adults' motives to embrace an enduring identification as "trans" – even after completing a full gender transition – or to view such identities as temporary stepping stones along the route to a normative "female" or "male" identity. This is clearly a priority for future research.

As noted earlier, perhaps the most important development in research on gender over the past 20 years has been the realization that the transsexual trajectory is not the only form of transgender experience, and may not even be

the modal one (Devor, 2004; Ekins & King, 1999; Gagné, Tewksbury, & McGaughey, 1997; Halberstam, 2005). Rather, similar to the aforementioned case of “tranny boys,” an increasing number of transgender individuals have come to adopt and embrace fluid, shifting, and ambiguous gender identifications, which seek to combine attributes of masculinity and femininity rather than to “switch” from one gender identity to the other. For example, Gagné et al. (1997) charted multiple identifications in their diverse sample of transgender participants, all of whom were born male. In addition to transsexuals (i.e., those who desired to permanently adopt unequivocally female identities), their sample included preoperative transsexuals (who hoped to pursue sex reassignment surgery in the future, but had not yet done so), nonoperative transsexuals (who lived socially as women and made use of hormones and breast augmentation to feminize their appearance, but had no plans to pursue full-blown sex-reassignment surgery), radical transgenderists (who maintained a masculine gender identity but cross-dressed in a conscious attempt to explore feminine aspects of their personality and challenge traditional binary notions of gender), and ambigenderists and “third-gender” individuals (who lived alternately as men and women or consciously combined masculine and feminine characteristics, emphasizing the degree to which their bodies and self-concepts occupied a spectrum of female and male characteristics).

Similarly, consider the experience of several transwomen interviewed by Girchick (2008), all of whom challenged the notion that transgender individuals sought to resolve any discrepancy between an internal and external sense of gender (typically through sex-reassignment surgery), and who instead gave voice to an empowering embrace of gender ambiguity or fluidity, and a rejection of dichotomous models of sex and gender.

Because I am so openly gender-variant and fluid, I reserve the right to express the truth of that “in the moment”. . . . I believe in “shape shifting” with truth. . . . Is the goal to get from A to B or is the goal to remain open to fluidity? That’s the key. So, it’s not so much that surgery will necessary limit your

expression, it’s the mindset that goes with your need for surgery. Because most folks who want surgery think they’re only going from A to B, and that is a limiting mindset (p. 70).

I feel like there’s tremendous pressure to have an external appearance and body that are consistent with the internal identity. . . I have spent much of my life desperately wishing I had a male body. But I’m starting to feel comfortable with the apparent contradictions between my female body and my male presentation. This contradiction is part of my strength and my identity (p. 71).

I think when you’re born one and cross over to the other side, so to speak, you’re really neither. . . . And I think a lot of us feel like we are lying, and then we are forced to lie, and ugh. It’s like they get you coming and going and there’s no way you can in good conscience mark M or F, ’cause neither applies. Or both apply (p. 74).

The terminology contemporarily used by transgender individuals is also notably diverse, including (but not limited to) gender blender, gender bender, gender outlaw, gender queer, drag king/queen, trans, transgender(ist), and queer (Carroll et al., 2002; Ekins & King, 1999). Such individuals pose a fundamental challenge to binary notions of gender by persistently violating or collapsing the border between masculine and feminine appearance and self-concept. Queer theorists have tended to embrace such “gender outlaws” (Bornstein, 1994), heralding their opposition to the hegemonic notion that there are, and should be, “two and only two” genders (Fausto-Sterling, 1993; Feinberg, 1996; Roen, 2002).

Psychologists, however, have taken a more mixed and ambivalent approach to these diverse forms of transgender (reviewed in Mallon & DeCrescenzo, 2006), especially when adopted by adolescents. Is it healthy to claim a permanently liminal form of gender identity? How can we speak of “transgender identity development” if no single identity “goal” can be identified, or if the stated goal involves a wholesale deconstruction of the notion of a fixed and stable self? After all, as early as 1987, the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-III) recognized a lack of coherent identity as a risk factor for poor mental health outcomes (American Psychiatric Association, 1987)? How do transpeople conceptualize their gender identities, and

negotiate the constancy of their biological sex with a conflicting gender identity schema?

There is scant empirical data available on such questions. In contrast to the extensive body of research on conventional gender identity development (Kohlberg et al., 1974; Ruble et al., 2006, 2007; Bussey, Chapter 25, this volume), little research focuses on the developmental processes or the structure and properties of transgender identities in nonclinical populations (Gagné et al., 1997; Mason-Schrock, 1996), and almost no longitudinal studies have been conducted on this topic. Rather, the majority of research on transgender populations focuses on their experiences of discrimination, limited access to health care, physical health challenges, conflicting surgical outcomes, and mental health concerns (Devor, 2004; Lev, 2004; Zucker & Bradley, 1995). Furthermore, most of the existing empirical research on gender nonconformity and transgender individuals has focused on gender atypical *males*, usually in childhood (American Psychiatric Association, 2000; Zucker, 2005b; Zucker & Bradley, 1995). In contrast, there is a dearth of empirical research on normative or resilient developmental outcomes among gender nonconforming and transgender natal females (Zucker, 2005b).

Existing Models of Transgender Identity

Nonetheless, some scholars have attempted to articulate coherent models of transgender and/or transsexual identity development. Perhaps most notable among these attempts is Devor's (2004) 14-stage developmental model, which outlines a progression from early confusion and persistent attempts at social comparisons to gradual self-acceptance, identity synthesis, and pride. For example, in stage one, abiding anxiety characterizes the individual's distinct discomfort with his/her biological sex and his/her preference for cross-gender activities and companionship. Later, during a first identity comparison stage, the individual compares his/her assigned birth-sex with his/her preferred gender roles, and if discrepant,

begins actively seeking out and experimenting with alternative gender expressions and identities. The fourth stage is gender identity discovery, during which he/she accidentally or intentionally learns about the existence of transsexualism and becomes aware that this phenomenon "fits" his/her own sense of identity. After seeking more information about transsexualism, the person begins a second identity comparison stage characterized by disidentification with the birth-sex and reidentification as "transsexed" or as "transgender." Eventually (and often after a notable delay) the individual accepts his/her transsexual identity and discloses it to others. The fact that Devor's model is specific to transsexualism, rather than the full range of transgender experience, can be seen in the fact that the final stages of the model specifically involve planning, saving money for, and undertaking complete sex reassignment, after which the individual experiences a final sense of integration between mind and body and a resulting experience of self-acceptance and pride.

Importantly, Devor's theoretical model has not been empirically validated (Pardo, 2009). Hence, it is unknown whether the majority of transsexuals follow such a linear progression. Certainly, the linear stage models of lesbian-gay-bisexual identity development on which Devor's model is based have been roundly critiqued and arguably discredited over the years, as empirical research has shown that the process of adopting a sexual-minority identity is often characterized by abrupt, nonlinear, and recursive processes of identity exploration, negotiation, and renegotiation (Diamond, 2005a, 2005b, 2007, 2008; Golden, 1987). Based on such findings, it is plausible that transsexual identity development, too, is complex, dynamic, and nonlinear. Devor's model may only apply to the subset of transgender individuals with clear-cut gender dysphoria, for whom the "discovery" of a mismatch between their psychological sex and their physical body represents a critical turning point.

In acknowledgment of these weaknesses, Devor (2004) actually delivers a stern set of cautions against overgeneralizing his model, noting that "It cannot possibly apply to all individuals,"

that “some people may *never* experience some of the stages,” and “that others will move through them in different orders, at different rates, or perhaps not at all” (pp. 43–44). With so many caveats, one may reasonably wonder, “What, then, is the point of a model at all?” Yet although we must remain circumspect about the specific form, order, sequencing, and generalizability of certain transgender developmental pathways, this does not mean that the identification of such pathways is either impossible or inappropriate. The fact that so many transgender-identified individuals report early questioning of their gender identity, often as young as age 10, followed by adoption of a trans-identity around puberty and subsequent disclosure of this identity to others (Grossman & D’Augelli, 2006), suggests that the investigation of potential developmental sequences of transgender experience is a plausible and worthwhile goal that may shed light on the nature, etiology, and general trajectory of transgender experience. In particular, it might help to clarify the extent and source of variability in this experience. For example, are differences between *transsexual* adults (who report a notable disjuncture between their psychological and physical gender) and *transgender* adults (who report mixed gender identifications, or who reject all gender identifications) reflected in their early developmental trajectories? Might such developmental differences shed light on the etiology of their distinct experiences?

The conceptual model developed by Denny et al. (2004) attempts to deemphasize the rigid gender binary that characterizes conventional models of gender identity development, and instead presumes the existence of parallel gender continuums inclusive of male and female dimensions. According to this model, individuals can strongly identify with both male and female dimensions, or with neither (Denny et al., 2004). In addition, rather than positing a single modal developmental pathway, it posits the existence of multiple, individualized trajectories. In this respect, the model is similar to Savin-Williams’ *differential developmental trajectories* approach to the development of sexual identity (Savin-Williams, 2005; Chapter 28, this

volume). Savin-Williams’ differential developmental approach acknowledges that there may be common experiences and developmental milestones which characterize sexual minorities, but nonetheless emphasizes within-group variability in developmental pathways. Hence, rather than seeking one common developmental trajectory, this approach seeks to identify and understand the *multiple* possible trajectories within the sexual-minority population, and to identify the factors which cause trajectories to converge or diverge at different developmental stages.

Debating the Role of the Gender Binary

This differential developmental trajectories approach would appear to be particularly appropriate to modeling the multiplicity of transgender experiences. Importantly, however, this multiplicity should not be interpreted as utterly arbitrary, representing a limitless undoing of all possible positions and forms (Nataf, 1996). Rather, research suggests that there are certain common elements that bridge otherwise diverse transgender experiences, and these common elements deserve careful attention by identity theorists. In particular, we can speak of a general divide between individuals (such as transsexuals) whose experiences revolve around and reinforce a gender binary by seeking the physical presentations of gender that correspond to their psychological sense of gender, and those whose experience of transgender straddles, rejects, or collapses that binary. Similar to Gagné et al. (1997), Ekins and King (1999) have attempted to systematically chart these different manifestations of transgender experience, differentiating between four different types of narratives commonly recounted by transgender individuals: Narratives of *migration*, *oscillation*, *negation* (or “erasing”), and *transcendence*.

In their framework, migration narratives are those recounted by transsexuals, who emphasize the process of “crossing over” permanently from one gender to another, and who speak of finding a “home” in the desired gender. For

these individuals, the transition is permanent and unequivocal. In contrast, transgender individuals with oscillation narratives describe repeated movement back and forth across gender boundaries. They might view one gender identification as “truer” than another, but they do not plan to adopt a permanent gender presentation on either side of the “gender divide.” Rather, oscillation transgenderists consider the very process of moving back and forth across the border to be meaningful in and of itself. Importantly, Ekins and King emphasized that this process of moving back and forth across the gender binary did not challenge or dismantle the binary; rather, it functioned to *reinforce* its meaning and rigidity on a cultural level. This is because it is the very *difference* between the male and female “sides” of the border that provides the energy, dynamism, and motivation underlying “border crossing.”

In sharp contrast to these two groups, transgender individuals with negation or transcendence narratives pose a more direct challenge to binary notions of gender. As described by Ekins and King, negation narratives speak of erasing or undoing gender – not only the signs and indicators of one’s “born” biological sex, but of *all* clear-cut markers and indicators of gender, through selectively adding or eliminating gender-related attributes in a manner that deliberately creates an ambiguous gender presentation. Ekins and King argue that negation narratives actually resemble the growing number of science fiction fantasy stories, which posit futuristic worlds “beyond” gender.

Finally, there are transcendence narratives, which are similar to negation narratives in their attempt to undo and subvert gender, but which have a more explicitly political aim. Bornstein’s *Gender Outlaw* (1994) might be considered the paradigmatic expression of this form. In these narratives, the negation and undoing of gender polarities is not simply a personal decision, written on the body and acted out in behavior, but it is explicitly undertaken with the aim of dismantling the hegemonic power of gender dichotomies on a social and cultural level. In transcendence narratives, personal attempts to “ungender” oneself are fundamentally and inextricably linked

with larger political struggles in which the entire social bases of gender-related practices and politics are questioned. As Stone (1991) argued, such transmen and transwomen who reject society’s insistence on “passing,” and instead allow their ambiguous bodies to be “read” in their complex and unsettling ambiguity, “fragment and reconstitute the elements of gender in new and unexpected geometries” (p. 296).

The Personal, the Political, and the Theoretical

The divide between modes of transgender experience that seek to substitute one gender for the other, those that mesh the two genders into an androgynous new whole, and those which seek to dismantle dichotomous notions of gender altogether has become a contentious area of debate among psychological and social theorists of gender. To be sure, this distinction – and the attendant debates – has important implications for theorizing about transgender identity. In particular, as articulated by S. Hines (2006), there appears to be an inherent contradiction between approaches to transgender identity which seek to destabilize the notion of a singular and stable gender identity, and approaches which straightforwardly advocate the substitution of an old, “false” identity with the new, “correct” one. The former approach has been ardently championed by theorists questioning the “naturalness” of sex (most notably Butler, 1990, and Fausto-Sterling, 1993, as noted earlier), and who seek to expose the socially constructed nature of femaleness and maleness altogether. Yet others have cautioned against universalizing this particular interpretation of transgender, which runs the risk of dismissing and invalidating the lived experiences of transsexuals who hold a more conventional sense of authentic gendered selves, and who seek a stable, fixed identity as “male” or “female” (S. Hines, 2006; Namaste, 1996; Prosser, 1998).

The difference between these two types of transgender experience – one operating within conventional gender constructs and one actively resisting them – is sharply manifested

in their respective interpretations of *change and transition*. Both camps are relevant for highlighting elements of transgender identity development. Transsexuals who seek a fixed “home” in one gender or the other (Prosser, 1998; Wilson, 2002) typically view their own trajectory of gender reidentification and authentication as having a defined end, a point in time when the personal gender transformation will be complete. As noted by Wilson (2002), for such individuals the completion of their transformation may entail a withdrawal from the very transgender social and support groups that may have initially proved helpful, since the very identity of “transgender” may cease to hold personal relevance once the new “male” or “female” identity has been successfully adopted. In fact, the former “transgender” identity may be explicitly cast off as a painful reminder of the former false self (see also Brown & Rounsely, 2003).

Yet for transgender individuals who seek to dismantle fixed notions of gender, the process of questioning and transformation may prove to be ever present, with no definitive beginning or end. Furthermore, the transitional process *itself* may change over time. As S. Hines (2006) indicated, “the relationship between gender identity and presentation shifts and evolves *through transition*” (p. 60, emphasis added) such that the degree of “fit” between a certain psychological sense of gender and a particular physical presentation may be quite different 2 years into a transition than it was at the outset. This exemplifies the degree to which no single identity goal is sought. Rather, the overarching aim is to continually seek and approximate a particular form of psychological and physical gender coherence that is, in essence, a moving target.

For these individuals, the journey is itself the outcome. As Kogan (2009) argues in a lucid critique of the recent *legal* history of transgender experience and status, we might best consider all transgender individuals – and for that matter, all “normative” men and women as well – to be undertaking a lifelong “sex/gender journey” (similar to Denny et al., 2004 notion of individualized gender trajectories). In this journey, individuals seek their own particular manifestation

of “maleness” or “femaleness,” never quite achieving the archetype of “Man” or “Woman” heralded by society, but instead coming to approximate it in different ways at different points during the life course, and sometimes explicitly seeking to manifest or reject *both* archetypes.

Placing Change at the Center: Dynamical Systems Theory

Perhaps the most successful approach to theorizing transgender identity development might be one which places change and transition at the center of analysis, and which views identity “outcomes” as states which are continually constructed and reconstructed over time, rather than achieved with a certain finality. The closest approximation to such an approach, with respect to theory, comes from *dynamical systems theory*. We do not want to imply that this particular strain of theory can “fix” all of the aforementioned weaknesses of existing models of transgender identity development. Rather, we want to highlight dynamical systems theory for the creative and generative possibilities that it offers for future model building.

Dynamical systems models seek to explain how complex patterns emerge, stabilize, change, and restabilize over time. Over the past decade social scientists have increasingly applied this approach to complex human phenomena (for early, seminal examples, see Fogel & Thelen, 1987; Thelen, Kelso, & Fogel, 1987; Thelen & Smith, 1994) to better represent how dynamic interchanges between individuals and their environments give rise to novel forms of thought and behavior. Thus far, dynamical systems approaches have made notable contributions to our understanding of motor development (Kelso, 1997; Turvey, 1990), cognition (Thelen & Smith, 1994), perception (Gilden, 1991), emotion (Fogel, Nwokah, Dedo, & Messinger, 1992; Fogel & Thelen, 1987; Izard, Ackerman, Schoff, & Fine, 2000), personality (Lewis, 2000; Read & Miller, 2002), language (Christman, 2002; Elman, 1995), children’s play (Steenbeek &

van Geert, 2005), coping (Lewis, Zimmerman, Hollenstein, & Lamey, 2004), antisocial behavior (Granic & Patterson, 2006), and – most appropriate for this discussion – gender development (Fausto-Sterling, 2000).

Dynamical systems models belong to a larger family of theoretical perspectives seeking to replace deterministic models of social-behavioral phenomena with approaches that emphasize dynamic person–environment interactions occurring over time. Other examples of this approach include general systems theory, developmental systems theory, ecological perspectives, contextualism, transactionalism, and holistic-interactionism (reviewed in Granic, 2005). At their core these approaches all emphasize transformative, bidirectional, changing interactions among endogenous factors (such as genes, hormones, skills, capacities, thoughts, and feelings) and exogenous factors (such as relationships, experiences, cultural norms, family history, etc.). According to dynamical systems theory, interactions among these elements can actually *create* novel psychological and behavioral phenomena during periods of fundamental reorganization in the overall system, denoted “phase shifts” (Granic, 2005). Phase shifts occur when certain parameters governing the system – or certain relationships *among* parameters – start to vary outside of certain critical thresholds (Fogel & Thelen, 1987). As a result, existing patterns of thought and behavior break down and new patterns take their place.

This process, denoted *self-organization*, is defined as the spontaneous development of order within a complex system (Kelso, 1997). A closely related concept is *emergence*, defined as the coming-into-being of altogether novel behaviors or experiences through dynamic, unpredictable interactions between different elements in the system. As reviewed by Fogel (2006), researchers and theorists have increasingly come to view emergence and transformation as fundamental processes of psychological change, encompassing not only qualitative shifts in subjective experience, but also processes of cognitive discovery and creativity (for example Gottlieb, 1992;

Nelson, 1997; Overton, 2002; Tronick et al., 1998).

This would appear to be directly relevant to transgender experience and development. From this perspective, the fundamental task for transgender identity development is not simply to discover, acknowledge, and reveal a deeply hidden “true self,” but rather to *create* one’s “true self” through a process of self-reflection, perspective-shifting, and (for some) physical transformation (compare to emerging views on the relationship between self-construction and self-discovery in personal identity, as elucidated by Waterman, Chapter 16, this volume and Soenens & Vansteenkiste, Chapter 17, this volume). The new sense of authentic identity which emerges is, in the end, altogether new. It was *not* “in there all along,” simply waiting to be released. It is, rather, a hard-fought achievement, a truly novel creation forged out of the individual’s entire history of gender experience *and* his/her creative explorations of new forms of gendered self-expression. This perspective actually shares much with Lev’s (2004) model of “transgender emergence,” which emphasizes the transgender individual’s *active engagement* with processes of self-reflection aimed at instantiating a new sense of identity authenticity. One strength of this approach is its necessarily broad timeframe – the process of identity transition and transformation is necessarily open, and potentially recursive, revisited repeatedly as the individual occupies different contexts and seeks to integrate new traits and characteristics into his/her emerging sense of self. Another strength of this approach is the active and autonomous role granted to the transgender individual. The specific nature and character of the authentic identity is *in one’s own hands* – not dictated by social norms, therapists, or medical standards. Hence, “mixed” forms of gender presentation which might be deemed “incomplete” from the perspective of developmental models based on transsexualism, are instead authentic and viable identity outcomes. The application of dynamical systems theory to transgender identity and development is one of the most provocative and interesting directions for future research.

Intersections with Sexuality

Another important element which requires more systematic integration into future models of transgender identity development concerns the complex interplay between gender identity and sexual identity and orientation. Historically, it was presumed that the link between gender identity and sexual identity/orientation was fairly straightforward: being attracted to women was a fundamental component of being a man, and being attracted to men was a fundamental component of being a woman (Block, 1909; Forel, 1908; Krafft-Ebing, 1882). According to this logic, men who were attracted to men were not *completely* male; they possessed, instead, some degree of essential femininity. The same logic, in reverse, applied to women who were attracted to women. This conflation between same-sex desire and “gender reversal” (such that gay men are necessarily feminine and lesbians necessarily masculine) has been vigorously critiqued over the years by researchers studying the development and expression of same-sex sexuality (Gottschalk, 2003; Hegarty, 2009; Paul, 1993; Rottnek, 1999). In the context of transgender, this model would appear to suggest that *all* transgender individuals are fundamentally gay, lesbian, or bisexual *before* modifying their original gender presentation (i.e., those born with female bodies are attracted to women, and those born with male bodies are attracted to men), and fundamentally heterosexual afterwards (because by switching their own gender identity, they have transformed a same-sex attraction into an other-sex attraction). Yet this simplistic model of the links between gender identity and sexual orientation simply does not fit the empirical data. Research has documented incredible diversity in transgender individuals’ experiences of same-sex and other-sex desire, both before and after modifying their gender identities and presentations (Hines, 2007). Some male-to-female transsexuals seek female sexual partners and identify as lesbians; others seek male partners and identify as heterosexual women (Chivers & Bailey, 2000). Some biologically female transgender individuals

identify as butch (i.e., highly masculine) lesbians and continue to participate actively in the lesbian community, whereas others take on identities as men and seek heterosexual female partners; yet others pursue sexual relations with both men and women. This diversity is possible because gender identity and sexual identity, despite conventional assumptions to the contrary, are fundamentally distinct constructs, such that variability in one dimension does not neatly map onto the other (Devor, 1997; Lawrence, 2004).

At the same time, this does not mean that gender and sexuality are altogether unrelated. For some individuals, these two forms of identity reciprocally inform and influence one another, such that one’s experience of “femaleness” and “maleness” is interbraided with one’s subjective understanding, experience, and interpretation of sexual desire for female and male partners. Correspondingly, experiences of “same-sex” and “other-sex” desire and behavior are often embedded within the social and interpersonal context of gender presentation – after all, the very designation of a particular desire or behavior as “same sex” or “other sex” requires a stable appraisal of the gender status of everyone involved. Hence, although gender identity and sexual identity are separate phenomena, their relationship is dynamic and reciprocal, informed by an individual’s personal sense of gender *and* his/her appraisal of the gender of social partners. It is not surprising, then, that individuals who begin to explore multiplicity and fluidity with respect to their gender identity often become progressively more aware of multiplicity and fluidity in their erotic attractions as well. S. Hines (2007), for example, noted that just as gender is an inherently relational phenomenon, actively negotiated through interactions with other (gendered) individuals, so too is sexuality, and especially for individuals who have questioned, modified, or rejected their natal sex. For these individuals, their subjective experience and understanding of desire necessarily change as their own relationship to their body, their identity, *and* the bodies and identities of their intimate partners changes.

An example of this dynamic interplay between fluidity in gender and fluidity in sexuality is

provided by “Mark,” a participant in Diamond’s (2008) longitudinal study of sexual identity development. Mark was born with a female body, and grew up with a conventional female gender identity. He had been aware of sexual attractions to women since adolescence, and during his early twenties he identified as lesbian. Yet over the years, he began to question his gender identity, and eventually adopted a male gender presentation. Surprisingly, he found that as he delved deeper into the masculine sides of his personality, and took on an increasingly masculine role in self-presentation and interpersonal interaction, he became unexpectedly attracted *to men* (although his attractions to women did not diminish). As Mark described, “It was odd; guys would flirt with me, and I would be like, “Hey, I don’t mind that. That doesn’t turn me off or make me angry or whatever. Because it used to really annoy me, and it doesn’t anymore.” (Diamond, 2008, p. 196). Mark connected his own reconstituted experiences of desire for men with his changed appraisal of men’s social location with respect to his own: he noted that it was the traditional male-female heterosexual dynamic that he had always found distasteful. Now that he identified as Mark, his desires for men – and his interpersonal and sexual interactions with them – no longer inhabited the conventional male-female heterosexual dynamic, and this shift opened up new erotic possibilities. Mark also described changes in the *types* of men he found attractive after taking on a masculine gender presentation, and these changes were intriguingly related to issues of power and social location. As Mark became “more male” himself, he became increasingly attracted to openly gay men. Hence, although he was still biologically female, and the objects of his desire were male, he experienced these desires (and the resulting erotic dynamic) as fundamentally *homosexual* rather than heterosexual, reflecting a “gay male” side of himself. Perhaps because this form of desire permitted him to maintain more control than is typically afforded heterosexual women in their interactions with men, Mark felt much more comfortable with his attractions to – and relationships with – men than had been the case when he was a teenage

girl. His experiences clearly indicate that the critical “trigger” for Mark’s sexual desires was never, in fact, a stable, trait-like degree of femininity or masculinity in another person, but instead a particular interpersonal dialectic regarding gender and social relations.

Such experiences highlight the value of attending to the complex, mutual, dynamic influences between gender identity and sexual identity, and their embeddedness in specific social locations. In modeling multiple trajectories of transgender identity development, we must take care to treat the degree of interdependence between gender identity and sexual identity/desire as an open question, and one which might vary dramatically across different individuals, and also across different stages of the lifespan. Charting these forms of variation, and exploring their implications for long-term self-esteem and well-being among transgender youth and adults, is a key direction for future research.

Mental Health Implications of Transgender Identity

We have considered a multiplicity of identity outcomes and trajectories. Now, what are their implications for mental health? For example, is it “healthier” to transition to a fixed gender identity which conforms to conventional boundaries separating “male” and “female,” or to seek a liminal, fluid, transgender identity which collapses and deconstructs those categories? To answer this question, we must consider the major threats to psychological health among transgender men and women.

Research reliably indicates that social stigmatization – manifested in some cases by outright physical victimization – poses the pre-eminent threat to transgender individuals’ mental and physical health. These findings concord with the *minority stress* model of sexual-minority health (Meyer, 2003), which specifies that sexual minorities’ acute exposure to environmental stressors such as verbal or physical abuse, institutional discrimination, interpersonal harassment,

and general social marginalization confers cumulative psychological stress. This stress, in turn, negatively affects both mental and physical well-being.

Institutional reports, popular media, and biographical accounts document an abundance of gender prejudice and gender-based violence perpetrated against transgender individuals (Brown & Rounsely, 2003; Feinberg, 1996, 2006). A recurring survey conducted by the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP) of bias-motivated violence against gender and sexual minorities has found that hate crimes against gender-nonconforming adolescents and adults accounted for one-fifth of all documented murders (National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs, 1999, 2007). A recent survey of 515 trans-identified people (392 male-to-female, 123 female-to-male; Clements-Nolle, Marx, & Katz, 2006), reported that 28% of the respondents had been in an alcohol or drug treatment program, 62% had experienced gender discrimination, 83% had experienced gender-related, verbal discrimination, 59% had experienced sexual assault (rape), and 32% had reported attempted suicide. Among the sample's youth (< 25 years of age), nearly half had attempted suicide as a result of gender-based victimization.

It should be no surprise that other recent empirical investigations suggest that gender-nonconforming adolescents are particularly vulnerable to environmental stressors. Brown and Rounsely (1996), for example, found that gender-nonconforming adolescents routinely experienced taunting, teasing, and bullying at school. Sausa (2005) reported that nearly all the gender-nonconforming adolescents in his study recalled school-based verbal and physical harassment, which left three-quarters of them feeling unsafe. They felt singled out or traumatized several times a day, including during gym class, at school events, or when using single-sex restrooms. In yet another study (D'Augelli, Pilkington, & Hershberger, 2002), lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth confirmed that peers verbally harassed and physically abused their gender-nonconforming peers more frequently than themselves.

Even youths who escape victimization in school must contend with heightened psychosocial stress in their daily lives. In addition to the normative stressors associated with adolescent social and psychological development, gender-nonconforming adolescents often struggle with an increasing awareness that their *psychological* sense of self does not neatly correspond to their body. The physical changes brought about by puberty only heighten this discrepancy, potentially escalating a youth's potential sense of internal alienation and confusion. Youths may be unable to articulate to others *why* they feel different, and hence frequently report feeling isolated, depressed, hopeless, or utterly invisible to friends and family (Swann & Herbert, 1999). From a symbolic interactionist perspective (Serpe & Stryker, Chapter 10, this volume), it might be viewed as inevitable that a youth's gender nonconformity influences his psychological well-being, given that the social stigma attached to gender nonconformity necessarily alters – sometimes profoundly – the nature of such a youth's social interchanges with strangers as well as friends and family. Hence, to the extent that psychological well-being is fundamentally embedded in social relations, the altered social relations of gender-nonconforming youths create notable strains for their psychological development.

Left unchecked, the accumulation of stressors at home, at school, and at work may provoke sustained feelings of shame, alienation, and inadequacy among gender-nonconforming youths. To cope with these feelings, youths may display a range of externalizing problems, including running away from home, dropping out of school, abusing substances, or self-harm (D'Augelli, Hershberger, & Pilkington, 2001; Sausa, 2005). Others may seek to modify their bodies to achieve a greater sense of comfort and personal authenticity. For example, some transgender adolescents with particularly pronounced cross-gender identifications have reported self-injecting silicone or steroids to create a more feminine or masculine appearance in accordance with their gender identity. Klein (1999) suggested that restricted access to carefully monitored and orchestrated gender transitions can

result in increased risk-taking behavior including self-mutilation, substance abuse, prostitution, and exposure to HIV.

In the context of these risks and stressors, what conclusions might we draw about different trajectories of transgender identity development? One likely possibility is that during the adolescent years, it may be difficult – or impossible – to tell whether a particular youth is “headed” for one trajectory or another. Although some adolescents may self-identify as transsexual at fairly early ages, expressing clear desires to permanently change their gender, it is important to remember that such youths may perceive that this is the *only* outcome of gender questioning. The possibility of adopting a more fluid, liminal sense of gender may have never occurred to many youths; in addition, they are unlikely to have any visible models of such forms of gender fluidity. Hence, their ability to craft a meaningful autobiographical narrative (see McAdams, [Chapter 5](#), this volume) which contains – and makes sense of – their conflicting and changing experiences of masculinity and femininity is impaired. Given this limitation, the healthiest identity trajectory for transgender adolescents may be one which makes no presumptions about desirable outcomes, and sets no timetables for resolution, but instead remains open to multiple possibilities over potentially long periods of time. Youths need time, support, information, and autonomy as they grapple with their own sense of gendered selfhood and seek a comfortable and personally authentic constellation of female-typed, male-typed, and gender-neutral traits. *Changes* in this constellation – at the level of cognition as well as appearance, and occurring during adolescence as well as adulthood – may be part and parcel of the identity development process.

One thing, however, is abundantly clear. Neither transgender youths nor adults can embark on this process without a basic sense of safety. As long as transgender individuals are forced to navigate their school and family worlds with an ever-present, debilitating fear of stigmatization, ostracization, humiliation, and physical violence, they cannot be expected to achieve a healthy

sense of self-determination, whether such self-determination involves switching their gender identity or making peace with a lasting sense of gender fluidity.

With respect to transgender youth, it is evident that supportive adults play a key role in facilitating resilience and positive development (Garofalo, Deleon, Osmer, Doll, & Harper, [2006](#); Grossman & D’Augelli, [2006](#); Mallon & DeCrescenzo, [2006](#)). Decades of research on resilience, conducted with mainstream as well as at-risk populations, has shown that adults can strengthen youth by teaching them how to respond positively to adversity (Bernard, [2006](#)). With respect to transgender youth in particular, adults may require special education and awareness. For example, learning the preferred name and pronoun usage of a transgender youth is critical to gaining their trust and supporting their own developmental pathway. Similarly, ensuring and maintaining confidentiality is critical for demonstrating to transgender youth that their safety will not be compromised, given the risks that these youths typically face for discrimination and violence. Finally, research on resilience (Bernard, [2006](#)) also indicates that young people flourish when they know that adults believe and nurture their capacity to succeed. Accordingly, it is important to encourage transgender and gender-nonconforming youth to be visible and proud leaders and role models for others just like them.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have reviewed the literature on the documented diversity of transgender experience, as well as previous research on the development of transgender identity. In contrast to the theoretical identity models based on sexuality research which prioritize stable, uniform endpoints, we have argued for new, flexible models that conceptualize transgender identity development as a dynamic, highly individualized process, which may be undertaken multiple times over the lifespan, and for which the *journey* is as important as the outcome. We make a call for new lines of empirical research using this approach to

explore the full range of trajectories of transgender identity development. Identity models organized around the process of change and *transition itself*, rather than those which prescribe a limited range of “healthy” outcomes, will be most successful in elucidating the individual and contextual factors which promote mental and physical well-being among transgender youths and adults, and which support their self-actualization.

In many ways, the state of flux and transformation that currently characterizes research on identity development among transgender populations resembles similar transformations that took place within the field of sexual identity research regarding acknowledgment and validation of bisexuality. With a few notable exceptions (Blumstein & Schwartz, 1977; Paul, 1985; Shuster, 1987), early investigations of sexual identity development focused exclusively on lesbian and gay individuals, not even mentioning bisexuals in the title (reviewed in Diamond, 2008). Yet both researchers and laypeople persistently questioned whether bisexuality represented a “true” and stable identity or whether it was best construed as a transitional phase that individuals traversed on the way to their “true” homosexuality (Rust, 2000, 2001). Overall, this battle has been largely resolved, and most researchers now consider bisexuality to be a stable identity in and of itself with its own distinctive phenomenology and developmental trajectory (Rust, 2002; Weinberg, Williams, & Pryor, 1994). However, the long-fought battle for such legitimacy exemplifies the degree to which psychologists have difficulty reconciling the notion that a healthy identity might, in fact, be characterized by a fundamental *liminality* in sexual and gender expression.

We now face a similar crossroads with respect to transgender identity development. Whereas previous research on transgender populations has presumed that the fundamental identity “project” was to unilaterally switch from one gender to the other, and has focused primarily on their psychological deficits and challenges, it is now time to acknowledge the

complexity of the transgender population and to explore how the multiple meanings that transgender individuals attach to their shifting gender identities may positively influence their identity development and their overall well-being. Toward this end, we must work systematically to develop and test models which allow for a multiple continuum framework that allows for simultaneous parallel continuums for biological sex (more to less female and more to less male), gender identity (man to not-man and woman to not-woman), and gender expression (more to less masculine and more to less feminine) (Doorn, Poortinga, & Verschoor, 1994; Girchick, 2008). As Devor argued (2004), “each of us has a deep need to be witnessed by others for whom we are” (p. 46). By respecting and scientifically investigating the full range of transgender experiences and transgender developmental trajectories, identity theorists can play a critical part in this witnessing.

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Abstract

This chapter summarizes advances in current theoretical and empirical literature on sexual identity development. It proposes a model of sexual identity that offers a more global (i.e., non-sexual identity group specific) perspective in comparison to existing sexual identity group-specific sexual identity models. Attention to commonalities in sexual identity development across sexual identity subgroups can offer a more global perspective that captures shared experiences of sexual identity development as well as differences between subgroups. The proposed unifying model of sexual identity development incorporates what has been learned from years of theory and research concerning sexuality, LGB and heterosexual identity development, attitudes toward sexual minority individuals, and the meaning of ordinate and subordinate group membership. The model describes the intersection of various contextual factors that influence the individual and social processes underlying sexual identity development. The unifying model is innovative in its applicability across sexual orientation identities, as well as its inclusion of a wide range of dimensions of sexual identity and possible developmental trajectories. The chapter concludes with a discussion of preliminary research findings that inform the unifying model and that have implications for future research. We hope this model allows researchers, educators, and practitioners to develop interventions and conduct investigations on broader questions about human sexuality without being constrained to gay–straight dichotomies of sexual orientation and the related methodological limitations that have characterized sexual identity theory and research in the past.

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Identity consists of a stable sense of one's goals, beliefs, values, and life roles (Erikson, 1950; Marcia, 1987). It includes, but is not limited to, gender, race, ethnicity, social class, spirituality, and sexuality. *Identity development* is a dynamic process of assessing and exploring one's identity,

and making commitments to an integrated set of identity elements (Marcia, 1987). Identity formation was originally conceived as a focal task of adolescence (Erikson, 1950), but the concept has more recently been applied throughout the lifespan (see Kroger & Marcia, Chapter 2, this volume).

In this chapter, we focus on sexual identity development. During the past two decades, there have been numerous theoretical and empirical advances in understanding sexual identity development as applied to individuals identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and heterosexual (e.g., Diamond & Savin-Williams, 2000; Eliason, 1995; Fassinger & Miller, 1996; McCarn & Fassinger, 1996; Savin-Williams & Diamond, 2000; Worthington, Savoy, Dillon, & Vernaglia, 2002; see Savin-Williams, Chapter 28, this volume). Within these advances, conceptual models and measurements of sexual identity development were designed for specific sexual identity subgroups (e.g., lesbians, gay men, heterosexuals). It is important to note, however, that only limited progress has been achieved in the construction of models and measures for bisexual or heterosexual individuals (see Diamond, Pardo, & Butterworth, Chapter 26, this volume; Savin-Williams, Chapter 28, this volume).

Sexual identity subgroup models and measures serve an important role in elucidating identity experiences and processes that are unique to each subgroup. Attention to commonalities in sexual identity development across sexual identity subgroups can offer a global perspective that captures shared experiences of sexual identity development as well as differences between subgroups. Thus, group-specific and universal models of sexual identity development can be viewed as having complementary strengths and limitations in that aspects of sexual identity development that are uniquely salient to specific groups are the focus of group-specific models, and aspects that are shared across groups are the focus of universal models. The need for both group-specific and universal foci also parallels greater societal acceptance of diversity in sexual identity groups (e.g., Yang, 2000).

The purpose of this chapter is to describe current theoretical and empirical literature on sexual identity development, and to arrive at a proposed model of sexual identity that offers a global (i.e., non-group specific) perspective. This proposed model can offer a complementary perspective to existing group-specific (i.e., gay and lesbian, bisexual, and heterosexual) sexual identity models and is not intended to replace such models. In the subsequent sections, we (a) review and evaluate prominent literature and concepts concerning sexual identity development within specific sexual identity subgroups, (b) introduce a unifying model of sexual identity development that can be applied across sexual identity subgroups, and (c) discuss preliminary findings from recent research that can inform the unifying model and that may have implications for future research.

Sexual Orientation, Sexual Orientation Identity, and Sexual Identity

A number of scholars have argued that sexual *identity* would be more reliably assessed, and validly represented, if it were disentangled from sexual *orientation* (e.g., Chung & Katayama, 1996; Drescher, 1998a, 1998b; Drescher, Stein, & Byne, 2005; Rust, 2003; Stein, 1999; Worthington et al., 2002). Our conceptualization of *sexual orientation* refers to an individual's patterns of sexual, romantic, and affectional arousal and desire for other persons based on those persons' gender and sex characteristics [American Psychological Association (APA) Task Force on Appropriate Therapeutic Responses to Sexual Orientation, 2009]. Sexual orientation is linked with individual physiological drives that are beyond conscious choice and that involve strong emotional feelings (e.g., falling in love). *Sexual orientation identity* is what we term the individual's conscious acknowledgment and internalization of sexual orientation. Sexual orientation identity is thought to be linked with relational and other interpersonal factors that can

shape an individual's community, social supports, role models, friendships, and partner(s) (e.g., APA Task Force on Appropriate Therapeutic Responses to Sexual Orientation, 2009; APA, 2003). We conceptualize sexual orientation identity as subsuming sexual orientation, with the former construct reflecting a conscious acknowledgment of the latter construct. Thus, to simplify our discussion, we use the term *sexual orientation identity* throughout the chapter to refer to these overlapping concepts in a single phrase. It is worth noting that Savin-Williams (Chapter 28, this volume) uses the phrase *sexual identity label* to represent what we term sexual orientation identity. Savin-Williams prefers *label* over *identity* because the former is terminologically distinct from sexual identity and because *label* captures his intent to use the term as a group descriptor. We use the term *sexual orientation identity* to be explicit about this concept as a conscious acknowledgment of identity and to locate it within the broader construct of sexual identity.

We conceptualize sexual orientation identity as one of many dimensions of *sexual identity*. We consider other dimensions of sexual identity that are commonly attributed to sexual orientation identity (sexual behavior with men and/or women; social affiliations with lesbian, gay, bisexual (LGB) individuals, and/or heterosexual individuals and communities; emotional attachment preferences for men and/or women; gender role and identity; Klein, Sepekoff, & Wolf, 1985) as correlates of sexual orientation identity, but not sole characteristics of sexual orientation identity. These elements are part of sexual identity as a larger construct. We view sexual identity as also including other dimensions of human sexuality (e.g., sexual needs, sexual values, modes of sexual expression, preferred characteristics of sexual partners, preferred sexual activities and behaviors) as well as group membership identity (e.g., a sexual orientation identity, or considering oneself as a member of sexuality-related social groups) and attitudes toward sexual minority individuals. These concepts and their roles in sexual identity development are elaborated upon in the chapter.

Measuring Sexual Identity

Content analyses of research on sexual diversity in psychology have indicated that the most common method of assessing what we term the *sexual orientation identity* (others term sexual orientation or sexual orientation label) of participants is to request self-identification as gay, lesbian, bisexual, heterosexual, or some variation on these types of categories (Buhrke, Ben-Ezra, Hurley, & Ruprecht, 1992; Clark & Serovich, 1997; Huang et al., 2009; Phillips, Ingram, Smith, & Mindes, 2003). This method provides categorical self-identification. These categories are typically used as a global proxy for the cognitive, behavioral, emotional, and physiological bases underlying sexual identity. However, a substantial body of research has suggested a variety of ways in which self-identified heterosexual, gay, and lesbian individuals might exhibit bisexual behavior or attractions without categorically identifying as bisexual (e.g., Diamond, 2000, 2003a, 2008; Diamond & Savin-Williams, 2000; Worthington & Reynolds, 2009). This is further complicated by the substantial number of individuals who report predominantly other-sex sexual feelings and behaviors, who also have experiences of same-sex attraction or behavior, but who do not identify as gay, lesbian, or bisexual (Diamond, 2008; McConaghy, Buhrich, & Silove, 1994; Worthington & Reynolds, 2009; see Savin-Williams, Chapter 28, this volume). A universal model of sexual identity may advance the current state of research and measurement by addressing limitations and constraints inherent in categorization of sexual orientation, feelings, and behaviors.

Both categorical and more continuous conceptualizations of sexual orientation identity have evolved over the last 60 years since Kinsey and his colleagues (Kinsey, Pomeroy, & Martin, 1948; Kinsey, Pomeroy, Martin, & Gebhard, 1953) first published their classic works on sexual *behavior* of males and females. Kinsey et al. used a seven-category taxonomic system in which "0" corresponded to "*exclusively heterosexual*" and "6" corresponded to "*exclusively homosexual*." It

is noteworthy that, although the scale is intended to index sexual behavior, it is often used as a measure of sexual orientation identity. A number of scholars have criticized the Kinsey Scale (e.g., Masters & Johnson, 1979; Sell, Wells, & Wypij, 1995; Shively & DeCecco, 1977) because it presents same- and other-sex sexual behavior as opposites along a single continuum. Specifically, in Kinsey's binary model, increasing desire for one sex represents reduced desire for the other sex, which in reality may not always be the case. In contrast, other theorists have suggested that same-sex and other-sex attractions and desires may coexist relatively independently and may not be mutually exclusive (Diamond, 2003b, 2008; Sell et al., 1995; Shively & DeCecco, 1977; Storms, 1980; Worthington & Reynolds, 2009). In multi-dimensional models of sexual orientation identity, the intensity of an individual's desire for or arousal toward other-sex individuals can be rated separately from the intensity of that individual's desire for or arousal toward same-sex individuals, and this allows for a more nuanced understanding of sexual diversity (Worthington & Reynolds, 2009).

In understanding measurement issues related to sexual identity, readers are cautioned to recognize that inconsistent terms, methods, and concepts have plagued the sexual orientation and sexual identity literatures. As noted earlier, scholars often inappropriately presume interchangeability of terms (e.g., sexual orientation, sexual identity). The field also operationalizes key sexual identity variables in inconsistent ways (e.g., categorical self-identification, use of a continuous self-identification scale such as a Kinsey-type scale, and physiological measures). The sexual orientation and identity literature also does not typically account for historical shifts across time in both popular and scholarly conceptualizations of variables tied to human sexuality, especially self-ascriptions related to sexual orientation identity (e.g., *gay*, *lesbian*, *bisexual*, *queer*, *heterosexual*, *metrosexual*, *bicurious*, *heteroflexible*, *pansexual*, *polyamorous*, *trans-amorous*, *uncertain*, *disidentified*, *ex-gay*, *ex-ex-gay*). Therefore, much of this literature is difficult to interpret—especially when comparing findings across time,

samples, and investigators (Meyer & Wilson, 2009; Moradi, Mohr, Worthington, & Fassinger, 2009). In one attempt to reconcile incompatible definitions and conceptualizations of variables related to sexual orientation, Tolman and Diamond (2001) have suggested that sexual orientation can be conceptualized as having inherent biological determinants (essentialism) as well as being strongly influenced by and given meaning through socio-cultural forces (constructionism). That is, rather than understanding sexual orientation from either a social constructionist or an essentialist paradigm, the integration of aspects from both perspectives may better reflect the multi-dimensionality and dynamics of human sexual orientation.

Tolman and Diamond's clarification of the nature of sexual orientation as having *both* essentialist *and* constructionist components is consistent with the distinctions among sexual orientation, sexual orientation identity, and sexual identity as proposed in this chapter and in Worthington et al. (2002). Modern scholarship examining the stability of sexual orientation also seems to support our conceptualizations of sexual orientation, sexual orientation identity, and sexual identity (e.g., Diamond, 2003a; Horowitz & Newcomb, 2001; Rosario, Schrimshaw, Hunter, & Braun, 2006, see Savin-Williams, Chapter 28, this volume). Specifically, some dimensions of sexual identity, such as relationships, emotions, behaviors, values, group affiliation, and norms, appear to be relatively fluid; by contrast, sexual orientation [i.e., an individual's patterns of sexual, romantic, and affectional arousal and desire for other persons based on those persons' gender and sex characteristics (APA Task Force on Appropriate Therapeutic Responses to Sexual Orientation, 2009)] has been suggested to be stable for a majority of people across the lifespan (Bell, Weinberg, & Hammersmith, 1981; Ellis & Ames, 1987; Haldeman, 1991; Money, 1987). Our distinctions among sexual orientation, sexual orientation identity, and sexual identity attempt to capture and acknowledge both fluid and stable aspects of sexual identity. These distinctions are also consistent with the aforementioned constructionist and essentialist distinction.

As the reader may have noticed, the stability of sexual orientation is supported by some earlier empirical studies (e.g., Haldeman, 1991, 1994) but is questioned by more recent empirical studies (Kinnish, Strassberg, & Turner, 2005; Savin-Williams, Chapter 28, this volume). New empirical data concerning sexual fluidity could reflect a greater acceptance of sexual minority individuals in society in comparison to 20 years ago (Savin-Williams, 2005, Chapter 28, this volume). That is, more people may be acknowledging sexual minority orientations (i.e., “coming out”) because of a more accepting societal climate. Yet, it is not clear from existing research whether sexual orientation is more variable across time for some individuals and not for others, or whether individuals may be relatively more or less open to *experiencing* and *acknowledging* variations in sexual arousal and desire at different points in their personal development. That is, *experiencing* arousal may be different than *acknowledging* arousal, which may vary across contexts and relationships. For instance, Diamond’s (2003a, 2003b, 2008) research on women and same-sex attractions indicates that many women’s acknowledged identities vary as contexts, relationships, and behaviors change, but that their overall levels of sexual desire and attraction generally do not change.

Sexual Orientation Identity Development

Models of sexual identity *development* may provide an additional perspective regarding the nature and variety of sexual orientation identities over time. In her groundbreaking work, Cass (1979) set the foundation for much of the theory building and exploratory research on the sexual identity of gay men and lesbians (e.g., Troiden, 1988, 1993). In this work, Cass described a multi-stage process from confusion to identity synthesis where the individual addresses the impact of stigma while passing through milestones of identity awareness and formation. This work has been more recently considered descriptive of the

coming out process for sexual minority individuals rather than as a model of identity development (e.g., McCarn & Fassinger, 1996). That is, the model may only consider one aspect of sexual identity development—acceptance and disclosure of one’s sexual orientation identity as gay or lesbian.

Although they are too numerous to fully review here, there has been a proliferation of models intended to describe lesbian and gay identity development. Readers are referred to Reynolds and Hanjorgiris (2000) and Savin-Williams (2005, Chapter 28, this volume) for a thorough review and critique of existing models. These critiques note that past gay and lesbian identity development models have often neglected individual differences in race, ethnicity, age, and socioeconomic class (Savin-Williams, 2005, this volume). Savin-Williams (Chapter 28, this volume) also discusses the previously noted problems of the *gay–straight binary* inherent in many of these models (see also Moradi, Mohr, et al., 2009, for more on this discussion). Specifically, these models meet their intended aim to delineate identity development for specific groups but are limited in their generalizability to other identities (e.g., bisexuality, heterosexuality) and to description of sexual identity development *across* groups.

Building on existing sexual minority identity formation models, Fassinger and colleagues (Fassinger & Miller, 1996; McCarn & Fassinger, 1996) produced arguably the most sophisticated models of lesbian and gay identity development. Their models include four phases of sexual identity development (awareness, exploration, deepening/commitment, and internalization/synthesis). The Fassinger et al. models are distinct in its conceptualization of phases of both individual and group membership identity. Within the awareness phase, at the individual level, one recognizes being different, and at the group level, one acknowledges that there are different possible sexual orientations. This recognition and acknowledgement leads to the next phase, exploration, wherein exploration of same-sex attractions occurs at the individual level and exploration of one’s position

in the lesbian and gay community begins at the group level. Through this exploration, the deepening/commitment phase occurs—the crystallization of a gay or lesbian sexual identity at the individual level and personal involvement in the lesbian and gay community at the group level. The final phase is internalization/synthesis. Within this final stage, a gay or lesbian identity is integrated into one's general self-concept at the individual level and across contexts (e.g., home, work, neighborhood) at the group level. Importantly, the individual and group phases do not necessarily occur in parallel fashion, and an individual could experience concordant or non-concordant phases of individual and group identity. For instance, a person could commit to a lesbian or gay identity at the individual level (e.g., have a same sex partner), but still be at an earlier stage at the group level (i.e., not have identified self to others as lesbian or gay, not engaged in lesbian and gay community). Two quantitative measures of lesbian and gay identity development have been developed to assess each status of the models: the Gay Identity Scale (Fassinger, 1997) and the Lesbian Identity Scale (Fassinger & McCarn, 1997).

Although the Fassinger and Miller (1996) and McCarn and Fassinger (1996) models are a clear advance over earlier lesbian and gay identity models, there are some limitations in the Fassinger models that require attention. In particular, one must identify as gay or lesbian to complete the instruments associated with the models. As a result, research using these instruments is likely to sample only from participants who identify as gay or lesbian and who are in the deepening/commitment or internalization/synthesis statuses of sexual identity development (see Savin-Williams, Chapter 28, this volume).

We contend that some of the limitations of past sexual identity development models can be addressed through a unifying, generalizable sexual identity development theory and accompanying instrumentation. For instance, a sexual identity development measure that does not categorize participants into sexual orientation identity categories (or ask participants to do so) at recruitment has the advantage of capturing participation

from gay, lesbian, bisexual, or other participants who, on the basis of sexual orientation identity or commitment to sexual identity, might not otherwise volunteer for research exclusively related to lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) identities (see Worthington, Navarro, Savoy, & Hampton, 2008). A universal model of sexual identity is also applicable to heterosexual individuals, who may not go through the stages identified by Fassinger and colleagues. Thus, a more global conceptualization of sexual identity broadens the scope of measurement and can improve empirical investigations of sexual identity.

Bisexual identity. Although there may be some overlap in the experiences of the coming out process and identity development for lesbians, gay men, and bisexual men and women, bisexuality has been identified as a unique and often misunderstood phenomenon (Klein, 1993). Kinsey et al. (1948) long ago advanced the notion that bisexuality was much more common than previously expected. In their seminal research on bisexuality, Weinberg, Williams, and Pryor (1994) suggested that “becoming bisexual involves the rejection of not one but two recognized categories of sexual identity” (p. 26). They described a stagewise model of bisexual identity development that includes initial confusion, finding and applying the label, settling into the identity, and continued uncertainty. They emphasize that a substantial amount of bisexual identity development involves confusion, exploration, and uncertainty. Nevertheless, although larger proportions of their bisexual research participants expressed ongoing and past uncertainty about self-identification compared to heterosexuals, lesbians, and gay men, the vast majority of bisexuals expressed comfort and certainty with their bisexual identity.

Similar to Weinrich and Klein (2003) and to the differential developmental trajectories framework posited by Savin-Williams (Chapter 28, this volume), empirical studies by Weinberg et al. (1994) have highlighted within-group differences among bisexuals by identifying several different “types” of bisexuality, including the pure, mid, heterosexual leaning, homosexual leaning, and varied types. This research demonstrates several

important aspects of bisexuality that counteract stereotypes: (a) bisexuality is a unique and legitimate identity; (b) substantial external pressures to conform to the gay–straight dichotomy may result in considerable confusion, exploration, and uncertainty; and (c) there are important within-group differences among bisexual individuals that have critical influences on sexual identity development (see also Worthington & Reynolds, 2009).

Heterosexual identity. Heterosexual identity development is a relatively new and understudied area of sexual identity theory and research (Ellis & Mitchell, 2000). One of the first studies of heterosexual identity applied Marcia's identity development theory (see Kroger & Marcia, Chapter 2, this volume) within an exploratory qualitative investigation of how undergraduate students' heterosexual sexual identities formed (Eliason, 1995; see Savin-Williams, Chapter 28, this volume). Although the study was conducted with a small number of participants ($n = 26$), Eliason determined that the largest proportion of her participants exhibited identity *foreclosure*. Another large percentage of students were categorized in identity *diffusion*, primarily because they expressed confusion about the definition of sexual identity. Eliason found gender differences among the small number of participants who were categorized as identity *achieved*. Whereas the men appeared to commit to heterosexuality based primarily on a rejection of gay identity, the women appeared to be more open to other alternatives at a later point. Similarly, all participants categorized as identity *moratorium* were women, with no men categorized into this status.

Sullivan (1998) applied concepts commonly associated with racial identity development (i.e., Hardiman & Jackson, 1992) to the identity development process of both LGB and heterosexual college students. She described the development of heterosexual identities within five stepwise stages (*naïveté*, *acceptance*, *resistance*, *redefinition*, and *internalization*) shaped by an atmosphere of homophobia and heterosexism. No research, to our knowledge, has examined the validity of the Sullivan model. Potential questions for future empirical research concerning

the Sullivan model include the following: what developmental events lead a heterosexual person to examine her or his sexual identity with an appreciation of sexual minorities in society (the *resistance* stage)? And how might heterosexual persons be distributed across these categories?

Mohr (2002) introduced a model of adult heterosexual identity in an effort to conceptualize heterosexual therapists' barriers to and facilitators of effective practice with LGB clients. Like the Sullivan model, no empirical studies to our knowledge have examined the Mohr model. Nevertheless, it potentially contributes to our limited theoretical base concerning heterosexual identity. Mohr argues that therapists' ineffective practice with LGB clients can be understood as a manifestation of efforts by therapists to develop, maintain, and express heterosexual identities in ways that contribute to a positive and coherent sense of self, although these efforts are detrimental to the therapy process. Mohr's model describes heterosexual identity as a result of the interaction between individuals' sexual orientation schemas or *working models* and their core motivations to fulfill basic needs for social acceptance and psychological consistency. This entirely theoretical model also describes the importance of social context (e.g., work, home, community) and multiple identities (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender) in processes related to heterosexual identity.

Another model of heterosexual identity development was advanced by Worthington et al. (2002), who built on the earlier work of McCarn and Fassinger (1996). A unique feature of this model relative to the previously described models is that it includes sexual orientation as one component of heterosexual individuals' broader sexual identity. This heterosexual identity development model is the foundation for the unifying model proposed later in the present chapter. In the Worthington et al. (2002) heterosexual identity model, sexual orientation identity was conceptualized as one of six dimensions of the larger construct of individual sexual identity: (a) *perceived sexual needs*, (b) *preferred sexual activities*, (c) *preferred characteristics of sexual partners*, (d) *sexual values*, (e) *recognition and identification*

of sexual orientation, and (f) *preferred modes of sexual expression*. Multiple interrelated biopsychosocial factors (e.g., biological, microsocial, gender, cultural, religious, and systemic) were posited as influencing an individual's progression through five heterosexual identity development statuses. Although a complete presentation of the heterosexual identity model is beyond the scope of this chapter, we briefly review the original tenets below because they also represent theorized determinants of sexual identity development in the unifying sexual identity model proposed later in the chapter.

Biological determinants of sexual identity were considered in the heterosexual model because many biological influences (e.g., amino acids, hormonal variations, genetic familiarity, molecular genetics, prenatal sex hormones, prenatal maternal stress, functional cerebral asymmetry, neuroanatomical sex differences, sibling sex ratio and birth order, temperament, and physical attractiveness) have been proposed to influence sexual identity. Although these biological factors are posited to operate, empirical evidence supporting their role is limited (Zucker & Bradley, 1995). In addition to biological factors, microsocial influences (Bronfenbrenner, 1977) stemming from one's immediate relationships with family, peers, coworkers, neighbors, and others also were included in the initial model because gender roles, sexual knowledge, sexual attitudes/values, and some sexual behaviors are often learned within microsocial contexts (e.g., peer group, classmates, family). In addition, heterosexual identity was conceptualized as dependent and concomitant to gender identity development processes because a person's biological sex triggers a range of social norms for gender characteristics and behaviors, including sexual identity. For instance, as soon as a newborn baby enters the world, her or his biological sex is emphasized (e.g., through the colors of her/his bedroom and her/his clothes and toys). In turn, gender characteristics based on societal and cultural norms (often stereotypically masculine and feminine) are attributed to the individual (Gilbert & Scher, 1999). The individual then internalizes societal constructions of gender

and acts according to these internalized norms in her or his interpersonal interactions (West & Zimmerman, 1987). An important way in which one internalizes societal constructions of gender and acts according to these internalized norms is through enacting a heterosexual identity. That is, gender role prescriptions for women include being sexually oriented toward men and gender role prescriptions for men include being sexually oriented toward women. Related to this notion is evidence that heterosexual self-presentation is an important societal norm for masculinity (Mahalik et al., 2003; Parent & Moradi, 2009), and aspects of sexual identity such as sexual fidelity and relational orientation are important societal norms for femininity (Mahalik et al., 2005; Parent & Moradi, 2010). Furthermore, gender role traditionality is fairly consistently correlated with prejudicial attitudes toward non-heterosexual groups (e.g., Goodman & Moradi, 2008).

Cultural context was also theorized as a critical influence on heterosexual identity development. Contexts such as family (see Scabini & Manzi, Chapter 23, this volume), community, cultural norms, and oppression may facilitate or inhibit an individual's affectional preferences and sexual behaviors, thereby affecting her or his sexual identity development. Furthermore, because many religions regulate sexual behavior among their members and instruct specific values and moral convictions regarding sexuality, religious orientation is theorized to shape sexual identity development, particularly the statuses of sexual identity exploration and commitment. Related research demonstrates that sexual values are associated with religious orientation (Davidson, Darling, & Norton, 1995; Robinson & Calhoun, 1982; Tozer & Hayes, 2004) and that homonegativity correlates with religiosity (e.g., Herek & Capitanio, 1996; Johnson, Brems, & Alford-Keating, 1997; Worthington, Dillon, & Becker-Schutte, 2005). Finally, because systemic homonegativity, sexual prejudice, and privilege are so pervasive at both macro- and micro-levels of society (Levitt et al., 2009; Rostosky, Riggle, Horne, & Miller, 2009), these forces are hypothesized to influence sexual identity development.

We describe these influences more specifically in the next sections of the chapter.

Although the McCarn and Fassinger (1996) model aims to describe the sexual identity development process of sexual minority individuals, and whereas the Worthington et al. (2002) model intends to describe this process for heterosexual individuals, these two conceptual models contain quite similar features. They propose similar processes of identity development (e.g., both models reflect the processes of *exploration*, *commitment*, and *synthesis/integration*), consider individual as well as group identity, and account for multiple dimensions of—and influences on—sexual identity development. Bieschke (2002) suggested that the Worthington et al. model may serve as a unifying model of sexual identity development. Accordingly, the next section of this chapter presents a new unifying model of sexual identity development. This newer model represents an updated version of the Worthington et al. (2002) model and attempts to integrate research on correlates of sexual identity and theories of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and heterosexual identity development into one inclusive working model.

A Unifying Model of Sexual Identity Development

We define *sexual identity development* as the individual and social processes by which persons acknowledge and define their sexual needs, values, sexual orientation, preferences for sexual activities, modes of sexual expression, and characteristics of sexual partners. We add to this definition the assumption that sexual identity development entails an understanding (implicit or explicit) of one's membership in either a privileged dominant group (heterosexual) or a marginalized, minority group (gay, lesbian, or bisexual identity), with a corresponding set of attitudes, beliefs, and values with respect to members of other sexual identity groups.

Similar to the Worthington et al. (2002) heterosexual identity model and McCarn and Fassinger (1996) lesbian and gay identity development model, the unifying model proposed here describes two parallel, reciprocal developmental determinants: (a) an individual sexual identity development process and (b) a social identity process (see Fig. 27.1). These two processes are

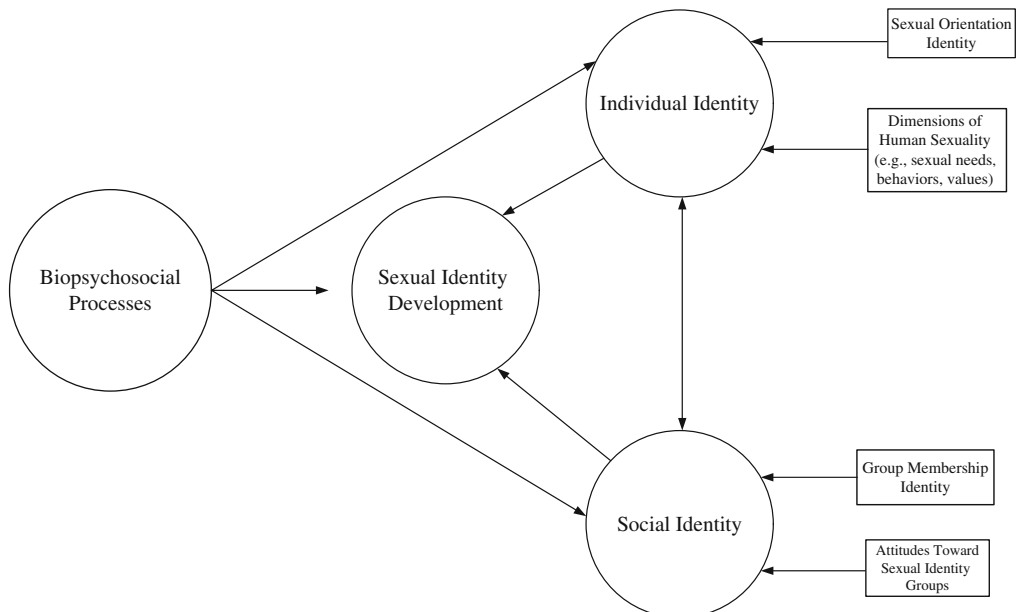


Fig. 27.1 Determinants of sexual identity development

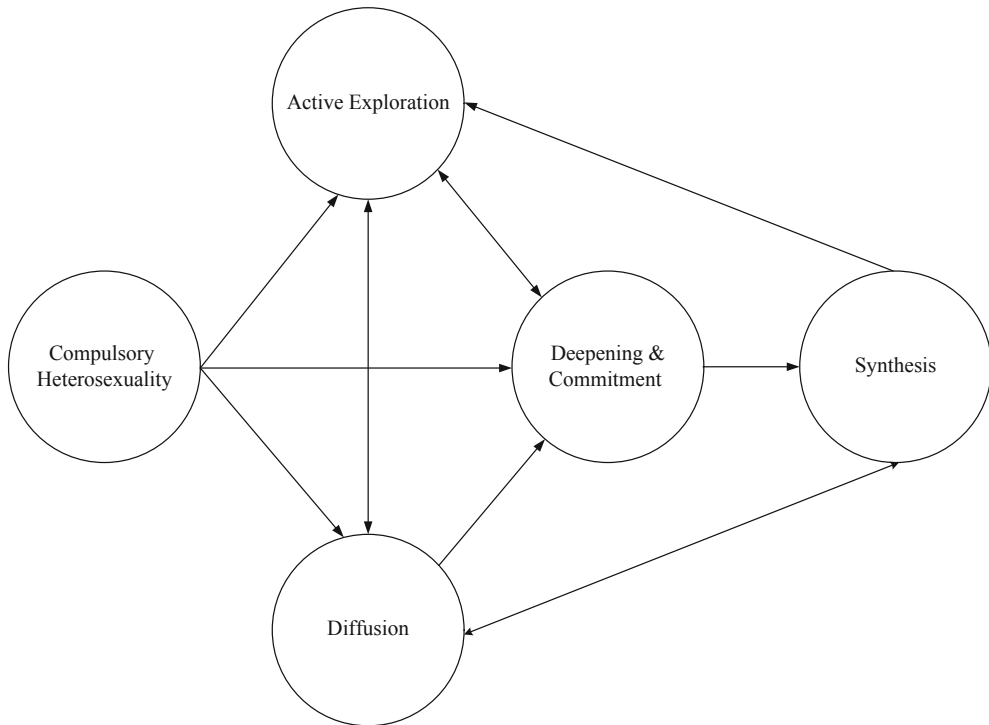


Fig. 27.2 Processes of sexual identity development

posited to occur within five discernible sexual identity development statuses—described in the next section of the chapter (see Fig. 27.2): (a) compulsory heterosexuality [a term first proposed by Rich (1980) and more recently adopted by Mohr (2002)], (b) active exploration, (c) diffusion, (d) deepening and commitment, and (e) synthesis. Although the unifying model represents an attempt to describe developmental phenomena, we emphasize that there are opportunities for circularity and revisiting of statuses throughout the lifespan for a given individual. Thus, points in the model should be thought of as non-linear, flexible, and fluid descriptions of statuses through which people may pass as they develop their sexual identity over the lifespan. As can be seen in Fig. 27.2, which illustrates the hypothesized processes underlying sexual identity development, there are many different trajectories and outcomes of sexual identity development.

As described earlier in the chapter, individual sexual identity includes, but is not limited to,

sexual orientation identity. As in the heterosexual identity model, sexual identity in the universal model is understood as a multi-dimensional construct that includes sexual orientation identity and numerous other domains of human sexuality (e.g., sexual needs, sexual values, preferred sexual activities, preferred characteristics of sexual partners, preferred modes of sexual expression) (see Fig. 27.1). The social identity process involves group membership identity, or the recognition of oneself as a member of a group of individuals with similar sexual identities, and attitudes toward other sexual identity groups (see Ashmore, Deaux, & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004, for more on group membership identity theory). It is important to note that the recognition of oneself as a member of a group of persons with similar *sexual identities* differs from the recognition of one's *sexual orientation identity*. The former is a broader group membership identification which includes both sexual orientation identity and other salient

aspects of human sexuality. For instance, a person could identify as heterosexual (a sexual orientation identity), while also considering oneself as a member of other sexuality-related social groups [e.g., celibates (Abbott, 1999), swingers (de Visser & McDonald, 2007), nudists (Story, 1987), voyeurs (Rye & Meaney, 2007), exhibitionists (Långström & Seto, 2006), practitioners of sadomasochism (Moser & Klienplatz, 2006)]. We expect that dimensions of the larger construct of individual sexual identity evolve and interact with the processes of group membership identity and attitudes toward sexual identity groups (See Fig. 27.1). For example, an individual who has (a) negative attitudes toward sexual minority individuals and (b) a group membership identity grounded in societal heterosexism may not want to engage in sexual activities that involve homoerotic taboos.

Regardless of whether a person is sexually active or celibate, sexual identity development may occur on both conscious and unconscious levels throughout all stages of the model. For instance, exploration can involve cognitive or behavioral activities (or both) and is not limited to behavioral experimentation. Furthermore, as suggested by identity status literature (e.g., Pastorino, Dunham, Kidwell, Bacho, & Lamborn, 1997), we expect that persons experience different sexual identity statuses (and related dimensions) at different times due to individual differences in developmental context. Thus, the model allows for many different individual trajectories and outcomes of identity development.

Statues of Sexual Identity Development in the Unified Model

Compulsory heterosexuality. The title of this status is based on the term coined by Rich (1980) and applied by Mohr (2002) to describe the presumption across societal systems that (a) heterosexuality is normal and universal and (b) women and men are innately attracted to each other emotionally and sexually. Compulsory heterosexuality refers to individuals of any sexual

orientation who accept and adopt the compulsory heterosexuality as a sexual orientation identity that is institutionalized and required by socialization in many cultures. Compulsory heterosexuality also reflects microsocial (e.g., familial) and macrosocial (e.g., societal) mandates for “appropriate” gender roles and sexual behavior and/or avoidance of sexual self-exploration, which may preempt sexual exploration. Because of societal assumptions about normative development, most people are likely to experience very little conscious thought about their adoption of compulsory heterosexuality. People exhibiting the compulsory heterosexuality identity status can be of any age. For example, prepubescent boys and girls may not have had much opportunity to consider their sexuality at a conscious level. Similarly, many adults may never have considered any alternatives to heterosexuality.

Because heterosexuality is so strongly circumscribed in most cultures, compulsory heterosexuality is likely to be the starting point for most individuals, regardless of whether they later self-identify as heterosexual or as a sexual minority. As a result, this status represents an externally imposed identity rather than a self-ascribed identity, even when an individual identifies outwardly as heterosexual. This status closely resembles the foreclosed identity status in Marcia’s model of identity development (see Kroger & Marcia, Chapter 2, this volume). Movement out of compulsory heterosexuality is likely to be permanent because entry into one of the other statuses ultimately precludes the type of naive commitment to sexual identity characteristic of this status (see the *Deepening and commitment* status sub-section of the chapter for our descriptions of two related sub-statuses of *Deepening and commitment*—*committed heterosexuality* and *committed compulsory heterosexuality*).

In terms of group membership identity, individuals of any sexual orientation in compulsory heterosexuality tend to operate within culturally prescribed norms for heterosexist assumptions about normative behavior on the part of others. Concrete, all-or-nothing thinking tends to characterize conceptions of different sexual identity groups. For instance,

attitudes toward heterosexuals are “group appreciating” (cf. Atkinson, Morten, & Sue, 1995). The presumption that heterosexuality is normal and good is accepted without question. Awareness that heterosexuals are a privileged, dominant majority group is either denied or repressed from awareness or accepted without question as normal, understandable, and justifiable. Attitudes toward sexual minority individuals are “group depreciating” among individuals in the compulsory heterosexuality status (cf. Atkinson et al., 1995). People in this status are likely to assume that everyone in their microsocial contexts (e.g., familial, work, and other immediate social circles) is heterosexual. As such, sexual minority individuals are understood only in abstract, stereotypic terms. For individuals who have same-sex or other-sex sexual orientations, the nature of this status suggests that attitudes toward sexual minority individuals are likely to be at the condemnation end of Herek’s (1984) *condemnation—tolerance* continuum, reflecting prejudice toward same-sex sexual orientation and sexual minority individuals (Herek, Gillis, & Cogan, 2009).

Active exploration. Purposeful exploration, evaluation, or experimentation of one’s sexual needs, values, orientation and/or preferences for activities, partner characteristics, or modes of sexual expression are typical of the active exploration status. Active exploration of individual sexual identity is distinguished from naive behavioral experimentation in three important ways that have implications for other statuses in the model. First, exploration can be cognitive or behavioral. Although there may be a bias toward behavioral sexual exploration in modern society, cognitive forms of exploration (e.g., fantasy) are possible as well and may be the preferred form of exploration among individuals; particularly those who engage in abstinence-oriented lifestyles. Second, active exploration is purposeful and usually tends to be goal directed, such as purposefully experimenting (in thought or action) with different modes of sexual expression, different characteristics of sexual partners, and/or sexual acts. Third, the socially mandated aspects of heterosexuality—those that

characterize compulsory heterosexuality—are thought to be questioned or abandoned by individuals of any sexual orientation when active exploration occurs. However, contextual influences can constrain or promote sexual identity exploration within socially acceptable boundaries. For example, this occurs when a person is raised in a family, culture, or religion that instructs that acceptable sexual partners are only persons of the same race, different gender, similar age, same socioeconomic status, and same religion. Although these constraints vary from person to person depending on a number of dimensions of social context (e.g., gender, culture, age, religious orientation), active exploration occurs when the individual engages in cognitive or behavioral exploration of individual sexual identities beyond that which is socially mandated within one’s social context. For instance, even if one is raised in the above-described context, active exploration regarding preferred characteristics of a sexual partner for some might entail the development of sexual or romantic relationships with people having different types of physical, social, economic, or spiritual characteristics. For others, active exploration might entail such things as experimenting with different types of sexual activities, transcending gender roles through adoption of gender atypical modes of sexual expression, engaging in sex with more than one partner (e.g., group sex), reading books about sex, and so on. As a result, active exploration could be characterized very differently depending on contextual factors. Furthermore, there is a wide range of levels of exploration (e.g., type, depth, and duration of exploration). Thus, our notion of active exploration is inclusive and flexible enough to account for between and within-group differences exhibited by same-sex- and other-sex-oriented individuals, as suggested by Savin-Williams’ (Chapter 28, this volume) differential developmental trajectories perspective on sexual identity development.

Active exploration will most typically coincide with biological maturation (e.g., physical capacity), but could occur at nearly any point during the course of the lifespan. This status closely resembles Marcia’s (Kroger & Marcia,

Chapter 2, this volume) moratorium status, which is characterized by a suspension of commitment in favor of active exploration. Due to the powerful impact of systemic homonegativity and sexual prejudice, many heterosexually identified individuals who enter this status are likely to primarily explore needs, values, and preferences for activities, partner characteristics (with the exception of gender), and modes of sexual expression—but they will likely not explore sexual orientation identity alternatives.

Sexual minority individuals are more likely to explore options in all areas of their sexual identities. Entry into the active exploration status for sexual minority individuals may be prompted by awareness of homoerotic feelings, behaviors, and exploration (Fassinger & Miller, 1996). These experiences may lead to re-labeling of sexual orientation identity (e.g., from heterosexual to lesbian, gay, or bisexual) during active exploration. Although some heterosexuals in this status may also consciously experiment with symbolic (fantasy) or real sexual activities with same-sex partners, most are expected to identify as “straight” to preserve the privileged status associated with it. Others may reflect on the possibility that their compulsory heterosexual orientation identity does not fit them and may consider or adopt another sexual orientation identity (e.g., gay, lesbian, bisexual, queer). We conceptualized only two pathways out of active commitment: (a) into deepening and commitment following active exploration or (b) into diffusion. This process is described in subsequent sections of the chapter.

The group membership identity process is hypothesized to be more salient for individuals in the active exploration status in comparison to the compulsory heterosexuality status. Recognition of same-sex attractions might result in (a) questioning the privileged status of heterosexuality in society, (b) maintaining negative attitudes toward oneself and toward sexual minority individuals (Szymanski, Kashubeck-West, & Meyer, 2008), or (c) exploring one’s own attitudes toward sexual minorities as a group, as well as the possibility of membership in that group (Fassinger & Miller, 1996). When a person recognizes her or his

membership in a dominant heterosexual group, such recognition might result in (a) questioning the justice of the privileged heterosexual majority position or (b) further asserting the privileges of the heterosexual majority. In active exploration, the interaction of individual and social processes of identity development is thought to become considerably intertwined. For example, a willingness to violate cultural sanctions against sexual self-exploration may result in recognition and understanding of ordinate–subordinate group dynamics and majority group privilege by individuals of any sexual orientation identity. As such, individuals of any sexual orientation identity may be aware of and associate with persons from different sexual minority groups more often than persons in the compulsory heterosexuality status.

Identifying as heterosexual (a privileged group membership status) in active exploration can sometimes be reserved as a visible orientation (i.e., passing as straight) by individuals of any sexual orientation. Homoerotic thoughts, feelings, and behaviors can be dismissed as transient, concealed, and denigrated; or may be accepted as congruent with one’s of sexual, romantic, and affectional arousal and desire. Many individuals in active exploration can overtly or secretly experiment with behaviors that involve more than one partner and/or one or more same-sex partners without ever identifying with a sexual orientation identity minority group (Diamond, 2008; McConaghy et al., 1994; Worthington & Reynolds, 2009). Thus, sexual behaviors and sexual orientation identity can be conveniently separated by some. For instance, this discrepancy could occur when persons identify as heterosexual to serve an “ego preservation” function, protecting individuals with heterosexist and self-stigmatizing beliefs from threatening thoughts and feelings (Moradi, van den Berg, & Epting, 2006). Earlier related research (Herek, 1984) also suggests that expressing negative attitudes toward lesbian and gay individuals may serve as an expression of positive self-concept for the individual (e.g., negative attitudes that are part of one’s religious identity; Mohr, 2002). Not surprisingly, separation of gayness from one’s

self-concept has been identified as a component of internalized homophobia as reported by self-identified lesbian and gay adults (Moradi, van den Berg, & Epting, 2009). Alternatively, as noted above, some individuals in active exploration may more openly associate with (and come to identify with) LGB individuals and groups through friendship patterns, sexual exploration, and other types of affiliation. This process is thought to be more likely for persons who either (a) are less restricted by heterosexist contextual influences (e.g., growing up in an environment in which sexual diversity is normative, acceptable, and even desirable; Savin-Williams, 2005, this volume), or (b) who demonstrate resilience against such constraints (Sanders & Kroll, 2000).

Attitudes toward other sexual orientation identity groups are likely to vary considerably both within and between individuals in the active exploration status. However, we posit that an orientation toward active self-exploration is likely to correspond with more positive attitudes toward sexual minority individuals and with less self-stigma compared to compulsory heterosexuality. This hypothesis is partially supported by our earlier work, which found that exploration was positively associated with LGB-affirmative attitudes and negatively related to homonegativity among one sample of heterosexual adults (Worthington et al., 2005) and another sample of individuals from heterosexual, gay, lesbian, and bisexual sexual orientation identity groups (Worthington & Reynolds, 2009). In another study, we found that exploration was related to psychotherapists' self-efficacy to affirmatively work with sexual minority clients (Dillon, Worthington, Soth-McNett, & Schwartz, 2008).

Diffusion. Diffusion has been defined as the absence of commitment and of systematic exploration (Marcia, 1987). It is one of the more complex identity statuses. Identity literature describes two types of diffusion—*diffused diffusion* and *carefree diffusion* (Luyckx, Goossens, Soenens, Beyers, & Vansteenkiste, 2005; Luyckx et al., 2008; Marcia, 1976, 1989). The carefree diffusion status reflects someone who is unconcerned and content with not having strong commitments or having actively explored. In fact, carefree

diffusion does not always include the maladjustment commonly thought to accompany it (Luyckx et al., 2005, 2008). Thus, in terms of sexual identity development, people exhibiting carefree diffusion are similarly expected to indicate low levels of commitment or exploration, and apathy regarding commitment and exploration (e.g., "I don't care"). Any sexual identity-related exploration by carefree diffusers is expected to appear to be a random willingness to try or be almost anything related to sexual identity without distress. The diffused diffusion status has been suggested to reflect an underlying uncertainty or insecurity and is more likely to be distressed by lack of commitments (Archer & Waterman, 1990; Luyckx et al., 2005, 2008).

Whether due to insecure apathy or a carefree lack of commitment, individuals in diffusion may be more likely to ignore or reject social and cultural prescriptions for sexual values, behavior, and identity. In some cases, diffusion may be difficult to distinguish from active exploration, because the infrequent and random experimentation (in thought or action) characteristic of this status might resemble active exploration. However, diffusion typically lacks goal-directed intentionality—one of the criteria necessary for active exploration to occur (Soenens & Vansteenkiste, Chapter 17, this volume). Although carefree diffusion may be characterized by a lack of distress, it is important to note that diffusion typically coincides with a number of forms of psychological distress (Schwartz, Zamboanga, Weisskirch, & Rodriguez, 2009). Thus, we posit that people experiencing diffusion are likely to have identity confusion in other aspects of their lives. They may also express a lack of self-awareness about their underlying motives or intentions that might characterize people in other statuses (see Soenens & Vansteenkiste, Chapter 17, this volume, Luyckx, Schwartz, Goossens, Beyers, & Missotten, Chapter 4, this volume).

Because emerging research suggests that individuals in diffusion can transition into either foreclosure or moratorium (Meeus, van de Schoot, Keijsers, Schwartz, & Branje, 2010), pathways out of diffusion could include returning to

compulsory heterosexuality or progressing into active exploration, which in some cases may be facilitated through professional psychological services or other interventions to address potential psychological distress (Schwartz et al., 2009). We expect that individuals are vulnerable to enter this status from any of the other identity statuses—but most likely compulsory heterosexuality or active exploration—while experiencing high levels of distress (e.g., distress resulting from stigma and/or harassment associated with sexual exploration or taboo behaviors). Research is needed to examine this assumption and to identify types of distress that could potentially influence entry into diffusion. Furthermore, given that individuals in more integrated levels of identity are less likely to regress into diffusion (Meeus et al., 2010), we assume a similar dynamic in sexual identity.

Deepening and commitment. Individuals of any sexual orientation identity in the deepening and commitment status exhibit a movement toward greater commitment to their identified sexual needs, values, sexual orientation and/or preferences for activities, partner characteristics, and modes of sexual expression. This status most closely resembles Marcia's achieved identity status (Marcia, 1987; see Kroger & Marcia, Chapter 2, this volume).

A critical distinction between deepening and commitment and Marcia's achieved identity status is that deepening and commitment in our model is hypothesized to be possible (or even likely) without the individual's engaging in active exploration. We posit that moving to deepening/commitment of lesbian, gay, bisexual persons almost always involve active exploration, whereas movement to deepening/commitment of heterosexual identity may or may not involve active exploration. Some individuals may move directly from compulsory heterosexuality into deepening and commitment as a function of maturational changes in life experiences, cognitions, and behaviors that do not meet the criteria for active exploration. For instance, heterosexual individuals entering deepening and commitment may be more likely to transition into

this status from compulsory heterosexuality than from active exploration. For such individuals, the deepening and commitment that occurs during this status is contained within their compulsory heterosexuality. As such, their compulsory heterosexuality becomes a *committed compulsory heterosexuality* that is characterized by a more profound commitment to compulsory heterosexuality.

It is also possible that heterosexuals could move from compulsory heterosexuality to deepening and commitment via active exploration. We expect such individuals to differ from individuals in committed compulsory heterosexuality in several ways. Individuals moving into this status from active exploration may be more likely to question the presumption that heterosexuality is the only normal and appropriate sexual orientation identity, and to question the need for the institutionalization of heterosexuality as the only sexual orientation identity through, for example, legislation banning same-sex marriages. In terms of group membership identity, individuals in deepening and commitment who commit to a heterosexual identity orientation after active exploration are expected to question heterosexist assumptions about normative behavior on the part of others. Heterosexist assumptions and attitudes (e.g., heterosexuality is normal and universal; women and men should only be attracted to each other emotionally and sexually) are expected to be maintained or strengthened among heterosexuals entering deepening and commitment from compulsory heterosexuality without active exploration (i.e., committed compulsory heterosexuality).

Deepening and commitment following active exploration is thought to be the most common identity development process for LGB individuals. The active inquiry into different sexual needs, values, orientation, and partner characteristics in active exploration is thought to yield a great amount of self-understanding and knowledge (McCarn & Fassinger, 1996; Riggle, Whitman, Olson, Rostosky, & Strong, 2008). This heightened sense of self-understanding is hypothesized to lead to greater levels of clarity and choices about one's sexuality. This process is also thought

to be linked to a greater level of acceptance than earlier described statuses, and more willingness to further examine one's overall sexual identity.

Attitudes toward heterosexuals may still be "group appreciating" (cf. Atkinson et al., 1995) on the part of individuals of any sexual orientation identity. Persons who have entered the deepening and commitment status are thought to deny that heterosexuals are a privileged, dominant majority group if they have engaged in active exploration. This is because the socially mandated aspects of heterosexuality—those that characterize compulsory heterosexuality—are thought to be questioned or abandoned by individuals when active exploration occurs. Both LGB persons in deepening and commitment and heterosexuals in deepening and commitment following active exploration are hypothesized to express less "group depreciating" attitudes toward sexual minority individuals compared to heterosexuals characterized by committed compulsory heterosexuality.

For sexual minority individuals and committed heterosexuals in this status, group membership identity processes and attitudes toward sexual orientation identity groups also begin to deepen and crystallize into conscious, coherent perspectives on dominant/non-dominant group relations, privilege or loss of privilege, and oppression or marginalization. This process of crystallization may take virtually any form along the continuum of attitudes toward sexual minority individuals as well as toward heterosexuals (the dominant group), from condemnation to tolerance to affirmation (Herek, 1984; Worthington et al., 2005). Based on general identity literature, we expect that individuals may move out of deepening and commitment via three pathways: (a) into synthesis (described below), (b) into active exploration, or (c) into diffusion (Stephen, Fraser, & Marcia, 1992; Meeus et al., 2010).

Synthesis. Potentially the most mature and adaptive status of sexual identity is characterized by a state of congruence between the individual and social identity processes of sexual identity development that were described earlier in the chapter (see also Fassinger & Miller, 1996). In the synthesis status, people come to an understanding of sexual identity that fulfills their self-definitions

and carries over to their attitudes and behaviors toward both LGB-identified and heterosexually identified individuals. Individual sexual identity, group membership identity, and attitudes toward dominant and marginalized sexual orientation identity groups merge into an overall sexual self-concept, which is conscious, congruent, and volitional (see Soenens & Vansteenkiste, Chapter 17, this volume). Other aspects of identity are likely to blend into the synthesis status—in the sense that intersecting identities (e.g., along lines of gender, race/ethnicity, religious orientation) will have a high degree of coherence and consistency in relation to sexual identity. Thus, we expect that a coherent sexual identity will correlate with coherence and consolidation within other types of identity.

We posit only one pathway into synthesis, through deepening and commitment. However, we hypothesize that synthesis may also require active exploration. Individuals who experience deepening and commitment directly from compulsory heterosexuality are not likely to demonstrate all of the qualities of synthesis. For instance, we hypothesize that more active exploration is associated with more affirmative and flexible thinking with respect to sexual diversity for sexual minority and heterosexual individuals (Worthington & Reynolds, 2009; Worthington et al., 2005). Thus, individuals in synthesis are likely to experience little or no self-stigma or internalized heterosexism/homophobia, to understand human sexuality as a continuous and nuanced—rather than all-or-nothing—phenomenon, and to be more affirmative toward LGB individuals. However, the difficulty of transitioning into synthesis does not preclude an individual from moving out of synthesis for one reason or another, which we hypothesize to occur via either active exploration or diffusion.

Preliminary Research Supporting a Unifying Model of Sexual Identity Development

Several empirical studies have informed the development of the unifying model. One study involved the development of a measure that

quantitatively assesses the statuses associated with sexual identity development (Worthington et al., 2008). The measure, called the *measure of sexual identity exploration and commitment* (MoSIEC), was designed to assess sexual identity statuses among individuals, regardless of sexual orientation or identity. Initial psychometric investigations yielded promising evidence of reliability and validity in national adult samples (Worthington & Reynolds, 2009; Worthington et al., 2008).

Similar to other literature that supports the measurement of identity status (Luyckx et al., 2005, 2008; Meeus et al., 2010), the MoSIEC yields four empirically derived dimensions: (a) *commitment*, (b) *exploration*, (c) *sexual orientation identity uncertainty*, and (d) *synthesis/integration*. The MoSIEC factor structure reflects constructs from Marcia's theory that describe two dimensions of exploration (i.e., exploration factor and sexual orientation identity uncertainty factor) and two commitment-related dimensions (i.e., commitment factor and synthesis/integration factor). The four factors also represent constructs from the unifying sexual identity development model: (a) active exploration indicated by the exploration factor, (b) compulsory heterosexuality and deepening and commitment represented by the commitment factor, and (c) synthesis characterized by the synthesis/integration factor.

The sexual orientation identity uncertainty factor reflects what Marcia referred to as *moratorium* (delay of commitment during exploration) or what recently has been termed *reconsideration of commitment* (the comparison of present commitments with possible alternatives because the current commitments are no longer satisfactory; Crocetti, Rubini, Luyckx, & Meeus, 2008). Construct validity for this factor has been demonstrated through its positive correlation with exploration and its negative correlations with commitment and synthesis. An analysis of patterns of between-groups differences on sexual orientation identity uncertainty indicated that participants who were bisexual, lesbian, or gay tended to endorse these items more strongly compared to those individuals who identified as

heterosexual (Worthington & Reynolds, 2009; Worthington et al., 2008).

Recent studies employing the MoSIEC have also supported the unified model. For instance, significant between-group differences in sexual identity development statuses have been found among self-identified sexual minority individuals (e.g., Worthington & Reynolds, 2009). For instance, "mostly straight" women differed from "exclusively straight" women, showing higher levels of identity exploration and uncertainty (and marginally lower levels of synthesis) than their exclusively straight counterparts. In addition, in support of the unified model, differences in sexual behaviors among participants in Thompson and Morgan (2008) did not necessarily constitute differences in sexual identity development status (mostly straight women shared similar levels of exploration, uncertainty, and synthesis with both bisexual and lesbian women although they reported different sexual behaviors). This finding specifically supports the notion advanced by the universal model that sexual behavior is only part of sexual identity.

As previously mentioned, the unifying model of sexual identity development hypothesizes that individuals who have engaged in active exploration are more likely to hold positive attitudes toward LGB individuals and less internalized heterosexism or self-stigma. As noted earlier, this hypothesis was partially supported by prior research using an earlier version of the MoSIEC (Worthington & Reynolds, 2009; Worthington et al., 2005). More specifically, these authors found that exploration and sexual orientation identity uncertainty were positively associated with LGB-affirmative attitudes (i.e., LGB civil rights, knowledge, and internalized affirmativeness) and that exploration was negatively related to homonegativity (i.e., religious conflict and hate) among self-identified heterosexuals. Future research is needed to explore whether (and how) internalized heterosexism and self-stigma (Herek et al., 2009; Moradi, van den Berg, et al., 2009; Szymanski et al., 2008) differ across self-identified lesbian, gay, and bisexual persons who range in endorsement of commitment, exploration, sexual orientation identity uncertainty, and

synthesis/integration dimensions. Worthington and Reynolds (2009) recently began this line of research in a study indicating within-group differences among bisexual men and women, gay men, and heterosexual women in terms of sexual identity development dimensions and LGB-related knowledge and attitudes.

The MoSIEC studies also report links of sexual identity dimensions with age, religiosity, sexual conservatism, and multiple aspects of sexual self-awareness (Worthington & Reynolds, 2009; Worthington et al., 2008). Age was positively linked with commitment and synthesis/integration. Individuals who were lower on religiosity and less sexually conservative appeared more likely to engage in exploration and exhibit uncertainty, whereas sexual assertiveness and sexual self-consciousness were associated with commitment, exploration, and synthesis/integration.

Future Research

The unifying sexual identity development model and the MoSIEC can be applied to a host of additional research questions and social issues. The various dimensions of sexual identity development are theorized to relate to a range of sexual behaviors and outcomes, including unintended pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, safer sex practices, sexual agency, and sexual risk behaviors. Research is needed to examine these hypothesized links with the goal of understanding and impacting these behaviors. Furthermore, the unifying model and measure could be useful in examining the relations between sexual identity statuses and sexual health awareness and help seeking. Future research might also investigate whether educational and psychological interventions targeting various social issues (e.g., risky sexual practices, antigay attitudes and behavior, and heterosexism and homonegativity) can be tailored according to aspects of sexual identity present in the target groups to increase the effectiveness of these strategies. An integrated sexual identity model can also facilitate research

integrating sexual identity with other types of identity, including racial/ethnic, gender, and religious/spiritual (among others). Ultimately, this model can be a starting point from which an extensive program of research on sexual identities can be produced.

Conclusion

The proposed unifying model of sexual identity development incorporates what has been learned from years of theory and research concerning sexuality, LGB and heterosexual identity development, attitudes toward sexual minority individuals, and the meaning of ordinate and subordinate group membership. We have attempted to describe the intersection of various contextual factors that influence the individual and social processes underlying sexual identity development. The unifying model is innovative in its applicability across sexual orientation identities, as well as its inclusion of a wide range of dimensions of sexual identity and possible developmental trajectories. We hope this innovation allows researchers, educators, and practitioners to develop interventions and conduct investigations on broader questions about human sexuality without being constrained to gay-straight dichotomies of sexual orientation and the related methodological limitations that have characterized sexual identity theory and research in the past.

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Ritch C. Savin-Williams

Abstract

Sexual identity is the name and meaning individuals assign to themselves based on the most salient sexual aspects of their life – such as sexual attractions, fantasies, desires, and behaviors. Sexual identities usually fall within existing social categories, such as straight, bisexual, or lesbian/gay, and are historically and culturally specific. Youth in today’s cohort have expanded the list of sexual identities, moving beyond traditional notions of a gay, bisexual, or heterosexual orientation to include gender identity and partner characteristics. Social scientists from a variety of disciplines have proposed models of sexual identity. In this chapter, the most frequently cited and tested sexual identity model, Cass’s homosexual identity formation model, is evaluated. An alternative perspective, differential developmental trajectories, has recently been proposed that focuses on developmental milestones that contribute to a sexual identity. Besides recognizing the inherent uniqueness of every life, this perspective proposes that in many developmental processes, sexual-minority youth are similar to all other adolescents of their sex, ethnicity, class, and cohort. Also discussed are the possibility of a “straight sexual identity” and two major problems with sexual identity models – the instability of sexual identity over time and its occasional inconsistency with sexual behavior and attraction. The distinctive aspects of growing up lesbian or gay have greatly diminished as the current cohort of youth has increasingly accepted sexual diversity as normative, acceptable, and even desirable. Thus, the demise of sexual identity is forecast as youth of all sexualities are refusing and resisting sexual identity labels.

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This chapter is an update of my previous writings, particularly Savin-Williams, 2005, 2009, portions of which have been modified for the current chapter.

Sexual Identity, Sexual Orientation Label, Sexual Orientation

Sexual identity is the term an individual assigns to himself or herself based on the most salient sexual aspects of his or her life – such as sexual attractions, fantasies, desires, behaviors, and relationships. It gives meaning and significance

to the configuration of feelings, perceptions, and cognitions that an individual has about the various domains of sexuality in her or his life. When based on one's sexual orientation (see below), these sexual identities usually fall within existing social categories such as straight, bisexual, or lesbian/gay. The self-ascribed term may accurately reflect the totality of the individual's sexuality. Alternatively, it may give priority to some domains over others (e.g., sexual attractions over sexual behavior), or may consciously (or unconsciously) attempt to deceive the self or others about the nature of the individual's sexuality.

Furthermore, sexual identity is historically and culturally specific and can be altered over one's life course – or even from day to day. Many youth in today's cohort have expanded the list of sexual identities, often moving beyond traditional notions of sexual orientation. These may include elements of gender identity (transqueer dyke), politics (pomosexual – post-modern sexuality), partner characteristics (pansexual – not the genitalia of the person but her/his personality, for example), or idiosyncrasies (squiggly). Increasingly there is recognition that variations in sexual behavior may also become a sexual identity – slut, swinger, polyamorist, BDSM (i.e., bondage, discipline, dominance, submission, sadism, and masochism) practitioner, serial monogamist.

Sexual identity is frequently mistaken for or equated with *sexual orientation label* – sometimes referred to as sexual orientation identity. I use sexual orientation label rather than sexual orientation identity for two reasons. First, the term “label” reduces confusion with the more general concept of sexual identity. Second, I refrain from using the term “identity” with reference to sexual orientation because it seems too presumptuous to assume that individuals are doing anything other than labeling their sexual orientation when we ask them to describe, label, or identify their sexual orientation. Label is a more descriptive term; identity carries too much weight. Currently, most researchers use five sexual orientation labels: heterosexual, mostly heterosexual, bisexual, mostly homosexual, and homosexual.

For clarity, *sexual orientation* is a deeply rooted predisposition toward erotic or sexual fantasies, thoughts, affiliations, affection, or bonding with members of one's sex, the other sex, both sexes, or, perhaps, neither sex (asexuality). Sexual orientation label is thus the term applied to that predisposition. Although sexual identity and sexual orientation label are alterable, it is generally understood that sexual orientation is not because of its genetic and/or prenatal environmental genesis. Few individuals state they chose their sexual orientation; most recognize they can easily choose and un-choose a sexual identity. One's awareness of her or his sexual orientation may, however, be fluctuating and subject to greater information and familiarity with the various domains of sexuality – this may be particularly noteworthy during adolescence when sexuality is increasingly expressed through sexual behavior.

The distinctions among sexual identity, sexual orientation label, and sexual orientation are often conflated and are sources of considerable misunderstandings and debate. For example, a young woman could be sexually attracted primarily to other females, engage in sex with both sexes, and romantically fall in love with males. She might label her sexual orientation as mostly heterosexual and sexually identify as straight. A young man could be attracted to both sexes, engage in no sexual activity, and romantically fall in love with females. He might label his sexual orientation as bisexual and identify his sexuality as gay.

My focus in this chapter is on sexual identity, with multiple references to sexual orientation label, sexual orientation, and various aspects of sexuality. To make sense of sexual identity, social scientists from a variety of disciplines have proposed models of sexual identity and coming out (i.e., disclosure to others) development. In nearly all cases, however, sexual identity models have been devoted to sexual minorities and not to heterosexuals (one exception is Dillon, Worthington, & Moradi, [Chapter 27](#), this volume). In this chapter, I briefly review the most frequently cited and tested sexual identity model, Cass's (1979) homosexual identity formation (HIF) model, and evaluate the empirical

support it has garnered. A number of scholars have critiqued sexual identity models in general, and Cass's model in particular, and I add my own perspective on the value of these critiques. An alternative perspective, a differential developmental trajectory framework, is proposed which argues that, in their sexual development, sexual-minority youth are similar to all other adolescents. Thus, I briefly discuss the possibilities of a "straight sexual identity" and two major problems with sexual-minority sexual identity models – the instability of sexual identity over time and its inconsistency with two domains of sexual orientation – sexual behavior and attractions. Because the distinctive aspects of growing up as lesbian or gay have greatly diminished as the current cohort of youth has increasingly accepted sexual diversity as normative, acceptable, and even desirable, I forecast the demise of sexual identity because youth of all sexualities are refusing and resisting sexual identity labels. Evidence for this qualitative change in attitudes toward sexual minorities, and the consequences of this change, are summarized, resulting in the possible disappearance of the "gay teenager."

Sexual Identity Models

Naming one's sexuality as a means to achieve a personal and positive understanding to a life narrative is a relatively recent development. From the beginning of this endeavor, attempts to understand this process were enhanced by the construction of sexual identity models, but only for non-heterosexual (i.e., sexual-minority) youth. Heterosexual youth were not viewed as having a sexual identity. These theoretical proposals were initially and variously referred to as "coming out" or "sexual identity" (the terms were used interchangeably) models. These constructions charted the process by which a young adult moved from knowing that she/he was not heterosexual to identifying to her/himself and eventually (perhaps) to others as lesbian or gay, but rarely as bisexual (Savin-Williams, 2005). Attention to the identity aspect of human sexuality emanated not from early sexologists such as Kinsey (Kinsey,

Pomeroy, & Martin, 1948), who rather saw heterosexuality, bisexuality, and homosexuality as sexual behaviors/feelings rather than as an inherent characteristic of an individual, but from the theoretical and clinical writings of the 1960s and 1970s (Dank, 1971; Gagnon & Simon, 1973; Hooker, 1965; Warren, 1974; Weinberg, 1970). Identifying or coming out as homosexual implied the creation of a new cognitive category for individuals who came to recognize that they were not heterosexual and of a new social category for individuals who, by virtue of their public declarations, became an "outsider" (Dank, 1971). Thus, from the "invention of homosexuality" during the modern era, idealized sexual identity models of how one "becomes gay/lesbian" soon evolved. Neglected by nearly all of these writers were comparable concerns about how those who were not lesbian or gay became something else (e.g., heterosexual, unlabeled). For example, Malcolm (2008) argued that Cass's model does not address the experiences of individuals who engage in same-sex behavior but who are not proceeding toward a gay/lesbian identity.

Although elaborations on this identity process were based on various theoretical perspectives, most sexual identity models were derived from Erikson (1968). Commensurate with the prevailing view of his time, Erikson assumed a link between positive identity and heterosexuality: heterosexuality was an inevitable part of *healthy* identity development in adolescence and early adulthood – a stance for which he has received some criticism (Eliason, 1995; Gilligan, 1982; Moore & Rosenthal, 1993). According to Erikson, heterosexuality is merely a "natural" aspect of one's personal identity. Given this postulate, a *positive* personal identity coalescing around a perceived deviant sexual status was not initially seen as possible, certainly not by Erikson, who believed that a homosexual identity was a rebellion against parental values and an acceptance of "all those identifications and roles which, at critical stages of development, had been presented to them as most undesirable or dangerous and yet also as most real" (Erikson, 1968, p. 174). Homosexuality was a negative, desperate attempt to regain mastery and

equilibrium when routes toward positive identity were unachievable.

Sexual identity models were first proposed in the 1970s and have continued over time (Horowitz & Newcomb, 2001; Morris, 1997). The authors of these identity models have come from various professions, usually psychiatry, psychology, sociology, or social work, and have proposed theoretical perspectives (Cass, 1979; Coleman, 1982; Malyon, 1981; Troiden, 1979; Weinberg, 1978). Sometimes relying on qualitative data, but rarely on quantitative data, these scholars offered theoretical interpretations of the coming-out process, most of which evolved into developmental stage models. Adolescence and young adulthood were presumed to represent critical developmental times for tracing the transition from the feeling during late childhood that “something isn’t quite right” to the early adolescent recognition that “something” was same-sex desire, to middle adolescent sexual exploration, to late adolescent (however reluctantly) acceptance of a lesbian/gay identity, and to young adult commitment to, integration of, and pride with this identity. These theoretical notions are strongly reflected in research from an identity status perspective, with its focus on identity exploration and commitment (Kroger & Marcia, Chapter 2, this volume).

Cass’s Homosexual Identity Formation Model

Although more than two dozen experts have created what they assert to be *unique* models of sexual identity development, the six-stage model proposed by Cass (1979, 1984, 1990, 1996) has become, by near unanimous acclaim, the standard bearer of sexual identity models. Unlike the other models, Cass’s model has been continually refined and expanded since Cass first proposed it during her pre-doctoral days in the late 1970s. Indeed, it is the only one, to my knowledge, that has been subjected to empirical verification – including generating its own assessment tool, the Gay Identity Questionnaire (Brady & Busse,

1994), to test its hypothetical sequence of identity progression.

Despite claims by nearly all sexual identity models that they offer something unique and are not intended to apply to all individuals, most model constructions (including Cass) reify “master” narratives to explain how individuals shift from *thinking* gay, to *doing* gay, to *being* gay in such a way that “stages” are presented as occurring in a uniform, though not inevitable, fashion. To Cass, what young people are to avoid as developmentally detrimental is becoming dif-fused or foreclosed about one’s identity; testing one’s identity and advancing toward identity synthesis is to be encouraged as developmentally beneficial (McConnell, 1994). Briefly, the six stages are as follows:

1. *Identity confusion.* Individuals recognize that their sexual feelings, actions, or thoughts could be homosexual but they are not yet prepared to accept this possibility. Emotional tension, bewilderment, and anxiety are common at this point (cf. Luyckx et al., 2008).
2. *Identity comparison.* Individuals compare their sexual feelings with those of others and may tentatively accept that they might be gay/lesbian. They evaluate this possibility as desirable (true self), as too costly (alienation from family and friends), or as a temporary aberration (bisexual, a special case).
3. *Identity tolerance.* Individuals begin with the tentative belief that they are likely gay/lesbian and end this stage with near certainty but not full acceptance that they are lesbian/gay. They explore how this identity might affect other domains of the self, initial contacts with similar others are made, and trusted (safe) others are informed.
4. *Identity acceptance.* With acceptance individuals gain a clearer and more positive image of themselves as lesbian/gay. Greater comfort leads to selective disclosures, although “passing as straight” might occur in special circumstances (e.g., grandparents, sports teams).
5. *Identity pride.* Incongruity between the homosexual and heterosexual worlds dichotomizes the universe into in-group versus out-group dynamics (Spears, Chapter 9, this volume):

gay/lesbian (pride) versus not-gay/lesbian (anger with heterosexism). The inevitable confrontations inspire a preference for associations with like-minded people and help to engender a sense of pride in one's sexual identity.

6. *Identity synthesis.* Individuals integrate their sense of self as a sexual minority with other aspects of the self. Being lesbian or gay is an important but not exclusive aspect of the self. They are at peace, feel self-actualized, and not defensive, and have positive interactions with heterosexuals.

Corresponding to the number of sexual identity models are questions about whether they match people's real lives. These criticisms have been broad and penetrating (Diamond, 2008; Savin-Williams, 2001a, 2005). The most common criticism of these models has been that they present sexual identity from an essentialist perspective, as if it were a series of discrete, universalized stages without regard to contextual influences. Within sexual lives, well-defined and universal starting and ending points in the search for a sexual identity seldom exist. Stage boundaries inherently place brackets around something that is difficult to bracket. Sexual identity development is also socially constructed and, hence, variable. That is, individuals may or may not feel or recognize that they are different from their peers and that this difference is because of their sexuality. If they are aware, they may or may not give this "different sexuality" a name or tell others about their secretive discovery. Uncertain as well is the extent to which they will integrate their same-sex sexuality with their sense of self; these steps may occur in no particular order or developmental timeline. As will be clear in the next section, there is no empirical evidence to suggest that sexual identity development occurs in stages.

One analysis determined that the majority of sexual identity models can be reduced to four common themes: self-awareness, self-acceptance, disclosure to others, and integration into personal identity (Horowitz & Newcomb, 2001). A more parsimonious interpretation of the empirical evidence reviewed below suggests

that the process can be more accurately reduced to the relatively simplistic three stages of pre-awareness, awareness, and post-awareness (disclosure to others). The first process is rarely represented in research because of the difficulty in recruiting individuals in the midst of a process of which they are not yet aware; our knowledge of pre-awareness is frequently retrospective, with whatever accompanying distortions and biases that might exist. Those who progress in their sexual identity development may remember or report their initial stages as more traumatic than they actually were, as a way to execute a cultural script that expects such ordeals, to gain sympathy, or to garner praise for their current recovery or psychic strength. Perhaps awareness and post-awareness are not stages of development per se but rather simply reflect different types of individuals who choose, for various justifiable or non-justifiable reasons, whether others are to know that they are lesbian/gay. Thus, awareness individuals know that they are not heterosexual but essentially decide to tell few others that they are lesbian/gay, whereas post-awareness individuals want everyone who knows them to know about their sexuality.

Empirically Testing Sexual Identity Models

My focus here is to assess whether there is empirical support for these models, especially Cass's homosexual identity formation model (see Dillon, Worthington, & Moradi, Chapter 27, this volume, for a broader discussion). That is, if sexual identity stage models describe an unfolding of sexual-minority development, then they should be observable and verifiable across time and space in the lives of at least a substantial number (if not most) of same-sex-attracted individuals.

The empirical base for these models is, however, scant so much that Eliason (1996, p. 53) noted that people appear to be wedged or "forced into stages, rather than stages made to fit people's situations." Weinberg (1984, p. 78) wondered whether sexual identity models were being portrayed as "frameworks superimposed on

phenomena by researchers and [that] may be real only for their inventors.” The first to supply empirical data was Cass (1984) herself, to test her six-stage model. Unfortunately, 70% of her subjects were in stage 4 (acceptance) or 6 (synthesis), and she was consequently unable to assess the identity development of those in the first three stages. She conceded that this finding “in no way provides evidence for the concept of progress” (Cass, 1984, p. 162). In addition, she granted that her six stages could be reduced to four, largely because of the difficulty of recruiting individuals in the first three stages. By definition, such individuals were highly improbable to participate in research on an identity they were unable or unwilling to acknowledge or accept.

A decade later, despite Cass’s own conclusions on the lack of empirical verifiable evidence that sexual identity progresses, Brady and Busse (1994) developed “The Gay Identity Questionnaire” (GIQ) to assess the progressive nature of Cass’s six-stage model. Similar to Cass (1984), few of the individuals recruited were classified in the first three stages (8%) or in stage 5 (pride, 9%), leaving nearly everyone either in stage 4 (acceptance) or in stage 6 (synthesis). As a result, Brady and Busse could not provide evidence that individuals transitioned through early stages or that individuals who accepted their sexuality would eventually evolve to identity pride or identity synthesis. Indeed, they reduced Cass’s repositioned four stages to “a two-stage process” (Brady & Busse, 1994, p. 13).

Another decade later, perhaps unaware of previous findings regarding the failure of the GIQ as an acceptable measure of identity progress, Halpin and Allen (2004) and Halpin (2008) used the GIQ and rediscovered that nearly all subjects were in stage 4 or 6. They concluded, however, that their results supported Cass’s “progressive stage nature” of homosexual sexual identity. Given the lack of longitudinal evidence, a more parsimonious explanation is that individuals in acceptance and synthesis stages represented two statuses, with the latter exhibiting, by definition, greater happiness, life satisfaction, and self-esteem. With an adult sample, Johns and

Probst (2004) also concluded that Cass’s stages could be reduced to two – individuals who have an unintegrated or fully integrated sense of their sexual identity.

Sexual Identity Models Reconsidered

Historically, sexual identity models helped to establish “gay/lesbian adolescence” as a field for developmental scholarship and clinical concern. However, they also simplified a complex, evolving process and did so with little empirical support. Though initially promising, these models have failed to broadly represent the life experiences of many individuals with same-sex sexuality and, consequently, they do not adequately characterize the dynamic lives of contemporary adolescents and young adults. Unless a sexual identity model explicitly incorporates social, cultural, and historical contextual relativity, it fails to capture what is most critical in the young lives of those with same-sex attractions and desires. The erroneous assumption that one model covers all, without regard to discrepant sex, socioeconomic, cohort, and ethnic backgrounds, is inherently limiting. Sexual identity development is not dictated by an essentialist program – a predetermined unfolding of collective proportions. Indeed, this calls for a more contextual approach in which sexual lives are configured, including sexual identity development has a rich history (Hammack, 2005; Hammack & Cohler, 2009; McAdams, 2005; Savin-Williams, 2005) but has failed to garner much research attention (Diamond, 2005).

What should replace these models? Alternatives to stage models that reflect the diverse, unpredictable, and ever-changing lives of contemporary teens are few (for examples of such life stories, see Hammack & Cohler, 2009). Thus, several social constructionist scholars have proposed alternative, “multidimensional” models of sexual identity (Glover, Galliher, & Lamere, 2009; Horowitz & Newcomb, 2001; Kinnish, Strassberg, & Turner, 2005). These “holistic” proposals emphasize that the various domains of sexual identity, such as sexual desire, behavior,

attraction, and orientation, are not combined in a unitary construct but are fluid and complex with meaningful differences among individuals (Glover et al., 2009).

This option, to tweak existing sexual identity models until they better reflect the real lives of sexual-minority youth, is unwise from my vantage point. I believe that, fundamentally, the notion of psychological or social stages/phases of sexual identity development from either an essentialist or a social constructionist perspective is a flawed and fairly limited concept – for all the reasons noted above. There must be other alternatives.

Differential Developmental Trajectories

Given the definition of sexual identity that opened this chapter – an organized and inclusive configuration of cognitions, perceptions, and feelings that individuals have about the meaning and significance of their sexual attractions, desires, behaviors, and relationships – I believe there have been many misunderstandings in regard to its character and hence its characteristics. One alternative that I suggested a decade ago was a *differential developmental trajectory* framework (Savin-Williams, 1998, 2001b). *Differential* refers to the variability inherent within and across sexual domains and individuals, *developmental* signifies the sexual milestones and processes that occur throughout the life course, and *trajectories* indicate individual pathways in their sexual development that occur across time. Neither an essentialist nor a social constructionist position is necessary or adequate because the different developmental trajectory framework assumes an interactive approach to development. The four basic tenets are as follows:

1. Same-sex-oriented youth are similar to all other adolescents in their developmental trajectories. They are subject to the same biological, psychological, and social influences that affect other youth, regardless of sexuality. To exclusively focus on the consequences of homoeroticism runs the danger of misattributing normal adolescent experiences to a sexual orientation.
2. Same-sex-oriented youth are dissimilar from other-sex-oriented adolescents in their developmental trajectories. Perhaps due to a unique biologically mediated constitution (e.g., a brain that is organized in a sex-atypical manner that causes, for example, boys, similar to girls, to be attracted to boys) and cultural heterocentrism and sexual prejudice, especially manifested in negative social treatment for displaying gender-atypical behavior, temperament, and interests, same-sex-oriented teens negotiate their psychological development in a manner at variance from other-sex-oriented youth.
3. Same-sex-oriented youth vary among themselves in their developmental trajectories, often congruent with the ways in which other-sex-oriented teens vary among themselves. The influences of gender, ethnicity, geography, socioeconomic status, and cohort, among many other variables, result in distinctive trajectories among teens. It is imprudent to characterize same-sex desire as a monolith – a single entity with similar developmental trajectories and outcomes.
4. Same-sex-oriented youth follow their own unique developmental trajectories, dissimilar to any other person who has ever lived. Given the profound diversity inherent in individual lives, general descriptions of group mean differences and similarities may be irrelevant when applied to a specific individual.

Over the past 25 years, my empirical work has highlighted tenet #1 by demonstrating the “no sexual orientation difference” in a number of developmental and mental health domains, including pubertal onset (Savin-Williams, 1995; Savin-Williams & Ream, 2006), self-esteem (Savin-Williams, 1990, 1995), aspects of ethnicity (Dubé & Savin-Williams, 1999), gender socialization (Diamond & Savin-Williams, 2000; Savin-Williams & Diamond, 2000), and suicide attempts (Savin-Williams, 2001c; Savin-Williams & Ream, 2003). What I have not done, however, is to apply the different developmental trajectory perspectives to help us understand

how sexual-minority sexual identity development is similar or different from sexual identity development among heterosexuals.

To do this, the first task is to understand the development of sexual identity for individuals of all sexualities, a task complicated by the reality that sexual identity is usually a topic reserved for investigations of same-sex- or, more rarely, both-sex-oriented individuals. The logical follow-up question is this: Do heterosexual individuals have a straight sexual identity?

Straight Sexual Identity

The sexual privilege conferred on heterosexual individuals as possessing the normative or desirable sexuality usually prevents thoughtful or empirical consideration of whether youth do or can have a “straight” sexual identity.¹ Because, in mainstream North America, heterosexuality has often been hyper-normalized, with historically minimal attention given to same-sex attractions, desires, or behaviors (Bolton & MacEachron, 1988; Gagnon & Simon, 1973; Marsiglio, 1988). Frankel (2003, p. 83) concluded that young male heterosexuals may be aware of themselves as sexual beings but that there is little evidence that they have a sexual identity: “This is the paradox of heterosexuality: It is ubiquitous as an orientation yet invisible as a sexual identity.” Establishing a straight sexual identity requires conscious thought and action about one’s heterosexual orientation and its everyday meaning. To “have” a straight sexual identity implies being aware of possessing a heterosexuality that has meaning and significance for who one is as a person. It also involves a process by which other-sex-oriented individuals integrate their sexual orientation into a personal and social life such that their heterosexuality affects their self-concept and alters their personal history and relationships with others and with society. We know that heterosexuals have a sexual orientation; that they sexually fantasize, become sexually aroused, engage in sexual behavior, and develop sexual and romantic relationships with (usually) similarly other-sex-oriented individuals; and

that they can label their sexual orientation as “heterosexual” or “mostly heterosexual.” The critical question is whether heterosexually oriented individuals understand their sexual orientation as evidence for a sexual identity.

The usual empirical procedure to investigate this issue, unfortunately, assesses not sexual identity but sexual orientation label, even though the resulting categorization is (mis)labeled “sexual identity.” For example, Konik and Stewart (2004) asked nearly 400 undergraduates, “How would you identify your sexual orientation?” with response options considered to be indicators of sexual identity (including heterosexual). Indeed, a fair number of these “heterosexually identified” youth had bisexual attractions, fantasies, and behaviors (Hoburg, Konik, Williams, & Crawford, 2004) – but it is not clear whether these inconsistencies affected their sexual identity. In another study, a heterosexual sexual identity was defined as “someone who is interested in members of the other sex” (Boratav, 2006, p. 218), and then youth were asked about the origins, consistency, and effect of this identity. Although it is doubtful that this question assessed anything other than sexual orientation, the author suggested that most participants were foreclosed in their *identity* development. Certainly, the Turkish college students in that study experienced their sexual identity, feelings, and behaviors as “always having been the same” (p. 219). Finally, in another study of “heterosexual-identified” youth, sexual identity was asked, “When you think about your sexual orientation, what term do you *most* identify with?” (Morgan, Steiner, & Thompson, 2010, p. 5). Given the questions asked, I believe that all three studies assessed not sexual identity but sexual orientation label.

Exceptions to this tendency to equate heterosexual orientation with identity include the small-scale study by Eliason (1995) and the dissertation study by Frankel (2003, 2004). In her qualitative interviews with 26 well-educated, other-sex-oriented college students about their sexual identity, Eliason (1995, p. 826) reported that the most common themes were “outside forces [e.g., gender socialization] made me heterosexual” and

“never thought about it.” It was not so much that their heterosexuality was inborn or fixed, a common perspective among sexual-minority young people, but that “the question of how my sexual identity formed really left me stumped” (Eliason, 1995, p. 826). Frankel (2003, 2004) asked 154 young men to complete a “Who Am I?” exercise and discovered that less than 10% spontaneously mentioned their sexual identity (or even their sexual orientation) among their top 15 characteristics. Those who did were not more likely than other young men to have questioned their sexuality or to be attracted to other males.

In their research with heterosexually oriented college men, Morgan and associates (2010) reported that over half had questioned their heterosexuality. What differentiated them were not masculine ideology, beliefs about civil rights for sexual minorities, or sexual identity exploration but rather higher affiliations with sexual-minority individuals and openness to being a sexual minority (likely due to a greater sexual identity uncertainty and lower levels of sexual identity commitment, integration, and synthesis).

In general, research participants’ reports have been consistent with Marcia’s (1966, 1980; Kroger & Marcia, Chapter 2, this volume) identity-diffused status (no active sense of identity with neither exploration nor commitment to an identity) and identity foreclosure (accepting an identity imposed by others or by societal expectations without critique or exploration). Straight young people generally have not been known to “come out” to themselves or others as straight-identified. It is my impression that they seldom say after their first sex with a girl/boy, “Wow! I’m a heterosexual!” Rarely do they wake up one morning and divulge to their mother or best friend, “Hey, I have something to tell you. I think I’m straight.” In a far larger and more contemporary study, Thompson and Morgan (2008), using the Worthington sexual identity measure (Worthington, Navarro, Savoy, & Hampton, 2008), reported that compared with lesbian, bisexual, and mostly straight college women, exclusively straight women were significantly lower in sexual identity exploration (open to or actively experimenting with the same

sex in the past, currently, or in the future) and identity uncertainty (uncertain or unclear about one’s sexual needs or desires).

If other-sex-oriented young people are to become aware of the developmental processes that create their sexual identity, they must adjust their deep-seated cognitive, affective, and behavioral understanding of themselves in such a manner as to include sexual domains. Similar to the findings of Thompson and Morgan (2008), Diamond (2008, p. 58) argued that relatively few heterosexual women think about their sexual identity because the presumption of mandated heterosexuality is unquestioned. It is when a woman violates the heterosexual norm that she begins to contemplate her sexual identity. If other-sex-oriented individuals are unaware of how their sexuality has any impact on their sense of self – which appears to be the current norm – the question remains, Do they have a sexual identity? Because the overwhelming answer to this question reported by heterosexual youth is “no,” this supports the *unmarked* nature of heterosexuality. That is, other-sex-oriented individuals assume that they have a “normal” sexuality not that they have a straight identity. It is precisely this naturalness of heterosexuality that has dictated the virtual absence of research or theories about straight identity development. The notable exception is a primarily theoretical model of heterosexual identity development proposed by Worthington et al. (2008; Dillon et al., Chapter 27, this volume).

Given the above speculations, sexual-minority youth would be considered unique (tenet #2) in their development of a sexual identity, not because of a biologically mediated factor but because of social constructions of sexual identity. A counter-argument would be that other-sex-oriented individuals have a sexual identity but simply have not been asked about it by researchers because straightness is not considered a worthy topic to investigate. Although heterosexually oriented individuals, especially women (Diamond, 2008), are certainly capable of moving from a weak or nonexistent straight identity to an identity based on a growing realization of being attracted to same-sex others, a recent

review of the empirical literature on adolescent sexuality included only sexual minorities when discussing sexual identity, largely because of the paucity of data about heterosexuals' sexual identity (Diamond & Savin-Williams, 2009).

Stability and Consistency of a Sexual-Minority Sexual Identity

Stability

Tenet #3 of the differential developmental trajectory framework proposes that same-sex-oriented youth vary among themselves in their sexual identity progression.² This divergence in pathways was noted in several early research studies (Herdt & Boxer, 1993; Savin-Williams, 1990; Sears, 1991). Somewhat later, Schneider (2001) proposed that sexual-minority women manifested one of four trajectories:

1. Consistent women had an early awareness of same-sex attractions and knew their sexual-minority status during adolescence.
2. Adult onset women were convinced that they were heterosexual during adolescence and became lesbian/bisexual in mid-life, usually after falling in love with a woman.
3. Vacillating women experienced confusion during adolescence because of their sexual attractions, with the possibility that they would accept a bisexual label.
4. Uncertain women felt they did not fit in, sexually floated through adolescence, and deferred sexuality or were not very interested in sex with anyone.

Although little is known about this diversity in sexual identity trajectories, the presence of sexual identity instability among sexual-minority youth, especially among young women (Diamond, 2008), over time has recently been investigated. Youth maintain that their sexual identity (straight yesterday, bisexual today, gay/lesbian tomorrow) is, by its very nature, subject to change, especially during adolescence and young adulthood (Friedman et al., 2004). Several retrospective studies provide support for an instability conclusion among sexual-minority populations. Among community and college youth, nearly two-thirds of gay/lesbian and bisexual individuals thought at one time during their development that they were bisexual or gay/lesbian, respectively (Rosario et al., 1996). In another study, participants aged 36–60 years and of various sexualities rated themselves on components of sexuality, including sexual identity, for repeated 5-year periods beginning with ages 16–20 years and ending with their current age (Kinnish et al., 2005). Even though each identity category represented a significant alteration in self-representation, over time many sexual minorities, but few heterosexuals, changed their identity label (Table 28.1). Women were more likely than men to change, and bisexuals were more so than gays/lesbians or heterosexuals. For example, whereas most gay men had always been identified as gay, only about one-third of lesbians had always been identified as lesbian – over half of current bisexuals at one time identified as heterosexual.

Diamond (2008) discovered that she could not predict from her longitudinal study which young

Table 28.1 Stability among identity groups over time: current identification of individuals (*x*-axis) who had once identified under another category (*y*-axis)

Identity	Heterosexual only (%)	Gay only (%)	Lesbian only (%)	Bisexual only (%)	Multiple identities (%)
Heterosexual	97	0	0	3	1
Gay	11	61	–	19	9
Lesbian	39	–	35	10	16
Bisexual male	50	12	–	34	4
Bisexual female	63	–	6	23	8

women would be stable or would relinquish their sexual identity over a 10-year period. Nearly two-thirds changed their identity label at least once, often because the identity categories did not adequately capture the diversity of their sexual and romantic feelings for female and male partners. Over time, lesbian and bisexual identities lost the most adherents, and heterosexual and unlabeled identities gained the most. What remained relatively unchanged were reports of sexual and romantic attractions. That is, young women might change their sexual identity from bisexual to heterosexual to unlabeled without undergoing a comparable change in their sexual orientation.

Consistency

Given this instability in sexual identity over time, investigators have attempted to predict consistency of sexual identity with components of sexual orientation within a time period or across time periods. Results have not been encouraging. Only about 20% of US adults who were same-sex oriented on one component (identity, attraction, or behavior) reported being same-sex oriented on the other two (Laumann, Gagnon, Michael, & Michaels, 1994). Among Dutch men who reported having had sex with another male, one-third said they were not attracted to males and just half of these same-sex behaving men identified as gay/bisexual or had ever been in love with a male (Sandfort, 1997). The most telling youth data come from an anonymous questionnaire study conducted with a representative sample of Minnesota junior and senior high school students. Youth who reported same-sex fantasies, attractions, or behaviors seldom reported being same-sex oriented in the other domains or reported having a gay, lesbian, or bisexual identity (Remafedi, Resnick, Blum, & Harris, 1992).

A substantial body of literature supports the finding that the vast majority of those who *identify* as a sexual minority also engage in same-sex *behavior* – even though gay virgins do exist. Less empirically convincing, however, is the transposition: although a higher proportion

of sexual-minority than straight-identified youth engage in same-sex behavior, the sexual partners of sexual-minority youth usually identify as heterosexual. Indeed, in terms of pure numbers, similar to adult men (Pathela et al., 2006), most adolescents with a same-sex experience identify as straight – three-quarters in one study (Remafedi et al., 1992). The reverse is also true: a heterosexual encounter is as likely or more likely to be reported by a sexual-minority as by a straight-identified youth (DuRant, Krowchuk, & Sinal, 1998; Garofalo, Wolf, Kessel, Palfrey, & DuRant, 1998). This seeming contradiction, that a majority of gay- and lesbian-identified youth report other-sex behavior, is reflected in the finding that exclusive same-sex behavior in populations of adolescents and young adults is relatively rare, usually less than 1% (D’Augelli & Hershberger, 1993; Garofalo, Wolf, Wissow, Woods, & Goodman, 1999; Remafedi et al., 1992; Savin-Williams, 1998). These findings are supported by cross-cultural data in Switzerland, where over 80% of adolescents reporting same-sex activity identified as heterosexual (Narring, Stronski Huwiler, & Michaud, 2003; see also van Griensven et al., 2004 in Thailand; and Eskin, Kaynak-Demir, & Demir, 2005 in Turkey).

The consistency between sexual *attraction* and *identity* is also weak, at best. Minnesota public school students were four times more likely to report same-sex attractions than a same-sex identity, especially for girls, and only 5% of those with same-sex attractions identified as a sexual minority (Remafedi et al., 1992). Among Swiss adolescent girls, 73% of those with same-sex attraction (83% of those with same-sex fantasies) identified not as lesbian or bisexual but as heterosexual; for Swiss boys, the proportions were lower but in the same direction (Narring et al., 2003). These findings were replicated among Turkish college students but not among Thai adolescents (Eskin et al., 2005; van Griensven et al., 2004).

The generally weak relationships among sexual components are also present in the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health dataset, a national study of US youth (Savin-Williams & Ream, 2007). During Wave 3, less than 2% of the

young women who reported having exclusively same-sex romantic attraction or same-sex behavior identified as exclusively or mostly lesbian; among young men, 13 and 3%, respectively, identified as gay. Of those who had *both* exclusive same-sex attraction and behavior, 41% of young women and 82% of young men identified as mostly or exclusively lesbian or gay. Thus, same-sex attraction plus same-sex behavior were better than either alone in predicting young adult sexual identity. Further illustrating the inconsistency among sexual components, of adolescents who engaged in same-sex behavior at Wave 1, fewer than one in twenty-five males and one in five females identified as a sexual minority at Wave 3. A worthy research pursuit would be to test whether different sexual components, such as sexual behavior or romantic feelings, have different meanings or salience for sexual identity at various ages and across sexes.

Stability and Consistency

Based on the available data, a sexual-minority identity (but not, as far as we know, straight identity) tends toward instability over time and toward inconsistency with other components of sexuality. Changes can be multidirectional and seemingly unpredictable. Individuals leave and enter a sexual identity stage or status, perhaps once or several times, at different rates and for different reasons. Although nearly all individuals who identify as a sexual minority also report same-sex attraction, arousal, and behavior, a relatively small minority of those with same-sex attraction, arousal, or behavior identify as gay, lesbian, or bisexual – they might, however, and are increasingly identified as “mostly heterosexual” (Vrangalova & Savin-Williams, 2010). Adolescents are far more likely to report same-sex attraction, fantasy, or desire than to identify as something other than heterosexual. The possibility that this identity instability and inconsistency uniquely reflect adolescent developmental phenomena is doubtful because similar findings have emerged in adult populations (Dunne, Bailey, Kirk, & Martin, 2000; Laumann et al., 1994;

Pathela et al., 2006; Savin-Williams & Ream, 2006, 2007; Smith, Rissel, Richters, Grulich, & de Visser, 2003).

These findings suggest a greater sexual orientation/identity alignment among heterosexuals than sexual minorities and among young men than young women. This is the conventional wisdom – but I remain unconvinced until more comprehensive data are produced. Although these inconsistencies have been interpreted as manifestations of “sexual fluidity” (Diamond, 2003, 2008) or “erotic plasticity” (Baumeister, 2000) among sexual-minority young women, I question whether erotic plasticity is solely the province of young women. In recent investigations across several countries, more young women *and* men reported that they are “mostly straight” in their sexual orientation identity or attractions/fantasies than say they are gay or bisexual (Busseri, Willoughby, Chalmers, & Bogaert, 2008; Dickson, Paul, & Herbison, 2003; Ellis, Robb, & Burke, 2005; Thompson & Morgan, 2008; Wichstrøm & Hegna, 2003).

How or why individuals transform their sexuality or their understanding of their sexuality, or remain stable and consistent, is unknown. Nevertheless, in their lives, these discrepancies exist. A young woman may be romantically attracted to women, but she does not thus necessarily give up her desire to identify as straight. Or she identifies as lesbian as a means to bond with a community of women, as heterosexual to please her parents, or as unlabeled because she does not want to be pigeon-holed into one identity category. A young man has consistent and persistent longings for sex with males, falls deeply in love with a woman, has sexual experiences with both sexes, and identifies as heterosexual as a means to secure his chosen career. Developmental movement across the life course from assumed heterosexuality to non-heterosexuality and back to heterosexuality is characteristic among youth who have a singular idealized, hero-worship infatuation with a coach or a teacher that is interpreted as a romantic crush; engage in a curiosity-driven sexual experience that may be sporadic or continuous; or say gay or bisexual to be “in” or to fit the image of

the rebellious teen. Youth want to be accepted, and the moving target of popularity may motivate various sexual identifications. Of course, passages among various sexual identities may also be understood as “finally” recognizing one’s authentic self (cf. Soenens & Vansteenkiste, [Chapter 17](#), this volume; Waterman, [Chapter 16](#), this volume), even if that acknowledgement is merely temporary.

Alternatively: No Sexual Identity

Given the findings summarized in this chapter – the low incidence of sexual identity among heterosexually oriented individuals, the instability of sexual identity among sexual minorities, and the lack of consistency between sexual identity and other aspects of sexuality – an alternative perspective would be a reasonable undertaking. My starting point is tenet #1 of a differential developmental trajectory framework: irrespective of sexual orientation, same-sex-oriented adolescents are, first and foremost, adolescents. As such, I propose that current cohorts of youth with some degree of same-sex sexuality are similar to their other-sex-oriented peers, rather than replicating previous generations of sexual-minority youth, in two regards. First, they often prefer not to reference their sexuality with a sexual identity label. During a 2009 workshop I conducted, one 16-year-old male wrote when asked to describe his sexual identity, “I don’t desire to identify my sexuality. I just am me. Get over it.” An 18-year-old young woman wrote, “I like what I like regardless of what’s down their pants. If someone’s attractive, they’re attractive. The end.” Second, when asked, many in today’s cohort of youth prefer to describe their sexuality in complex and often non-traditional terms that frequently combine notions of gender with sexuality. In the workshop, an 18-year-old young woman wrote, “Pansexual. I like gender blenders, the mixtures, the people that look like both boys and girls. Then it’s a ‘special surprise inside’ when you discover them in a sexual situation.” A 17-year-old young man wrote, “I guess I’m straight but curious because maybe I haven’t met the

right guy yet. Right now, straight, but open to possibilities.”

It is not that today’s youth cannot name their sexual orientation, attractions, or desires. They can certainly say or describe their sexual orientation as heterosexual, mostly heterosexual, bisexual, mostly gay, or gay. What I believe is happening in the lives of modern-day youth, regardless of their sexuality, is that they are eliminating the need to label their sexual identity, either altogether or in traditional terms. These developments are radical solutions to the sexual identity conundrum, the categorical boxes that adults have asked youth to own up to. It is not that youth deny or reject their sexuality or its role in their lives; rather, many believe that sexual identity labels, especially the traditional ones, limit them and their sexuality. They are inadequate, confusing, and misplaced. The mere creation of sexual categories reifies the labels across time and place and exaggerates false differences among sexualities (Muehlenhard, 2000) and between them and their friends.

Yet we know little about sexual-minority youth who prefer not to identify their sexuality as gay, lesbian, or bisexual. How do they differ from sexual-minority youth who continue to use the traditional labels? We cannot answer this question in part because the non-identifying youth tend to opt out of research, educational programs, and support groups targeted for “lesbian/gay/bisexual youth.” I suspect that they likely reject a sexual identity for various reasons. Some may experience their sexuality as more fluid than most sexual labels tolerate, and others may object for philosophical reasons. They protest against attempts to place their sexuality into “identity boxes.” As such, they view sexual identity in general as artificial, as a balkanization of sexuality into inflexible, distinct boundaries, and personally as failing to capture the full extent of their complex sexuality. Or they may raise objections to the sexual and political connotations of a particular identity label. Lesbian sounds too clinical; bisexual emphasizes the sexual; and gay signifies gay politics, rights, and queer lifestyles. They may wish to separate their sexual desire from the friction of politics. To them, sexuality

cannot be compartmentalized; it is not about politics but rather about pleasure and happiness (D'Erasmus, 2001).

These trends have been reported for a number of years – but primarily only among young women who were more likely than men to allow, and be okay with, inconsistencies in their romantic/sexual fantasies, behavior, and identity. As a result, they often made sense of their erotic desires and behaviors with reference to *new notions* of sexuality (Diamond, 2008; Pattatucci & Hamer, 1995; Rothblum, 2000; Rust, 2000, 2002). Even when asked to label their sexuality, adolescent girls often preferred to create their own identity label rather than to choose one offered by researchers (Hillier et al., 1998). This is the result, according to Rust (2000), of gender socialization that encourages women to seek their identity through relationships, to have sex within that context, and to change their identity in response to this variability.

Others, however, have noted these trends among young men as well. Green (1998) observed that adolescents of both sexes often refused to become embroiled in sexual identity politics, which they perceived as important issues for older generations. They simply wanted to love and have sex with the person(s) they desired, regardless of the individual's biological sex. Green speculated that, although these youth threaten both the gay/lesbian and the straight establishments, they might well be the future in a post-sexual identity society. Similarly, Dixit (2001) reported in *Rolling Stone* that same-sex-attracted college men no longer felt that identifying as gay was a primary aspect of their personal identity. One student suggested, "There's a prevailing attitude of, because I'm gay, it doesn't mean that's my life. I'm not a 'gay person,' I'm a person who happens to be gay." These young adult men knew their same-sex attractions and desires but they chose not to have their same-sex sexuality define them or to be the major decider in their personal identity. Rather than obsessing over their sexuality, these young adult men were occupied with typical college pursuits, including sports, fraternities, and careers. Few asserted either a gay identity or a gayness that

defined them relative to their straight peers. "No one really cares or objects to you if you're gay. In fact, making a big deal about being gay is seen as distasteful."

What has led to this development is a matter of considerable speculation, but two possibilities are noteworthy (Savin-Williams, 2005). First, as same-sex sexuality has become more visible and prevalent among today's cohort of youth, youth may feel that a distinctive sexual identity as an aspect of their personal identity adds little of significance. In this, they are becoming more similar to their other-sex-oriented peers (tenet #1). Young people with same-sex desires look and act like other youth, value marriage and family life, have the same career aspirations, and hold the same diverse range of attitudes toward mainstream values. Real changes in North American politics, laws, and consciousness toward sexual minorities have raised the possibility that sexual orientation may feel to teens to be irrelevant to their personal identity. Whether similar processes are taking shape in other less-Westernized societies is unknown but worthy of documentation in the coming decade.

One indication of this widespread change in the US cultural landscape is national poll data which indicate that attitudes toward sexual minorities have become strikingly more positive over the past two decades (Campo-Flores, 2008). For example, a December 2008 *Newsweek* poll indicated that a majority of Americans believe that gays/lesbians should serve openly in the military; that same-sex unions or partnerships should be legally sanctioned; that gays and lesbians should be able to legally adopt children; and that sexual minorities should have inheritance rights, Social Security benefits, hospital visitation rights, and equal job and housing opportunities. The latter grouping is endorsed by more than two-thirds of all Americans, and these proportions have increased since the questions were asked in the early 1990s, in large part because attitudes have become considerably more progressive among younger cohorts (Campo-Flores, 2008). For example, 58% of those 18–34-year-olds support same-sex marriage; this drops to 42% among 35–64-year-olds and 24% among

those 65 years and older (Steinhauser, 2009). This secular trend might partially be the result of an increase in those who know a sexual-minority individual. In the *Newsweek* poll, one-third of Americans have a sexual-minority family member, two-thirds have a sexual-minority friend, and three-quarters know someone who is gay or lesbian. Those who befriend gay people tend to have more positive attitudes toward them (Morrison & Bearden, 2007), though cause and effect are difficult to determine. That is, perhaps those with positive attitudes toward sexual diversity are more likely to befriend a gay individual.

Among adolescents and young adults, these attitudes toward gay people are especially positive (Campo-Flores, 2008; Savin-Williams, 2005). For example, whereas 39% of Americans over the age of 18 support legally sanctioned same-sex marriage (Campo-Flores, 2008), among high school seniors and college freshmen, same-sex marriage endorsement exceeds 60% (Broverman, 2006; Hamilton College, 2001; Vara-Orta, 2007). The percentage of 18–29-year-olds who find homosexuality “acceptable” is 62; among their parents’ generation, 46 (Evans & Salazar, 2007). In addition to knowing someone who is gay, the increased visibility of sexual diversity in youth culture may also be causal in this shift toward progressive attitudes among contemporary cohorts. This shift might be attributable to several factors. One is the proliferation of gay/straight alliances, of which there are now over 4,000 in US secondary schools (glsen.org, 2009). These are student-run, school-sanctioned clubs that work to improve the social and interpersonal climate for all students, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression. A second is the frequent portrayal of same-sex desire in the youth-oriented online and offline worlds (see Savin-Williams, 2005, for example). As Doig (2007, p. 49) noted, “During the course of the 1990s, homosexuality went from being largely invisible to shockingly visible to fairly pedestrian.” The culture of contemporary teenagers easily incorporates its homoerotic members. It is more than being gay friendly; it is being gay blind.

A second possible liberalizing factor is the public’s belief that individuals do not choose their sexual orientation. Whereas 30 years ago only, 1 in 10 US citizens believed that an individual is born gay, today more than 4 in 10 agree that homosexuality is something a person is born with rather than a result of upbringing or the environment (Saad, 2007). Consequently, the majority of the US public accepts that sexual orientation cannot be changed (Gandossy, 2007). This belief matters because those who express strong antigay attitudes tend to view homosexuality as “temporary” and not biologically based (Haslam & Levy, 2006).

A counter argument to the secular trend hypothesis is that scholars previously overestimated the prevalence and importance of a sexual identity among sexual-minority youth because they included in their research only youth who had a strong sense of their sexual identity. Sexual-minority youth were defined as those who had a gay, a lesbian, or a bisexual *sexual identity*; excluded were those who had no such identification or for whom their sexuality was a minor aspect of their personal identity. Evidence for this is apparent in a state-wide survey of Massachusetts high school students which revealed that just over 2% identified themselves as gay, lesbian, or bisexual (Garofalo et al., 1998). Yet, in a national representative study of the same age group conducted a few years later, over three times that many reported that they had same-sex romantic attractions (identity was not assessed) (Russell & Joyner, 2001). Were the 2% in 1998 representative of the 6% in 2001? One indication that they might not be is that suicide attempt rates dramatically differed: 35% for the self-identified sexual minorities and 13% for the same-sex-attracted youth. In another study of Massachusetts youth, fewer than 3% identified as gay, lesbian, or bisexual, even though over 11% ascribed to themselves same-sex attractions, fantasies, or behavior (Orenstein, 2001). Again, were the 3% representative of the 11%? Thus, it matters for research findings whether the population sampled is based on sexual identity or some other aspect of sexual orientation.

Conclusion

The notion that the development of a sexual identity involves a predetermined trajectory as predicted by sexual identity or coming-out models is belied by recent scholarship. Sexuality is but one facet of an interactive system that comprises a youth's personal identity, and this is true regardless of sexual orientation. Whether contemporary cohorts of same-sex-oriented youth are mirroring other-sex-oriented youth in their sexual identity development is difficult to assess at this point because of the dearth of comparable research on straight identity and the limitations of research on sexual minorities. However, any presumption that teens have more in common with others of their sexual orientation than with their peers in general simply because of that orientation is questionable and perhaps implausible. The most accurate conclusion is that sexual orientation dictates some (but not all) of the essence of a personal identity and that this contribution varies across individuals and across developmental time. Thus, to understand the development of sexual identity among same-sex-oriented teenagers, scientists must first understand the development of personal identity in general. A critical aspect of this understanding is the recognition that sexual diversity is becoming normalized among current cohorts of youth.

Same-sex-oriented adolescents have the same developmental concerns, assets, and liabilities as do other-sex-oriented adolescents. Contemporary same-sex-attracted teenagers want to pursue diverse personal goals, one of which is choosing unconventional sexual identities or forgoing a sexual identity altogether. How prevalent is this "trend?" It is difficult to assess given the scholarship available. What is clear is that for many adolescents, the old sexual identity categories do not fit so well anymore.

Notes

1. This section is based in part on a dissertation by Frankel (2003).

2. This section is based in large part on my earlier writing (Savin-Williams, 2009).

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Part VI

Economic and Civic Participation

Vladimir B. Skorikov and Fred W. Vondracek

Abstract

Occupational identity refers to the conscious awareness of oneself as a worker. The process of occupational identity formation in modern societies can be difficult and stressful. However, establishing a strong, self-chosen, positive, and flexible occupational identity appears to be an important contributor to occupational success, social adaptation, and psychological well-being. Whereas previous research has demonstrated that the strength and clarity of occupational identity are major determinants of career decision-making and psychosocial adjustment, more attention needs to be paid to its structure and contents. We describe the structure of occupational identity using an extended identity status model, which includes the traditional constructs of moratorium and foreclosure, but also differentiates between identity diffusion and identity confusion as well as between static and dynamic identity achievement. Dynamic identity achievement appears to be the most adaptive occupational identity status, whereas confusion may be particularly problematic. We represent the contents of occupational identity via a theoretical taxonomy of general orientations toward work (Job, Social Ladder, Calling, and Career) determined by the prevailing work motivation (extrinsic vs. intrinsic) and preferred career dynamics (stability vs. growth). There is evidence that perception of work as a calling is associated with positive mental health, whereas perception of work as a career can be highly beneficial in terms of occupational success and satisfaction. We conclude that further research is needed on the structure and contents of occupational identity and we note that there is also an urgent need to address the issues of cross-cultural differences and intervention that have not received sufficient attention in previous research.

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Occupational identity, also alluded to as vocational, work, professional, or career identity, refers to the conscious awareness of oneself as a worker. On the one hand, occupational identity represents one's perception of occupational

interests, abilities, goals, and values (Kielhofner, 2007). On the other hand, occupational identity represents a complex structure of meanings in which the individual links his or her motivation and competencies with acceptable career roles (Meijers, 1998). Occupational identity has frequently been conceptualized as a major component of one's overall sense of identity (Kroger, 2007; Skorikov & Vondracek, 2007). From this perspective, it represents a core, integrative element of identity, serving not only as a determinant of occupational choice and attainment, but also as a major factor in the emergence of meaning and structure in individuals' lives (Erikson, 1968). Although there is no universal agreement regarding the domains of identity that are most relevant, the domain of occupation appears to be a central element of identity (Schwartz, 2001). Over the past 50 years, research on the structure, functions, and development of occupational identity has been conducted by scholars from a variety of disciplines, with the majority of the studies conducted within the field of vocational psychology.

Vocational and developmental psychologists view forming an occupational identity as a critical developmental task of adolescence, and vocational identity formation is taken to represent an overall index of progress in career development (Kroger, 2007; Savickas, 1985; Vondracek, 1995; Zimmer-Gembeck & Mortimer, 2006). Thus, it is not surprising that the concept of occupational identity has been incorporated in almost every major theory of career development (e.g., Bordin, 1984; Holland, 1985; Peatling & Tiedeman, 1977; Super, Savickas, & Super, 1996; Tiedeman & O'Hara, 1963). Nevertheless, only two of these theoretical perspectives on occupational identity continue to be widely utilized. One is a personality-theory-based approach established by Holland (1985), and the other stems from a psychosocial approach based on Erikson's (1963, 1968) theory of identity.

John Holland, the author of a popular theory about the relationships between personality types and work environments, known as the Person-Environment Fit Theory (1985), added the construct of identity to his theory in the

1970s. Holland's objective was to use both personality types and subjective awareness of one's occupational preferences to predict occupational choice and occupational success. He defined occupational identity (vocational identity in his terminology) as a clear, stable, and coherent picture of one's career goals, interests, and abilities (Holland, 1985; Holland, Daiger, & Power, 1980; Holland, Gottfredson, & Power, 1980). Holland's definition of occupational identity has been subsequently integrated into another major career theory, Super's Life-span, Life-space Theory (Super et al., 1996) and stimulated considerable research over the past 30 years.

Although Holland (1985) noted that vocational identity develops during childhood and adolescence through increasing differentiation among preferred activities, interests, competencies, and values, his approach focused on the strength of identity while largely ignoring its structure and the complexity of developmental processes involved in its formation. Holland's rather simplistic perspective on identity has been criticized by developmentally minded vocational psychologists, particularly because of its inability to differentiate among identity achievement and foreclosure (Brisbin & Savickas, 1994; see also Kroger & Marcia, Chapter 2, this volume) and to capture the differentiation, coherence, and stability (as well as clarity) of occupational self-concept (Vondracek, 1992). Since the 1970s, an alternative approach to the construct of occupational identity, based on Erikson's ego identity theory (Erikson, 1963, 1968; see Kroger & Marcia, Chapter 2, this volume), has become widely accepted (Blustein & Noumair, 1996; Munley, 1977; Savickas, 1985; Vondracek, 1992). Given that Erikson considered occupational choice and commitment to be the core elements of identity and noted that the inability to settle on an occupation is especially disturbing during the transition to adulthood (Erikson, 1968), his approach has been readily embraced by vocational psychologists.

Erikson described identity as the experience of "wholeness" characterized by a sense of individuality, continuity, and integration of personal goals and values, potentially achieved through

the psychosocial crisis of adolescence (Erikson, 1968). According to Erikson, failure to establish a sense of personal identity during adolescence leads to confusion with regard to future adult roles and can be associated with an array of adjustment problems. The dynamic nature and complexity of adult roles in modern societies make the process of identity formation difficult and stressful. Although some individuals can adopt a foreclosed identity based on premature early identification with parents, peers, and other role models, establishing a true sense of identity involves a relatively long period of psychosocial moratorium, characterized by active role experimentation and postponing making adult role commitments. In contrast to Holland's model, the Eriksonian perspective suggests considerable differences in the consequences of identity commitments characterized by foreclosure versus those characterized by achievement and assumes that the state and strength of occupational identity should be interpreted from the perspective of developmental stages. Thus, during the period of identity moratorium, adolescents may appear to be vocationally maladjusted as they experience an identity crisis, but this period of internal instability is an important developmental precursor for further occupational and psychosocial adaptation (Erikson, 1963, 1968).

The operationalization of occupational identity within the Eriksonian approach has most frequently been guided by Marcia's (1966) identity status construct (see Kroger & Marcia, Chapter 2, this volume). Identity status refers to a characteristic way of dealing with the salient identity issues characterized by exploration and decision-making crisis on the one hand, and by personal investment and commitment on the other (Marcia, 1966, 1993). Following Marcia, many vocational researchers (e.g., Dellas & Jernigan, 1981; Melgosa, 1987; Munson & Widmer, 1997) have described occupational identity *Achievement* as a strong commitment to self-chosen occupational goals and values acquired through occupational exploration. In contrast, occupational identity *Foreclosure* is characterized by occupational commitments made without much occupational- and self-exploration.

Occupational identity *Moratorium* represents an active process of exploration and crisis and temporary inability to make a lasting career commitment. Occupational identity *Diffusion* is characterized by lack of effective exploration and inability to make commitments, regardless of whether one has already experienced a period of crisis.

Marcia's identity status categories have been effectively used in research on occupational identity directly or with minor modifications (e.g., Goossens, 2001; Meeus, Dekovic, & Iedema, 1997; Skorikov & Vondracek, 1998). There have also been attempts to refine and extend the identity status paradigm (Luyckx, Goossens, Soenens, Beyers, & Vansteenkiste, 2005; Skorikov & Vondracek, 2007). Revisions to the original identity status paradigm were suggested, in part, by Marcia's recognition that some individuals appear to be characterized by fluctuations between moratorium and achievement, which he called the *MAMA cycles* (Stephen, Fraser, & Marcia, 1992). Individuals in MAMA cycles have made identity commitments, but did not disengage from the process of exploration, which assumes a state of identity characterized by continuously updated, dynamic, and flexible choices rather than a static commitment. Recognition of the importance of differentiating between lack of interest and involvement in exploring identity issues (identity diffusion) and failure to secure a sense of identity despite having completed the process of exploration (identity confusion), described by Erikson as a potentially dangerous role confusion (Erikson, 1963), provided further impetus to expand the identity status paradigm. The resulting expanded model of occupational identity status proposed by Skorikov and Vondracek (2007) is shown in Table 29.1.

Although this expansion of the identity status paradigm is a step in the right direction, it still does not fully capture occupational identity as the complex, evolving structure of meanings in which the individual links his or her motivation and competencies with acceptable career roles (Meijers, 1998; Savickas, 1985; Vondracek, 1992). Accordingly, a recent volume dedicated to

Table 29.1 Occupational identity status classification

<i>Occupational commitment</i>	<i>Occupational self-exploration</i>		
	Limited	Active	Completed
Not made	Occupational identity diffusion	Occupational identity moratorium	Occupational identity confusion
Made	Occupational identity foreclosure	Dynamic occupational identity achievement	Static occupational identity achievement

occupational identity research in Europe (Brown, Kirpal, & Rauner, 2007) outlined a few important observations about the nature of modern occupational identities:

- Occupational identity is characterized by both continuity and change
- Occupational identity is shaped by the changing system of interpersonal relationships around which it is constructed
- Individuals make a significant contribution to the construction of their occupational identity
- Individual occupational identities are constrained by social-economic structures and processes (also see Oyserman & James, Chapter 6, this volume)
- There is considerable variation in the salience of occupational identity within the person's overall sense of identity

These generalizations are consistent with a recent analysis of occupational identity (Skorikov & Vondracek, 2007), which utilized the developmental contextual perspective on career development (Vondracek, Lerner, & Schulenberg, 1986). Skorikov and Vondracek described occupational identity as a dynamic organization of occupational self-perception, shaped by “qualitative and quantitative changes in the structure and form of identification with the role of a worker that occurs as a result of the interaction between the epigenetic unfolding of the person's capabilities and learning through self-chosen and socially assigned vocational, educational, and leisure activities” (p. 146). Additionally, the process of constructing one's occupational identity is influenced by relevant significant relationships and broader social factors, such as societal norms and expectations and economic and technological change.

Whereas the structural aspects of occupational identity have been extensively studied at least since the 1980s, its content has received considerably less attention in the literature. The importance of significant differences in occupational identities, and the ways in which these differences are associated with the underlying assumptions about the meaning of work, have been largely ignored in theory and research on careers and on identity (Blustein, 2006). Developing an understanding of occupational identity as a system of meanings associated with the worker role requires attending to its contents as well as its structure. Thus, a distinction between work as a job versus as a career has been re-emphasized in recent European studies, as the “job” perspective appears to be characterized by lack of a long-term perspective and of a sense of uniqueness, along with passive adoption of an ascribed identity. The “career” perspective, on the other hand, is marked by an active construction of occupational identity and focus on long-term career prospects and occupational success from a highly individualized perspective (FAME Consortium, 2007). Other authors have drawn upon a more traditional triad of the meanings of work as a job, as a career, or as a calling (Walsh & Gordon, 2008; Wrzesniewski, McCauley, Rozin, & Schwartz, 1997). However, the rationale for these traditionally utilized groupings has not been clearly articulated. Thus, in an attempt to develop a logically consistent taxonomy of general orientations toward work, Skorikov (2008) suggested a two-dimensional approach. First, an individual's meaning of work can be described in terms of the relative importance of extrinsic and intrinsic work motivation (see Soenens & Vansteenkiste, Chapter 17, this volume; Waterman, Chapter 16,

Table 29.2 Taxonomy of work orientations

<i>Prevailing work motivation</i>	<i>Preferred career dynamics</i>	
	Stability	Growth
Extrinsic	Work as a job	Work as a social ladder
Intrinsic	Work as a calling	Work as a career

this volume). Whereas most workers value occupational rewards and conditions as well as the work that they actually do, one is typically more important than the other within the individual's system of work preferences. Second, from the perspective of career dynamics, the meaning of work may be characterized by orientation toward professional growth versus stability. The corresponding theoretical model is presented in Table 29.2.

An empirical assessment of this logical taxonomy of general orientations toward work indicated that the four categories indeed represent empirically independent types of subjective meanings assigned to work in accord with one's sense of identity (McKeague, Skorikov, & Serikawa, 2002). Of course, many additional aspects of the contents of identity should be considered to provide a comprehensive description of the range of individual perceptions of work and of one's role as a worker. Among those, one's commitment to a particular occupational field as well as work role salience and its relative subjective importance among other life roles are also critical (Brown et al., 2007; Super et al., 1996). We address these issues in the sections that follow.

Occupational Identity and the Overall Identity Structure

As noted above, in accord with Erikson's theoretical propositions, occupational identity can be considered as a core element of identity (Skorikov & Vondracek, 1998). In the modern world, occupation is often viewed not only as the major source of income, but also as the main mechanism of social integration and the means of developing and expressing one's identity (Christiansen, 1999). Empirical studies

confirm that engaging in occupational exploration and making occupational commitments leads not only to establishing a sense of occupational identity, but also to constructing one's identity in general from childhood through adulthood (Flum & Blustein, 2006; Kroger, 2007; Skorikov, 2007; Vondracek, Silbereisen, Reitzle, & Wiesner, 1999).

Numerous cross-sectional studies have found positive associations between occupational identity and more general conceptions of identity in adolescence and young adulthood (Blustein, Devenis, & Kidney, 1989; Nauta & Kahn, 2007; Savickas, 1985; Skorikov & Vondracek, 1998). Whereas identity development is often marked by asynchrony and relatively low congruence across different domains (Goossens, 2001; Meeus, Iedema, Helsen, & Vollebergh, 1999; Solomontos-Kountouri & Hurry, 2008), adolescents are more likely to be characterized by identity achievement in the occupational domain than in any other domain (Grotevant & Thorbecke, 1982; Skorikov & Vondracek, 1998). Skorikov and Vondracek (1998) found that identity development in the domains of lifestyle, ideology, religion, and politics was correlated with, but lagged behind, occupational identity development, and these authors concluded that occupational identity plays the leading role in the process of adolescent identity formation.

The effects of occupational identity on identity in general are likely to be particularly strong during the transition from school to work (Danielsen, Lorem, & Kroger, 2000). During that period, successful employment strengthens the sense of occupational identity and its salience within the overall identity structure, whereas failure to find adequate employment increases the subjective importance of relational identity, which may then replace occupational identity as a main source of meaning and psychological well-being (Meeus et al., 1997; Skorikov & Vondracek, 2007). Interestingly, in a Norwegian study of recent high-school graduates, work was found to be the primary influence on overall identity regardless of whether the participants were attending college, working, or unemployed (Danielsen et al., 2000). In young and middle adulthood,

the relationships between occupational identity and other identity domains become progressively reciprocal as individuals recognize the need to balance their work, family, religious, and other commitments (Dorn, 1992; Friend, 1973; Kroger, 2007). However, there is also evidence that identity development in the occupational domain consistently outpaces development in other domains in adulthood and is most congruent with identity development at the overall level (Fadjukoff, Pulkkinen, & Kokko, 2005).

Functions of Occupational Identity

The formation of an occupational identity is an important career and developmental task of adolescence (Erikson, 1968; Flum & Blustein, 2006; Lapan, 2004; Vondracek et al., 1986). From a career development perspective, occupational identity represents the central mechanism of agentic control over one's career development (Meijers, 1998; Vondracek & Skorikov, 1997), because it serves as a principal cognitive structure that controls the assimilation and integration of self- and occupational knowledge and allows for making logical and systematic career decisions even when facing a serious career problem. Without a clear and strong occupational identity, individuals would be unable to make self-endorsed career choices, resulting in feelings of distress. This could further impede the capacity for adaptive information processing and decision making (Saunders, Peterson, Sampson, & Reardon, 2000). Indeed, the strength of occupational identity is closely associated with various indices of overall career development progress, such as career maturity (Holland, Johnston, & Asama, 1993; Leong & Morris, 1989; Savickas, 1985; Turner et al., 2006).

Theoretically, possessing an established occupational identity allows for making relatively easy, rational, and mature career decisions in the face of occupational ambiguities (Holland, 1985; Raskin, 1985; Saunders et al., 2000). This proposition has been supported in numerous studies of adolescents and young adults where positive associations have been reported between

occupational identity and career decision-making skills, career search and decision-making self-efficacy, career choice readiness, and career decidedness (Gushue, Scanlan, Pantzer, & Clarke, 2006; Hirschi & Läge, 2007; Holland et al., 1993; Solberg, 1998). In contrast, career indecision is correlated with a less established sense of occupational identity (Conneran & Hartman, 1993; Holland & Holland, 1977). Longitudinal studies of occupational identity in adults provide further evidence of its functional importance. For example, occupational identity achievement was found to be a significant predictor of both occupational attainment and re-establishing the worker's role in the process of occupational rehabilitation (Braveman, Kielhofner, Albrecht, & Helfrich, 2006; Schiller, 1998).

Another important function of occupational identity is to provide the person with a sense of direction and meaning and to establish a framework for occupational goal setting and self-assessment (Christiansen, 1999; Meijers, 1998; Raskin, 1985; Solberg, Close, & Metz, 2002). Experimental research has demonstrated that vocational identity is a strong predictor of the quality of reasoning about future career challenges and opportunities (Klaczynski & Lavalley, 2005). Additionally, naturalistic studies suggest that one's sense of vocational direction is an important predictor of success during the transition from school to work (Lapan, 2004; Mortimer, Zimmer-Gembeck, Holmes, & Shanahan, 2002), particularly for disadvantaged adolescents (Diemer & Blustein, 2006; Ladany, Melincoff, Constantine, & Love, 1997).

Adult occupational identity incorporates both (a) an understanding of who one has been and (b) a sense of desired and possible directions for one's future, and it serves as a means of self-definition and a blueprint for future action (Kielhofner, 2007). The organizing role of occupational identity has been consistently supported in research on workers in a variety of occupations. For example, studies have shown that occupational identity is an important predictor of continuity in one's work role, occupational and organizational commitment, and work

performance (Baruch & Cohen, 2007; Kidd & Frances, 2006; Sutari & Makela, 2007). Research also suggests that occupational identity serves as a control mechanism that regulates adult career stability and the range of acceptable career options (King, Burke, & Pemberton, 2005).

Finally, many theorists have argued that possessing a strong occupational identity contributes to psychosocial adjustment, well-being, and life satisfaction (Christiansen, 1999; Kroger, 2007; Raskin, 1985; Vondracek, 1995). Indeed, empirical studies have provided strong and consistent evidence for positive relationships between occupational identity and psychosocial functioning. During the transition from high school to work, occupational identity achievement appears to be predictive of mental health (De Goede, Spruijt, Iedema, & Meeus, 1999; Meeus et al., 1997) and may help to protect against drug use in men (Frank, Jacobson, & Tuer, 1990). In college students, strength of occupational identity was positively associated with life satisfaction and adjustment, and was negatively associated with distress (Leong & Morris, 1989; Lopez, 1989; Strauser, Lustig, Cogdal, & Uruk, 2006). In working adults, the strength of occupational identity was found to be a strong predictor of affective health, manifested in lower levels of depression and anxiety, and life satisfaction even when controlling for the effects of occupational status, income, education, and self-esteem (McKeague et al., 2002; Schiller, 1998; Skorikov, 2008). A number of cross-sectional studies provide converging evidence that perceiving work as a calling can be highly beneficial in terms of adult workers' psychological health and well-being (Kidder, 2006; Skorikov, 2008; Vaughan & Roberts, 2007; Wrzesniewski et al., 1997). Longitudinal research is needed, however, to clarify the nature of these associations and to test causal hypotheses about the role of occupational identity in human lives.

Occupational Identity Development

From a developmental point of view, occupational identity formation represents a lifelong

process of constructing, shaping, and reshaping the self as a worker (FAME Consortium, 2007). At any given point in time, occupational identity reflects accumulated life experiences organized into an understanding of who one is and wishes to become (Kielhofner, 2007). Adolescence is often considered the stage of development during which the process of identity formation begins, as the limitations of children's cognition and activity may not permit establishing complex, integrated, and stable self-representations (Kroger, 2007). However, childhood experiences very likely provide a foundation for one's occupational identity formation (Skorikov & Vondracek, 2007).

Although children's perceptions of work do not seem to be incorporated into an identity-like cognitive structure (Barak, Feldman, & Noy, 1991; Cook & Simbayi, 1998; Sellers, Satcher, & Comas, 1999), early vocational experiences and preferences may have lasting effects on the process of occupational identity construction. For example, informal observations of family members' work behavior and attitudes, societal expectations and cultural stereotypes, and mass media gradually shape the individual meaning of work (Danto, 2003), and by middle childhood a relatively stable system of vocational preferences can be established. Under favorable conditions, these preferences can facilitate future occupational identity formation (Vondracek et al., 1999). However, they can also exert negative effects. For instance, early experience of restrictive gender-role stereotypes and confined social class roles can limit the range of exploration and perceived career opportunities in adolescence (Gottfredson, 2005).

It is not uncommon for a child to adopt an occupational identity at a young age as a result of identifying with an adult or accepting an occupational identity assigned by others (Kalil, Levine, & Ziol-Guest, 2005). In that case, the child's identity would be almost inevitably ascribed and characterized as foreclosed rather than self-chosen and characterized as achieved (Brisbin & Savickas, 1994; Erikson, 1963; Vondracek et al., 1986). Furthermore, early occupational commitments are often based on an unrealistic self-assessment and change quickly during

the transition from school to work (Vondracek & Skorikov, 1997). For example, there is evidence that athletic occupational identity formed at a relatively young age can be remarkably stable throughout childhood and adolescence, but is frequently associated with failure to explore alternative occupations, poor career decision-making skills, and low career maturity (Brown, Glastetter-Fender, & Shelton, 2000; Murphy, Petitpas, & Brewer, 1996). Most importantly, such foreclosed identities rarely allow for implementing one's vocational plans in the world of adult work (Brown et al., 2000). Thus, many identity researchers argue that an early occupational or major educational choice does not provide an optimal context for psychosocial identity development and future adjustment (e.g., Danielsen et al., 2000). Some children, however, may be much more capable of forming realistic ideas about their future work roles than traditionally assumed, and in those cases there may be positive effects of establishing early vocational preferences (that are, however, open to revision) on subsequent identity development (Vondracek et al., 1999).

Occupational identity development during adolescence may be quite variable, with some adolescents remaining identity diffused in the absence of clear expectations in regard to work preparation and positive role models, while others, when pressured to make decisions about their occupational future, quickly accept a foreclosed occupational identity, especially if they strongly identify with their parents (Vondracek et al., 1986). During the high-school years, however, many adolescents begin questioning and reconsidering the work and career attitudes, beliefs, and values held by adult family members (Stead, 1996), a process referred to by Erikson (1968) as an identity crisis. This process typically leads to occupational identity moratorium, characterized by engagement in exploratory behavior that lays the groundwork for making important career decisions, but that is also usually accompanied by a lengthy delay in making occupational commitments (Erikson, 1968). Inability to make progress toward achieving an occupational identity can lead to vocational role confusion

and career stagnation, whereas the emergence of self-understanding and acceptance during the period of moratorium facilitates subsequent occupational identity achievement and helps to promote occupational adjustment (Salomone & Mangicaro, 1991).

Empirical studies have demonstrated that developmental changes in occupational identity cannot be detected over short periods of time and that there is no predictable pattern of change in any given individual's occupational identity status (Dellas & Jernigan, 1987; Meeus & Dekovic, 1995; Meeus et al., 1999; Van Hoof, 1999). Nevertheless, over longer periods of time, there is a clear developmental progression in occupational identity toward identity achievement and a decline in occupational identity diffusion during adolescence and adulthood (Fadjukoff et al., 2005; Pulkkinen & Kokko, 2000; Skorikov & Vondracek, 1998). A possible exception to this pattern is represented by occupationally foreclosed adolescents, who are most likely to retain their status, frequently well into adulthood (Dellas & Jernigan, 1987; Fadjukoff et al., 2005).

The period of occupational identity moratorium can be a long and difficult part of late adolescence and young adulthood, especially because many adolescents do not exhibit much progress in career development during high school (Vondracek & Skorikov, 1997). Research on career and identity development during the transition to adulthood consistently suggests that today's adolescents and young adults around the world have considerable, long-lasting difficulties with formulating career goals and making occupational commitments (Bloor & Brook, 1993; Fadjukoff et al., 2005; Mortimer et al., 2002; Skorikov, 2007). Identity development in the occupational domain is expected to be particularly difficult and stressful (Erikson, 1968). The extent to which young adults benefit from extending the period of occupational moratorium into their late 20s and early 30s may depend on how they approach the processes of individualization and identity formation. Recent research has suggested that young adults who approach these processes proactively and with a strong sense of

agency (i.e., they accept responsibility for the course of their life; they own their decisions and accept the consequences; they are confident that they can overcome barriers and obstacles) are more likely to engage in exploration and make flexible commitments and less likely to be conforming and avoiding (Schwartz, Côté, & Arnett, 2005).

Some longitudinal data suggest that postponing a transition to the adult work roles can facilitate further occupational identity development toward identity achievement (Fadjukoff, Kokko, & Pulkkinen, 2007). These findings dovetail with theorizing about the developmental relevance of a long period of occupational identity moratorium, which allows for exploring oneself and one's career options without making definitive decisions about one's occupational future (Ladany et al., 1997). However, many young people seem to postpone making occupational commitments without engaging in active and systematic career exploration (Côté, 2000; Salomone & Mangicaro, 1991). Their pattern of occupational behavior, described as floundering (Super, 1957), is marked by an apparently meaningless succession of random jobs and lack of progress in their occupational identity (Mortimer et al., 2002). Floundering is likely to be caused by a dif-fused identity, which prevents adolescents from making meaningful occupational decisions and from learning from their experiences (Salomone & Mangicaro, 1991). Thus, developing at least a general sense of direction and a tentative occupational identity by the beginning of the transition from school to work is an important conclusion to the process of occupational identity formation throughout childhood and adolescence.

There has been very little research on the developmental trends in occupational identity in adulthood. What is known, however, is that from young to middle adulthood there is a strong trend toward making occupational commitments, but the end result can be identity foreclosure as well as achievement (Fadjukoff et al., 2005; Pulkkinen & Kokko, 2000). This finding is consistent with the results of cross-sectional research, which shows that in working

adults the strength of occupational identity is positively correlated with age (Skorikov, 2008). Interestingly, the growth of an occupational commitment also increases the salience of the work role within the person's overall identity structure (Pulkkinen & Kokko, 2000). Unfortunately, little is known about the role of adult work experience in the construction and reconstruction of occupational identities (Brown et al., 2007). Although positive work experience promotes occupational identity development through strengthening of occupational commitments (e.g., Fagerberg & Kihlgren, 2002), adults must constantly renegotiate the balance between their occupational and life dreams and aspirations and the realities of the job market (Lips-Wiersma & McMorland, 2006). Inability to successfully implement one's occupational identity due to the limitations imposed by personal and contextual factors can lead to regressive shifts in occupational identity and even to identity loss (Brown et al., 2007; Fadjukoff et al., 2005; Vrkljan & Polgar, 2007). Moreover, in the process of work transitions, employment experience and occupational identity are likely to exert strong, reciprocal effects, but the exact nature of their influences on each other in adulthood has not been systematically studied.

Influences on Occupational Identity Formation

Theoretically, occupational identity development is shaped by the person's activities and experiences and a variety of individual (e.g., personality and gender) and contextual (e.g., family, peer group, social and economic conditions) factors, as well as their interaction (Skorikov & Vondracek, 2007). Contextual factors can have direct effects on identity via social stereotypes, modeling, perceived opportunity structure, and environmental constraints (see Oyserman & James, Chapter 6, this volume). At the same time, contextual variables can exert indirect effects on identity formation by regulating the direction and repertoire of individual actions.

Individual Activities and Experiences

Vondracek et al. (1986) argued that both vocational and avocational activities can serve as the means of self- and occupational exploration throughout the lifespan and thus can contribute to the process of occupational identity development. Indeed, Vondracek and Skorikov (1997) found that middle- and high-school students derive ideas about their occupational interests, aspirations, and abilities from a variety of work, school, and leisure activities and do not seem to differentiate among those as sources of their preferences and self-assessment. Participation in various organized youth activities, particularly service, faith-based, community, and vocational activities, has also been found to be a positive factor in shaping adolescent identity (Hansen, Larson, & Dworkin, 2003; Vondracek, 1994).

The role of early work experience in the process of occupational identity development has received increasing attention (e.g., Bynner, 1998; Mortimer, 2003; Mortimer & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2007; Skorikov & Vondracek, 1997). However, the actual work activities of children and even adolescents may have limited implications for developing ideas about one's occupational future and testing one's capacity to perform adult work roles. First, many cultures discourage formal employment until the completion of mandatory schooling (Ferreira, Santos, Fonseca, & Haase, 2007). Second, even in countries where many adolescents work while attending school, such as the United States, their jobs are typically located within unskilled manual labor and service occupations. These jobs are not perceived by young workers as relevant to their career plans as adults and do not provide significant opportunities for occupational exploration (Arnett, 2000; Skorikov & Vondracek, 1997). Nevertheless, adolescent work experience was found to be positively related to occupational goal setting (Zimmer-Gembeck & Mortimer, 2006) and development of the work value system (Porfeli, 2007; Skorikov & Vondracek, 1997). Early work experience can also have an indirect, delayed effect on occupational identity during the transition from school to work by increasing youths' employability

and potential for securing higher quality jobs (Mortimer et al., 2002). In contrast, youth unemployment and poor quality of the work environment during the transition to adulthood can inhibit the development of occupational identity (Danielsen et al., 2000; De Goede et al., 1999; Peregoy & Schliebner, 1990).

Children and adolescents in most parts of the world spend much of their waking time participating in educational activities. Schooling is a significant determinant of occupational identity formation, because it facilitates the acquisition of work skills, contributes to the development of occupational interests, and provides direct and indirect career guidance (Bynner, 1998; Dellas & Gaier, 1975; Vondracek & Skorikov, 1997). However, little research has been conducted on the specific effects of schools and academic activities on occupational identity, and the results of the few available studies have been inconsistent. For example, Meeus (1993) and Vondracek (1994) found that academic achievement facilitates occupational identity development in adolescence, but other studies did not find significant associations between academic achievement and occupational identity (Penick & Jepsen, 1992; Turner et al., 2006). Considerable variation among school systems makes it difficult to generalize any conclusions about the effects of educational contexts and activities on student occupational identity. There is converging, international evidence, however, that incorporating an occupational perspective in the academic curriculum (via magnet schools with special curricula that attract students from beyond the usual boundaries of school districts, similar to "special schools" in Great Britain, apprenticeships, internships, job shadowing for high-school students that involves following a member of an occupation for a day or longer to observe their activities, etc.) promotes occupational identity development (Flaxman, Guerrero, & Gretchen, 1999; Heinz, Kelle, Witzel, & Zinn, 1998; Remer, O'Neill, & Gohs, 1984; Zimmer-Gembeck & Mortimer, 2006). In contrast, purely academic school systems may delay the process of occupational identity formation by depriving students of opportunities to engage in occupationally

relevant exploratory activities (Vondracek & Skorikov, 1997). Apprenticeships seem to be particularly beneficial in terms of promoting occupational identity development (Hamilton, 1990; Zimmer-Gembeck & Mortimer, 2006). However, their success depends on the student's ability to integrate complementary as well as contradictory learning experiences (Harris, Simons, Willis, & Carden, 2003). Thus, adolescents who have already formed at least some sense of identity are likely to benefit most from apprenticeships (Skorikov & Vondracek, 2007).

Extracurricular and leisure activities can have numerous and varied effects on identity development as well (Hansen et al., 2003). High-school students who were more advanced in their occupational identity development were also more likely to be involved in extracurricular activities and sports (Vondracek, 1994). Similar findings were obtained in studies of college students (Munson & Savickas, 1999; Munson & Widmer, 1997). However, existing correlational studies do not preclude the possibility of the reverse effect: engaging in specific types of extracurricular and leisure activities can be an outcome of occupational identity development rather than its cause. For example, volunteerism and sports participation are frequently used by career-concerned high-school students to increase their chances of admission to elite colleges.

Personality

Erikson's (1963) theory suggests that successful identity formation during adolescence depends on stable, trait-like, adaptive ego qualities, such as optimism, autonomy, and sense of agency and industry, acquired in the process of accomplishing the developmental tasks of childhood. These ego qualities can be seen as personality traits evolving through life experiences on the basis of innate, temperamental characteristics. Thus, as a major component of overall identity, occupational identity formation is expected to be affected by personality. Indeed, studies on middle school, high school, and college students have consistently

found positive associations between occupational identity development and adaptive personality characteristics (e.g., openness to new experiences, flexibility, curiosity) and negative associations between occupational identity and self-defeating traits (e.g., narcissism, rigidity, defensiveness). In adolescence and young adulthood, occupational identity strength and occupational identity achievement are positively correlated with self-esteem (Munson, 1992; Santos, 2003), proactivity and goal directedness (Santos, 2003; Turner et al., 2006), self-regulation, internal locus of control and orientation toward personal growth (Robitschek & Cook, 1999), and rational decision making (Saunders et al., 2000). In contrast, occupational identity is negatively correlated with general indecisiveness (Lucas & Epperson, 1990; Santos, 2001), goal instability (Santos, 2003), and trait anxiety and depression (Lopez, 1989; Saunders et al., 2000). Unfortunately, there have been no longitudinal studies on the relationships between personality traits and occupational identity, and the hypothesized direction of effects has not been tested.

Gender

Historically, sex-related differences have frequently been theorized to be a major influence on identity in general and on occupational identity in particular (Erikson, 1968; Josselson, 1987). However, numerous empirical studies conducted on early, middle, and late adolescent samples in different countries over the past 20 years have found few or no gender differences in the process of occupational identity formation and its outcomes (Archer, 1989; Diemer & Blustein, 2006; Munson, 1992; Skorikov & Vondracek, 1998). Some studies indicate that girls can be somewhat more advanced than boys in their occupational exploration and commitment during middle and late adolescence (Meeus & Dekovic, 1995; Skorikov & Vondracek, 1998), which may be partially explained by the developmental lag in pubertal and maturational processes during adolescence in boys compared with girls (Skorikov & Vondracek, 2007).

In an early study by Grotevant and Thorbecke (1982), occupational identity was positively related to masculinity in both male and female high-school students. Studies on young adults suggest, however, that gender-related differences in societal demands and expectations may actually promote occupational identity formation in women. For example, Savickas (1985) found that, among medical school students, young adult women were more committed to their career goals, more likely to explore their career options, and had better-defined occupational identities compared to their male counterparts. Savickas explained his findings in terms of the women's need to possess a more stable occupational identity in order to choose and enter a male-dominated occupation. This explanation was supported in a study of Belgian college students majoring in engineering and psychology, in which women were much more likely than men to be assigned to the occupational identity achievement status (Goossens, 2001).

For modern women, the need to progress toward occupational identity achievement can represent a general, rather than occupation-specific, demand. As adolescent girls move into adulthood, contemporary societal expectations promote multiple role conflicts within the female identity (Barnett & Hyde, 2001), but studies of adult women suggest that employment is now the most important role in the hierarchy of role identities for the majority of women (Graham, Sorell, & Montgomery, 2004). To cope with various role conflicts, a working woman needs to possess a clear picture of herself as a worker – and this portrayal must be well integrated into her overall identity. In light of the above, it may not be surprising that, in a long-term study of identity development in Finland (Fadjukoff et al., 2005), women were found to clearly outpace men in terms of progress toward occupational identity achievement from young through middle adulthood. By the age of 42, almost 70% of women in the Finnish sample were identity achieved in the occupational domain, compared to just over 50% of men. In contrast, men were twice as likely to experience regressive changes (transitions in the direction opposite to the hypothesized

progressive sequence, which moves from identity diffusion to foreclosure to moratorium to achievement) in their occupational identity compared to women – 37% versus 19%. Whereas both men and women showed a strong tendency to make occupational commitments, as they grew older, men were more likely than women to adopt a foreclosed identity.

Despite similarities in the level of occupational identity development in adolescence, there are considerable gender differences in the relationships of occupational identity with other domains of identity (Goossens, 2001). Adolescent girls may be more advanced than boys in the family role domain of their identities (Archer, 1989) and may consider their relational identity more important than their occupational identity (Meeus & Dekovic, 1995). The occupational identity of high-school boys appears to be separated from the issues of gender and family, whereas in female high-school students, gender identity begins playing a central role in perceived occupational interests and abilities (Hollinger, 1988). In the process of negotiating their identities, girls begin balancing the occupational and other domains of identity earlier than boys and become progressively sensitive to the issues of family and relationships when making educational and occupational choices in late adolescence (Vondracek et al., 1986). By the end of adolescence, career commitment appears to be negatively related to intimacy (Seginer & Noyman, 2005), and some young women may change their previous occupational plans in favor of their family plans, whereas many professional women decide not to have children in order to pursue their careers. However, the distinction between the occupational and family domains of identity in women has been contested in the literature. Thus, Merrick (1995) argued that adolescent childbearing in some instances can be regarded as a career choice through which young women implement their sense of identity and which represents their adult occupation. Indeed, in some studies of occupational identity, motherhood and child rearing were considered an occupational choice for women (e.g., Frank et al., 1990).

Gender differences and similarities observed in research on occupational identity certainly depend on the historic trends in the interpretation of gender roles and cultural norms given that social context is a strong determinant of occupational identity salience, as well as of the relative importance of different identity domains (Shorter-Gooden & Washington, 1996; Solomontos-Kountouri & Hurry, 2008; Stead, 1996). To date, most research on gender issues in occupational identity has been conducted in Europe and North America, and findings cannot be generalized to other social and historical contexts. In fact, even among post-industrial societies, there is considerable variation in the relationships among various domains of identity (Solomontos-Kountouri & Hurry, 2008). A South African study of the perceived relevance of identity domains in adolescence (Alberts, Mballo, & Ackermann, 2003) provides an interesting example of such cultural differences. In that study, adolescent girls were more likely than boys to see their future career as very important, whereas relationships with the opposite sex were surprisingly more important for boys than girls.

Family and Peers

The influence of significant others has always been considered a major factor in the process of identity development in general (Danielsen et al., 2000) and occupational identity in particular (Vondracek et al., 1986). Research on children and adolescents suggests that significant figures in their lives, such as parents, friends, and teachers, exert a major impact on their occupational identity (Mortimer et al., 2002). However, these effects are complex and depend on the nature of the underlying interpersonal relationships (Li & Kerpelman, 2007) and the entire pattern of social interactions (Flaxman et al., 1999). For example, the density of the social network that provides mentoring is – surprisingly – negatively related to the clarity of occupational identity during the transition from college to work (Dobrow & Higgins, 2005). A possible explanation is that increasing the breadth, rather than depth,

of exploration does not immediately promote career planning and decision making, but rather intensifies the experience of an occupational identity moratorium (Porfeli & Skorikov, 2010; Schwartz, Zamboanga, Weisskirch, & Rodriguez, 2009).

Family of origin is considered a key factor in child and adolescent career development in general (e.g., Bryant, Zvonkovic, & Reynolds, 2006; Hartung, Porfeli, & Vondracek, 2005; Vondracek et al., 1986). However, empirical research on the effects of family on occupational identity formation has been largely inconclusive. For example, Lopez (1989) reported that the overall strength of occupational identity was correlated with family dynamics (i.e., how family members relate to one another), whereas others (e.g., Hartung, Lewis, May, & Niles, 2002) have not found a significant association. Moreover, when the associations among family variables are statistically controlled, very few characteristics of the family exert independent effects on occupational identity (Hargrove, Creagh, & Burgess, 2002; Johnson, Buboltz, & Nichols, 1999). Hargrove, Inman, and Crane (2005) found no association between strength of high-school students' occupational identity and any of the family environment characteristics studied, including quality of family relationships, family goal orientations, and degree of organization and control within the family system. In a study of 11th graders, Penick and Jepsen (1992) found that the strength of occupational identity was also independent of the family's socioeconomic status, and that there was no consistent pattern of associations with family characteristics reported by students, mothers, and fathers. Similarly, a large-scale study conducted on 12–24-year-old Dutch adolescents found that the effects of family on occupational identity status were small, and that the process of occupational identity formation appeared to be influenced more strongly by peers than parents (Meeus & Dekovic, 1995). Similar findings were reported in a study of commitment to career choice among American college students (Feldsman & Blustein, 1999). In contrast, Berríos-Allison (2005) reported more consistent associations between occupational identity status

and family differentiation, connectedness, and separateness.

The influence of peers on occupational identity may be particularly strong in middle adolescence, when membership in adolescent crowds is predictive of occupational interests and preferences in early adulthood (Johnson, 1987). Meeus (1993) found that support provided by high-school friends facilitated progress toward occupational identity achievement, and that the effects of peers remained consistently important in educational and work settings after high school graduation (see also Meeus & Dekovic, 1995). The influence of peers on adolescent occupational identity has been interpreted in terms of mutual reinforcement within the peer group, which is typically characterized by similar occupational interests and career goals (Flaxman et al., 1999).

Nevertheless, family should not automatically be considered less important than peers in terms of effects on occupational identity development (Skorikov & Vondracek, 2007). First, the formation of a peer group and peer interactions are undoubtedly influenced by upbringing in the family (e.g., Granic, Dishion, & Hollenstein, 2003). Second, the effects of family can be lagged and indirect, and there is evidence that families that promote exploration, independence, and achievement facilitate long-term progress in the process of occupational identity formation, whereas growing up in a dysfunctional family can jeopardize forming an adaptive occupational identity. In contrast, the immediate effects of family can be limited to only some of the occupational identity prerequisites, such as occupational exploration (Flum & Blustein, 2006). Clearly, the effects of family on vocational development are complex and determined by multivariate relationships rather than by simple associations.

Modern Social and Economic Conditions

Occupational identity, as well as identity in general, can be viewed as a form of adaptation to the social context (Baumeister & Muraven, 1996; Kielhofner, 2007), which is effective only

in relation to the changing social, economic, and cultural contexts of human lives (Blustein & Noumair, 1996; Law, Meijers, & Wijers, 2002). In the past, many traditional societies assigned an occupational identity to the child based on the basis of cultural norms and traditions, and some cultures may still promote early acceptance of a foreclosed, ascribed identity (Waterman, 1999). However, assigning an occupational identity may not be possible – or at least effective – in modern, post-industrial societies, which encourage active identity exploration and facilitate construction of a highly individualized sense of identity (Kroger, 2007). The growing trend toward individualization of the life course and increased variability in the nature and timing of developmental transitions leaves young people with few normative resources with which to develop a clear occupational identity (Côté, 2000; Mortimer et al., 2002).

Ongoing changes in the world of work have important implications for understanding the current context for occupational identity formation and implementation. Those changes include globalization, rapid shifts in occupational structures and the labor market, continuous technological innovation and lifelong learning, a growing demand for flexibility and mobility at work, a dramatic decrease in loyalty within employee-employer relationships, coupled with a decrease in the availability of normative, predictable, long-term career paths, as well as growing diversity in the workplace (Blustein, 2006; Hall, 2002; Kirpal, 2004; Patton & McMahon, 2006; also see Haslam & Ellemers, Chapter 30, this volume). In Europe, Australia, and North America, these changes have already resulted in the recognition of the growing importance of self-centered, flexible, and proactive careers (Briscoe & Hall, 2006; Brown et al., 2007; Kirpal, 2004; Patton & McMahon, 2006). Accordingly, adjustment to the nature of careers in modern economies progressively depends on establishing and maintaining a strong sense of proactive, dynamic, and highly individualized occupational identity (Skorikov & Vondracek, 2007). For workers with a traditional, rigid occupational identity, characterized by a high level of

identification with a narrowly defined occupation and expectations of loyalty and stability in employer-employee relationships, changes at work present a great challenge (Kirpal, 2004).

Forming an adaptive occupational identity is both important and challenging during the transition to adulthood. Traditionally, following in parents' footsteps has been the common path toward forming an occupational identity and a major mechanism of the intergenerational transmission of occupational status as well as career advancement (Kalil et al., 2005). However, due to vast and rapid changes in social and economic conditions, educational requirements, and career patterns over the past three decades, children can no longer rely on their parents as adequate career role models. Their career success and satisfaction depend on developing a highly individualized occupational identity characterized by dynamic achievement, but they are offered few opportunities to engage in adequate career exploration and preparation. Furthermore, as adults, they are progressively challenged by massive layoffs, organizational restructuring, and dramatic shifts in the nature of jobs in many occupations in response to technological innovations. Often, individuals are forced to change careers in their 40s or 50s as a result of outsourcing, downsizing, and other corporate decisions. Recent publications make a strong case in favor of the critical role played by the worker's occupational identity in these career transitions (Fouad & Bynner, 2008). Whereas possessing a strong yet flexible occupational identity has been shown to be particularly important in high-status occupations (Kidd & Frances, 2006; Suutari & Makela, 2007), future research needs to investigate the forms of occupational identity and their implications among lower-status workers, particularly those in non-professional, blue-collar occupations. Some studies suggest that occupational identity could be one of the major factors promoting employability following a job loss among members of those occupations (McArdle, Waters, Briscoe, & Hall, 2007).

Another important line of future research involves a detailed examination of cultural differences and similarities in occupational identity (Blustein & Noumair, 1996; Flum & Blustein,

2006; Toporek & Pope-Davis, 2001). Modern societies are becoming progressively multiethnic and multicultural (see Jensen, Arnett, & McKenzie, Chapter 13, this volume; Huynh, Nguyen, & Benet-Martínez, Chapter 35, this volume), and greater attention should be paid to the cultural and socioeconomic aspects of the meaning of work and of occupational identity construction in ethnic and cultural minority groups. However, only a few empirical studies have addressed the issues of ethnic differences and minority status in occupational identity (e.g., Diemer & Blustein, 2006; Gushue et al., 2006; Leong, 1991; Turner et al., 2006). Although there has been a promising increase in the number of such publications in the past few years, the overall scope of this line of research has been limited. Nevertheless, recent findings clearly demonstrate that developing a strong, positive, and flexible occupational identity is very important for economically disadvantaged and minority youth, who face significant career barriers associated with their status within the society (Diemer & Blustein, 2006, 2007; also see Oyserman & James, Chapter 6, this volume).

In addition, little is known about the functions of occupational identity and its relationships with other domains of identity in non-Western cultural contexts (Fouad & Bynner, 2008). However, the few available studies suggest that the process of vocational identity development in less individualistic, less industrialized, and more religiously based cultures may differ from that observed in the North American and Western European samples that comprise most of the literature (e.g., Solomontos-Kountouri & Hurrey, 2008). Further research on international labor force migration, which is frequently associated with renegotiating an occupational identity in the process of occupational and social adaptation (Cooke, 2007), is also urgently needed.

Occupational Identity Interventions

There has been little research on targeted interventions in the process of occupational identity development and their effects on career and life trajectories. Both identity and career theorists

have frequently noted the importance of vocational guidance (e.g., Erikson, 1968; Raskin, 1989; Vondracek, 1993) but the evidence suggests that few adolescents obtain any professional help with finding appealing career paths or developing their occupational identities (Mortimer et al., 2002). To successfully promote the process of occupational identity development, interventions should take into account developmental differences in occupational identity formation and status (Raskin, 1994). Such interventions might begin in childhood by helping children to acquire a sense of industry (Vondracek, 1993) and exposing them to positive occupational role models. In adolescence, occupational identity interventions are particularly appropriate, as there is evidence that they may significantly enhance career exploration opportunities and facilitate active and systematic exploration guided by a tentative career choice (Raskin, 1989; Salomone & Mangicaro, 1991). The impact of such interventions can be particularly positive if they include active involvement and support of the family (Berríos-Allison, 2005).

During middle and late adolescence, occupational identity formation can be significantly enhanced by providing career mentors and establishing apprenticeships (Hamilton, 1990; Long, Sowa, & Niles, 1995). In late adolescence, with the emergence of serious concerns about one's career prospects, even simple, short-term interventions, such as career development courses, have been found to be valuable in terms of motivating adolescents to explore identity issues and clarify their sense of occupational identity (Anderson, 1995; Barnes & Herr, 1998; Scott & Ciani, 2008). Modern interventions with adolescents should also incorporate the use of the Internet, which has already become a powerful tool in the process of occupational identity construction, and should facilitate establishing a relatively flexible occupational identity, necessary for adjustment and success in the labor market (Terêncio & Soares, 2003).

During the transition to adulthood, an important task is assisting youth with the process of integrating the occupational domain with other domains of identity, particularly the family

domain (Dorn, 1992; Graham et al., 2004; Skorikov & Vondracek, 2007). Yet the most critical task is assisting youth with a successful transition from occupational identity exploration to occupational identity implementation. This transition can be challenging – research suggests that many adolescents do not possess a realistic picture of their occupational opportunities and prospects (Mortimer et al., 2002), and they are further handicapped by insufficient skills and environmental constraints during the transition to the role of an adult worker (FAME Consortium, 2007). As career paths become more changeable and work transitions become more common, there is a growing need to address the corresponding changes and adjustments in occupational identity during middle adulthood (Fouad & Bynner, 2008). One of the key issues for appropriate occupational identity interventions is facilitating adaptability and flexibility. Numerous studies indicate that a narrow and rigid occupational identity is often a major obstacle for occupational success and satisfaction in the modern economy (Brown et al., 2007).

Successful future interventions require a much deeper understanding of occupational identity than has been achieved so far. Clearly, further longitudinal studies are needed to identify the mechanisms underlying occupational identity formation and its outcomes, particularly during the transition to adulthood. Previous research, for the most part, has been conducted on college students and has utilized cross-sectional designs. Findings from such studies provide little information about the nature of the relationships of occupational identity to other aspects of career development and to other identity domains, or about the developmental processes underlying the formation of occupational identity. A systematic investigation of the roles played by schools and family in constructing occupational identities is a critical direction for future research. In this regard, intervention studies could also provide a valuable tool in developing a better understanding of the development and implementation of occupational identity. A careful assessment of intervention outcomes can shed light on the mechanisms of promoting an adaptive identity,

as well as on those factors that can jeopardize the progression toward successful identity achievement and implementation. A serious commitment on the part of intervention professionals to understand and deal with the full complexity of individuals trying to develop a firm occupational identity in challenging contexts would benefit not only these individuals but also their families and communities.

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S. Alexander Haslam and Naomi Ellemers

Abstract

In recent years, theory and research on issues of identity have addressed a range of topics relevant to organizations, such as leadership, motivation, communication, decision-making, negotiation, productivity, stress and well-being. Identities in organizations can be defined at different levels, including the *individual* (people's personal identity within the organization), *group* (teams within an organization), *organizational* (the organization as a whole) and *cultural* (commonalities in identity within a society as a whole). Moreover, identity processes can manifest themselves as context-determined consequences of organizational life, as strategic responses to organizational conditions, as motivators of organizational goals and behaviour, as determinants of normative and organizational influence, and as organizational and political projects in their own right. Organizations make us who we are, and who we are determines the type of organizations that we make. A key goal of this chapter is to place this very diverse body of work within the broader canvas of organizational and social psychological research. We consider theoretical and practical contributions to our understanding of both organizations and the nature of identity, by first outlining key identity processes specified with social identity theory (SIT) and self-categorization theory (SCT) and then demonstrating how these provide the basis for an integrated analysis of three central organizational topics: leadership, motivation and stress. A fundamental point that emerges from this review is that processes pertaining to organizational identity are central to the meaning, form and dynamics of organizational life — as well as to the fact that organizational life is possible at all.

Over the past 20 years, industrial and organizational psychologists' interest in identity and related concepts has increased at a phenomenal rate. An early catalyst for this work was the publication in 1989 of a landmark article by Blake Ashforth and Fred Mael in the *Academy of Management Review*. In this, they applied the insights of Henri Tajfel and John Turner's *social*

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identity theory to issues in management and organizational science. This paper has now been cited over 2,000 times, and at least 15 other publications on identity and organizations have been cited more than 300 times. These are listed in Table 30.1, and it is worth noting that more than 30 other publications in this area have been cited over 100 times, with the 40 most highly cited papers together having been cited over 15,000 times.

From these crude statistics it can clearly be seen that, far from being a peripheral concern, issues of identity have become a major interest within the organizational field. From the range of outlets in which this work is published and the dramatic increase in interest that has been witnessed in recent years (for details, see Haslam, 2004, p. xxv; Haslam, Postmes, & Ellemers, 2003), it is also apparent that this research is having an increasingly broad and deep impact on our understanding of organizational dynamics.

The goal of this chapter is to chart and explain the contribution made by research into identity processes in organizations – first by clarifying the importance of (social) identity processes to organizational life, and then demonstrating how an integrated understanding of these processes can be used to develop accounts of key organizational phenomena that are both novel and powerful.

In line with these objectives, the first part of this chapter provides an overview of some of the key identity processes that have been of interest to organizational researchers. Following Ashforth and Mael, this discussion is heavily informed by work in the social identity tradition (specifically, social identity theory, *SIT*; Tajfel & Turner, 1979, 1986; and self-categorization theory, *SCT*; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987; Turner, Oakes, Haslam, & McGarty, 1994; see also Spears, Chapter 9, this volume).

Following on from this, the second part looks at the ways in which appreciation of these various processes can be used to provide an integrated understanding of specific organizational topics. Because a detailed review would fill several books (e.g., see Bartel, Blader, & Wrzesniewski,

2006; Haslam, 2001; Haslam, van Knippenberg, Platow, & Ellemers, 2003), the treatment here is necessarily selective. Accordingly, we focus our analysis on just three core topics: leadership, motivation and stress. Although necessarily selective, these are topics that have proved to be of particular interest to organizational theorists and practitioners. Accordingly, our focus on these topics is a useful way of showcasing what the study of identity can bring to organizational science.

The chapter ends with a reflection on the way in which identity serves as an integrative theme for organizational science. A key conclusion here is that, although many issues remain to be resolved, an appreciation of identity processes in organizations has become, and will remain, central to the study of organizational behaviour. This is because it is our collective sense of who we are – and what we might be – that provides the psychological foundation for the structures and achievements of the organizational world. Indeed, identity lies not only at the centre of organizational psychology, but at the heart of the organization itself.

Part 1: Identity Processes and Their Relevance to Organizational Life

The Definition and Structure of Organizational Identity

Within social psychology, the concept of *social identity* grew from an awareness of the psychological reality and importance of the social group and of its distinctive contribution to cognition and behaviour. As defined by Tajfel (1972), social identity is an “individual’s knowledge that he [or she] belongs to certain social groups together with some emotional and value significance to him [or her] of this group membership” (p. 31). A core idea here is that groups are not only external features of the world, but can also be *internalized* and thereby contribute to a person’s *sense of self*. In this way, group memberships make a fundamental contribution to a person’s sense of ‘who they are’ (Turner, 1975).

Table 30.1 Publications on 'identity' and 'organization' that have been cited more than 300 times^a

Authors	Year	Title	Outlet	Citations	Citations per year
Ashforth & Mael	1989	Social identity theory and the organization	<i>Academy of Management Review</i>	2,061	98.1
Kogut & Zander	1996	What firms do? Coordination, identity, and learning	<i>Organization Science</i>	1,280	91.4
Dutton, Dukerich, & Harquail	1994	Organizational images and member identification	<i>Administrative Science Quarterly</i>	1,236	77.3
Albert & Whetten	1985	Organizational identity	<i>Research in Organizational Behavior</i>	1,183	47.3
Dutton & Dukerich	1991	Keeping an eye on the mirror: image and identity in organizational adaptation	<i>Academy of Management Journal</i>	1,092	57.5
Czarniawska-Joerges & Czarniawska	1997	<i>Narrating the organization: dramas of institutional identity</i>	Book	1,064	81.8
Hogg & Terry	2000	Social identity and self-categorization processes in organizational contexts	<i>Academy of Management Review</i>	897	89.7
Mael & Ashforth	1992	Alumni and their alma mater: a partial test of the reformulated model of organizational identification	<i>Journal of Organizational Behavior</i>	739	41.0
Haslam	2001	<i>Psychology in organizations: the social identity approach</i>	Book (2 editions)	725	81.0
Ashforth & Humphrey	1993	Emotional labour in service roles: The influence of identity	<i>Academy of Management Review</i>	717	42.2
Gioia, Schultz, & Corley	2000	Organizational identity, image and adaptive instability	<i>Academy of Management Review</i>	549	54.9
Akerlof & Kranton	2005	Identity and the economics of organizations	<i>Journal of Economic Perspectives</i>	439	87.8
Alvesson & Willmott	2002	Identity regulation as organizational control: producing the appropriate individual	<i>Journal of Management Studies</i>	435	54.4
Scott & Lane	2000	A stakeholder approach to organizational identity	<i>Academy of Management Review</i>	391	39.1

Table 30.1 (continued)

Authors	Year	Title	Outlet	Citations	Citations per year
Hatch & Schultz	1997	Relations between organizational culture, identity and image	<i>European Journal of Marketing</i>	334	25.7
Parker	2000	<i>Organizational culture and identity: unity and division at work</i>	Book	307	30.7

Note: ^aData abstracted from Google Scholar, April 6, 2010.

In organizational contexts, this means that the organizations to which we belong (and the units within those organizations; e.g., teams, sections and departments) can also provide us with a sense of social identity – an *organizational social identity* (or *organizational identity* for short). Reflecting this, when we engage with these organizations or organizational units, we commonly refer to their members as ‘we’ and ‘us’ not just ‘them’ (Fiol, 2002; Gioia, Schultz, & Corley, 2000). Importantly, this is not simply a metaphorical allusion. Instead, it speaks to aspects of those organizations that we perceive to be real and important, and which (as we will see) are likely to impact upon our thoughts and actions in significant ways. For this reason, the capacity for organizations to furnish their members with a sense of social identity (and for them to project this identity to the world at large) is commonly considered to be one of their defining features (e.g., Statt, 1994).

Elaborating further on the nature and structure of social identity, Turner (1982) subsequently argued that this and other cognitive representations of the self take the form of *self-categorizations*. Within SCT, the self is seen as a member of a particular class or category of stimuli, and as such is perceived to be (a) more or less equivalent to other stimuli in that category, and (b) more or less distinct from stimuli in other categories. For example, if a female dentist categorizes herself as a dentist, she acknowledges her similarity to other dentists and her difference from, say, patients or doctors. Following Rosch (1978), SCT argues that these identity-defining categories exist at different levels of abstraction with higher-level identities

(e.g., health professional) being more inclusive than those defined at lower levels (e.g., doctor, dentist).

In the organizational domain, this means that identities can be realized at many different levels, each of which provides a different framework for both organizational behaviour and its interpretation (Cornellissen, Haslam, & Balmer, 2007; Schultz, Hatch, & Larsen, 2000). In this vein, A.D. Brown (2001) identifies four relevant levels of analysis: *individual* (relating to people’s *personal identity* as unique individuals within the organization; Turner, 1982), *group* (relating to the shared identity of organizational teams and sections), *organizational* (relating to the identity of the organization as a whole) and *cultural* (relating to commonalities in identity across organizations and within a particular culture or society). Importantly, from the perspective of SCT, identities at all these levels of abstraction are equally ‘real’ and just as much a reflection of a person’s ‘true’ self (Oakes, Haslam, & Turner, 1994). This means that no single level of self-categorization is inherently more appropriate or useful than another, and hence that none is in any sense more fundamental to who or what the person is. It is worth noting as well that this proposition goes against a general tendency for industrial and organizational psychologists (after Münsterberg, 1913; in keeping with many other theorists; e.g., see Skorikov & Vondracek, Chapter 29, this volume; Soenens & Vansteenkiste, Chapter 17, this volume; Waterman, Chapter 16, this volume) to accord privileged status to personal identity – as if a person’s ‘true’ self is always defined by their individuality (see Asch, 1952; Oakes, 1996).

The Motivation for Positive, Distinct and Enduring Organizational Identity

As noted elsewhere in this Handbook (e.g., Spears, [Chapter 9](#), this volume), a specific empirical catalyst for early social identity work was the series of *minimal group studies* conducted by Tajfel and his colleagues in the early 1970s (Tajfel, 1970; Tajfel, Flament, Billig, & Bundy, 1971). These studies sought to identify the minimal conditions that would lead members of one group to discriminate in favour of the *ingroup* to which they belonged and against another *outgroup* to which they did not belong. The robust finding that emerged from these studies was that even the most stripped-down conditions – in which groups had no pre-existing meaning and no obvious self-relevance – were sufficient to encourage ingroup-favouring responses. This suggested that the mere act of individuals *categorizing themselves* as group members was sufficient to lead them to display ingroup favouritism (Turner, 1975). Moreover, self-categorization of this form can be seen to provide the psychological underpinnings of group behaviour in general. In other words, it is a sense of shared social identity that makes group behaviour possible (Turner, 1982), just as it is a shared sense of organizational identity that makes organizational behaviour possible (Haslam, Postmes, & Ellemers, 2003).

Organizational research has shown that the basic patterns revealed in minimal group settings are reproduced in a range of work contexts. For example, in an early study of wage negotiations, R. J. Brown (1978) found that different professional groups were motivated not simply to earn as much as possible, but to preserve wage *differentials* which ensured that their own group earned more than others. Indeed, as was found in the minimal group studies, this motivation meant that group members would sacrifice absolute gain in order to preserve their ingroup's relative advantage.

In this regard, one of the key points that the minimal group studies brought home to Tajfel

(1972) was that, when people categorize themselves as members of a social group, they are motivated to establish a social identity that is *positive* and *distinct*. That is, when their sense of self is defined in terms of group membership, people want to feel that this group is 'special'. They are motivated to behave in ways which establish the superiority of the ingroup relative to comparison outgroups and aim to preserve that state of affairs over time, by protecting their identity against circumstances that may challenge their group's superiority or undermine its distinctiveness.

Consistent with these motivations, Albert and Whetten (1985) argued that organizational identities tend to be defined by anchors that provide some continuity in capturing an organization's central and distinctive features (e.g., mission statements and other organizational pronouncements that define 'us' as different from, and better than, 'them'; Dutton, Dukerich, & Harquail, 1994; Haslam & Ellemers, 2005). Moreover, in line with this insight, the significance of people's desire for organizational identities that are positive, distinct and enduring is revealed in multiple strands of organizational research. In particular, these motivations become apparent in the context of organizational *change* – for example, when firms are undergoing merger, acquisition or restructuring. Here, a large body of research attests to the fact that employees whose sense of identity is bound up with their membership of a particular organizational unit typically find change to that unit intensely threatening, and hence are likely to resist it (e.g., Ellemers, 2003; Jetten, O'Brien, & Trindall, 2002; Terry, 2003; van Leeuwen & van Knippenberg, 2003). This is especially true when change is driven by agencies external to the group itself. For related reasons, loss or devaluation of organizational identity (e.g., resulting from the fact that after organizational change, a self-defining organizational group no longer exists in its original form) is also found to be a source of profound organizational stress (Haslam & Reicher, 2006a; see below).

The Contribution of Perceived Social Structure to Strategies of Identity Enhancement

In the minimal group studies, participants achieved positive distinctiveness through a strategy of *social competition* that led them to favour their ingroup over an outgroup. However, within SIT, social competition is conceptualized as only one of three strategies that individuals can pursue in order to achieve a sense of positive social identity. Two other strategies that can achieve this objective are *individual mobility* and *social creativity*. Which of these three strategies a person resorts to is seen to depend on three structural elements: the perceived *permeability* of group boundaries, and the perceived *stability* and *legitimacy* of an ingroup's position relative to other groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; see also Ellemers, 1993; Spears, Chapter 9, this volume).

Without going into too much detail, if members of low-status groups believe that group boundaries are permeable, then in order to deal with the negative identity that is associated with their group's low status, they should tend to favour a strategy of individual mobility that leads them to act individually and seek out a new positive group identity. For example, if a woman finds that her gender identity is a bar to preferment and promotion in her place of work, she may seek to disavow this identity and act like 'one of the boys' in order to get ahead (Ellemers, Van den Heuvel, De Gilder, Maass, & Bonvini, 2007; Schmitt, Ellemers, & Branscombe, 2003).

On the other hand, if individuals perceive group boundaries to be impermeable (so that group membership is fixed and one's low status is inescapable) individual mobility is not an option. Here, if social relations are *secure* (i.e., seen as both stable and legitimate), members of low-status groups are predicted to engage in social creativity – striving to accentuate their positivity in alternative ways that are irrelevant to the status-defining dimension. They might do this by endorsing beliefs of the form 'We may not be as wealthy/intelligent/qualified as them, but we're more down-to-earth/friendly/kind' (Terry, Carey, & Callan, 2001). As an example of this,

Terry and Callan (1998) examined the reactions of employees in two hospitals (one high-status, one low-status) that were going through the process of a merger. Here, those who had been in the low-status hospital acknowledged the inferiority of their ingroup on the status-relevant dimensions of clinical excellence, but compensated for this by accentuating their superiority on status-irrelevant dimensions such as friendliness and sociability. Likewise, Ashforth and Kreiner (1999) examined the ways in which people who do 'dirty work' (i.e., who have low-status jobs) respond to the challenge that their low-status profession poses for their sense of work-based identity (see also Lupton, 2000). The researchers observed that these workers deal with the potentially negative implications of their occupation for the self by defining it in creative ways that focus on positives rather than negatives. For example, garbage collectors draw attention to the fact that their job involves working outdoors, dog catchers focus on their flexible hours, and exotic dancers highlight the fact that they have plenty of opportunities to meet new people.

Yet if relations are impermeable and *insecure* (i.e., seen to be unstable and/or illegitimate), then members of low-status groups generally prove less willing to accept their low status and to try to 'work around' it. It is here that they are more likely to define themselves in terms of their group membership and strive to engage in social competition with a view to achieving some form of *social change*. As in the minimal group studies, this may involve challenging the outgroup, and its status, head on. Consistent with this analysis, experimental research by Wright and his colleagues has shown that, if members of low-status groups are vying to gain entrance to an organizational élite, they are far more likely to pursue a strategy of collective conflict when access to the high-status group is impossible and the behaviour of that group appears illegitimate. Under other conditions – especially when the high-status group promotes some 'token' low-status group members to cultivate the appearance of boundary permeability – members of the low-status group are much less likely to challenge the status quo

(Wright, 2000; see also Reicher & Haslam, 2006; Reynolds, Turner, & Haslam, 2000; Taylor et al., 1987).

The Salience of Organizational Identities and Variation in Individuals' Ability to Embody Them

We can see from the previous section that SIT is focused largely on the psychological and behavioural implications of individuals coming (or not coming) to define themselves in terms of social identity. However, the theory does not deal in any great detail with the question of how particular social identities become salient in the first place. In contrast, these questions are of primary importance within SCT.

A key process here is that of *self-stereotyping*. This allows the self to be perceived as categorically interchangeable with other ingroup members – a process Turner (1982) termed *depersonalization*. Most theory and research in psychology defines the individual, 'who one is' (and therefore what one *does* and *seeks* to do) almost exclusively in terms of idiosyncratic personal attributes (i.e., personal identity). Complementing this view, SCT posits that when people self-stereotype as group members (i.e., when social identity is salient), the self (and the actions and aspirations dictated by this self) is defined in terms of stereotypical attributes (e.g., values and goals) that are shared with others who are perceived to be representative of the same social category. Building upon this point, SCT goes on to provide an analysis of *social identity salience* (Oakes, 1987; Turner, 1985). Here, SCT specifies the processes that dictate *whether* people define themselves in terms of personal or social identity and, when social identity is salient, *which* particular group membership serves to guide behaviour. In any given organization, when will employees see themselves and others as members of the department or team to which they belong, or as members of the organization as a whole, rather than acting as individuals? Answering such questions is important, because, as we intimated above, the *particular* level at

which organizational members define themselves has distinctive implications both for their own behaviour and for the functioning (and analysis) of the organization as a whole (Ellemers, de Gilder, & van den Heuvel, 1998; van Dick, 2004; van Dick, Wagner, Stellmacher, & Christ, 2004).

Evidence garnered by self-categorization theorists suggests that social identity salience is the product of an interaction between two processes: *perceiver readiness* (or *accessibility*) and *fit* (Oakes, 1987; Oakes, Turner, & Haslam, 1991; after Bruner, 1957). This means that people are more likely to define themselves in terms of a particular social identity if this identity has prior meaning for them and if it allows them to make sense of the particular reality with which they are confronted in any given setting. We are more likely to define ourselves as psychologists if we have been working as psychologists for a long time, and if it makes sense to do so in the context that we find ourselves – for example, if we are at a psychology conference rather than a football match.

The process of perceiver readiness ensures that categorization always depends, at least in part, on the expectations, goals and theories which the perceiver brings into any situation – many of which derive from their group memberships and the socialization experiences associated with them. People thus organize and construe the world in ways that reflect the groups to which they already belong and in this way their social histories lend stability, predictability and continuity to ongoing experience (Fiol, 2001; Oakes et al., 1994; Peteraf & Shanley, 1997; Reicher, 1996; Rousseau, 1998; Turner & Giles, 1981). Along these lines, it is apparent that particular social group memberships are more likely to be used as a basis for self-definition if they are valued and self-involving, and contribute to an enduring sense of identity. For this reason, *identification* with a given social category (e.g., a work team, a department, an organization) is one particularly important factor that affects a person's readiness to use that category in order to define themselves across situations (e.g., Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 2002; Turner, 1999). When a person identifies strongly with a given

organization, for example, they will be more prepared to interpret the world, and their own place within it, in a manner consistent with that organization's values, ideology and culture (Kramer, Brewer, & Hanna, 1996; Mael & Ashforth, 1992; Rousseau, 1998).

Yet, as well as being determined by prior experience, social categorization is also determined by features of the immediate context with which the perceiver is confronted. The principle of *comparative fit* explains how people adapt their self-definitions to different comparative contexts, depending on the salience of specific dimensions of judgement and relevant others in that context. Specifically, the likelihood that people define themselves in terms of a particular social category increases to the extent that the differences among members *within* that category are perceived to be smaller than the differences *between* members of different categories (Turner, 1985). One broad implication of this principle is that employees will be more likely to categorize themselves as members of a particular organizational group in intergroup rather than intragroup contexts (Haslam, Oakes, Turner, & McGarty, 1995). For example, teachers in different schools should be more likely to define themselves as teachers rather than as employees of a particular school in situations where they are in competition with other professions (rather than with each others' schools; Van Dick & Wagner, 2002). This same principle is also illustrated in research on the formation of *faultlines* and the emergence of intergroup conflict as a result of employee diversity in organizations. This work has argued and shown that employees in organizations are more likely to form different subgroups when they can be distinguished from each other on multiple dimensions of comparison – for instance, when young female employees with a university degree work together with older male employees with professional training (Lau & Murningham, 1998; Thatcher, Jehn, & Zanutto, 2003). This can be explained as a consequence of the fact that the convergence of multiple characteristics which differentiate between groups of individual workers increases the comparative fit of these subgroups.

In addition to comparative fit, the likelihood that people will invoke a particular categorization to make sense of the world also depends on the *normative fit* of that category to a specific context. Whereas comparative fit speaks to the distinctive salience of category characteristics, the principle of normative fit relates to the meaningfulness of category *content* as a basis for distinguishing between individuals. This principle also helps perceivers to understand and predict how individuals will respond or behave in a particular situation. For instance, the distinction between managers versus workers is more likely to predict employees' respective positions in discussions about working unpaid overtime, than in a discussion about the selection of snacks in the canteen. In other words, people are more likely to see themselves and others as members of distinct categories when the *nature* of the differences between them is consistent with category-related expectations (Oakes et al., 1991). If these content-related expectations are not met (e.g., when different attitudes about overtime work cut across the distinction between managers and workers), the social categorization will not be invoked to make sense of events or to define the perceiver's own action.

The way in which prior experience and current context interact to determine the salience of organizational identities is summarized schematically in Fig. 30.1. The key point to note here is that organizational identity salience and organizational identification are dynamically inter-related. That is, whether an organizational identity becomes salient at a given point in time is interactively determined by the accessibility of organizational self-categories and current organizational conditions. However, once people develop a strong organizational identity in this way, this in turn helps to foster an ongoing sense of organizational identification that will enhance the salience of organizational identities in the future.

Importantly, principles of fit do not just play a role in determining social identity salience. They also help determine *which aspects* of any given organizational identity will be seen to define that

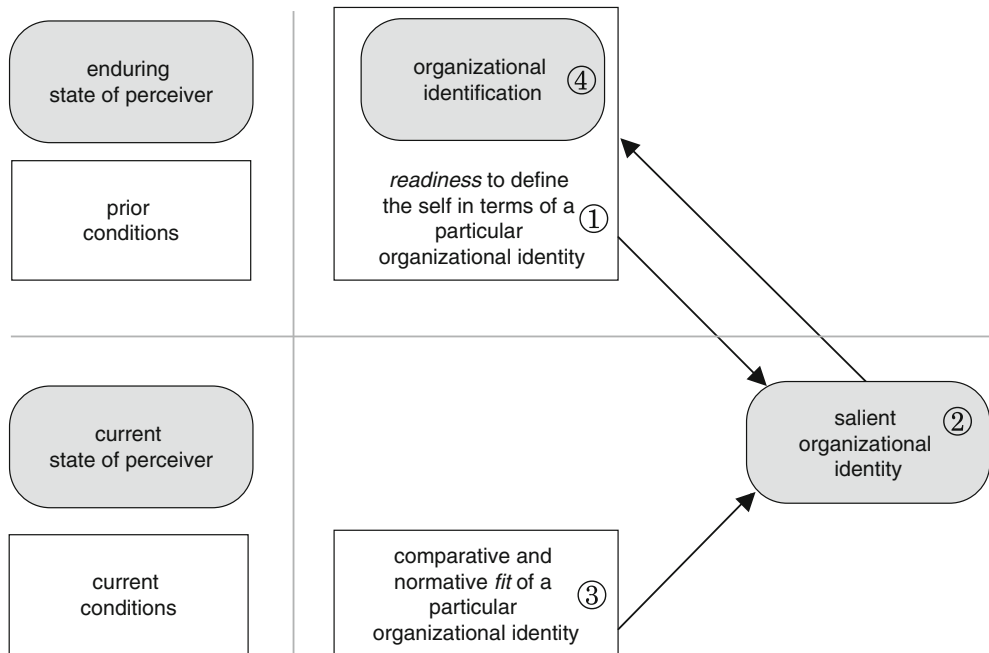


Fig. 30.1 The inter-relationship between organizational identification and organizational identity salience (adapted from Haslam, Postmes, & Ellemers, 2003) *Note:* Organizational identification reflects a person's relatively enduring identification with an organization or organizational unit (i.e., their pre-existing *readiness* ① to use an organizational category to define their sense of self (what Rousseau, 1998, refers to as *deep-structure identification*). Organizational identity salience ② (what Rousseau, 1998, calls *situated identification*) reflects the impact of organizational identification in interaction with perceptions

of the specific set of contextual conditions that impact on the perceiver in the current context ③ (i.e., perceiver readiness in interaction with the *fit* of a particular self-categorization; Oakes, 1987). In this way, current and prior conditions contribute to the current state of the perceiver which in turn contributes to his or her long-term state ④ (Fiol, 2002; Haslam, Postmes & Ellemers, 2003; Rousseau, 1998). This long-term state then becomes one of the prior conditions that contributes to the perceiver's current state at some time in the future

identity best in any given context. In particular, just as comparative fit is a partial determinant of *which* social categories perceivers use to define themselves and others, so too it is a partial determinant of the *internal structure* of those categories. This idea follows from the theorizing of cognitive psychologists (e.g., Barsalou, 1987; Rosch, 1978), which suggests that categories have an internally *graded structure* so that, for any individual category, some features (e.g., particular behaviours, attributes or individuals) will define it better than others. This means that, although all category members are seen as to some extent representative (or *prototypical*) of the category, they also differ in the extent to which they are perceived to be representative or prototypical of it. All academics may be seen as

intelligent, but some are perceived to be more intelligent than others.

It also follows from this idea that whether any particular group member is seen as prototypical of the group's identity will depend on which other groups are salient in a given context, and on how these groups are being compared (i.e., on what dimensions; Turner, 1987). In particular, a given individual will appear to be more prototypical of a group to the extent that he or she is both similar to other ingroup members *and* different from relevant outgroup members. In a comparison with cleaners, a relatively intellectual administrator may be quite prototypical of the category 'administrator' because she partly embodies the stereotypical *difference* between administrators and cleaners with administrators being relatively

more intellectual as a group. But in comparison with academics that same person's prototypicality for the category of administrators will tend to decrease. In this comparative context, an administrator who is more practical and 'hands on' would seem more prototypical for the category, as this latter dimension embodies the stereotypical difference between administrators and academics (Haslam, Oakes, McGarty, Turner, & Onorato, 1995; Hogg, Turner, & David, 1990; McGarty, Turner, Hogg, David, & Wetherell, 1992).

The Ability of Shared Organizational Identity to Generate Influence and Power

Critically, once a particular organizational identity has become salient for a particular group of people, and once particular facets of the organization (e.g., norms, values and individuals) have come to define it, this should have an impact on the psychology of individuals but it should also help translate that psychology into *collective* products – plans and visions, goods and services, organizations and institutions. In particular, this is because, as a form of social identity, shared organizational identity is a basis not only for people to perceive and interpret their world in similar ways, but also for processes of *mutual social influence* which allow them to coordinate (and *expect* to coordinate) their behaviour in ways that lead to concerted social action and collective products (Haslam, 2001; Turner, 1987, 1991). To the extent that someone embodies a salient shared organizational identity (i.e., to the extent that this person is seen to represent the meaning of 'us'), others will perceive him/her as carrying features of social and organizational reality that bear upon that identity. Indeed, this is one reason why people tend to look towards particular individuals to provide guidance concerning the appropriate shape and direction for their activities within the organization (Ellemers, De Gilder, & Haslam, 2004; Haslam & Platow, 2001a; Turner & Haslam, 2001).

Moreover, as Mayo (1949) first acknowledged, it is precisely through individuals'

conformity to norms that are perceived to be shared with others in a particular context that their potentially idiosyncratic views become socially organized and consensual. Through this process, individual views are coordinated and transformed into *shared* values, beliefs and behaviours. These values and beliefs have particular force because they are no longer experienced as subjective but instead articulate a common, as-if-objective, view (Haslam, Turner, Oakes, McGarty et al., 1998; Moscovici, 1984). In this way *personal opinion* can become *social fact*. '*I think* it is important to work overtime' can become '*It is* important to work overtime'; '*I think* we are the best' can become '*We are* the best'. Indeed, at the most general level, it is apparent that identity-based processes of social influence are central to the transformation of low-level individual inputs (e.g., opinions, attitudes) into higher-order organizational products (e.g., norms, values, culture).

Organizational evidence attesting to the utility of these ideas has been provided by multiple strands of research. For example, studies of communication and group productivity show that factors that serve to increase a sense of social identity (e.g., as a member of a team or organization) make people (a) more willing to communicate with each other, (b) more open to other's communications and (c) more likely to interpret communicative acts in similar ways and in the spirit in which they are intended (e.g., Lea, Spears, & Rogers, 2003; Moreland, Argote, & Krishnan, 1996; Postmes, Spears, & Lea, 1998). At the same time, such processes also increase the likelihood that individual group members will develop shared understandings (e.g., transactive memory systems and shared mental models) that allow them to produce collaborative products that exceed what would be expected on the basis of group members' potentialities as individuals (Haslam, 2001; Postmes, 2003). In short, shared organizational identity (or the lack of it) is responsible for the oft-noted difference between a team of champions and a champion team.

In exactly this way, shared organizational identity can be seen to be the basis for forms of 'collective mind' akin to those observed in

research by Weick and Roberts (1993) into the inter-related activities of flight deck crews on aircraft carriers. Here, it was the fact that the crews had a shared identity-based understanding of their roles, relationships and responsibilities that allowed them to *trust* each other and work together at the high intensity that their work demanded and without needing to refer to written rules or constantly checking what others were doing (see also Platow, Haslam, Foddy, & Grace, 2003).

Ultimately then, the particular significance of organizational identity as an analytic construct derives from the fact that it is an embodiment of the dialectic relationship between, on the one hand, individual psychology and, on the other, collective organizational products (Haslam, Postmes, & Ellemers, 2003). Recognition of the fact that individual psychology is socially structured means that the psychological analysis of organizational life is not necessarily reductionist in the way that some critics have suggested (e.g., MacKenzie, 1978). At the same time, the fact that collective products are always underpinned and made possible by individual psychology means that organizational analysis does not have to skirt around issues of psychology in order to capture and account for high-level organizational realities.

Part II: Integrated Analyses of Identity Processes in Organizations

The first part of this chapter provided some insight into a range of identity processes that shape and structure the dynamics of organizational life. From this treatment, though, it may be difficult to get a sense of the way in which these various processes interact and combine, and hence how they allow for an integrated appreciation of particular facets of organizational activity – especially as these are conventionally examined by organizational theorists and practitioners. Accordingly, with this goal in mind, the second part of the chapter is devoted to a more detailed exploration of three key topics in the organizational field. Although this review is

necessarily selective, the aim here is to provide a window onto the ways in which these topics in fact centre on issues of identity – even though this is not how they are routinely understood.

Leadership

Leadership is the process of influencing other people so that they are motivated to contribute to the achievement of group goals. Leadership allowed the Romans to build their empire, it enabled astronauts to land on the moon, it took Exeter City to promotion through two divisions of the English football league in successive seasons from 2007 to 2009, and it led to the extermination of six million Jews in the Holocaust. To any such list one can always add more – some widely recognized, some widely ignored; some widely celebrated, some widely condemned. Accordingly, leadership is probably the most widely studied topic in the organizational field, and it is one into which most people have some insight on the basis of their own experience.

However, a common theme in most theoretical treatments is that, almost without exception, they embrace *individualistic* models that see leadership as a process that is fundamentally grounded in a leader's individuality. In this way, leadership is seen to arise from a distinctive psychology that sets the minds and lives of great leaders apart from those of others – as superior, special, different. The most obvious examples are provided by personality theories that suggest that it is the possession of a unique constellation of traits and abilities that distinguishes great (or merely good) leaders from the rank and file.

There are many problems with individualistic accounts of this form (for a recent review, see Haslam, Reicher, & Platow, 2011). Probably the most serious of these is that empirical support for their various premises is typically very weak. In particular, following extensive reviews by Stogdill (1948) and Mann (1959), researchers have generally failed to identify any particular personality profile that has the ability to identify leaders predictively. Moreover, this fact

does not change markedly when such profiles are incorporated into contingency models (e.g., Fiedler, 1978) that see leadership as the mechanical product of an interaction between fixed personality characteristics and specified situational variables.

In contrast to such accounts, analysis informed by social identity and self-categorization principles sees leadership not as a process that revolves around individuals acting and thinking in isolation, but as a *group process* in which leaders and followers are joined together – *and perceive themselves to be joined together* – in a collaborative endeavour (e.g., see Ellemers et al., 2004; Haslam et al., 2011; Hogg & van Knippenberg, 2004; Turner & Haslam, 2001). Critically, then, this process centres on a sense of *shared identity* that defines both leaders and followers as ‘us’. In these terms, individuals are able to lead (i.e., to exert influence over other group members) not as a result of their ‘I-ness’, but by virtue of their capacity both to represent what it is that ‘we’ means in any given context and to promote interests associated with that collective self-definition.

In this way, a social identity approach encourages us to see leadership not as a process that is concerned with leaders alone, but as one that, by necessity, also involves the followers with whom those leaders forge a psychological connection and whose effort is required to do the work that drives the group forward (Hollander, 1985). Two processes that we focused on in the first part of this chapter are critical here: *social categorization* and *social influence*. Social categorization is important because it determines whether, and to what degree, leaders and followers see themselves as members of the same psychological group. Social influence is important because this is the process through which leaders and followers coordinate their activities. It is also this that ultimately determines – and defines – the success of leadership.

Leaders as ingroup prototypes. In this regard, one important way in which SCT conceptualizes a leader is as someone who is *prototypical* of a given ingroup (Turner, 1987). Indeed, it follows from the arguments outlined above that, the more

prototypical a person is of a group, the more they will represent what that group stands for, and, on this basis, the more influence they will exert over other members of the group (von Cranach, 1986). Importantly, though, as we noted above, a person’s prototypicality with regard to a given social category is not fixed and so is not a stable property that they ‘possess’. Instead, it varies predictably as a function of social context (Turner, 1987).

Consistent with this view, programmatic research by Platow and colleagues (e.g., Haslam & Platow, 2001a; Platow et al., 1997, 1998; Platow & van Knippenberg, 2001; see also Hogg, Hains, & Mason, 1998) has shown that group members’ willingness to support and be influenced by a leader varies as a function of changes to the comparative context within which the group is defined. In particular, in intragroup contexts (i.e., contexts in which only the ingroup is salient) group members are observed to favour leaders who treat ingroup members fairly and equally, but in intergroup contexts (where one or more outgroups is also salient) they favour leaders who allocate more rewards to ingroup members than to outgroup members (i.e., treating people *unfairly* and *unequally*) – as this helps to differentiate the ingroup positively from the comparison outgroup. Such findings support predictions derived from both SIT and SCT in demonstrating that leadership – and the value of particular leader characteristics (e.g., fairness) – is contingent both on leaders’ capacity to contribute to the positive distinctiveness of a social identity that they share with followers and on their context-determined prototypicality with respect to that identity.

As with contingency theories (e.g., Fiedler, 1978), this analysis can be seen to provide a partial explanation for the fact that different leaders (or different leadership styles) are considered appropriate and prove effective in different situations. Nevertheless, unlike most other accounts, from a social identity perspective the properties of the individual associated with these variations are seen to derive not from qualities inherent in the person *as an individual* (e.g., their personality or personal style) but from features of

the individual *as a representative of a contextually defined social category*. It is not always easy to distinguish the two, if only because many groups like to think of themselves in terms of positive characteristics such as initiative or competence, or because a range of situations may give rise to similar behavioural norms (e.g., associated with fairness or cooperation), resulting in converging leadership preferences. However, it is important to keep in mind that these preferences stem from contextually defined social identities, not from individual leadership qualities *per se*. As an extreme example of what this implies, in an experiment on leadership selection it was demonstrated that the majority of participants who thought that the outgroup had an extremely intelligent leader voted for an ingroup leader who was considerate and dedicated, but *unintelligent* (Haslam, 2001; Turner & Haslam, 2000). Thus, while standard leadership accounts emphasize personal leadership qualities as aspects of an individual-level analysis, our approach in terms of self-categorization and social identity processes helps understand why leaders with all the ‘right’ qualities are not always successful, and predicts when groups are likely to express unconventional leadership preferences.

Leaders as entrepreneurs of identity. Although leadership flows from a person’s ability to represent a given social identity in context, it is not the case that this process is entirely passive. Leaders are not puppets of prototypicality but rather play an active role in its definition. More specifically, in the terminology of Reicher and Hopkins (1996; see also Haslam et al., 2011; Reicher, Haslam, & Hopkins, 2005), leaders can be seen as ‘*entrepreneurs of identity*’. So, for example, where would-be leaders espouse views that are not representative of their group, they may seek to restructure the social context, as a means of increasing their own ingroup prototypicality. They might do this by arguing for the appropriateness of particular social categorizations – especially those that distinguish between ‘us’ and ‘them’ in a manner that enables both the leader and the ingroup to be seen as positive and distinct. Reicher and Hopkins (1996) provide

a number of case studies of these processes in action – for example, through an examination of the contributions of political leaders to debate about the 1984–1985 British miners’ strike. Here, the leaders of the two main political parties, Margaret Thatcher and Neil Kinnock, attempted to construe events surrounding the strike in such a way that (a) their party could be seen as representative of a positively defined ingroup which (unlike the negatively defined outgroup) encompassed almost the entire population and (b) the policies that their leadership advocated were consonant with the definition of that ingroup identity. For example, the conservative Thatcher defined her government as representative of “a moderate and responsible majority . . . fighting for great and good causes” that was opposed to an “organized revolutionary minority” of “thugs and bullies” and which, for this reason, was committed to a policy of political and industrial conflict (Reicher & Hopkins, 1996, pp. 360–361). Along similar lines, longitudinal research by Fiol (2001) shows how industry leaders who are seeking to promote organizational change use rhetorical tools (e.g., defining new identities positively and old identities negatively) to redefine organizational identities and thereby transform a workforce.

As an extension of this point, the position of a leader in power can be strengthened by backing up the rhetoric of ‘us versus them’ with actual hostility towards an outgroup. Experimental support for this idea also comes from research by Rabbie and Bekkers (1978) which found that leaders whose positions within their group were unstable were more likely to choose to engage in intergroup conflict than leaders whose positions were secure (see also Platow & van Knippenberg, 2001). Clearly too, this strategy is one to which political leaders who face dissent from their constituents routinely resort and one which has played a role in the escalation of a great number of conflicts (R.J. Brown, 1988). Most recently, this has been witnessed in the actions of leaders in Iran, Iraq, Israel, Venezuela, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Leader charisma as a product of identity advancement. In researchers’ attempts to identify

the source of the 'special something' that surrounds great leaders and our relationship with them, one attribute that they have often focused on is that of *charisma*. This attribute was first explored in depth by Weber (1921/1946) and although the term has multiple meanings (including the power to perform miracles, and the ability to make prophecies; Marturano & Arsenault, 2008) it is generally taken to refer to the idea of a 'special gift' that allows leaders to motivate, enthuse and influence others. Weber himself argued that this gift was partly bestowed by others, but in line with the individualistic leanings of the leadership literature, contemporary analyses tend to regard it as characteristic of the person (Platow, van Knippenberg, Haslam, van Knippenberg, & Spears, 2006). That is, leaders are seen as effective because they *have* the charisma (or the charismatic personality) that allows them to articulate a vision for a given group of followers and to generate enthusiasm for that vision.

In contrast to this view, and in keeping with the conception of successful leaders as entrepreneurs of identity described above, a social identity approach suggests that charisma results from individuals' ability to define (or, more typically, *redefine*) a group's identity and objectives in a way that enhances both the shared self-concept of its members and therefore the leader's own relative influence (House & Shamir, 1993). In other words, charisma can be seen as an *emergent product* of self-categorization processes that serve to define a positive (i.e., self-enhancing) identity-based relationship between leaders and followers, as well as between their group and others (Haslam, Platow et al., 2001). Charisma is thus *conferred* by followers and is an *expression* of the leader-group dynamic as perceived by those followers in a specific social context. This is not to deny that there may be individual difference variables (such as adaptability to changing circumstances, sensitivity to the expectations of others) that can make it easier to successfully achieve such a relationship with one's followers. However, in contrast to standard approaches that focus on charisma as an inherent personal characteristic or personality trait,

the social identity approach we propose emphasizes the group dynamic processes involved in the emergence and maintenance of leadership that is experienced as charismatic.

Support for these ideas has emerged from a number of recent studies (for a review, see Haslam et al., 2011). For example, experiments by Platow et al. (2006) showed that students' perceptions of a (male) leader's charisma flowed from his being defined (by the experimenters) as prototypical of their own student group. Moreover, this prototypicality-based charisma also determined the leader's perceived persuasiveness. In short, the leader had to be defined as 'one of us' in order to be seen as charismatic, and, when he was, it was this identity-based charisma that made him persuasive. Along related lines, earlier studies by Haslam and colleagues (Haslam, Platow et al., 2001) also showed that perceptions of charisma were enhanced when a leader was associated with a dramatic upturn in an organization's fortunes (e.g., an increase in profits; replicating Pillai & Meindl, 1991), but that this was also contingent upon the leader having previously acted in ways that promoted a valued group identity (e.g., by displaying ingroup favouritism). These results are at odds with the suggestion that followers confer charisma *wherever* they find organizational success. Instead, they support the view that such perceptions depend upon the implications of a leader's behaviour for the social identity that he or she is expected to represent. Followers thus appear to entertain few romantic illusions about a leader who is clearly not 'doing it for us' (Haslam & Platow, 2001b; see also Kulich, Ryan, & Haslam, 2007).

Extending this point, this same research also provided evidence that attributions of charisma are a reflection of the *intellectual work* that followers sometimes need to do in order to explain (both to themselves and others) why they are influenced and inspired by a person who is not a straightforward embodiment of salient ingroup norms and why, indeed, that person has encouraged them to redefine the meaning of 'we-ness'. In much the same way, we can see that when people acknowledge the charisma of people

like Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King Jr. or Barack Obama, there is a sense in which they acknowledge that this person has played a role in redefining and restructuring their identity. Such experiences can also be seen as genuinely *transformational* (in the sense implied by Burns, 1978) not only because the leader has forged a new path, but also because his or her behaviour motivates followers to contribute *creatively* both to a collective redefinition of self and to profoundly new forms of social and organizational behaviour (see also Adarves-Yorno, Postmes, & Haslam, 2007).

Motivation

The theories of motivation that are typically advanced in the organizational literature tend to focus on individual workers and on the way in which their needs, goals and rewards affect their work behaviour (cf. Soenens & Vansteenkiste, Chapter 17, this volume). In particular, such theories aim to understand (a) the conditions that encourage people to invest energy in their work (*energize*), (b) the activities that they focus their efforts on (*direct*) and (c) what makes them sustain these efforts over time (*persist*). For instance, various models point to ways in which workers can be energized by appealing to the particular needs that they seek to satisfy (these being specified within particular needs *hierarchies*; e.g., Alderfer, 1972; Herzberg, 1966; after Maslow, 1943). Other models provide insight into the direction that workers' efforts are likely to take by examining the behavioural choices they make (e.g., Mowday, 1979; Vroom, 1964). Finally, theories derived from principles of psychological learning seek to understand why certain organizational behaviours are more likely to be sustained than others (e.g., Komaki, Coombs, & Schepman, 1996; for reviews, see Ellemers et al., 2004; Ellemers, De Gilder, & Haslam, 2008).

Although these various approaches all have some merit, as with dominant approaches to leadership, one of their common features is that they construe motivation primarily as an issue that

relates to the behaviour of people *as separate agents*. However, in most contemporary organizational settings, it is apparent that individuals typically have to work *together* with others in teams and collaborative work groups. For this reason, motivation in the contemporary world of work is at least as much about 'we' as it is about 'I'. Accordingly, there is a demand for theoretical approaches that account for motivation at *both* individual and collective (team or organizational) levels. In this regard, a key attraction of the social identity approach is that it provides a framework that allows us to explain the capacity for people to conceive of themselves, and act, either as separate individuals or as part of a collective (Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 2002; Turner, 1985).

Motivation as a product of variable self-categorization. As with issues of leadership, questions of identity provide an important starting point for thinking about questions of motivation. More specifically, to understand a person's motivations, it can be useful to reflect on their likely response to the question 'Who do you think you are?' (for related arguments, see Handy, 1976; Oyserman & Packer, 1996; Shamir, 1991). As we noted in the first part of this chapter, SCT suggests that a question of this form can be answered at varying levels of abstraction (Turner, 1985). These range from conceptions of the self in terms of one's personal identity as a unique individual, through group-based self-definitions in terms of a salient social identity, to more abstract representations of self as a human being, or at an even higher level as an animal (i.e., sharing identity with other living creatures).

Importantly too, each of these different levels of self-definition is likely to be associated with a distinct set of needs. In particular, when people categorize themselves at a personal level, they should be motivated to do those things that promote their personal identity as individuals; but when they categorize themselves at a social level, they should be motivated to do those things that promote their social identity as group members. In this way, needs associated with a salient personal identity should be more specialized and idiosyncratic than those associated with a social identity, which in turn should be more specialized

Table 30.2. The relationship between level of self-categorization and hierarchies of need identified by major theorists (Maslow, Aldferer and Herzberg) (adapted from Haslam, 2001; Haslam, Powell, & Turner, 2000)

<i>Level of self-categorization</i>	Content	Associated needs as identified by the hierarchies proposed by key motivational theorists		
		Maslow	Alderfer	Herzberg
Personal	Self as individual (in contrast to ingroup members)	Self-actualization	Growth	Motivators
Social	Self as group member (in contrast to outgroup members)	Esteem	Relatedness	
		Love		Hygienes
Human	Self as human (in contrast to other animals)	Safety	Existence	
Animal	Self as animal (in contrast to non-animals)	Physiological		

and idiosyncratic than those associated with a human or animal identity (Haslam, Powell, & Turner, 2000).

As Table 30.2 indicates, the actual content of the needs associated with each of these different levels of self-definition can be seen to correspond closely with the different categories of needs that are identified within the hierarchies of need identified by researchers such as Maslow, Alderfer and Herzberg. So, when personal identity is salient, this should be associated with needs to self-actualize and to enhance personal interests through personal advancement and growth (Ouwerkerk et al., 1999). On the other hand, when social identity is salient, this should be associated with the need to enhance social self-esteem through a sense of relatedness, respect, peer recognition and the achievement of group goals (Bagozzi, 2000; Hogg & Abrams, 1990, 1993). And when human or animal identities are salient, needs should be more existence-, security- and safety-related.

As we have seen in the first part of this chapter, SCT presents a framework for understanding when and why particular levels of self-categorization become salient. This suggests that *identity salience* is the key process that determines which particular category of needs guides a person's behaviour. Thus, although we are generally motivated to live up to norms and to achieve

goals that are relevant to our self-definition, the definition of self varies with context. Moreover, given the argument that no level of self-definition is any more real or essential than any other, it follows from this perspective that there is no sense in which 'higher-level' needs are inherently more important, superior, valuable or valid than 'lower-level' needs. Nevertheless, this same theoretical framework also explains why there is such a strong resemblance between various needs hierarchies and why these hierarchies have the structure they do. We argue that this is the case because they all map onto an underlying hierarchy of self, in which personal, social and human identities are organized in a hierarchical system of nested categorizations (Ellemers & Rink, 2005).

Contrary to the assertions of many needs theorists (e.g., Maslow, 1943), there is therefore nothing special about personal self-actualization that makes it an inherently better motivator than the need to stand well with one's peers or to achieve collective goals (Leavitt, 1995). Consistent with this analysis, a large number of studies have shown that people can quite easily change the focus of their needs and trade one type of motivator for another, depending on the conditions in which they find themselves and the opportunities these offer. For instance, when group boundaries are perceived to be permeable

(e.g., when it is seen to be possible to be promoted from a low-status group to a high-status one), members of low-status groups tend to define themselves in terms of personal identity and so are motivated to work hard as individuals in order to advance their personal career within an organization. However, once boundaries are impermeable, individuals are more likely to define themselves in terms of social identity and so become more attuned to the needs and advancement of the group as a whole (e.g., Ellemers, 1993; Reicher & Haslam, 2006; Taylor, Moghaddam, Gamble, & Zellerer, 1987).

Organizational identification as a multi-level determinant of motivation. When Ashforth and Mael (1989) first outlined the potential applications of SIT to organizational settings, much of their discussion focused on the importance of organizational identification (i.e., the extent to which an individual identifies with a given organization or organizational unit; Cornelissen et al., 2007), as they proposed that this might be a very good predictor of a range of significant organizational behaviours, including turnover, adherence to organizational values and willingness to perform extra-role duties. Indeed, these researchers argued that identification may be a particularly useful construct in this regard because it relies upon *internalization* of the organization's goals, whereas other rival theoretical constructs (e.g., those relating to incentive) may only reflect attraction to the resources that the organization offers, as an external or extrinsic source of motivation (O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986). Consistent with these claims, a number of studies have shown that organizational identification is a powerful predictor of a range of important organizational behaviours. For example, an early study by Mael and Ashforth (1992) found that organizational identification (in this case former students' identification with the college of which they were alumni) was associated with alumni being more willing to contribute funds to their college, to send their children there, and to attend college functions.

As a variant on this position, van Knippenberg and van Schie (2000) note that, in many

organizational contexts, employees' primary identification will not be with the organization as a whole but rather with their specific work-group or team (see also Barker & Tomkins, 1994; Brewer, 1995; Kramer, 1993; Van Dick, Wagner, Stellmacher, & Christ, 2005). Indeed, this prediction follows from principles of positive distinctiveness and comparative fit that we discussed in the first part of this chapter (Deschamps & Brown, 1983; Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner, 1985). These principles suggest that, in many organizational contexts, identities are likely to become salient at a level below that of the organizational category as a whole (e.g., at a departmental, divisional or work-team level) because in an intra-organizational context (a) sub-organizational identities allow employees to feel that their ingroup is in some way 'special' and distinct from others and (b) people should be more likely to make comparisons between different work groups than between different organizations.

Supporting these assertions, van Knippenberg and van Schie (2000) found that, in several different organizational samples, individuals' identification with their immediate work-group was higher than their identification with the organization as a whole. Moreover, identification with this lower-level (i.e., less inclusive) self-category was a much better predictor of a range of key work-related variables (including job satisfaction, job involvement and intention to continue working for the organization) than was identification with the organization as a whole. Similar patterns have also been observed by other researchers who note that workers often identify more with particular organizational constituencies than with an organization as a whole (Becker & Billings, 1993; Hunt & Morgan, 1994; Reichers, 1986; see Ouwerkerk et al., 1999).

Along related lines, Ouwerkerk et al. (1999) argue that individuals' identification with their workgroup can also be differentiated from their commitment to *personal* organizational goals (which they refer to as *career commitment*; see Skorikov & Vondracek, Chapter 29, this volume).

This claim was supported in studies conducted by Ellemers, De Gilder and van den Heuvel (1998), in which workgroup identification emerged as a far better predictor of employees' willingness to engage in extra-role helping behaviour and other acts of organizational citizenship. In line with arguments presented in the previous section, it thus appears that, when work behaviour is determined by a salient personal identity, people are likely to engage in activities that advance their personal status (e.g., by obtaining additional qualifications). On the other hand, when employees act in terms of a salient social identity, they are likely to work hard to promote the interests of the group with which that identity is associated (e.g., by doing unpaid overtime and performing other 'thankless' tasks). To the extent that organizational researchers are interested in predicting and encouraging collective forms of behaviour (as they often are), they may therefore need to focus less on motivation associated with personal identity and more on motivation rooted in social identification.

Motivation as a product of identity fit. As well as specifying that motivation is determined by the level at which identity is defined, SCT principles also lead us to expect that motivation should vary as a function of people's perceptions of the degree to which they are representative of a given organizational group. In particular, those who are on the periphery of an organization (or organizational unit) and who find it hard to move towards the centre should display lower levels of organizational identification (Jetten, Branscombe, Spears, & McKimmie, 2003; Jetten, Spears, & Manstead, 1997) and, as a result, display lower levels of motivation.

Amongst other things, this analysis helps us understand why women's motivation levels are found to drop relative to men's if the organization of which they are part has a masculine or male-dominated culture. Evidence of this process emerges from research with female surgeons and police officers conducted by Peters, Ryan, Haslam, and Hersby (2009; see also van Vianen & Fischer, 2002). In these studies, women who perceived their own approach to work as

differing from that of people who were in leadership positions in the organization were found to have lower levels of ambition and a greater desire to exit their profession – a relationship that was fully mediated by the perceived lack of fit between their own identity and that of the organization. Similar results also emerged from studies in which fit was experimentally manipulated (Peters et al., 2009). Here, to the extent that women police officers were led to believe that their own characteristics matched those of prototypical group members, they displayed greater desire to stay, and to get ahead, in the police service.

On the basis of such findings, these researchers concluded that the atrophy of ambition among women once they reach managerial positions (sometimes referred to as the 'opt out revolution'; e.g., Belkin, 2003; Wallis, 2004; see also Lyness & Judiesch, 2001) does not arise because they are inherently less motivated than men to scale organizational heights (e.g., as a result of their biological drive to go off and have children). Rather, their disengagement is better understood as an adaptive response to the particular social and organizational realities they encounter (Ryan, Haslam, Hersby, Kulich, & Atkins, 2007; Ryan, Haslam, Hersby, Kulich, & Wilson-Kovacs, 2008; Schmitt, Branscombe, & Postmes, 2003). Accordingly, if one is trying to encourage members of minority groups to advance in organizations, this should be construed not as a battle against biology but as an issue of identity.

Stress

Despite the fact that the value of leadership and motivation is always dependent on the content of the identities with which they are associated (so that these things can be used in the service of evil as well as good; e.g., Haslam & Reicher, 2007), organizations typically seek to encourage and promote both of these processes. Stress, on the other hand, is something that organizations are typically very keen to reduce – not least because it can be very costly. Indeed,

estimates suggest that stress-related costs arising from absenteeism, inefficiency and demands on health care may account for anything up to 1% of national gross domestic product and 10% of company profit (Martin, 1997). Furthermore, stress can be seen to reflect the potential for 'positive' organizational processes like leadership and motivation to have a 'down side' that impacts negatively on employees' well-being (Cooper, Dewe, & O'Driscoll, 2001). For example, leaders who work hard to champion change may place a heavy psychological burden both on themselves and on those they lead (Quick, Cooper, Gavin, & Quick, 2002; Terry et al., 2001). Likewise, motivational and productivity demands may put staff under extreme pressure (Bourassa & Ashforth, 1998; Parker, 1993).

As a result, researchers and practitioners are routinely charged with trying both to understand the nature and basis of stress in the workplace and with trying to do something to reduce it. Their strategies in this respect take a number of forms, including stress counselling, cognitive behaviour therapy and the delivery of other forms of personal advice and guidance. Despite their variety, a common feature of these approaches is that they tend to regard stress as a phenomenon grounded in the psychology of the individual *as an individual* (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004). Typically, then, because stress is seen as a problem of (and for) the individual, remedial interventions are targeted at workers in isolation, rather than their condition being seen as something that is grounded in their experience with respect to social and organizational groups.

In contrast, a social identity approach suggests that group memberships are central to people's experiences of, and reactions to, social and environmental stressors (Branscombe, Schmitt, & Harvey, 1999; Haslam, 2004; Ryan et al., 2008; Van Dick & Wagner, 2001). Not least, this is because individuals' experience of stress in the workplace is often interwoven with the existence of groups and with individuals' membership in these groups. It is clear, for example, that stress can arise from the activities that particular occupational groups have to perform (e.g., caring for

others), from the way in which groups are treated by others (e.g., being abused by customers), from a person's relationship to a group (e.g., as a newcomer) and from norms that develop within a group (e.g., to treat people disrespectfully; Haslam, 2004).

Reflecting the dynamics that surround these facets of organizational experience, the social identity approach argues that group life plays a key role in shaping the psychology of stress through its capacity to inform and structure our sense of self — and the sense of belonging, worth, purpose and potential that goes with it (Haslam, Jetten, Postmes, & Haslam, 2009). Most particularly, the sense of social identity that underpins group membership plays a key role in determining whether stressful conditions change us for the worse or whether we combine with others to change them for the better (Haslam & Reicher, 2006a).

Social identity as a basis for primary stress appraisal. One of the most basic predictions that flows from principles articulated within the social identity approach is that if a person's social identity is salient, then his or her *appraisal* of social stressors will be influenced by the perspective and condition of his or her ingroup. In line with this suggestion, a body of research has confirmed that social identity salience is an important determinant of *primary appraisal* — that is, the assessment of a given stressor as threatening to self (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). This is for the simple reason that such appraisal is necessarily dependent on how the self is defined.

These ideas were initially supported in experimental research by Levine and Reicher (1996). These researchers found that female sportswomen found the threat of a knee injury more stressful than the threat of a facial scar when their identity as sportspeople was made salient; however, the opposite pattern emerged when their gender identity was salient (see also St. Claire, Clift, & Dumbelton, 2008). In a subsequent study, Levine (1999) also showed that secretaries' responses to stressors that were relevant to their professional identity (e.g., restricted manual dexterity, back pain) were perceived to

be more stressful when their professional identity had first been made salient.

A related prediction is that employees' responses to organizational stressors should also be structured by their level of identification with the organizational unit that is the source of those stressors. Amongst other things, this is because stressors that emanate from a source with which one identifies (e.g., requests from teammates to work unpaid overtime) are more likely to be seen as self-generated and under one's control than those which emanate from a source with which one does not identify (e.g., the same requests from senior managers). The resulting hypothesis is that employees will respond more positively to organizational stressors to the extent that they have high levels of organizational identification. This prediction has been supported by large-scale studies of call-centre workers (Wegge, van Dick, Fisher, Wecking, & Moltzen, 2006), schoolteachers (van Dick & Wagner, 2002) airline pilots (Peters, Tevichapong, Haslam, & Postmes, 2010) and office workers (Knight & Haslam, 2010a, 2010b).

One interesting feature of a number of organizational stressors is that responses to them are often *shared* among members of a particular work community. This is true, for example, of complaints such as Sick Building Syndrome (SBS) and Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI), which are typically found to be concentrated among employees in a particular organizational culture at a particular point in time (Bartholomew & Wessely, 2002). In line with principles articulated within SCT, this can be seen to reflect the fact that members of particular organizational communities perceive themselves to share social identity and, on this basis, group members play a key role in shaping each others' appraisal of their work environment. This is a point that van Steenbergen, Ellemers, Haslam and Urlings (2008) discuss in relation to the potential stress that attempting to maintain work–life balance poses for working women – showing that whether women respond positively or negatively to this challenge depends very much on how others around them respond.

In contrast to the picture that might emerge from alternative approaches, it is typically not the case, then, that individuals appraise particular stressors from a position of isolation and then decide matter-of-factly whether or not a particular stimulus is threatening. Instead, they talk to their peers and come to shared understandings about the meaning and significance of their experiences. And it is partly on this basis that they come to see the air as stale or fresh, the work demands as unreasonable or reasonable, and their manager as a help or a hindrance (Mayo, 1949).

Indicative evidence of the role that social identity can play in such appraisals emerges from an experimental study in which students were presented with a message about the stressfulness of a series of arithmetic tasks from someone described as an ingroup member (a fellow student) or an outgroup member (a stress sufferer; Haslam, Jetten, O'Brien, & Jacobs, 2004). When they performed the task themselves, students' stress was reduced only when the message encouraged them to perceive the task as an enjoyable challenge and it was provided by a fellow ingroup member. As suggested by SCT (Turner, 1991), this can be seen to reflect the fact that only a person with the same identity-based perspective as the perceivers was qualified to inform them about the meaning of the social reality they confronted.

Social identity as a basis for secondary stress appraisal. As well as affecting primary appraisal, social identity salience also serves as a basis for *secondary appraisal* – that is, the assessment of one's capacity to cope with a particular stressor (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). In particular, this is because a person's sense of shared group membership is central to the dynamics of *social support* (i.e., whether they give and receive assistance from others, and how they respond to it; Cohen & Wills, 1985; Underwood, 2000). SCT principles predict that, to the extent that a person defines themselves in terms of a social identity that they share with another person, they should be more willing to help that person out and provide them with various forms of support – instrumental, emotional, companionship and informational.

This idea was supported in research by Levine, Prosser, Evans and Reicher (2005), who showed that a person's willingness to help a stranger in distress (the phenomenon of 'bystander intervention'; Darley & Latané, 1968) is enhanced when the stranger in question is perceived to share social identity with the prospective helper (see also Levine, Cassidy, Brazier, & Reicher, 2002). As a corollary, it should also be the case that the likelihood of a person *receiving* support from others depends on whether or not he or she is perceived by the support provider to be an ingroup member. The same process should also determine whether any particular act of support is interpreted in the spirit in which it was intended. This is important because, as work by Nadler (e.g., Nadler, Fisher, & Streufert, 1974) suggests, there is considerable opportunity for *misinterpretation* of social support where the salient identities of provider and recipient are not matched. Indeed, this may help to explain why, in many organizational contexts, social support is found to have mixed benefits and can actually prove counterproductive (Dunkel-Schetter, Blasband, Feinstein, & Herbert, 1992; Terry, Callan, & Sartori, 1996; Underwood, 2000). Nevertheless, where the providers and recipients of social support do share the same social identity, there is plenty of evidence that this can play a key role in buffering groups – especially those with low status – from adverse environmental threats. In particular, this has been found in studies of the work-related stress experienced by ethnic minority groups (James, 1997) and in studies of Black Americans' responses to discrimination and prejudice (Branscombe et al., 1999; Postmes & Branscombe, 2002).

Research with bomb disposal experts and bar staff also supports suggestions that shared social identity can offset the effects of stress because it serves as a basis for the receipt of effective support from ingroup members (Haslam, O'Brien, et al., 2005). In this study, employees' identification with their colleagues was found to be significantly correlated with job satisfaction, and this relationship was mediated by the perception that those colleagues were an important source of material, emotional and intellectual support.

Interestingly, this same research also indicated that employees' assessment of their capacity to cope with particular stressors was moderated by their membership of specific occupational groups. Thus, although bar staff reported that handling bombs would be much more problematic than doing bar work, bomb disposal experts reported the very opposite pattern. Bar staff were thus relatively unfazed by the stresses of bar work, and bomb handlers by the stresses of handling bombs. This pattern of findings suggests that groups' collective experiences (e.g., during training and in the course of actually doing their job) allow them to *normalize* aspects of work that might otherwise be quite abnormal and threatening (Ashforth, 2001). More generally, these research findings suggest that (a) the nature and strength of a person's workgroup identity, and (b) the meaning of a specific stressor in relation to that identity, are both very important determinants of any given stressor's impact.

Lack of social identity as a basis for burnout. The research discussed in the previous two sections was generally conducted with opportunity samples of 'normal' workers and hence only provides insight into stress of a relatively unexceptional nature. A key question is thus whether the analysis we have outlined is relevant to work environments where stressors are much more toxic. In particular, can the social identity approach help us to understand the dynamics of *burnout* — that is, chronic stress associated with exhaustion, a profound sense of lack of accomplishment, and callousness (a lack of concern for others' welfare; Maslach & Leiter, 1996)?

Some evidence that it might comes from a study by O'Brien and Haslam (2003) of an organization that had been issued with the first Stress Improvement Notice by the UK Health and Safety Executive. In this study, low levels of social identification (at both team and organizational levels) were found to be significant predictors of employees' burnout levels (which were extremely high in some workgroups). Moreover, as in Haslam et al.'s (2005) study, this relationship between low identification and burnout was mediated by a lack of social support. In other words, in this organization, one reason why many

workers experienced high levels of burnout was that their psychological connection to the organization was weak and, as a result, they found themselves both isolated and unsupported (see also Haslam, Jetten, & Waghorn, 2009).

Yet, like many other studies of stress (and other organizational processes), the above study employed only correlational methods and was reliant on employees' self-reports of their psychological states. A study with the unique capacity to overcome these weaknesses and to provide a much closer inspection of these processes at work (as well as allowing for a more general analysis of the contribution of social identity to group and organizational functioning) was the BBC Prison Study (Haslam & Reicher, 2006a, 2006b; Reicher & Haslam, 2006). In this study, participants were randomly assigned to groups of Prisoners and Guards, and their behaviour within a simulated prison environment was studied closely over a period of 8 days. The goal of the research was to manipulate factors that would impact upon the Prisoners' degree of social identification and to examine the impact of this on group functioning (see Reicher & Haslam, 2006, for more detail).

In line with the arguments outlined in previous sections, it was clear from psychological, physiological and observational data that higher levels of social identification were generally associated with more positive stress-related outcomes (i.e., *eustress* – the opposite of distress; Suedfeld, 1997). As events unfolded, the Prisoners' increasing identification with their group led them to become increasingly resistant to the strains of their predicament (e.g., physical confinement, poor diet, lack of privileges) and increasingly willing to impose strain on the Guards (e.g., by challenging their position, by subjecting them to humiliation and bullying). At the same time, as the Guards' sense of shared identity declined, they became increasingly distressed. Not least, this was because they became increasingly isolated and failed to provide each other with the support necessary to maintain their authority and resist the various challenges posed by the Prisoners. Ultimately, the Guards'

failure to run the prison effectively led to them experiencing high levels of burnout.

In its entirety, this study thus allowed for an integrated examination of the complex roles that social identification and emergent intra- and intergroup dynamics play in the stress process, and in organizational dynamics more generally (e.g., clarifying the role that social identity plays in leadership and motivation, as argued in preceding sections; see Haslam & Reicher, 2008; Reicher et al., 2006). On the one hand, then, the experiences of the Prisoners illustrate how an emergent sense of shared social identity allows individuals to resist strain and turn adversity into advantage. On the other hand, the experiences of the Guards demonstrate how the erosion of social identity exposes individuals to stress and how, if it contributes to collective failure, it can ultimately pave the way to burnout. In this way, the study confirms the point that stress is not simply a problem of individual biology, physiology or personality. It is also (and perhaps primarily) a problem of group life. And yet, at the same time, group life is also the key to its amelioration.

Conclusion: Identity as an Integrative Principle for Organizational Science

Our goal in this chapter has been to identify some of the main identity processes that operate in organizational contexts, and then to demonstrate how an appreciation of these processes allows for an integrated understanding of key organizational topics. Our analysis has drawn heavily on principles originally specified within SIT and SCT, but it has also shown how these theories can be extended through their application to the organizational domain. We have also attempted to show that this exercise provides powerful new insights into traditional topics and challenges a number of deeply held assumptions along the way. In doing so, the approach allows us to tackle some of the core problems of traditional organizational psychology – in particular, its piecemeal empiricism, its individualism, its obsession with taxonomy,

and its restricted conceptions of the self (see Haslam & Ellemers, 2005; Pfeffer, 1997).

In this and other work, a key contribution of the social identity approach has been to question static approaches that view measurement and classification of particular organizational features as the primary path to theoretical and practical understanding. Above all, the approach reveals the capacity for contextual factors to redefine the nature and meaning of both (a) particular organizational properties and structures, and (b) the sense of self that underpins individuals' psychological orientations towards them. Furthermore, this redefinition has *qualitative*, not just quantitative, implications. This is because social identities are emergent higher-order products that are *transformed* by context, rather than merely aggregated from it (Turner & Oakes, 1986). This means that relevant psychological states and processes (e.g., leadership, culture, gender) cannot be discovered within the dissembled parts of wholes in the manner that classical organizational approaches suggest. Rather, these identity-based processes need to be understood, and studied, as irreducibly socio-contextual. Organizational contexts do not merely provide milieus within which identity operates – they also contribute to the creation of *new* identities, just as those identities themselves motivate the creation of new organizational contexts (Gioia et al., 2000). The organizational world shapes who we are, but who we are (and want to be) also shapes the organizational world. This dynamic is central to organizational psychology and, moreover, is a basic source of organizational vitality and adaptiveness.

In conclusion, it is worth noting that the ideas and research we have focused on in this chapter have not paid much heed to questions of how social identity can be used and managed in organizations. For organizational psychologists in particular, this has been a significant issue and one that has underscored debate surrounding issues of negotiation, diversity and change (e.g., see Jackson, 1992; Reynolds, Turner, & Haslam, 2003; van Knippenberg & Haslam, 2003). In all of these areas, core questions

centre on the way in which (perceptions of) group and individual differences can be managed in order to promote harmonious group relations and to achieve positive organizational outcomes (e.g., employee satisfaction, enhanced productivity).

This is not the place to discuss the range of options that researchers have outlined and to weigh their relative strengths and weaknesses (see Haslam & Ellemers, 2005, for a discussion). Nevertheless, an important point that emerges from the body of work that has been conducted in this area is that relevant organizational goals are far more likely to be reached when organizational agents (e.g., managers, leaders, policy-makers) take steps to discover, develop and *work with* relevant identities rather than ignore or work against them (e.g., see Haslam, Eggins, & Reynolds, 2003). Moreover, by attempting to come to terms with the political as well as the psychological dimensions of identity, such activities allow for a more fruitful dialogue between the various parties whose interests converge around this fundamental topic.

This dialogue is both intellectually rewarding and of supreme practical importance for the shape, structure and sustainability of organizational life. For it is only through an awareness of our shared organizational identity that we are able to organize ourselves, and it is only through the content of that identity that we know what form our organization needs to take. Identity, then, determines not only the work we do in the world, but also the world in which we do the work.

Acknowledgments Work on this chapter was supported by a grant from the Economic and Social Research Council (RES-062-23-0135).

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Helga Dittmar

Abstract

One increasingly powerful context in which individuals construct and express their identities is the material and consumer culture we live in. Having the 'right' material goods has become vital to many, not so much because of these goods themselves, but because of hoped-for psychological benefits, such as moving closer to an ideal identity, creating a desired social image, and achieving positive emotional states. Having, buying, and desiring material goods has a profound impact on individuals' identities and their well-being (Dittmar, 2008). This chapter starts with a sketch of contemporary material and consumer culture as a significant context for identity processes, and develops a theoretical framework for understanding how material goods become incorporated into identity. Second, it outlines an integrative model of identity-related functions of material goods, and reviews pertinent research with respect to each function, in relation to both favourite personal possessions and acquiring new consumer goods. Third, although material goods can, and do, have positive functions for individuals' identity, a strong emphasis on having and buying goods in order to make ourselves feel better and move closer to an ideal identity can have negative consequences for well-being. This is illustrated in a selective review of research on the link between materialistic values and well-being, as well as on the search for a better self in compulsive buying, a dysfunctional consumer behaviour, in both conventional and online buying environments. Thus, interventions are needed to protect vulnerable individuals from a maladaptive pursuit of material and consumer identities.

As this book attests, identity is multi-faceted and complex, with diverse self-representations in different identity domains. One increasingly powerful context in which individuals construct and express their identities is the material and consumer culture we live in. Having the 'right' material goods has become vital to many, not

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so much because of these goods themselves, but because of hoped-for psychological benefits, such as moving closer to an ideal identity, creating a desired social image, and achieving positive emotional states. Celebrities, fashion models, media stars, even computer game heroes or toys, influence who children and adolescents aspire to be and what they want to look like. Having, buying, and desiring material goods has a profound impact on individuals' identities and well-being (Dittmar, 2008). Material and consumer identities are still relatively novel topics in mainstream psychology, whereas substantial literatures exist in consumer, marketing, and advertising research, as well as social sciences such as sociology (e.g. Sassatelli, 2007; Slater, 1997) and anthropology (e.g. Douglas & Isherwood, 1979).

This chapter cannot possibly give an exhaustive account of the many ways in which material goods are linked to individuals' identity and well-being, but it offers three things. First, it sketches contemporary material and consumer culture as a significant context for identity processes, and develops a theoretical framework for understanding how material goods become incorporated into identity. Second, it outlines an integrative model of identity-related functions of material goods, and reviews pertinent research with respect to each function, in relation to both favourite personal possessions and acquiring new consumer goods. Third, although material goods can, and do, have positive functions for individuals' identity, a strong emphasis on having and buying goods in order to make ourselves feel better and move closer to an ideal identity can have negative consequences for well-being. This is shown in research on the link between a materialistic value orientation and lower well-being, as well as dysfunctional consumer behaviour. Thus, interventions are needed to protect vulnerable individuals from a maladaptive pursuit of material and consumer identities.

Living in a 'Material World': Context, Identity, and Identity Processes

It is hard to overestimate the significance of material and consumer culture. The mass media

generally, and advertising specifically, are full of idealised images of desirable material goods, perfect appearance, and affluent lifestyles, reflecting a core cultural ideal: the 'material good life' (Dittmar, 2008). They contain 'lifestyle and identity instructions' of how to look, how to act, and what goods to aspire to (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). In these images, the pursuit of material goods and achievement of affluence is associated not only with success, control, and autonomy, but also with a positive identity, satisfying personal life, happiness, and rewarding intimate relationships. The link between material goods on the one hand and identity and well-being on the other is heavily emphasised. Goods are marketed and presented as symbolic bridges towards an 'ideal self', with the message that buyers consume not only the actual goods advertised, but also their symbolic meanings (successful, happy, glamorous), thus moving closer to the ideal identity portrayed by media models. Of course, nobody takes these messages at face value, but it is very hard – if not impossible – to remain unaffected by the continuous exposure to the 'material good life' ideal. Current estimates are that individuals in developed consumer societies see as many as 3,000 ads a day (Kalkbrenner, 2004). Even if they do not process them in an aware and explicit manner, repeated media exposure shifts perceptions of social reality, because we come to see socio-cultural ideals as increasingly normative, desirable, and expected (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorelli, 2002; Shrum, 2002).

Mass Consumer Society and Identity

Although material culture has played an important role for individuals and society for a long time, linked economic-structural, socio-cultural, and psychological transformations in the last three or four decades have created particularly dramatic changes in the thoughts, feelings, and behaviours of consumers. The existence of continuing, or even growing, inequalities in wealth means that some individuals live in poverty in developed mass consumer societies, but – overall – the rise of disposable incomes has given people increasingly greater

spending power. Complementing greater disposable incomes are mushrooming credit facilities: it is now easier than ever to spend money that one does not, in fact, have (at least before the ‘credit crunch’, i.e. the lowering of credit limits, raising of interest rates, and increased lender scrutiny since 2008). Between 1970 and 1990, the number of credit cards in the United Kingdom multiplied more than fourfold (Rowlingson & Kempson, 1994) and the average number of credit cards per US household in 2005 was given as 12.75 (Harper’s Index, 2005). Alongside growing opportunities for credit that outstrip individuals’ ability to repay, consumption has come to play a central socio-cultural role, with overwhelming consumer choice, and leisure activities that increasingly involve having and buying material goods. There is growing concern about the consequences for children of growing up in a consumer culture that is all-pervading (Schor, 2004).

Parallel with these economic and socio-cultural transformations is a stronger psychological role of consumer culture and material goods in people’s lives. One reason for this greater psychological significance is that traditional, stable means of identity construction – such as community, class, religion, family, or nationality – have become eroded to some extent, particularly in urban environments, leading to an ‘empty self’ (Cushman, 1990). Instead of being *ascribed*, identity is increasingly *achieved* by the individual herself or himself (Côté & Levine, 2002; Kroger & Marcia, Chapter 2, this volume). A highly significant element of such achieved identity is the acquisition, ownership, and consumption of material goods. They have become contemporary means of acquiring, expressing, and attempting to enhance identity: they signify social status, express unique aspects of the person, and symbolise hoped-for, better, more ideal identities (Benson, 2000; Dittmar, 2004a, 2004b, 2008; see also Oyserman & James, Chapter 6, this volume).

Material Goods as Identity Extensions

The terms ‘self’, ‘self-concept’, and ‘self-identity’ are all related to identity, but have

been given complex and sometimes inconsistent definitions in psychology. In the present chapter, identity is defined as the subjective concept (or representation) that a person holds of herself or himself, in agreement with authors such as Vignoles (Chapter 18, this volume) and Gregg, Sedikides, and Gebauer (Chapter 14, this volume). What is important about this definition is that identity focuses on subjective psychological experience, and that it is inclusive, involving individual, relational, and group levels of self-representation.

The fact that material goods are extensions of our identity has long been recognised, as in this famous and oft-quoted passage of William James’s *Principles of Psychology*: ‘... it is clear that between what a man calls *me* and what he simply calls *mine* the line is difficult to draw... *a man’s self is the sum total of what he CAN call his*’ (1981/1890, pp. 279–80, emphases in original). Supporting evidence comes from studies that demonstrate directly that material goods are perceived by people as a part of an extended sense of self, such as ‘my house’ or ‘my car’ (Belk, 1988; Prelinger, 1959), and are named spontaneously as elements of the self by children, adolescents, and adults (Dixon & Street, 1975; Gordon, 1968). The link between identity and possessions is also strong when measured implicitly, that is, when people are not conscious of what is being measured (Oyamoto, 2004). Possessions become ‘me’ the more people are attached to them, the more they symbolise close interpersonal relationships or autonomous identity and the stronger their role for individuals’ past, present, or future selves (Schultz-Kleine, Kleine, & Allen, 1995).

If we use material goods for defining an extended identity, it follows that their unintended loss should be experienced as a lessening of self. Indeed, burglary victims experience rather more psychological trauma than is often credited to the loss of ‘mere things’, due to perceptions of violation and shrinkage of self (Van den Bogaard & Wiegman, 1991). Similar reactions occur when personal possessions are lost in natural disasters, where the loss of treasured objects is linked systematically to identity (Ikeuchi, Fujihara, &

Dohi, 2000). Experimental studies confirm that threats to spatial-symbolic extensions of the self are experienced as identity threats (Burriss & Rempel, 2004). Thus, individuals perceive and experience material goods as integral parts of their extended identity: identity has boundaries that extend beyond the physical body (Dittmar, 1992a, 2008).

A Meadian Approach to Material Identity Development

My account of how the symbolic meanings of material goods become incorporated to form part of individuals' identity is informed by, but also goes beyond, Meadian symbolic interactionist principles. The present analysis is broad, and better understood as a 'meta-theory', but it nevertheless shares several components of the structural symbolic interactionist extension reflected in identity theory, discussed by Serpe and Stryker (Chapter 10, this volume), particularly a multifaceted view of identity and the concept of identity salience.

The body of thought outlined by Mead (e.g. 1913, 1934), commonly referred to as *symbolic interactionism*, has as its core the notion that developing a sense of identity stems from the human ability for self-reflexivity, or viewing oneself from the *perspective of the other*. Imagining how we appear from the standpoint of others is bound up with socially shared systems of meaning, and a Meadian perspective therefore has unique potential for mapping the symbolic significance of material goods for identity development (Dittmar, 1992a, 2008). Material objects, or rather the symbolic meanings associated with them, can also serve as imaginary points of view from which to see the self. Within consumer culture, a Rolex watch is seen as a symbol of wealth and success, and by looking at myself on the basis of these symbolic meanings, I can view myself as a person who is wealthy and successful. Children's early interactions with material objects, such as toys or dolls, are intimately bound up with social interactions in which the symbolic meanings of these material objects are

established and internalised. So, symbolic communication about material goods is involved in how children become aware of themselves, and develop and maintain an identity, particularly in the context of contemporary consumer culture's emphasis on the material 'good life' ideal.

The process of children developing an identity is a gradual one, progressing in stages. With respect to taking the perspective of another person, a child at first can only adopt the perspective of a specific person with whom she/he interacts directly, and thus internalises the attitudes of that individual towards him or her as part of their self-concept. Subsequently, the child is able to adopt the perspective of several specific others simultaneously and thus comes to see herself or himself from the viewpoints of, for instance, her or his whole family or group of playmates all at once. Consequently, self-attitudes become more complex and integrated. But Mead speaks of a fully developed identity only when particular attitudes of specific others towards the individual are integrated and generalised, so that they become an internalised *set* of representations, which reflect the attitudes of larger social units, and even society as a whole. This process can also be applied to the link between material symbols and identity. Gradually, young children learn the symbolic meanings of material goods through observing and imaginatively taking part in others' interactions with objects, be it directly or on the mass media. For example, a mother might comment during a children's TV programme that the person who owns this beautiful, large house is very clever and successful. In this way, children are introduced to the idea that material objects provide symbolic information about the characteristics of the owner.

To give an empirical example, we can consider how dolls influence young girls' identity and body image (Dittmar, Halliwell, & Ive, 2006). Dolls like Barbie can serve as an imaginary point of reference for social comparisons, from which young girls can see their own bodily self, where they come to understand the meaning of beauty and perfection through pretending to be their dolls. If dolls signify a socio-cultural ideal

of the female body that equates beauty with thinness, such as Barbie, then the thin beauty ideal is gradually internalised through fantasy and play. Thus, the primary meaning of the term ‘role model’ for Mead is a cultural representation that becomes internalised to form part of the child’s emerging identity. This process involves different phases of play, where young children initially imitate, and identify with, ‘beautiful’ Barbie in a direct, non-reflexive manner, but then – gradually – come to internalise thinness as a salient feature of what it means to be beautiful. Eventually, the internalised thin appearance ideal can become a significant element of their ideal, if not easily actual, identity, and thus a guiding principle for their thoughts, emotions, and behaviours.

This conceptualisation of identity as a social product, accomplished through symbolic communication, is a meta-theoretical framework of identity development. It forms a backdrop throughout this chapter. However, in subsequent sections, specific social psychological models and theories are adapted and integrated in order to understand the social psychological processes which link material goods and individuals’ identity, as well as vulnerability factors for negative well-being resulting from the pursuit of particular material and consumer identities.

Identity-Related Functions of Material Goods

When people own material possessions, this can serve various identity functions, such as expressing or enhancing their identity, as well as symbolising relatedness with others. Such identity functions also play a role in motivating people to buy new consumer goods, even though the act of ‘buying’ is separate from attachments to specific possessions. This review of different identity-related functions of material goods is concerned with motivated identity, as discussed by Gregg et al. (Chapter 14, this volume) and Oyserman and James (Chapter 6, this volume), and presents a framework that has important links

with some core identity motives (reviewed by Vignoles, Chapter 18, this volume).

Model of Identity-Related Functions of Material Goods

Based on extensive research in which diverse respondents provided open-ended accounts of the reasons why their favourite material possessions were important to them (Dittmar, 1992a, 2008), a model of seven main categories emerges, as shown in the left column of Table 31.1. These bottom-up identity functions in the context of material goods show strong connections with most of the identity motives identified by Vignoles (Chapter 18, this volume), shown in the right column of Table 31.1. In recent work, these identity motives have been found to be related to individuals’ identification with brands (Kreuzbauer, Vignoles, & Chiu, 2009), as well as to material possessions (Vignoles et al., 2011).

Identity functions have been examined in qualitative research that uses the ‘favourite possessions paradigm’, where respondents explain in their own words why treasured objects are important to them. Buying motives for new consumer goods have been researched with a number of methodologies, including shopping diaries, interviews, and questionnaires, both in social psychology (Dittmar, 2008) and in consumer research (Banwari, 2006).

Instruments of control and mastery. Individuals give accounts of how their material possessions enable them to do specific activities and enhance their independence, freedom, and autonomy, for instance referring to their laptop computer. This effectiveness function closely resembles the self-efficacy identity motive, where individuals strive to feel competent and capable of influencing their environment. Based on an extensive cross-cultural and developmental interview study with children, adolescents, and adults from America, Israeli kibbutzim, and Israeli cities, Furby (1978) argues that effectance motivation, or the need for mastery, is the main defining characteristic of why possessions are psychologically important. Given that the

Table 31.1 Identity-related functions of material goods and identity motives

Dittmar's identity-related functions	Vignoles' identity motives
<i>Effectiveness</i> Control, independence, autonomy	<i>Self-efficacy</i> Feel competent and capable of influencing environment
<i>Emotional regulation</i> Regulate/enhance mood, comfort, security	
<i>Actual identity</i> Individuality/differentiation, symbol of personal qualities, values, goals	<i>Distinctiveness</i> Distinguish self from other people <i>Continuity</i> Perceive identity as continuous over time
<i>Ideal identity</i> ^a Identity repair, moving closer to ideal self, fantasy self	<i>Self-esteem</i> See self in positive light
<i>Personal history</i> Link to past/childhood, symbol of self-continuity	<i>Continuity</i> Perceive identity as continuous over time
<i>Symbolic interrelatedness</i> Relationships with specific others, symbolic company	<i>Belongingness</i> Be included and accepted within social circles Also esteem, and distinctiveness for social identity
<i>Social identity</i> Social category, group membership, sub-culture, status	<i>Meaning</i> Perceive life as ultimately meaningful

^aThis category was added after the 1992 book.

three cultures studied differ on individualism–collectivism (Smith, [Chapter 11](#), this volume) and have different values with respect to possessions, with kibbutzim highly collectivist and non-materialistic in contrast to the individualist culture in US and Israeli cities, Furby interprets her findings as support for a universal effectance motivation, which is reflected in a strong link between individuals' sense of self and their material possessions, regardless of developmental stage or cultural context. The psychological significance of possessions is seen as residing mainly in the control they afford their owner over the physical and social environment, and they are closely linked to identity for precisely that reason. The magnitude of control an individual has over their possessions is of the same order as the control they exert over their body, and it is this powerful control, which leads to possessions becoming a part of people's sense of self. The proposal that material possessions are linked to individuals' identity because they help them exercise control and experience a sense of mastery echoes the effectiveness identity function

and self-efficacy identity motive described in [Table 31.1](#).

Although the implication that the psychological significance of possessions resides primarily in fulfilling control and mastery motives may hold for young children, others functions are likely to become equally, or even more, important for adolescents and adults. The effectiveness, control, or self-efficacy motive is well supported in all of the research using open-ended accounts, not only by Furby and myself, but also by US studies with different age groups (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981; Kamptner, 1991). In addition, there is experimental evidence for this. A study on self-completion, a process of compensating for aspects of self perceived as inadequate, examined the link between possessions and control motivation through manipulating people's sense of personal control and then collecting their judgements of the extent to which their possessions give them control and mastery (Beggan, 1991). The findings confirmed that those who suffer control deprivation (being told that they had failed

on an experimental task) overemphasise the control their possessions give them, compared to those who experience control gain, but this result emerged only for those respondents who believed in general that they have control over their life (internal locus of control).

Thus, material goods clearly play an important role for identity through fulfilling needs for effectiveness, mastery, and self-efficacy (see also literature review by Pierce, Kostova, & Dirks, 2003). Self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Soenens & Vansteenkiste, Chapter 17, this volume) identifies competence and autonomy as intrinsic psychological needs that require fulfilment for people's well-being. It therefore makes sense that material goods can have a beneficial effect for people if they contribute towards a sense of effective identity.

Emotional expression and regulation. Emotion 'work' emerged strongly in both qualitative and quantitative work on identity functions, where individuals use material goods to express, regulate or enhance their mood, find emotional comfort, derive a sense of emotional security, vent their frustration, or escape from unwanted emotional states. This facet of material identity is not reflected in Vignoles' review of identity motives. Although emotional expression or regulation is not necessarily linked to identity, it may have some connection to various of his identity motives: to self-esteem (people strive to feel better about themselves); to belongingness (having a nice car can help to 'fit in' in a wealthy social group), or continuity (people who live in the same house for years may be better adjusted than those who move around a lot). The mood people are in is reflected in their subjective evaluation of consumer goods they own or desire to own, such that they evaluate goods more positively when in a positive rather than negative mood, although this mood-congruent pattern is moderated by personality differences (Ciarrochi & Forgas, 2000).

Significantly, emotional functions of material goods emerge as highly prominent concerns when people buy new consumer goods, both in typologies of buyers (Stone, 1954) and surveys of buying motives. Emotional functions appear as hedonic, compared to utilitarian, benefits from

shopping in consumer research (Babin, Darden, & Griffin, 1994), but we found that emotional buying motives form a coherent, internally consistent dimension separate from other types of buying motives, reflecting concerns such as 'I get a real buzz from buying things' or 'I often buy things because it puts me in a better mood' (Dittmar, 2008).

Although emotional regulation is likely to fulfil beneficial functions for identity, particularly the emotional comfort and security provided by treasured personal possessions that symbolise personal history and interrelatedness with others, there are also indications that mood regulation in the context of buying new consumer goods – 'retail therapy' – may have negative consequences. In one study, we asked respondents about potential difficulties with uncontrolled spending, such as finding it easy to spend money without realising, and found that emotional motives were a significant predictor of perceived ease of spending in shops and stores (Dittmar, 2008). This suggests that emotional involvement in buying goods can facilitate overspending. Indeed, as we will see in a later section, escape from negative mood states, such as anxiety or depression, are prominent features of dysfunctional consumer behaviour.

Expressing actual identity. Material goods can symbolise, both to self and others, an individual's unique qualities, values, and personal goals, expressing their personal identity and their differentiation from others. The desire to be differentiated from others, to stand out from the crowd, and to be unique may be particularly strong in Western, individualist cultures, but has been identified as an important general identity motive (Vignoles, Regalia, Manzi, Golledge, & Scabini, 2006). Scabini and Manzi (Chapter 23, this volume) discuss the differentiation motive in the context of identity and family processes. The motive to be distinct from others also finds expression when people buy new consumer goods. We collected open-ended accounts of buying motives in women's shopping diaries. These diaries showed that concerns with expressing identity, such as 'something that fits "me"' or 'just how I want to look', were

reported as frequently as non-identity concerns with whether goods are useful or good value for money, and more frequently than mood change (Dittmar, 2001, 2005a). We also demonstrated that the motive to buy 'because it expresses what is unique about me' is commonly endorsed (overall ratings fell above the scale midpoint; Dittmar, 2008). However, this motive differs by type of consumer good, such that mean ratings are significantly higher for clothes, which are high in identity-symbolising potential, than for basic body care items such as shampoo (Dittmar & Bond, 2010).

The close link between material goods and actual identity is also highlighted in a literature review (Pierce et al., 2003), which identifies self-identity as one of three main functions of possessions. Moreover, it appears that material possessions are viewed as a particularly useful source of information about others' identity, and that identity inferences show a degree of accuracy. A US study showed that 84% of observers preferred possessions over other sources of information, and that those who made identity inferences on the basis of possessions were more accurate (in the sense that they agreed more strongly with owners' self-ratings) than observers who had chosen information about behaviours or activities (Burroughs, Drews, & Hallman, 1991). This suggests that the function of material goods to express actual identity is not only strong, but can be successful. However, the relationship between owners' personal qualities and observers' inferences becomes more complex once it is taken into account that there are differences between what individuals want to express through their favourite material goods, and what they think other people will infer about them on the basis of photographs of those goods (Anderson, 2007).

In the consumer and academic marketing research literatures, there is a substantial body of work on self-congruity, which focuses on the match between attributes of consumers and the same attributes applied to products or brands. The closeness of the self-product match is then used as a predictor of different facets of consumer attitudes and behaviours, such as perceived advertising effectiveness (Sirgy, 1982).

The self-congruity effect is explained through a self-consistency motive, according to which individuals are motivated to behave in ways consistent with how they see themselves, their actual identity, which may also be linked to Vignoles' self-continuity motive. Lack of consistency in a person's self-concept is linked to the subjective experience of emotional distress (Gramzow, Sedikides, Panter, & Insko, 2000).

Taken together, this evidence suggests that material goods – both already owned and considered for purchase – serve an important function through helping individuals to express their actual identity. Identity symbolism has a communicative role, in the sense that material goods can be used by people to make inferences about owners, which can be reasonably accurate. Identity expression is linked to the need to maintain self-consistency, and possibly self-continuity, which are beneficial for psychological well-being.

Striving for an ideal identity. Self-congruity research has also studied the fit between ideal identity and product image, again finding that a greater fit (modestly) predicts stronger liking for goods or brands, and stronger purchase motivations, with some indication that effects are stronger for ideal compared to actual identity (Sirgy, 1985). This effect is explained by self-esteem and self-enhancement motives, whereby ideal self-product congruity can help people to reduce discrepancies between their actual and ideal self.

Qualitative research confirms that people use material symbols to bolster or enhance aspects of their identity and, in our survey research on buying motives, ideal identity motives emerged as a coherent, internally consistent, and conceptually distinct set of buying motives, with 'makes me feel more like the person I want to be' as an example item (Dittmar, 2008). A perspective that is conceptually rich and has proved fruitful for my own research is symbolic self-completion theory, which proposes that people make use of material possessions, among other strategies, to compensate for perceived inadequacies in their self-concept (Wicklund & Gollwitzer, 1982). Because of their communicative power, material symbols have identity-creating and identity-enhancing

features. Within limits (of gender, age, or social role), people attempt to move closer to their ideal identity by engaging in symbolic self-completion. For instance, business students who had a weak symbolic basis for a business career, in the sense that their qualifications were less good, displayed more relevant material symbols, such as an expensive watch, briefcase, or business suit, compared to students with better career prospects (Braun & Wicklund, 1989). The subjective importance people attach to an identity – its salience – is important, however, because the compensatory relationships between a weak identity and increased use of relevant material symbols holds only for those people who were committed to that particular identity. This implies that people pursue material symbols in order to reduce discrepancies between their actual and ideal self, which raises the question of whether material goods are a beneficial strategy for dealing with identity deficits. This interesting issue is discussed later, in the sections on materialism and dysfunctional consumer behaviour.

In summary, the pursuit of an ideal identity seems a particularly powerful function of material goods, linked to various identity motives. Ideal identity is linked to self-esteem, in the sense that people are motivated to improve their self-image and see themselves in a positive light, similar to the self-enhancement motive highlighted by Gregg et al. (Chapter 14, this volume). Yet, at the same time, ideal identity is also concerned with identity repair, since the motive to move closer to an ideal self implies that aspects of the actual self are perceived as lacking, incomplete, or undesirable.

Personal history, identity maintenance, and self-continuity. Early evidence that possessions help people to maintain a general sense of identity and integrity can be found in Goffman's (1961, 1968) classic analyses of 'self mortification' in prisons and mental hospitals. He offers a vivid account of the identity-maintaining features of personal possessions by outlining how admission procedures where 'inmates' are stripped of all personal belongings take away most of the previous basis of self-identification. Goffman (1968) argues that these procedures not only are

humiliating, but also deprive inmates of their 'identity-kit', which includes clothing, make-up, and other personal possessions, which function as 'embodiments of self'. Investigations concerned with relocations and major life transitions demonstrate that people adjust better if they can take their treasured possessions with them, because they symbolise a person's life experiences, and thus the historical continuity of self. Elderly people coped much better with the trauma of moving into a nursing home (Wapner, Demick, & Redondo, 1990), and emigration to a different country is also easier (Mehta & Belk, 1991).

This research highlights that symbolic aspects of possessions help people to maintain a general sense of identity, integrity, and self-continuity, providing a symbolic record of their personal history. This identity function of possessions is very closely related to the self-continuity motive reviewed by Vignoles (Chapter 18, this volume). Life-span investigations of personal possessions and identity (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981; Kamptner, 1991) characterise late adulthood as a life stage where this identity function becomes particularly prominent because people are engaged with a retrospective life review process, where reminders of the past and relationships aid in the maintenance and assessment of their lifelong sense of self.

Symbolic interrelatedness. The desire for interpersonal attachments has been described as a fundamental human motivation (Baumeister & Leary, 1995), and the need for interrelatedness with others is identified as an intrinsic motive that has to be fulfilled to achieve well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Material goods emerge as important symbols of personal relationships with others in the 'favourite possessions paradigm' studies, where photos, heirlooms, and gifts are prominent examples of symbolic interrelatedness, symbolising close relationships with friends and family (Dittmar, 1992a).

Material goods can also be used to communicate and negotiate identities within relationships. For instance, giving gifts often involves more than constituting a token of love: it can be likened to the imposition of an identity, in the sense that it is one of the ways in which we announce and

transmit the image we have of somebody, and the receiver's acceptance of the gift entails an acceptance of the giver's ideas about her or his identity. Imagine the difference between giving a woman a black, tailored cocktail dress versus a flowery, cotton dress with puffed sleeves.

Clearly, material goods can play an important beneficial role in symbolising and strengthening close personal relationships, a function that is closely related to Vignoles' belonging motive. When material possessions provide a psychological sense of actual interrelatedness, then this is likely to be beneficial for well-being. However, people sometimes pursue material goods in order to compensate for unsatisfactory, damaged relationships, which can be detrimental for their well-being.

Symbols of status, wealth, and group membership. Moving on to material goods as categorical symbols and as signs of social identities, clothes are perhaps the most obvious example of our possessions through which we can signify group affiliations and social standing, including sex-role identification, political orientation, or socio-economic status (Solomon, 1985). Material goods can also serve to signify membership in smaller sub-cultures, such as punks (Hebdige, 1979).

Inspired by Veblen's (1899) seminal essay on wasteful conspicuous consumption, more systematically researched material expressions of a person's standing are status symbols, investigated mainly by sociologists (Goffman, 1951). Status symbols change over time. Objects cease to serve as status symbols once they become shared too widely to denote exclusiveness. There are both 'trickle-down' and 'trickle-up' effects, where aspiring low status groups imitate and adopt the status symbols of those groups slightly more affluent than they are, until higher status groups discard these markers and, in turn, adopt new ones to differentiate themselves. Yet, it is important to recognise the power of an advertising-driven mass fashion which simultaneously informs, influences, and is adopted by social groups at many levels of the social-material hierarchy (Sproles, 1985).

Work on brand loyalty emphasises the significance of social brand community, that is, an actual group where members have contact with each other, as well as psychological brand community, which suggests a sense of identification with an anonymous collection of individuals because they share the same brand preference (Carlson, Suter, & Brown, 2008). In other words, people can identify with other brand admirers as a virtual group in the absence of any social interaction: 'I'm an Armani man, myself.' However, people also actively choose goods in order to be different from members of other social groups, selecting cultural tastes including material possessions, which distinguish them from other groups and abandoning tastes when other social groups adopt them, in order both to communicate identity and to avoid others making undesired identity inferences (Berger & Heath, 2007).

Stereotypes of different social groups are typically examined through personal qualities ascribed to in-group and out-group members, but stereotypes of different groups exist also in terms of material possession profiles. I (Dittmar, 1994) asked respondents from three different socio-economic groups – business employees, students, and unemployed – to list objects they thought of as favourite possessions, both for themselves and for members of the other two groups. Two findings emerged that are typical features of stereotyping: out-group homogeneity and between-group differentiation. Members of other groups are perceived as being more similar to each other than they really are, in that possessions listed for other groups were less diverse than those for one's own group. Differences between groups are perceived as greater than they actually are, given that goods related to the socio-economic differences between groups in terms of (relative) wealth and status were overemphasised.

If people use material possession profiles to locate individuals in socio-economic terms and if they hold stereotypes associated with those profiles, it follows that first impressions of the very same person should differ, depending on whether that person is surrounded with material objects that denote a relatively higher, compared to lower, level of wealth. This was examined in

an experimental study (Dittmar, 1992b), where respondents from middle-class or working-class backgrounds watched a short video that depicted a young person, whose profile of material possessions denoted either relative affluence (e.g. an expensive designer pine kitchen, state-of-the-art music equipment, high status car) or a lack of affluence (e.g. basic kitchen and hi-fi equipment, small car). As expected, the middle-class respondents described the affluent video as more similar to their family background, whereas the working-class respondents saw the less affluent video as more similar. This material similarity between video character and observer is important, because social identity theory (Brown & Hewstone, 2005; Spears, Chapter 9, this volume) proposes that people should form more positive impressions of in-group members, in this case the video character with a similar material background. In contrast, wealth stereotypes profiled in consumer culture may be so pervasive that they are shared across different SES groups, so that impressions would differ only on the basis of the video character's material possessions profile. The findings supported the second hypothesis. The same person, when portrayed with affluent material goods rather than inexpensive possessions, was perceived by both groups as significantly more intelligent, more assertive, and more in control – all of which are highly valued culturally in Western societies. Yet, she/he was also seen as less warm and expressive. Thus, the wealth stereotype combines less interpersonal warmth with a set of attributes that are overwhelmingly positive and important for success. These findings have been replicated since (Christopher & Schlenker, 2000; Dittmar & Pepper, 1994).

Thus, material goods symbolise membership of, or sense of belonging to, diverse social groups, such as social categories, smaller groups, and even virtual groups whose members do not interact directly. They also signify social status and wealth, with associated beliefs about owners' personal qualities. This identity function resonates with several of the identity motives reviewed by Vignoles (Chapter 18, this volume): belongingness, distinctiveness, and esteem.

Identity Variations: Life-span, Culture, Socio-economic Status, and Gender

The evidence to support the existence and importance of the seven identity functions of material goods outlined in Table 31.1 is strong, drawn from my own research as well as from different literatures in psychology, sociology, consumer, marketing, and advertising research. Their relative importance to a person is influenced by a number of factors, such as stage in the life-span, culture, socio-economic status, and gender.

Life-span. Changes from infancy to old age have been documented consistently, where concerns with control, mastery, and independence are gradually overtaken by a focus on the symbolic functions of goods, first with respect to one's own identity, and then increasingly with respect to close personal relationships with others, such as friends and family. This trajectory of change has been interpreted as reflecting different life stages, or tasks, of identity development, that are thought to apply universally. However, the relevant evidence was collected typically in individualist, Western cultures, and thus it may not reflect universal stages. Indeed, recent findings provide support for the symbolic interactionist framework adopted in this chapter, which suggests that different orientations towards material goods can occur at every stage of identity development, depending on social context.

Infants often establish a special relationship with just one or two material possessions, usually a 'cuddly' toy or 'transitional' object (Winnicott, 1953), which has been argued to play a significant role in the child's development from total dependency towards autonomy by giving emotional comfort and – as the first 'not me' possession – helping the child to draw a boundary between self and the external world. Yet, cross-cultural research shows socialisation influences rather than cuddlies constituting a necessary, and therefore universal, step in infants' successful individuation and construction of identity. Whereas most children in developed Western countries have a cuddly, children in developing countries

typically have almost continuous body contact with their nurturer, but no cuddly (Gulerce, 1991).

Studies of different age groups and generations (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981; Kamptner, 1991) found that children treasured possessions predominantly in terms of the active functions they fulfil for them in establishing independence and autonomy, whereas the oldest generation was concerned with the symbolic record that photographs and memorabilia provided of their lives and relationships with their loved ones. In between, adolescents were concerned with peer-group ties associated with their favourite objects and the aspects of identity they expressed. Young adults also talked about the interpersonal ties their cars, jewellery, photographs, and general memorabilia symbolised. In middle adulthood, photographs and jewellery take increasingly prominent places as favoured objects, with a growing emphasis on the social and family networks they signify, and the emotions and memories associated with them. To explain these changes, Kamptner (1991) draws on Erikson's (1980) model of identity development, according to which the central identity tasks at different life stages are as follows: build a sense of competence, mastery, and independence in childhood; develop an autonomous identity in adolescence; find intimate relationships in young adulthood; establish social links with different generations in middle adulthood; and engage in a retrospective life review process in late adulthood.

Thus, life-span changes are reflected in a gradual shift of emphasis, initially from effectiveness to self-expressive and then, finally, to the social-symbolic functions of material goods, depending on the main identity tasks people are engaged in. However, this life-span approach should not be taken to imply that there is a universal pattern for the links between identity and material possessions. As with the meanings of cuddlies in early childhood, there is evidence that culture influences these links.

Culture. As discussed by Smith (Chapter 11, this volume), a growing literature in social psychology documents that identity construction

differs across cultures. Individualist cultures, such as the United States or the United Kingdom, tend to privilege an independent form of self-construal, such that identity is separate from others and defined by personal goals, whereas collectivist cultures emphasise interdependent self-construal, such that identity is defined through connectedness with others and the importance of group goals (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). A study comparing favourite possessions and their meaning among US residents with those in a traditional, tribal community in Niger (Wallendorf & Arnould, 1988) found not only that the objects named were radically different, but also that the reasons why they were treasured focused predominantly on symbolising personal history in the United States, in contrast to symbolising status within the community and commitment to shared values in Niger. Although this study was not designed to assess identity construction directly, its findings are consistent with the proposal that material possessions are likely to symbolise personal identity in an individualist culture, and social identity in a collectivist society.

We (Bond, Dittmar, Singelis, Papadopoulou, & Chiu, 2002) examined the hypothesis that identity functions of material possessions would reflect culturally prevalent modes of identity construction in a cross-cultural comparison of respondents from the United States, the United Kingdom, and Hong Kong. The findings support the hypothesis that there is some match between cultural-level individualism (higher in the United States and the United Kingdom than in Hong Kong) and the identity functions of emotional regulation and actual (unique) identity expression: emotional regulation was rated as more important in the United States and the United Kingdom than in Hong Kong, and possessions were valued as symbols of a unique identity most strongly in the United States, followed by the United Kingdom, and least strongly in Hong Kong. Thus, there are systematic differences between cultures so that identity functions that reflect culturally privileged forms of self-construal are perceived as more important. Yet, self-construal differences

exist not only between, but also within, cultures.

Socio-economic status. Socio-economic status (SES) is a further influence on the relative emphasis that individuals place on different identity functions of their material goods. High SES, middle-class business managers are more concerned with their utility, leisure, and sentimental possessions as unique symbols of their personal history and development, whereas low SES, working-class unemployed individuals focus more on the functional, active, and emotional uses of their leisure and utility objects, such as ‘switching off’ or ‘escaping’ (Dittmar, 1991). This reflects a highly individualised, long-term perspective on self-development in those of a high social–material position, in contrast to a short-term, functional perspective more likely to be adopted by individuals from a low social–material position, arising at least in part from a constantly enforced concern with economic and emotional security. A US study also showed that high and low SES individuals engage differently with symbolic and material culture, reflecting different notions of identity (Snibbe & Markus, 2005). High SES participants and their preferred cultural products (such as music CDs) emphasise the expression of uniqueness, control, and power, whereas less educated, low SES respondents and their preferred products emphasise maintaining integrity and adjusting selves.

Gender. The ‘favourite possessions’ studies reviewed earlier, as well as my own research (Dittmar, 1989), confirm that women and men tend to differ in the importance they attach to different identity functions. Compared to women, men refer more strongly to control and effectiveness functions, whereas women concentrate more on the role of goods as symbols of interpersonal relationships and their emotional significance. These gender differences can be understood as reflecting the ways in which women and men typically construct their identity. Men tend towards a more *independent* form of identity construction (separateness from others, being able to do things) in contrast to women’s more *interdependent* identity (embeddedness in close personal relationships). Of course, women and

men can, and do, use both independent and interdependent forms of identity construction, but gender differences have been demonstrated consistently in their typical preferences (Cross & Madson, 1997). These are reflected in the identity-related functions that women and men value most in the material possessions they already own, but also in buying motives for new consumer goods. In particular, gender differences emerge with respect to emotional regulation, where the importance of buying goods in order to cheer oneself up and feel happier is significantly greater for women than for men (Dittmar, 2008).

This section has documented the diverse identity functions that material goods fulfil for individuals. These functions can change throughout the life course, but rather than reflecting universally applicable stages of individual development, variations occur and can be analysed as reflections of privileged modes of identity construction in the social context, as suggested by a Meadian perspective, whether this be culture, SES, or gender. It also suggested that material goods, particularly treasured possessions, often play a positive role for individuals, thus contributing to their well-being because they can help fulfil identity needs seen as intrinsic from the self-determination perspective, discussed by Soenens and Vansteenkiste (Chapter 17, this volume). Material goods can increase individuals’ effectiveness and autonomy, aid identity expression, maintenance and continuity, or, as symbolic markers of interrelatedness, increase their sense of affiliation and connectedness with others. However, there is a dark side to the close link between material goods and identity.

Maladaptive Pursuits of Material and Consumer Identities

The pursuit of materialistic values – money, fame, material goods – is highly profiled in consumer culture as a pathway to a happy, satisfied life and has been seen as central to the success of modern economies. Yet, there is growing concern

and evidence that an orientation to the *material good life* undermines psychological well-being. Drawing on several influential social psychological theories, I have developed a model that aims to identify who is most vulnerable to negative effects from pursuing material goods, wealth, and the *material good life* ideal, and to outline the identity processes through which these pursuits come to impact individuals' well-being (Dittmar, 2008). A brief summary is given below in four points.

First, comparisons with images prevalent in the media and consumer culture can make people feel bad about themselves. The core of Social Comparison Theory is that people have a need to evaluate themselves through comparing themselves to others (Festinger, 1954), and consumers are affected because they cannot help but compare themselves with idealised media images, implicitly and explicitly (Richins, 1991). Given that the great majority of individuals fall far short of the *material good life* typically portrayed, social comparisons with media models lead many people to negative self-evaluation and discontent. However, in order for this negative effect to occur, individuals need to attach psychological importance to the central qualities of these media images, such as an affluent lifestyle and expensive goods.

Second, this psychological importance depends on individuals' underlying value system. From a self-determination perspective, an orientation that emphasises money, material goods, fame, and image is based on extrinsic life goals, guided by external influences, such as approval by others, rewards, or coercion, as opposed to intrinsic goals, such as relationships, community involvement, or self-development (Soenens & Vansteenkiste, Chapter 17, this volume). The *material good life* ideal can be internalised by individuals, so that it forms a personal system of values or goals, which guides how individuals construe themselves, the ideals they pursue, and the motivations that drive their behaviour. Depending on the extent to which they internalise a materialistic value orientation, some individuals, or groups of people, are more

vulnerable to detrimental consumer culture effects than others.

Third, and most central, are psychological processes related to identity. Self-Discrepancy Theory (Higgins, 1987) postulates negative psychological consequences when individuals experience discrepancies, or gaps, between how they see themselves (actual identity) and how they would ideally like to be (ideal identity). Thus, comparisons with idealised models can lead to salient actual-ideal identity deficits, particularly when individuals already endorse material ideals as a personal goal. In this way, consumer culture highlights identity deficits, and can also contribute to their development in the first place. Yet, it also offers a supposed remedy: consumers need only buy the promoted products to get closer to their ideal identity, and experience more positive emotions. Whether they are aware of it or not, people engage in identity and mood repair through consumption by acquiring relevant material symbols, as suggested by Symbolic Self-Completion Theory (Wicklund & Gollwitzer, 1982). For instance, people might buy a 'glamorous' outfit in order to feel more glamorous and self-confident. Although this may work for some people, at least in the short term, it is unlikely to provide a long-term solution for those who have chronic identity deficits.

Fourth, putting the previous three points together, the central thesis of the model emerges. Material culture encourages value internalisation and construction of a negative identity in vulnerable people, so that they feel far away from their ideal, and bad about this gap. At the same time, it offers supposed, but illusory, solutions for managing and repairing identity deficits and negative emotions through consumption. The particular motivations for buying material goods emphasised by the *material good life* ideal focus on identity repair and mood management, captured in the material culture slogans of 'retail therapy' and 'I shop, therefore I am' (Dittmar, 2008). And identity repair and mood management are precisely the identity functions that are detrimental to well-being.

The Pursuit of the 'Material Good Life' and Subjective Well-being

There is a substantial body of research that examines links between a materialistic value orientation and individuals' well-being (for reviews, see Dittmar, 2008; Kasser & Kanner, 2004). The review provided here is selective, focusing on the role of identity processes in the materialism–well-being link. Materialism is concerned with people's *desire* for material goods and wealth, not with people's actual wealth. It can be defined as the importance that people ascribe to the ownership and acquisition of material goods in achieving their life goals, and associated beliefs about the identity-related benefits that material goods will bring, such as status, positive identity, or happiness (Dittmar, 2008; Kasser & Kanner, 2004; Richins, 2004). The most prominent explanation for why materialism may be linked to lower well-being comes from the self-determination perspective (Kasser & Ryan, 1996; Soenens & Vansteenkiste, Chapter 17, this volume), proposing that such an extrinsic goal orientation is unlikely to lead to, or may even undermine, the fulfilment of essential psychological needs for relationships, autonomy, and competence. In short, the pursuit of material goods and wealth takes time and energy away from intrinsic goals, and therefore leads to lower well-being.

Contrary to the pervasive belief that more money and material goods will improve our lives considerably, profiled so strongly in the media and consumer culture, the evidence demonstrates that those with a strong materialistic value orientation have lower life satisfaction, are less happy, suffer from more psychological and physical problems, and experience lower subjective well-being. Subjective well-being includes long-term satisfaction with one's life as a cognitive component, and the presence of positive emotions combined with an absence of negative emotions as an affective component. Correlational studies consistently report a negative association between a materialistic value orientation and well-being, not only in the United States where the majority of research has been conducted (e.g. Kasser & Ryan, 1993, 1996; Richins & Dawson,

1992; Sirgy, 1998), but also in other countries, including Europe, the Far East, the former Soviet bloc, and – recently – developing countries (Dittmar & Kapur, in press; Garðarsdóttir, Dittmar, & Aspinall, 2009; Jankovic & Dittmar, 2006; Kasser & Ahuvia, 2002; Ryan et al., 1999). Perhaps the most persuasive piece of evidence linking materialism to lower well-being is a cross-temporal meta-analysis of psychopathology among young Americans from 1938 to 2007, showing that there are strong generational increases in psychopathology and that this increase fits best with a cultural shift model towards increasing extrinsic goals (Twenge et al., 2010).

Notwithstanding the consistency of a negative link between materialism and well-being, the strength of association is typically small, or moderate at best. An explanation can be found in the recent goals–motives debate, suggesting that this negative link may only hold with respect to particular motives for wanting money and possessions (Garðarsdóttir et al., 2009; Srivastava, Locke, & Bartol, 2001). People may pursue affluence and material goods for many diverse reasons, and the motive to secure a pleasant home environment for one's family may well have a different link to well-being, compared to the motive to feel superior to the neighbours by displaying higher status goods.

Srivastava et al. (2001) examined 10 different motives for holding materialistic values classified into three types. *Freedom of action* motives, such as spending time and resources pursuing leisure activities, had no effect on subjective well-being, and *positive* motives were labelled as such because they showed a (mild) positive relationship with SWB, including supporting a family, feeling proud of oneself, and getting just compensation for one's efforts. *Negative* motives were found to be linked to lower well-being, with the central motives focused on overcoming self-doubt and status seeking, such as proving that one is not a failure or dumb, and having a house and cars that are better than those of the neighbours. Consistent with previous research, Srivastava et al. (2001) reported a significant negative link between materialism and SWB, but found that

this link was reduced to non-significance once underlying motives were taken into account. However, from a self-determination perspective, research challenges this conclusion by demonstrating that it is both the money (goal content) and the motives behind the goals that affect subjective well-being independently (Sheldon, Ryan, Deci, & Kasser, 2004). These authors argue that negative motives (operationalised as externally controlled rather than autonomously motivated) and extrinsic goal content, such as the pursuit of money, share significant features and are therefore both important when it comes to predicting SWB, so that the link with SWB is not reducible to one or the other predictor.

We conducted a follow-up study with students and employees in the public and private sector (Garðarsdóttir et al., 2009). The two motives that are of central interest for this chapter are the motive for a happier self, where people want affluence in order to improve positive emotions and lead a happier life, and the motive for a better identity, where people want money to deal with identity deficits and seek better status. As expected, we found small, but significant negative associations between materialism and SWB. When we took motives into account, both the motives for a happier self and a better identity were significant, and stronger, negative predictors of SWB. At the same time, the previously significant association between materialism and SWB disappeared. Thus, our conclusion concurs with Srivastava et al. (2001): The pursuit of money and expensive goods is not necessarily linked to lower well-being. Instead, specific identity motives which influence such a pursuit for money and goods seem toxic: the motive for greater happiness and the motive for a more ideal identity.

The 'Bricks' and 'Clicks' of Dysfunctional Consumer Behaviour

Compulsive buying, often called shopping addiction in the media, is a dysfunctional consumer behaviour that has serious negative consequences

for individuals: debt, distress, and impairment. This dysfunctional behaviour can come to dominate individuals' lives to such an extent that it has to be considered a clinical disorder, listed in the DSM-TR-IV (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). Although there is no agreed upon specific definition, broad consensus exists on three core features: the urge to buy is experienced as irresistible, individuals lose control over their buying behaviour, and they continue with excessive buying despite adverse consequences in their personal, social, or occupational lives, as well as financial debt (Dittmar, 2004b; Faber & O'Guinn, 2008).

Moreover, the problem is growing (Neuner, Raab, & Reisch, 2005). As many as half a million people in the United Kingdom, one million in Germany, and 15 million in the United States may be affected by compulsive buying (Dittmar, 2004b; Koran, Faber, Boujaoude, Large, & Serpe, 2006), and many more are likely to suffer from sub-clinical dysfunctional consumer behaviour: a tendency towards compulsive buying, which can be measured with clinically validated screener questionnaires. Several comprehensive overviews of the compulsive buying literature are available (Benson, 2000; Benson, Dittmar, & Wolfsohn, 2010; Dittmar, 2004b; Faber & O'Guinn, 2008). Compulsive buying is multi-determined, and the aim here is to provide a selective review with respect to identity functions and motives linked to material goods. This summary from an interview with a recovering compulsive shopper illustrates not only the agreed on core characteristics (printed in italics), but also the two identity motives of central interest: emotional regulation and striving for an ideal identity (printed in bold):

For Nancy, 35 years old, there is only impulse buying. If she sees something in a shop she likes, she *must have it*. She *can't stop* herself. It is always clothes and jewellery, smart clothes mainly, **a size 12 which she desires to be**. . . It does **lift her up** for a few hours. . . It is *all her fault*, she thinks. She *feels guilty*. She has ridden the family into *debt*. She says that she *cannot tell her husband*, because he would walk out on her. . . her repayments will add up to about £15,000 (\$22,500). (Dittmar, 2004b, p. 412 emphases added)

Nancy refers to emotional regulation ('lifts her up'), which is also prominently discussed in the clinical literature, where compulsive buying has been described as relieving anxiety and 'self-medication' for depression (Black, 2006; Lejoyeux, Adés, Tassian, & Solomon, 1996). She also illustrates that compulsive buyers typically seek to move closer to their ideal identity through buying identity-relevant consumer goods, in her case an attractive, slim body ideal through size 12 clothes. This is consistent with clinical reports that compulsive buyers are highly selective in their purchases – for women it is usually clothes, appearance-related goods, and accessories (Dittmar, 2004b, 2008).

We have carried out diary, interview, survey, and experimental studies with UK respondents in which we assessed compulsive buying tendencies (Dittmar, 2001, 2005a, 2005b, 2008; Dittmar & Bond, 2010). The scale employed (d'Astous, Maltais, & Roberge, 1990) cannot be used for clinical diagnosis, but it does have a cut-off point, which identifies individuals whose score indicates dysfunctional buying attitudes and behaviours, even though these may be sub-clinical. Our figures from several UK surveys are therefore higher than clinical prevalence estimates of around 5% (Koran et al., 2006), but we are concerned with identifying the prevalence of consumer behaviour that implies a degree of negative well-being that is sufficient to give cause for concern and indicates a need for intervention. Among an adult sample that excluded respondents who either had been in contact with a self-help organisation or responded to appeals concerning shopping problems, 13% scored above the cut-off point. For students, it was 20%, rising to 28% among consumer research panellists for a multinational corporation, who are likely to be particularly strongly involved with consumer culture. Among 16–18-year-old adolescents, 44% scored beyond the dysfunctional cut-off point. Although this should be interpreted with caution, given that adolescence is a developmental stage marked by extreme behaviours in various consumption domains (e.g. drinking alcohol), it does indicate that potentially problematic shopping

and spending habits are widespread among adolescents.

Given our proposal that identity-related functions of material goods are important predictors of dysfunctional consumer behaviour, we examined the role played by endorsement of a materialistic value orientation. Research on over 200,000 US students suggests that today's young adults are more materialistic in orientation than ever: the proportion who report that it is *very important or essential* that they become *very well off financially* increased dramatically between the 1970s and the present from about a third to over three quarters of respondents (Pryor, Hurtado, Saenz, Santos, & Korn, 2007). Thus, age needs to be examined as well as materialism, given that compulsive buying tendencies are negatively correlated with age. They may also be stronger in women. Therefore, I examined age, gender, and materialistic value orientation as predictors of compulsive buying tendency (Dittmar, 2005b), controlling for income and education. In a hierarchical multiple regression, gender and age were examined first, showing mildly greater dysfunctional buying for women, and for younger respondents. Yet, when added as a predictor, materialistic values not only proved a powerful predictor of increasingly stronger compulsive buying tendencies, but it also reduced age differences. Indeed, younger people held significantly stronger materialistic values, which are associated with stronger dysfunctional buying behaviour. These findings are important because they demonstrate that younger people's stronger compulsive buying tendencies are due, at least in part, to their greater endorsement of materialistic values.

The importance of demonstrating that materialistic values are a powerful risk factor for dysfunctional consumer behaviour lies in the proposal that identity-related processes are likely to take maladaptive forms when they are associated with materialism. Similar to Symbolic Self-Completion Theory (Wicklund & Gollwitzer, 1982), I propose that gaps or discrepancies in a person's self-concept produce a motivation to self-complete through reducing gaps and discrepancies. Given that a materialistic value

orientation entails the belief that material goods are an ideal route to achieve a more ideal identity, we propose that the psychological salience of a person's identity deficits should predict their compulsive buying tendency if they also endorse a materialistic value orientation. We developed our own measure of identity deficits, which draws on Self-Discrepancy Theory (Higgins, 1987), but is different from Higgins' Selves Questionnaire. Rather than asking respondents separately about their actual and ideal self, we developed the Self-Discrepancy Index (SDI), in which respondents are asked directly about their identity deficits, and the psychological salience of these deficits. In the first, qualitative, part, respondents complete a number of sentences, usually five, of the format 'I . . ., but I would like . . .', and then, in the second, quantitative part, they rate each self-discrepancy they generate in terms of its magnitude (size of discrepancy) and psychological importance (concern or worry about the discrepancy). The SDI can be used as a global measure (calculated by summing the products of the magnitude and importance ratings of each self-discrepancy and then dividing by the number of statements, following Dittmar, Beattie, & Friese, 1996), or as a measure of self-discrepancies in a specific identity domain (calculated by summing the products of the magnitude and importance ratings of each relevant self-discrepancy), such as appearance (Dittmar, Halliwell, & Stirling, 2009; Halliwell & Dittmar, 2006).

We have good evidence that materialistic values lead to dysfunctional buying behaviour when they are accompanied by identity deficits (Dittmar, 2001, 2004a, 2005a). For the purpose of illustration, I selected 40 women from one sample of almost 300 (Dittmar, 2004b), in order to create four groups of ten women each, with two groups non-materialistic and the other two with a strong materialistic value orientation. Within the non-materialistic and materialistic women, half were selected because they feel quite close to how they would like to be (low SDI), and the other half because they were highest in identity deficits (high SDI). Our two-factor model predicts that only women who are *both* materialistic *and* high in identity deficits should have strong

compulsive buying tendencies, while the other three groups should not. This is, indeed, the case. Compared to the mean score of these three groups of women (17.6, 25.6, and 30.9), the ten women in this quadrant had a mean score (56.5) that falls beyond the scale's cut-off point for dysfunctional buying (43). In fact, every single one of these ten women scored higher than the cut-off point. In contrast, for men, we found that materialistic value orientation was a strong predictor of compulsive buying tendency, but not of identity deficits (Dittmar, 2005a). This may be due to women's identities still being more closely bound up with shopping than men's, or to the fact that the scale used to measure dysfunctional buying focuses predominantly on high street shopping. Our two-factor model may be supported if we examine dysfunctional consumer behaviour that is more prevalent among men, such as pathological collecting of expensive goods, or addiction to bidding in auctions.

Finally, let us consider a direct examination of emotional regulation and ideal identity seeking as buying motives, which we propose as intervening processes in the association between materialism and compulsive buying tendency. Compulsive buying does not only take place in the 'bricks' of conventional shops and stores, but also in the 'clicks' of online buying: the Internet is fast becoming a serious alternative to conventional buying (Dittmar, 2008), and the Internet may even be more conducive to excessive buying, because 'clicking' does not feel like spending 'real' money (Dittmar, Long, & Meek, 2004), with limitless access 24 hours a day. In a survey of young online buyers (Dittmar, Long, & Bond, 2007), we hypothesised that a materialistic value orientation should manifest itself in emotional and ideal identity buying motives. The more individuals believe that the acquisition of material goods will bring them happiness – improved emotions and mood – the more they should be motivated to buy goods in order to obtain these emotional benefits. The same should hold for beliefs that material goods bring them social status and a more ideal identity: the more individuals endorse such materialistic beliefs, the more they should seek social and personal identity gains

when they buy goods. The proposed model thus conceptualises internalisation of materialistic values as a more distal, or general, predictor of compulsive buying tendency, exerting its impact through the more proximal, or direct, predictors of emotional and ideal identity buying motives. Controlling for general Internet use, we found, as expected, that materialistic value orientation positively and strongly predicts compulsive buying tendency online, thus replicating our findings for conventional buying. Yet, when emotional and ideal identity buying motives are added as mediators, the direct link between materialism and compulsive buying tendency online drops to near zero. Given that individuals' internalisation of materialistic values strongly predicts both the emotion-regulation motive and the identity gain motive, and that these two motives, in turn, significantly predict compulsive buying tendency online, we can see that the link of materialism to compulsive buying is fully accounted for by these buying motives. Moreover, the explanatory power of the model is substantially increased through the inclusion of these two identity motives from 29 to 56% of the variance in compulsive online buying tendencies.

When considering these findings, one should bear in mind that compulsive buying is multi-determined. However, we can nevertheless conclude that the same two identity motives identified as leading to lower subjective well-being when pursuing the *material good life* also play a significant role in predicting dysfunctional buying. These findings are consistent with the proposal that these identity motives are unrealistic when they are pursued through material goods. A judgement that some motives are more unrealistic than others is not an easy one to make, and the view presented here should be understood mainly as an aid in interpreting the effects of the motives. These motives have negative associations with well-being, because it seems unlikely that people can find fulfilment through obtaining wealth or material goods. Research shows that greater actual wealth has surprisingly little impact on individuals' happiness and well-being

beyond the fulfilment of such basic needs as adequate nutrition and reasonable housing (Diener & Biswas-Diener, 2002), and that it may even be detrimental (Eaton & Eswaran, 2009). It is also unlikely that material goods would solve underlying self-doubts and identity deficits. Positive emotions, happiness, and a positive identity are more likely to be achieved by pursuing goals other than financial success, and engaging in activities other than buying consumer goods. Supportive interpersonal relationships and a meaningful life (e.g. job satisfaction, spirituality, community involvement) are particularly strong predictors of well-being (Diener & Seligman, 2005).

Conclusions and Implications for Intervention

The evidence is persuasive that material goods are perceived as parts of the extended self, so that there is not an absolute dividing line between an extended identity and a core identity; rather material goods emerge as constituent parts of a person's identity. Material goods, both treasured possessions already owned and new consumer goods, fulfil diverse identity functions for individuals, whose relative importance reflects privileged modes of identity construction in the social context a person finds themselves in. This pattern of findings supports the Meadian framework on how material goods are incorporated into identity outlined near the start of this chapter. The analysis of identity functions demonstrated that material goods can have positive effects for people's identity and well-being, particularly in aiding effectiveness, control and autonomy, maintenance and continuity of identity over time, and providing a sense of interrelatedness with others. These are related to the three intrinsic needs identified by Self-Determination Theory: competence, autonomy, and relatedness. This has implications for practitioners helping people to maintain and stabilise their identity during periods of change and crisis, such as immigration to a new country, moving into an institution

(e.g. nursing home, hospital), or the challenging transition from adolescence to adulthood.

However, in the analysis of identity functions and buying motives, there were already indications of a possible 'dark side' of certain identity motives, namely, emotional regulation and identity repair to move closer to one's ideal. These motives are interrelated: individuals do not only want to feel better, they also want to feel better about themselves. However, material goods are unlikely to deliver these hoped-for benefits when people seek long-term solutions to identity deficits, insecurity, and unhappiness. Often, goods provide nothing more than a momentary high, where people fantasise about who they would like to be, and where browsing through goods and purchasing seems to offer an avenue for moving closer to that ideal person, which then quickly turns into a dead end. These maladaptive pursuits of material and consumer identities have to be taken very seriously, given the wide and increasing spread of a materialistic value orientation and sub-clinical levels of dysfunctional buying behaviour.

The pursuit of wealth and material goods is not necessarily damaging to individuals' well-being. Rather it is a more specific type of materialistic value orientation that is problematic, namely, the emotional regulation and ideal identity motives for desiring affluence and goods which are linked to lower subjective well-being. These kinds of motives may already play a role in children's internalisation of materialistic values: we (Banerjee & Dittmar, 2008) found that 8–11-year olds endorse materialistic values because they believe that, in order to be 'cool' and popular among their peers, they have to have the right material goods. We are currently extending this work to examine links with children's well-being (Dittmar & Banerjee, 2011).

Compulsive buying is clearly a detrimental consumer behaviour, psychologically and financially, which appears to be on the increase, at least as far as sub-clinical dysfunctional buying is concerned. It is more prominent in younger people, and adolescents may be at particular risk of engaging in uncontrolled buying and spending. The central risk factors identified across

a series of studies are individuals' materialistic value orientation, as well as identity deficits, and buying motives that focus on seeking identity and enhancing mood. Given the exponential growth of online buying, and the increasing sophistication of retail sites in mimicking visual and experiential aspects of conventional shopping, virtual compulsive buying could represent a future trend that increasingly affects young consumers.

The research presented in this chapter provides convergent evidence that pursuing material goods in order to fulfil emotion regulation and ideal identity motives is detrimental to the well-being of adults, adolescents, and most likely children, too, suggesting the need for intervention. Given that these motives are likely to be promoted and reinforced by media and advertising messages that stress the 'material good life' as a road to ideal identity and happiness, one possibility could be to change advertising policies (see, for example, the anti-consumerist Canadian magazine *Adbusters* at www.adbusters.org), although this seems unlikely to be instituted any time soon. With respect to compulsive buying tendencies, curbing credit opportunities that are likely to over-indebt consumers could be beneficial, and changes to lender practices are under discussion in the United Kingdom (Elliott, 2005).

At the level of the individual, information and advice could help people to develop a more critical stance towards the unrealistic nature of the materialistic ideal, which proclaims that consumer goods offer viable means of solving emotional and identity-related problems. Clinical, consumer advice, and educational practitioners may wish to guide individuals towards critical reflection on materialistic values, both in terms of their personal value system and media literacy aimed at critical reflection on advertising messages that emphasise unrealistic psychological benefits from buying new consumer goods. It should be acknowledged, however, that attempts to curb a materialistic value orientation are probably a difficult route, because they run counter to the prevailing economic and consumer climate geared towards increasing consumption. For this reason, critical reflection on

a materialistic value orientation may stand the best chance of providing a basis for prevention and consumer education when it is encouraged early, such as pre-adolescents being advised in their school curricula about unrealistic expectations of material goods, and about why and how to avoid uncontrolled spending and buying. Given that children as young as 8 years old already believe that having 'cool things' will help them get accepted by their peers, it would seem important to target individuals as young as possible, preferably in both school and home environments.

Thus, in conclusion, this chapter highlights that identity functions and identity processes hold the key to understanding important consumer phenomena, which increasingly dominate our everyday lives. On the one hand, material goods can, and do, play a powerful positive role in identity development, maintenance, and transition through fulfilling diverse identity functions conducive to psychological need fulfilment. On the other hand, two particular motives for desiring money and expensive possessions – emotion regulation and identity repair – are toxic for well-being, jeopardising personal well-being and facilitating overspending and over-shopping. Indeed, in order to understand the impact of consumer culture on children's, adolescents', and adults' identities and well-being, we need to understand the role of identity-related processes centred on mood and identity repair.

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Abstract

Notions of citizenship and civic identity are central to political theory and political psychology. We explore the various meanings of civic identity, and suggest that the concept is best understood as having subjective, ethical, and political facets. The prominence of civic identity in constructions of citizenship is then considered. We use civic identity embedded in the context of citizenship to refract contemporary debates concerning globalization and immigration. Our review suggests that civic identity figures prominently in each debate, with proponents of different perspectives in these debates varying in their views about the kinds of civic identities morally desirable and politically necessary. In the final section, data from a large international survey of adolescents are used to explore the relations of different facets of civic identity and citizenship. We conclude with suggestions for future research and conceptual exploration.

Civic identity lies at the heart of common notions of citizenship and civic participation. A sense of civic identity leads people to volunteer to help their neighbors and their neighbors' children, vote in local and national elections, join the military and risk their lives to protect national interests, and pay taxes to provide for fellow citizens who are unable to earn enough to pay for housing, food, and medical care. The sense of oneself as a civic actor empowers political discussion, protest of governmental policies judged

unfair or illegal, and participation in many facets of political life. Civic identity infuses meaning in, and provides the motivation for civic behavior. As Leydet (2006) points out, "A strong civic identity can itself motivate citizens to participate actively in their society's political life." To give one empirical example, American adults surveyed in the General Social Survey were asked how much pride, on a 5-point scale, they had in being American and whether they had voted in the 1992 election. Seventy-five percent of those who claimed to be "extremely proud" of being American reported having voted, a substantially higher percentage compared to the 64% voting rate among those who reported only being "somewhat proud" of being American.¹

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The absence of a sense of oneself as a member of a community, to which one is emotionally attached and for which one feels responsible, reframes civic behavior within judgments of utility; the personal benefits derived from civic behavior are so few—utility is so low—that voting, volunteering, jury duty, and so on become nearly irrational and consequently are to be avoided. It is because civic identity is considered so central to motivating civic life that societies develop elaborate practices—civics and national history classes, for example—to inculcate their young into the synthesis of emotions, beliefs, and obligations constituting civic identity.

Our goals in this chapter are to explore the nature of civic identity, contemporary debates about civic identity, and the connections of civic identity and citizenship to context. To anticipate one theme that appears throughout the chapter, civic identity, citizenship, and context have become ubiquitous notions in contemporary political science and social policy, largely because of the consequences—real and imagined—of globalization.

The Nature of Civic Identity

Connotations of Identity

Identity has become a frequently used term in social discourse (as demonstrated within this volume). One consequence of its ubiquity has been a wide—and diffuse—range of meanings. As Brubaker and Cooper (2000) point out, identity has been used in political discussions to refer to (a) a subset of interests that are particular rather than general (e.g., “I am a train hobbyist”), (b) group memberships (e.g., gender and race “identities”), (c) a social role that is formed in social or political movements, and (d) a specific aspect of self that shifts according to social or temporal circumstances. Brubaker and Cooper note that these various uses of the term identity are not necessarily compatible with each other. This is because so many different fields have used “identity” to mean different things—hence the confusion (see Schwartz, Vignoles, & Luyckx, Chapter 1, this

volume). For example, identity in the philosophical literature often refers to the persistence of objects and persons over time (Nozick, 1981). A person has an “identity” in the sense that the individual can make judgments about the future based upon his or her views concerning which qualities of self will persist over time. Gender, race, and other enduring qualities of self (meaning (b) of identity) can be viewed to constitute an identity in this sense. This notion of identity can be inconsistent with notions of identity which emphasize transient, context-specific patterns of behavior (meaning (d)) often described in social psychology.

A second inconsistency among connotations concerns the authority of the individual in determining identity. Some scholars use “identity” in ways that indicate that an individual’s view concerning himself or herself is largely irrelevant in assigning an identity to that person for analytical purposes. That is, an individual might be labeled as having a particular identity based on physical features, occupation, group or tribal membership, and so on, independent of whether the individual perceives any of these characteristics as part of the self. For example, an individual might be of Asian heritage, and viewed as an “Asian” by some; yet the same individual might not identify closely with any Asian country or culture (see Umaña-Taylor, Chapter 33, this volume). The theorist or analyst assigning the identity simply infers that a characteristic is sufficiently important in social interaction that important facets of a person’s life can be better understood by reference to this characteristic: if a person looks to be of Asian heritage, then that fact—or assigned identity—likely captures some facets of that person’s life and experience.

Other philosophers and psychologists view identity as essentially subjective and, consequently, necessarily dependent upon the individual’s own view of self and of the self’s qualities (see for example Cameron, 2004). William James, for example, discerned identity in the continuity of consciousness over time, a phenomenon that is necessarily subjective. This view opens up the possibility that a characteristic of an individual salient to others—gender or race, for

example—might be viewed by the individual as peripheral to his or her sense of identity. We adopt this perspective in this chapter.

Identity and Civic Life

Centrality of civic life to the sense of self. In our view, civic identity is best understood as a set of beliefs and emotions about oneself as a participant in civic life. Forms of participation overlap with the actions characteristic of citizenship, and consequently may include voting, holding or running for political office, jury duty, and so on. These forms of participation can be associated with strongly held views of the self. For example, a South African voter, recalling the history of Apartheid policy and his own memories of police abuse in childhood, writes that “to stand in a long line of black and white people waiting patiently together to vote remains an emotional experience for most of us” (Wende, 2009). The American revolutionary war hero Nathan Hale felt so deeply for his nascent country that he is reported to have said just prior to being hanged as a spy by the British that “I regret that I have but one life to give for my country.” Shadid (2005) quotes an Iraqi citizen discussing the risks and benefits of voting in his country’s first democratic election in 50 years “Whatever they [terrorists] would do, I would still vote. . . Even if I was dead, I would still participate. The vote comes from the bottom of my heart.” All of these quotes illustrate how central civic participation can become to civic identity and to one’s sense of identity in general.

The salience of civic identifications within the sense of self varies from person to person, among historical eras, and across countries. Polls suggest, for example, that pride in one’s country, a component of civic identity as we discuss in a later section, varies across Europe with only 23% of Germans, but 57% of Spaniards, reporting being “very proud” of their countries (Harris Poll, 2004). Not everyone eligible to vote feels as deeply about the importance of voting as does the Iraqi cited above; indeed, a concern of many political scientists and policy-makers is that the

centrality of civic obligations to the sense of self is declining in many societies throughout the world with worrisome implications for civic participation (Rahn, 2008), a topic to which we return in a later section of the chapter.

Similarities of civic identity to moral and national identities. Civic identity is usually linked to communities and societies, each of which is attached to a specific geographical location. An individual might think of herself as concerned about her neighborhood, as an active citizen of her town, or a proud, contributing member of her country.

An important question taken up by philosophers is whether civic identity *must* or *ought* to be linked to geography. For example, “citizen of the world” is a term often used to characterize individuals who seek to contribute to the welfare of others in communities other than their own. Leydet (2006) provides a particularly thorough exposition of the philosophical debate on the issues related to civic identity, citizenship, and links to specific communities. Those who favor a locale-based notion for civic identity and citizenship argue that a connection to a specific place and culture is necessary for civic action to be motivated and to be effective. In a world in which people move freely from location to location, without constructing local bonds with others, there are no political units capable of effective self-governance, there are only “casual aggregates” (Walzer, 1983), that is, groups of individuals moving independently of each other. On the other hand, some theorists argue that a sense of civic identity and citizenship may be constructed independently of attachment to particular locations and social groups. The argument made by Kymlicka (2001), for example, is that the demands of justice supersede boundaries of political groups and their associated territories. A world citizen, then, may be an individual who seeks the widest possible spheres for justice.

The balance between the larger concern with justice and a more local civic identity may be what Nelson Mandela (1999) was describing when he saw his future, following his departure from the presidency of South Africa, “as part of an international community of men and women

who have chosen the world as the theatre of their operations in pursuit of justice; and as an ordinary citizen of a nation that has won the world's admiration not by prowess in war but by the dedication of its people of every background to celebrate their humanity." In our view, as the notion of civic identity is unlinked from specific communities and societies, it begins to become indistinguishable from a broad moral orientation or moral identity concerned with universal moral concerns (cf. Hardy & Carlo, [Chapter 19](#), this volume). Mandela's goal to join others in the "pursuit of justice" seems a straightforward moral goal rather than one that is best described as an aim or reflection of civic activity. There may be no explanatory benefit to a notion like civic identity if it is identical with concepts like moral identity.

In our view, the notion of civic identity is most useful when it is linked to particular social groups located in specific geographical areas—and in such ways, can be distinguished from moral identities. However, civic identity should also be distinguished from simple identifications with these social groups. For example, one's civic identity is at least potentially distinct from one's national identity; one might view oneself as fully German, or Mexican, or Norwegian, participating in the cultures of the countries, without viewing oneself as a participant in the group's civic affairs. Civic identity, in the connotation advanced here, necessarily implies participation in the civic life of the community. In contrast to the universalistic moral aspirations of a "world citizen" moral identity, civic identity is bound to particular social groups; in contrast to national identities, civic identity implies action in a public arena governed by a concern with rights and responsibilities for all.

Citizenship and Civic Identity

The meaning of civic identity is best understood in relation to traditional notions of citizenship. By citizenship, we refer, as is common, to three qualities: *membership*, *rights*, and *participation* (Bellamy, 2008). Membership refers to the sense of belonging to the nation and communities of

which one is a citizen. Citizens are entitled to rights by virtue of membership, and as citizens, they participate in shaping these rights. Full citizenship requires participation in the life of society.

Citizenship demands some degree of subjective identification with other citizens. Participation in democratic government often presumes that those who vote and those who govern identify, to some degree, with the people and institutions constituting the state. Indeed, democracy is thought to function best when those individuals holding elected positions are concerned for the well-being of their constituents and for the state itself. Although it is usually understood that politicians have their own interests that they hope to fulfill while holding public office—whether these be psychological or material in nature—the public ordinarily expects these interests to be subjugated to the public good. The United States and many other countries have laws and regulations intended to diminish government officials' inclinations to pursue private goals at the expense of the public good.

Similarly, some sense of identification with the state is often seen as a prerequisite for citizenship. To the extent that voters and representatives act out of self-interest and, relatedly, an interest in the prosperity of one's community, citizenship guarantees a certain protection for the state—in the form of citizens' investment in their communities and nations. For example, it would seem unwise to allow citizens and residents of Australia to vote or run for office in local elections within the United States. Australian residents presumably have no interests in the governance of, for instance, Cheyenne, Wyoming, and, consequently, are likely to make ill-informed and poorly considered decisions. One might imagine a resident of Australia running for office in America in order to benefit Australians (e.g., restrict trade between the United States and all other countries except Australia). In contrast, citizens of Cheyenne are motivated by their own collective interests (e.g., I want my home prices to remain high, so I will vote for a candidate who restricts highway development near residential neighborhoods) and a concern for their fellow

residents and local institutions to make careful choices for electoral office.

As noted previously, functioning democracy requires that citizens feel that their lives are joined in important ways with their fellows. The absence of such a sentiment reduces civic life to the point where it is expressed as instrumental action intended to fulfill purely selfish interests—and such a scenario is incompatible with healthy democracy. Although it is possible to assign the identity of “citizen” to an individual who feels no identification with fellow citizens—indeed, every democratic society has citizens for whom this is true—this is not the kind of civic identity that can serve as the goal toward which analysis and practice ought to build.

To summarize, a full civic identity contains elements of the three constituents of identity: membership, participation, and a concern for rights. Like a national identity (e.g., “I’m a Canadian”), it includes a sense of membership; like a moral identity (e.g., “I’m a citizen of the world”) it includes, but is not limited to, concerns for rights. And, finally, a civic identity motivates, is maintained, and is structured by participation in civic life.

Developmental Emergence of Civic Identity and Citizenship

Civic identity includes experiences, beliefs, and emotions concerning membership, rights, and participation (Bellamy, 2008). Although, as noted previously, these three qualities are conceptually related, psychologically they are likely to be partially independent. It is conceptually possible, for example, for one to identify with one’s fellow citizens, and yet be little involved in civic life; similarly, an individual might be concerned about the rights of citizens without identifying with others in the community and absent political participation. Although these different facets of civic identity do cohere—as we demonstrate in a later section—one’s view of oneself in civic life is open to psychological, social, and political influences that make civic identity more fluid than other more stable identities (e.g., sexual identity).

For example, the 2008 presidential election in the United States, featuring the charismatic Barack Obama as a candidate, was thought to enlarge and energize the civic identities of many voters who had previously been disconnected from civic and political concerns.

Because of the openness of civic identity to a variety of influences, different facets of civic identity are likely to follow partially independent developmental trajectories. Moreover, the salience, elaboration, and content of each quality are likely to reflect slightly different influences.

The developmental trajectories of the sense of membership and of rights are quite surprising in that both seem to emerge at very young ages. For example, Barrett, Wilson, and Lyons (2003) demonstrated that English schoolchildren as young as 5 years of age were able to distinguish between British citizens and those from America and Germany. Moreover, even young children preferred citizens of their own nations to those of others (for further evidence of in-group preference, see Abrams, Rutland, & Cameron, 2003; Brewer, 1999; also see Spears, Chapter 9, this volume). Barrett et al. (2003) found that the importance of national identity increased over the course of childhood, with older children judging nationality to be more important to them than gender and age-based identities. In comparing their results to those of other researchers, Barrett et al. conclude that there is considerable variation in findings across countries and that developmental trajectories are yet to be fully identified. However, variations in methods that have been used in different studies in different countries make conclusive comparisons about cross-national differences and developmental trajectories impossible.

Young children are also able to infer that citizens have rights. In a series of studies, Helwig and colleagues (Helwig, 1998; Helwig, Arnold, Tan, & Boyd, 2003; Helwig, Arnold, Tan, & Boyd, 2007; Neff & Helwig, 2002) have shown that children and adolescents believe that citizens have rights that should not be violated through governmental actions. In Canada, the United States, and China, 6-year-old children have been shown to judge, based on the principle

of fairness, that citizens should not be prevented by legislation or authority from criticizing the government (Helwig, 1998). Although older children's judgments on the principle of fairness are more differentiated and more pragmatic about the consequences of such actions (e.g., it might be dangerous to voice opposition to government policies if the country officially opposes free speech) compared to those of 6-year-olds, it appears that a fundamental sensitivity to citizens' rights emerges early in life. Moreover, sensitivity to rights appears even in countries that are traditionally viewed as less rights-oriented than Western democracies, such as China (Helwig et al., 2003).

Less is known about children's sense of themselves as civic actors. However, children do volunteer, a precursor to adult forms of civic participation (Hart, Donnelly, Youniss, & Atkins, 2007), and by adolescence, volunteering is viewed by some adolescents as integral to their senses of self (Hart & Yates, 1997).

Contemporary Debates Concerning Civic Identity

Civic identity and citizenship have become central topics in the controversies arising from the recent transformations in social, economic, and political life collectively referred to as *globalization*. A computer search of works published in 1990 suggests that of the approximately 4,500 articles with the keyword "citizenship" in the bibliographic record, only 187, or 4%, also contained the keyword "globalization." In contrast, of the 29,300 bibliographic records for works published in 2008 with the keyword "citizenship," 45% also contained the keyword "globalization." It is unknown whether the increase from 4,500 to 29,000 published works with the keyword "citizenship" reflects greater interest in citizenship, bibliographic records with more information, or more publications. However, what is clear is that contemporary discussions of citizenship are intertwined with the various threads of globalization to a degree that makes it impossible to discuss one without consideration of the other. In contrast,

it appears that the vast majority of discussions of citizenship just 20 years ago did not feature considerations of globalization (see Jensen et al., Chapter 13, this volume, for a discussion of globalization and identity).

One reason for this interest is immigration. Many countries have had protracted debates about extensions of citizenship to residents who are currently accorded neither the full rights nor the responsibilities of citizens (see Schildkraut, Chapter 36, this volume; Licata, Sanchez-Mazas, & Green, Chapter 38, this volume; Stepick, Dutton Stepick, & Vanderkooy, Chapter 37, this volume, for additional discussions). In the United States, for example, there are both (a) groups seeking to provide paths to citizenship to the millions of illegal immigrants within the borders and (b) groups advocating for the immediate return of illegal immigrants to their countries of origin (Lowenstein, 2006). Germany, too, has had an enduring debate concerning the rights of immigrants, with this discussion focusing particularly on first- and second-generation Turks. Versions of the arguments heard in the United States and Germany can be found throughout Europe, Africa, and North America, as citizens of countries on each of these continents examine their responsibilities to new residents and reflect upon their willingness to grant these new residents the rights and responsibilities of citizenship (see Koopmans, Statham, Giugni, & Passy, 2005, for an example of this discourse).

Immigration raises not only questions concerning the rights and responsibilities of immigrants, but about *identities* as well. An important issue is whether immigrants see themselves as citizens of the countries in which they reside. Merely living in a country is not sufficient to ensure identification with it (Zhou, Morris, & Benet-Martínez, 2008). Immigrants to Sweden, for example, may be willing to accept the social welfare benefits of residence in Sweden, but fail to perceive themselves to be Swedish or Swedish-like. This lack of identification might be reflected in an unwillingness to acquire the language, habits, and practices common in Sweden (Caldwell, 2006; see also chapters in

this volume by Jensen et al., [Chapter 13](#), Licata et al., [Chapter 38](#), Vanderkooy et al., [Chapter 37](#), Huynh et al., [Chapter 35](#), Umaña-Taylor, [Chapter 33](#), and Schildkraut, [Chapter 36](#)).

Huntington (2004) has suggested that recent immigrants to the United States might not incorporate key elements of the national identity into their own belief systems, and, consequently, might not view themselves to be Americans—at least when it comes to “American” values (but see Schildkraut, [Chapter 36](#), this volume). Specifically, Huntington argued that Mexican immigrants might be particularly likely not to identify with core American values, and that this lack of identification occurs for a number of reasons. First, Mexico is contiguous with the United States, meaning that immigrants who live near the border can maintain their social and institutional affiliations in Mexico. The maintenance of a connection to Mexico reduces the likelihood of parallel and new affiliations developing in the United States. Second, Huntington suggests that the size of the Mexican immigrant community in the United States allows immigrants to bond with each other rather than create relationships with other Americans with whom traditional American values and norms can be modeled.

Huntington (2004, pp. 44–45) foresees “dangerous” consequences for the United States resulting from this lack of identification: “Continuation of this large immigration (without improved assimilation) could divide the United States into a country of two languages and two cultures. . . [resulting in] the end of the America we have known for more than three centuries.” The same concern has been raised by commentators in other Western democracies experiencing large influxes of immigrants.

Ethnic and racial diversity among *citizens* poses some of the same challenges as those arising from immigration. Putnam (2007) has reported that increasing racial and ethnic diversity—both forms increasing in many Western democracies—is often accompanied by decreases in social capital. Social capital, according to Putnam, is constituted of social networks characterized by reciprocity and trustworthiness.

Those who have access to more social capital tend to be healthier, wealthier, and happier (Kawachi, Kennedy, Lochner, & Prothrow-Stith, 1997). Most importantly for our purposes in this chapter, social capital is positively associated with civic participation, such as volunteering, voting, protesting, and military service (Kahne & Spote, 2008).

Ethnic and racial diversity may undermine social capital because citizens of different races and ethnicities can view themselves in competition with each other for limited resources (Perlmutter, 2002), the consequences of which can be increased bias favoring those who share the same racial and ethnic identities and derogation of those who do not (see Spears, [Chapter 9](#), this volume). There is evidence that this occurs even in countries that are known for their tolerance of others, such as the Nordic nations (Pred, 2000).

Collier (2009) suggests that many of the problems in governance that characterize the world’s poorest nations result from diversity. For example, Collier attributes the corruption and inequitable distribution of national resources characteristic of poorly functioning African states in part to ethnic diversity:

Although the instant states that came into being with the dissolution of the colonial empires were ancient societies with a multiplicity of strong ethnic loyalties, usually they lacked national loyalty: people’s primary allegiance was to their ethnic group. As I have argued, this severely impeded the provision of public goods. Anything public was simply up for grabs: a common pool resource, the control of which depended upon winning the political struggle between the various ethnic groups. Much of the surest way of overcoming this problem would be to follow the earlier model of nation building: gradually erode ethnic identities and replace them with a national identity (Collier, 2009, p. 178).

Moreover, Collier reports that ethnic identification is *positively* related to educational attainment and political mobilization in nine African countries. The implication is that high levels of ethnic identification—and low levels of national identification—are unlikely to disappear as a result of modernization.

Finally, Collier (2009) describes several lines of research suggesting that the sense of citizenship may be particularly submerged in countries that are characterized by *both* high levels of poverty and diversity. That is, there is an *interaction* between diversity and poverty that exacerbate the effects of each on civic identity. High levels of diversity and high levels of poverty are common in many African countries, and it is for this reason that many of these countries have difficulty in creating functional democracies. In these countries, there is no shared collective identity to moderate conflicts posed by the shortage of resources. To the extent that globalization alleviates poverty, it can contribute to the decline of such conflicts; but for the reasons noted earlier, the processes related to globalization may not lead to more inclusive civic identities.

To summarize, globalization has led to increases in immigration and diversity, each of which has the potential to pose problems for the development of citizenship and civic identity. Political scientists have been particularly focused on the potential for immigration and diversity to suppress the sense of identification with fellow residents and citizens, which theorists since Aristotle have seen as central for democracy. At the same time, results from studies in intergroup relations within the field of psychology (e.g., Halevy, Bornstein, & Sagiv, 2008) suggest that the implications of diversity and immigration are complex and can be beneficial in certain contexts.

Psychological, Political, and Demographic Contexts of Civic Identity

The overview of contemporary discussions suggests that civic identity is embedded within the social and political contexts in which the individual functions. In this section, we identify the connections of civic identity to psychological, political, and demographic contexts.

Psychological Influences on Civic Identity

Trust. Trust—the expectation that others are fair, trustworthy, and will reciprocate—is the cornerstone of the psychological foundation of citizenship (Flanagan, 2003). Adults high in trust participate in civic life to a much greater degree than do those who lack trust (Putnam, 2000). Similarly, adolescents who are high in trust report more conventional civic engagement, and more intended civic engagement in adulthood, compared to adolescents who lack trust in political institutions (Hart & Gullan, 2010). Consequently, research suggests that trust facilitates civic participation, a central component of civic identity; it also seems likely, although research evidence is lacking, that trust will increase the propensity for identification with others and an interest in rights.

Civic knowledge. Civic knowledge, or knowledge of democratic principles (Torney-Purta, 2002) and of domestic and international history and government (Rubin, 2007), is important as well. Civic knowledge is associated with political participation and respect for rights (Galston, 2001). Indeed, the association of civic knowledge with citizenship is foundational for most civics curricula, based on the assumption that those who know will translate that knowledge into action, although this assumption is not as well-substantiated as many proponents of civics education imagine (Hart et al., 2007; Youniss & Hart, 2005).

Belonging. From a peer relations perspective, the need to belong seems to be a primary motivator for many people, leading even to greater acceptance of negative behavior when it is a norm in the group in which membership is desired (Duffy & Nesdale, 2009). It is likely that individuals also feel a need to belong to a nation, even in childhood (Barrett, 2007). It is unclear the extent to which a need to belong to a nation will affect one's civic identity, though a sense of belonging is certainly related to the formation of a national versus ethnic identity (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006)

Political Influences on Civic Identity

Civic identity is also likely to be the product of political climate. Civic identity is likely to be expressed differently in societies characterized by repression of dissenting views than it is in societies open to a variety of competing perspectives. For example, Hart and Gullan (2010) have suggested that the emergence of political activism is influenced by the openness of a society to political protest. Relatedly, the absence of explicit political activism does not imply satisfaction or complicity in the state of affairs of a nation, but may simply reflect the acknowledgment of the danger of activism in a society closed to opposition (Turiel, 2003; Turiel & Perkins, 2004). Torney-Purta, Wilkenfeld, and Barber (2008) found that *political efficacy*, the sense that one is an effective actor in the political sphere, which may influence civic identity, was actually lower in countries in which more political rights and civil liberties are accorded to citizens.

Demographic Influences on Civic Identity

Economic conditions. The functioning of the national economy is one frequently examined influence on how individuals view themselves civically. Generally, it is assumed that desperate economic times make civic identity and citizenship difficult. Poor economic conditions may adversely affect civic identity in multiple ways.

Ethnic heterogeneity. As noted earlier, ethnic heterogeneity has often been assumed to interfere with individuals' sense of citizenship. Putnam (2000) and Huntington (1996) have both suggested that countries that are ethnically diverse might have difficulty creating social capital (Putnam, 2000) and promoting national identification (Huntington, 1996).

Child saturation. One demographic quality of populations that may be associated with civic identity is the percentage of the population that is composed of children (Hart, Atkins, Markey, &

Youniss, 2004)—child saturation. The idea that child saturation is an important index for understanding civic life has received some credence from work by political scientists. For example, Moller (1968) has linked youth bulges, corresponding to high levels of child saturation, to the Protestant Reformation, and to revolutions in eighteenth-century France and twentieth-century Indonesia, and Huntington (1996) has suggested that youth are generally more attracted to such movements than are adults. Goldstone (1999) pointed out that youth may be less invested in the existing social and religious structures—they are less likely than adults to be married, have children, occupy prestigious positions in their communities and churches, and so on—and that as a consequence, youth may be more open to movements that seek to overthrow or revise existing orthodoxies. Although there is a great deal of fascinating writing on the relation of child saturation to the emergence of powerful social and religious movements (e.g., Moller, 1968), there is as yet a dearth of systematic research.

Hart et al. (2004) suggest that those who grow up in communities and societies with large cohorts of children (child-saturated contexts) are less influenced by adults, compared to children who grow up in communities and societies where adults constitute large majorities of the population (adult-saturated contexts). Hart et al. hypothesized that growing up in adult-saturated contexts results in a more thorough transmission of knowledge of, and respect for, the culture and society. This transmission is possible because, in adult-saturated contexts, a large percentage of a child's interactions will naturally involve adults, who typically possess knowledge about society and culture. In contrast, in child-saturated contexts, children interact frequently with other children, and less transmission of cultural information can take place because there are fewer adults available to transmit information about their societies. Indeed, Hart et al. (2004) demonstrated empirically that children living in child-saturated communities in the United States have less civic knowledge compared to children living in adult-saturated communities, and showed

as well that children in child-saturated countries possess less civic knowledge compared to children in adult-saturated countries. Hart et al. suggested, but have not empirically demonstrated, that youth who possess little civic knowledge are more likely to become involved in radical political and social activism compared to those who possess more civic knowledge. In summary, Hart et al. argue that members of youth bulges have less civic knowledge compared to youth of the same age who were not socialized in large cohorts of children, and that a deficit in civic knowledge can lead to participation in extremist political activities. An interesting question is whether civic identities are involved in terrorist activities. Clearly, at least some terrorists view themselves in terms of collective identifications (Post, Sprinzak, & Denny, 2003). One line for future research might be to contrast civic identities, traditionally construed in terms of the framework provided by explorations of citizenship, with the identities motivating terrorism.

An International Examination

Perhaps because civic identity has only recently become prominent in political science discourse, there is little research on the relations of facets of civic identity to the psychological, political, and demographic influences outlined in the previous section. In this section, we aim to contribute some knowledge on these issues by reporting new analyses from the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) Civic Education Study (Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Oswald, & Schulz, 2001).

The IEA Civic Education Study (CIVED) was a rigorous international study of adolescents' civic knowledge, attitudes, and behavior in 28 countries (representing countries in Eastern and Western Europe, Asia, and Latin America, as well as the United States and Australia). Adolescents (age 14) completed surveys of civic attitudes and anticipated civic participation, as well as a 38-item assessment of civic knowledge. The sample across all countries totals nearly 90,000 adolescents.

Because the CIVED is international, it permits an examination of the associations of demographic and political characteristics of countries to facets of civic identities. Moreover, because the Civic Education Study assessed knowledge and trust in adolescents, it is also possible to estimate the association of these psychological qualities to civic identity.

Indicators of Citizenship and Civic Identity

The CIVED includes indicators of the three qualities of citizenship and civic identity discussed in previous sections: *membership*, *participation*, and *rights*. Membership was assessed by asking for a judgment of agreement with three statements such as "this country [the country in which the adolescent was resident] should be proud of what it has achieved." Scores on these three items were combined to form a scale that we consider to assess *nationalism* and a sense of membership (details about this scale, and the others in the CIVED data, are found in Lehman & Torney-Purta, n.d.). Presumably adolescents who agree with such statements feel that they belong to the countries of which they are proud. The questionnaire also assessed adolescents' views about conventional participation, with adolescents judging the importance of participation in ways such as "voting in every election." Ratings on six such items were combined to form a scale of *conventional participation*. Finally, support for rights is indicated by adolescents' judgments concerning the rights and opportunities for women. Adolescents reported the extent of their agreement with five statements such as "women should have the same rights as men in every way." Scores for the five statements were combined to form an index of support for *women's rights*.

In addition to the measures conceptually related to civic identity and citizenship, CIVED also contained an 8-item attitudinal measure concerning immigration (sample item "Immigrants should have all the same rights that everyone else in a country has"). High scores indicate a favorable attitude toward immigrants.

Predictors of Citizenship and Civic Identity

Knowledge and trust. The survey included sets of multiple choice questions tapping civic knowledge (e.g., “In a democratic system, which of the following ought to govern the country?”) and political trust (e.g., “how much of the time can you trust each of the following institutions. . . the courts”). Scales measuring each were formed by combining relevant items.

Political and demographic influences. Kaufmann, Kraay, and Mastruzzi (2008) have combined hundreds of survey scale items (none from the CIVED study), ratings from non-governmental organizations, and other forms of data to create a measure of a country’s *voice and accountability*, which we use in these analyses to index tolerance for political dissent. *Voice and accountability* refers to “the extent to which a country’s citizens are able to participate in selecting their government, as well as freedom of expression, freedom of association, and a free media” (Kaufmann et al., 2008, p. 7). Our prediction is that adolescents are more likely to perceive themselves to be citizens in countries tolerant of political dissent (high in *voice and accountability*).

The World Bank Development Indicator data set was the source for *child saturation* (the percentage of children under the age of 15) for each of the 28 countries in the IEA study. Country-level economic vitality was indexed by using a country’s per capita *gross domestic product (GDP)*, also drawn from the World Bank Indicator data set.

Finally, estimates of ethnic diversity within countries are drawn from Alesina, Devleeschauwer, Easterly, Kurlat, and Wacziarg (2003). These authors used a variety of data

sources to estimate ethnic diversity within nations.

Analyses

Correlations among the various indicators of civic identity and hypothesized predictors are presented in Table 32.1 (a correlation matrix was computed separately for each country; to aggregate the matrices, we used the r-to-z transformation, averaged the 28 matrices, and then transformed the z scores back). Two general observations are important. The first is that correlations among the indicators of civic identity are small in magnitude: nationalism, conventional participation, and support for women’s rights are only weakly related to each other. The second observation is that the hypothesized predictors are all generally related to one or more of the indicators for civic identity.

Nationalism, reflected partly by self-reported pride in one’s membership in a country, is positively correlated with *conventional participation* and support for *women’s rights*. Those who identified strongly with their countries were more likely than those with weak attachments to the nation to support the importance of jury duty, voting, and the rights of women to participate fully in society. Nationalism was also positively related to trust. Adolescents who reported high levels of trust in the political institutions in their country were more patriotic than adolescents distrustful of their national bureaucracies. Interestingly, nationalism was essentially unrelated to civic knowledge; apparently even those with very little understanding of how democratic governments work can identify with their countries just as strongly as can those with sophisticated understandings of political functioning.

Table 32.1 Average within-nation correlations among indicators of civic identity and psychological factors^a

Variable	Nationalism	Conventional participation	Women’s rights	Trust
Conventional participation	0.18			
Women’s rights	0.12	0.04		
Trust	0.22	0.25	0.07	
Civic knowledge	0.01	−0.01	0.29	0.04

^aN > 91,000.

Table 32.2 Correlations of aggregated indicators of civic identity with demographic and political predictors^a

<i>Variable</i>	Nationalism	Conventional participation	Women's rights	Trust	Civic knowledge	Voice	Saturation	Per capita GDP
Conventional participation	0.65							
Women's rights	-0.01	-0.33						
Trust	0.04	-0.03	0.66					
Civic knowledge	0.28	0.01	0.12	0.21				
Voice	-0.16	-0.41	0.73	0.43	0.14			
Child saturation	0.44	0.39	0.14	0.12	-0.41	-0.30		
Ethnic diversity	-0.31	0.03	-0.44	-0.36	-0.34	-0.46	0.15	
Per capita GDP	-0.42	-0.46	0.77	0.60	0.16	0.67	-0.23	-0.20

^a*N* > 91,000.

Table 32.2 presents the correlations of the national average scores for the markers of civic identity with national level demographic and political variables (it should be noted that these correlations reflect differences between nations in mean levels of civic identity, and thus they cannot tell us anything about the differences between the individuals within those nations [see Trzesniewski, Donnellan, & Robins, 2008 for a good explanation of these kinds of correlations]). At the level of demographics, nationalism was positively associated with child saturation (the percentage of the population under the age of 15); it appears that countries with young populations inspired more identification and patriotism than countries with older populations. Predictably, given the literature reviewed in an earlier section, ethnic diversity was inversely correlated with nationalism. Surprisingly, however, so too was per capita gross domestic product (GDP); adolescents residing in affluent countries were less likely to report high levels of nationalism than were adolescents living in poor countries.

Adolescents' judgments about the importance of civic participation showed a pattern of associations similar to that observed with nationalism. Adolescents were more likely to judge different forms of civic participation to be important if they were high in trust and lived in countries high in child saturation. Somewhat surprisingly, adolescents were less likely to endorse conventional participation in countries with high per capita GDPs and in which political dissent was common (voice). Finally, support for the rights of women was highest among adolescents who trusted the political institutions in their countries, were knowledgeable about civic functioning, and who lived in countries that were supportive of political dissent, relatively affluent, and ethnically homogeneous.

Although the indicators used in these analyses of civic identity—nationalism, endorsement of conventional participation, and support for women's rights—are all very limited and indirect reflections of membership, participation, and rights, the pattern of correlations suggest that civic identity rests upon trust in political institutions to a much greater degree than it does upon

civic knowledge. Many societies seek to inculcate civic spirit primarily through civics instruction; the findings presented here suggest that social context and attitudes may be more important for educators interested in influencing civic spirit. It is possible that effective preparation of future citizens ought to be concerned with providing adolescents with experiences in which they can observe and participate in effective, fair functioning of political processes, with the hope that these experiences result in heightened trust in political institutions. Too little is known about the effectiveness of intentional interventions to spur increased trust to suggest that trust-building ought to be the aim of civic education. On the other hand, the findings in Table 32.1 suggest that civic knowledge is largely independent of civic identity.

Although trust is related similarly with each of the indicators of civic identity, this pattern is something of an anomaly—none of the other indicators showed such a consistent pattern. For example, political voice is negatively associated with nationalism, but positively associated with support for women's rights; per capita GDP is positively correlated with support for women's rights, but negatively associated with endorsement of conventional participation; and so on. This suggests (though better data such as data resulting from longitudinal studies and from natural experiments are needed to make stronger claims) that the factors that make salient some elements of civic identity may at the same time depress other elements. Elements of civic identity may be in dynamic tension with each other. Future research should examine this possibility.

We discussed earlier that the increased interest in civic identity witnessed over the past two decades is in part a consequence of concerns resulting from globalization and immigration. It is interesting, therefore, to examine the relation of the indicators of civic identity to attitudes toward immigration. It is noteworthy that all three indicators of civic identity are positively associated with favorable attitudes about immigrants. Figure 32.1 depicts the association of nationalism and positive attitudes toward

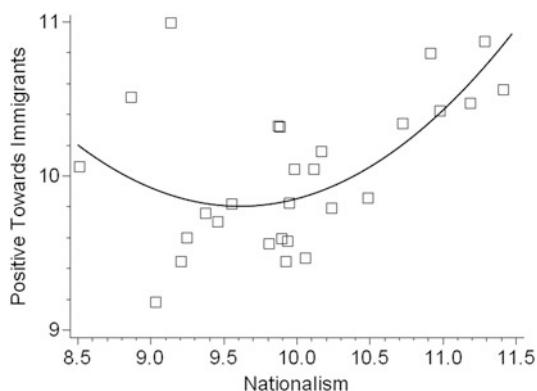


Fig. 32.1 Relation of positive attitudes toward immigrants with nationalism. Each point in the graph corresponds to the average for a country. A quadratic regression line is fitted to the plot. That the quadratic trend depicted here for data aggregated at the level of country also characterizes the relation of positive attitudes toward immigrants with nationalism at the level of the individual was confirmed using multi-level modeling, with participants at level 1 and countries at level 2 (details of this analysis are available upon request from the authors)

immigration. Each data point corresponds to a country and reflects the average for nationalism and positive attitudes toward immigrants living in that country. Superimposed on the graph is a quadratic trend, indicating that very little difference, and perhaps change in a negative direction, in positive attitudes toward immigrants is observed as countries change from low- to average levels of nationalism; however, attitudes toward immigrants become sharply more positive as countries change from about average in nationalism to high in nationalism. One possible interpretation of the trend is that in countries characterized by low levels of identification (low nationalism), positive attitudes toward immigrants are possible because adolescents seem little concerned about protecting the country from the possible threat posed by non-citizens. As identification increases, concerns about threats to the integrity of the society increase, and immigration is seen as a threat. At high levels of identification and pride in the country, however, adolescents apparently are confident that their countries are able to assimilate immigrants and accommodate to cultural traditions immigrants bring with them.

The strands of civic identity traced throughout this review—membership, participation, and rights—are related to each other and to psychological, political, and demographic influences. The strands are only loosely wound, and each is pulled and stretched by its own combination of influences. The consequence is that civic identity can assume very different profiles in comparisons between individuals (one person might be high in the sense of membership, whereas another might be focused on participation) or within individuals considered over time (high in the sense of oneself as a participant in early adulthood, more focused on membership in later adulthood). These findings suggest that understanding civic identity requires a consideration of its contexts.

Conclusion

Our goals in this chapter were to explore the nature of civic identity, consider contemporary debates about civic identity, and assess connections of civic identity and citizenship to context. We have suggested that civic identity is subjective and is best captured in relation to the qualities of citizenship. This means that civic identity refers to the individual's sense of self as a member of a community or society, as an actor contributing to the management and welfare of that group, and as a participant in that society bearing rights and responsibilities. Civic identity from this perspective excludes some connotations of identity (the notion advocated here rests on the subject's view of the self, and does not extend to attributing civic identities to individuals simply because they live in social groups), as well as distinguishes civic identity from other forms of identity that may be similar (national identities, moral identities).

Contemporary fascination with civic identity has arisen in large measure in reaction to, and concern with, the effects of diversity resulting from globalization and immigration. Our review touched upon claims that rapidly increasing cultural and racial diversities are problematic for the sense of membership and identification with the community that

are central to civic identity and citizenship. Philosophers and social scientists are exploring the intersections of diversity, identity, and citizenship, and consequently much interesting scholarship has emerged with much more work on the near horizon.

Finally, our analyses of the CIVED data set were used to illustrate the intertwining of civic identity with psychological, political, and demographic contexts. The elaboration of civic identity and its psychological salience depend substantially on social, demographic, and political contexts. Perhaps more so than other identities, civic identity—the individual’s sense of membership, participation, civic rights, and responsibilities—reflects one’s psychological and social environments. We showed, for example, that nationalism, which reflects civic identity to some degree, varies according to the youthfulness of a country’s population.

Our review of the research also identified gaps in our knowledge. For example, a great deal needs to be learned about civic identity before its explanatory power can be accurately assessed. As we noted, contemporary discussions are very much concerned with the consequences of globalization for civic identity and citizenship. Yet we know very little about the importance of civic identity, and the relative salience of different aspects of civic identity, for successful functioning of communities and societies. Our intuitions lead us to assume the importance of these identities, and there are certainly many facts consistent with this inference; but in fact, there is a dearth of careful empirical work disentangling civic identity from moral obligations, political considerations, and so on. Moreover, it is unclear whether it is even accurate to characterize an individual as having a single civic identity—perhaps multiple civic identities would be more accurate. The latter might be particularly true for immigrants, for example. If indeed multiple civic identities might exist in the same individual, the question then arises as to how these identities relate to each other and the conditions under

which one identity assumes regulatory dominance over others in civic and political life (see Schildkraut, [Chapter 36](#), this volume; and Stepick et al., [Chapter 37](#), this volume, for more on this).

Secondly, although there are many views about how civic identity is best inculcated in children and adolescents (see Youniss & Hart, 2005, 2006 for several examples), we know very little about how civic identity can be intentionally and successfully fostered. Our analyses presented in this chapter suggest that teaching adolescents the facts and principles of civic life is not sufficient, as civic knowledge was not tightly connected to civic identity. Moreover, the successful transmission of civic knowledge is itself a complicated process that is not fully understood (see Hart et al., 2007, for one discussion of the limitations of civic knowledge for understanding civic life). It seems likely that the openness of civic identity to a variety of influences means that a range of interventions can be effective. Perhaps, at the time the second edition of this handbook is prepared, there will be sufficient knowledge to make recommendations to those concerned with social policy on this issue.

Despite the need for more careful theoretical and empirical work on civic identity, we believe it to be a construct whose time has arrived. The very real issues arising from immigration and globalization highlight the possibilities for exploration of political and civic life through the lens of civic identity.

Note

1. Details of this analysis are available upon request.

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Part VII
Ethnic and Cultural Identities

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Abstract

The current chapter reviews existing empirical work on ethnic identity and its relation to psychosocial functioning among ethnic minorities in the United States. A working definition of the construct of ethnic identity is presented, followed by an overview of the theoretical frameworks that have informed the literature on ethnic identity. Existing work with Latino, Black, Asian, and American Indian samples is then reviewed and the strengths and limitations of this work are presented. Although there is much heterogeneity in ethnic identity experiences within and among ethnic minority groups in the United States, the current review of the existing research suggests that, among all groups, ethnic identity appears to serve a promotive and/or protective function for individuals' psychosocial functioning. Despite this potential commonality, it is recommended that researchers not assume homogeneity in ethnic identity experiences and outcomes within or among ethnic minority groups. Suggestions for future research are presented and focus largely on conducting longitudinal work that captures multiple developmental periods and that considers (a) within group diversity, (b) the influence of community ethnic concentration, and (c) the interaction of ethnic identity and other salient social identities in informing individuals' psychosocial functioning and development.

Identity formation is a critical developmental task throughout the lifespan (Erikson, 1968). As outlined within several chapters in this volume (e.g., Haslam & Ellemers, Chapter 30; Savin-Williams,

Chapter 28; Spears, Chapter 9), individuals are defined by multiple social identities. One such social identity is informed by an individual's ethnicity, which is defined by one's culture of origin and is often associated with specific cultural values, attitudes, and behaviors (Phinney, 1996). The United States has a long history of placing a strong societal emphasis on ethnicity, such that the country is frequently described as a land of immigrants who came from diverse places across

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the world, and equality among ethnic groups is often emphasized as a core value of the country (Devos & Banaji, 2005; Schildkraut, Chapter 36, this volume). Unfortunately, ethnicity also is particularly salient in the United States because significant disparities exist in access to power and resources based on ethnic group membership, with ethnic minority group members experiencing significant discrimination and marginalization (Devos & Banaji, 2005). Because of this sociohistorical context, ethnic group membership can be especially salient for the identities of ethnic minority individuals in the United States, particularly compared to their European American ethnic majority counterparts (Tsai, Morensen, Wong, & Hess, 2002).

The identity that develops as a function of one's ethnic group membership can be generally referred to as one's ethnic identity. Ethnic identity is conceptualized as a component of one's overall identity, and will vary in its salience across individuals, as introduced above. Given the diversity in disciplinary backgrounds among researchers who have studied ethnic identity, a wide range of definitions and conceptualizations of ethnic identity exists. Such conceptualizations have ranged from simple self-identification labels (e.g., Chinese American) to complex and multifaceted typologies informed by one's orientation and attachment toward one's ethnic heritage. For the most part, scholars have moved toward these more complex conceptualizations in recent work, given increased recognition that ethnic identity is a multifaceted and complex construct that cannot be reduced to a self-identification label (Phinney, 1996; Umaña-Taylor, Diversi, & Fine, 2002). Reducing ethnic identity to a self-identification label overlooks important variability that exists within groups, such as individuals' attachment or sense of commitment to their ethnic group, and the degree to which individuals have explored their ethnic group membership. Different people within the same ethnic group may have dramatically different degrees of ethnic identity. Importantly, this variability is often associated with individuals' psychosocial adjustment, given that the connection one feels to the group can determine whether or not membership in that

group will have an impact on one's sense of self (Phinney, 1989; Spears, Chapter 9, this volume).

Researchers studying ethnic minority group members living in the United States have examined ethnic identity as a multifaceted construct that is comprised of various components such as exploration, resolution, and affirmation of ethnicity. Such research has identified significant associations between ethnic identity and various indices of psychosocial functioning. Members of ethnic minority groups in the United States are disproportionately likely to face negative experiences associated with their ethnic background, such as ethnic discrimination (e.g., Fisher, Wallace, & Fenton, 2000), that are, in turn, associated with negative psychosocial outcomes such as anxiety and depression (e.g., Romero, Carvajal, Valle, & Orduña, 2007). As a result, research designed to identify factors that can protect against these negative experiences and/or that predict positive psychosocial functioning among ethnic minority group members is particularly important. Specifically, basic research that focuses on promotive or protective factors among ethnic minority group members, such as ethnic identity, is critically necessary for developing effective preventive intervention programs designed to minimize negative outcomes among ethnic minority group members. In fact, several scholars (e.g., Case & Robinson, 2003; Hollon et al., 2002; Prado et al., 2006), as well as the US surgeon general (Thompson, 2001), have called for an increased focus on prevention research with members of ethnic minority groups in the United States, particularly because of the increased risk that members of ethnic minority groups face with respect to indices of maladjustment such as delinquency, school failure or dropout, physical health problems, and mental health problems. As such, the current chapter provides an overview of existing work in which the construct of ethnic identity has been examined in relation to psychosocial functioning (i.e., general psychosocial adjustment such as self-esteem; internalizing behaviors such as depressive symptoms; externalizing behaviors such as drug or alcohol use) among ethnic minorities in the United States. Strengths and limitations

of existing work are reviewed, and suggestions for future theoretical and empirical advances are presented. Throughout the remainder of this chapter, terms such as Asian, Black, and Latino are used to refer to individuals who live in the United States and have ethnic origins in these groups. The term “American” is not added to these descriptors (e.g., Asian American) unless this is the terminology used in the original published work that is being discussed. Although all research reviewed pertains to studies conducted on ethnic minority groups in the United States, adding the qualifier “American” would be inaccurate for some group members who, despite residing in the United States, do not identify with the label “American.”

Theoretical Background

Although existing conceptualizations of ethnic identity have been guided by numerous theoretical frameworks, among the most prevalent theoretical perspectives upon which scholars have drawn when studying ethnic identity are Erikson’s (1968) theory of identity development (see Kroger & Marcia, Chapter 2, this volume) and social identity theory (Tajfel, 1981; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; see Spears, Chapter 9, this volume). Specifically, Phinney (1989, 1993) applied these theoretical frameworks, along with Marcia’s (1980, 1994) operationalization of Erikson’s theory, to derive a new conceptualization of ethnic identity development. Based on Marcia’s operationalization of Erikson’s theory, which outlined four possible identity statuses (i.e., diffuse, foreclosed, moratorium, achieved; see Kroger & Marcia, Chapter 2, this volume, for a review) in which individuals could be classified based on their degree of exploration of identity issues and commitment to a personal identity, Phinney (1993) proposed a three-stage model of ethnic identity. Phinney’s work, which focused largely on adolescence, emphasized the need to acknowledge and understand the psychosocial meaning that individuals developed with respect to their ethnic group membership. That is, what does a person’s ethnicity mean to her or him? How

central is it to her or his sense of self? Does the person regard her or his ethnicity positively or negatively, and to what extent?

From a developmental perspective, similar to identity status (see Kroger & Marcia, Chapter 2, this volume), ethnic identity formation includes processes of exploration and commitment/resolution (Phinney, 1993; Umaña-Taylor, Yazedjian, & Bámaca-Gómez, 2004). *Exploration* involves increasing one’s understanding and exposure to one’s group by doing things such as reading about one’s ethnic background, talking to others about one’s ethnic group, or searching the Internet for information about one’s ethnic group (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2004). Making a commitment toward one’s ethnic identity pertains to individuals’ sense of *resolution* regarding their ethnic group membership; in particular, *resolution* of ethnic identity involves a sense of understanding regarding what an individual’s ethnic group membership means to her or him and the extent to which it plays an important role in her or his life. The concepts of *exploration* and *resolution* are drawn largely from Erikson’s (1968) and Marcia’s (1980) work on identity formation and provide a useful framework for understanding how the psychological meaning of ethnicity develops and eventually may contribute to the individual’s general sense of self.

Social identity theory has provided a sociological and social-psychological approach toward understanding ethnic identity, with a specific emphasis on the affect that individuals develop toward their ethnic group. The construct of ethnic identity *affirmation* has emerged largely from social identity theory (Spears, Chapter 9, this volume; Tajfel, 1981; Tajfel & Turner, 1986) and is based on the notion that, in an effort to maintain a positive self-concept, individuals strive to achieve a positive social identity. One way in which such a positive social identity can be developed is by adopting a positive outlook toward the social groups to which one belongs. Thus, ethnic identity *affirmation* pertains generally to whether individuals feel positively or negatively about their ethnic group membership (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2004). This dimension is sometimes also

referred to as private regard (Fuligni, Witkow, & Garcia, 2005; Rivas-Drake, Hughes, & Way, 2009).

Viewed as a social-developmental process, ethnic identity has been theorized to become increasingly important during adolescence (Phinney, 1993), but it is also considered a salient process that can occur throughout the lifespan (Phinney, 1996; Syed, Azmitia, & Phinney, 2007). Furthermore, ethnic identity serves as an important predictor of individuals' psychosocial functioning and development. Conceptually, a secure sense of ethnic identity contributes significantly to positive psychosocial functioning among ethnic minority group members (Phinney & Kohatsu, 1997). Existing research, conducted primarily with adolescent populations, has generally supported the notion that ethnic identity may promote positive adjustment, although findings vary somewhat according to the specific ethnic minority group studied. In the sections that follow, I review research that has examined ethnic identity in relation to indices of psychosocial functioning, with an emphasis on understanding whether findings are consistent across ethnic groups and across developmental periods. I identify general patterns and make recommendations regarding directions for future work in this area.

Overview of Empirical Findings

The past decade has seen a significant increase in the number of studies published focused on ethnic identity among members of four pan-ethnic minority groups in the United States (i.e., Latino, Black, Asian, and American Indian) and potential links between ethnic identity and psychosocial functioning among these populations. Much of this work has been driven by an interest in identifying the degree to which ethnic identity can serve a protective function for ethnic minority group members, who have been identified in previous research as being at increased risk for negative psychosocial adjustment (e.g., Lee, 2003; Mossakowski, 2003; Romero & Roberts, 2003; Walker, Wingate, Obasi, & Joiner, 2008).

Within this body of work, some studies have examined ethnic identity among samples that collapse across multiple ethnic minority groups (i.e., the sample includes Blacks, Latinos, and Asians; and analyses are conducted across ethnic groups). When studies have analyzed data based on individual ethnic groups, however, findings are somewhat different than when pooled ethnic samples are examined. A review of this work, as well as a discussion of this discrepancy, follows.

Pooled ethnic samples. When samples are examined collapsing across ethnic groups, ethnic identity appears to be significantly associated with favorable psychosocial outcomes. For example, researchers have found that higher levels of ethnic identity affirmation are associated with lower levels of drug use among ethnic-minority early adolescents (Marsiglia, Kulis, & Hecht, 2001; Marsiglia, Kulis, Hecht, & Sills, 2004), and that exploration and resolution are each positively associated with self-esteem among ethnic-minority high school and college students (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2004). In addition, in studies in which a composite ethnic identity score was examined (i.e., scores are summed across exploration, resolution, and affirmation), higher levels of ethnic identity were associated with higher self-esteem among ethnic-minority high school students (Bracey, Bámaca-Gomez, & Umaña-Taylor, 2004), higher overall quality of life among ethnic-minority adults (Utsey, Chae, Brown, & Kelly, 2002), and lower levels of personality characteristics commonly linked to drug use, such as rebelliousness and impulsivity, among ethnic-minority young adults (Brook, Duan, Brook, & Ning, 2007).

Latino samples. In contrast, findings from studies that examined ethnic identity among ethnically homogenous samples (or studies that included multiple ethnic groups in their sample but where analyses were carried out separately for specific ethnic groups) have been more mixed. Research with Latinos is a good example of this, in that some findings suggest that higher ethnic identity is associated with more positive adjustment, others suggest that ethnic identity is positively associated with *maladjustment*, and yet others fail to find an association between Latinos'

ethnic identity and individuals' psychosocial functioning. For instance, studies have found composite ethnic identity scores to be positively associated with self-esteem among both early adolescents (Schwartz, Zamboanga, & Jarvis, 2007) and older adolescents (Bracey, Bámaca-Gómez, & Umaña-Taylor, 2004; Umaña-Taylor, 2004), and positively associated with coping, mastery, and optimism among early adolescents (Roberts et al., 1999). In addition, exploration and resolution were each uniquely and positively associated with self-esteem among Latino high school (Umaña-Taylor & Updegraff, 2007; Umaña-Taylor, Vargas-Chanes, Garcia, & Gonzales-Backen, 2008) and college (Umaña-Taylor & Shin, 2007) students. Group esteem, which appears analogous to ethnic identity affirmation, has been found to be negatively associated with delinquency in late adolescents (French, Kim, & Pillado, 2006). Furthermore, ethnic identity affirmation has also emerged as a protective factor by minimizing (a) the negative association between discrimination and self-esteem among Mexican-origin adolescents (Romero & Roberts, 2003) and (b) the positive association between salient risk factors (e.g., peer drug use) and drug use among Puerto Rican adolescents (Brook, Whiteman, Balka, Win, & Gursen, 1998). Thus, many studies suggest a positive link with adjustment, or, put differently, a negative link with maladjustment.

A few studies with Latinos, however, have found ethnic identity to be associated with increased maladjustment. For instance, using composite ethnic identity scores, researchers have found ethnic identity to be positively associated with alcohol use in Mexican American college students (Zamboanga, Raffaelli, & Horton, 2006), and positively associated with alcohol and marijuana use in early adolescents (Zamboanga, Schwartz, Jarvis, & Van Tyne, 2009). In addition, researchers studying Latino early adolescents have found ethnic identity exploration to be associated with increased delinquency (French, Seidman, Allen, & Aber, 2006), and ethnic identity affirmation to be associated with an increased alcohol use (Marsiglia et al., 2004). Finally, McCoy and Major (2003) found that prejudice

was more strongly and positively associated with depressive symptoms among college students who were highly ethnically identified, suggesting that ethnic identity may serve as a risk enhancer in this context.

Finally, in other studies, researchers failed to find a significant association between ethnic identity and depressive symptoms among Latino early adolescents (Roberts et al., 1999) and found that ethnic identity affirmation was not associated with self-esteem among older adolescents and college students (Umaña-Taylor & Shin, 2007; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2004). More longitudinal work is needed with samples that capture *multiple* developmental periods, such as early adolescence through adulthood, to gain a clearer understanding of the potential links of ethnic identity to psychosocial functioning throughout the lifespan and, further, to better understand which, if any, of the ethnic identity components are linked to these outcomes. There is some empirical support for the notion that ethnic identity affirmation is a protective factor that can reduce or buffer the negative effects of risk on Latino adolescents' psychosocial functioning. Furthermore, it appears that the most consistent finding with Latinos across developmental periods is that both ethnic identity exploration and resolution are positively associated with indices of adaptive psychosocial adjustment (e.g., self-esteem, coping, optimism, lower delinquency), although there was one study that found a link between ethnic identity exploration and delinquency during early adolescence (i.e., French et al., 2006). Interestingly, only one study, using a sample of early adolescents, examined depressive symptoms as an outcome of interest with Latinos, and that study found no association between a composite ethnic identity score and depressive symptoms (Roberts et al., 1999). Given Latinos' increased risk for mental health disorders such as depression (Roberts, Roberts, & Chen, 1997; Siegel, Yancey, Aneshensel, & Schuler, 1999), it is important to examine this association among other samples of Latinos, including high school and college students, as well as adults, to determine whether the findings regarding ethnic identity and depressive symptoms are generalizable

across age groups. Findings from this work will have important implications for preventive intervention work with Latinos.

Black samples. Research examining the associations between ethnic identity and psychosocial functioning, internalizing, and externalizing behaviors among Black samples has more consistently yielded promotive effects. In fact, of the studies identified in the current review, only one was found in which ethnic identity affirmation (labeled “group esteem”) was associated with increased delinquency among African American early and middle adolescents (French et al., 2006). Overall, findings from studies of Black early adolescents have indicated that composite ethnic identity scores were associated with fewer externalizing behaviors (Arbona, Jackson, McCoy, & Blakely, 1999), lower risky sexual attitudes (Belgrave, Van Oss Marin, & Chambers, 2000), and lower levels of aggressive behaviors and beliefs (McMahon & Watts, 2002). Similarly, composite ethnic identity scores have been inversely linked with depressive symptoms among early and middle adolescents (e.g., McHale, Whiteman, Kim, & Crouter, 2007; McMahon & Watts, 2002; Wong, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2003; Yasui, Dorham, & Dishion, 2004), lower levels of loneliness among early adolescents (Roberts et al., 1999), and higher self-esteem among high school students (Bracey et al., 2004; Roberts et al., 1999).

When individual ethnic identity components were examined, similar findings emerged. With respect to Black adolescents’ externalizing behaviors, ethnic identity exploration was associated with lower levels of delinquency among early and middle adolescents (French et al., 2006); and ethnic identity affirmation was associated with fewer sexual behaviors among early adolescents (Wills et al., 2007) and more positive school attitudes and fewer problem behaviors among early and middle adolescents (Resnicow, Soler, Braithwaite, Selassie, & Smith, 1999). In terms of psychosocial functioning and internalizing behaviors, ethnic identity affirmation was positively associated with self-esteem among early, middle, and late adolescents (Resnicow et al., 1999; Umaña-Taylor & Shin,

2007), and negatively associated with depressive symptoms (Gaylord-Harden, Ragsdale, Mandara, Richards, & Petersen, 2007) among early adolescents. In addition, ethnic identity exploration and resolution were each positively associated with self-esteem among African American college students (Umaña-Taylor & Shin, 2007).

Furthermore, consistent with findings from studies that examined Latinos, among Black youth, ethnic identity affirmation has emerged as a significant protective factor against drug use (Brook & Pahl, 2005) and alcohol consumption (Nasim, Belgrave, Jagers, Wilson, & Owens, 2007). Moreover, when measured as a composite variable, ethnic identity appeared to reduce the positive association between depressive symptoms and suicidal ideation among Black college students (Walker et al., 2008). In addition, early adolescents’ connection to their ethnic group attenuated the negative effects of discrimination on adolescents’ academic achievement, self-competency, and problem behaviors (Wong et al., 2003). In sum, the association between ethnic identity and positive psychosocial functioning and adjustment appears to be clear among Black samples. Ethnic identity is not only clearly linked to positive outcomes among Black youth, but ethnic identity affirmation, in particular, may play a significant protective function in the face of negative external influences. As with research on Latinos, there is limited research on developmental periods beyond late adolescence and, thus, it is unclear whether ethnic identity functions in a similar manner among Black adults. This is an area ripe for future research, particularly because the findings have significant implications for preventive intervention work in light of the potentially protective nature of ethnic identity.

Asian samples. Research conducted with Asian samples is most distinguishable from research with Latino samples in that many studies have focused on specific national origin groups (e.g., Filipinos, Koreans) rather than on pan-ethnic populations (e.g., Asian, Latino). In addition, unlike Blacks and Latinos, several studies have examined adult Asian samples. Findings for Asians appear to be more mixed compared to those with Latino or Black samples. For

instance, ethnic identity tended to be linked with greater maladjustment for Cambodian and Hawaiian adolescents, such that higher composite ethnic identity scores were associated with more delinquency among Cambodian adolescents (Go & Le, 2005) and more misconduct (Hishinuma et al., 2005) and suicide attempts (Yuen, Nahulu, Hishinuma, & Miyamoto, 2000) among Native Hawaiian adolescents living in Hawaii. On the contrary, in another study, ethnic identity affirmation was associated with lower levels of violence among Hawaiian adolescents and adults (Austin, 2004). Furthermore, when studying pan-ethnic Asian samples, composite ethnic identity scores have been associated with higher self-esteem among high school students (Bracey et al., 2004) and lower depressive symptoms among college students (Juang, Nguyen, & Lin, 2006). In addition, among college students, ethnic identity affirmation was found to be positively associated with self-esteem (Umaña-Taylor & Shin, 2007) and negatively associated with depressive symptoms (Mahalingam, Balan, & Haritatos, 2008). Higher composite ethnic identity scores were also linked with fewer depressive symptoms among Filipino adults (Mossakowski, 2003). Interestingly, among a sample of Korean college students, there was no significant association between composite ethnic identity and either self-esteem or depressive symptoms (Hovey, Kim, & Seligman, 2006). Given the limited research on specific Asian ethnic groups, it is not clear whether these pan-ethnic findings are a function of the mixture of national origins in these samples or of some other participant characteristics. What these findings highlight, however, is the importance of examining specific Asian ethnic groups, as findings with pan-ethnic samples may not necessarily be generalizable to all specific ethnic groups within the pan-ethnic group. Findings obtained using a sample that is largely Chinese, for example, may obscure important findings for Vietnamese, Korean, Asian Indian, Hmong, and other Asian groups that may be less well represented in the sample. Unlike Latinos, Asian groups do not share a common language and, furthermore, several Asian groups (e.g., Sri Lankans, Vietnamese, and Chinese) differ

considerably from one another with respect to conditions of immigration to the United States, context of reception, and religion, for example. It is likely that the differences across Asian cultures – particularly the lack of a common language, which is believed to be an important ethnic marker (Alba, 1990; Padilla, 1999; Sridhar, 1988) – may partially explain the discrepant findings across Asian groups.

With respect to the potential protective nature of ethnic identity, findings from two studies of Filipino adults, each utilizing a composite ethnic identity score, indicated that ethnic identity attenuated the negative effects of discrimination on depressive symptoms (Mossakowski, 2003) and on total prescription drug use (i.e., use and misuse; Gee, Delva, & Takeuchi, 2007). In another study, which included a pan-ethnic Asian American sample of college students, Lee (2003) also examined the potential moderating role of ethnic identity in the association between discrimination and both self-esteem and depressive symptoms, but found no evidence of moderation. All three studies used a composite score of ethnic identity and, in fact, used the same measure. The main difference, however, was that Lee's study utilized a pan-ethnic Asian American college student sample and an Asian Indian college student sample, whereas Mossakowski and Gee et al., each studied Filipino adult samples. Given the differences in the samples, it is unclear whether the protective nature of ethnic identity may be specific to the national origin group under study or to the developmental period (i.e., college students versus adults).

Another significant moderator that has emerged in existing work with Asian samples involved the Asian ethnic concentration within individuals' schools or communities. Juang et al. (2006) found a significant association between ethnic identity and depressive symptoms when Asian American college students were in an ethnically concentrated context (i.e., at the community level, Asians comprised 31% of the total population); however, this relation did not emerge as significant for Asian American college students in a primarily White American context (i.e., at the community level, Asians

comprised only 8% of the total population and Whites comprised 81%). Somewhat contrary to Juang's findings, but consistent with the notion that ethnic concentration of context is a variable worthy of study, Umaña-Taylor and Shin (2007) found that ethnic identity exploration, resolution, and affirmation were unrelated to self-esteem among Asian American college students in California, whereas resolution and affirmation were both positively associated with self-esteem among Asian American college students in the Midwest. The two studies differed significantly in the outcome variable of interest (i.e., depressive symptoms versus self-esteem) and the nature of the context (e.g., the California sample for Umaña-Taylor and Shin's study was not a particularly Asian-concentrated context, but it was more ethnically diverse than the Midwest sample). Thus, it is inaccurate to present these findings as completely contradictory; however, they are being presented to illustrate that within both of these studies, community ethnic concentration played a significant moderating role and should be considered in future research.

In sum, research findings from studies with Asian American samples are more mixed, and it is not clear whether ethnic identity generally plays a promotive role vis-à-vis psychosocial functioning and adjustment for Asian Americans in general, or whether findings must be qualified for specific Asian groups. Furthermore, the specific role that community ethnic concentration plays is unclear, but it appears to be an influential variable. Studies examining ethnic identity must pay special attention to the characteristics of the communities in which individuals' lives are embedded, particularly with respect to ethnic composition. As explained by Juang et al. (2006), it is possible that Asians living in an ethnic-concentrated context and who identify strongly with their ethnicity may experience a better fit with the norms and values of the context, and this may lead to greater well-being. These ideas are consistent with notions from a goodness-of-fit framework (Lerner & Lerner, 1983; Thomas & Chess, 1977) and suggest that individuals' adjustment may depend on the degree to which their

ethnic identity is consistent with the demands and resources of their community (Juang et al., 2006).

American Indian samples. Although researchers have examined ethnic identity among American Indian populations, this pan-ethnic group has been the least represented in the existing work on ethnic identity. One study found that ethnic identity affirmation was negatively associated with drug use (Kulis, Napoli, & Marsiglia, 2002). A second study (Newman, Sontag, & Salvato, 2006) found that a composite ethnic identity score was positively associated with self-esteem and negatively associated with social problems, but there was no significant association between ethnic identity and depressive symptoms. Finally, Marsiglia et al. (2004) found that ethnic identity affirmation was positively associated with drug use among American Indian early adolescents. Given the few studies in which ethnic identity has been examined among American Indian populations, it is difficult to speculate about the value of ethnic identity for this pan-ethnic population. Furthermore, given the diversity that exists within the American Indian population (e.g., numerous tribes, languages, and traditions), it may be difficult to draw generalizations from existing work in which the focus has been a pan-ethnic population (e.g., including multiple tribal affiliations).

Summary. Together, findings suggest that the construct of ethnic identity appears to serve a promotive function, particularly among adolescent and college student populations. This seems to be most consistent for Blacks in the United States, and least consistent for Asians in the United States. Although the findings from research with American Indian samples suggest that ethnic identity is associated with positive adjustment, the limited number of studies and the vast diversity that exists among this pan-ethnic population limits the ability to draw generalizable conclusions from existing findings. Importantly, the findings reviewed above demonstrate the need to acknowledge the diversity that exists both among and within ethnic minority groups. Studies that reported findings based on pooled ethnic samples revealed only promotive

associations between ethnic identity and outcome variables. However, studies focusing on specific ethnic minority groups, as described above, yielded discrepant findings. The limitations of this work and ideas for advancing this literature are reviewed below.

Empirical and Conceptual Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Within-Group Diversity. Although findings from existing studies provide a starting point from which to understand the relevance of ethnic identity for various ethnic minority group members in the United States, they also underscore the need to account for the tremendous heterogeneity that exists among and within ethnic minority populations in the United States, and could possibly apply to dynamics for certain populations in other countries (e.g., South Asians in England, North Africans in France). First, the divergent findings for pooled samples and ethnic homogenous samples demonstrate the need to conduct analyses for specific ethnic groups. Further, the inconsistent findings within ethnic minority groups (e.g., Asians) suggest that perhaps analyses should be conducted by specific national origin groups, rather than an assumed homogenous pan-ethnic population; for instance, separate analyses would be conducted for Chinese, Vietnamese, and Cambodian Americans, rather than combining all groups and analyzing data for an assumed homogenous “Asian” group. In fact, one characteristic that distinguished research on Asians (in which findings were most mixed) from research on Latinos, Blacks, and American Indians was that, in most studies on Asians, analyses were conducted by specific national-origin groups, whereas analyses were largely conducted on pan-ethnic populations for the other three groups. This may help to explain why findings appear to be more consistent across Blacks than across Latinos. Among samples of Blacks, it is possible that few Black immigrants are represented in the samples and, rather, the findings are being driven by African American participants who share a long group

history in the United States. Among Latinos, however, findings may be driven by one group when conducted in a certain region of the United States (e.g., Cubans in Florida; Mexicans in California; Puerto Ricans and Dominicans in the Northeast) and, thus, the most dominant national-origin group in each sample may be driving the findings in each study – perhaps accounting for the inconsistent findings across studies.

Developmental Period Studied. Another notable limitation of the existing work is the lack of focus on adult populations. Although it is understandable that a vast majority of research on ethnic identity would focus on adolescents and emerging adults, given the central focus on identity formation during this developmental period (Arnett, 2000; Erikson, 1968), ethnic identity is a process that is expected to be revisited throughout the lifespan (Phinney, 1996; Syed et al., 2007) and, thus, there is a need to understand this process beyond adolescence. Further, studies that have examined adult populations suggest that ethnic identity may serve a protective function by offsetting the negative effects of discrimination on depressive symptoms (cf. Mossakowski, 2003) and prescription drug use and misuse (Gee et al., 2007). Moreover, using a sample of ethnic minority adults (pooled across ethnic groups), Utsey et al. (2002) found that a stronger sense of ethnic identity was associated with higher quality of life. Thus, it will be important for future research to determine whether ethnic identity functions in a similar promotive manner among adults from other ethnic minority backgrounds. There is some work (i.e., Snyder, Cleveland, & Thornton, 2006) to suggest that ethnic identity may moderate the association between demographic variables and attitudes toward affirmative action among Asian, Black, and Latino adults; thus, future work should consider ethnic identity as a potential moderator of the relations between stressful experiences and adult adjustment.

Longitudinal Studies. Another important research gap involves the need for more longitudinal work that follows the progression of ethnic identity across multiple developmental periods. Given the costly and labor-intensive nature of longitudinal studies, coupled with the

relatively recent advancement of ethnic identity as a construct worthy of study, it is not surprising that few longitudinal studies focused on ethnic identity have been published. The few longitudinal studies that have been conducted to date have focused on early to middle adolescence (French et al., 2006) and middle to late adolescence (Pahl & Way, 2006; Umaña-Taylor, Gonzales-Backen, & Guimond, 2009). These studies have focused on African Americans and Latinos, and did not include Asian Americans or American Indians, and developmental periods beyond adolescence have not been examined. Nevertheless, findings suggest significant growth in ethnic identity affirmation and exploration during middle adolescence for Black and Latino youth (French et al., 2006) as well as significant growth in ethnic identity exploration and resolution from middle to late adolescence for Latino girls and growth in ethnic identity affirmation during this same time period for both Latino boys and girls (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2009). In a third study, Pahl and Way (2006) found no change in ethnic identity affirmation, and a decrease in ethnic identity exploration, between middle and late adolescence in a sample of Black and Latino adolescents. Again, however, community ethnic concentration may play a role in these inconsistent results across studies: Pahl and Way studied an urban sample of Black and Latino youth in New York City, whereas Umaña-Taylor et al.'s sample consisted of Latino youth attending Midwestern schools that were predominately European American. It is possible that differences in the salience of ethnicity across the two samples could be contributing to the different trajectories observed. The inconsistent findings, at the very least, underscore the importance of considering the potential influence of community ethnic concentration on ethnic identity formation.

Finally, Syed et al. (2007) examined changes in ethnic identity in a short-term longitudinal study (i.e., examining change in college students' ethnic identity between Fall and Spring quarters within a single academic year) utilizing a typology approach based on Phinney's (1993) theoretical work on ethnic identity (described above). In

their study, they examined whether individuals' ethnic identity status classification (i.e., unexamined, moratorium, achieved) changed over time. Individuals who reported low levels of exploration and resolution were classified as unexamined, those with high levels of exploration but low levels of resolution were classified as being in moratorium, and those suggesting high levels of both exploration and resolution were classified as achieved. Syed et al.'s (2007) findings supported existing theory in that the emerging adults in their sample were generally moving toward, rather than away from, the achieved status. Furthermore, these findings are consistent with existing theory and empirical work on developmental patterns of change in identity statuses (for a review, see Kroger & Marcia, Chapter 2, this volume). Their approach, focusing on shifts in ethnic identity status membership over time, is consistent with existing ethnic identity theory (i.e., Phinney, 1993), which is built on the notion of identity status typologies and classifications (Marcia, 1980). Although it is analytically challenging to examine change in ethnic identity using typology classifications, particularly with longer term longitudinal studies in which the possible trajectories are numerous, it is an important methodological step that would significantly advance the field's understanding of how ethnic identity formation unfolds. Syed and colleagues' study was limited to college students and spanned only one semester; it would be worthwhile to replicate this work following early adolescents through emerging adulthood. Given the centrality of the developmental task of identity formation during adolescence (Erikson, 1968), coupled with the increased social and cognitive maturity that accompanies this developmental period (Elliott & Feldman, 1990; Keating, 1990) and makes the abstract construct of ethnicity increasingly salient to youth, it is likely that much change in ethnic identity formation takes place during the period from early adolescence through emerging adulthood. Furthermore, following individuals for a longer period of time will allow for a clearer understanding of possible trajectories and their potential links to outcomes. Meeus, van de Schoot, Keijsers, Schwartz, and

Branje (2010) provide an example of an analytic approach that may be useful to apply to ethnic identity research. Meeus and colleagues longitudinally examined identity status transitions (i.e., their focus was on personal identity - assessing interpersonal and ideological domains) using a combination of latent class analysis and latent transition analysis. With this dual-method strategy, they were able to identify the prevalence of specific identity statuses at distinct developmental periods and, importantly, to track patterns of identity transitions over time. It will be useful to apply such an approach to analyze longitudinal data on ethnic identity.

Composite Ethnic Identity Scores versus Examination of Individual Components

Generally, scholars have moved toward an examination of individual ethnic identity components (e.g., affirmation, exploration), rather than an examination of a composite ethnic identity score that encompasses multiple ethnic identity components (e.g., via the use of a sum score or a mean across multiple subscales). In early work on ethnic identity, the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM; Phinney, 1992) was one of, if not *the*, most widely used measures to assess ethnic identity (Helms, 2007). However, psychometric analyses of the MEIM by multiple research teams (e.g., Pegg & Plybon, 2005; Ponterotto, Gretchen, Utsey, Stracuzzi, & Saya, 2003; Worrell, 2000) including Phinney herself (see Phinney & Ong, 2007) have repeatedly suggested that this measure is characterized by a single factor, rather than the original three-factor model that guided the development of the scale. This has led much of the work on ethnic identity to be based on an examination of a composite ethnic identity score, which combined individuals' scores on multiple ethnic identity components such as exploration, resolution, and affirmation. Umaña-Taylor et al. (2004) argued that a new measure, in which one could uniquely examine the multiple components of ethnic identity, was necessary to be more consistent with existing theory (for a detailed account of this

argument, see Umaña-Taylor & Alfaro, 2006; Umaña-Taylor, 2005). Thus, the Ethnic Identity Scale (EIS; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2004), which allowed for the unique assessment of three components of ethnic identity (i.e., exploration, resolution, and affirmation), was developed. Also recognizing the need to independently assess the components of ethnic identity, Phinney and Ong (2007) published a revised version of the MEIM (i.e., MEIM-R), which consists of two distinct subscales (i.e., exploration and commitment). The EIS and MEIM-R both allow for examination of individual components of ethnic identity.

The examination of individual components of ethnic identity has proven worthwhile, given that the components have been differentially linked to predictors and outcomes. For instance, Umaña-Taylor et al. (2004) found that familial ethnic socialization significantly predicted ethnic identity exploration and resolution, but not ethnic identity affirmation, among both university and high school students from various ethnic groups. Supple, Ghazarian, Frabutt, Plunkett, and Sands (2006) replicated this finding with a sample of Latino youth. Furthermore, Supple and colleagues found that ethnic identity affirmation, but not exploration or resolution, significantly predicted teacher-reported school performance. Finally, in a longitudinal study of Latino youth (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2009), growth in ethnic identity exploration, but not affirmation or resolution, significantly predicted growth in self-esteem from middle to late adolescence. Together, these findings suggest that utilizing a composite ethnic identity score may be less informative, given that the specific associations for certain ethnic identity components may be masked. Furthermore, measurement of individual components and examination of typology classifications using various combinations of levels of different ethnic identity components (as described above in Syed et al., 2007, work) are most consistent with the theoretical frameworks guiding existing work on ethnic identity and, thus, make the measurement of individual ethnic identity components most compelling.

The Role of Community Ethnic Concentration. Existing research also is limited in its understanding of the role that social context plays in individuals' ethnic identity formation and, in turn, its association with various predictors and outcomes. Although a few studies have examined ethnic identity in distinct contexts based on the ethnic composition of adolescents' schools (e.g., Juang et al., 2006; Umaña-Taylor, 2004; Umaña-Taylor & Shin, 2007), there is a need for a more systematic examination of this aspect of the social context. In particular, it will be important for future research to consider not only the proximal social context (e.g., school ethnic composition), but also the more distal community ethnic concentration, such as the geographical region in which individuals' lives are embedded. For example, ethnic identity may be protective against drug and alcohol use in highly Hispanic areas in the Southwestern United States (Marsiglia et al., 2001, 2004), but it may represent a risk for drug and alcohol use in parts of the American Midwest, where White Americans comprise an overwhelming majority of the local population (Zamboanga et al., 2009).

Findings from existing studies on the effects of community ethnic concentration on ethnic identity have been somewhat mixed, but it is difficult to compare across studies because they have examined different populations (e.g., Asian American adolescents versus Latino adolescents). Furthermore, existing studies have assessed the proximal community ethnic concentration by measuring the ethnic density of adolescents' schools or universities, but the geographical region in which adolescents were raised has not been tested as a contributing variable in existing studies. Representation of some ethnic groups is much greater in certain regions of the United States than others. For instance, the Latino population is more heavily concentrated in the Southwest than in the Northwest. As a more specific example, if one were to focus on specific national-origin groups, it would be important to recognize that, within the state of California, the experiences related to ethnic identity would likely be significantly different for Mexican-origin Latinos, who make up a majority

of the Latino population in California, and Puerto Rican Latinos, who are a double-minority in California because they are a numerical minority within the Latino population (which in turn is a minority within the United States as a whole). However, if the same study were conducted in New York, Puerto Ricans would be the majority Latino group, and Mexican-origin Latinos would be a double-minority.

It is a complex endeavor to account for the distinct social contexts in which individuals' lives are embedded (Bronfenbrenner, 1989), and even more challenging to identify which ecological variables should be examined as significant contributors or moderators in studies of ethnic identity. However, it will be critical for research to move in this direction, particularly because of existing work that has demonstrated that ethnic group density and history in a particular geographic context can have a significant impact on ethnic identity development via the resources available for ethnic socialization and the potential barriers that result from lack of representation of one's group (Schwartz et al., 2007; Umaña-Taylor & Bámaca, 2004). Thus, there is a need for future studies on ethnic identity to focus on specific national-origin groups and obtain their samples from at least two distinct geographical regions, in which a key distinguishing factor is the ethnic representation and history of the group of interest. Ideally, researchers would study two groups within the same pan-ethnic group (e.g., Chinese and Vietnamese; Mexican and Puerto Rican) who had opposite histories and representation in the geographical regions where the data were being gathered, such as Cubans and Mexicans in Florida and California.

Examining the potential influence of community ethnic concentration in studies of ethnic identity is not only important for understanding how ethnic identity develops, but also for understanding the functions of ethnic identity in individuals' lives. Based on social identity theory (Tajfel, 1981; Tajfel & Turner, 1986), individuals' self-concepts are informed, in part, by their membership in social groups and their perceptions of others' evaluations of their group. In particular, individuals seek to maintain a positive

sense of self via positively evaluating their group. When one's group is viewed negatively, individuals may engage in identity protection strategies (see Spears, [Chapter 9](#), this volume) that enable them to reconcile negative views of their group and, thus, to not be negatively impacted by disparaging views of their group (Roberts, Settles, & Jellison, 2008). Furthermore, social identity theory suggests that antagonistic intergroup relations (e.g., experiences with discrimination) can heighten identification with and positive attachment to one's group (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Thus, the history of an individual's ethnic group in a particular area, and the resulting context of reception that the individual's group experiences (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006), is likely to impact one's self-concept and, specific to ethnic identity, the degree to which one's ethnic identity is linked to perceptions of the self. As described above, it is possible that individuals who identify strongly with their ethnic group, but whose group is devalued and/or lacks representation in their respective communities may, in turn, have poorer adjustment due to a poor fit between their identity and their environment.

Multiple Social Identities. A final limitation within the literature is the limited understanding of the interface of ethnic identity and other social identities. Individuals' identities are made up of multiple social identities, such as ethnic identity, gender identity, sexual identity, and racial identity, to name a few (e.g., Bussey, [Chapter 25](#), this volume; Savin-Williams, [Chapter 28](#), this volume). All of these social identities contribute to the individual's global sense of self. Few studies have examined how multiple social identities intersect and the degree to which they develop in a uniform or distinct manner. Most of the studies that have examined the intersection of ethnic identity with other social identities have focused on ethnic identity and gender identity, and there are a few that have examined ethnic identity in relation to other identities such as American identity (i.e., Kiang, Yip, & Fuligni, 2008), but these studies are limited in number and, thus, it is difficult to draw general conclusions regarding the intersection of these identities. A majority of the work on the intersection of ethnic and

gender identity has been conducted by the same research team (i.e., Pittinsky, Shih, & Ambady, 1999; Shih, Pittinsky, & Ambady, 1999; Shih, Pittinsky, & Trahan, 2006), although others also have contributed to this area (Abu-Ali, 1999; Hoffman, 2006; Sinclair, Hardin, & Lowery, 2006). Findings suggest that gender identity development and ethnic identity development may follow similar trajectories, such that women from an ethnically diverse sample who had an achieved gender identity also tended to have an achieved ethnic identity and vice versa (Hoffman, 2006). Interestingly, in a study of Muslim adolescent girls living in the United States, Abu-Ali (1999) found that higher levels of ethnic identity affirmation were associated with higher scores on femininity; however, there was no significant association between ethnic identity achievement and femininity.

With a more experimental design, Shih et al. (2006) found that Asian American college females performed better on verbal tests when their gender identity was made salient than when their ethnic identity was made salient. Conversely, a previous study by the same research group found that Asian American women assigned to an experimental group scored higher than those assigned to a control group on a math test when their Asian American identity was made salient and worse than the control group when their gender identity was made salient. The control group consisted of Asian American women for whom neither identity was made salient (Shih et al., 1999). In both studies, researchers suggested that it was not the particular identity that influenced individuals' performance on math or verbal tests, but rather the stereotype associated with the identity that was made salient. This explanation is somewhat consistent with the concept of stereotype threat, which suggests that when a stereotype of a group to which one belongs is made salient, it can affect one's behavior in a manner that confirms the stereotype (Steele, 1997). Interestingly, the concept of stereotype threat has been generally discussed with respect to negative stereotypes about one's group; in the case of Shih and colleagues' work, it seems that both negative and positive

stereotypes may actually affect behavior in a manner that is consistent with the stereotype that exists about the group.

In another study that examined ethnic and gender identities, Pittinsky et al. (1999) examined Asian women's affect toward their social identities in three separate conditions: a context in which Asian ethnic identity was adaptive (i.e., a math test), a context in which female gender identity was adaptive (a verbal test), and a context in which neither identity was relevant (control). Findings indicated that participants generated more positive memories related to their gender than their ethnicity in the verbal test condition, whereas they generated more positive memories related to their ethnicity than their gender in the math test condition. In the control situation, there were no significant differences in the positive or negative memories participants generated regarding their gender or ethnic identities. These findings suggest that individuals may activate different social identities in different contexts and that the characteristics of a particular context may prime a certain type of affect (i.e., positive or negative) toward a specific social identity. Though informative, these studies do not speak directly to the intersectionality of gender and ethnic identity. It would be interesting, for example, to examine whether gender identity would be strongest for those with high levels of ethnic identity in cultures that follow more rigid gender socialization patterns. For instance, in cultures that adhere to more rigid distinctions between males and females, would those who are most strongly ethnically identified also tend to demonstrate the strongest gender identities? And, in turn, would this strengthen the association between the particular identity and psychosocial, externalizing, or internalizing outcomes?

Interestingly, researchers generally have not examined the intersection of ethnic identity and racial identity (for an exception see Worrell & Gardner-Kitt, 2006). Although sometimes used synonymously, the terms race and ethnicity refer to considerably different constructs. A person's race is based on external physical characteristics, such as skin color (Phinney, 1996). Ethnicity, on the other hand, is based on cultural traditions

and values that are transmitted over generations (Spencer & Markstrom-Adams, 1990) and tends to be more subjective than race, which is more heavily grounded in the sociohistorical and cultural milieu of a particular country or region. There can be multiple races found within any ethnic group. For example, some Cuban Americans are racially White and others are racially Black. Whereas ethnic identity is based on identification with an ethnic group, racial identity pertains to individuals' identification with their racial group, including a shared history as a result of being a member of a particular race (Helms, 1990). For example, for Black individuals, racial identity would involve overcoming oppression and related struggles that result from historical oppression and racism that have existed throughout US history. Scholars suggest that the construct of race is not particularly meaningful for Latinos, as evidenced by the large proportion of the Latino population in the United States that does not answer the race question or refuses to identify with a single standard race in the US Census (Hirschman, 2004; Perez & Hirschman, 2009). Thus, it is possible that the construct of race is most salient for Blacks and least salient for Latinos, and that the construct of ethnicity is particularly salient for Latinos and perhaps less salient for Blacks.

Although it is not often discussed in the literature, it is possible for individuals to have both a racial identity and an ethnic identity, with racial identity being based on individuals' experiences with and understanding of the societal factors that affect their racial group, and ethnic identity being based on cultural characteristics that are transmitted from one generation to the next (Umaña-Taylor, 2003). For example, while Black Haitian Americans and Black African Americans would both have racial identities associated with being Black in the United States, Haitian Americans' ethnic identity would be based on their Haitian heritage, and African Americans' ethnic identity may be based on their African tribal heritage. The lack of understanding regarding how individuals' ethnic and racial identities intersect is among the largest limitations of the existing work on ethnic and racial identity.

This is an area in need of future research, particularly for Latinos who are tremendously racially diverse, with many having African roots, others having indigenous roots, and others having European roots. In fact, scholars question the arbitrary distinction between current conceptualizations of race and ethnicity, particularly because they do not adequately reflect the experiences of Latinos in the United States (see Hitlin, Brown, & Elder, 2007). Thus, it will be important for future research to understand the contexts within which racial versus ethnic identity is more salient to individuals (similar to research described above for gender and ethnic identity). Are there contexts in which individuals draw on both racial and ethnic identities for protection? For example, when faced with discrimination, are individuals more likely to rely on both their racial and ethnic identity to find ways to cope with the discriminatory behavior, rather than just one or the other? Does it depend on the type of discrimination that one is experiencing? It also is important to acknowledge (and to understand more fully) the notion that, for some groups and individuals, racial identity may be more salient, whereas for others, ethnic identity may be more salient.

Conclusion

In closing, existing work on ethnic identity among ethnic minority group members in the United States has advanced tremendously in the past several decades. The current review of existing empirical studies on the associations among ethnic identity and various indices of psychosocial functioning indicates that it is important to consider specific ethnic groups and, particularly, not to assume homogeneity in ethnic identity experiences and outcomes within or among ethnic minority groups. Furthermore, despite the heterogeneity within ethnic minority groups, ethnic identity appears to serve a promotive and/or protective function for individuals' psychosocial functioning. What will be important to understand more clearly, however, is the specific function that ethnic identity serves for each specific ethnic minority group. As previously discussed, the various ethnic groups that comprise the

population of the United States are diverse with respect to, for example, their immigration history (e.g., some groups are predominantly voluntary immigrants while others are involuntary immigrants), the context of reception that their group has experienced in the United States, and the structure of economic opportunities that sometimes differ by group because of different labor needs in specific geographic areas where certain ethnic groups tend to disproportionately settle (Baca Zinn & Wells, 2000). Since this diversity may account for some of the differences observed across groups with respect to the importance placed on and the protective nature of ethnic identity, future research should systematically study the potential impact of factors such as immigration history and context of reception in the United States.

In addition, although existing work has advanced the field's understanding with respect to ethnic identity among adolescents and emerging adults, there is a significant gap in the literature regarding ethnic identity beyond late adolescence and emerging adulthood. This may be due, in part, to a majority of this work being guided by Erikson's (1968) theory of identity formation, which emphasized adolescence as a central developmental period for identity formation. Nevertheless, scholars agree that identity is a process that is revisited throughout the lifespan (Kroger & Marcia, Chapter 2, this volume; Luyckx, Schwartz, Goossens, Beyers, & Missotten, Chapter 4, this volume). As a result, there is a need for more attention to ethnic identity during adulthood. In sum, given the limitations and directions for future research discussed above, the path to a more complete understanding of the process of ethnic identity development and its association with psychosocial outcomes will require more longitudinal work that captures multiple developmental periods and considers within group diversity, the influence of community ethnic concentration, and the interaction of ethnic identity and other salient social identities in informing individuals' psychosocial functioning and development.

Acknowledgment A special thanks to Aaron Foley for his assistance with a search of the literature on ethnic identity and externalizing behaviors.

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Abstract

Cultural identity represents an individual's identity as a member of a group with shared characteristics, which often (but not always) include racial, ethnic, or geographical origins. Cultural identity influences multiple life domains, including the ways in which people make decisions about performing behaviors that ultimately influence their health. This chapter reviews the role of cultural identity in public health. I present a theoretical model in which the effects of cultural identity on health-related behaviors are mediated by perceptions of risk of disease, perceptions of cultural norms, desire to self-present as a member of a cultural group, functional meanings of behaviors, and cultural values. Through these mediated pathways, cultural identity can influence the likelihood that individuals will engage in health-protective behaviors, seek early detection of illness, and obtain treatment for existing illness. These pathways also can be moderated by enabling factors such as access to care, information, and resources. These mediating and moderating mechanisms are then illustrated with examples from multiple domains of public health research such as genetic testing, smoking, healthcare decision-making, and adolescent drug use. Further research is needed to develop improved measures of cultural identity, understand the effects of changes in cultural identity on health-related behaviors, understand the interactions between the individual's cultural identity and the larger cultural context, and develop health education interventions that are compatible with patients' cultural identities. The theoretical model presented in this chapter could be a useful starting point for researchers, interventionists, and evaluators to include cultural identity in public health efforts.

Cultural identity pervades all aspects of life, including interpretations of situations and events, patterns of interpersonal communication, values and priorities, and day-to-day behaviors. Therefore, it is not surprising that cultural identity affects health and illness as well. Cultural identity has been associated with various aspects

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of health, including people's understanding of their vulnerability to various illnesses and their likelihood of performing health-risk and health-protective behaviors, obtaining medical screenings for disease, and seeking treatment. This chapter reviews the role of cultural identity in public health. I propose a new theoretical model of potential mediators and moderators of the associations between cultural identity and health behaviors, and I provide examples of these processes from previous research on health-related behaviors such as genetic testing, smoking, healthcare decision-making, and adolescent drug use.

A Working Definition of Cultural Identity

Before examining the role of cultural identity in public health, it is necessary to clarify our definition of cultural identity. For the purposes of this chapter, I use the term "cultural identity" rather than "ethnic identity" because these terms differ in breadth. The main difference is that ethnicity usually refers to a person's ancestral geographic origin, whereas cultures are groups of people who share knowledge, beliefs, norms, and behaviors (Geertz, 1973). Cultures can include ethnic groups as well as other groups of people whose membership is based not on geography but on other shared traits, interests, knowledge, or behaviors (e.g., gay culture, deaf culture, hip-hop culture). The term "cultural identity" implies that an individual has a number of different possible identities at different levels, because each individual belongs to numerous overlapping and non-overlapping cultural and subcultural groups (Raman, 2006; Spears, Chapter 9, this volume). In this chapter, I use the term "cultural identity" to describe a person's identity as a member of a cultural group, which often (but not always) consists of people of similar ethnic, racial, and/or national origins. Therefore, cultural identity usually includes ethnic identity, but it also can be broader than ethnic identity.

Cultural identity, like culture itself, is a complex and abstract phenomenon that is difficult to

define and measure (Matsumoto, 2003). Trimble (2000) describes cultural identity as an "affiliative construct"; individuals view themselves and others as belonging to a particular group with shared characteristics (Spears, Chapter 9, this volume). People's judgments about whether they or others belong to a cultural group can be influenced by the person's physical appearance (e.g., the person's physical similarity to others in the group), the person's ancestral origin, or the person's behaviors (e.g., celebration of holidays, choice of clothing, manner of speech, etc.) (Cheung, 1993).

According to Phinney, 1990, 2000, 2003), a person claims an identity within the context of a group that has a common ancestry and shares a similar culture, race, religion, language, kinship, or place of origin. This identity includes self-identification, sense of belonging to a cultural group, attitudes toward the cultural group, social participation, and cultural practices. Referring to people who immigrate to a new culture or belong to a cultural minority group, cultural identity also includes people's subjective orientation (a) toward their families' culture(s) of origin (b) toward one or more "dominant" cultures, or (c) toward a combination of these cultures. Cultural identity also refers to the degree to which one has explored and committed to a sense of who one is in a cultural sense (see Umaña-Taylor, Chapter 33, this volume). In the case of immigrants, because there are usually differences between the sending and receiving cultures, and because there may be heterogeneity within each of these cultures, people can develop cultural identities that are a blend of multiple cultures (Howard, 2000). For example, Fig. 34.1 depicts the self-reported cultural identities of 1,963 Hispanic/Latino high school students in Southern California in 2005 (Unger et al., unpublished manuscript). The students were asked, "Do you live by or follow the – way of life?" (Oetting & Beauvais, 1990). These students might be expected to have cultural identities comprised of elements of their Hispanic cultures of origin, the US culture where they live, or a combination of the two. Although most students identified primarily with aspects of the Hispanic/Latino (92%) and

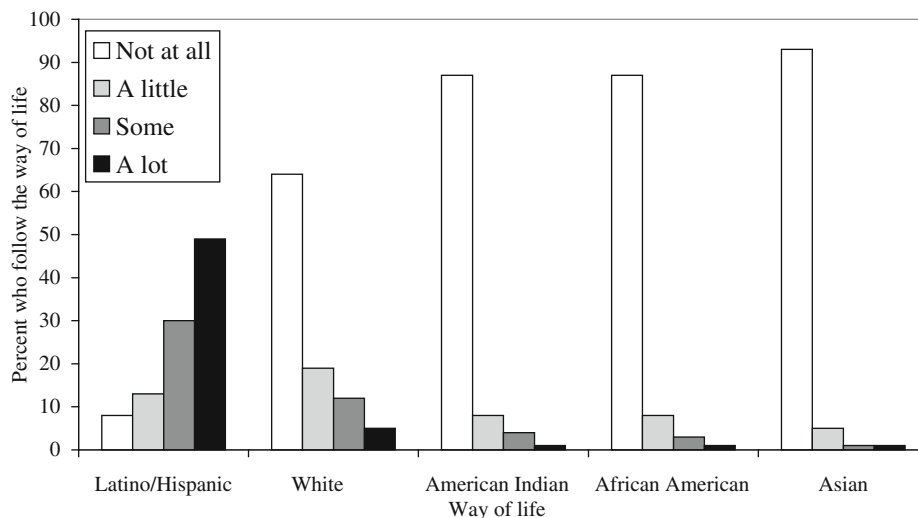


Fig. 34.1 Cultural/ethnic identity among Hispanic/Latino high school students in Southern California

White (36%) cultures, some students also identified with aspects of African American (13%), American Indian (13%), and Asian American (7%) cultures. These adolescents' multicultural identities are not surprising, given that they are living in a culturally diverse urban context where they are exposed to a wide variety of cultural norms, values, and behavioral expressions. Even members of "dominant" or majority cultures can adopt cultural identities that include elements of minority cultures, as evidenced by non-African-American adolescents in the United States adopting elements of African-American cultural identity such as music and clothing styles.

Cultural identity formation has been described recently as a continuous and dynamic process that evolves over the entire life course and also shifts from moment to moment, depending on the social context (Weinreich, 2009). Although Phinney (2003) describes cultural identity formation as a developmental process in adolescence and young adulthood rather than a lifelong process, she also acknowledges that it can continue to change over the life course and across situational contexts. Cultural identity is not a final decision, but a constantly shifting understanding of one's identity in relation to others. Recent writings on cultural identity formation (Weinreich, 2009) have emphasized the active role of the

agentic individual in building a cultural identity by selecting individual features of multiple cultures to incorporate into the self-identity, rather than a passive individual being changed by a dominant culture (see Huynh, Nguyen, & Benet-Martínez, Chapter 35, this volume). In other words, individuals repeatedly explore the meaning of various cultural identities, including those of their ancestors and those of the people in their current social networks. They can choose elements of these identities to incorporate into their own self-identities. The salience of any particular aspect of the cultural identity varies according to the situational context.

How Does Cultural Identity Influence Health?

Cultural identity does not necessarily determine people's health status directly, but it can influence their decisions about engaging in behaviors that affect their health status. Because cultural identity shapes people's understanding of the physical and social world and their role in it, cultural identity also shapes people's beliefs about health and disease, including criteria for labeling oneself as healthy or sick, actions taken to avoid disease, decisions about seeking early detection

of disease, and decisions about whether, when, and how to treat disease (Mechanic, 1986). In the public health field, health-related behaviors can be classified as primary prevention (preventing disease from occurring), secondary prevention (detecting disease in its early stages), and tertiary prevention (treating existing disease). These classes of behaviors are described in detail below.

Primary prevention. Primary prevention includes behaviors undertaken to maintain health or prevent disease from occurring (Friis & Sellers, 2009). These include health-enhancing behaviors such as physical activity and appropriate dietary choices, behaviors to protect against disease and injury such as hand-washing and wearing seatbelts, and avoidance of behaviors that threaten health such as smoking or unsafe sex. Cultural identity may influence primary prevention behaviors by influencing people's perceptions of which behaviors are related to health and disease (e.g., is diabetes caused by diet or by experiencing strong emotions? [Hatcher & Whittemore, 2007]); which behaviors are normative and accepted among members of their cultural group (e.g., is it acceptable for women to smoke? [Unger et al., 2003]); and the cultural assets and resources upon which the person can draw to make decisions about engaging in risky and protective behaviors (e.g., do extended family members or religious leaders influence these decisions? [Turner, 2000]).

Secondary prevention. The goal of secondary prevention is to identify and detect disease in its earliest stages, before symptoms develop, when it is most likely to be treated successfully (Friis & Sellers, 2009). Early detection and diagnosis can make it possible to cure a disease, slow its progression, prevent or minimize complications, and limit disability. Cultural identity could influence secondary prevention behaviors by influencing people's perceptions of themselves as members of high-risk groups (e.g., whether they are aware of their ethnic, racial, and national origins and the specific diseases that are prevalent among those groups) and their desire to become aware of their disease risk (e.g., do people want to know about a cancer diagnosis, or would they

rather not know and remain optimistic? [Powe & Finnie, 2003]).

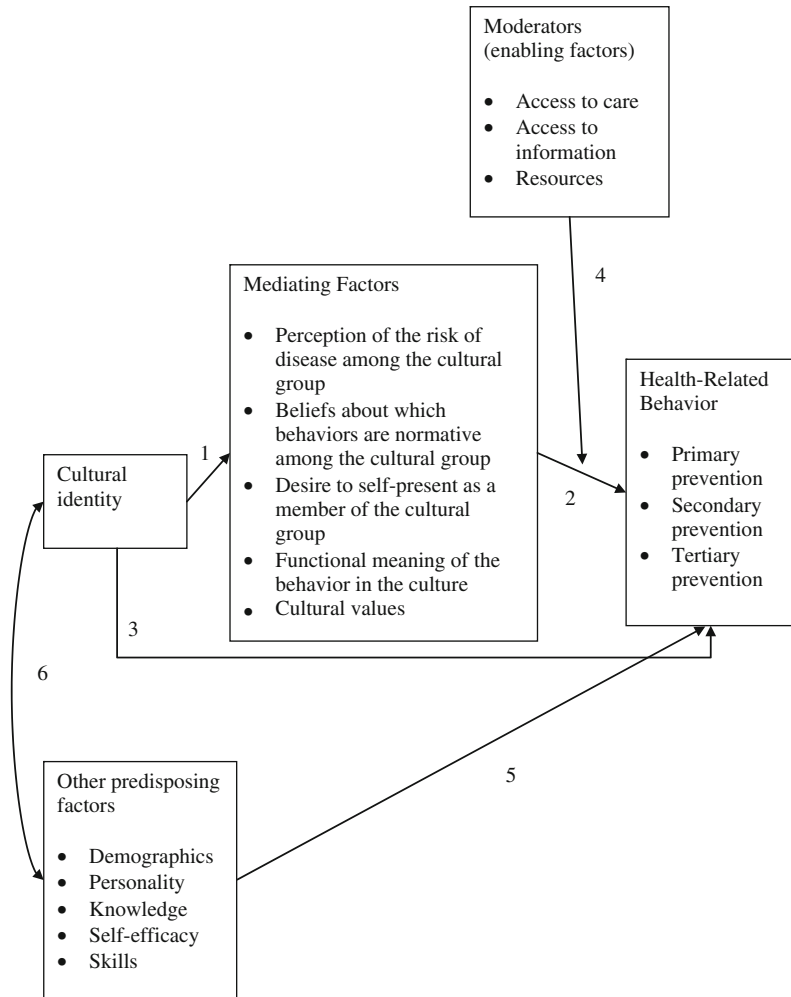
Tertiary prevention. Tertiary prevention involves treating disease after it has occurred (Friis & Sellers, 2009). For diseases that cannot be cured, this includes improving the patient's quality of life by managing symptoms and pain, limiting complications and disabilities, reducing the severity and progression of disease, and providing rehabilitation. Cultural identity could influence tertiary prevention behaviors by influencing people's preferences about how medical treatment decisions should be made (e.g., should the patient make treatment decisions autonomously, or should family members relieve the patient of the burden of decision-making? [Kagawa-Singer & Blackhall, 2001]) and the extent of medical intervention that they are willing to receive to prolong their lives (Kagawa-Singer & Blackhall, 2001).

Theoretical Model

In this chapter, I propose a theoretical model of the role of cultural identity in people's decisions about engaging in specific health behaviors. I posit that cultural identity influences these decisions, and that there are mediators and moderators of these effects. The theoretical model is diagrammed in Fig. 34.2, and the paths in the model are described in detail below.

Mediating Factors in the Association between Cultural Identity and Health-Related Behaviors. Paths (1) and (2) in the model show a causal chain leading from cultural identity to the mediating factors to health-related behavior. Mediators are steps within a causal pathway (Baron & Kenny, 1986). They represent the mechanism by which one phenomenon (e.g., cultural identity) influences another phenomenon (e.g., health-related behavior). In this model, I posit that the causal pathway from cultural identity to health-related behaviors is mediated by cognitions such as the following:

- *Perception of risk of disease among the cultural group* (i.e., does this cultural group have a relatively high prevalence of a particular

Fig. 34.2 Theoretical model

disease, relative to other groups?) [Janz & Becker, 1984]

- *Perception of normative behaviors among the cultural group* (i.e., is this behavior common among this cultural group? Is this behavior viewed as acceptable and desirable among this cultural group?) [Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975]
- *Desire to self-present as a member of the cultural group* (i.e., do I want people to view me as a member of this cultural group? Will this behavior contribute to my image as a member of this cultural group?) [Baumeister, 1982]
- *Functional meaning of the behavior among the cultural group* (i.e., In this cultural group, what do people believe are the positive

and negative consequences of this behavior?) [Spruijt-Metz, 1995]

- *Cultural values* (e.g., individualism vs. collectivism, as well as group-specific cultural values such as familism, filial piety, “respeto,” “simpatia,” and saving face) [McElroy & Jezewski, 2000]

Unmediated Effect of Cultural Identity on Health-Related Behavior. Path (3) in the model leads directly from cultural identity to health-related behavior. This path indicates a directional and causal association between cultural identity and health-related behavior that is not mediated by the hypothesized mediating factors. This path leaves open the possibility that other undiscovered mediators may exist.

Moderators of the Path from Cultural Identity to Health-Related Behavior. Path (4) in the model indicates that other factors (sometimes referred to as “enabling factors” in other theories [Green & Kreuter, 1999]) can facilitate or block the path from cultural identity to health-related behavior. Moderators are variables that influence the strength of the association between a predictor and an outcome (Baron & Kenny, 1986). For example, women whose cultural beliefs are consistent with early detection of breast cancer may be more likely to obtain mammograms, but only *if* mammograms are conveniently available and affordable. Women who lack access to mammography will be unlikely to obtain mammograms, regardless of their cultural identities. Enabling factors such as access to care, access to information, and resources are shown in the box at the top of Fig. 34.2. The arrow pointing down from these enabling factors indicates that they moderate the association between the mediating factors and behavior.

Other Predisposing Factors. Of course, cultural identity is not the only factor that influences health-related behaviors. Path (5) in the model shows the effects of other variables such as demographic characteristics (e.g., age, gender, socioeconomic status), personality (e.g., general tendency to take risks [Llewellyn, 2008]), knowledge (e.g., knowledge of the risks and benefits of various behaviors), self-efficacy (i.e., confidence in one’s ability to perform a health-protective behavior [Bandura, 1986]), and skills (i.e., one’s actual ability to perform the behavior correctly). Path (6) in the model indicates that some of these other predisposing factors also may be correlated with cultural identity.

A key assumption of this model is that people are motivated to maintain consistency between their self-image and their behaviors (see Oyserman & James, Chapter 6, this volume). This notion has been expressed in several psychological theories such as cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957), self-consistency (Aronson, 1968; 1999), and self-affirmation theories (Steele, 1988). These theories assert that people develop conceptualizations of themselves as individuals, with specific preferences, personal

and moral values, skills, and priorities. People are most comfortable when they act in ways that affirm their self-images. When people act in ways that are inconsistent with the self-image (for example, if a person with an “honest” self-image tells a lie), they feel discomfort and take action to resolve the discrepancy, either by revising the self-image or by finding a way to rationalize the aberrant behavior.

I posit that, whenever possible, people will engage in health-related behaviors that are consistent with their chosen cultural identities, that is, behaviors that are salient among the cultural group with which they identify, behaviors that are normative and valued by that cultural group, behaviors that strengthen their identity as members of the cultural group, behaviors that serve a valued function among members of the cultural group, and behaviors that are consistent with the core values of the cultural group.

Of course, all human behavior occurs within a sociocultural context (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Systems outside the individual, including family, social network, social institutions (schools, workplaces, churches), community, and the sociopolitical context also exert influences on health-related behaviors. Although these ecological influences are not the focus of this chapter, it is important for the reader to keep in mind that the larger social and cultural context likely influences individual-level associations between cultural identity and health behaviors.

Examples of the Role of Cultural Identity in Health-Related Behaviors

Cultural identity can influence primary, secondary, and tertiary preventive health behaviors through the pathways depicted in Fig. 34.2. The remainder of this chapter describes some examples of how cultural identity can influence health decision making through the mediating mechanisms described above. I describe a different behavioral health issue for each mediating mechanism to illustrate the variety of health behaviors that are influenced by cultural identity. These examples illustrating possible mediating

mechanisms are by no means exhaustive; they are just illustrations of associations between cultural identity and health behaviors.

Perceptions about Risk of Disease in the Cultural Group

Genetic Screening among Ashkenazi Jews. Cultural identity can influence people's decisions about whether to be screened for disease by influencing their perceptions of whether they are at risk for a particular disease. Individuals might be more likely to seek screening tests if they identify with a cultural group that is viewed as having a high risk for a given disease. Research has identified two genes, BRCA1 and BRCA2, which are strongly linked to hereditary breast and ovarian cancers (King, Marks, & Mandell, 2003). People with a mutation in one of these genes have a lifetime risk of breast cancer as high as 82%. These genetic mutations are especially common among people of central and eastern European (Ashkenazi) Jewish descent. Therefore, it is typically recommended that Ashkenazi Jewish women, especially those with a family history of breast cancer, should consider being tested for the specific BRCA mutations that are common in this population. Women who test positive for BRCA mutations may elect to have prophylactic surgery such as mastectomy or oophorectomy (removal of the ovaries), or they may elect to receive frequent mammograms to detect breast cancer in its early stages.

Theories of health behavior (e.g., Janz & Becker, 1984) posit that people will be more likely to seek screening if they believe that they are personally susceptible to the disease. Perceptions of susceptibility can be influenced by a number of factors, including people's beliefs about the quality of their health in general, their beliefs about whether they tend to be more or less lucky than others (Weinstein, 1980), and their subjective perceptions about whether they fit the profile of the typical person who is likely to get the disease. Women may be more likely to seek breast cancer screening if they believe they fit the profile of the "typical" woman who is at risk for

breast cancer, and this belief may be influenced by their cultural identities, as described below.

In recent years, the media have publicized the high prevalence of breast cancer genes among Ashkenazi Jews, highlighting this group as a high-risk group for breast cancer (Hoffman-Goetz, Clarke, & Donelle, 2005). Self-identification as an Ashkenazi Jew may increase a woman's subjective perception of her breast cancer risk, which may make her more interested in being tested for BRCA mutations. However, many factors may influence women's cultural identification with the Ashkenazi Jewish population. Jewish identity is a complex construct that includes aspects of heritage, religious beliefs, and cultural belongingness. Many people have a Jewish biological lineage but do not participate in the Jewish community. Others consider themselves members of the Jewish culture but not religiously observant. In addition, because of the history of migration of the Jewish diaspora, many people of Jewish descent cannot trace their families back to specific countries, and there are likely many people with Jewish ancestors who are not aware of this ancestry. For example, one of the BRCA1 mutations was found among six non-Jewish Americans of Spanish ancestry living in Colorado (Mullineaux et al., 2003). Although none of them knew of a Jewish ancestor, one researcher hypothesized that they were descendants of Marranos, Spanish Jews who pretended to convert to Christianity in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries to avoid persecution (Long, 2004). In most of the original studies of BRCA1/2 mutations, there were no consistent criteria for identifying Ashkenazi Jews; families were identified based on their self-reports, or even their physicians' assumptions, that they were Ashkenazi Jews (Brandt-Rauf, Raveis, Drummond, Conte, & Rothman, 2006). Therefore, the cultural identities that people choose, and the cultural identities that they present to their physicians, could influence the types of screening that they seek out or are offered.

Jewish cultural identity illustrates how cultural identity can influence people's perceptions of disease risk, which in turn can influence their

screening behaviors and potentially prevent cancer mortality. Messages about the high prevalence of breast cancer susceptibility genes among Ashkenazi Jews may resonate more with people who have a strong Jewish identity. Jews who are more immersed in the Jewish community may have more opportunities to learn about their risk for breast cancer and may be more likely to find this risk personally relevant.

Perception of Normative Behaviors among the Cultural Group

Smoking among Women. Cultural identity can influence perceived social norms about the appropriateness or desirability of health-risk and health-protective behaviors. Cultural norms dictate which behaviors are appropriate for which segments of the population. Therefore, cultural identity may influence people's decisions about which behaviors would be appropriate for them personally. Tobacco smoking is a health-risk behavior that is associated with over 443,000 premature deaths in the United States each year (Adhikari, Kahende, Malarcher, Pechacek, & Tong, 2008). The demographic patterns of smoking differ across cultural contexts. For example, within White American culture and in many European cultures, the prevalence of cigarette smoking is similar among men and women (Hammond, 2009). These cultures lack strong social norms about whether smoking is more appropriate among one gender than among the other. However, in some Asian cultures, smoking is considered appropriate among men but undesirable among women (Hsia & Spruijt-Metz, 2008; Tsai, Tsai, Yang, & Kuo, 2008). Since the cultural meaning of women's smoking varies across cultural contexts, individual women's cultural identities will influence their decisions about smoking.

Cultural influences on smoking might not be so obvious among Asian women who are living in Asian cultural contexts, because they share an Asian cultural identity and share the norm that smoking is not acceptable among women. However, when Asian women move to the United

States or Europe (or when daughters of Asian immigrants grow up in the United States or Europe), the influence of cultural identity on smoking may become especially salient. Among those with Asian cultural identities, smoking will still likely be viewed as unacceptable for women. Among those Asian women who have adopted more Westernized cultural identities, smoking may be less taboo. In fact, women may actually use smoking as a way to demonstrate to their peers that they have adopted a more Westernized identity. Consequently, acculturation to American culture is associated with an increased risk of smoking among Asian women and girls, but not among Asian men and boys (Chae, Gavin, & Takeuchi, 2006; Hofstetter et al., 2004; Kim, Ziedonis, & Chen, 2007). For example, in studies of Chinese, Filipino, South Asian, Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese American adults in California (An, Cochran, Mays, & McCarthy, 2008) and of Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, and Cambodian women in Pennsylvania and New Jersey (Ma et al., 2004), endorsement of an American cultural identity was associated with an increased prevalence of smoking among women but not among men. Similar patterns have been found among Asian-American adolescents, with higher levels of US cultural identity being associated with a higher prevalence of smoking and stronger social norms about the acceptability of smoking among girls but not among boys (Weiss & Garbanati, 2006). The patterns of smoking among Asian women illustrate one way in which cultural identity can affect health-risk behaviors: because of cross-cultural differences in social norms and the social acceptability of smoking among women, an Asian cultural identity may be protective against smoking among Asian-heritage women, whereas a Westernized cultural identity may be a risk factor for smoking.

Desire to Self-present as a Member of the Cultural Group

Menthol smoking among African Americans. People may choose to adopt certain health-related behaviors as a way of demonstrating their cultural

identity to others. If a behavior is viewed as typical among a certain cultural group, people can use that behavior as a way of demonstrating that they belong to that group. One example of this is menthol cigarette smoking among African Americans. Menthol cigarettes have become associated with an African American cultural identity, so people may smoke menthols as a way of demonstrating that they identify with African American culture. Over 70% of African American smokers, compared with 30% of White smokers, prefer menthol cigarettes (Gardiner, 2004). Multiple factors have interacted over the past century to create an association between African American identity and menthol smoking. It is likely that the association between African American cultural identity and menthol smoking has its roots in traditional Deep South African American culture, in which mentholated products were frequently used as folk medicine cures for numerous ailments (Castro, 2004). The tobacco industry capitalized on this association between menthol and medicinal benefits to market mentholated cigarettes to the African American community as a healthier alternative to regular cigarettes. Tobacco companies later began to use culturally tailored images and messages to “African Americanize” menthol cigarettes (Gardiner, 2004). Mentholated tobacco products, such as Kool cigarettes, were promoted as young, hip, new, and healthy. More recently, tobacco companies have selectively marketed menthol cigarettes in African American neighborhoods

(Yerger, Przewoznik, & Malone, 2007) and in African American magazines (Landrine et al., 2005). They have also associated menthol smoking with genres of music that have been popular with African Americans, such as jazz and hip-hop (Gardiner, 2004). The result of this marketing is the creation of a strong cultural norm that African Americans smoke menthols, whereas White Americans do not.

Now that this norm has been established, it may influence people’s decisions about smoking menthols. For example, many African Americans may try menthol cigarettes first because their parents or other relatives smoke menthol brands. Depending on the extent of their identification with the African American community and its media-generated image, they may decide to continue smoking menthols (and thus reinforce their African American identity) or switch to a non-mentholated brand (and thus turn away from the norm in the African American community) (Allen & Unger, 2007). The decision to smoke menthols, in turn, may affect their risk for tobacco-related diseases because menthol smokers tend to inhale more deeply and therefore expose themselves to more nicotine and other harmful chemicals per cigarette compared to non-menthol smokers (Ahijevych & Garrett, 2004).

Figure 34.3 compares African American smokers who smoke menthols exclusively, those who smoke non-menthols exclusively, and those who smoke both types of cigarettes. In this study

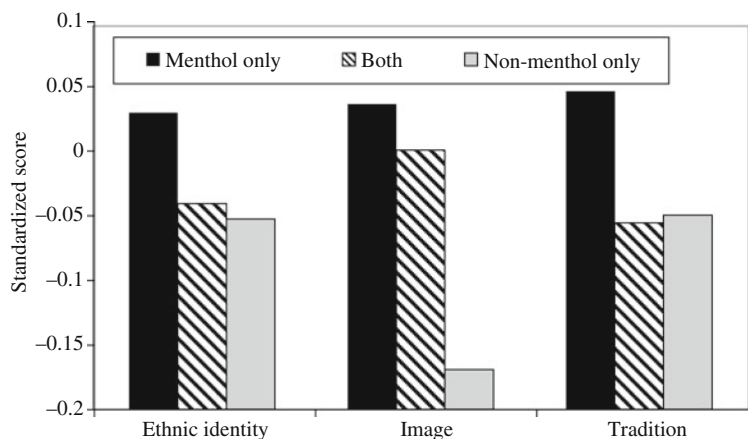


Fig. 34.3 Identity-related measures among African American smokers in Southern California

(described by Unger, Allen, Leonard, Wenten, & Cruz, in press), a representative sample of 720 African American smokers in Southern California, recruited through a quota sampling approach at retail locations in census tracts with large proportions of African Americans, completed a survey about their smoking behavior and associated attitudes and beliefs. Among the respondents, 57% smoked menthols only, 15% smoked non-menthols only, and 28% smoked both. The respondents answered questions about their African American cultural identity (Phinney, 1992), beliefs that menthol smoking is consistent with the African American cultural image, and beliefs that menthol smoking is consistent with African American traditions. The “image” measure was the mean of six items, e.g., “Smoking menthols shows that African Americans identify more with their culture” (Cronbach’s $\alpha=0.75$). The “tradition” measure was the mean of five items, e.g., “African Americans have chewed mint and used mint tea since the time of slavery,” (Cronbach’s $\alpha=0.77$). As shown in Fig. 34.3, menthol smokers have stronger ethnic self-identification, stronger beliefs that menthol smoking is consistent with the African American image, and stronger beliefs that menthol is an African American tradition, as compared with non-menthol smokers or respondents who smoke both types of cigarettes.

Ironically, the association between African American cultural identity and menthol smoking may be changing, as Whites who wish to emulate the African American culture have also been reported to smoke menthol cigarettes (Richter, Beistle, Pederson, & O’Hegarty, 2008). This illustrates that people can adopt cultural identities that differ from their own cultural backgrounds, and these adopted cultural identities can also influence their health behaviors. This example illustrates how industry marketing can create an association between a specific cultural identity and a health-risk behavior, and how that newly created norm can then influence people’s behavior according to their personal cultural identities.

Functional Meaning of the Behavior among the Cultural Group

Individual- versus Family-based Medical Decision Making across Cultural Groups. Health-related behaviors have different meanings across cultures. Therefore, people’s cultural identities may influence the extent to which they ascribe certain meanings to behaviors, which in turn will influence the extent to which they practice the behaviors in question. This is evident in the ways in which healthcare decisions are made – do patients choose treatment options independently, as a way of maintaining their autonomy and control, or do family members participate in the decision-making or even assume full responsibility for decision-making? In the United States and most Western cultures, personal autonomy in healthcare decision-making is viewed as a basic right (Bowman & Hui, 2000). Whenever possible, patients are given all available information about their condition and the treatment options, and the patient makes the final decision about which treatment to pursue. Medical systems in most Western cultures operate under the assumption that making one’s own decisions is a way for the patient to maintain control, dignity, autonomy, and privacy. Typically the doctor first informs the patient about the diagnosis and prognosis, leaving it to the discretion of the patient whether or not to inform family members.

However, in more collectivist cultures including many cultures in Asia (Bowman & Hui, 2000) and Latin America (Galanti, 2003), medical decision-making is viewed as a family activity and an opportunity for family members to help the patient by relieving him/her of the burden of making difficult choices alone. Collectivist cultures view the person as a “relational self” – a self for whom social relationships, rather than rationality and individualism, provide the basis for decision-making (see Chen et al., Chapter 7, this volume). Therefore, the entire family is involved in decisions about medical procedures. The family may designate one member – often someone other than the patient – to receive medical information from the physician, confer with

the family, and communicate the family's decision back to the physician. Often the patient is not told the details of her/his prognosis, because bad news might cause excessive worry that could impede recovery. Personal autonomy in healthcare decision-making is viewed not as a human right but as a burden and a stressor; family members are obligated to protect the patient from upsetting information and excessive stress by making decisions on the patient's behalf (Blackhall, Murphy, Frank, Michel, & Azen, 1995). In a study of adults in the United States (Blackhall et al., 1995), individuals of Korean and Mexican descent were more likely to hold a family-centered model of medical decision-making, whereas European American and African American respondents preferred patient-centered decision-making.

The distinction between individual decision-making and family decision-making illustrates a major source of variation in cultural identities across cultural groups. According to Markus and Kitayama (1991, 1995) and Smith, (Chapter 11, this volume), there are two types of self-construal: independent and interdependent. The independent self-construal, which is emphasized in Western cultures, views the self as a self-contained set of internal attributes (preferences, traits, abilities, motives, values, and rights). In this view, each person's set of internal attributes is separate and unique. The individual constructs her/his own identity and makes her/his own autonomous decisions. This can still include consideration of the consequences to other people, but the self is seen as a distinct entity with inherent boundaries and rights.

The interdependent self-construal, which is emphasized in non-Western cultures, views the self not as a separate entity but instead as fundamentally interdependent with the family, social group, and community. This does not imply that the person with an interdependent view of the self has no conception of a unique self, but rather that the self is viewed in the context of its relationships with others (cf. Chen et al., Chapter 7, this volume). Thus, a person's priorities include occupying one's proper place in the group, engaging in collectively appropriate actions, and promoting

the goals of the group. Independent and interdependent self-construals are present to some extent in every culture, but cultures vary in ways in which these orientations are weighted in social life and manifest in behavior, including medical decision-making. One study (Kim, Smith, & Gu, 1999) found that people with high levels of interdependent self-construal were more likely to prefer healthcare decisions made by the physician or the family, whereas people with high levels of independent self-construal were more likely to prefer patient decision-making. This is an example of how one's cultural identity can shape perceptions about the functional meaning of behaviors such as healthcare decision-making.

Cultural Values

Cultural Values and Health-Risk Behaviors among Adolescents. Cultural values refer to attitudes, beliefs, priorities, and behaviors that are emphasized, encouraged, and viewed as desirable by members of a particular social group at a specific time (McElroy & Jezewski, 2000). Cultural values shape people's attitudes toward performing various behaviors, including those related to health. Examining the values of multiple cultures, one can easily observe parallels. Many cultures have values that emphasize the importance of harmonious social relationships, including agreeableness, politeness, and avoidance of blatant disagreement, including the traditionally Hispanic value of *simpatía* and the traditionally Asian value of saving face (Griffith, Joe, Chatham, & Simpson, 1998; Triandis, 1984). Some cultures endorse collectivist values that emphasize the well-being of the group (family, community, etc.) over the well-being of the individual (Triandis, 1995). Some collectivist values, such as the traditionally Hispanic value of familism, emphasize a sense of obligation to, and connectedness with, immediate and extended family, as well as fictive kin (e.g., close family friends; "adopted" aunts, uncles, and cousins who are not biological relatives) (Cuellar, Arnold, & Gonzalez, 1995). Other values imply a more vertical, hierarchical power structure, emphasizing

that lower-status people such as children should obey and respect higher-status people such as family and community elders, for the good of the larger group (Triandis, 1995). For example, the traditionally Hispanic value of *Respeto* and the traditionally Asian value of filial piety emphasize a child's duty to show respect for, take care of, and obey the advice of parents and other authority figures such as doctors, teachers, and community elders (Garcia, 1996; Ho, 1994). Internalization of certain cultural values could influence people's decisions about health-related behaviors. For example, a study of students in a culturally diverse high school (Unger et al., 2002) found that filial piety was associated with a lower risk for substance use, presumably because students who internalized the value of filial piety were more likely to obey their parents' rules about substance use. Another study of Asian American and Hispanic middle school students (Unger et al., 2006) found that the values of respect for adults (a combination of filial piety and *respeto*) and politeness (importance of smooth, harmonious interpersonal interactions, saving face) were inversely associated with tobacco use. This example illustrates that cultural identity can shape cultural values, which in turn can affect people's decisions about engaging in health-related behaviors.

Conclusions

This chapter has proposed a new theoretical model of the mechanisms by which cultural identity might influence health-related behaviors, including primary preventive behaviors (preventing disease before it occurs), secondary preventive behaviors (detecting disease early), and tertiary preventive behaviors (treating existing disease). The effects of cultural identity on health-related behaviors are likely mediated by cognitive and affective factors such as perceptions of the risk of disease in a particular cultural group, perceptions of the normative behaviors of the cultural group, desire to self-present as a member of the cultural group, and internalization of the values of the cultural group. In addition, it is likely that these effects can be facilitated or hindered

by enabling factors such as access to care and knowledge. Although this hypothesized model provides a framework with which to organize and understand the role of cultural identity in health, future research will be necessary to garner support for the pathways proposed in the model.

Recommendations for Future Research and Practice

The theoretical model and the examples discussed in this chapter suggest several gaps in the research and recommendations for service providers who work with diverse populations:

Develop Improved Measures of Cultural Identity. Many psychometric instruments exist to assess various constructs related to cultural identity, including acculturation, ethnic identity formation, and cultural values. These constructs overlap to some extent, and there has been great variation across studies in the definition of cultural identity and the measures used, making it difficult to compare results across studies. Brief, valid survey measures are needed to assess cultural identity in ways that are not too cumbersome for inclusion in large-scale studies (see Umaña-Taylor, Chapter 33, this volume).

Conduct Research to Understand the Effects of Changes in Cultural Identity on Health-Related Behaviors. As described above, cultural identity is not static; it changes throughout the life course and across situations, and it also changes as a result of acculturation. Research is needed to understand how long-term and short-term changes in cultural identity affect people's decisions about health-related behaviors. For example, do processes of cultural identity exploration or changes in cultural identity lead to changes in health behaviors? Does the salience of a person's cultural identity in a given situation influence the person's immediate decisions about performing health behaviors that are consistent or inconsistent with that cultural identity?

Conduct Research on the Interactions between an Individual's Cultural Identity and the Larger Cultural Context. Although all human behavior

occurs within a cultural context, most studies of cultural identity merely examine individual-level associations between cultural identity and behavior. Research is needed to determine whether matches or mismatches between an individual's cultural identity and the larger cultural context also influence behavior (Schwartz, Unger, Zamboanga, & Szapocznik, 2010). For example, does cultural identity influence behavior more when the individual is in a cultural minority because the individual's cultural identity is more salient? Or does cultural identity influence behavior more when the individual is in the cultural majority because the prevailing social norms support that behavior?

Practitioners Should Understand Patients' Cultural Identities and Present Medical Advice in Ways that Are Compatible with Patients' Cultural Identities. A common complaint among practitioners is that patients do not comply with medical recommendations (Winnick, Lucas, Hartman, & Toll, 2005). It may be possible to increase compliance by taking the time to learn about patients' cultural identities and make recommendations that are consistent with these identities. In many cases, it may be sufficient merely to mention a health-related behavior and ask the patient whether this behavior is acceptable in her/his cultural group. For example, Bowman and Hui (2000) describe a case of a Chinese man with a medical condition. The physician simply asked the man whether he was more comfortable making medical decisions himself or whether he preferred another family member to receive his medical information and convey the family's decision. The man designated his son as the family spokesperson – a solution that was acceptable to everyone. Because cultural identity is such a pervasive determinant of human behavior, and health is such a central quality of the human experience, it is crucial to continue to gain more information about the complex associations between cultural identity and health. Such information will likely help respect the cultural values of individuals and their families, as well as to improve the health of the public.

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Abstract

Given the growing numbers of bicultural individuals in the United States and around the world, bicultural identity integration (BII) is an important construct that helps researchers to better capture the diversity within this group. In this chapter, we organize and summarize the limited literature on individual differences in bicultural identity, with a special focus on BII. First, we discuss and define biculturalism and cultural identity in general. Second, we introduce individual differences in bicultural identity and the ways in which these differences have been studied. Third, we define BII, summarize research on this construct, and introduce the latest applications of BII theory to other areas of identity research. In unpacking the construct of BII, we first define it along with its components (harmony and blendedness) and nomological network. We also discuss what we believe to be the process involved in integrating one's dual cultural identities. We then present correlates of BII, including self-group personality perceptions, culturally related behaviors and values, and sociocultural and psychological adjustment. Finally, we discuss how BII relates to other important social-cognitive constructs, such as cultural frame switching or code switching. We end with a brief overview of the latest applications of BII theory (e.g., to gay identity) and suggestions for future research on bicultural identity. In summary, our goal for this chapter is to introduce BII and to help readers understand the importance of culture in identity.

Since 1970, international migration has doubled worldwide. According to a recent report by the United Nations, about 175 million people are

living in a country other than where they were born, and about 1 in 10 persons in “more developed” regions is an international migrant (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2002). In addition to these changes in international migration, advances in technology have drastically increased cross-cultural contact and cultural diversity across the globe (Arnett, 2002), and changes in attitudes and laws about

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inter-ethnic marriage in some parts of the world have led to more inter-ethnic families whose children have mixed cultural backgrounds. Overall, people have more opportunities now than ever before to interact with those who are culturally different from them due to international migration, globalization, travel, and the Internet (cf. Arnett Jensen et al., [Chapter 13](#), this volume). As a result of this cross-cultural exposure, there has been a large increase in the number of bicultural individuals – people who have internalized at least two cultures. It is essential for those interested in issues of identity to understand how dual-cultural identities operate within bicultural persons.

Broadly speaking, bicultural individuals may be immigrants, refugees, sojourners, indigenous people, ethnic minorities, or mixed-ethnic individuals (Berry, [2003](#); Padilla, [2006](#)). However, bicultural individuals are not necessarily cultural minorities or those in non-dominant ethnocultural groups. For example, individuals from the dominant group (e.g., non-Hispanic White Americans) who have lived abroad or in ethnic enclaves, and those in inter-ethnic relationships, may also be bicultural. More strictly defined, bicultural individuals are those who have been exposed to and have internalized two cultures (Benet-Martínez, in press; Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, [2005](#); Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, [2007](#), [2010](#)), so the cultural domain of identity is especially important for them. The focus of this chapter is on bicultural identity, specifically bicultural identity integration (BII; Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, [2005](#)), as outlined below. We explore the diversity of the bicultural experience, present BII as a way to understand individual differences in biculturalism, and discuss the implications of and suggest future directions for BII.

Types of Biculturals

From the acculturation literature, biculturalism is conceived as one of four possible acculturation strategies: (a) the integration strategy (i.e., biculturalism) refers to involvement in both dominant and ethnic cultures, (b) the assimilation

strategy is involvement in the dominant culture only, (c) the separation strategy is involvement in the ethnic culture only, and (d) marginalization is involvement in neither culture (Berry, [2003](#)). Traditionally, cultural psychologists have focused on differences *between* bicultural individuals (those using the integration acculturation strategy) and other acculturating groups (those using the assimilation, separation, or marginalization acculturation strategies). However, empirical research, mostly conducted on young adults and adolescents, has shown that the majority of acculturating individuals are bicultural (Berry, [2003](#); Van Oudenhoven, Ward, & Masgoret, [2006](#)). Therefore, it may be more fruitful to focus on differences *among* bicultural individuals, rather between bicultural individuals and other acculturating individuals. For example, do all bicultural individuals integrate their two cultures in the same way, in the same contexts, and for the same reasons? Until recently, there has been little research exploring differences within this large group that uses the integration strategy and whether these differences are meaningful. New research, however, suggests that bicultural or integrated individuals do not comprise a homogeneous group and that there are clearly variations among them (Schwartz & Zamboanga, [2008](#)).

One of the earliest typologies of bicultural individuals, obtained with a sample of Latinos in the United States, included (a) the synthesized multicultural individual, (b) the functional multicultural individual with a mainstream cultural orientation, and (c) the functional multicultural individual with a Latino cultural orientation (Ramirez, [1984](#)). The synthesized multicultural individual represents the “true” bicultural individual who is competent in and committed to both cultures. The functional multicultural individual is competent in both cultures but is committed to or identified with only one culture – either the mainstream or Latino (or other ethnic) culture. Although this typology was developed for Latinos, it may apply more broadly to other bicultural individuals. See [Table 35.1](#) for a summary and comparison of typologies of bicultural individuals.

Table 35.1 Types of Biculturals Identified in Previous Research

Description	Theorists					
	Ramirez (1984)	LaFromboise et al. (1993)	Birman (1994)	Phinney and Devich-Navarro (1997)	Benet-Martínez et al. (2002)	Benet-Martínez and Haritatos (2005)
Competent in and identified with both dominant and ethnic cultures		Fused	Blended	Blended	High BII	High blendedness and/or high harmony
	Synthesized	Alternating		Alternating	Low BII	Low blendedness and/or low harmony
Competent in both cultures, identified with dominant culture only	Functional/mainstream		Integrated			
Competent in both cultures, identified with ethnic culture only	Functional/ethnic					
Competent in both cultures, identified with neither dominant nor ethnic culture	Instrumental					

Subsequently, LaFromboise, Coleman, and Gerton (1993) proposed two bicultural modes: alternation and fusion. Alternating bicultural individuals “alternate” or shift between their two cultures in accordance with the situation, whereas fused bicultural individuals subscribe to a “fused” or emergent third culture created by mixing and recombining their two cultures. Building on the above conceptualizations, Birman (1994) described three types of bicultural individuals: (a) blended, which is similar to LaFromboise et al.’s (1993) fused category, (b) instrumental, which includes individuals competent in both cultures but identified with neither, and (c) integrated, which is similar to Ramirez’s (1984) functional multicultural individual with a Latino cultural orientation. To empirically test these theoretical propositions regarding types of bicultural individuals, Phinney and Devich-Navarro (1997) conducted a study with Mexican American and

African American adolescents using both quantitative and qualitative methods. They found support for two types of bicultural individuals: blended and alternating. Although both types feel positively about their two cultures, alternating bicultural individuals appear to feel conflicted about having two cultures, whereas blended bicultural individuals do not.

The above researchers are credited with calling attention to bicultural individuals and for advancing this area of research. However, a conceptual limitation of these typologies is their confounding of identity and behavioral markers. Specifically, whereas the labels “blended” and “fused” refer to identity-related aspects of the bicultural experience (e.g., seeing oneself as Asian American or Chicano), the label “alternating” refers to the behavioral domain, that is, the ability to engage in cultural frame switching (Hong, Morris, Chiu, & Benet-Martínez, 2000).

Naturally, individuals' subjective experience of their identity and their behavior/competencies may not necessarily map onto each other (Roccas & Brewer, 2002). For instance, a bicultural individual may have a blended or fused identity (e.g., someone who sees himself/herself as a product of both Jewish and American cultures and accordingly identifies as Jewish American) and also alternates between speaking mainstream English and Yiddish depending on the context. Thus, researchers should be aware that labels such as "blended" and "alternating" do not tap different types of bicultural individuals but rather different components of the bicultural experience (i.e., identity vs. behaviors, respectively). In other words, blending one's two cultural identities is not incompatible with alternating between different cultural behavioral repertoires. Given this, the validity of the above "blended" versus "alternating" groupings (e.g., Phinney & Devich-Navarro, 1997) as separate types of biculturals is unclear.

To address the above shortcomings of the biculturalism literature, Benet-Martínez, Leu, Lee, and Morris (2002) introduced the construct of BII, an individual difference variable which captures the phenomenology of managing one's dual cultural identities. More recently, Benet-Martínez and Haritatos (2005) demonstrated that BII is not a unitary construct, but instead that it encompasses two different and psychometrically independent components (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005): (a) cultural *blendedness* versus compartmentalization – the degree of dissociation versus overlap perceived between the two cultural orientations (e.g., "I see myself as a Chinese in the United States" vs. "I am a Chinese-American"); and (2) cultural *harmony* versus conflict – the degree of tension or clash versus compatibility perceived between the two cultures (e.g., "I feel trapped between the two cultures" vs. "I do not see conflict between the Chinese and American ways of doing things").¹ In other words, for bicultural individuals, cultural blendedness is subjective distance, which varies among people and is more relevant and meaningful than the objective distance between two cultures (Rudmin, 2003). Cultural blendedness and cultural harmony are psychometrically

independent components and are differentially related to important contextual and personality variables. Specifically, lower blendedness is linked to personality and performance-related challenges (e.g., lower openness to new experiences, greater language barriers, and living in more culturally isolated surroundings), whereas lower harmony stems from other personality traits and strains that are largely interpersonal in nature (e.g., higher neuroticism, greater perceived discrimination, more strained intercultural relations, and greater language barriers – see Benet-Martínez, in press; Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005, for a full discussion and graphing of these results). Bicultural individuals can have any combination of high or low blendedness and high or low harmony.

The BII framework emphasizes the subjective (i.e., perceptual) elements of perceived blendedness and harmony between the two cultures. This emphasis is a strength of the theory, as a study of over 7,000 first- or second-generation immigrant adolescents in 13 countries found that objective cultural differences do not relate to adjustment (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006). Objective cultural difference was operationalized as the difference in countries' scores determined by Hofstede (1983) on his dimensions of individualism-collectivism, power distance, masculinity-femininity, uncertainty avoidance, and long- versus short-term orientation.

Measurement of BII

Early versions of the Bicultural Identity Integration Scale. The Bicultural Identity Integration Scale – Pilot version (BIIS-P) is comprised of a short descriptive vignette that bicultural individuals rate on an 8-point Likert-type scale (1 = definitely not true, 8 = definitely true) with regard to how much it reflects their bicultural identity experiences. This measure was used in the first study of BII (Benet-Martínez et al., 2002) to assess the perceived compartmentalization (lack of blending) and conflict (lack of harmony) between

two cultures in a multi-statement paragraph. Although this measure has high face validity with respondents, it confounds the two components of BII, cultural blendedness and harmony, by requiring participants to rate a statement that contains both of these elements. The Bicultural Identity Integration Scale – Version 1 (BIIS-1) is an eight-item measure of BII blendedness (4 items) and harmony (4 items; Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005). These items are rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). Although the BIIS-1 is adequately internally consistent ($\alpha_{\text{blendedness}} = 0.69$, $\alpha_{\text{harmony}} = 0.74$; Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005), the reliability of scores yielded by this instrument is not ideal. In addition, the few items assessing each component of BII do not adequately cover all relevant content domains of BII. Therefore, in a series of development and validation studies, Huynh (2009) improved the measurement of BII with the Bicultural Identity Integration Scale – Version 2 (BIIS-2).

After generating items using qualitative data (open-ended essays written by self-identified bicultural college students) and item evaluation by subject-matter experts and pilot testers, Huynh (2009) administered 45 new items of the BIIS-2 to an ethnically diverse group of more than 1,000 self-identified bicultural college students. Approximately half of the participants (55.5%) were women, and the mean age of the sample was 19.3 years. The majority of participants were either Latinos/as (32.1%) or Asian Americans (48.6%), and most participants were either first- (34.6%, mean years in the United States = 10.6 years) or second- (55.9%) generation Americans. The final BIIS-2 consists of 19 items rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree; see Appendix A for sample items). These items yield reliable (blendedness vs. compartmentalization $\alpha = .86$ for 9 items; harmony vs. conflict $\alpha = .81$ for 10 items) and stable ($n = 240$; $M = 6.93$ days, $SD = 0.90$ days; Time 1 and Time 2 correlations: $0.74 < r < .78$) scores across ethnic groups. In addition, results from both exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses suggest that the BIIS-2 is comprised of separate blendedness and

harmony components. Finally, the BIIS-2 showed measurement invariance (i.e., that the structure of the BIIS-2 is similar across groups) for two ethnic groups (Asian American and Latino) and two generational groups (first and second generation). Across groups, the blendedness and harmony components were moderately correlated ($r = .36$), but they were distinguishable in the exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses described above.

Previous Findings on BII

Previous literature suggests that BII has important implications for bicultural individuals' adjustment, cognition, and behaviors. We first review earlier literature on BII when it was still considered a unitary construct, and then we review more recent literature on the blendedness and harmony components of BII. Regarding adjustment, researchers have found that BII was associated with greater adjustment (i.e., higher self-esteem, greater life satisfaction, greater subjective happiness, lower depression, lower anxiety, and less loneliness) for Mainland Chinese adult immigrants in Hong Kong, native-born college students in Hong Kong, and native-born college students in Mainland China (Chen, Benet-Martínez, & Bond, 2008). Further support for the relation between BII and adjustment comes from research on multicultural identity integration (MII, an extension of BII from two to three cultures: e.g., ethnic culture, English Canadian culture, French Canadian culture) in Quebec. Researchers also found a link between MII and greater psychological well-being (i.e., self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth) in young adults from diverse backgrounds in Quebec (Downie, Koestner, ElGeledi, & Cree, 2004; Downie, Mageau, Koestner, & Liodden, 2006). In summary, individuals higher on BII tend to be better adjusted.

To understand the cognitive correlates of global BII (i.e., BII as measured by the BIIS-P), Benet-Martínez, Lee, and Leu (2006) compared

the cognitive complexity of Chinese American undergraduate students high versus low on BII. They found that individuals low on BII had more cognitively complex representations of culture because they provided more abstract and dense descriptions of their cultures than did those high on BII. In other words, individuals low on BII described culture using multiple perspectives, compared and contrasted those different perspectives, included more ideas and words in their descriptions, and made evaluative judgments of each culture. Benet-Martínez and colleagues reasoned that the more systematic and careful processing of cues that underlies the monitoring of conflictual information (Botvinick, Braver, Barch, Carer, & Cohen, 2001) would lead low BIIs to develop cultural representations that are more complex (e.g., richer in content, more differentiated and integrated) than high BIIs. This finding is in agreement with the work of Suedfeld and colleagues (Suedfeld, Bluck, Loewen, & Elkins, 1994; Suedfeld & Wallbaum, 1992), which showed that conflict between desired but contradictory values (e.g., individual freedom and social equality) leads to more complex descriptions of each value.

Differences between individuals high versus low on BII also extend into social networks (Mok, Morris, Benet-Martínez, & Karakitapoglu-Aygun, 2007). In a sample of Chinese American undergraduate students, graduate students, visiting scholars, and their spouses, the social network of individuals high on BII included more dominant-culture friends, and their dominant-culture and ethnic-culture friends were more interconnected. In summary, variations in BII levels are associated with variations in cognitive complexity and social behavior.

In terms of the two components of BII, recent studies have helped to delineate the unique links between these components and adjustment, sociocognitive variables, and behavioral variables. Across multiple studies with bicultural individuals from several different ethnic groups in university and community settings, BII harmony (but not BII blendedness) was related to lower rates of depression and/or anxiety symptoms (Benet-Martínez, Haritatos, & Santana,

2010). However, regarding social perceptions such as self- and group-stereotypes, BII blendedness (but not BII harmony) was consistently related to higher overlap among personality ratings that Latino college students and Cuban American adults ascribed to the self, a typical Latino, and a typical American (Miramontez, Benet-Martínez, & Nguyen, 2008). This suggests that, as theorized, BII blendedness captures the organization and structure of one's two cultural orientations, whereas BII harmony indexes the feelings and attitudes toward those cultures. Finally, it appears that BII blendedness and BII harmony are associated with different aspects of the acculturation process (Nguyen, Huynh, & Benet-Martínez, 2010). In a sample of Vietnamese American bicultural individuals, BII harmony was related to acculturation in terms of values, such that individuals who only endorsed one set of cultural values (e.g., only American values) perceived more harmony between their cultures than those who endorsed both sets of cultural values. Furthermore, BII blendedness was related to behavioral acculturation, such that individuals who engaged in behaviors associated with both cultures had blended rather than compartmentalized identities.

Building on the Nomological Network for BII

Using the BIIS-2, Huynh (2009) found further support for the notion that blendedness represents the behavioral or performance-related component, whereas harmony represents the affective component of BII. Meaningful relations have been found between these BII dimensions and acculturation, identity, personality traits, and psychological adjustment. BII blendedness was correlated with orientation to American culture (e.g., years in the United States, English language proficiency and use, and US cultural identification). This suggests that exposure to American culture is related to perceiving one's heritage and receiving cultures as more similar, and that this exposure is important in forming a combined identity. Furthermore, supporting

previous research on the relationship between BII blendedness and acculturation strategies (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005), there were small to moderate correlations between BII blendedness and stronger integration attitudes and weaker separation attitudes. This suggests that bicultural individuals who wish to integrate their two cultures and do not endorse separation from the mainstream culture are more likely to find it easy to combine their two cultural identities. In addition, BII blendedness was only weakly related to acculturation stressors (e.g., perceived discrimination, problematic intercultural relations, work challenges), well-being, anxiety, depression, and hostility, further supporting the claim that blendedness is the less affect-laden component of BII. These findings also suggest that the perception of compartmentalization between two cultures is not likely linked to either contextual pressures or to psychological adjustment.

Regarding findings for BII harmony, there were small to moderate positive correlations between this BII component and ethnic identity affirmation, a dimension of ethnic identity that emphasizes positive attitudes toward one's ethnic group. In addition, BII harmony generally was moderately and negatively correlated with contextual acculturation stressors and neuroticism. This supports the claim that BII harmony involves affective elements of bicultural identity and is driven more strongly by contextual pressures compared to BII blendedness (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005). In addition, BII harmony had small to moderate positive correlations with measures of mental health (higher general well-being and lack of depressive symptoms). This suggests that there are links between the perception of conflict between a person's two cultures and lower psychological well-being and higher psychological distress (Chen et al., 2008). In general, BII harmony evidenced weak relationships with traditional acculturation variables (e.g., years in the United States, language proficiency, cultural identification, bicultural competence, cultural orientation, acculturation attitudes; Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005) – providing further evidence that the two BII dimensions are largely separate.

Huynh (2009) also examined the antecedents and consequences of BII via path analyses and found that personality and acculturation variables influence individuals' perceptions about their dual identities (BII), which in turn influences adjustment [tests of model fit: $\chi^2(34) = 220.86$, $p < 0.0001$, CFI = 0.93; RMSEA = 0.07 (90% CI = 0.06–0.08); SRMR = 0.05]. Specifically, these analyses indicate that individuals who perceive the greatest harmony between their cultures are those who are more emotionally stable (or less neurotic); those who have harmonious intercultural relations, few culture-related work challenges, and few linguistic problems in English; and those who live in culturally diverse areas (i.e., personality and acculturation variables predict BII harmony). Consequently, individuals who perceive harmony between their cultures, as well as those who are emotionally stable, suffer the least from depressive symptoms (i.e., personality and BII harmony both predict psychological adjustment). Furthermore, individuals who blend their cultures most are those with few linguistic problems in English, those strongly identified with their ethnic culture, those highly oriented to American culture, and those preferring the integration strategy. In other words, acculturation variables predict BII blendedness, which in turn is *not* predictive of adjustment.

Development of an Integrated Bicultural Identity

BII may be determined by a variety of factors, ranging from personality to the immediate social environment to the larger historical, political, and economic context of one's cultural group. Although research on BII has been limited to correlational data, which does not allow for causal inferences, we can advance some theoretical propositions regarding the developmental process of BII. First, the history and current status of one's cultural group within the dominant culture may determine the range of one's BII level. For example, Phinney and Devich-Navarro (1997) found that the majority of African American adolescents were blended

biculturals (e.g., high BII), whereas the majority of Mexican American adolescents were alternating biculturals (e.g., low BII). It is possible that African Americans' long and stable history in the United States, allowing for the development of a widespread African American culture, facilitates their cultural blendedness. Conversely, despite their long history in the United States, Mexican Americans are at the center of often controversial immigration debates, which impose on them an ever-present immigrant status even for those who are not immigrants. These tensions may predispose them to being alternating biculturals. Although BII has been found to be valid across highly diverse cultural and ethnic groups (Huynh, 2009), these groups may differ in the relative level of BII blendedness or harmony experienced.

In addition to larger contextual factors, variations in BII might be further influenced by dispositional factors, such as one's personality. For example, more neurotic or less emotionally stable individuals tend to perceive lower harmony between their cultures. Moreover, those who are more open to new experiences tend to perceive greater blendedness between their cultures (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005).

Finally, the actual degree of BII reported by a given person also may be determined by his/her immediate social environment and experiences. For example, previous research on large, diverse samples of bicultural individuals (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005; Huynh, 2009) showed that experiences with discrimination, interpersonal problems with culturally different others, and linguistic barriers were associated with bicultural individuals' perception of lower harmony between their two cultures. Furthermore, path analyses in those studies indicated that linguistic barriers and culturally isolated environments were associated with bicultural individuals' perception of lower blendedness between their two cultures.

In addition to these antecedents of BII, we believe that, although blendedness and harmony are theoretically independent and only weakly correlated, BII blendedness may precede BII harmony (see Fig. 35.1 for a pictorial depiction of the proposed developmental process of BII). Researchers have proposed that bicultural individuals with two cultures that are considerably different experience lower identity integration and greater identity conflict than those with two cultures that are more similar to one another

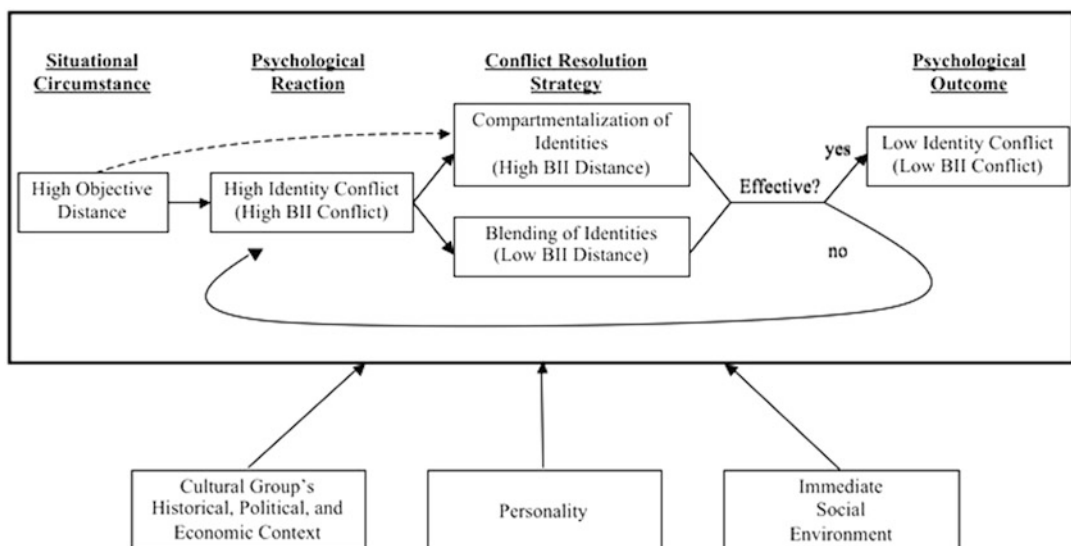


Fig. 35.1 Development of an integrated bicultural identity

(Amiot, de la Sablonnière, Terry, & Smith, 2007; Ward, 2008). In other words, high objective cultural distance [e.g., difference in countries' scores on Hofstede's (1983) dimensions] may lead to high BII conflict (low harmony). However, if the two cultures are kept separate, bicultural individuals may not recognize or perceive conflict at all (Amiot et al., 2007). As an attempt to resolve identity conflict, individuals may choose to blend or integrate different aspects of one's two identities into a new, merged identity in order to reconcile conflict, or they may choose to compartmentalize or separate their identities in order to avoid conflict (Amiot et al., 2007; Ashforth, Kreiner, & Fugate, 2000; Baumeister, Shapiro, & Tice, 1985). In other words, subjective cultural distance (low blendedness or high compartmentalization) may be a response to high BII conflict (low harmony). Alternatively, *objective* cultural distance also may have a direct influence on *subjective* cultural distance, such that bicultural individuals may be forced to keep their cultures compartmentalized if the two cultural identities represent truly different ways of being (e.g., marriage for love vs. arranged marriage).

Note that blending versus compartmentalizing one's identities is only an attempt, and thus may not be successful, at resolving conflict. For example, the blending of some norms from two cultural systems (e.g., dating and marital preferences) may not be possible and cannot be used to resolve cultural conflicts. Therefore, whereas some individuals with either blended or compartmentalized identities may not perceive any conflict between their two cultures, other individuals with either blended or compartmentalized identities may still perceive conflict. In other words, whether identity conflict is decreased or remains high may depend on the effectiveness of blending or compartmentalizing identities, which is not always possible given cultural and situational constraints. This would lend further support to the theoretical and empirical independence of BII blendedness and harmony. In summary, we believe that the degree to which one's two cultures are objectively different (high objective cultural distance) would influence one's

perception of conflict between the two cultures (low BII harmony), which in turn might influence the degree to which one either blends or compartmentalizes the two cultures (BII blendedness or subjective cultural distance). These theoretical propositions await empirical examination, and findings from such studies would further our understanding of the development of BII and biculturalism.

BII and Cultural Frame Switching

Biculturalism includes the adoption of two sets of behavioral repertoires (Rotheram-Borus, 1993) as well as the ability to switch between two sets of cultural schemas and norms (Hong et al., 2000). This shifting of cultural thoughts and behaviors in response to cultural cues or primes is referred to as cultural frame switching (Hong et al., 2000). Cultural frame switching has been shown to occur for cognitive styles (Hong et al., 2000), personality (Ramirez-Esparza, Gosling, Benet-Martínez, Potter, & Pennebaker, 2006), self-identification and cultural values (Verkuyten & Pouliasi, 2002), self-construal (See Smith, Chapter 11, this volume), affect (Perunovic, Heller, & Rafaeli, 2007), and decision making (Briley, Morris, & Simonson, 2005), among others. Although cultural frame switching is characteristic of bicultural individuals, individuals high versus low on BII frame-switch in different ways (Benet-Martínez et al., 2002; Cheng, Lee, & Benet-Martínez, 2006; Zou, Morris, & Benet-Martínez, 2008). More specifically, individuals high on BII respond to cultural cues by performing prime-consistent behaviors (e.g., behaving in Chinese ways after being primed with Chinese culture), whereas individuals low on BII respond to cultural cues by displaying prime-resistant behaviors (e.g., behaving in American ways after being primed with Chinese culture). Because individuals high in BII perceive their cultures as non-oppositional, it may be easier for them to switch between cultural frames in a fluid manner, by responding to cultural cues in culturally consistent ways. On the other hand, individuals low in BII perceive their cultures as oppositional

and may chronically polarize their two cultures, which in turn may lead to cognitive linking of the cultures as a single dichotomy (i.e., viewing the two cultures as evaluative/conceptual opposites). Thus, priming one culture (e.g., Chinese) would lead to the activation of the other culture (e.g., American; Hong et al., 2000), perhaps through a process of comparison and contrast (see Benet-Martinez, in press; for a more detailed account of this phenomenon). This suggests that BII may be associated with cultural comfort and expertise, where individuals high in BII are able to respond appropriately to cultural primes from each of their respective cultural backgrounds.

Constructs Related to BII

Given the paucity of research on biculturalism and BII, we discuss suggestions for future research. Theoretically, there are several constructs, both within and outside the cultural area, that may relate to BII; however, empirical data are needed to determine whether these constructs are distinct. Baumeister et al.'s (1985) identity compartmentalization, which refers to the separation of identities into different domains or situations, may relate to low BII blendedness, and their construct of identity conflict, which refers to the perception of incompatibility between two identities, may relate to low BII harmony. Moreover, Ward's (2008) ethnocultural identity conflict, which refers to the perception of conflict between one's ethnic and dominant cultures, may relate to low BII harmony. In addition, Ogbu's (1993) oppositional identity (vs. non-oppositional identity), which refers to an identity that involves two groups that are in conflict with one another, may relate to low BII harmony. Finally, identity synthesis (vs. confusion; Schwartz, 2006), which refers to a coherent and consolidated identity, may relate to both components of BII. All of these associations are in need of empirical investigation.

Another construct relevant to BII is social identity complexity, which may provide further insight into individual differences in biculturalism. Roccas and Brewer (2002) proposed four

types of social identity representations based on the structure of individuals' two social identities and how those identities create a perceived in-group. First, individuals in the intersection mode only perceive those sharing both their identities as the in-group (e.g., Mexican Americans). Second, individuals in the dominance mode view those sharing their more dominant identity (e.g., either Mexican or American) as in-group members. Third, individuals in the compartmentalization mode define their in-group members depending on the situation (e.g., Americans in American settings, Mexicans in Mexican settings). Finally, those in the merger mode view their in-group members as those who share at least one of their identities (e.g., Mexican Americans, Mexicans, and Americans). Further research is needed to understand how these social identity representations map onto cultural identities and BII. For example, it is likely that individuals low on blendedness may be in the compartmentalization mode. However, it is uncertain whether individuals high on blendedness would be in the intersection or merger mode. Future research may help to determine whether individuals high on blendedness comprise a heterogeneous group and whether further delineation of this BII component is needed.

Beyond Cultural Applications of BII

Applications of BII theory. The principles of BII are not necessarily restricted to ethnocultural identities. They may apply to any other type of dual identities, such as sexual, religious, or professional identities. For example, Fingerhut, Peplau, and Ghavami (2005) examined lesbian women's identification with lesbian culture and their identification with the mainstream heterosexual culture. Ideas from the BII literature could be incorporated into a study such as this by asking participants whether they perceive conflict between lesbian and heterosexual cultures and whether they compartmentalize their affiliations with these two cultures. Furthermore, in addition to extending to identities other than ethnocultural identities (e.g., racial identities),

BII theory can also extend to multiple (more than two) identities, as in the case of multiracial identity integration (Cheng & Lee, 2009) or multicultural identity integration for tricultural individuals such as Chinese Canadians in English-French Quebec (Downie et al., 2004). Overall, the processes associated with BII are likely to generalize to other identities, such as career identity (see Skorikov & Vondracek, Chapter 29, this volume), religious/spiritual identity (see MacDonald, Chapter 21, this volume; Roehlkepartain, Benson, & Scales, Chapter 22, this volume), and sexual identity (see Dillon et al., Chapter 27, this volume; Savin-Williams, Chapter 28, this volume). For example, BII theory may apply to the integration of one's Buddhist identity with the dominant culture's Christian identity. These identities may also be described as conflictual or compartmentalized; however, further research is needed to determine whether the integration of other types of identities follows the same principles as the integration of cultural identities.

Not only can BII be applied to dual identities within a single category (e.g., Buddhist and Christian religious identities), but it can also be applied to dual identities from two different categories (e.g., cultural identity and religious identity). For example, Verkuyten and Yildiz (2007) examined Turkish-Dutch Muslims' identification with their ethnic (Turkish) culture, their dominant (Dutch) culture, and their religious (Muslim) culture. BII could have contributed to this study by capturing the degree of perceived blendedness and harmony among Turkish, Dutch, and Muslim cultures, and the Muslim culture may be contrasted with the secular Dutch culture – given that most Dutch people do not endorse organized religion. BII could also be used to examine the degree of harmony versus conflict perceived between the sexual identity and religious identity of Muslim gay men (of Pakistani descent in the United Kingdom; Jaspal & Cinnirella, 2010) and Jewish gay men (in the United Kingdom; Coyle & Rafalin, 2000). In a study of female engineers, BII was applied to examine the degree of compartmentalization between participants'

identities as women (i.e., gender identity) and as engineers (e.g., professional identity; Cheng, Sanchez-Burks, & Lee, 2008). They found that female engineers with more integrated identities designed more creative products than those who perceived lower blendedness between their gender and professional identities. Other research within the work domain, such as that on women who are both African Americans and professionals (Bell, 1990) and men who are both fathers and managers (DeLong & DeLong, 1992), may also benefit from the introduction of BII into their research paradigm.

Suggestions for future research. Concepts from sociology, anthropology, ethnic studies, and education that have the potential for further elucidating the construct of BII include biculturalization, hybridity, pan-ethnicity, segmented assimilation, and intersectionality. [See also Jensen, Arnett, and McKenzie's (Chapter 13, this volume) chapter on globalization and hybridity.] First, biculturalization refers to the process of adapting to two cultures (Polgar, 1960; Sadao, 2003; Valentine, 1971). Biculturalization differs from acculturation, which presupposes that one (ethnic) culture is learned first, followed by the second (dominant) culture (Berry, 2003); biculturalization allows for the possibility of individuals learning their two cultures simultaneously (Birman, 1994; Padilla, 2006; Szapocznik, Kurtines, & Fernandez, 1980). Biculturalization is more appropriate for and more inclusive to the experiences of bicultural individuals, such as mixed-ethnic individuals and second-generation children of immigrants or refugees. Analogous to the comparison of acculturation versus biculturalization is the comparison of coordinate bilingualism versus compound bilingualism within the area of psycholinguistics (Ervin & Osgood, 1954). Coordinate bilinguals learn one language before the other, learn their two languages in different contexts, and organize their two language systems separately, whereas compound bilinguals learn their two languages at the same time and in the same context, and the organization of their two language systems tend to overlap. It thus follows that bicultural individuals who learn their two cultures simultaneously should be more

likely to have overlapping identities (high blendedness) than those who learn one culture before the other; however, further research is needed to test this hypothesis.

Second, hybridity, or an emergent third culture, is a concept that has received increasing attention (Hermans & Kempen, 1998; Hutnyk, 2005; Lowe, 1996; Oyserman, Sakamoto, & Lauffer, 1998). Hybridity refers to a new culture that emerges from a dynamic interaction, rather than merely a summation, of existing cultures. It is also known as ethnogenesis (Flannery, Reise, & Yu, 2001) or transculturation (Comas-Diaz, 1987). A well-known example of hybridity is Chicano culture, which is comprised of Mexican culture, US American culture, as well as Mexican American culture and other cultures (Garza & Lipton, 1982). Another example is British Indian culture (including the recently invented chicken tikka masala dish) which stems from but is distinctly different from both mainstream British culture and Indian culture as found on the Indian subcontinent (Cook, 2001). There seem to be many parallels between hybridity and blendedness, and it is therefore important for future research to identify the distinctions and overlap between these two constructs.

Third, pan-ethnicity refers to the identification with a racial or pan-ethnic group (e.g., Asian, Latino) rather than with their specific ethnic group (e.g., Chinese, Mexican; Rumbaut, 1994). It is also known as panethnogenesis, or the creation of a culture based on ethnicity. A pan-ethnic culture might consist of values and behaviors common among hyphenated ethnic cultures of that pan-ethnicity (e.g., all Asian Americans) but not found in the cultures of origin (e.g., cultures in Asia) – for example, identification as “AZN” (shortened form of “Asian”), driving a modified (“tricked-out”) imported vehicle, and drinking boba (a drink with tapioca pearls). Pan-ethnically identified individuals tend to belong to later generations, to have experienced discrimination, and to have higher socioeconomic status (Masuoka, 2006; Rumbaut, 2005). It is possible that blendedness for these individuals involves the merging of multiple hyphenated ethnic cultures of that pan-ethnicity along with the

dominant culture, rather than merely the merging of their ethnic culture with the dominant culture. Moreover, because pan-ethnic labels were created by US institutions to classify groups of individuals (Espiritu, 1996; Lopez & Espiritu, 1990), a pan-ethnic culture may also include the blending of the dominant group’s perceptions of the pan-ethnic group with actual characteristics of the pan-ethnic group (e.g., the term “Hispanic” is a US-American grouping of 21 Latin American groups). Future research is needed to understand the conceptualization of blendedness among pan-ethnically identified bicultural individuals.

Fourth, segmented assimilation refers to an orientation to neither the dominant culture nor the ethnic culture, but rather an orientation to the culture of an impoverished, underprivileged, lower-class, inner-city, and reactive racial-minority segment of dominant society (Portes & Zhou, 1993). For example, some low-income Vietnamese Americans in New Orleans identify with and are friends with the traditionally low-income, marginalized group in that city: African Americans (Bankston & Zhou, 1997). As with pan-ethnicity, individuals participating in segmented assimilation tend to belong to later generations and to have experienced discrimination. However, unlike pan-ethnically identified individuals, those participating in segmented assimilation tend to have lower socioeconomic status and to experience greater economic and class inequality (Portes, Fernandez-Kelly, & Haller, 2005; Portes & Zhou, 1993). Baumeister et al. (1985) proposed that individuals resolve identity conflict by either blending or compartmentalizing their identities. Segmented assimilation may be a third possible response to identity conflict. As a way of resolving conflicts between their two cultures, individuals may choose to or be forced to withdraw from both cultures and seek refuge in another culture, a culture for those who face racial and economic conflicts and hardships. Future research is needed to determine whether segmented assimilation is related to low BII harmony, or possibly to the marginalization acculturation strategy (Nguyen, Huynh, & Benet-Martínez, 2009).

Finally, the dual identities from different categories alluded to earlier (e.g., cultural and religious identities, gender and professional identities) are often referred to as intersectionality. Intersectionality is defined as the unique experience associated with having multiple identities and multiple types of oppression (e.g., gender, race, sexual orientation, religion, class, ability; Cole, 2009; Collins, 1998; Stirratt, Meyer, Ouellette, & Gara, 2008; Warner, 2008). Individuals with multiple subordinate identities (e.g., African American lesbian women) face unique obstacles, such as intersectional invisibility (Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008), whereby they are not recognized as traditional members of any of their groups. Thus, BII, especially the harmony component, is relevant to and can inform the study of intersectionality and the interaction of multiple identities. Research on BII and intersectionality can both be advanced by the study of these constructs in conjunction with each other.

Concluding Remarks

In this chapter, we have reviewed the importance of biculturalism and of variations among bicultural individuals within the larger framework of studying identity. We believe that bicultural individuals are the key to uncovering the dynamics of culture and identity, and the field of biculturalism offers many new and exciting opportunities for future inquiries. Attention to variations in bicultural identity (e.g., LaFromboise et al., 1993; Phinney & Devich-Navarro, 1997) has propelled the field forward, and BII is a part of this exciting new movement (Benet-Martínez, in press; Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005; Benet-Martínez et al., 2002; Huynh, 2009; Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2007).

Thus far, across different ethnic groups and geographic locations, researchers have found that BII consists of two components: blendedness and harmony. These components are distinct, and they are related to different personality and situational variables. In addition, they are differentially related to emotional stability and adjustment, supporting previous

theoretical propositions that blendedness is the more organizational, behavioral, and performance-related component of BII, whereas harmony is the more affective, psychological component of BII. There is an increasing body of empirical research on BII and its nomological network or set of correlates (e.g., Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005; Benet-Martínez et al., 2006; Huynh, 2009; Miramontez et al., 2008; Nguyen et al., 2010), but much still remains to be discovered about dual identity integration.

Although topics from across the social sciences such as biculturalism, emergent third culture and hybridity, pan-ethnicity, segmented assimilation, and intersectionality offer promising new directions to the field of biculturalism, they have been relatively unexplored within psychology. To further move the field forward, it is essential to gather empirical evidence to examine the commonalities and differences between these constructs and psychological constructs such as BII. Moreover, with increasing diversity, other dual identities and the intersection of multiple identities require more research. The BII framework can be used within these areas of research to elucidate how people affectively and cognitively manage their various, and sometimes potentially incompatible, identities.

Given the important changes in international migration and increasing cultural exposure around the world within the past few decades, empirical work on biculturalism from an individual differences perspective is a surprisingly new and under-researched area of inquiry in psychology. Much more research is needed to understand how increasing cultural diversity and global interconnectedness affect people's identities, which has important implications for individuals as well as for societies.

Note

1. Note that Benet-Martínez and Haritatos (2005) initially named the two components of BII distance versus blendedness and conflict

versus harmony. However, recently, we have renamed the dimensions blendedness versus compartmentalization (not distance, to better capture the dissociation, rather than objective distance, between the cultures) and harmony versus conflict (to take focus away from the negative pole of the dimensions). For ease of reading, we will refer to the blendedness versus compartmentalization component as “blendedness” and the harmony versus conflict component as “harmony” from now on.

Appendix

Examples of the Bicultural Identity Integration Scale–Version 2

Items are rated on a 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) scale; an asterisk indicates a reverse-scored item to measure the positive pole of the BII component.

Blendedness versus compartmentalization:

I feel _____ and American at the same time.

I do not blend my _____ and American cultures.*

Harmony versus conflict:

I find it easy to harmonize _____ and American cultures.

I feel that my _____ and American cultures are incompatible.*

For the full BIIS-2 scale, please see Huynh (2009), or contact Que-Lam Huynh at qhuynh@projects.sdsu.edu.

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Part VIII

National Identity, Cohesion, and Conflict

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Abstract

This chapter explores many facets of the question “What does it mean to be American?” The topic of American national identity is explored from the perspective of political science, while drawing on history, political philosophy, and psychology. The chapter begins with an exploration of the concepts of nationalism and patriotism, and discusses how they play a role in American public opinion. Next it examines the notion of identity attachment, which refers to the extent to which people think of themselves first and foremost as American. The question of identity attachment is often salient when societies have high levels of immigration, as the United States has had over the past several decades. As such, this section pays particular attention to the study of ethnic and racial differences in identity attachment. The factors that influence such attachment are discussed, as are the consequences of such attachment – or lack thereof – on political outcomes, such as trust in political institutions and political behavior. The final section of the chapter investigates the content of American identity, which involves the set of norms that people think constitutes American identity, such as the norms of free speech, active citizenship, and Protestantism. It looks at what these norms are, how they have evolved over time, the extent to which they are adopted by various segments of the American population. As with the section on identity attachment, this final section specifically addresses ethnic and racial differences in how people define what it means to be American.

This chapter explores many facets of the age-old question: “What does it mean to be American?” The topic of American national identity is

explored from the perspective of political science, while also drawing on history, philosophy, and psychology. The chapter begins with a discussion of the concepts of nationalism and patriotism, and discusses their role in American public opinion. Next, it examines the notion of identity attachment, which refers to the extent to which people think of themselves first and foremost as Americans instead of as members of

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particular ethnic or national origin groups (for more on these types of identity attachments, see Umaña-Taylor, [Chapter 33](#), this volume). Identity attachment is often salient when societies have high levels of immigration, as the United States has had over the past several decades. National origin quotas in place for the first part of the twentieth century kept immigration levels low, but reforms in 1965 and again in 1986 ushered in a new era of immigration. As a consequence, the percentage of foreign-born residents in the country has been rising steadily, from a low of roughly 4% in 1970 to approximately 13% today. And although in the past American immigration politics primarily concerned immigrants from various European and Asian countries, today the focus is largely on immigrants from Latin America, and especially from Mexico, in addition to Asia.¹ As such, this section of the chapter attends closely to the study of ethnic and racial differences in identity attachment. The factors that influence such attachment are discussed, as are the consequences of such attachment – or lack thereof – on political outcomes, such as political behavior and trust in political institutions. The final section of the chapter deals with the content of American identity, which involves the set of norms that people regard as constituting American identity, such as the norms of free speech, active citizenship, and Protestantism. I examine what these norms are, how they have evolved over time, and the extent to which they are adopted by various segments of the American population.

Americans have been concerned with American national identity since the country's founding. This preoccupation with what it means to be American exists because the nation has typically been characterized as being founded on ideas, not culture or ethnicity (Hackney, 1997; Hartz, 1955). Ancestry was pushed aside, and the notion that a common set of principles constituted the essential meaning of American identity took center stage. Gunnar Myrdal (1944) wrote in the 1940s that American identity is based on a collection of ideals that he termed the American Creed. These ideals include individualism, the notion and promise of hard work, a belief in the rule of law, freedom, and equality.

Whether these liberal principles have, in practice, encompassed the full range of ideas constituting American identity has been a matter of debate (Banning, 1986; Mills, 1997; Schildkraut, 2005a; Smith, 1993, 1997). Yet the conventional wisdom remains that the Creed is a central component of what it means to be American and that America is unique among nations in being defined by the Creed instead of by culture or ancestry. Though other nations of immigrants, such as Canada or Australia, may be able to make similar claims that ancestry and national identity are separate, popular culture in the United States maintains that the United States is “exceptional” in this regard.

Even among people who believe in the Creed's centrality to the notion of American identity, some wonder whether ideas are enough to hold such a diverse country together (Hackney, 1997; Huntington, 2004; Schlesinger, 1998). Samuel Huntington, for instance, points to former communist countries as examples of places that were unable to sustain unity over time when the sole basis for that unity was a set of political ideas. Upon the demise of their communist regimes, he notes, many of these countries became embroiled in conflicts over culture and ethnicity as new elites sought to redefine their national identities in ethnic terms (Huntington, 2004).² One can also see this tendency emerge when dictatorships topple, as in the recent case of Iraq. This type of concern has received renewed attention lately in the United States as immigration politics have returned to the foreground of the political landscape. In particular, the fear is that the latest wave of immigrants are too culturally distinct from the American mainstream such that the stability of the nation is threatened even if immigrants claim to support political ideals such as individualism and equality.

In this regard, it is important to note that another reason Americans have been preoccupied with the question of what it means to be American is because the American population consists in large part of voluntary immigrants or the descendants of voluntary immigrants. Since 1990, close to (or more than) one million legal immigrants have been admitted

to the United States each year (Department of Homeland Security, 2008). It is estimated that roughly another 500,000 enter illegally per year (Passel, 2006). As noted earlier, the foreign born currently comprise about 13% of the population in the United States, and in eight states (California, New York, New Jersey, Nevada, Florida, Hawaii, Texas, and Arizona), they represent over 15% of population.³ In the 2006 General Social Survey (GSS), 43.1% of respondents said that at least one of their grandparents was born outside of the United States, and 22.6% said that at least one of their parents was born outside of the United States.⁴ Thus, the immigration experience is a very real component of the day-to-day lives and memories of many Americans. This high level of immigration has resulted in a country that is quite ethnically diverse. The Census Bureau recently estimated that the population of the United States is 12.8% Black, 14.8% Latino, and 4.4% Asian, and six states (Arizona, California, Florida, New Mexico, Nevada, and Texas) are over 20% Latino (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008). Though American identity is popularly conceived of as unique due to such diversity, it is important to note that there is no reason to think that any process discussed in this chapter is in fact unique to the United States. Any diverse democracy will need to consider the issues under investigation here, and existing research on immigration and identity suggests that attitudes develop similarly across countries (Citrin & Sides, 2008; de Figueiredo & Elkins, 2003; Fetzer, 2000; also see Licata, Sanches-Mazas, & Green, Chapter 38, this volume).

Patriotism and Nationalism

Despite concerns over whether a set of ideals is enough to unify and sustain a nation, Americans are a highly patriotic group of people, and a key source of that patriotism – or love of country – are those ideals, embodied in the country’s political system: freedom, individualism, and egalitarianism. Americans consistently report that they are very or extremely proud of their country and its achievements. In 1996, the GSS asked

respondents how important being American is to them on a scale from 0 to 10 where 10 indicated that being American is the most important thing in the person’s life (Davis & Smith, 1996). Fully 45% of the respondents said being American is the most important thing in their lives. Another 25% rated being American as an 8 or 9. In that same survey, over 80% said they were very or somewhat proud of the way American democracy works and of America’s history. In the 2004 National Election Study (NES), 80% of respondents said they feel extremely or very good when they see the American flag flying (The National Election Studies, 2004). As illustrated in Fig. 36.1, survey data between 1983 and 2006 consistently show over half of the population as “very patriotic,” with at least another 20% as “somewhat patriotic.” Over the entire 23-year period, at least 90% of the population deemed itself either “very” or “somewhat” patriotic. The group claiming to be “not very” patriotic did not exceed 7%.

Even with these consistently high numbers, patterns of change can still be detected. For instance, American patriotism peaked during the Gulf War in 1991 and immediately after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. The other high point in “very patriotic” sentiment followed highly publicized US military attacks on targets in Libya in 1986, which also coincided with centennial celebrations of the Statue of Liberty. Its lowest levels were in the summer of 1989, before the fall of the Berlin Wall, and in the summer of 2006, just before a tumultuous Congressional election and when the war in Iraq was unpopular.⁵

It should be noted that Americans are not necessarily unique in their high levels of patriotism. Of 70 countries surveyed in the 1999–2004 wave of the World Values Survey, only 23 had fewer than 80% of the population claiming to be very or quite proud to be a citizen of their country, and only 7, such as Japan and Lithuania, had fewer than 60% (World Values Survey, 2004). The United States had more than 90%, which puts it in the company of 28 other countries including Canada, Iceland, Indonesia, Nigeria, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Iran, Jordan, and Singapore.

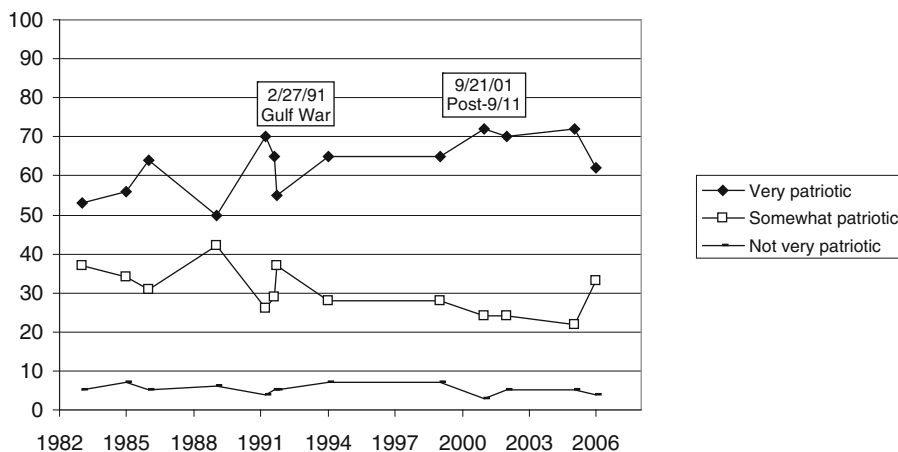


Fig. 36.1 Patriotic sentiment in the US, 1983–2006 (Source: The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, iPoll Databank. Surveys from CBS News, *The New York*

Times, Gallup, *The Washington Post*, The Kaiser Family Foundation, and ABC News)

There have been vigorous debates in the literature regarding the different manifestations of patriotism, how to measure its variations, and whether certain types – such as “blind” patriotism – are more worrisome than others – such as “constructive” patriotism (Schatz, Staub, & Lavine, 1999). “Blind” patriotism does not allow room for criticism and is characterized by an unquestioning loyalty to the nation. When someone tells a critic to “love it or leave it,” he or she is exhibiting this kind of patriotism. “Constructive” patriotism, on the other hand, is motivated by a desire to improve the nation, and therefore permits criticism (Schatz et al., 1999). Protestors of domestic and/or foreign policy who see their actions as trying to help the country live up to its ideals embody this type of patriotism. Survey research indicates that many Americans are sympathetic to the constructive variant of patriotism. In June 2008, Gallup asked Americans how patriotic it is to protest American policies that they oppose; 38% of respondents said that doing so displays a great amount of patriotism, and another 28% said that it displays a moderate amount (poll data in this paragraph obtained from the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research). A 2006 poll by CBS News found that 83% of Americans said that one could be patriotic and still oppose the Iraq war. In September 2002, before the war began, 67% of respondents in a

Newsweek poll said that it is patriotic to raise questions about a possible war with Iraq. A similar question was asked by the *Los Angeles Times* during the first Gulf War in 1991, and 70% of respondents said it was possible to protest the war and still be patriotic.

Whether high levels of patriotism are “good” or “bad” is a question that is perennially debated. Cultivating patriotism has long been advocated as a means of encouraging individual citizens to overcome selfish impulses and contribute to the public good. As Elizabeth Theiss-Morse (2006, p. 6) noted, “one of the best predictors of helping behavior is shared group membership”. Additionally, Theiss-Morse (2006, p. 24) found that, “whether people give to charity, volunteer in their community, help in a crisis, or support increased government spending on education is significantly affected by whether they feel deeply attached to and embedded in their national community.” She concludes that having a strong national identity can therefore be quite good for the country (for more on the positive aspects of group attachments, see Spears, Chapter 9, this volume).

Moreover, it is argued that love of country promotes civic and political engagement. Huddy and Khatib (2007) found that people who said being American is important to them were more likely than others to pay attention to politics

and to vote. They posited that this relationship stems from the fact that identifying oneself with the national group leads to a greater likelihood of adhering to group norms, and these scholars rightly note that political participation is an important American norm, one that is admittedly more widely endorsed in principle than in practice (Schildkraut, 2005b, 2007). And as noted earlier, constructive patriotism can motivate people to support and promote efforts to improve the country.

Alexis de Tocqueville (1835/1990, p. 243) observed strong patriotic feelings among the many people he encountered during his travels in the United States in the 1830s, and he wondered how Americans could have developed so strong a love of country in such a short period of time. The reason, he concluded, was because “everyone, in his sphere, takes an active part in the government of society.” In other words, participating in public life makes one proud of the community, and that pride, in turn, encourages further action directed toward the public good.

The scholarly consensus is thus that patriotism itself is generally unproblematic, but that it is *nationalism* that presents a cause for concern. Nationalism is commonly understood to mean a belief in the superiority and dominance of one’s own country relative to other countries (de Figueiredo & Elkins, 2003, p. 175). It is typically measured by asking people whether they agree that their country is a better country than most others and that the world would be a better place if more countries were like their own. Nationalism and patriotism are correlated, but factor analyses have suggested that they are distinct concepts (Citrin, Wong, & Duff, 2001; de Figueiredo & Elkins, 2003; Kosterman & Feshbach, 1989; McDaniel & Nooruddin, 2008).⁶ In their study of patriotism and nationalism using the 1996 GSS, Citrin and colleagues found that the mean score on a patriotism scale (ranging from 0 to 1) was 0.80, whereas the mean score on a nationalism scale was 0.59 (Citrin et al., 2001). Although levels of nationalism are generally not as high as levels of patriotism, data from the GSS indicate that levels of nationalism in the United States rose between 1996 and 2004, most likely

in response to terrorist attacks in 2001 and the war in Iraq (McDaniel & Nooruddin, 2008).

A potential reason why nationalism is considered to be more problematic than patriotism is that, whereas patriotism promotes civic engagement, nationalism has been shown to promote xenophobia, anti-immigrant attitudes, a greater willingness to define American identity in ascriptive terms (e.g., saying that true Americans are Christian), and a greater support for nuclear armament (Citrin et al., 2001; de Figueiredo & Elkins, 2003; Kosterman & Feshbach, 1989; McDaniel & Nooruddin, 2008; and Licata, Sanchez-Mazas, & Green, Chapter 38, this volume). Recent research, however, has called into question whether patriotism continues to be benign. Analyses by McDaniel and Nooruddin (2008) suggest that although nationalists held more nativist ideas about the meaning of American identity than patriots in 1996, this difference was greatly diminished by 2004. They argue that 9/11 and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have “blurred” the line between nationalism and patriotism. Their research powerfully suggests that the external political context is an important consideration when assessing the implications of a highly patriotic population.

National Attachment and Self-Identification

Recently, the issue of patriotism has been a concern in the United States, not only because of the country’s “War on Terror” but also because of the demographic changes it has been experiencing. As the American population has become more diverse over the past several decades, some have begun to wonder whether immigrants and their descendants truly “become American.” As Patrick Buchanan, a conservative media commentator and former presidential candidate, charges, “millions [of immigrants] bring no allegiance to America and remain loyal to the lands of their birth. And though they occupy more and more rooms in our home, they are not part of our family. Nor do they wish to be” (Buchanan, 2006, p. 13). Many Americans

likewise compare today's "bad" immigrants to yesterday's "good" immigrants when talking about immigration (Schildkraut, 2005a). Indeed, because many Americans today are immigrants or children of immigrants of varying ethnicities, it is important to consider whether there are racial and ethnic differences in the extent to which people feel patriotic and consider being American to be an important part of their identity. If differences exist, we need to consider the implications (also see Hart, Richardson, & Wilkenfeld, Chapter 32, this volume; see Huynh, Nguyen, & Benet-Martínez; and Umaña-Taylor, Chapter 35, this volume).

American Identity, Ethnic Identity, and National Origin Identity

One method of gauging attachment to being American has been to ask people whether they think of themselves primarily as American, as a member of a particular ethnic group, or as both. As Citrin and colleagues (Citrin et al., 2001; Pearson & Citrin, 2006) have found, most Whites identify primarily as American. When given the option, most non-Whites consistently adopt an American identity *and* some other identity. In other words, non-Whites are sometimes reluctant to say they are only American, but are quite willing to say they are American and something else, exhibiting a degree of biculturalism (see also Huynh et al., Chapter 35, this volume). In the 2001 Pilot National Asian American Political Survey (PNAAPS), 61% of respondents said they identify either as American (12%), Asian American (15%), or ethnic American – i.e., Chinese American, Vietnamese American, etc., – (34%) (Lien, Conway, & Wong, 2004). Additionally, in laboratory studies, Devos and Banaji (2005) found no differences between White and Asian American participants in the extent to which they considered themselves part of the American in-group. Devos and Banaji used implicit tests in this study, which means that their findings were not a product of self-presentation motives on the part of Asian participants.⁷

My own research (Schildkraut, 2011) suggests that concerns about the rejection of an American self-identification among today's newcomers and their descendants are exaggerated. In that work, I employ the Twenty-First Century Americanism Survey (21-CAS), a national survey I conducted in 2004 with oversamples of Blacks, Latinos, and Asians. Any resident of the United States over 18 years old and living in a household with a telephone was eligible for inclusion in the sample. Participants were selected through random digit dialing (RDD). Counties with higher percentages of Black, Latino, and Asian residents were targeted more heavily with RDD in order to create the oversamples. Such targeting is a common technique for including larger numbers of people from groups that are traditionally underrepresented when RDD is used alone. The average interview length was 26 min. A Spanish version of the survey was available and was used by 137 respondents.⁸

The survey investigated three types of identities: one's national origin identity (i.e., Dominican, Polish, Japanese), one's pan-ethnic or racial identity (i.e., White, Black, Latino, Asian), and one's identity as American. To establish national origin, respondents were asked, "What countries did your ancestors come from?" Each participant was allowed three responses. If they mentioned more than one, they were then asked, "Which of those countries do you identify with most?" Their answer to that question was used in all subsequent questions that refer to their national origin. To gauge self-identification, respondents were asked three yes/no questions to see whether they ever describe themselves in terms of (a) their national origin, (b) their pan-ethnic group, and (c) being American. They were asked, "Do you ever describe yourself as _____?" The blank was first filled with the respondent's national origin,⁹ then with her racial or pan-ethnic group (e.g., White, Black, Latino, Asian), and finally with "American." If a respondent said "yes" to more than one of these three questions (as 90% of respondents did), she was then asked, "Which one of those best describes how you think of yourself most of the

time?” The response to this question was used to measure a respondent’s primary identity.

Thirty-six percent of respondents said they describe themselves in all three terms, 47% said they use two of the three, and 10% said they use only one.¹⁰ Overall, 78% chose American as their primary identity, 14% chose their racial or pan-ethnic group, and 8% chose their national origin group. Of the 22% of respondents who did not choose “American” as their primary identity (74% of which were non-White), 73% still sometimes describe themselves as American, leaving 6% of the total sample that does not use “American” at all.

Table 36.1 illustrates identity prioritization patterns based on particular variables of interest. Whites, American citizens, people whose families have been in the United States for many generations, and people who primarily speak English at home were quite likely to identify primarily as American. Yet in no case does a pan-ethnic identification outweigh a national-origin or American identity. Additionally, a majority of Latinos, and a plurality of Asians and first-generation respondents, chose “American” as their primary identity. All respondents were

asked how important their chosen identity was to them, and across ethnicity, over 80% of all respondents who chose “American” said this identity was very important. The degree of importance among national origin and pan-ethnic identifiers was substantially weaker. For instance, only 55% of Latinos who chose “Latino” as their primary identity said that being Latino was very important to them, in contrast to the 82% of Latinos who chose “American” and thought that being American was very important to them.

The only groups who were unlikely to see themselves primarily as American were people who speak a language other than English at home and people who are not US citizens. In both of those cases, a national-origin identification predominated. These findings, along with those from the studies discussed above, appear to portray a consistent picture: most people in the United States describe themselves as American in some form most of the time. Moreover, immigrants and their descendants are also increasingly likely to do so (see also Stepick, Dutton Stepick, & Vanderkooy, [Chapter 37](#), this volume).¹¹

Table 36.1 Identity prioritization: “Which one best describes how you think of yourself most of the time?”

	Panethnic	National origin	American	n (Raw)
<i>White</i>	7.8	2.8	89.4	1,589
<i>Black</i>	41.6	6.1	52.3	281
<i>Asian</i>	16.7	36.0	47.3	276
<i>Latino</i>	18.2	28.2	53.6	422
Chi-sq: 739.476, p < 0.001				
<i>US citizen</i>	13.1	4.6	82.4	2,435
<i>Not US citizen</i>	26.2	56.1	17.8	249
Chi-sq: 701.728, p < 0.001				
<i>1st generation</i>	20.2	38.0	41.8	530
<i>2nd generation</i>	11.6	11.8	76.6	166
<i>3rd generation</i>	5.9	2.6	91.5	175
<i>4th generation or more</i>	13.6	2.2	84.2	1,765
Chi-sq: 728.062, p < 0.001				
<i>Speaks primarily English at home</i>	12.8	3.7	83.6	2,281
<i>Speaks another language at home</i>	23.6	43.9	32.5	404
Chi-sq: 721.906, p < 0.001				

Note: n = unweighted.

Source: 21st Century Americanism Survey, 2004.

The Political Consequences of Self-Identification

Despite a strong identification with America, enough people prioritize a racial or national-origin identity (alone or in conjunction with an American identity) that it is worth investigating whether there are any politically significant differences that derive from those choices. It is generally believed that the identity choices one makes affect thoughts and behaviors toward many aspects of American society, including patriotism, trust in American political institutions, beliefs about obligations to the national community, and voting behaviors. Group consciousness theory (GCT) is one approach that helps us understand how. This theory posits that objective group membership must be paired with both a psychological attachment to – or self-identification with – the group *and* a sense that the group membership is politicized before the identity itself will affect political attitudes and behavior (Conover, 1988; Conover & Sapiro, 1993; McClain, Johnson Carew, Walton, & Watts, 2009; Miller, Gurin, Gurin, & Malanchuk, 1981). Politicization can involve the perception of discrimination against one's group and against oneself individually, feelings of linked fate, a sense that the group is worth fighting for, perceptions of deprivation relative to other groups in society, and a belief that the political system – and not individual attributes – is to blame for such deprivation (Dawson, 1994; García Bedolla, 2005; Miller et al., 1981; Schildkraut, 2005b).

Proponents of group consciousness theory maintain that such politicized identities mobilize people to become involved in the political process and can inoculate them against the otherwise damaging effects of perceptions of discrimination by providing a psychological resource – or psychological capital (García Bedolla, 2005) – that facilitates engagement with the political system (see also Umaña-Taylor, Chapter 33, this volume). In other words, whereas a person who identifies primarily as American and perceives ethnicity-based discrimination might

become withdrawn and alienated from the political community, a person who identifies with the aggrieved group might be more likely to participate and have a belief that political realities can change which, in turn, can even bolster faith in political institutions.

Social identity theory (SIT) is another useful approach for thinking about the potential political consequences of identity choices. SIT posits that people are driven to maintain positive group identities (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; see also Spears, Chapter 9, this volume). The need to maintain a positive group image is so powerful that group identification can promote in-group bias and/or out-group derogation (Theiss-Morse, 2003). Moreover, the perception of external threat to the group heightens the need to see one's group positively and can exacerbate these tendencies. Social identity research has demonstrated that “the mere perception of belonging to a social category is sufficient for group behavior,” as measured by “intergroup discrimination in social perception and behavior or intragroup altruism” (Turner, 1982, p. 23). Studies have documented in-group bias with respect to helping behavior and that this bias is *enhanced* by the perception of threat to the in-group (Dovidio & Morris, 1975; Flippen, Hornstein, Siegal, & Weitzman, 1996; Hayden, Jackson, & Guydish, 1984; Hornstein, 1976). As Branscombe, Ellemers, Spears, and Doosje (1999, p. 47) explain, “when outgroup based threats to the ingroup's value in the form of discrimination and devaluation are severe enough... we would expect that most ingroup members would behave in [a] defensive fashion; closing ranks following explicit group-based exclusion allows devalued group members to protect their well being.” Thus, whereas GCT predicts little power for group identification without the presence of a politicizing agent, SIT contends that a psychological identification with a group can sometimes be enough to lead people to close ranks around the in-group. Both theories are in agreement, however, in noting that attachments to group identities are especially powerful when politicized by a perception of threat.

The question is whether the power of such politicized identities will lead to more or less engagement with the broader national political community. Here, the two theories generally provide complementary expectations. Much like the group consciousness literature, some social identity scholarship has been concerned with understanding when people in disadvantaged groups will become more likely to engage in actions aimed at improving their status. Such scholarship argues that collective action is more likely when a person identifies with the disadvantaged group, when she/he perceives that the group is disadvantaged, when group boundaries are seen as impermeable (as is typically the case with race and ethnicity), when “cognitive alternatives to the status quo” can be imagined, and when the group’s lower status is perceived as illegitimate (Ellemers & Barreto, 2001; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Wright, 2001; see also Spears, Chapter 9, this volume). These conditions set the stage for the emergence of the psychological capital that the group consciousness literature describes. They create conditions in which people become empowered, confident in their own abilities, and motivated by a feeling of common cause shared with other group members. In SIT terminology, such people would be engaging in a management strategy of *social competition*, in which the subordinate group competes with the dominant group in an attempt to change the existing social structure (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; see also Spears, Chapter 9, this volume). Both theories, therefore, would predict higher rates of political participation among ethnic minorities in the presence of a politicized identity. Moreover, we might expect that politicized identities can inoculate people against the loss of trust in the political system and against the loss in patriotism that can result from the belief that one’s group is disadvantaged.

When it comes to a sense of obligation to the American political system and to the people who make up the American national community, however, engagement is predicted to decline among those with politicized identities, at least according to SIT. SIT scholarship has demonstrated that an attachment to a particular group identity paired with the perception that the group

identity is threatened leads to withdrawal from prosocial interactions with the out-group (also see Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000). In SIT terminology, this process is a product of the *social creativity* management strategy, in which subordinate group members seek to redefine the domains of comparison with the dominant group and in doing so, often direct positive attention inward (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; see also Spears, Chapter 9, this volume). Thus, when it comes to cooperation, altruism, and a sense of obligation to the *national* community, SIT suggests that identifying with a narrower group such as Latinos or Mexicans could lead to disengagement when that identity is paired with a perception of discrimination. In contrast to social identity research, research on group consciousness has typically only focused on collective action outcomes as the dependent variable and not on prosocial behavior, leaving us with little in the way of expectations regarding how a politicized identity might affect one’s sense of obligation to the national community.

With these two theoretical perspectives in mind, the remainder of this section addresses the following questions: Is mere self-identification with a pan-ethnic or national-origin identity enough to reduce patriotism, trust in institutions, a sense of obligation to the United States, and electoral participation? Or does a person need to feel that American society is a threat to that identity before it becomes consequential? How much should Americans worry about people who do not identify primarily as American? More specifically, under what conditions should they worry?

Patriotism. In light of the previous section of this chapter, the first issue to examine is patriotism. Using the 1989 Latino National Political Survey, de la Garza, Falcon, and Garcia (1996) found Mexican Americans to be *more* patriotic than Whites, and that the extent to which one consciously thought of oneself as Latino (instead of as White) did not matter. These authors further found that the least acculturated respondents, in terms of language use and nativity, were more patriotic than the most acculturated. With more recent data, Citrin, Lerman, Murakami, and

Pearson (2007) found that US-born Hispanics had higher levels of patriotism than Whites. And using Citrin et al.’s measure of identity choice that allows respondents to identify as American, as a member of an ethnic group, or as both, they found that levels of pride in being American were high across all three types of identifiers.¹²

In the twenty-first Century Americanism Survey (Schildkraut, 2011), all respondents who were American citizens were asked if they strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with the statement: “I am proud to be an American” (where “strongly agree” was coded as 1 and “strongly disagree” was coded as 0).¹³ Overall, 84% of respondents said they strongly agree, and only 1% said they strongly disagree. Relevant bivariate comparisons are presented in Table 36.2, with each cell containing the mean level of patriotism on the 0–1 measure. As the table shows, there is virtually no variation in patriotism levels by identity prioritization, ethnicity, nativity, or language use. The differences displayed in Table 36.2 are statistically significant, but that is because of the large

sample size in the 21-CAS. There may be *statistically* significant differences in Table 36.2, but not *substantive* ones. That the patriotism levels of English speakers and non-English speakers, for example, differ by only 3% points and that both are above 90% portrays more of a picture of similarity than of difference. The high level of patriotism among pan-ethnic and national-origin identifiers remains striking.

SIT might lead us to expect higher levels of patriotism among those who identify primarily as American, especially if the identity is salient and/or threatened, which it might be given how important American identifiers say their identity is to them and given the state of international politics when the 21-CAS was conducted. Yet that turns out not to be the case. Multivariate analyses of the 21-CAS (not shown here) suggest that what matters most in shaping levels of patriotism is whether or not people feel that their racial or ethnic group is discriminated against in the United States, as measured by the sense that one’s group is discriminated against in schools and the workplace, and is generally prevented from

Table 36.2 Pride in being American

	Mean level of pride (0–1)	n (Raw)
<i>Panethnic identity</i>	0.87	149
<i>National Origin identity</i>	0.88	319
<i>American identity</i>	0.95	1,959
	F(2,2424)=30.60, p<0.001, R ² =0.025	
<i>White</i>	0.94	1,604
<i>Black</i>	0.93	287
<i>Asian</i>	0.88	212
<i>Latino</i>	0.93	298
	F(3, 2397)=6.64, p<0.001, R ² =0.008	
<i>1st generation</i>	0.92	308
<i>2nd generation</i>	0.91	173
<i>3rd generation</i>	0.91	184
<i>4th generation or more</i>	0.94	1,804
	F(3, 2522)=3.22, p=0.022, R ² =0.004	
<i>Speaks primarily English at home</i>	0.93	2,309
<i>Speaks another language at home</i>	0.90	215
	F(1, 2522)=11.22, p<0.001, R ² =0.004	

Note: n = unweighted.

Source: 21st Century Americanism Survey, 2004.

achieving success. Those who perceived such discrimination had lower levels of patriotism than those who did not. One's primary identity attachment had no effect. SIT and GCT, however, also suggest that a group attachment *in conjunction with* a perception of threat (such as the perception that the group is a target of discrimination) might condition the direct effect of perceptions of threat. Yet that also turns out not to be the case. The interaction of perceptions of discrimination with one's identity choice does not alter the direct effect of perceptions of discrimination on patriotism. In other words, a "politicized" identity (one that contains both a psychological attachment to one's group membership and a perception of discrimination) does not influence levels of patriotism. It is a perception that one's ethnic group is discriminated against, regardless of one's primary identification, which harms levels of patriotism.

Trust in institutions. Trust in American institutions, such as government and law enforcement, is an important factor to consider with respect to identity choices. Previous research has shown that trust affects compliance with political and legal processes, particularly in cases where people dislike the outcomes of those processes (Tyler, 2006; Tyler & Huo, 2002). Trust affects whether people support policies aimed at reducing inequality (Hetherington, 2005). Additionally, it is argued that trust generates a willingness to take risks on behalf of the community (Smith, 2003). It is therefore important to determine whether levels of trust are affected by prioritizing one's ethnic or national-origin group.

Studies have shown that Mexican Americans have more confidence in the executive branch and Congress compared to non-Hispanic Whites (Weaver, 2003), and that Latinos trust the federal government more than other ethnic groups (Pearson & Citrin, 2006). As with patriotism, what seems to matter more are perceptions of discrimination. Using the 1989 Latino National Political Survey, Michelson (2003) found that perceptions of discrimination reduce trust in the federal government. Likewise, Lien and colleagues (2004) found that personal experiences with discrimination led to diminished

trust in local government among Asian Americans.

In the twenty-first Century Americanism Survey (Schildkraut, 2011), trust in government and law enforcement was gauged by asking respondents, "How much of the time do you think you can trust [the government in Washington/law enforcement] to do what is right... just about always, most of the time, some of the time, or never?" "Just about always" is coded as 1, "never" as 0.¹⁴ Most respondents said they trust the government only some of the time (57%) and that they trust law enforcement most of the time (53%). Table 36.3 depicts the mean levels of trust according to particular variables of interest. Table 36.3 suggests that prioritizing an American identity affects trust in law enforcement more than it affects trust in government. Though both results show a significant impact for identity choice, the effect on trust in law enforcement is greater, both statistically and substantively. As with patriotism, however, the *similarities* in levels of trust across identity types are striking. Table 36.3 also depicts Latinos as most trusting of government, Whites as most trusting of law enforcement, and Blacks as least trusting of both. Consistent with earlier research (Michelson, 2003), all three measures of acculturation (citizenship, generation, and language use) appear to reduce both types of trust.

Multivariate analyses (not shown here), however, suggest that the differences in levels of trust in law enforcement by self-identification are statistically nonsignificant once we control for other factors, including variables in Table 36.3 (race/ethnicity, nativity, generation, and primary language spoken at home) as well as other factors such as political party affiliation. Moreover, perceptions of discrimination appear to *reduce* levels of trust among minorities who identify as American, whereas perceptions of discrimination *increase* levels of trust in government among minorities who identify with their ethnic group, as GCT and SIT would predict. With respect to trust in law enforcement, neither GCT nor SIT seems to explain the data: as with patriotism, trust is reduced by perceptions

Table 36.3 Levels of trust

	Trust in:		n (Raw)
	Gov't	Law	
<i>Panethnic identity</i>	0.42	0.55	384
<i>National origin identity</i>	0.46	0.59	295
<i>American identity</i>	0.42	0.63	2,007
	F(2, 2638)=5.21, p=0.006, R ² =0.004	F(2, 2671)=19.49, p<0.001, R ² =0.014	
<i>White</i>	0.46	0.65	1,589
<i>Black</i>	0.35	0.45	281
<i>Asian</i>	0.45	0.59	276
<i>Latino</i>	0.51	0.61	422
	F(3, 2615)=27.29, p<0.001, R ² =0.030	F(3, 2654)=60.52, p<0.001, R ² =0.064	
<i>US citizen</i>	0.44	0.61	2,435
<i>Not US citizen</i>	0.55	0.66	249
	F(1, 2740)=36.79, p<0.001, R ² =0.013	F(1, 2780)=10.89, p=0.001, R ² =0.004	
<i>1st generation</i>	0.50	0.63	530
<i>2nd generation</i>	0.42	0.58	166
<i>3rd generation</i>	0.44	0.61	175
<i>4th generation or more</i>	0.44	0.58	1,765
	F(3, 2687)=9.92, p<0.001, R ² =0.011	F(3, 2724)=1.95, p=0.119, R ² =0.002	
<i>Speaks primarily English at home</i>	0.44	0.61	2,281
<i>Speaks another language at home</i>	0.51	0.63	404
	F(1, 2741)=24.23, p<0.001, R ² =0.009	F(1, 2781)=2.69, p=0.101, R ² =0.001	

Note: n = unweighted; cell entries = mean on zero to one scale.

Source: 21st Century Americanism Survey, 2004.

of discrimination regardless of whether a person identifies primarily as American or as a member of a pan-ethnic or national origin group.

In sum, when minorities prioritize an American identification, it is only beneficial with respect to trust if perceptions of discrimination are absent. However, perceptions of discrimination are rarely absent. In the 21-CAS, nearly one-quarter of the respondents would have likely raised their level of trust in the government had they identified primarily with their pan-ethnic group instead of as American (Schildkraut, 2011). The joint presence of identifying primarily as American and perceptions of discrimination has also been shown to affect

voting behavior (Schildkraut, 2005b). This research suggests that roughly 8% of Latinos would have been more likely to vote in national elections had they identified as something other than American. The probability that an American identifier (as opposed to a pan-ethnic or national-origin identifier) will vote drops *over 50 percentage points* as perceptions of discrimination increase from the lowest to the highest value (Schildkraut, 2005b).

National obligations. Obligation refers to the duties of citizenship, what we “owe” to our compatriots and to our political institutions in exchange for the privileges and rights conferred by membership in the political community. In the United States, there is general consensus that our

main obligation is to obey the laws of the land, though many Americans also feel that we have a duty to devote some of our time and resources to the common good. Therefore, as with trust, it is important for us to determine whether (or under what conditions) identity choices influence one's sense of obligation.

Unlike the other areas of inquiry discussed in this chapter, there is very little research on people's thoughts about their national obligations, let alone on whether such thoughts are affected by one's race, ethnicity, or sense of American identity. In the 21-CAS, obligation is measured by offering respondents a list of possible obligations and asking them to indicate whether they think each one is an obligation they owe to other Americans. "Yes" (1), "no" (0), and "it depends" (0.5) were accepted responses. The obligations were giving money to charities, volunteering

in your local community, and serving in the military.¹⁵ Though serving in the military is the only obligation here that applies directly to institutions of the state, the other two explicitly refer to obligations toward Americans in general, and not toward any particular subgroup or community. Overall, it appears that Americans feel that they have all three obligations: charity = 57%; volunteer = 72%; military service = 45% (a plurality). Table 36.4 shows people's sense of obligation broken down by variables relevant to this inquiry. Table 36.4 suggests that people who prioritize an American identity are more likely to say they have an obligation to volunteer and serve in the military compared to people who do not prioritize an American identity. Blacks appeared most likely to say they have an obligation to donate and volunteer, whereas Latinos appeared most likely to say they have an obligation to

Table 36.4 Levels of obligation

	Obligation to:			n (Raw)
	Donate	Volunteer	Serve in military	
<i>Panethnic identity</i>	56	69	33	384
<i>National origin identity</i>	52	69	44	295
<i>American identity</i>	57	74	48	2,007
<i>Chi-sq, p</i>	4.671, 0.323	12.825, 0.012	38.683, 0.000	
<i>White</i>	56	72	46	1,589
<i>Black</i>	65	78	39	281
<i>Asian</i>	54	75	45	276
<i>Latino</i>	49	68	48	422
<i>Chi-sq, p</i>	19.888, 0.003	14.837, 0.022	9.052, 0.171	
<i>US citizen</i>	57	73	45	2,435
<i>Not US citizen</i>	51	65	47	249
<i>Chi-sq, p</i>	2.43, 0.296	9.562, 0.008	6.754, 0.034	
<i>1st generation</i>	54	71	52	530
<i>2nd generation</i>	56	72	72	166
<i>3rd generation</i>	56	71	48	175
<i>4th generation or more</i>	57	73	43	1,765
<i>Chi-sq, p</i>	1.725, 0.943	3.849, 0.697	23.258, .0001	
<i>Speaks primarily English at home</i>	57	73	44	2,281
<i>Speaks another language at home</i>	54	71	50	404
<i>Chi-sq, p</i>	2.887, 0.236	2.263, 0.322	9.182, 0.010	

Note: n = unweighted; cell entries for trust = mean (0–1), cell entries for obligation = % saying yes.

Source: 21st Century Americanism Survey, 2004.

serve in the military. Conversely, Latinos were shown as least likely to say they have an obligation to donate and volunteer, whereas Blacks were shown as least likely to say they have an obligation to serve in the military (though this last result was not statistically significant). Finally, acculturation sometimes matters as well, and in ways contrary to the concerns of immigration critics (Huntington, 2004). The foreign-born, for instance, display a greater sense of obligation to serve in the military, though a lesser sense of obligation to volunteer. Non-English speakers also exhibit a greater sense of obligation to serve in the military than English speakers. It is noteworthy that the question about serving in the military applies most directly to institutions of the state *and* is the item on which we see the newcomers professing more commitment than the “natives.”

Multivariate analyses (not shown here) indicate that, contrary to the positive impact that politicized identities have on trust, the joint presence of discrimination and a non-American identity *reduces* one’s sense of connection to the American in-group, consistent with social identity theory. For example, Latinos who identify as Latino *and* who think that their pan-ethnic group is discriminated against are less likely than other Latinos to say they have an obligation to donate to charity (Schildkraut, 2011). Likewise, Asian Americans who identify with their national-origin group *and* who think that their national-origin group is mistreated are less likely than other Asians to say they have an obligation to volunteer in their communities. The results, in short, show that the social creativity strategy posited by SIT comes into play when examining how identity choices affect one’s sense of obligation to the national community.

Identity Content: How Is American Identity Defined?

Earlier in the chapter, I presented evidence that Americans of all backgrounds are highly patriotic. A question to ask in light of such high levels of patriotism is: what are Americans so proud of?

What kind of statement are people making when they say that they think of themselves primarily as American and that being American is the most important thing in their lives? In light of contemporary concerns about the impact of immigration and ethnic diversity on American national identity, it is also important to wonder whether Americans of different backgrounds even have the same things in mind when they think about what being “American” means. Many people share Samuel Huntington’s concerns when he argues that a multicultural America will become a multicreedal America, and that a multicreedal America cannot survive because a common creed has historically been essential in holding the country together (Huntington, 2004).

The concept of liberalism may be the starting point for any investigation into how Americans define what being American means. As noted earlier, the tenets of liberalism are at the heart of the American Creed, which is widely considered to be the central (if not the only) set of ideals that defines American identity. Liberalism is based on the principles of freedom, equality, opportunity, rule of law, and minimal government intervention into the private lives of citizens.¹⁶ Although most scholars agree on the centrality of liberalism to the notion of American identity, they have disagreed over the extent to which additional ideological traditions are also involved (Banning, 1986; Mills, 1997; Rodgers, 1992; Schildkraut, 2005a; Smith, 1993; 1997; Sullivan, 1982). Recently, however, there has been increasing acknowledgment and evidence that additional traditions also represent key elements of American identity. These traditions include civic republicanism, ethnoculturalism, and incorporationism.

Whereas liberalism emphasizes the rights that come with membership in the American political community, civic republicanism emphasizes the responsibilities. As a political tradition, civic republicanism advances the notion that a self-governing society can only sustain itself if its people do their part to work toward the public good rather than simply work to pursue their own individual interests (Banning, 1986; Held, 1996). A civic republican conception

defines American identity in terms of active citizenship, being an informed citizen, and volunteering to do one's part for the greater good. This conception also involves the belief that it is important for Americans to think of themselves first and foremost as Americans. Note, however, that civic republican philosophy is not to be confused with the contemporary Republican Party, which focuses on minimally regulated economic activity and social conservatism.

Ethnoculturalism is an ascriptivist tradition that maintains that American identity is defined by cultural ancestry. Specifically, ethnoculturalism posits that true Americans are White, English-speaking Protestants of Northern European ancestry. For a significant portion of American history, ascriptivist tendencies (such as slavery and the denial of naturalization to Asians) were treated as an aberration from America's true nature (e.g., Hartz, 1955; Huntington, 1981; Lipset, 1963). But increasingly, scholars have argued that ethnoculturalism constitutes a central element of American identity in its own right (Gerstle, 2001; Mills, 1997; Schildkraut, 2005a; Smith, 1997), and even though it has been discredited over time, it continues to be endorsed by a non-trivial segment of the American population (see below).

Finally, incorporationism is the notion that the United States is a "nation of immigrants," and that American identity is uniquely defined by its immigrant tradition (Glazer, 1997; Higham, 1993; Tichenor, 2002). According to incorporationism, to be American means to celebrate one's ethnic heritage while *also* assimilating into the country's dominant culture. Although finding a balance between ethnic diversity and assimilation can be difficult to achieve in practice, doing so constitutes the incorporationist ideal within the American imagination (Tyack, 1999; Walzer, 1996; Zolberg & Woon, 1999). In this sense, incorporationism reflects the bidimensional model of acculturation psychology, where one dimension represents the acquisition of the new culture in the host country and a second dimension represents the maintenance of the original culture. According to this model, people can move along each dimension separately. As

David Sam (2006, p. 17) wrote, this bidimensional model illustrates that "it is possible to identify with or acquire the new culture independently, without necessarily losing the original culture." In the present analysis, we can assume that this bidimensional incorporationist model characterizes what it means for America to be a "nation of immigrants" to the extent to which respondents agree that it is important for Americans *both* to blend into the larger society *and* to maintain traditions from their minority or heritage culture.

The notion of cultural pluralism was first introduced into American political discourse in the 1920s by Horace Kallen (1924), and the concept of the "melting pot" was introduced in 1909 by playwright Israel Zangwill. But the idea of incorporationism as a key component of American identity did not take root until the rights revolutions of the 1960s and 1970s. As David Hollinger (1995, p. 101) noted, it was not until the end of the twentieth century that the nation saw the "sheer triumph" of "the doctrine that the United States ought to sustain rather than diminish a great variety of distinctive cultures carried by ethno-racial groups." This triumph can be seen in the rise and use of alternative metaphors to the melting pot, including the salad bowl and the mosaic, where the individual parts retain their integrity while still combining to create a product that is greater than the sum of its parts (see Licata, Sanchez-Mazas, & Green, Chapter 38, this volume, for a discussion of this pluralist trajectory in Europe).

These four notions of what being American means – liberalism, civic republicanism, ethnoculturalism, and incorporationism – provide the American people with insight regarding appropriate state action in response to political conflicts. Additionally, these notions provide expectations about the political, civic, and cultural beliefs and practices of one's compatriots. For these reasons, political scientists are interested in studying the extent to which the American public agrees that each notion constitutes a central element of American identity. Yet only recently has public opinion analysis begun to incorporate

measures of civic republicanism, ethnoculturalism, and incorporationism into their investigations of how people define American identity (Citrin et al., 2001; Conover, Crewe, & Searing, 1991; McDaniel & Nooruddin, 2008; Paxton & Mughan, 2006; Schildkraut, 2005a; Theiss-Morse, 2004).

The 21-CAS (Schildkraut, 2011) was designed, in part, to provide a comprehensive examination of public opinion about what it means to be American. In the survey, the definitions of American identity described above were measured by asking respondents this question:

“I’m going to read a list of things that some people say are important in making someone a true American. The first one is _____. Would you say that it should be very important, somewhat important, somewhat unimportant, or very unimportant in making someone a true American?” The items inserted into the blank were designed to capture liberalism, civic republicanism, ethnoculturalism, or incorporationism. Table 36.5 lists each item, the tradition it was intended to measure, and the percentage of respondents that says the item is either very or somewhat important.¹⁷

Table 36.5 American identity items

Intended tradition	Question	% very important	% somewhat important	N
Liberalism	Respecting America’s political institutions and laws	80.9	15.9	2,764
	Pursuing economic success through hard work	69.0	21.7	2,760
	Letting other people say what they want, no matter how much you disagree with them	65.9	21.9	2,698
Civic republicanism	Doing volunteer work in one’s community	44.3	41.9	2,773
	Thinking of oneself as American	68.9	24.3	2,763
	Feeling American	62.1	28.0	2,678
	Being informed about local and national politics	65.3	29.7	2,770
	Being involved in local and national politics	37.1	43.8	2,761
Ethnoculturalism	Being born in America	24.2	27.1	2,768
	Being a Christian	19.3	15.6	2,745
	Having European ancestors	7.0	10.4	2,707
	Being white	3.8	6.1	2,747
Incorporationism	Carrying on the cultural traditions of one’s ancestors, such as the language and food	35.7	37	2,751
	Respecting other people’s cultural differences	80.1	16.8	2,773
	Blending into the larger society	36.9	36.5	2,683
	Seeing people of all backgrounds as American	73.1	19.6	2,717
Contested/multiple	Being able to speak English	71.0	23.1	2,787
	Having American citizenship	76.0	17.7	2,773

Note: Weighted results. “Don’t know” and “no answer” excluded.

Source: 21st Century Americanism Survey, 2004.

Regarding liberalism, Table 36.5 shows that all liberal measures (respecting political institutions and laws, working hard to achieve success, and permitting free speech) are endorsed by strong majorities as elements of American identity. Although there is more variation on the measures of civic republicanism (feeling and thinking of oneself as American, being informed about and involved in politics, and volunteering), we still find that over 80% say that each item is very or somewhat important in making someone a true American. The measures of ethnoculturalism (being born in America, being a Christian, being White, and having European ancestors) are much less likely to be endorsed as contemporary components of American identity (see also Schildkraut, 2007). However, endorsement of ethnoculturalism is still at a notable level, with over half of the respondents saying that it is very or somewhat important for Americans to be born in America, 35% saying the same about being a Christian, and 10% saying the same about being White.¹⁸ Turning finally to incorporationism, items that refer to more of a “hands-off” approach to the relationship between immigration and American identity (respecting other people’s cultural traditions and seeing people of all backgrounds as American) garner much more support than the measures that highlight an active management of cultural differences (carrying on the traditions of one’s ancestors and blending into the larger society). That said, however, even those latter items assessing carrying on traditions and blending in achieve majority support when “somewhat” and “very important” are combined.¹⁹

Multivariate analyses (not shown here) indicate few differences in the extent to which one’s ethnic or immigrant background shape how the content of American identity is defined (Schildkraut, 2007; see also Devos & Banaji, 2005).²⁰ In other words, mistaken are those who fear that the foreign born, Latinos, or Asians define what being American means differently from native-born Whites. Any statistically significant differences were small in magnitude and were outweighed by differences caused by other factors including age, education, political party

affiliation, and political ideology (liberal versus conservative). And in some cases, being non-White or of foreign origin led to a *greater* likelihood of endorsing particular conceptions of American identity. For example, foreign-born respondents were more likely than native-born respondents to endorse being informed and involved in politics as central components of American identity. Additionally, the foreign born, Blacks, and Asians were more likely than the US-born and Whites to say that pursuing economic success through hard work denotes true Americanness.

With respect to incorporationism, I do find ethnic differences in the extent to which people think we can “have it all” in terms of cultural diversity and assimilation (Schildkraut, 2007), or rather, in the extent to which they believe that American society is and should be characterized by a bidimensional acculturation process. In particular, Blacks and Latinos were more likely than others to think that the incorporationist ideal is an achievable part of American identity, as evidenced by expressing high levels of support for *both* the item that refers to maintaining cultural difference *and* the item that refers to assimilation. It is important, however, to point out that I do not find any ethnicity-related instances in which one group supports the maintenance of cultural differences whereas the other supports assimilation (e.g., that the foreign born support only the maintenance of difference while the native born only support blending into the larger society). In other words, whereas some groups are more optimistic about the incorporationist ideal, I do not find an ethnic or immigrant divide.

Conclusion

In the past 20 years, public opinion scholars have made great gains in providing empirical data to accompany the centuries-old question of what it means to be American. These data have enabled us to examine whether the ways in which ordinary Americans answer that question matches the answers provided by political philosophers and historians. The data have also allowed us to address normative concerns about whether – or when – ideas such

as patriotism or national identity should be encouraged or discouraged among the populace.

The desire to produce empirical insights into public opinion about American identity has taken on new urgency in the past decade as the demographic consequences of mass immigration are being realized in cities and towns in all corners of the nation. At present, politicians, commentators, activists, and scholars in the United States are not only concerned with whether patriotism promotes civic engagement and/or xenophobia, but also with whether levels of patriotism vary systematically across ethnic groups and across immigrant generations. Likewise, they seek answers on whether immigrants and their descendents come to think of themselves as American, and if not, whether anyone should care. The early results suggest that American identity is doing just fine. Levels of patriotism are high and vary little across ethnic or immigrant background. Most Americans of all backgrounds think of themselves as American as opposed to thinking of themselves as members of an ethnic or national-origin group. And for those who prioritize a non-American identity, the level of trust in American institutions, political participation, and sense of obligation to the national community are largely unaffected. The emerging consensus in this research agenda is that interested parties should orient their concerns toward the extent to which non-Whites, immigrants, and their descendents feel that their ethnic group is discriminated against in American society. Such perceptions are far more consequential than whether a person thinks of himself as American or as Dominican.

Much progress remains to be made in addressing these questions. After all, today's third- and fourth-generation Latinos and Asians are from families that immigrated to the United States decades ago. Whether findings about today's third and fourth generation will also characterize tomorrow's third and fourth generation is something that can only be answered with time. Existing research on

American patriotism, attachment to American identity, and defining American identity has thus far provided a valuable snapshot of public opinion on these topics at the dawn of the twenty-first century. But the questions that this line of research investigates are not going away any time soon, and the relationships discussed here might change with time. It seems that Americans may be asking, "What does it mean to be American?" for years to come.

Notes

1. Data on demographics were found at the Migration Policy Institute: <http://www.migrationinformation.org/datahub/charts/final.fb.shtml>, accessed June 19, 2008.
2. One argument against the claim that former communist countries serve as a negative example for the United States is that communist ideals were often imposed on the people through coercive means whereas the set of political ideals that unite Americans and are embodied in political institutions are widely endorsed among the public.
3. Data on demographics were found at the Migration Policy Institute: <http://www.migrationinformation.org/datahub/acscensus.cfm>, accessed on May 6, 2009.
4. Online data analysis of the General Social Survey is available at <http://sda.berkeley.edu/archive.htm>, accessed October 26, 2008.
5. A poll conducted by Quinnipiac University in August of 2006 found 53% of respondents opposing the war. Other surveys throughout 2006 also show over 50% of the public in opposition (Roper Center for Public Opinion Research).
6. Note that Citrin et al. (2001) use the term "chauvinism" instead of "nationalism."
7. This same study, however, also showed that Asian Americans often associated Americanness with Whiteness.
8. Data collection was funded by the Russell Sage Foundation, and was conducted from July 12, 2004 – October 8, 2004 by the Social and Economic Sciences and Research Center

- (SESRC) at Washington State University (WSU). The final sample has 2,800 respondents (1,633 White, non-Hispanic; 300 Black; 441 Latino; 299 Asian). Households with only cell phones were not a part of the sampling procedure.
9. For a respondent who only named one country of origin, that ancestry was used to fill in the blank.
 10. Unless otherwise noted, all figures refer to weighted results, using population weights provided by the SESRC.
 11. It is also worth noting that Latinos were the pan-ethnic group most likely to choose *only* an American identity (17%, vs. 8% for Whites, 4% for Blacks, and 6% for Asians).
 12. It should be noted that some studies have found that African Americans tend not to be as proud as Whites (D. Davis, 2007; Huddy & Khatib, 2007; Sidanius, Feshback, Levin, & Pratto, 1997).
 13. “Somewhat agree” was coded as 0.67 and “somewhat disagree” was coded as 0.33.
 14. “Most of the time” was coded as 0.67 and “some of the time” was coded as 0.33.
 15. These questions were adopted from Elizabeth Theiss-Morse’s *Perceptions of the American People Survey*, 2002.
 16. The term “liberalism” here refers to classical liberalism in political philosophy; it does not refer to the current ideological stances of “liberals” and “conservatives” in American politics.
 17. To minimize respondent fatigue, the American identity series was randomly divided into two halves. The first half was asked early in the survey; the second half was asked later. The items within each half were rotated randomly.
 18. In multivariate analyses, Blacks and Latinos are often more likely than Whites to endorse ethnoculturalism. It has been suggested that this pattern results from the degree of religiosity in Black and Latino communities (Citrin, Haas, Muste, & Reingold, 1994; Citrin, Reingold, & Green, 1990; Schildkraut, 2005a; 2007; Theiss-Morse, 2005).
 19. See Schildkraut (2007) for diagnostic tests on these measures, including scale construction and factor analysis.
 20. These multivariate analyses can be found in Schildkraut (2007).

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Abstract

The American people, and most of the world, think of the United States as a nation that has welcomed and assimilated immigrants. That image is only partially supported by facts. Until at least the 1960s, the melting pot was really a mold of conformity to the norms established by White Anglo Saxon Protestant (WASP) culture. Immigrants from England nearly instantly became American. Those from continental Europe found their labor welcome, but otherwise often initially encountered resistance to everything else about them. Yet, as “free White people,” the possibility of becoming American often became a reality. For people who were non-White, the barriers were far more substantial, and even many Europeans, especially southern and eastern Europeans, were largely excluded from completely becoming American until after World War II, when the United States began to allow more immigrants to enter the country, and when once again their labor became highly valued. Beginning in the 1960s, to a degree never previously encountered in US history, some in the United States celebrated the diversity that immigrants brought with them and encouraged immigrants to become American without surrendering selective aspects of their homeland heritage. At the same time, others continued the nativist, anti-immigrant ways that have deep roots in American history and expressed concerns that these new immigrants did not want to, and could not truly, become American. America is at a crossroads now where the second generation of the latest wave of primarily non-Europeans is attaining adulthood. For those immigrants from non-White backgrounds, such as Black and Latino/Hispanic immigrants, it is unclear if they can ever be accepted or seen as simply “American” or whether they will become African American or Latino American, as posited by segmented assimilation theory. The emerging ethnographic realities indicate that they are becoming American in complex ways that

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can be conceptualized as multiple identities, rather than the simple divisions among assimilation, biculturalism, and cultural maintenance. What identities immigrants and their offspring adopt reflect how America has treated them, their parents' efforts to maintain some of their heritage, and increased opportunities to live at least part of their lives transnationally across borders.

Globalization is transforming the world with unprecedented numbers of people migrating among countries (see Jensen, Arnett, & McKenzie, [Chapter 13](#), this volume). How people form themselves into societies, and the identities they develop as a result of these groupings, are deeply affected by this profound exposure to and associated mixing of cultures. Calling a country multicultural is insufficient to help us understand the specific dynamics of interpersonal and intergroup ways of relating, which we minimally need to know to understand what it means for immigrants and their children to become American. Because the United States is "a nation of immigrants," its past and present offer lessons about the confluence of many identities. Few of the millions of current inhabitants of the United States are descendants of Native Americans; rather, global immigration was and remains pivotal in establishing the nation and the identity of "American."¹ Nevertheless, there has been, and continues to be, dispute over who is or can become American. On the one hand is the image of America as a melting pot where anyone, regardless of their background, can become American. On the other hand is the extensive history of exclusion, a process generally referred to as nativism, in which Protestants of English descent viewed themselves as the real Americans. Psychologists have found considerable evidence that this attitude continues. DeVos and Banaji (2005), for example, found that both Whites and Asians tended to associate being American with being White.

The authors of this chapter come from sociology and anthropology disciplines, and some key concepts are defined fundamentally differently from those used in psychology. Acculturation and identity are key concepts in sociology and anthropology, but equally important is the concept of social relations between immigrants and

natives. Sociologists especially consider as indicators of assimilation the social relationships that immigrants have with their neighbors, coworkers, friends, and romantic and marriage partners. The more that immigrants have social relationships of these types with natives, the more assimilated they are considered to be. Sociologists and anthropologists also consider immigrants' success in education and the labor market, i.e., to what degree immigrants' accomplishments in these areas match those of natives, as important markers of assimilation.

The prevalence and acceptance of the word "assimilation" has changed over time, with most contemporary sociologists and anthropologists now preferring "integration" or "incorporation" – as these terms do not so strongly imply the loss of behaviors or expressions of immigrants' cultural heritage as is often assumed with "assimilation." The scope of this chapter unfortunately is not large enough to incorporate in-depth discussion of the differences in sociological and anthropological disciplinary perspectives versus those from psychology. We hope, however, that this chapter will help bridge some of the disciplinary gap to contribute to an overall better understanding of the enormously complex process of becoming American.

In contemporary sociology and anthropology, the process of becoming American is viewed as a dialectic between the immigrants themselves as they strive to adapt to living in their new environment, and the established residents of the United States (i.e., native-born and not of immediate immigrant descent), who have the power to include or exclude newcomers. Similar to Berry (2005), immigrant identity, and whether and how immigrants become American, emerges through a contestation of the immigrants' own self-attribution (i.e., internal self-categorization) and socially defined or ascriptive conditions

specific to the social worlds in which they are embedded (Vertovec, 2001; Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2003). Moreover, we argue that this dialectic is embedded within power relations in which the locally most powerful group, usually but not always White Americans, has the power to determine the terms of becoming American (Castells, 1997). This power includes obviously the power to determine who is legally admitted to the United States, but it also includes the power to establish informal norms of socially acceptable behavior such as, for example, when it is acceptable to speak a language other than English or where and when women may wear a headscarf. Psychological approaches, such as Licata, Sanchez-Mazas, and Green (Chapter 38, this volume), share much of this perspective.

This chapter addresses the evolution of this dialectic, describing the contradictory trends that exist simultaneously, as well as the social forces that transform some immigrants from excluded to accepted as Americans and to assuming an American identity. We begin with a summary of what immigration scholars mean by “identity.” We then describe the processes of becoming American as these processes occurred from the founding of what became the United States through the Great Wave of immigration that occurred at the end of the nineteenth through the beginning of the twentieth century. Out of this Great Wave, immigration scholars developed the core concept of assimilation, which established the starting point for analyses of what it means to become American and how one does so. We then analyze how the most recent wave of immigration, from 1965 to the present, has challenged and modified our understanding of assimilation and of becoming American.

Immigration and Defining Identity

An examination of “becoming American” raises the question of what constitutes American national identity and its relationship to other ethnic and cultural identities (Schildkraut, Chapter 36, this volume). The notion that American identity

is and should be a singular, exclusive identity reflects much of the popular political discourse that erupts in response to immigrants, i.e., whether immigrants are fundamentally different from native-born Americans because they come from a different place (Huntington, 2004a, 2004b). Although individuals may adopt hyphenated identities, such as Mexican-American, the essential concern for both the newcomer and the established resident remains with an individual’s identification or identifications linked to a geographic place or places of origin, or their sense of belonging to a particular nation. For the United States, the impact of immigration on national identity always has been, and remains, critical since the United States emerged out of colonization that involved people from diverse national origins. Debates surrounding immigrant incorporation, both historically and currently, highlight the political, economic, and social ramifications of immigration in relation to national identity (Brooks, 2007; Higham, 1988; Preston, 2007).

As happens in any field of study, scholars have difficulty agreeing on the precise definition of core concepts. Sociologists and anthropologists have not reached a consensus on precisely what identity is and how it relates to the processes of migration. Hale (2004, p. 34), for example, considers identity as reference points which people use within the social contexts they inhabit. These reference points allow them to comprehend diverse social relationships and to situate themselves and their choices within these contexts. Hale’s definition emphasizes that identity is a broad term referring to a wide variety of reference points to which individuals attach themselves. Within a diverse social landscape, individuals root themselves in particular groups or affiliations. These attachments or groupings are what we refer to as “identity.” Rahier (1999, p. xxiv) describes identities as descriptors that are both stated and unstated and continually changing within fluid contexts. Thus, identity refers to multiple axes of identification, including gender, age, nationality, class, race, and ethnicity. Although national identity is the form of identity that most often concerns immigration scholars,

other dimensions of identity, such as race, intertwine. For example, immigrants and their children who are perceived as White may be more accepted by the established resident White population, and thus may find it easier to claim an unmodified American identity than immigrants of color, i.e., Black, Latino, or Asian immigrants. Immigrants of color, however, may be perceived as having and may claim to have an ethnic minority identity, e.g., African American, and thus have a different sense of what it means to be American.

Our understanding of identity highlights its fluidity. Although identity implies a sense of immobility and constancy, it is perhaps the opposite. This perspective highlights the multiple points of reference that individuals employ, often related to specific contexts and circumstances. For example, Waters (1990) describes the selective use of ancestral identities among White ethnics, noting variability in terms of knowledge of one's ancestors, ancestral surnames, and the social stature of the ancestral group(s).² Nederveen Pieterse (2007) also raises concern with the term "*identity*" as overly static – he advocates using the more fluid "*identification*" to highlight individual actors' agency. In addition to fluidity and agency, this semantic shift from "*identity*" to "*identification*" highlights the labels which are ascribed to individuals; a pigmentocracy, i.e., a society such as the United States where skin color plays a critical role that limits the available options for minority individuals' identifications (Gans, 2007). For example, someone with dark skin is a "visible minority" and may have to incorporate "non-Whiteness" into her/his identity. Within this constrained context, the individual might choose specific labels related to this marginalization (e.g., Black, African-American).

We focus particularly on first-generation immigrants and their children (frequently referred to as second-generation immigrants). The definition of identity we use evolved from a conception of national identity as essentialized race, i.e., one in which only White Americans were really Americans, to a view of national identity as a socially constructed self-identification that not only develops through

an individual's life, but also varies by context – from public places such as workplace, to private contexts such as home and family. This approach is consistent with Anderson's (1999) understanding of the creation of nations, along with more recent work in social psychology, e.g., Billig (1995). Alternative and contextually emergent identifications include race and pan-ethnic identities (such as "Latino" or "Hispanic"), which both enfold people from diverse nations along with emerging notions of transnationalism, in which identities span nation states (see especially, Glick Schiller & Fouron, 1998; Kilic, 2007; Morawska, 2001). Compared to the immigration of 100 years ago, decreasing travel costs and technological advances in communication allow migrants to maintain ties with their homeland after migration, enabling transnational lives in which identities are not wedded to borders and nation states. In the next section, we review the historical roots of the processes of immigrants becoming American, and then we address how the contemporary immigrants are becoming American.

The Foundation of an Immigrant Nation

Since the beginning of European settlement in what was to become the United States, immigration has been the primary force that has provoked debates over who can, and how to, become American. Most stories of immigration ignore the presence of native indigenous peoples, i.e., American Indians. The early European immigrants, who were primarily English, generally pushed the native peoples aside, notwithstanding the myth of European immigrant-Native American cooperation embodied by Thanksgiving. Although the British governed the American colony, they encouraged immigration, not only of slaves and indentured laborers, but also of other free Europeans including the Dutch who originally settled in what became New York City, as well as Irish, Scots, and the most numerous group, German-speaking immigrants from what later became Germany.

With the exception of Quakers and Jews, if an immigrant wanted to “naturalize,” i.e., enjoy the rights of citizenship in the British American colonies, she/he had to be a member of a Protestant church.

Early English colonists disparaged Huguenots for being French and the Scottish and Irish for not being true English (Jones, 1960). German immigrants to England’s American colony caused particularly passionate phobias. Belonging to pacifist sects, such as the Amish and Quakers, many German immigrants sought seclusion from rather than assimilation to Anglo American ways. They prompted Benjamin Franklin to challenge, “Why should Pennsylvania, founded by the *English*, become a Colony of *Aliens*, who will shortly be so numerous as to Germanize us instead of Anglifying them?” (Weaver, 1970, p. 50).

On the other hand, some observers viewed America as capable of incorporating everyone, at least everyone who was a free White, and the Naturalization Act of 1790 specifically limited naturalization to those who were “free white persons” (“Naturalization Act,” 1790, Chapter 103). Soon after the founding of the United States as a nation, de Crèvecoeur (1782) referred to America as melting individuals into a “new race of men.” A half century later, Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote that America was a culturally and racially mixed “smelting pot,” although he added that Chinese were fundamentally different (Quoted in Gordon, 1964, p. 117). The historian Frederick Jackson Turner argued that “immigrants were Americanized, liberated and fused into a mixed race,” but again he was referring only to those of European descent (see Spickard, 2007, p. xvii). Henry James referred specifically to New York City in 1905 as a “fusion, as of elements in solution in a vast hot pot.” The specific phrase, “melting pot” came from Israel Zangwill’s 1908 play of that name. Thus, since the country’s founding, race has been a critical determinant of who has the opportunity to become American, and allowed the potential inclusion of Whites from different cultural backgrounds, but the exclusion of those defined as non-White.

The early immigration of people primarily from England founded what became the United States, but this first migratory wave was relatively small compared to later immigration. Between the 1880s and the mid-1920s, 23.5 million immigrants came to the United States. Streams of people from England, Ireland, and Germany continued to arrive in this Great Wave. Although those from England were considerable in number, they were never the subject of derision or exclusion. English Americans and their descendants, often referred to as WASPS (White Anglo Saxon Protestants), were generally not even thought of as immigrants. Rather, they were perceived as adding to the core of American society and culture, the standard by which others were judged, and the ideal newcomer to the growing nation (see Spickard, 2007, p. xvii).

The Great Wave also contained many who were not Protestants and some who appeared to be different. Among those settling in the eastern United States, the largest groups of non-WASPs were Catholics and Jews, and darker-skinned people from southern Europe. Fewer numbers of European immigrants in the Great Wave settled directly in the western United States. Instead, many who arrived there were immigrants from Asia; and following the US annexation of Texas, and later what became the southwestern states, many who had been Mexican became part of the United States without moving (Hing, 2004).

Many of the immigrants from the Great Wave reproduced some significant aspects of their native cultures in the United States. German immigrants, particularly those who settled in Midwestern agricultural areas, operated bilingual and monolingual schools and churches, as did Norwegian and other Scandinavian groups. Schools in non-English languages were indeed widespread as were newspapers. In the cities, Irish and German Catholics established Catholic parochial schools and suggested that the public help fund those schools just as it funded schools with Protestant leanings (Spickard, 2007).

These non-WASP newcomers were generally welcomed or at least tolerated because of their role in the economy. The Great Wave coincided

with and was closely tied to America's rapid industrialization, which was built upon unskilled and semi-skilled labor. Immigrants were sometimes employed specifically to undermine unionization efforts, but beyond that, industrialization demanded more labor than was otherwise available. The demand for labor extended also to immigrant women, particularly in the garment industry and food production (Butler, 1909). Immigrants filled the jobs generated by industrialization, just as undocumented or illegal immigrants now fill jobs that most Americans are not willing to do – at least not for the wages that are being offered. America could not have become an industrial giant without immigrants, and accordingly, their labor was welcomed.

Other characteristics of the Great Wave immigrants, such as their religion, were not as positively assessed as their ability to perform labor. At the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, Jews and Catholics from eastern and southern Europe were viewed as fundamentally distinct from the earlier, mostly Protestant immigrants from western and northern Europe (see, for example, Higham, 1988). These Jewish and Catholic immigrants were generally regarded as not only culturally, but also “racially,” distinct from and inferior to Anglo-Saxon and other Northern European, Protestant Americans. Fears abounded that immigrants were not doing what immigrants *should* do, i.e., abandoning the customs of their homeland and becoming American. Non-Protestant European immigrant groups, such as Catholic Irish and Italians, and Jewish Germans and Russians suffered from discrimination. Early in the nineteenth century, three states put limits on voting by Jews. After the civil war of the 1860s, Jews became secondary targets of the Ku Klux Klan. Later, Ivy League universities placed quotas on the maximum number of Jewish students admitted, and private clubs often excluded Jews. In the nineteenth century, a widespread stereotype of Irish, and subsequently of Italians, alleged that they were more loyal to the Pope than to their new homeland (Franchot, 1994).

The welcome accorded to immigrant labor, and the rejection of immigrants' real and alleged

social and cultural characteristics, reflected the underlying dialectic between the melting pot ideal and the inclinations toward exclusion. Yet, in spite of prejudice and discrimination, eastern and southern European and non-Protestant immigrants of the Great Wave of immigration were, with time, allowed to become American in some fundamental ways that were denied to non-White immigrants. Unlike peoples who entered the United States from somewhere outside of Europe, every European immigrant, regardless of what part of Europe and regardless of what religion he or she practiced, entered the United States as a “free white person” eligible for future citizenship. This categorization and associated opportunity to become citizens helped European immigrants become an important political force in every industrial city where labor organizers reached out to them. Gradually, beginning with World War I but especially during and after World War II, these European-origin groups became accepted as fellow “white” Americans and eventually intermarried into the White majority. Although negative stereotypes and some discrimination persisted, particularly against Jews, the Europeans of the Great Wave of immigration – and even more so their US-born children – were generally accepted as Americans by the descendants of English-speaking Protestants who had originally demeaned them as inferior.

In the United States, there is a significant historical exception to the general acceptance of and willingness to include European immigrants. World War I fostered a profound emphasis on American nationalism, and US entry into the war transformed ethnic Germans from acceptable White immigrants into enemies who had not become sufficiently American. German-language schools, along with other non-English-language schools, were quickly treated with suspicion, and many states passed laws prohibiting the use of the German language. Germans and other immigrants, particularly Jews who were leaders in organized labor, were seen as potential radicals with ongoing ties and affiliations to socialist revolutions abroad. Prominent German immigrants, including intellectuals, artists, and community leaders who had not acquired citizenship,

were incarcerated, an act that foreshadowed the internment camps for Japanese Americans in World War II. Many Germans were also physically assaulted, including at least one who was lynched (Spickard, 2007, p. 181). A consequent widespread push emerged for an “American” identity which emphasized loyalty to America. Many immigrants responded by abandoning or at least hiding their “foreign” heritage. By the end of World War I, “German immigrants” and their descendants had become “White Americans.”

By contrast, non-White immigrants received a lesser degree of acceptance in the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century. At the advent of European settlement and continuing at least into the eighteenth century in what is now the United States, people of color were presumed to be biologically incapable of becoming American. Colonial America believed that pre-modern societies, as represented by the indigenous Americans, as well as individuals from Africa and Asia, were innately inferior. As mentioned previously, the Naturalization Act of 1790 restricted citizenship to “free white persons” (“Naturalization Act,” 1790). Indigenous Native Americans, i.e., American Indians, were not even considered citizens of the United States until 1924. Those of African descent could become citizens only after the Civil War when the 1870 Naturalization Act extended citizenship to not only “white persons,” but also “persons of African descent” (“Naturalization Act “ 1870, Chapter CCLIV, Section 7). Nevertheless, those of African descent still faced legally sanctioned segregation and tremendous informal prejudice, most dramatically manifested in the lynchings of Blacks after the Civil War and into the twentieth century.

Asian immigrants, such as Chinese, Japanese, Koreans, and Filipinos, arrived in much smaller numbers than migrants from Europe, yet they generated more controversy and opposition than their European counterparts. They were legally ruled to be non-White and banned from marrying Whites in several states. Accordingly, they did not fit into melting-pot discourses at all. The 1870 Naturalization Act, for example, that extended citizenship to those of African descent

specifically barred Asians from becoming US citizens (Gettys, 1934, p. 70). Moreover, the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 was the first significant restriction on free immigration into the United States. It was not repealed until 1943. Bias against women was reflected in the 1907 Expatriation Act that declared that an American woman who married a foreign national lost her US citizenship. American men who married foreign women did not lose their citizenship (Nicolosi, 2001). In 1913, California passed a law that effectively barred Chinese and Japanese from owning property in the state, a law which was subsequently passed in other states (Gaines & Cho, 2004). By 1922, a woman who married a foreigner was allowed to retain her US citizenship, unless her husband was Asian – which would result in the loss of her citizenship (Nicolosi, 2001). In 1923 the US Supreme Court ruled that Indians from the Asian subcontinent could not become US citizens, and shortly after in 1924, the Oriental Exclusion Act not only prohibited most immigration from Asia, but also barred from entry the foreign-born wives and children of US citizens of Chinese ancestry (Haney-Lopez, 2006).

People of Mexican descent also confronted barriers to becoming Americans. The 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which incorporated the northwestern territories of Mexico into the United States, also granted formal US citizenship to those Mexicans living in those territories who did not choose to become Mexican citizens (Griswold del Castillo, 1992). Nevertheless, people of Mexican descent were not popularly considered to be “real” Americans. In most cases, land ownership rights of those living in the conquered territories were not recognized (Haynes, 2001). Most Western states prohibited marriages between whites and people of color, which was defined as including Mexicans. To escape this discrimination, many of those of Mexican descent in New Mexico referred to themselves as “Spanish-Americans” rather than Mexicans, a label that drew upon Latin America’s distinction between indigenous “indios” and “españoles,” i.e., Spaniards (Gonzalez, 1969). Being labeled as something other than Mexican could, for

example, provide their children with access to the segregated schools reserved for Whites (Menchaca, 2008).

Through the first half of the twentieth century, the forces of inclusion into the melting pot and exclusion of the supposedly racially distinct “others” created a generally informal, but occasionally legally sanctioned, ethnic and racial hierarchy of Americans. People of color faced far more restrictions and obstacles to becoming American. Although the large-scale historic European migrations to the United States are now romanticized and idealized, they were also tinged with racism and discrimination toward immigrants who did not fit the English Protestant ideal.

Theoretical Evolution: From Essentialized Racism to Socially Constructed Identifications

As the social sciences in Europe and the United States developed through the nineteenth and into the early twentieth centuries, they accepted the biological and racist premises of the broader society and sought to apply them. In the United States, anthropology and sociology were used to buttress arguments and policies that favored European immigrants over others, and that favored western European immigrants over those from eastern and southern Europe (Gould, 1981). Race was broadly conceived as what today we would call nationality or ethnicity. People from different nations and even regions were presumed to belong to different races, i.e., they were considered to be biologically and, therefore, socially and psychologically, fundamentally different.

This biological and racial conception was based in a broader framework that has been labeled as “modernism.” Modernism is marked by a profound belief in progress, that human societies move forward in a linear progression toward a condition which is considered “better” in some comparative format (Cowen & Shenton, 1995; Giddens, 1990). Western European societies, especially England, as well as North America were judged to be those that were moving

forward, at least by intellectuals and leaders from those societies. Other societies were labeled traditional, and their development was believed to be held back because their citizens were from inferior races. This hierarchy of societies was based upon supposedly innate characteristics and abilities accorded to the different races, which is known as “eugenics.” Accordingly, in the United States, the prevailing assumption was that people from the allegedly superior race had a right to push aside and even exterminate (such as occurred with the Native American Indians), enslave (as in the case of Africans), or bar from entry (as with Asians) inferior races (Cowen & Shenton, 1995; Nederveen Pieterse, 2007).

In 1911, in the midst of the Great Wave of immigration, the United States Immigration Commission, better known as the Dillingham Commission, issued a 42-volume report with extensive social and economic data. Considered moderate at the time, the commission invidiously claimed that northern European immigrants were superior to those from eastern and southern Europe. Eugenacists, who prominently contributed to the Dillingham Commission – including Madison Grant in his *The Passing of the Great Race* (1916) – argued that Anglo Saxons, Nordics, and Teutonics (i.e., Germans) should not contaminate their “racial purity” by marrying the “lower types” such as Poles, Italians, and Greeks. These ideas buttressed the nativist movement that sought to curb immigration to the United States, particularly that of the allegedly inferior peoples from anywhere other than western and northern Europe. A series of immigration laws were passed in the early 1920s that severely limited immigration from eastern and southern Europe and reconfirmed the exclusion of the Chinese. These legal restrictions combined with the Great Depression and then World War II to severely restrict immigration to the United States until the late 1940s. In this same era, the 1934 Tydings-McDuffie Act promised Philippine independence from the United States by 1944, but immediately stripped Filipinos of their status as US nationals.

Following World War II, and in response to the racist policies that Hitler’s Germany had

implemented, US immigration restrictionist policies began to shift toward more humanitarian principles. For example, the War Brides Act in 1945 allowed the foreign war brides of citizen members of the US armed forces to immigrate to the United States. In addition, the Luce-Cellar Act in 1946 extended the right to become naturalized citizens to newly freed Filipinos and Asian Indians, and the Displaced Persons Act of 1948 allowed some of those displaced by World War II to immigrate to the United States.

A scientifically based antiracist movement had begun to emerge in the early twentieth century, when Franz Boas, a pioneering anthropologist, countered the argument that immigrants were biologically different by examining the environmental factors that produced biological variations. He argued that immigrants were not an inferior genetic type, but simply people who had different life experiences, diets and opportunities. He demonstrated that in the second and third generations, the children and grandchildren of immigrants came to resemble native-born youth (Stocking, 1968).

Consequently, anthropology and sociology shifted toward an understanding of identity as emerging from social, rather than biological, processes. Research also became much more ethnographic, based upon direct observation of immigrants in their daily lives. Research on immigrants to the United States began in the early 1900s as the racist anti-immigrant climate was beginning to climax. The nascent Russell Sage Foundation initiated a research project on immigrant laborers throughout Pittsburgh's industries (Butler, 1909). With the publication of Thomas and Znaniecki's *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* (1918), the University of Chicago became the center of immigration research and established the framework that has influenced immigration studies to this day. Robert E. Park, Ernest Burgess, and W.I. Thomas systematically documented the conditions and attributes of immigrant groups, their occupations, and households. They described immigrant adaptation as a series of stages, in which "persons and groups acquire the memories, sentiments, and attitudes of other persons and groups and,

by sharing their experience and history, are incorporated with them in a common cultural life" (Park & Burgess, 1921, p. 735). Park and Burgess articulated what became the key theoretical concept in immigration studies in the United States, assimilation, which described the process by which immigrants became American.

Assimilation Theory and Melting Pots

Park and Burgess's early definitions of assimilation emphasized the cultural and social dimensions of immigrants adapting and fitting into American culture and society. In 1921, for example, they referred to incorporation into a "common cultural life" (1921, p. 735), and a few years later Park (1930, p. 281) defined "social assimilation" as the achievement of "cultural solidarity sufficient at least to sustain a national existence." Influenced by these sociologists, thinking about the process of becoming American moved from its former biological presumptions to a concentration on social and cultural dimensions.

The intellectual trajectory established by Park and Burgess culminated in Milton Gordon's *Assimilation in American Life* (1964). Gordon delineated a number of different dimensions of assimilation. For Gordon and other sociologists, acculturation was often considered the first step in assimilation, and the most noted part of acculturation was almost always language. Someone who preferred to use English over a non-English native language was considered acculturated and becoming more American. Language and other cultural traits, however, were not the only dimensions of assimilation. Sociologists were particularly likely to focus on social relations, i.e., who one's coworkers were, who one's neighbors were, with whom one spent free time (see, among others, Alba & Nee, 2003; Bean & Stevens, 2003; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). In each case, individuals were considered more socially assimilated when their social relations were more with established residents, i.e., native-born Americans of non-immigrant descent, which was generally interpreted as meaning one's ancestors had been in the United States at least three generations.

For many sociologists, the ultimate attainment of assimilation was marrying an established resident of non-immigrant background. Gordon (1964) also distinguished attitudes toward other groups and civic participation as critical dimensions of assimilation. Following Park and Burgess and their successors, assimilation was the expected outcome, a natural consequence of the immigrant experience in America, at least for immigrants of European descent (Gordon, 1964).

Gordon highlighted generational change as the yardstick to measure changes in immigrant groups. In this straight-line characterization of the assimilation process, the first generation (the foreign-born) were less assimilated and less exposed to American life than were their American-born children (the second generation); and their grandchildren (the third generation) were, in turn, more like the core American mainstream than their parents.

Gordon's analysis conformed well with the experiences of the immigrant flows from Europe in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, whose second- and third-generation offspring had apparently assimilated by the late 1950s and early 1960s when Gordon's research appeared. At the middle of the twentieth century, there were also some social scientists who argued that assimilation was not the same for everyone. Some argued that, rather than a single melting pot, there was instead a triple melting pot, and that immigrants assimilated into more culturally defined subcategories of US society. For example, Protestant, Jewish, and Catholic religious identities were interpreted as culturally defined ethnic identities because of their historical association with particular immigrant flows (Herberg, 1960; Kennedy, 1944).

Led by Robert Park (1930) as early as the 1930s, sociologists never completely accepted the melting pot. Park noted that "where peoples who come together are of divergent cultures and widely different racial stocks, assimilation and amalgamation do not take place so rapidly as they do in other cases" (cited in Gratton, 2002). Moreover, Gordon referred to assimilation not as a melting pot, but as Anglo conformity. Although small elements of foreign cuisine

had become incorporated into American culture, Gordon argued that the norms and ideas of Anglo Americans dominated. Not only was English overwhelmingly the language of the United States, but those in positions of power were disproportionately White Protestants, and if they were not Protestant, they were still most likely to be white and most certainly male.

The reality of the melting pot and the associated notion of assimilation were also challenged by the 1960s white ethnic resurgence, which followed closely on the heels of the Civil Rights Movement. The hyphenated identifications (e.g., Italian-American) that had been vigorously erased by the nationalistic American fervor engendered by the two world wars resurfaced. The phrase "White ethnic" is used to indicate that people who are white also have an ethnicity, as much as people who are Black or Latino. Since throughout the United States people who are white are both numerically and socially dominant, they often perceive themselves to be without ethnicity, to be simply Americans without an ethnic adjective. However, they are generally perceived by Blacks and Latinos as being different from Black Americans or Latino Americans. They are specifically and culturally White Americans. The term "White ethnic" was used as early as 1954 in the sociological literature (McKeown & Chyatte, 1954). Glazer's and Moynihan's (1970) discussion of the Irish and Italians in New York City made the term a central component of any sociological analysis of US ethnic categories. White ethnics were referred to as the "unmeltable ethnics," and included Italians in New York who maintained their ethnic distinctiveness and separation (Glazer & Moynihan, 1970). [See, *inter alia*, Greeley (1971), Waters (1996) and Doane (1997)].

Sociological and anthropological research on the ethnicity of white ethnics (Alba & Nee, 1997) added nuance to Glazer and Moynihan's notion that white ethnics were "unmeltable." Although white ethnics had not completely assimilated and lost their ethnic heritage, their expressions of ethnicity were typically more symbolic than fundamental. White ethnics did recognize their foreign roots and ate distinctive national foods,

but usually ethnic expressions were limited to special occasions and to foods that had been absorbed into American cuisine (Alba & Nee, 1997; Waters, 1990).

By the mid-1960s, sociological assimilation theory had reached its peak and had evolved from a simple assertion that all immigrants become Americans in a similar process to a recognition that, not only did at least some immigrants retain elements of their ancestors' distinct cultural heritage, but also that whites assimilated more easily than others. The Second Great Wave of US immigration that began in 1965 and that consisted of a majority from Latin America and Asia, had even more fundamentally challenged the notions of assimilation and becoming American. This substantial change in immigration policy and immigrants' origins has required further elaborations of assimilation and what it means to become American.

The Second Great Wave of US Immigration: 1965 and Onward

In the wake of World War II, US immigration law gradually loosened most of its restrictions. World War II veterans were permitted to bring home their brides from abroad. The United States accepted some of the European refugees displaced by the war, and it subsequently also accepted some refugees from the aborted Hungarian revolution against Communism in 1955. Indeed, while international law defined refugees as anyone fleeing persecution, the United States consistently favored those fleeing Communist or left-leaning regimes. Following Castro's revolution in Cuba and that country's ensuing conversion to Communism, the United States completely opened its doors to Cubans. In later years, US refugee law was brought in accordance with the broader international definition of refugees (through The Refugee Act of 1980), but frequently the law was still implemented to favor those fleeing Communism and to discriminate against others (see, for example, Teitelbaum, 1983; Zucker & Zucker, 1987). As the Civil Rights Movement progressed, the

United States became increasingly concerned about legally enforced racism. The severe restrictions on immigrants from particular countries embodied in the immigration laws of the 1920s were eliminated in 1965. Immigrants again began streaming into the United States, and many were from Latin America and Asia.

By the end of the twentieth century, the United States had more immigrants, specifically more people born outside the United States, than at the peak of the previous Great Wave at the beginning of the twentieth century. Although the percentage of the total population that was foreign-born (12.6% in 2007) was still less than it had been 100 years earlier when it peaked at 14.7%, the presence of new immigrants again raised questions of assimilation and the prospects for immigrants to become American. The new immigrants also appeared to be different from the previous waves. Although Europeans were among the new immigrants, many more were from Latin America and Asia. As late as 1960, over 70% of US immigrants were from Europe. By 2000, over 50% were from Latin America and over 25% from Asia (Migration Policy Institute, 2010a). Soon, Mexico, which contributed over 30%, was the single largest source of immigrants, followed by China, the Philippines, and India (Migration Policy Institute, 2010b). Although descendants of people from these places were already in the United States in significant numbers, especially in the western United States, the new immigrants were perceived as different and, for some, a challenge to America's identity (Huntington, 2004a, 2004b; Schlesinger, 1992).

The new post-1965 immigration from Latin America and Asia raised questions about the new immigrants' ability to become American, echoing the public debates from the first Great Wave approximately 100 years earlier concerning the supposedly biological racial differences of the Jewish and Catholic eastern and southern Europeans. Arthur Schlesinger (1992), for example, argued that America had become too tolerant of cultural diversity and that the emphasis on multiculturalism in US schools and other institutions would encourage and even assure that immigrants would maintain their homeland

cultures and not become American. Borjas (1990, 2006) stressed the characteristics of the immigrants themselves, asserting that they were of a “lower quality,” particularly in terms of educational achievement, and thus would not be able to advance economically. Still others emphasized social and economic barriers that might deter immigrants from truly integrating. Gans (1992) observed that the children of immigrants from “less fortunate” socioeconomic circumstances, especially dark-skinned immigrants, faced the risk of being trapped in permanent poverty because these children would lack job opportunities and would be confronted with high rates of unemployment, crime, alcoholism, drug use, and other traits associated with poverty and the frustration of unfulfilled expectations.

At the same time, and as with the Great Wave 100 years earlier, some Americans welcomed the new immigrants. Although manufacturing no longer needed massive supplies of workers, immigrant workers were and still are desired by various sectors of the economy. Since the shortage of labor caused by World War II, immigrants have had a primary presence in agriculture. From the 1980s onwards, immigrants became important components of labor in construction and the broad service industry. Moreover, they became central in one industrial sector: computers and information technology. Over 50% of the PhD-level engineers working in Silicon Valley, for example, are immigrants (Wong, 2005). All of these industries welcome immigrants and their labor.

In the wake of the Civil Rights movement and the associated positive acknowledgment of the contributions of non-Whites to America in the last half of the 1960s, there is a correspondingly greater acceptance and occasionally even celebration of immigrants. Athletes, artists, and scientists usually are welcomed eagerly into the United States, and significant numbers of immigrants hold university positions. Perhaps more significantly, all legal permanent immigrants can become citizens and exercise political power and influence. Immigrants without legal status, however, since they are not in the United States under cover of law, cannot become citizens and

are always subject to deportation, except when the US Congress passes special amnesty legislation to allow them to obtain a legal status, as it did in 1986 and has debated doing again. Advocacy groups for immigrants, such as the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, the National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium, and the National Council of La Raza, exist wherever significant numbers of immigrants have settled and in Washington, D.C. Increasingly, immigrant advocacy groups are emerging in states with a relatively recent history of immigration, including One America in the Pacific Northwest and the Mississippi Immigrant Rights Alliance in the heart of the US South. All of these organizations that advocate for immigrants are facilitating increased civic participation by immigrants and seeking to make it easier for immigrants to become American.

Becoming American for the New Second Generation

Until the 1990s, it was difficult to assess empirically in what ways the new immigrants were or were not becoming American, because they had not been in the United States for very long. A consensus gradually developed that the second generation, the children of those who immigrated, represented a more critical test of the opportunities and possibilities of becoming American. The first generation, which generally immigrates as adults, pragmatically has difficulty assimilating. Individuals who immigrate as adults almost always have a foreign accent when speaking English that identifies them as “not American.” Generally, it is more difficult to change one’s ways after reaching adulthood, and adult immigrants usually devote their energies to the immediate task of earning a living. The children of these immigrants, however, are more deeply affected by US culture. They go through the US school system; they have more free time than working adults; and they are more thoroughly exposed to American society and culture than are their parents.

In the United States, in the first decade of the twenty-first century, over 30 million young people are the children of immigrants (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006). In places of high immigrant concentrations, such as the Miami urban area, 30% of the population is composed of second-generation immigrants. The children of immigrants are still primarily young, with a median age in the early twenties. Accordingly, for many we still do not know in what ways and to what degree they will eventually become American in terms of behavioral acculturation and identification. Nevertheless, they have been the subject of considerable research, and some patterns are emerging along with some new theories to explain these patterns (see, for example, Bean, Brown, & Rumbaut, 2004; Harris, Jamison, & Trujillo, 2008; Hirschman, 1994, 2001; Kasinitz, Mollenkopf, Waters, & Holdaway, 2008; Kroneberg, 2008; Portes, Fernández-Kelly, & Haller, 2005; Rumbaut, 2008; Stepick, Dutton Stepick, Eugene, Teed, & Labissiere, 2001; Stepick, Dutton Stepick, & Labissiere, 2008; Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco, & Todorova, 2008).

In terms of behavioral acculturation, the children of immigrants are rapidly becoming American. They overwhelmingly prefer to speak English over their parents' heritage language (Portes & Schaufli, 1996). Schildkraut (Chapter 36, this volume) finds much the same thing regarding identification as American. The trend toward preferring English is especially evident over generations. By the third-plus generations (i.e., those whose grandparents or great-grandparents were immigrants), only 14% speak a language other than English at home (Rumbaut, 2004). At the same time, preferring English does not mean that immigrant youth are truly fluent.

For first-generation immigrant youth, there often remains a gap between conversational English and true literacy. While conversational verbal proficiency can be developed within a couple of years, it takes, for most non-native English speakers, 5–7 years under optimal conditions to achieve the level of academic language skills necessary to compete academically with native-born peers.

The preference among second-generation immigrants to speak English holds true regardless of their environment, even if they live in heavily immigrant areas where the majority around them speak a language other than English. They also adopt styles of a presentation of self that allow them to “fit in” with established residents, i.e., with those who were born in the United States to non-immigrant parents (see, for example, Olsen, 1997; Stepick, 1998; Suárez-Orozco, 1989; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2008). The children of immigrants listen to American popular music, dress according to current American youth styles, speak slang, and eat American fast food. By appearances and associated public behaviors, they have assuredly assumed an American identification.

Identity Labels versus Behavioral Acculturation

Paradoxically, at the same time as children of immigrants come to prefer English, American music, and American clothing, the labels they use to describe their identity become more focused on national origin and less on being American. As the children of immigrants go through high school, they generally and gradually come to recognize that, although they may act American, they are reminded by others that they are not solely or thoroughly American. When they are just entering high school, some children of immigrants use the simple label, “American,” to identify themselves, and some others use peculiarly American pan-ethnic labels such as African American or Latino. We say peculiarly American because these pan-ethnic labels are generally unknown, or at least not used, in the home countries of these children's parents. As they move through adolescence, many choose a hyphenated label, such as Mexican-American or Chinese-American. However, by the time the same youth are graduating from high school, very few choose an identity label of simply American, and fewer also identify with the pan-ethnic labels. Most still choose a hyphenated label, but many more claim their parents' national-origin labels, such as

Mexican or Haitian, without the hyphen (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). Thus, in terms of ethnic self-identity labels, there is a movement away from American and toward national origins. Children of immigrants have learned to see themselves within an America that is not a melting pot but instead is composed of peoples of diverse origins.

Not only do the children of immigrants perceive America as multiethnic, but there is also a growing recognition that the processes involved in becoming American are diverse. Immigrant parents generally encourage their children to retain at least some aspects of their homeland culture – and these efforts generally produce mixed results. Many children of immigrants retain and emphasize some of their parents' cultural heritage, but how much and which parts vary considerably. In general, for example, those whose parents are native Spanish speakers are more likely to retain knowledge of Spanish, even if they do prefer to speak in English (Kasinitz et al., 2008; Portes & Rumbaut, 2006). On the other hand, children of Chinese immigrants are especially unlikely to speak their parents' language (Kasinitz et al., 2008). No matter what language their parents speak, the children of immigrants are unlikely to be literate in their parents' language even when they do understand and speak it (Portes, & Rumbaut, 2006; C. Suárez-Orozco et al., 2008).

Selective Acculturation

Many immigrant parents view at least some aspects of American culture as undesirable, even dangerous. Immigrant parents, for example, often are uncomfortable with public displays of sexuality common in US mass media and often embodied in young women's dress. Immigrant parents fear that such displays may produce premature sex and unwanted pregnancies and thus derail their hopes for their children's education (Stepick, 1998; Warikoo, 2005). Immigrant parents also often fear that American youth do not value and put enough effort into their education. Accordingly, many immigrant parents do

not want their children interested in sexuality and peer social life instead of studying and do not want their children to Americanize in this fashion (Lopez, 2003; Stepick, 1998). Children of Asian immigrants, particularly those from China, Korea, Vietnam, and India, largely resist these aspects of Americanization and maintain a strong focus on education (Gibson, 1989; Louie, 2004, 2006; Zhou, 2007). Zhou and Bankston (1994, 1996), for example, observed that Vietnamese adolescents were constantly reminded by parents of their duty to show respect for their elders, to take care of younger siblings, to work hard, and to base decisions upon approval of parents, a trait generally referred to as filial piety.

To account for the differential retention of their parents' cultural heritage among Sikhs living in northern California, Gibson (1989) created the concept of selective acculturation. Within this concept, the aspects of immigrant culture that young people retain most notably include respect for education and respect for authority. At the same time, many children of immigrants from Asia selectively Americanize as their parents expect them to learn English and succeed in American schools. Children of immigrants also often incorporate selected aspects of expressive culture from their parents' homeland into their day-to-day lives in the United States. Heritage music from their parents' homeland culture is especially likely to be incorporated into the second generation's repertoire of cultural expressions (see McCann, 2004 on Brazil; Simonett, 2001 on Mexico; Wong, 2004 on Asian Americans). Music is perhaps the element of foreign cultures that Americans most readily accept and integrate, thereby producing musical genres of various origins, yet which are part of the American arts. Immigrants take advantage of America's interest in and ability to absorb different musical styles and use music to imagine their family homeland and assert their place in it as well as in the host society (Flores, 2005; Pacini-Hernandez & Garofalo, 2004). As detailed in the section on conceptualizing multiple identities, selective acculturation can be empirically complex.

Transnational Identities

One aspect of identity was not emphasized in studies of earlier waves of immigrants: transnationalism, that is lives and identities that span national borders. Piore (1979) demonstrated that as much as one-fourth of Italian migrants during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to the United States returned home after a brief stay in the United States and many of those later returned again to the United States, engaging in circular migration back and forth between Italy and the United States. Nevertheless, the focus of research on Italian and other European flows to the United States 100 years ago was on those who settled. With the wave of immigration that began in 1965, studies have focused not only on settlers, but also those who move back and forth, i.e., transnational migrants. The most obvious transnational actors are perhaps merchants who buy goods in their homelands, transport them to the United States for sale, and then take US goods back to their homeland for sale there. Many other migrants also structure their lives across borders, some for religious reasons, some for family or for political reasons. Logically, others could be considered transnational actors, such as seasonal migrant workers, international businesspeople, and international students. These groups are usually not included as immigrants, however, because the emphasis in transnational studies is on people who have demonstrated some form of commitment to settlement, even if settlement is split between two locations. These other groups are considered to be temporary visitors to the United States rather than permanent migrants. Transnationalism has become the focus of considerable research (see, for example, Basch, Glick-Schiller, & Blanc-Szanton, 1994; Glick-Schiller & Fouron, 2001; Kearney, 1995; Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007; Mahler, 1995).

Most migrants living some form of transnational existence are first-generation immigrants, as they are likely to have deeper ties to their homeland than their second-generation children who, by definition, have been socialized

primarily in the United States. Nevertheless, the extent and ease of ties to the homeland in a globalized world linked by cell phones, the Internet, and relatively inexpensive air travel affect everyone. And, although most children of immigrants do not maintain significant actual transnational lives, some do this. Many experience significant sentimental ties that affect their sense of identity (Levitt & Waters, 2003).

Even those who never go back to their ancestral homes are frequently raised in households where people, values, goods, and claims from somewhere else are present on a daily basis (Fouron & Glick-Schiller, 2002; Pries, 2004). They may develop the skills and social connections to become transnational activists if and when they choose to do so during a particular life-cycle stage. In the meantime, they participate in at least some activities that emphasize their homeland, such as family celebrations or simply receiving visits of family and friends from the homeland.

In South Florida, children of West Indian immigrants are likely to feel "at home in both cultures," and West Indians and Colombians in particular have been found to most frequently visit their parents' homeland (Haller & Landolt, 2005). Although there has not been much research on the relationship between transnational activities and identity among the children of immigrants, for the first generation, transnational activities and immigrant political integration have been found to complement each other rather than conflict with one another. Some studies have found that transnational and US-focused political activities often appear together and even reinforce each other (DeSipio, 2006; Portes, Escobar, & Arana, 2009). Thus, transnational actors express an attachment and identity that is both American and supportive of their homeland. To draw an analogy from the descendants of the first Great Wave of immigrants, American Jews can easily be both American and supportive of Israel. Similarly, first- and second-generation immigrants can be involved in political activities in their homeland, yet still be engaged in US politics.

Conceptualizing Multiple Identities

For some immigrant youth, the multiple forces of Americanization, selective acculturation, and transnational ties can be confusing and troubling. How can and how should we represent these multiple dimensions of identity? In popular culture, it is often presumed that an individual can only maintain a singular national identity, as evidenced after the United States entered World War I when German Americans were forced to become 100% American, and quickly complied with demands to abandon their German schools, German associations, and other obvious aspects of their German cultural roots. Similar fears about loyalty resulted in the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II. After the Civil Rights struggle of the 1960s and the resulting rise in tolerance and even celebration of multiculturalism, some parts of American society encourage complex identities, whereas others still expect individuals to have a simple, singular identity.

Sociologists and anthropologists agree that identities are complex, but they have not reached a consensus on how to represent the complexity. Many have used the term “hybrid” to reflect the combination of elements from different sources. Close ethnographic observation reveals that many children of immigrants report some blending or hyphenated identities, or embrace a pan-ethnic identity rather than one tied to a specific nationality (Espiritu, 2003; Lopez, 2003; Perez, 2001). Hybridity does indeed capture a significant component of the empirical observations of immigrant identity described above. The children of immigrants, for example, learn to speak English and express an appreciation for American institutions such as education and politics, while simultaneously often practising the same religion and forms of worship that their parents did in their homeland, understanding their parents’ native language, and eating their homeland cuisine. Hybrid, however, seems to imply that identity may be fixed, singular, and coherently integrated. The empirical research reveals that identity may vary according to context (cf. Huynh, Nguyen, & Benet-Martínez, Chapter 35,

this volume) and becomes transformed as part of the adolescent psychological development process. How this occurs is described in the next section.

Although the concept of selective acculturation may help explain why some immigrant youth do exceptionally well educationally, taken as a sole explanation it also tends to simplify the complexity of the process of becoming American. New York immigrant youth, for example, report they do not feel fully a part of their immigrant parents’ homeland or US ethnic communities, nor do they see themselves as fully “American” – by which they mean established resident Whites whom they know primarily through television. Nevertheless, they do not fret over living between different worlds. They believe they can pick and choose which cultural elements best work in particular situations (Kasinitz et al., 2004, 2008). In the process, in terms of behavioral acculturation, it may be said they have become American.

One limit inherent in believing that children of immigrants can pick and choose cultural elements in their lives is that it tends to overemphasize the choice the children of immigrants have in adopting an identity. Although children of immigrants may choose what music to listen to or what food to eat, they cannot choose the color of their skin. Whereas children of West Indians may elect to maintain their parents’ British-inflected accent, they may still be perceived and treated by others as no different from African Americans (Waters, 1999a). Although South Americans may know nothing about Mexico, they may still be treated as no different from Mexicans. In short, wherever prejudice and discrimination exists toward native minorities or particular immigrant groups, children of immigrants who are similar to, or mistaken for, the native minorities or the particular immigrant groups remain subject to the same discrimination.

Another way in which selective acculturation and hybridization approaches tend to oversimplify the understanding of the identities and behaviors of immigrants and their children is by overlooking the reciprocal impact of immigrants and their children on American society and culture. It is important to recognize that, because

second-generation immigrants are American by birth, they are also helping to remake what it means to be American (Alba & Nee, 2003; Warikoo, 2005). Just as pizza and wonton soup have become part of American cuisine, contemporary children of immigrants are contributing their own particular flavors to the range of what it means to be American. Their contributions are evident in popular music through such musicians as Carlos Santana (Mexico), Gene Simmons (Israel), Gloria Estefan (Cuba), and Wyclef Jean (Haiti). In the everyday lives of second-generation immigrant adolescents, ethnic displays of identity contribute to always-fluid dimensions of social status, including, for example, sari-themed clothing or henna dyes on skin, which are approximated into an American style termed Indo-chic (Warikoo, 2005).

Field research reveals that, regardless of what ethnic self-identity label a child of immigrants may choose, he or she actually performs different identities in different contexts (see Huynh et al., Chapter 35, this volume). In school, a child of immigrants may enact an American identity and, indeed, after a youth has been in the United States for sometime between 6 months and a year, it is often impossible for outsiders (and occasionally even insiders, such as teachers and principals) to know from outward appearances which children are immigrants and which are natives (See Stepick et al., 2001). But outside of school, a youth often performs a different identity. On Sundays, which are generally focused on family activities, the children of immigrants typically reveal their immigrant origins. They often attend church with their parents, speak their parents' language with adult, first-generation immigrants, eat traditional foods, and listen to music from their parents' homeland. Much like the "unmeltable" White ethnics described by Moynihan and Glazer (1970), in particular contexts these second-generation immigrants display their ethnic origins. Yet, in other contexts, they display or perform their American identity. For this reason, we prefer the phrase multiple identities or what others have called identifications to conceptualize the multiple dimensions of identity for immigrants and their children.

Causes of Assuming and Performing Particular Identities

What are the forces that produce particular conceptions and performances of identity in particular contexts? At a general level, the performance of different aspects and dimensions of identity reflects the dialectic between immigrants' own self-attribution (i.e., internal self-categorization) and socially defined or ascriptive conditions specific to the social worlds in which they are embedded (in psychology, Berry, 2005; and in sociology and anthropology, Vertovec, 2001; Wimmer, 2004). More particularly, behavioral expressions of identity further reflect what forces are the most powerful in an individual's immediate, local lived context. Immigration studies conceptualize this context as the context of reception, i.e., the opportunities available to immigrants and how immigrants are treated by members of the host society (Portes & Böröcz, 1989; Portes & Rumbaut, 2006). If immigrants are welcomed, and if they are treated with respect, then they are more likely to identify with the host population. If on the other hand, they encounter prejudice and discrimination, they are likely to respond with reactive ethnicity, i.e., the development of defensive identities that highlight the positive aspects of their differences. When immigrants confront discrimination, there is a tendency to reaffirm the collective worth of the in-group by drawing an even stronger protective boundary around it, that is, by identifying even more strongly with ethnic traditions and maintaining boundaries from the host society [Rumbaut & Portes, 2001, also see Spears (Chapter 9, this volume) on social identity processes and Licata et al. (Chapter 38, this volume) on similar processes within European contexts].

The context of reception varies significantly by geographic level: from the national level attitudes and policies toward immigrants in general and toward specific national-origin groups down to the regional and local levels of an immigrant's face-to-face relationships in places such as neighborhoods and schools. Immigrants may confront prejudice at the national level yet be welcomed

and accommodated locally. Immigrants may also be initially welcomed but subsequently encounter negative policy shifts or new social stereotypes that are rejecting.

Current anti-immigrant attitudes and fervor have been a dominant political theme in the United States since at least the mid-1990s when the state of California passed several referenda that attempted to discriminate against immigrants, with one specifically focused on denying educational, welfare, and health services to undocumented immigrants. California's Proposition 187, which was passed in 1994, mandated that teachers, doctors, social workers, and police check the immigration status of all persons seeking access to public education and health services from publicly funded agencies, and deny services to those in the United States illegally (Alvarez & Butterfield, 2000). Also in California, Proposition 209, passed in 1996, prohibits public institutions from considering race, sex, or ethnicity in, for example, hiring employees or admission to state universities. Although supporters labeled Proposition 209 the "California Civil Rights Initiative," its goal was to eliminate affirmative action (Myers, 2007). Proposition 227, passed in 1998, requires that those California public school students in English as a Second Language (ESL) classes be placed in structured English immersion for a period "not normally to exceed 1 year," then be transferred to mainstream classrooms taught "overwhelmingly in English." This proposition also gave parents the possibility to request alternative programs to ESL for their children, however, the availability of waivers and information to parents has been a challenge in the implementation of this proposition (Crawford, 1997; Johnson & Martinez, 2000).

In the midst of these state legislative actions against immigrants, the federal government also boosted efforts to intercept illegal immigrants along the United States-Mexico border. In spite of the increased federal resources on the border, a vigilante group, the Minutemen, emerged and claimed that they would patrol the border because the US federal forces were too ineffective in their estimation. Bedolla (2000, 2005) indicates that anti-immigrant movements produced an ethnic

reaction among not only immigrants, but also native minorities, particularly those of Latino descent who shared a similar ethnic and working-class background with the targeted immigrants. In the first few years of the 2000s, similar reactive ethnicity was evidenced in massive demonstrations by immigrants throughout the United States as the US Congress considered immigration reform in which some proposals would restrict immigration and deny federal benefits to immigrants already in the United States.

Not all immigrants responded with such forceful reactive ethnicity. Demonstrations in Miami were proportionally much smaller than in New York, Chicago, or Los Angeles, in spite of the fact that Miami proportionally has more immigrants. The reason is that the national and local reception proffered to Miami's primary immigrant group, Cubans, has always been much more open and "welcoming" than that offered to other immigrants in the United States. The organizers of the demonstrations in Miami struggled to unify the longstanding cleavages between Miami's immigrant communities (Vanderkooy & Nawyn, 2011, forthcoming). Early waves of Cuban refugees received unparalleled federal benefits that underwrote the transformation of Miami into one of the focal economic and urban centers of the Caribbean and even all of Latin America (Pedraza-Bailey, 1985; Stepick & Grenier, 1993). Locally, Cuban immigrants and their children have become the most powerful group, superseding the previous White American oligarchy (Portes & Stepick, 1993). Cubans have been able to create a local context in which speaking Spanish is not a negative attribute but is, in fact, an advantage: and where being an immigrant or the child of an immigrant is not demeaned, but rather is accepted as a point of pride. Within Miami, Cuban immigrants and their children experience inclusion, not exclusion. As a result, the children of Cuban immigrants express their sense of belonging in much the same ways that White American youth do throughout the rest of the United States. The children of Cuban immigrants in Miami proprietarily take their central place in society for granted. Only when an event or travel moves them out of the comfort of their

region where their community is dominant are they forced to reflect on their sense of belonging or identity.

The first dramatic event that caused Cuban immigrants to recognize that they were not fully American was the Mariel boatlift that, within a few months in 1980, brought over 125,000 refugees from Cuba to South Florida, including some released from Cuba's prisons. The overwhelming influx produced a backlash against all Cubans in the United States, including the creation of the US English Only movement which began in Miami-Dade County. In turn, this backlash prompted strong reactive ethnicity among Miami's Cuban immigrants that had a tremendous local political impact. Within less than a decade, the Cuban community mobilized to elect first- or second-generation Cubans to every significant local political position including mayors, city and county commissions, local school boards, state legislature, and the US House of Representatives. By the early 1990s, Cubans had thoroughly established themselves as the most powerful local group (Stepick & Dutton Stepick, 2001). This created a context of reception for becoming American unlike anywhere else in the United States.

Miami Cubans so thoroughly dominate the local scene in Miami-Dade County that the children of Cuban immigrants often do not realize that they may hold views and values different from the rest of America. They often presume everyone outside of Miami is not so different from them, at least until they are forced to confront "mainstream American" perspectives and opinions about events and issues close to home. The case of Elián Gonzalez, the Cuban rafter boy who became the focus of national attention in 2000–2001, jolted Miami Cuban youth into the realization of how much they may have been taking for granted (Stepick, Grenier, Castro, & Dunn, 2003). Elián Gonzalez was a 6-year-old Cuban boy who survived a raft trip to Miami while his mother drowned and his father remained in Cuba. His father and the Cuban government demanded the return of the child to Cuba, with which the US government eventually complied. In the meantime, the Miami

Cuban community insisted that Elián remain in Miami rather than return to Cuba (Acosta, 2001; De La Torre, 2003; Stepick et al., 2003). Many Miami Cuban youth, who had not been previously politically engaged and who had conceived of themselves as American, suddenly participated in demonstrations and emphasized their Cuban roots. After Elián was returned to Cuba, Vivian, a Cuban teen, concluded "The Americans [meaning non-Hispanic Whites], it's like this is their country and we're not part of this. We are visitors. Just that we're not Americans. We're from other places. We don't belong here."³ Miguel, a Nicaraguan, added, "I think what she's trying to say is no matter how hard you try, you're always going to be from another country. We're not going to be American. We're going to be Latin."

The Elián case shocked the children of Cuban immigrants in Miami into an awareness of their "otherness" vis-à-vis the national social and political landscape. This event also affected their Nicaraguan peers, who similarly had been largely politically unengaged. The Nicaraguan youth were forced into acknowledging the uniqueness of the region where they lived and their difference from non-Hispanic Whites. Above all, they were shocked into a new awareness that others in the broader US society beyond Miami might hold different views of the world and of them. They were forced to reflect upon their sense of belonging to their local place as well as their place in the broader US society. The Elián event highlighted how the local context of reception is critical in developing a sense of what it is to be both an American and a child of immigrants, and it also indicated how dramatic events can challenge and change one's sense of identity and self. This event also revealed the limits of Cuban local power. Although, generally, Cubans and other local Latinos could become American on their own terms, the broader society and particularly the national government could enforce its terms when it so decided.

Cubans in Miami represent a case of an extremely positive context of reception. Cuban immigrants automatically receive permanent residency in the United States one year after they set foot on American soil. Although occasionally

other Latino adults in Miami complain that Cubans have all the power, at the same time, Latinos from South America and much of the rest of the Americas recognize that in Miami, they can become part of the United States without having to adapt to White American culture. In particular, they do not have to learn English in order to succeed or simply to get by with daily living. In contrast to much of the United States where Latino students report frequent discrimination (Lopez, 2003; Olsen, 1997; Suárez-Orozco, 1989; Valenzuela, 1999), Nicaraguan students, for example, in a local high school maintained that teachers did not discriminate against them, “because they (the teachers) are Hispanic, too, or they’re of Hispanic descent” (Konczal, 2002).

However, non-Latino immigrants in Miami, such as Haitians, must contend with a very different context of reception that discriminates and expresses prejudices toward their language, culture, and often their skin color. In spite of a generally pro-immigrant sentiment at the local county level in Miami, Haitian youth have endured extreme and sometimes violent social and cultural discrimination. The US government has routinely sought to discourage Haitians from coming to the United States by using the US Coast Guard to intercept boats off the shores of Haiti that may be headed for the United States. These efforts to intercept Haitians date back to 1981. In 1994, it was extended to interdict Cubans, too. However, for those not interdicted at sea and who make it to US shores, Cubans are allowed to stay and almost all Haitians are incarcerated or sent back to Haiti. Individual Haitians are almost never granted asylum or refugee status regardless of either general political chaos or evidence of individual persecution back in Haiti (Stepick, 1998). Instead, the government jails without parole Haitians who do make it to the United States without a visa and claim that they want to stay. Negative treatment of Haitians by the US Government predates this internment policy; during the 1980s, the US government also mistakenly branded Haitians as public health risks. First, the government claimed that Haitians were bringing tuberculosis into the United States, and then it claimed that Haitians

were one of the sources of the HIV/AIDS virus (George, 1978; Mohl, 1987; Stepick, 1998).

At the more local level, Haitians confront further prejudice and discrimination from the general population, who commonly identifies them as poor and without skills, and undeserving of residence in the United States (Stepick, 1998). The result has been a delayed reactive ethnicity. Younger second-generation Haitian children often feel so stigmatized that they actually hide their Haitian heritage, attempting to pass as Bahamian or African American in order to escape discrimination. Older adolescents, once they have learned how to perform an American identity, such as playing US sports or performing well in school, often re-discover their Haitian heritage and display it proudly (Stepick, 1998; Stepick et al., 2001).

Proximal Hosts and Native Minorities

The particular English accent and vocabulary that the children of immigrants develop, their specific clothing styles, the precise music they prefer, and identity label they adapt depends on where they are in America, who lives in their neighborhood, who attends their schools, and what kind of Americans they interact with most frequently and intensely. Although general American culture, through such media as movies and television, influences immigrants, even more important are face-to-face interactions in one’s immediate social environment. Waters (1994, 1999a) has labeled this the “proximal host,” i.e., those native-born individuals and earlier immigrants who constitute the social environment that surrounds and most affects immigrants and their children.

Because many immigrants reside in urban areas, often the proximal hosts for the children of immigrants are American minorities – such as African Americans, Latinos, and Asian Americans. There is frequently a difference between the way the immigrant parents and their children perceive and relate to American minorities. Immigrant parents are keenly aware of the stigmatized status of poor, particularly inner-city

African Americans, and they accordingly often distance themselves from them. First-generation immigrant West Indians and Haitians, for example, often prefer to distinguish themselves from African Americans by proclaiming a national identity, such as Jamaican or Haitian (Rogers, 2006; Stepick, 1998; Vickerman, 1998; Waters, 1994, 1999b). This positional identity has also been observed in the case of Dominican immigrants who are generally black by US standards, but who also speak Spanish. They frequently choose to emphasize their Hispanic/Latino identity over a black identity, also as a means to avoid the prejudice and discrimination directed toward poor African Americans (Bailey, 2001, 2007).

Many children of immigrants, however, come to know American minorities far more closely than White Americans, because they attend school with them and grow up with them. Although they occasionally exhibit their parents' fears and negative stereotypes, children of immigrants are much more likely to identify with their American minority peers. Both Haitians and African Americans, for example, acutely experience and astutely assess racism in the United States. The struggle against racism allies African Americans with Haitians. Whenever the US government jails newly arrived Haitians, refusing them the legal immigration status that the US government extends to Cubans, both African Americans and Haitians interpret the actions as based upon racism. Similarly, both African Americans and Haitians in Miami celebrated the 2008 election of Barack Obama as a victory against racism (Castillo et al., 2008). One way in which Haitians and African Americans express their solidarity is through an assertion of a common African history. As a 15-year-old Haitian young man, also in Miami, suggested, "You should tell them we are African 'cause all-a-us came on the slave ships from Africa. Some got off here and some got off there. We're all African." The high school class he was addressing spontaneously erupted in applause (Stepick, 1998, p. 87).

This identification with native minorities among children of immigrants has been termed segmented assimilation (Portes & Zhou, 1993).

In a general sense, segmented assimilation refers to first- and second-generation immigrants of color and means they may assimilate into the segments of US society that they most physically resemble. Thus, Asian immigrant children may assimilate into the Asian American segment of American society; children of Black immigrants, on the other hand, assimilate into the African American segment, whereas children of immigrants from Spanish-speaking countries assimilate into Latino/Hispanic segments.

Some have further argued that some of the children of immigrants identify with and adopt the stereotypical values associated with some poor inner-city youth involved in oppositional values and behaviors, such as demeaning education, being rebellious or self-destructive, and valuing gang life and violent and often illegal activities (Portes & Zhou, 1993). The statistics on incarceration for the children of immigrants indicate that a small proportion of the children of immigrants do indeed drop out of school, and that some do become involved in illegal activities similar (and sometimes identical) to that of some American minority youth. The data also clearly indicate that the majority of the children of immigrants are certainly not involved in such behaviors, even in poor neighborhoods with poor schools (Kasinitz et al., 2008; Rumbaut, 2008). Thus, most children of immigrants do assimilate to a specific segment of American culture, but they do so selectively – generally choosing those elements that allow them to be accepted by their peers but that do not put them in danger.

Immigrant parents, unfortunately, are not always so discerning. They see the clothes that emphasize sexuality, hear the music that may glorify violence, and confront attitudes that defy authority. They often interpret this performance of one aspect of American identity as a rejection of parental values and goals for their children to obtain an education and to find a secure place in American society. The great majority of children of immigrants are more likely, however, to see these American styles as only one aspect of their identity (Kasinitz et al., 2008), one that allows them to be accepted by their peers, but one that

does not necessarily compromise their commitment to education and to taking advantage of the opportunities that drew their parents to the United States in the first place.

Conclusion

The American people, and most of the world, think of the United States as a nation that has welcomed immigrants and has made it easy for them to become American. That image is only partially supported by the facts. Until at least the 1960s, the melting pot was really a mold of conformity to the norms established by WASP culture. Immigrants from England nearly instantly became American. Those from continental Europe found their labor welcome, but otherwise often initially encountered resistance to everything else about them. Yet, as “free white people,” the possibility of becoming American often became a reality. For people who were non-White, the barriers were far more substantial, and even many Europeans, especially southern and eastern Europeans, were largely excluded from completely becoming American until after World War II, when the United States began to allow more immigrants to enter the country and when once again their labor became highly valued.

Beginning in the 1960s, to a degree never previously encountered in US history, some in the United States celebrated the diversity that immigrants brought with them and encouraged immigrants to become American without surrendering selective aspects of their homeland heritage [what has been called “biculturalism” (Berry, 2005, see also Huynh et al., Chapter 35, this volume)]. At the same time, others continued the nativist, anti-immigrant ways that have deep roots in American history and expressed concerns that these new immigrants did not want to, and could not truly, become American.

America is at a crossroads now where the second generation of the latest wave of primarily non-Europeans is attaining adulthood.

For those immigrants from non-White backgrounds, such as Black and Latino/Hispanic immigrants, it is unclear if they can ever be accepted or seen as simply “American” or whether they will become African American or Latino American. The emerging ethnographic realities indicate that they are becoming American in complex ways that reflect how America has treated them, their parents’ efforts to maintain some of their heritage, and increased opportunities to live at least part of their lives transnationally across borders. They are joining the American workforce; they are raising children who speak English; and they are taking part in the American political process. They know that they are American in ways far more fundamental than their parents who were born in another country. At the same time, they are holding onto selected aspects of their parents’ culture and identity, and they recognize that they are not American in the same way as White Americans whose families have been in the United States for generations. This generation of immigrants’ offspring are finding their place in American society. In the process, they are finding and asserting identities that are outside of the WASP ideal from which social norms have historically flowed in the United States. Through these multiple identities, whether they are reactive or not, this new cohort of immigrant Americans finds pride in difference and is assuredly changing what it means to become American.

Notes

1. We acknowledge that “American” should refer to all of the Americas from Canada to Argentina and Chile. Nevertheless, the most common usage is for it to refer more narrowly to the United States of America, a usage we adopt in this chapter with apologies to those from other nations in the Americas.
2. The phrase “White ethnic” is discussed more thoroughly later in this chapter.

3. All of these quotes come from focus groups with Nicaraguan and Cuban high school students in Miami. The broader project was part of an examination of the academic orientation of immigrant and native minority adolescents. For a description of the methodology, see Stepick (1995).

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Identity, Immigration, and Prejudice in Europe: A Recognition Approach

38

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Abstract

Social identity is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, identifying with a social group is a prerequisite for the sharing of common norms and values, solidarity, and collective action. On the other hand, in-group identification often goes together with prejudice and discrimination. Today, these two sides of social identification underlie contradictory trends in the way European nations and European nationals relate to immigrants and immigration. Most European countries are becoming increasingly multicultural, and anti-discrimination laws have been adopted throughout the European Union, demonstrating a normative shift towards more social inclusion and tolerance. At the same time, racist and xenophobic attitudes still shape social relations, individual as well as collective behaviour (both informal and institutional), and political positions throughout Europe. The starting point for this chapter is Sanchez-Mazas' (2004) interactionist approach to the study of racism and xenophobia, which in turn builds on Axel Honneth's (1996) philosophical theory of recognition. In this view, the origin of attitudes towards immigrants cannot be located in one or the other group, but in a dynamic of mutual influence. Sanchez-Mazas' approach is used as a general framework into which we integrate social psychological approaches of prejudice and recent empirical findings examining minority-majority relations. We particularly focus on the role of national and European identities as antecedents of anti-immigrant attitudes held by national majorities. Minorities' reactions to denials of recognition are also examined. We conclude by delineating possible social and political responses to prejudice towards immigrants.

At the very moment we are writing this chapter, about 200 undocumented immigrants – among them children – occupy a large sports hall at the Free University of Brussels in Belgium, where they took shelter after being expelled from a squat (i.e., illegally occupied dwelling) by the police

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more than 3 months ago. These immigrants, like many others, are requesting the abolition of the barriers with which undocumented immigrants are confronted. They are supported by a committee of Belgian volunteers. Similar instances of collective claims from undocumented immigrants have been witnessed throughout Europe during the past two decades (see Düvell, 2008). Reactions from national majorities range from strong xenophobic reactions, where illegal immigrants are portrayed as a threat, to social support and political mobilization for their cause.

Originating from diverse parts of the world (especially from North and Central Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, and Eastern Europe), undocumented immigrants seek shelter in Western Europe for either political or economic reasons, or a combination of both. Some of them are fighting for basic rights: to obtain legal status that would give them the right to live in their new homelands, to have access to decent housing, to get a legal job, or to send their children to school. Whereas some members of the receiving societies contend that illegal immigrants have no right to enter the country's territory and should not be granted any rights, others support their claims on the basis of universal human rights (Steiner, 2009). In contrast, legal immigrants usually benefit from these basic rights, as well as from most civic rights. However, in most European countries, political rights such as voting at local, regional, national, or European elections are still restricted to nationals.¹ In turn, these rights are fully granted to naturalised immigrants, that is, immigrants or people of immigrant descent who are granted citizenship in the country to which they (or their parents) have immigrated. Nevertheless, even some of the cultural, ethnic, or religious practices of naturalised immigrants – such as the right to wear the Muslim headscarf in schools – are often considered by national majorities as lying outside the range of acceptable behaviour. In addition, despite their formal rights being recognised, both legal immigrants and nationals of immigrant descent still suffer from informal rejection from majority members, especially when their physical appearance or style of dress differentiates

them from majority members. They still often face negative stereotypes, prejudice, and acts of discrimination.

In this chapter, drawing on Axel Honneth's (1996) philosophical theory of recognition, we present an interactionist approach to prejudice. This approach will be used as a general framework into which we will integrate social psychological approaches to prejudice and recent empirical findings. We particularly focus on the role of national and European identities as antecedents of anti-immigrant attitudes (see Schildkraut, Chapter 36, this volume, for an analysis of similar issues in the US context).

The Denial of, and Struggle for Recognition

To reach a better understanding of contemporary forms of prejudice, it is essential to define the broader societal context in which prejudice is embedded. First, expressing prejudice is but one of the numerous outcomes of the relationships between national majorities and immigrants. Some majority members support restrictive immigration and integration policies, express anti-immigrant prejudice, vote for xenophobic political parties, discriminate against immigrants, or even use violence against them. In contrast, other members of the same societies establish strong affective links (including marriage) with immigrants, donate their time and money to help them, or become involved in collective actions to support them. Second, there are different ways of expressing a negative attitude towards immigrants (Brown, 1995), and ascribing negative stereotypical traits to them is only one of these. For example, one can express a negative attitude towards an asylum seeker by supporting restrictive immigration criteria, and one can derogate a legal immigrant by supporting assimilationist integration policies. The recent vote of a majority of Swiss citizens in support of a law prohibiting the building of minarets (the towers of Mosques) is a case in point. Third, immigrant minorities also have claims related to culture, ethnicity,

or religion — such as wearing headscarves in schools, funding religious schools, or being politically represented at local or national levels — that sometimes trigger individual or collective behaviour on the part of both the immigrant and majority groups. Whereas some immigrants remain silent, others engage in collective actions to obtain rights, fight against prejudice and discrimination, or participate in politics. These actions can then trigger prejudice towards or support for immigrants among national majority members. Thus, prejudice should also be conceived as a *reaction* to the actions of minorities and not only as *judgements* about the minority members' "essence". It is necessary to take the back-and-forth interactions between majorities and minorities into account in order to grasp some of the specificities of modern prejudice.

German philosopher Axel Honneth's (1996) theory of "The struggle for recognition", which Sanchez-Mazas (2004, 2007) has applied to the study of racism and xenophobia, provides such an interactionist view of majority-minority relationships. The main tenets of this theory connect majority and minority perspectives and provide a general framework in which social psychological theories of prejudice, as well as recent empirical findings, can be situated. Within this integrative framework, we posit that holding prejudiced attitudes towards immigrants is one of various ways of denying them recognition. Moreover, we regard minorities' reactions to these denials of recognition as fuelled by people's motivation to be symbolically recognised by others. This is similar to the goals of other modern social movements. Indeed, Honneth's (1996) theoretical framework was developed to understand the relationship between majorities and minorities in "modern societies" that is, societies based on the equality of rights, individual freedom, and democracy. We apply it here mainly to the context of the European Union. Nevertheless, the basic principles of this framework also apply to other contexts, such as the United States.

Honneth's (1996) interactionist view of social relationships traces back to George H. Mead's model of identity (Mead, 1934/1967; Serpe & Stryker, Chapter 10, this volume). Starting from

the idea that humans are relational animals, Honneth contends that the individual's integrity and identity are shaped by recognition from similar others (Marková, 1987). In line with this view, we propose a normative and sociopolitical framework that can be drawn upon for examining relations between national majorities and immigrants in contemporary societies, and for understanding prejudice against immigrants as an instance of denying recognition. By denying recognition in various forms, majorities exclude immigrants and people of immigrant descent from the rights and esteem that are granted by default to majority members.

According to Honneth (1996), normative integration in modern societies takes place in three distinct spheres of recognition, corresponding to three ways of relating to oneself and constructing one's personal and social identity. The *private sphere of love and friendship* refers to interpersonal relations such as friendship, romantic relationships, or family ties, and implies strong affective links among a limited number of persons. In democratic societies, the *legal sphere* is the domain where individuals are granted equal rights and moral obligations. To be granted these individual rights demonstrates to the individual that she/he is recognised by others as a morally responsible person. Finally, the *sphere of social esteem* refers to the mutual appreciation of subjects. Individuals judge each other as a function of the values, practices, and cultural identities represented in the surrounding society. People are evaluated positively to the extent that they are perceived as possessing the qualities and abilities that are required to contribute positively to the common practices valued in the group.

Whereas the sphere of love and friendship mainly relates to interpersonal relationships within social groups,² the two latter spheres – the legal sphere and the sphere of social esteem – are of particular interest for addressing intergroup relationships between immigrants and majority members, and accordingly we focus on these spheres here. Within these two spheres, individuals are recognised respectively as entitled to rights and as endowed with specific qualities and cultural identities. These spheres represent areas

of dispute where minorities formulate demands aiming to satisfy their aspirations for integrity, autonomy, and agency, and where majorities can either grant or deny them recognition. For example, the history of race relations in the USA illustrates that Black people's access to equal rights gradually moved denial of recognition from the legal sphere to that of social esteem: having become full citizens, the Blacks were formally equal to Whites but were still denied social esteem during the Southern "Jim Crow" system of official discrimination. Moreover, the denial of social esteem in the form of racist prejudice did not fade out as a result of the removal of segregationist barriers after the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

The dynamics of claiming recognition, or responding to claims for recognition, may differ as a function of the sphere in which the struggle takes place. Given that struggles for legal recognition are often undertaken in the name of principles of justice acknowledged by the majority (i.e., equal rights), minority members may convince majority members to extend legal recognition to them. Struggles for recognition in the legal sphere are likely to mobilise majority members by highlighting the contradiction between egalitarian principles and discriminatory practices occurring in democratic societies (Katz & Hass, 1988; Myrdal, 1969; Sanchez-Mazas, 1996). In some cases, these struggles induce majority members to support the denied minority's cause, to regret the difficulties faced by minorities, and to act in the name of justice.

However, the transformations occurring in today's world – the importance of identities, political disengagement, the emerging notion of "clash of civilizations" between modern and traditional cultures (Huntington, 1996), and the development of multicultural societies – afford increasing importance to the sphere of social esteem. Whether or not individuals are granted rights, their social value is at stake. However, the informal denial of social esteem is even more salient when the targets of stigmatization benefit from equal formal rights. In modern societies, denials of recognition mostly take place in the sphere of social esteem, that is, in terms of individuals' social value, and in

informal relationships. This is why Honneth (2007) has labelled contemporary society as "The contempt society" – in which minorities struggle against denial of their dignity, of their contribution in society, and of their cultural identities – as opposed to the moral ideal of "The decent society" (Margalit, 1996) where majorities and minorities are recognised similarly. Unlike legal recognition, where people are granted rights regardless of their qualities (either as individuals or as members of social groups), recognition in the sphere of social esteem depends on informal social judgements. According to the dominant cultural frame of reference that prevails in modern societies, it is deemed legitimate to judge people according to their unique qualities, aptitudes, and contributions, rather than according to their belonging to social categories. Accordingly, prejudice towards members of social categories is expressed through the ascription of negative individual traits, in addition to the derogation of the group as a whole. Because individual qualities are at stake, prejudice is less likely to be recognised by the members of minority groups as *group-specific injustice*, compared to the case of deprivation of rights. As a result, group-based collective struggle for recognition is less likely to appear (Ellemers & Barreto, 2009).

The application of the recognition approach to racism and xenophobia has led Sanchez-Mazas (2004) to suggest that, in the case of immigration, a shift in recognition may take place through the transition from the legal barrier separating former immigrants from the receiving society to the citizenship obtained by people of immigrant descent. For example, in France, second/third-generation immigrants are often not recognised as true citizens, despite their access to formal citizenship, as they do not respond to the "cultural obligations" that the French model of integration prescribes in order to become a "true" French citizen (Koopmans & Kriesi, 1997). Such a shift suggests that majorities strive to maintain a social or symbolic distance from minorities even after the formal barriers have been removed, and it accounts for the expression of prejudice in terms of "cultural difference" or "cultural incompatibility".

Our approach can thus account for the changing nature of prejudice according to the cultural and historical context. It therefore complements theoretical contributions in the field of social psychology. Such theories provide keys for understanding general psychological processes that are pervasive across these contexts. We turn first to relevant theoretical contributions defining the basic processes that lie at the root of prejudice towards immigrants among majority group members. We broadly describe the historical and sociopolitical context (i.e., immigration and integration policies) in which the struggle for recognition between majority members and immigrants takes place in European societies, and we report relevant empirical results. Next, we address the immigrants' perspective in an attempt to identify some of the likely reactions to prejudice, and we report corresponding research results. We also discuss how the perspectives of majorities and minorities relate to each other.

Recognition from the Majority/Receiving Country Perspective: Social Psychological Roots of Prejudice

Several major social psychological theories have been drawn upon to understand the psychological roots of prejudice. We review theories of prejudice that focus on characteristics of intergroup relations, such as competition for scarce resources, or on groups' efforts to reach or maintain a positive social identity.

Structural Approaches

Structural approaches locate the causes of prejudice in the structure of intergroup relationships, which can be defined in terms of economic or power inequalities between groups, or in terms of the nature of their interactions (cooperation or competition).

Realistic conflict theory assumes that intergroup attitudes reflect the relationship (or conflict) between groups' material interests

(Sherif, 1967). Competition between social groups over limited resources and opportunities has been shown to lead to intergroup conflict. From this perspective, it may be surmised that receiving country members' negative attitudes and discrimination towards immigrants are driven by zero-sum competition over housing, jobs, or other goods, such that the national in-group's gains are proportionate to the immigrant groups' losses – and vice versa. Thus, anti-immigration stances or opposition to policies improving immigrant rights are driven by the objective threat which immigrants pose to the receiving population.

Relative deprivation theory also predicts higher levels of prejudice among people who see themselves and their in-group as relatively disadvantaged in comparison with out-group members (relative group deprivation). This perspective differs from realistic conflict theory because it emphasises the subjective evaluation of this disadvantaged comparison (Pettigrew, Christ, Wagner, Meertens, van Dick, & Zick, 2008). That is, the evaluation does not necessarily reflect objective circumstances, but rather the perceived disadvantage compared to the target of comparison.

Social dominance theory (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999) begins with the assumption that societies are structured as group-based hierarchies that distinguish between dominant and subordinate groups. Individual-level, ideological, and institutional mechanisms, mutually reinforcing each other, produce and sustain group-based social hierarchies. Because supporting group-based inequality serves the group interests of dominants more than that of subordinates, this theory emphasises the dominant group's need to legitimise its power and to maintain group-based systems of social hierarchy. Indeed, the ideological attitudes of dominants will be more strongly driven by desire for dominance than will those of subordinates. Therefore, asymmetrical effects are found in support for specific social ideologies. However, social psychological studies have often indicated the existence of a widespread motivation among members of the subordinate group to support and justify existing social relations (this

phenomenon has been labelled “system justification”; Jost & Major, 2001). Such findings may help us to understand the negative reactions of disadvantaged nationals to immigrants and immigration policies, in particular when competition for scarce resources is at stake.

Referring to these structural approaches leads to a framing of immigrant–majority group relationships in terms of unequal distribution of concrete resources, and this therefore raises the question of redistribution of resources rather than that of recognition of identities (see Fraser & Honneth, 2003). Redistribution issues have been central in classic social movements’ analyses, such as the Marxist theory of class struggle. Structural approaches are still relevant for understanding some instances of prejudice towards immigrants, as some empirical findings presented below illustrate, although majority–minority relationships in modern societies are often related to symbolic issues of identity and cultural recognition.

Social Identity Theory

Social psychological theories focusing on symbolic motives fit best with Honneth’s notion of struggle for recognition. Henri Tajfel’s (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; see also Spears, Chapter 9, this volume) social identity theory is one of the most systematic and influential attempts at explaining intergroup relationships by relating them to group members’ sense of identity. As such, it appears as a useful complement to the general theoretical framework examining struggle for recognition.

Social identity theory has often been referred to in social psychological approaches to prejudice, including prejudice towards immigrants (Esses, Dovidio, Jackson, & Armstrong, 2001; Huddy, 2001; Nesdale, 2004). Social identity theory is based on the assumption that the self-concept comprises both personal and social elements: one can view herself or himself as an individual in one social context and as a member of a particular group in another context. Two basic motivations, tied to social identities, drive people’s attitudes, behaviour, and

perception of the social world: a motivation to obtain a clear picture of one’s position in the social structure; and a motivation to obtain or maintain a positive sense of self-esteem (Abrams & Hogg, 1990). A clear representation of the social world is obtained through the cognitive process of categorisation. Positive self-esteem, in turn, is achieved through intergroup comparisons, so that people compare their in-group to out-groups on dimensions that they judge relevant, in order to obtain positive distinctiveness, and thus positive collective self-esteem. This theory is equally useful for understanding majorities’ attitudes towards immigrants and for understanding minorities’ collective mobilisation (e.g., social movement participation and collective protests) in reaction to discrimination (Simon, 2004).

From the majority perspective, derogating an out-group is only one of many ways through which group members can choose to maintain positive distinctiveness. Although a positive relationship between individuals’ levels of in-group identification and out-group derogation has sometimes been suggested, this relationship is often not demonstrated empirically (see, for example, Hinkle & Brown, 1990; Mummendey, Klink, & Brown, 2001). Indeed, according to the social identity perspective, identification should lead to out-group derogation only in specific circumstances (Reicher, 2004; Turner, 1999). Turner (1999) emphasises that people’s pursuit of positive distinctiveness *may* lead them to derogate out-group members, depending on several factors: the level of in-group identification; the salience of the relevant social identity; the perceived social structure of intergroup relationships; the relevance of the comparative dimension to the intergroup status relationship (for example, groups with different socioeconomic statuses are often compared on the dimension of competence); and the relevance of the out-group to the particular comparative judgement being made. When these conditions are met, social identity theory predicts that symbolic social identity concerns – that is, the motivation to have a clear and positive representation of one’s membership in social groups – may lead to prejudice towards out-group members. Prejudice

against immigrants among majority-group members could also arise when they perceive that their social identity – most likely their national identity, but also sub-national (e.g., Flemish or Walloon within Belgium) or supranational (e.g., European) levels of identity – is being symbolically threatened (Branscombe, Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 1999) by the divergent values, cultural and religious habits of immigrants, or by their political claims (Simon, 2010).

Social identity theory is thus highly compatible with Honneth's political philosophical theory of recognition. On the one hand, social identity theory provides a social psychological foundation (theoretical and empirical) to Honneth's model, as it demonstrates the importance of identity motives (see Gregg, Sedikides, & Gebauer, Chapter 14, this volume; Vignoles, Chapter 18, this volume) in shaping majority attitudes and behaviour towards minorities as well as minority members' individual or collective actions. On the other hand, Honneth's theory of the struggle for recognition complements social identity theory by situating social identity dynamics within the normative frameworks of contemporary societies, by stressing the interdependence of majorities and minorities, and by distinguishing different types of denials of recognition occurring in different spheres of modern societies and at different moments in the immigration history of each society.

Before turning to more specific instances of denials of recognition to immigrants in European societies, it is worth noting that identity and structural approaches are not mutually exclusive. Hence, they are combined, for example when examining the simultaneous effects of perceived realistic and symbolic threats on immigration attitudes (Stephan & Renfro, 2003). Moreover, Tajfel and Turner (1986) clearly stated from the start that their theory was meant to complement realistic conflict approaches by adding a symbolic dimension. This symbolic dimension consists of people's social identities and belief systems. These belief systems are related to the objective structure of group relations, but only indirectly, such that there is not a "one-to-one relationship" between the objective stratification

of a social system and the belief system that represents it. This way of conceiving the relationship between a structural and a symbolic level to account for people's intergroup behaviour is germane to Honneth's (2003) contention that redistribution *is* recognition. That is, unequal distribution of resources is not only unjust *per se*; it also expresses a lack of symbolic recognition from dominant to subordinate groups in society.

Instances of Majorities Denying Recognition to Immigrants

We examine here how majority identity concerns, at the national and at the European Union level, can lead to the denial of recognition of immigrants. We distinguish two broad ways of denying recognition. Focusing on immigrants or potential immigrants who are not yet legally established on the receiving country's territory – candidates for immigration, asylum seekers, or undocumented immigrants – we first examine immigration policies and people's support for these policies. Then we address the situation of established immigrants and their descendents, who are the target of integration policies, and we investigate majority members' attitudes towards such policies. Finally, we examine how national and European identifications relate to these forms of denial of recognition.

Immigration Policies in Europe: Granting or Denying Recognition to Candidates for Immigration

National immigration policies are one expression of recognition. These policies can recognise, as well as deny, immigrants in the process of determining which out-group members are accepted within the boundaries of the national in-group. In addition to entering the national territory, immigrants also enter a "moral" community with rights and obligations (see Anderson, 1983). Insofar as the definition and implementation of immigration policies take place at an institutional

level, these policies relate to the legal sphere of recognition.

The “classic” work-related immigration has been stopped in most European countries since the oil crisis of the 1970s, so that legal ways of immigrating are now generally limited to family reunion, seeking political asylum (following the criteria of the 1951 United Nations *Geneva Convention* on the Status of Refugees), and restricted work-related access. However, the development of the European Union (EU) has facilitated mobility – permanent or temporary – across member states for European citizens. The difference in rights to settle in EU countries between nationals and citizens of other member states has been constantly decreasing since the Rome treaty in 1954 (Groenendijk, 2006). For example, an Italian citizen can settle in a Belgian town nearly as easily as would a Belgian citizen. However, this European citizenship has not been extended to immigrants from outside Europe, so that the access of people emigrating from countries outside of the European Union to European countries has not been facilitated. On the contrary, some commentators have noted the increasing closure of the EU borders, leading to the construction of a “fortress Europe” (Geddes, 2000). The opening of internal borders was actually accompanied by a strengthening of immigration control at the EU external boundaries (Cholewinski, 2002). Moreover, freedom of movement remains restricted for people coming from new EU member-states of Central and Eastern Europe.

Citizens of receiving countries vary in their support for immigration policies when they agree or disagree, for example, with certain entry criteria set for immigrants. When examining the attitudes of the receiving country’s citizens towards immigration, we shift from the legal sphere of recognition to the sphere of social esteem, even though supporting restrictive immigration policies does not necessarily imply holding prejudice. In this sphere of recognition, receiving country citizens assign importance to certain characteristics defining who should be allowed to enter and live in the in-group territory. These attitudes, in turn, influence political decision making and can

thus be considered as implicit or indirect forms of immigration control (Brochmann, 1999).

Based on immigration policy debates, one can distinguish between *ascribed* and *acquired* immigration criteria (Green, 2007, 2009), according to a *categorical* or *individual* perception of persons. Ascribed immigration criteria are inherent and collective, and relate to immigrants’ membership in social categories such as ethnic or national origin. Endorsement of ascribed criteria is likely to represent an explicitly xenophobic stance, in that this argument dictates that people must be excluded from the possibility of immigration exclusively on the basis of category membership. In contrast, acquired criteria, such as educational qualifications, working skills, or adopting the way of life of the country of immigration are, at least in principle, within individual control. Support for these criteria implies restricting entry to admit only those desirable immigration candidates who have the potential to conform to the way of life by endorsing the receiving country’s values and practices (Bourhis, Moïse, Perreault, & Senécal, 1997). A strong expectation of assimilation favours westernised, well-educated, high-status immigrants, and this can be viewed as a form of prejudice if immigrants simultaneously are expected to abandon their cultural heritage. Nevertheless, support for acquired criteria can also express a genuine concern for social integration, provided that the maintenance of cultural minorities’ distinctiveness is also recognised.

Social psychological threat theories can be drawn upon to understand why receiving country citizens deny recognition of immigrants by supporting certain strict immigration criteria (Riek, Mania, & Gaertner, 2006; Stephan & Renfro, 2003). Support for ascribed or acquired immigration criteria can reflect perceptions of realistic, material threat: immigrant and national minority out-groups are perceived as competitors (e.g., for jobs or housing), which leads to support for restrictions, regardless of whether or not an objective threat exists (Esses et al., 2001; Pratto & Lemieux, 2001). Symbolic threat reflects a concern for the identity of the national majority (e.g., maintenance of language and culture) instead of its material interests, but this

also heightens support for restrictive immigration criteria. For example, immigrants' potentially differing values and belief systems might evoke a perception of threatened national unity (Azzi, 1998), so that prejudice tends to increase as a function of perception of cultural dissimilarity (Zárate, García, Garza, & Hitlan, 2004). Consequently, values of the national majority group serve as the frame of reference for judging national minorities, including immigrants. Support for restrictive immigration criteria thus asserts and bolsters common values within a country (e.g., Sears & Henry, 2005) by regulating entry of immigrants who diverge from majority values and established norms. Both types of threat underlie the denial of recognition of immigrants by increasing support for strict entry criteria. However, symbolic threat underlies more clearly the denial of the social value of traditions, values, and practices of individuals from different national or ethnic origins. From a recognition perspective, immigrant exclusion is thus constructed in parallel to the bolstering of the in-group. Whereas positive value is associated with practices and traditions of the national in-group, negative value is associated with those of the out-group (Jodelet, 2005; Staerklé, 2005).

The ways in which receiving country citizens assign social value to immigrants also depend on the situation prevailing in the receiving country. Recent social-psychological research has shown that support for immigration criteria is affected by national level factors. Green (2009) demonstrated, across 20 European countries, that a poor economic situation (indexed with low gross domestic product), akin to realistic threat on the national level, predicted support for the use of ascribed criteria. Moreover, the positive link between perceived threat and approval of acquired entry criteria was stronger in wealthy than in poorer national contexts. In a study comparing 15 European countries, Scheepers, Gijsberts, and Coenders (2002) showed that a high proportion of non-EU citizens within a country was related to ethnic exclusionism. Semoynov, Rajzman, Yom Tov, and Schmidt (2004), in turn, compared attitudes towards foreigners in different regions of Germany: whereas

the actual proportion of the immigrant population in a region did not have effects on attitudes, a high perceived size of the foreign population in the region was associated with perceived threat and discriminatory attitudes towards foreigners. These results indicate the importance of acknowledging the interplay between the collective context and individual-level recognition.

Integration Policies in Europe: Granting or Denying Recognition to Legal Immigrants

Whereas immigration policies regulate the settlement of foreigners to national territories, integration policies address the situation of people who are already legally settled in a country.³ Further, whereas receiving country members' support for strict immigration criteria can serve as a means for denying entry to immigrants, the denial of recognition often continues once immigrants move and settle in the receiving country. Though integration policies differ from one European country to another, some common policies have been adopted at the EU level (see below) and therefore influence member states' policies (Geddes & Guiraudon, 2004). In addition, national policies are heading in convergent directions, even in domains that are not covered by European conventions.

International comparisons of integration policies reveal different national models of integration. Three ideal types of integration are usually referred to (e.g., Koopmans, Statham, Giugni, & Passy, 2005). The British model is traditionally described as "multicultural" – viewing immigrant minorities as ethnic groups. France is said to be "assimilationist" – expecting immigrants to adopt French culture and thus integrate as individuals. And the German model is often viewed as "segregationist" – with immigrant minorities being excluded from the nation. Countries' integration policies are generally classified as a function of their resemblance with one of these three models. Nevertheless, Joppke (2007) argues that contemporary policy solutions to integration issues converge to such an extent that referring to

different national models no longer makes sense. For example, he observes that France, Germany, and the Netherlands (usually seen as multicultural), as well as other European countries, have all introduced compulsory “citizenship trajectories”, including courses on the national language, practices, and institutions. In the Netherlands, passing a Dutch citizenship test in one’s country of origin is a necessary condition for allowing immigration, even when based on family reunion. However, Jacobs and Rea (2007) contend that national differences persist beyond this apparent convergence towards assimilation.

Kymlicka (2007) observes that this backlash against multiculturalism is in fact restricted to the immigration domain, and specifically targets Muslim immigrants. Other cultural minorities, such as indigenous people (Frisians in the Netherlands, Welsh in Great Britain, or Basques in Spain), are usually not targeted. The 9/11 attacks and the London and Madrid train bombings – as well as other debates following the Danish cartoon affair, or the assassination of filmmaker Theo Van Gogh in the Netherlands – have increased the salience of security issues in the relationship between Muslim communities and European states (Strabac & Listhaug, 2008). According to Richardson (2004), four main themes emerge in public discussions about Islam: the military threat of Muslim countries, the threat of political violence and extremism, the (internal) threat to democracy posed by authoritarian Muslim political leaders and parties, and the social threat of Muslim gender inequality (see also Gianettoni & Roux, 2010).

To sum up, though integration policies are still diverse, they tend to converge, and they sometimes target particular categories of immigrants, who are therefore at risk of being denied recognition in the legal sphere.

National Identification, Multiculturalism, and Denial of Recognition

In the sphere of social esteem, denying recognition to immigrants on the basis of their belonging

to a devalued social category equates with holding prejudice against them. National identification has been associated with such denial of recognition. However, the pattern is very variable across societies. Indeed, analysing data from the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) 2003 module on national identity, Pehrson, Vignoles, and Brown (2009) calculated correlations between national identification and anti-immigrant prejudice within 31 representative national samples (including 21 European countries). These correlations ranged from weakly negative to moderately positive, with significantly positive correlations found in only 18 countries. So, although the relationship between national identification and prejudice towards immigrants clearly exists, it is far from being as strong and universal a phenomenon as one might have expected. It is worth noting, however, that an absence of significant positive correlation was observed only in four European countries (Russia, Portugal, Czech Republic, and Ireland).

Some authors (Condor, 2001; Reicher & Hopkins, 2001) have criticised a widespread tendency to see nations as univocal entities and have argued that there are variations in the way nations are defined. As Billig (1995) has proposed, nations are not concrete realities, but rather ideological constructions that are constantly being reaffirmed through the routine use of national symbols and events like national commemorations or national celebrations. Socially shared definitions of the national group – as homogeneous or diverse – are particularly relevant (Licata, 2003), as are the norms and ideologies that are available in the national contexts, because they can affect the relationship between national identification and attitudes towards immigrants.

Hence, several scholars have argued that the ideological construal of national identity determines whether national identification is related to anti-immigration attitudes (Billiet, Maddens, & Beerten, 2003; Reicher & Hopkins, 2001; Schildkraut, Chapter 36, this volume). For example, in describing the content of national identities, a distinction can be made between ethnic and civic national identity (Smith, 2001; see also Hart, Richardson, & Wilkenfeld,

Chapter 32, this volume). Ethnic national identification involves defining the national group in terms of ethnicity, such as shared ancestral origin, language, and culture, whereas civic national identification is based on citizenship and on common institutional and political allegiance. The relationship between national identification and anti-immigration stances should emerge when immigration is construed as harming and violating the national identity. This is the case for ethnic national identification, because immigrants do not usually share the ancestral origins of receiving country members, nor their language or culture. Hence, research has repeatedly found that perceived cultural dissimilarity (Pettigrew et al., 2008), or perception of cultural threat (Curseu, Stoop, & Schalk, 2007), is a good predictor of prejudice towards immigrants.

Pehrson et al. (2009) showed that the collectively shared definition of nationality at the country level influenced the relationship between individuals' national identification and their prejudice towards immigrants. National identification predicted prejudice most positively in those countries where speaking the national language was considered more important, and in those countries where being a citizen was considered less important, as a criterion for national membership. Also using cross-national ISSP data, Staerklé, Sidanius, Green, and Molina (2005) demonstrated that, among national majority populations, the relationship between national identification and xenophobic attitudes was mediated by ethnic identification: nationals who felt more identified with their country were more hostile towards immigrants because they identified more strongly with the dominant ethnic group (see also Sanchez-Mazas, Van Humskerken, & Casini, 2003; Staerklé, Sidanius, Green, & Molina, 2010). Similarly, Pehrson, Brown, and Zagefka (2009) found that national identification was associated with negative attitudes towards asylum seekers and willingness to support an anti-asylum-seeker group only among individuals endorsing an essentialist ethnic definition of the national in-group. Meeus, Duriez, Vanbeselaere, and Boen (2010) also found that this relationship

was mediated by ethnic definitions of the in-group among Flemish participants in Belgium.⁴ Moreover, with longitudinal data, they showed that Flemish identification predicted an increasing tendency to view Flanders as an ethnic rather than civic group 1 year later, which was further associated with increased adoption of anti-immigrant prejudice. These results suggest that people who identify with a national group mostly in ethnic terms tend to internalise a representation of national culture that triggers negative attitudes towards out-group members (including immigrants). These attitudes therefore arise from an interaction between individual-level and group-level influences.

The endorsement or rejection of multiculturalism, as an ideology, has also been related with different levels of anti-immigrant prejudice. According to Berry's (1984) model of acculturation strategies, societies adopting a cultural pluralism or multiculturalism model favour integrationist policies (see also Bourhis et al., 1997). These policies – which should be regarded as a specific form of more general integration policies – allow ethnic minorities to maintain their culture and to engage in intercultural contact with other cultural groups (including the dominant national group). In contrast, assimilationist policies implicitly or explicitly press ethnic minorities to abandon their culture of origin in favour of the dominant culture. Verkuyten and colleagues conducted several studies on the impact of the multicultural “ideology” on intergroup relations in the Netherlands (see Verkuyten, 2006, for a review). First, they consistently found that minority group members (mostly Turkish-Dutch) generally express more support for multiculturalism than Dutch majority members, as this policy is often perceived as favouring minorities. Moreover, experimental studies have demonstrated that, compared to multiculturalism, assimilationism leads to greater levels of in-group identification among majority-group members. Among minority members, however, multiculturalism leads to greater levels of in-group identification. Coenders, Lubbers, Scheepers, and Verkuyten (2008) also showed that the shift from multiculturalism towards assimilationism

that took place during the last decade in the Netherlands, regarding both integration policies and public opinion, was accompanied by an increase in negative attitudes towards immigrants and their descendants, especially towards Muslims. They also showed experimentally that rendering an assimilationist (versus multicultural) ideology salient led to more negative attitudes towards immigrants.

In sum, there is evidence that national identification leads to anti-immigrant prejudice only when the nation is defined in ethnic terms and seen as a culturally homogeneous whole. Construing one's nation as plural, where minority groups are recognised and valued, tends to weaken or eliminate this link. Identifying with one's nation can lead to denying recognition to immigrants to the extent that the nation is represented as a monocultural entity, which therefore would be threatened by the presence of immigrants holding different values and cultural references (see Schildkraut, [Chapter 36](#), this volume, for similar findings in the USA).

European Identification and Denial of Recognition

The European integration process has had several important implications for both immigration and integration policies. One of the most important advances towards increased protection of immigrant minorities' rights has been the adoption by EU member states of the anti-discrimination directives based on Article 13 of the Amsterdam Treaty in June 2000. These directives represented a clear shift from local policies based on diverse national models to a common set of rules that covers instances of both direct and indirect discrimination, as well as positive action towards immigrants (Geddes & Guiraudon, [2004](#)).

But the European integration process has also had negative consequences for non-EU nationals. On the one hand, the official introduction of EU citizenship in 1992 favoured a new superordinate level of identification including nationals of all EU countries, and extended some of their rights (e.g., free movement and residence throughout

the Union, the right to vote and stand in local and European elections in any member state, the right to protection by the diplomatic or consular authorities of other member states when in a non-EU member state). On the other hand, this new status has only been granted to nationals of EU member states, which implies that non-EU nationals have since been doubly excluded – from both national and European citizenships. Therefore, one might fear that the European level of identification facilitates out-group rejection at the corresponding level, that is, towards immigrants or people of immigrant descent originating from non-European countries. Indeed, Licata and Klein ([2002](#)) found, through a survey among French-speaking Belgian students, that European identification predicted higher levels of xenophobia, independently of national identification and of political orientation. Moreover, they showed that this trend occurred despite the fact that participants widely associated Europe with values of tolerance and fraternity, and with a positive view of intercultural contact. Although these results, based on a non-representative sample, cannot be generalised either to Belgium (Quintelier & Dejaeghere, [2008](#)) or to other European countries, they suggest the very possibility that developing a superordinate European level of identity might also have its pitfalls. Again, this might depend on the way European identity is represented (Chryssochoou, [2000](#)).

Sanchez-Mazas, Van Humskerken, and Gély ([2005](#)) found that representing European identity in terms of a shared culture, history, and values was associated with more rejection of non-EU foreigners, whereas a more civic representation of Europe was associated with more favourable attitudes towards them. This raises the question of the way European identity is conceived and how it is promoted as a particular political project (Stråth, [2000](#)). This project is either framed as the development of a new superordinate level of identity that should progressively replace national identities, or as a supplementary level that is meant to coexist with national identities. The first solution would require that national identities progressively fade away and be replaced by a common European identity.

Research by Castano and colleagues (Castano, Yzerbyt, & Bourguignon, 2003) suggested that perceiving the European Union as a real entity – in particular seeing European countries as similar – was associated with favouring European identification. However, Licata (2003) showed that envisioning the European integration process as threatening national identity tended to impede European identification. Moreover, another study (Licata, Klein, Casini, Coscenza, & Azzi, 2003) suggested that perceiving European countries as culturally similar was positively correlated with European identification only when cultural similarity had been presented as normatively desirable, showing that perception of similarity is not a necessary condition for feeling European. These last findings clearly tend to favour the second solution for the European project, which would not seek to reproduce the national ideal – based on a close correspondence between a community of people, a culture, and a state (Gellner, 1983) – at the European level (Habermas, 2001).

Conceptions of Europe and of nations are crucial because they clearly condition the way in which the presence of immigrant communities is perceived within European societies. Again, norms and representations associated with European identity serve to condition majority members' readiness to grant or to deny recognition to immigrants. As we have seen, contradictory tendencies occur simultaneously. On the one hand, integration policies tend to favour cultural diversity and the protection of immigrant rights (at least for some immigrant groups). On the other hand, immigration policies at the European level are becoming increasingly restrictive. This divergence between immigration and integration policies creates a normatively ambiguous situation. Attitudes towards immigration and integration policies are also affected by the way European identity is represented. The supranational model (i.e., pan-European identity) may lead to the rejection of what is perceived to be non-European, whereas envisioning the EU as a supplementary level designed to coexist with national identities should induce a more positive view of cultural diversity and should therefore favour immigrants' recognition.

So far, we have examined theoretical and empirical contributions in the field of social psychology that help explain prejudice against immigrants, and we have addressed them as forms of denials of recognition. As we have argued, these denials may take various forms, such as denial of rights (e.g., settlement, citizenship, social rights, freedom of movement) and denial of social esteem in the form of prejudice or negative opinions of the culture and/or religion of the out-group. Moreover, different forms of denial of recognition are likely to occur simultaneously. The ways in which minorities react to denials of recognition also take different forms.

Minorities' Reactions to Denials of Recognition

According to Honneth (1996), experiencing denials of recognition has a profound emotional impact on minority members, as recognition is a fundamental symbolic resource needed for the development of positive self-regard. Both legal and informal discrimination are regarded as unjust because, beyond restricting freedom or depriving people of material resources, they harm minority group members with regard to their expectations of equality and respect. This feeling of injustice can lead minority members to react and claim recognition of their rights and social value. However, merely experiencing injustice does not automatically lead to action (Simon, 2010). For example, an immigrant who is unfairly rejected when applying for a job could attribute it to his lack of competence rather than to group discrimination. Hence, Honneth specifies that being the target of denials of recognition leads to collective mobilisation of minority members only to the extent that this denial is viewed as *group-specific*. This is consistent with research on relative deprivation showing that perceptions of the relative positions of groups, and feelings of collective deprivation, leads to a sense of discontent among minorities and is a better predictor of collective action than is personal deprivation (Guimond & Dubé-Simard, 1983). This is also consistent with studies showing that collective

reactions to discrimination are only instigated by overt discrimination and not by covert forms of prejudice (Ellemers & Barreto, 2009; Wright & Taylor, 1998).

However, social-psychological approaches to collective movements and protests (Klandermans, 1997; Simon, 2004) suggest that the causal chain linking discontent with collective action is more complex than is envisioned by Honneth's theory, as this causal sequence includes psychological, situational, and structural causes. This causal chain is moderated by many factors, suggesting that immigrant minorities initiate collective action to claim recognition only in a limited range of situations. Hence, victims of discrimination may engage in proactive behaviours motivated by claims of injustice – “voice” strategies. But they can also opt for reactions involving retreat – “exit” strategies, that is, not initiating any collective action; or for submission to authority – “loyalty” strategies (Hirschman, 1970; see also Sanchez-Mazas, Maggi, & Roca i Escoda, 2010). Here, we briefly focus on factors linked with minority group members' identity concerns and with their appraisal of the intergroup situation (discrimination).

Social identity theory's view of the minority perspective also stems from the assumption that serving as the target of negative stereotypes, prejudice, and discriminatory behaviour from dominant groups leads minority members to suffer from a negative social identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). But, according to this theory, this suffering leads to collective mobilisation of minorities only in specific circumstances. Responses to inequality, social exclusion, and unsatisfactory social identity differ depending on whether minority group members are concerned with improving the position of one's group as a whole or with improving their own personal status. These two strategies, called social change and social mobility, are chosen according to the way the individual views certain sociostructural characteristics of the social system. Thus, if the boundaries between groups are perceived as permeable, and the system appears stable and legitimate, individual mobility will be preferred

over social change. On the other hand, social change will be more likely to occur if group boundaries are perceived as solid, status differences between the groups are seen as unstable, and social inequality is considered illegitimate. Reicher (2004) adds two other contextual factors: the responses of the dominant group and the relative power of the minority group. Strategies employed by the minority group – especially symbolic ones defining new dimensions of comparison or reinterpreting existing ones – are best achieved if the dominant group accepts the minority group's influence and re-evaluates the dimensions of comparison. Intergroup competition strategies can be adopted, but their success also depends on the dominant group's resistance and will to reassert its domination, and on the power difference between the two groups (Simon, 2004). The Congolese decolonization process is a case in point. Until the late 1950s, most of those who later became independentist leaders, such as Patrice Lumumba, supported the colonial system. Lumumba adhered to the policy of individual mobility implemented by the Belgians (Klein & Licata, 2003), which granted some privileges to the most Europeanized Congolese. From 1957 on, members of the Congolese elite realized that, despite their efforts to reach a better status, they remained “Blacks” in the eyes of the Belgians and were denied access to high-status positions in the colonial administration or private companies. In the absence of opportunities for individual social mobility, they sought social change. In order to mobilize large numbers of Congolese, they had to convince them that the colonial system was illegitimate, that the intergroup boundaries were impermeable, and that, given their numerical majority over the Belgians, the system could be changed. This mobilization process led to protests and riots in 1959, and independence was obtained in 1960 after peaceful negotiations with the Belgian government.

Returning to the distinction between spheres of recognition proposed by Honneth, it is suggested, as far as immigrants are concerned, that a denial of recognition in the form of withholding rights – political, civic, or social – is likely to be interpreted as injustice towards the entire group

and to reinforce intergroup boundaries. This is likely what happens when undocumented immigrants are deprived of basic – and in principle universal – rights. In contrast, the perception of being treated unfairly is not straightforward as far as legal immigrants are concerned because citizenship still represents a major basis for legitimising unequal rights between nationals and foreigners. Moreover, the struggle for recognition by claiming equal rights is difficult in the context of indirect and subtle instances of discrimination, which, as argued previously, are the form of denial most encountered in the present moment of the history of immigration. Finally, denials of recognition in the sphere of social esteem – that is, in informal social relationships – which threaten minority group-members' self-esteem, are more likely to be experienced as targeting individuals rather than the whole social category, therefore impeding collective mobilisation.

Social-psychological research on individuals' reactions to stigmatisation (Heatherton, Kleck, Hebl, & Hull, 2000; Swim & Stangor, 1998) has produced contrasting findings: stigmatised persons sometimes adopt behavioural strategies that lead to stereotype confirmation (for a review, see Klein & Snyder, 2003), therefore legitimising the existing social order (Jost & Major, 2001). For example, when the stereotype of incompetence is made salient, African American students may be more likely to confirm this stereotype while performing a task, thus resulting in poorer performance compared to a condition where the stereotype is not made salient (Steele & Aronson, 1995). But they might also actively seek proof that their in-group is subject to discrimination, and thus protect their personal self-esteem by making external attributions for discrimination (Major & O'Brien, 2005). That is, people often do not feel personally responsible when their group is subjected to discrimination because they attribute it to the whole group rather than to their own features. Thus, contrary to Honneth or Tajfel's contention, being the target of denial of recognition should not necessarily engender suffering among minority members. In contrast, the Rejection-Identification Model (Schmitt & Branscombe, 2002) is based on the assumption that targets of discrimination attribute this

to internal, stable, and uncontrollable causes (some personal characteristics that they cannot control and which they believe will persist), which damages their psychological well-being. In order to alleviate these negative effects of discrimination on their self-esteem, such individuals increasingly identify with the disadvantaged group, which in turn improves well-being (see also Stepick, Dutton Stepick, & Vanderkooy, Chapter 37, this volume). The psychological benefits of identification (even to a stigmatised group) thus buffer the negative effects of discrimination. Verkuyten and Yildiz (2007) found that, among Turkish immigrants in the Netherlands, perceiving their in-group as being rejected by the majority increased ethnic and religious identification, and decreased national Dutch identification.

Perceived rejection then tends to favour what Simon and Ruhs (2008) labelled "separatist identification" among the immigrants, at the expense of dual identification (a simultaneous identification with the minority group and with the receiving nation; Berry, 1984; see Arnett Jensen, Jensen Arnett, & McKenzie, Chapter 13, this volume). In the case of separatist identification, immigrants' claims for recognition might be shaped exclusively in ethnocultural terms, and eventually lead to non-normative political action (e.g., violent action), whereas dual identification should facilitate immigrants' normative political participation in the receiving society. Indeed, Simon and Ruhs (2008) found that dual identification with both the minority group (German Turks) and with the receiving society (Germany) predicted higher levels of normative political participation as well as support for moderate ethnic and religious organisations, whereas separatist identification was correlated with higher support for radical organisations (albeit not with political violence).

Majority–Minority Interactions and the Normative Framework of Modern Societies

According to Honneth (1996), social change is triggered by struggles for recognition originating from unsatisfied normative expectations.

Thus the dynamics of majority–minority interactions can gradually improve the normative framework of contemporary societies. This idea is in line with Kymlicka’s (2007) observation that the liberal multicultural ideology emerged in Western European societies not because the cultural majorities were culturally receptive to it, but because minorities have had the opportunity to express their claims publicly. They therefore were able to influence the majority group (Moscovici & Mugny, 1985) and have progressively changed the dominant norms towards more recognition of cultural minorities (although this shift is only partial and does not seem to apply equally to all minorities). Similarly, by asserting their presence in and contribution to receiving societies, and therefore by questioning the legitimacy of legal boundaries, undocumented immigrants contribute to the strengthening of democracy, at great personal costs (Balibar, 2000).

However, the existence of shared normative principles is a prerequisite for majority receptiveness to minorities’ claims. The idea of interdependence of majority and minority implies a space of shared communication allowing a process of mutual influence (Doise, 2002). Granting voice to minorities of immigrant origin is a major challenge for contemporary societies. Being fully recognised as participants in the functioning of democratic societies should favour the development of dual identification or integration strategies (Berry, 1984) among minority members. Conversely, being denied recognition in the public space is likely to bolster ethnic “separatist” identities (Azzi, 2010), therefore impeding social integration and potentially leading to politically motivated violence (Moghaddam, 2006). From the majority point of view, immigrants’ participation in public democratic debates should lead to a less homogeneous perception of immigrant communities, to the extent that their members will take diverse positions within these debates. This heterogeneous perception is then likely to alleviate stereotyping and prejudice.

Conclusion

The aim of the current chapter was to discuss the social-psychological underpinnings

of Honneth’s model of recognition and apply it to examining relations between receiving-country majority and immigrant groups in Europe. We drew on social identity theory, as well as on structural approaches of prejudice, and presented empirical research that fits Honneth’s framework, which was initially developed in the field of political philosophy. We have proposed that prejudice against immigrants is a particular instance of majority members’ denials of recognition, namely a denial of recognition in the sphere of social esteem. We do not advocate giving up the notion of prejudice. Rather, we believe that identifying prejudice as a form of interaction through which one group denies recognition to another group may represent a conceptual expansion of the construct of prejudice. On the one hand, our approach stresses the interactive nature of these processes, and therefore calls for an analysis of these interactions as situated in time. Such a temporal dimension involves both short-term, dynamic relations between majorities and majorities and a long-term, historical contextualisation of these relations. On the other hand, our approach situates prejudice among other forms of denials of recognition, which sometimes precede or coexist with prejudice. Indeed, recognition can also be denied in the legal sphere, when immigrants – particularly illegal immigrants, regardless of the number of years they live in the receiving country – do not benefit from the same rights as majority members, or in the public space, when they are not allowed to participate in public debates. Finally, the recognition approach provides a way to address theoretically the interplay between sociopolitical contexts and social-psychological processes.

The reasons why majority members deny recognition to immigrants are manifold. High levels of prejudice, as well as support for restrictive immigration criteria or assimilationist social policies, have been observed when immigrants and majority members compete, or are perceived as competing, for rare and valuable resources, or when immigration is seen as challenging the dominant

hierarchical structure of a society. National identification, as well as European identification, also in some cases predicts higher levels of prejudice towards immigrants. However, in-group identification does not automatically lead to out-group rejection: it does so when the nation is represented in ethnic terms, as a culturally homogeneous group, and when it is associated with norms facilitating discrimination. Representing the European Union as a homogeneous cultural entity with clear group boundaries could thus facilitate prejudice towards immigrants from outside Europe.

Conversely, being the target of denials of recognition has profound consequences for immigrants to the extent that it threatens their social identity. Immigrants can tackle these threats in different ways – choosing voice, exit, or loyalty strategies – as a function of the way they perceive the intergroup situation and depending on the nature of the denial they are facing. Some immigrants choose individual strategies of social mobility or resort to psychological defences to protect their identity, whereas others interpret the denial of recognition as group-specific and eventually initiate strategies of collective mobilisation. In this last case, claims for recognition are formulated. In turn, these claims expressed by immigrant minorities elicit responses from the dominant cultural group in the receiving society, which may grant or deny recognition to the immigrants. Failing to be recognised can then trigger and fuel minority members' collective or individual strategies to satisfy identity needs. From the recognition perspective, then, attitudes of majorities and minorities are formed, and take place, in a dynamic of mutual influence.

Obtaining recognition in the legal sphere typically leads to a shift of demands of the minority group members towards the sphere of social esteem. Obtaining recognition in that sphere then tends to lead immigrant minorities to seek participation in public debates (Sanchez-Mazas, 2004, 2007). This historical sequence is at the heart of the recognition model and allows for delineating

different moments in the national or international *history* of majority-immigrant relationships, and for identifying the stakes of *currently* occurring relationships. For example, undocumented immigrants are struggling for the recognition of basic rights, whereas legal immigrants and citizens of immigrant descent are struggling for social esteem or access to the public space. These differing dynamics give rise to different reactions among majorities.

We have applied the recognition approach to the situation of immigrants in contemporary European societies and have highlighted the convergences in immigration and integration policies across Europe. However, one must keep in mind that European countries differ in many ways: immigration history and having a colonial past (Volpato & Licata, 2010), origin of immigrants, geographical distance from the “borders” of Europe, wealth, development of a welfare state, and so forth (Phalet & Kocic, 2006). Moreover, this approach applies to the context of other countries as well. For example, consider the situation of African Americans and Mexicans in the United States (see Stepick et al., Chapter 37, this volume). Mexican immigrants are often perceived as a material threat because they supposedly take majority members' jobs and send their money back to Mexico. This threat translates into a denial of recognition in the sphere of social esteem by way of negative perceptions of this group. Moreover, the absence of a legal obligation to provide bilingual education for Latinos in the United States can be considered a denial in the legal sphere. Affirmative actions to promote diversity at the work place or in higher education are examples of recognition of minorities in the legal sphere. The interactive nature of recognition is also present in Sears's concept of symbolic racism (Sears & Henry, 2005), which taps modern, subtler forms of racial prejudice towards African-Americans, and relates in part to majority members' reactions to minority claims. The perception that the demands of Black leaders are excessive or the interpretation of

affirmative action as unjustified favouring of minorities are examples of such reactions.

Finally, we have emphasised the normative benefits that modern societies can draw from implementing policies of recognition for minorities. Whereas denying recognition to immigrants runs the risk of eliciting separatist strategies, or even triggering non-normative action, granting them recognition facilitates their positive participation in democratic processes. Dialogue between majorities and minorities about common principles could then contribute to change the normative frameworks of democratic societies towards more respect for diversity. Granting recognition in the public space does not equate with blindly accepting any claim expressed by any minority; but it implies initiating a process of mutual influence with people of immigrant origin, even though this process can be conflictual. This process entails considering immigrants as a valuable party, and debating with them rather than ignoring their demands or deeming them as irrelevant. If receiving societies prove unable to respond positively to immigrants' claims for recognition, the immigrants will likely seek recognition elsewhere – either within immigrant communities or from their countries of origin – which will seriously impede the development of multicultural, peaceful, and decent societies.

Notes

1. See the Migrant Integration Policy Index for a description of 28 European countries' immigration policies: <http://www.integrationindex.eu/>
2. However, friendships across intergroup borders can prove efficient in reducing intergroup prejudice (e. g., Turner & Brown, 2008).
3. Here “integration” is used broadly to refer to allowing and promoting immigrants' active participation in society. When discussing the work of Berry (1984) and Bourhis et al. (1994), more fine-grained dimensions of integration will be distinguished.

4. In multiethnic states such as Belgium, Switzerland, or Canada, the basis for prejudiced attitudes towards immigrants may be the ethnic or linguistic group rather than the whole country.

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Abstract

Social identity is typically multidimensional, involving connections and commitments to multiple overlapping groups. Because abstract groups such as nations, cultures, or religions have the potential to outlast the individuals who compose them at any given point in time, affiliation with such groups provides a sense of continuity, permanence, and meaning. Thus, we are highly motivated to act on behalf of groups central to our social identities and against other groups that threaten or impede our own. On the basis of these theoretical considerations, the chapter provides a four-phase model of genocide. The first phase involves a dichotomization of identity that divides the social universe into “us” and “them.” Phase 2 involves a process of dehumanization that places “them” outside the realm of moral obligation. This enables and justifies violence against the out-group, up to and including genocide (phase 3). Such justification is supplemented, in a final phase, by denial of what really happened, thus enabling the perpetrators to maintain their moral self-conceptions. These phases are illustrated with examples encompassing the Holocaust, the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, the Latin American dirty wars of the 1970s and 1980s, and the European conquest of the Americas since 1492. The analysis is then extended to other cases of group violence, including the 1948 ethnic cleansing of Palestine, the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Centers and Pentagon, and the atomic bombing of Hiroshima.

Identity is a concept that spans psychology and sociology, or more broadly the behavioral and social sciences. Indeed, much of its theoretical power derives from its potential to connect

multiple levels of explanation. Such connection is critical to explaining genocide, an act of group against group that is perpetrated by many individuals against many others. Neither psychology nor sociology can explain genocide alone. Identity, I suggest, is the key concept that enables us to connect these levels of explanation with each other and with the phenomena of genocide.

In this chapter, I consider the relation of identity to genocide and other group violence. After

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preliminary discussion concerning the nature of identity and of genocide, I suggest four phases of genocide (Moshman, 2007): (1) dichotomization of identities; (2) dehumanization of the other; (3) destruction of the other; and (4) denial, which preserves a subjective moral identity. These phases are illustrated with examples from Rwanda, the Holocaust, the Latin American dirty wars of the 1970s and 1980s, and the European conquest of the Americas. I then conceptualize genocide as the destruction of social identity. Extending the analysis, I consider the roles of dichotomization, dehumanization, and denial in ethnic cleansing, terrorism, and other forms of group violence that also attack social identities. Finally, I provide some suggestions for minimizing group violence.

Identity and Genocide

I begin with definitional and conceptual issues concerning the nature of identity and the nature of genocide.

The Nature of Identity

Consistent with the organization of this volume, I distinguish two aspects of identity: personal and social. By *personal identity*, I mean roughly what is meant by identity in the literature of developmental psychology, extending from the mid-century psychoanalytic conceptualization of ego identity formation in adolescence (Erikson, 1968) through the identity status approach that dominated the 1970s and 1980s (see Kroger & Marcia, Chapter 2, this volume) and the more cognitive and process-oriented approaches of the past several decades (e.g., Berzonsky, Chapter 3, this volume). One's identity, in this view, is personal in that it is one's own theory of who one is. More specifically, I have suggested, *to have an identity is to have an explicit theory of yourself as a person* – that is, as a singular and continuous rational agent, extending from the past through the future, and acting on the basis of

beliefs and values that you see as defining who you are (Moshman, 2011).

Identity in this view is intrinsically subjective but constrained by objective realities. One's various personality traits, for example, constitute aspects of one's (actual) self, not one's identity. If one comes to see being honest as fundamental to who one is, and organizes one's other self-conceptions around this self-conception, then being an honest person is central to one's (subjective) identity. If in fact one cheats and lies to everyone around, this (subjective) self-conception is (objectively) false. It remains nonetheless one's identity, because it is one's theory of oneself, but the discrepancy between identity and behavior, at least to the extent that one comes to recognize it, may pressure one to either modify one's behavior or reconstruct one's identity.

By *social identity*, I mean roughly what is meant by identity in most of the social sciences and the humanities, including social psychology. Social identity refers to those aspects of identity that involve relations to others (e.g., Chen, Boucher, & Kraus, Chapter 7, this volume) and especially to groups (Spears, Chapter 9, this volume). To the extent that such groups are abstract social entities such as nations, cultures, or religions, rather than just collections of people, they have the potential to outlast the individuals who compose them at any given time. Affiliation with such groups thus provides our identities with a deepened sense of continuity, permanence, and meaning. As a result, we are highly motivated to act on behalf of groups central to our social identities.

The concept of social identity helps us steer between the Scylla and Charybdis of psychological and sociological reductionism (Postmes & Jetten, 2006). If we see social identity as simply an aspect of personal identity, we veer toward an overly psychological conception of individual people as pre-existing autonomous agents who create social groups. If instead we see social identity as simply a matter of being part of a group, we veer toward an overly sociological conception of groups as pre-existing entities that mold the

identities of their members. The challenge is to maintain a more dialectical conception of social identity that connects the sociological reality of human groups to the psychological reality of personal identities.

The Nature of Genocide

The term *genocide* was introduced by Raphael Lemkin in his 1944 book *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*. He defined it as “the destruction of a nation or of an ethnic group” (p. 79). This includes, but is not limited to, immediate destruction through mass killings. The term *genocide* signifies

a coordinated plan of different actions aiming at the destruction of essential foundations of the life of national groups, with the aim of annihilating the groups themselves. The objectives of such a plan would be disintegration of the political and social institutions, of culture, language, national feelings, religion, and the economic existence of national groups, and the destruction of the personal security, liberty, health, dignity, and even the lives of the individuals belonging to such groups. Genocide is directed against the national group as an entity, and the actions involved are directed against individuals, not in their individual capacity, but as members of the national group (Lemkin, 1944, p. 79).

Genocide thus overlaps with mass killing but is not identical to it. Mass killing is the killing of many individuals; genocide is the destruction of a group.

On December 11, 1946, the General Assembly of the United Nations passed the following resolution:

Genocide is a denial of the right of existence of entire human groups, as homicide is the denial of the right to live of individual human beings; such denial of the right of existence shocks the conscience of mankind, results in great losses to humanity in the form of cultural and other contributions represented by these groups, and is contrary to moral law and to the spirit and aims of the United Nations (United Nations, 1946).

The resolution went on to clarify the application of the term to “racial, religious, political and other groups.” It affirmed “that genocide is a

crime under international law which the civilized world condemns.”

Consistent with Lemkin’s conception of genocide as a crime against groups, the General Assembly resolution begins with an explanation that genocide is not mass murder but a crime at a different level of analysis that is analogous to murder. Genocide is to a social group as murder is to an individual. It is the denial of the right to exist. Although the resolution had no legal force, its general approach, rooted in Lemkin’s original conception, has much to commend it (Churchill, 1997; Moshman, 2008).

The legal definition of genocide was provided 2 years later in the 1948 United Nations Genocide Convention. An awkward and unprincipled hodgepodge of criteria, this definition is what emerged from political negotiations and compromises among the great powers – all of which were guilty of major atrocities, and none of which wanted to be guilty of genocide (Kuper, 1981). Despite its authoritative status as international law, the Genocide Convention has been rejected by almost all historians and social scientists as unusable for research purposes. There is no consensus, however, about what should replace it (Curthoys & Docker, 2008; Shaw, 2007). Proposed definitions vary with respect to at least eight dimensions (Moshman, 2008).

One of those dimensions, for example, is intent (Browning, 2004; Fein, 1993; Mann, 2005; Shaw, 2007; Straus, 2006, 2008). Even in clear cases of genocide such as Rwanda and the Holocaust, perpetrators do not issue official proclamations of genocide on behalf of their group. Genocides involve multiple agents with multiple perceptions, intentions, and motives. Genocide is typically an evolving process, moreover. At both individual and group levels, intent changes over time in response to changing conditions. This is not to say group intent is a meaningless concept or that it can never be empirically determined. Genocides do not happen by accident. Group intent may be implicit in, and inferred from, a genocidal act or process. But intent is not just something a group has or doesn’t have.

Intent is one of many issues about which scholars of genocide continue to debate, and some of those debates go to the heart of what constitutes genocide. For present purposes, following Lemkin and the UN Resolution, I define *genocide* as *an act or process of destruction aimed at an abstractly defined group of people*. There may be many perpetrators, but their actions must be sufficiently coordinated to constitute a singular act or process. The genocidal process may include deliberate acts of mass killing, but it may also consist, entirely or in part, of other actions undermining the biological, social, or cultural integrity of the victim group. The acts of destruction may be aimed at individuals, but the individuals are targeted on the basis of their actual or perceived association with a national, ethnic, racial, religious, political, socioeconomic, or other abstractly defined group. The group must be deliberately targeted, but the process may be deemed genocidal even if the motives of the perpetrators are complex and multifaceted, even if their intentions shift over time, even if their perceptions of the victim group are wildly inaccurate, and even if the extent of destruction is less than total.

Phases of Genocide

Examination of diverse genocides from multiple regions of the world indicates a common pattern of four overlapping phases (Moshman, 2007): First, there is a dichotomization of identities such that everyone is either one of “us” or one of “them.” Second, there is a process of dehumanization of the other that serves the purpose of removing them from the universe of moral concern, thus enabling us to act toward them in ways that would be morally unacceptable among people. Next comes destruction of the other. Finally, beginning even before the actual destruction and lasting long after, there is denial, which preserves a subjective moral identity.

In this section, I discuss these four phases of genocide, with examples from Rwanda, the Holocaust, the Latin American dirty wars, and the conquest of the Americas.

Dichotomization of Identities

People generally define themselves on the basis of multiple affiliations and commitments (e.g., ethnic, religious, political, sexual, and vocational; see Kroger & Marcia, Chapter 2, this volume), some more central to identity than others (with their relative centrality varying across persons). Because there are so many potential dimensions of identity, so many options with respect to each, so many possible combinations of those options and dimensions, and so many ways to prioritize and coordinate them, we each form a unique personal identity that is in part our own creation. Any two individuals, however, are likely to have affiliations and commitments in common and thus a shared social identity. More generally, we might say that the typical state of a society involves overlapping social identities such that each individual is both unique and a part of multiple groups. Dichotomized identities, then, are not typical. They often arise, however, due to contact between societies or forces within a society.

When two very different societies come suddenly into contact, potential social identities that cut across them are at least initially inconceivable due to the cultural (as well as geographical) divide between them. In the various first contacts with the indigenous peoples of the Americas beginning in 1492, for example, the women of Spain, France, England, Portugal, and their colonies could not come together in feminist solidarity even with each other, much less with the women of the indigenous societies that their own societies were destroying. Indigenous women were to them, for the most part, female Indians, not fellow women. Similarly, European youth did not join indigenous youth to work against the genocides of the older generations in their various societies. No common generational ground was even conceivable across the cultural divide between Europe (including its colonies) and the Americas, especially at first.

In other cases, dichotomized identities are the outcome of a process of dichotomization within an existing society. This involves the construction of social and cultural understandings that render some potential dimensions of identity so

salient that all others become peripheral. People increasingly define themselves, and construe each other, with respect to a small number of dimensions. If the process continues to its end, one dimension is highlighted above all others as what does or should define everyone, and that dimension is reduced to two categories (Brewer, 2001; Kelman, 2001; Maalouf, 2001; Sen, 2006; Stanton, 2004; Weitz, 2003).

An extreme example of deliberate dichotomization is the 1994 genocide in Rwanda (Des Forges, 1999; Gourevitch, 1998; Mamdani, 2001; Mann, 2005; Moshman, 2004b; Stanton, 2004; Straus, 2006, 2008). Unlike most African countries, Rwanda existed as a nation prior to European colonization. There was a longstanding but fluid distinction between Hutu and Tutsi based on a combination of ancestry and socioeconomic status, assessed in part on the basis of owning cattle. Contrary to Western media portrayals, the Hutu and Tutsi were not tribes or ethnic groups. They lived among each other, shared religious beliefs, and intermarried. Rwanda was a single society with a typical pattern of unique personal identities (in which being Hutu or Tutsi might be very important, less important, or irrelevant) and overlapping social identities (such that being Hutu or Tutsi was just one of many ways two Rwandans might share a social identity). The Tutsi (who constituted about 15% of the population) dominated politically and economically, but some Hutu attained a measure of power and economic success, and many Tutsi were as poor and marginalized as the majority of Hutu.

European rule from the 1890s to the early 1960s reinforced Tutsi power as a means of controlling the country. Identity cards that distinguished Hutu from Tutsi became mandatory, thus officially dichotomizing the population. In the early 1960s, Rwanda became independent under the control, for the first time, of its Hutu majority, many of whom saw their attainment of power as a democratic victory after centuries of illegitimate domination by the Tutsi minority. Many Tutsi, in turn, aimed to regain what they saw as their rightful authority. Efforts to eliminate official identity cards were unsuccessful.

By the early 1990s, Rwandans could still have multifaceted identities and many still saw being Rwandan as something different from and more fundamental than being Hutu or Tutsi, but the pressure to be Hutu or Tutsi above all was intensifying. This was due in part to the threat of a Tutsi-dominated army making incursions from Uganda and in part to the rise of a political movement that called itself Hutu Power, which defined Rwanda as a Hutu nation and denounced the Tutsi as aliens descended from Ethiopian immigrants who had taken control of Rwanda long before the European colonizers. Hutu Power had strong governmental connections and made systematic use of radio to spread anti-Tutsi propaganda across Rwanda. Rwandans could see themselves as affiliated with or committed to a variety of religions, professions, activities, ideologies, political parties, and so forth but faced relentless pressure to see themselves as, first and foremost, Hutu or Tutsi.

One common dynamic in situations of group violence is that moderates on each side are undermined by extremists on the other whose ideologies and violence challenge moderate claims about the rationality and humanity of the other side. In Rwanda leading up to 1994, moderate Hutu who advocated among their fellow Hutu a vision of Rwanda for all Rwandans were undermined by Tutsi extremists who advocated a return to Tutsi rule, thus confirming the claims of Hutu extremists about what the Tutsi really wanted. Correspondingly, moderate Tutsi who advocated among their fellow Tutsi an inclusive and democratic conception of Rwanda were undermined by the Hutu Power position that the Hutu were the true Rwandan nation, leaving no place for Tutsi. As the Hutu Power movement turned to deadly violence against moderate Hutu and all Tutsi, the middle ground collapsed entirely, dichotomizing Rwanda into supporters of Hutu Power and everyone else. In the opening days of the 1994 genocide, thousands of moderate Hutu who accepted the Tutsi as part of the Rwandan nation were killed by advocates of Hutu Power for betraying their Hutu identity. By the time the 100-day genocide ended, over half a million Tutsi had been killed, many of them identified, at the

point of a machete, on the basis of their identity cards.

Dehumanization of the Other

Having differentiated the other from ourselves, we are now in a position to dehumanize. Dehumanization is an everyday social phenomenon (Haslam, 2006). Dichotomization of identities, however, enables more radical and systematic forms of group dehumanization (Weitz, 2003). Targets of genocide have been variously labeled weeds, rats, vermin, dogs, wolves, cows, monkeys, viruses, maggots, microbes, parasites, plague, pests, snakes, spiders, lice, locusts, cockroaches, cancerous cells, or malignant tumors. Less biologically, they have been portrayed and seen as heretics, heathens, infidels, barbarians, savages, subversives, or terrorists. Whatever we call them, the point is that they are not part of the human universe of persons, not subject to norms of human rights and justice, not among those to whom our moral obligations extend (Fein, 1993). They are not just different from us (dichotomization) but less worthy than us (dehumanization). Our moral obligations to others are obligations to other *people* and to the social identities that define us as people and bind us to each other, not to an undifferentiated mass of weeds, rats, vermin, subversives, or terrorists. Thus, we prepare ourselves psychologically to do things to others that we would never do to (those we see as) people.

The Hutu Power movement, for example, successfully spread a conception of the Tutsi as cockroaches. They were not just a group distinct from the Hutu; they were a group distinct from humanity. They were not just different; they were not human at all, lacking both individual identity and moral status. Cockroaches, from a human point of view, are interchangeable; to kill a cockroach simply means one less cockroach, regardless of which one you kill. Similarly, to kill a Tutsi can be seen simply as decreasing the number of Tutsi, who lack the individuality that might raise questions of individual rights. In the moral worldview of Hutu Power, all Hutu were obligated, first and foremost, to each other

and to the Hutu nation of Rwanda. For any true Hutu, in this view, elimination of the Tutsi threat, and if necessary of the Tutsi themselves, was a moral imperative. And this created a psychological imperative not to see the humanity of the Tutsi. If cockroaches need to be eliminated, it becomes especially important to keep thinking of them as cockroaches.

The path toward the Holocaust within Germany after 1933 involved a dichotomization of Jews from Germans such that Jewish Germans became German Jews and ultimately just Jews. Jewishness became a defining quality regardless of nationality, beliefs, profession, political affiliation, or anything else. The dichotomization led directly to increasingly extreme forms of dehumanization. By the time the Polish death camps were operating at peak capacity in 1942–1943, Franz Stangl, commandant of Treblinka, saw the arriving Jews getting off the trains as “cattle,” a mindless herd, making its way toward the slaughterhouse where it would be transformed into “a mass of rotting flesh” that “had nothing to do with humanity.” The Jews were “cargo” to be transported and their bodies were garbage to be disposed of. “I rarely saw them as individuals,” Stangl explained. “It was always a huge mass” (Sereny, 1983, p. 201).

In Argentina in the late 1970s, some 30,000 individuals, mostly young adults who worked with the poor or expressed commitments to social justice, were kidnapped and tortured to death by the military government. Was it moral to treat them this way? The question need not be asked because, as General Ramon Camps pointed out, “it wasn’t people that disappeared, but subversives” (Fisher, 1989, p. 102). Chile and other countries also “disappeared” their subversives. In Guatemala and El Salvador, entire villages were deemed subversive, often because they were in subversive regions, thus justifying genocidal massacres of all their inhabitants (Archdiocese of Guatemala, 1999; Danner, 1994; Manz, 2004; Moshman, 2004a; Sanford, 2003, 2008). Were the children subversive? Again, a question that need not be asked. The children were part of a subversive village, not individuals. In Guatemala, where the death toll of the dirty war reached

200,000, Mayans who survived the destruction of their villages were finished off in coordinated military operations known as “hunting the deer” (Sanford, 2003, p. 160, 2008, p. 563).

But of course, dehumanization of indigenous Americans is nothing new. Rebellious natives in the Americas, reasoned seventeenth-century philosopher John Locke in his *Two Treatises on Civil Government*, had “declared war against all mankind, and therefore may be destroyed as a lion or tiger, one of those wild savage beasts with whom men can have no society or security” (quoted in McDonnell & Moses, 2005, p. 513). No less philosophical, nineteenth-century settlers in the American southwest saw the Apaches as wolves – “the most savage wild beast” – that must be hunted to the point of “extermination” (Jacoby, 2008).

Destruction of the Other

Dichotomization and dehumanization are, I suggest, necessary but not sufficient conditions for genocide. There are both empirical and theoretical bases for this claim.

Empirically, dichotomization and dehumanization do not always progress to the point of genocide but there are no cases, to my knowledge, where genocide was not preceded by radical forms of dichotomization and dehumanization. This is a matter to which I will return in the later discussions of ethnic cleansing, terrorism, and other group violence.

Theoretically, genocide requires (1) a small number of primary groups and (2) a way to rationalize destruction of a disfavored group. Dichotomization replaces the many dimensions along which people vary with a small number of categories, thus replacing networks of relationships with discrete groups. Dehumanization enables us not to recognize another category as consisting of persons entitled to moral treatment. Dichotomization and dehumanization together set the conditions for violence against the dehumanized group, but do not guarantee such violence, much less guarantee that destruction of the other group will be sought or achieved.

Whether a situation turns genocidal is a complex function of many interacting forces – psychological, sociological, economic, political, cultural, historical, and legal – and of the actions and interactions of large numbers of individuals. No existing theory or model successfully predicts whether or when dichotomization and dehumanization will continue to destruction. Some scholars propose that genocide can be explained on the basis of a small number of key causal factors, but there is no consensus on what those are (Shaw, 2007). Regardless, if genocide takes place, the next step is to create a history in which it didn’t.

Denial to Preserve Moral Identity

Denial begins even before destruction – that is, before a genocide takes place. Before and during genocide, dehumanization enables us not to see our victims as persons and thus not to see the human consequences and moral significance of our actions. Denial continues, however, long after the period of active destruction is complete, enabling us and our descendants to avoid acknowledging what we have done. Thus, it constitutes genocide’s normative final phase (Woolf & Hulsizer, 2005).

In addition to ongoing dehumanization, processes of denial take a variety of forms (Bandura, 1999; Cohen, 2001; Hulsizer, Monro, Fagerlin, & Taylor, 2004; Loewen, 1995; Moshman, 2004a, 2007). Among the most common are the following:

1. We simply refuse to acknowledge or consider the facts.
2. We decline to investigate something we don’t want to know more about.
3. We remember facts that reinforce our views and don’t remember facts that don’t.
4. We manipulate the definition of genocide to exclude our own atrocities and focus instead on the evils of our enemies.
5. We insist that we had no choice under the circumstances, whatever they may have been, and that we did what anyone would have done.
6. We educate our children to understand the rightness of our cause and perspective and the wrongness of theirs.

Underlying all of these processes of denial is a widely shared commitment to preserve and defend, individually and collectively, our identities as moral agents. Some people may have stronger moral identities than do others, in the sense that morality is more central to their self-conceptions (Hardy & Carlo, [Chapter 19](#), this volume), but it seems likely that nearly all people in all cultural contexts see themselves as fundamentally moral, whatever be their flaws, rather than fundamentally evil. We maintain our moral self-conceptions partly by behaving well and partly by denying, even to ourselves, our most egregious moral failures (Bandura, [1999](#); Moshman, [2004a](#)). We may not be perfect, we gladly grant, but surely we have not committed genocide.

The dirty war in Argentina is known for what came to be called *disappearances*. The disappeared were gone. The military and government claimed to know nothing. Maybe the young men had gone off to join subversive groups, they suggested. Maybe the young women had become prostitutes. The children kidnapped with their parents or born in prison had never existed. There were no disappeared. Perhaps there were some missing individuals, the official doctrine acknowledged, but no social identity had been targeted or destroyed (Arditti, [1999](#); Bouvard, [1994](#); Fisher, [1989](#); Mellibovsky, [1997](#)).

In Central America – especially Guatemala and El Salvador – entire villages were “disappeared,” hundreds of them, their inhabitants massacred down to the last child (Archdiocese of Guatemala, [1999](#); Danner, [1994](#); Manz, [2004](#); Moshman, [2004a](#); Sanford, [2003](#), [2008](#)). The United States armed and trained the perpetrators, which was a matter of political controversy in the 1980s, but there is no longer any debate in the United States as to whether US involvement in the Central American dirty wars was morally justified. The matter is simply never discussed. At least with respect to the mainstream media, the public educational system, and the major political parties, the denial of these and other such aspects of history is total.

Decades before the dirty wars, Operation Reinhard (Arad, [1987](#)) was deemed by the Nazis,

after serious debate, to be a top secret matter that must be hidden from history. Its three death camps – Belzec, Sobibor, and Treblinka – processed and killed more than 1.5 million Jews in 1942–1943. At first, Jewish slave laborers buried the bodies. Then, to maximize future deniability, they were instructed to burn all new bodies and to dig up the hundreds of thousands of buried bodies and burn them. After the transports, gassings, and cremations had ended in Treblinka, the last 30 Jewish slaves – 28 men and 2 women – spent each night in freight cars on the railway spur. In late November 1943, they were shot by three SS men, five at a time, each group cremating the corpses of the prior group, until the final group was cremated by Ukrainian guards. Treblinka was then demolished, as were Belzec and Sobibor. A small farm, with a farmhouse occupied by a former Ukrainian guard and his family, emerged at the site of each of Operation Reinhard’s three death camps. Following orders aimed to protect German moral identity, Operation Reinhard ended with a systematic effort to eliminate itself and its victims from history.

Meanwhile, the nations of the Americas remain virtually oblivious to their emergence from a series of genocides that eliminated hundreds of targeted indigenous cultural groups (Barkan, [2003](#); Cave, [2008](#); Churchill, [1997](#); Jacoby, [2008](#); Kiernan, [2007](#); Stannard, [1992](#)). No one wants to identify with a nation founded in genocide. Hiding our eyes from what we do not want to see, we fail to observe destruction all around us. More literally, hiding our minds from what we do not want to know, we fail to conceptualize genocide. Instead, in the language of denial, we see “progress” in the replacement of “barbarian” cultures with our own “civilization,” the working out of a “manifest destiny.”

Genocide as the Destruction of Identity

Genocide is usefully construed as the destruction of social identities (Powell, [2007](#)). In the context of a mass killing, this conceptualization may seem far too subtle, even morally oblivious, but

if our intent is to understand genocide, we must distinguish it from mass killing. Mass killing is the killing of many people, but genocide destroys something more than some number of people. The “something more” is a social identity. We can best see this in a case that separates, insofar as this is possible, genocide from mass killing.

From the late nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century, the governments of the United States and Canada ran boarding schools for indigenous children from dozens of tribes (Adams, 1995; Churchill, 2004). The intent was to eliminate indigenous cultures by severing the link between generations and assimilating the children to American society. No one would be killed, in theory, but the indigenous cultures would disappear with the passing of the present generation.

The students, accordingly, were isolated from their families and communities. They received “white man’s” names to replace those by which they had been known. They were issued clothing appropriate for their gender in “civilized” society. Boys, often to their great dismay, had their long hair cut. They were required to learn English and forbidden to speak their native languages. Christian beliefs and middle-class values dominated the curriculum. History was taught as the progress of civilization in the Americas since 1492. Girls were trained in domestic skills and boys in agricultural and industrial skills so that they could function in society.

The motto was “Kill the Indian, save the man.” Indian schools proudly illustrated their success with before-and-after photographs that showed young savages transformed into civilized Americans. The children were “saved.” What was “killed” was the social identity that would otherwise have linked them to their childhoods and ancestral cultures.

It would be morally blind to see no distinction between the Indian boarding schools and the death camps of Operation Reinhard. But it misses the point of genocide to see no similarity. Once we see genocide as an attack on social identity, moreover, we can better understand its connections to other forms of group violence.

Identity and Group Violence

Genocide is one of many forms of group violence. Thus, the connection of identity to genocide may best be seen as part of a more general connection of identity to group violence. For present purposes, I focus on ethnic cleansing and terrorism, and then touch briefly on torture, disappearances, and mass killing. In each case, it turns out, the same identity processes observed across a range of genocides – dichotomization, dehumanization, and denial – play central roles. This is consistent with the earlier conclusion that dichotomization and dehumanization do not necessarily lead to genocide. It appears instead that dichotomization, dehumanization, and denial are associated generally with attacks on social identity.

Ethnic Cleansing

Ethnic cleansing, like genocide, has a variety of overlapping definitions, none of which can be deemed authoritative. Rather than reviewing and analyzing these, suffice it to say that ethnic cleansing aims to eliminate some group from some place; its extreme form is genocide, which aims to eliminate a group from the world. For present purposes, I focus on a case that qualifies as ethnic cleansing under any definition: the 1948 ethnic cleansing of Palestine (Pappe, 2004, 2006).

Zionist ideology in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries portrayed Palestine to European Jews as “a land without a people for a people without a land.” In fact, the land was inhabited by hundreds of thousands of people with an emerging national identity as Palestinians (Khalidi, 1997). As European Jews arrived in Palestine in the early twentieth century, it became increasingly clear that the creation of a Jewish state would require removing much of the Palestinian population in order to decrease the proportion of non-Jews to a manageable level. “I am for compulsory transfer,” David Ben-Gurion told the Jewish Agency Executive in June 1938,

“I do not see anything immoral in it.” (quoted in Pappé, 2006, p. xi)

The next decade saw World War II, the Holocaust, and a postwar influx of European Jewish refugees into Palestine. The new United Nations decided that, under the circumstances, a radical dichotomization was in order. Thus it devised the 1948 partition of Palestine. The indigenous Palestinians at this time still constituted about two-thirds of the population and owned almost all of the cultivated land. Nevertheless, the United Nations designated most of Palestine for the creation of a Jewish state. For the Zionists to realize their dream, however, they needed to get as many of the native Palestinians as possible out of what would become Israel. The Hagana, a Zionist paramilitary force, prepared for transfer (Pappé, 2006).

Plan Dalet, launched in March 1948 by Ben-Gurion and the Hagana, implemented the ethnic cleansing of what was about to become Israel. In the next few months, hundreds of villages were systematically emptied and destroyed. Some 700,000 Palestinians were expelled or fled in terror. Massacres of Palestinians by Jewish forces killed hundreds, including dozens of young children, and encouraged the frantic exodus of others who feared they and their villages would be next. Consistent with the purpose of the ethnic cleansing, virtually none were ever permitted to return. Instead, Palestinian villages were systematically replaced with Jewish settlements or Jewish National Fund forests (Pappé, 2006).

The ethnic cleansing was followed immediately by denial (McGowan & Ellis, 1998). The standard story, now rejected by all serious historians, told of an Israeli David fighting off the mighty Goliath of the invading Arab armies. Palestinians, the story goes, were told by their Arab supporters to get out of the way until they could later return in victory. Israeli history texts taught these founding myths until at least the 1980s (Podeh, 2002). Texts of the 1990s were revised on the basis of new historical evidence (especially Morris, 1987), but the old myths persist.

At an official level, Israel continues to deny the historical reality of the 1948 ethnic

cleansing of Palestine and continues to dehumanize Palestinian victims of the ethnic cleansing and their descendants by refusing to recognize their fundamental human right to return to their 1948 homes or be compensated for what is irretrievably lost. The original dichotomization, of course, remains firmly in place. The case of Palestine is consistent with the hypothesis that dichotomization of identities, dehumanization of the other, and denial to maintain moral identity are relevant to group violence generally, not just to acts of genocide.

Terrorism

Terrorism has been seen by many as raising issues of identity (Schwartz, Dunkel, & Waterman, 2009). Perpetrators of terrorism identify strongly with their own group and see themselves as acting on its behalf to achieve its legitimate purposes (Moghaddam, 2006; Pape, 2005). They typically see what they are doing, or have done, as morally acceptable, admirable, or even obligatory under the circumstances. I consider here (1) the best-known example of terrorism and then (2) the deadliest day of terrorism (which was not the same day).

On September 11, 2001, planes flew into both towers of the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon in Washington, DC. A fourth plane was also intended to hit a government building in Washington but crashed in Pennsylvania. About 3,000 people were killed. The plan, it turned out, was devised by an Islamist group known as Al-Qaeda, led by Osama bin Laden.

As is always the case, bin Laden and Al-Qaeda had their reasons (Lawrence, 2005; Moghaddam, 2006). They saw themselves as acting on behalf of Islam and their Muslim brethren against the ongoing violence, encroachments, and humiliations inflicted by America and its allies, including Israel, on the Muslim world. The targets hit by their planes – the Pentagon and World Trade Centers – were centers and symbols of the military and economic might of the United States and were occupied by those serving its

purposes. The means used to attack the United States reflected the means available. And very few of the victims were children. Far from being unjustified and immoral, the September 11 attacks were seen by the perpetrators as morally praiseworthy.

But having what one sees as good reasons for acts of violence does not remove such acts from the category of terrorism. Bin Laden and Al-Qaeda engaged in deadly violence against people who had done no particular wrong in order to traumatize and intimidate Americans. By any definition, this was an act of terrorism.

And now: What was the deadliest day of terrorism in the history of the world? The answer, to the best of my knowledge, is August 6, 1945. That was the day the United States dropped an atom bomb on the city of Hiroshima, killing perhaps a hundred thousand people that very day and subjecting many thousands more to horrifying and deadly aftereffects. Given the scale of this mass killing, some scholars have considered it a genocidal act (Kuper, 1981; Markusen & Kopf, 1995). But the bombing of Hiroshima was not intended to destroy the people of Japan. It was intended to terrorize them into submission. Thus, it seems more accurate to call it an act of terrorism than an act of genocide.

No less than Al-Qaeda, the United States had its reasons. The United States was at war with Japan. It had been attacked at Pearl Harbor. It was saving lives by bringing the war to an end. It was doing what had to be done. These justifications are sufficient to convince most Americans that the bombing of Hiroshima was morally justified and did not constitute an act of terrorism.

More objective observers disagree (Grayling, 2006; Markusen & Kopf, 1995). Perpetrators of terrorism always have justifications of this sort that maintain their moral identities. They usually believe – often with good reason – that they were, are, or could soon be under attack. Their deadly violence is typically seen as a necessary part of a larger war. They commonly believe that theirs is the only path to a just peace. They easily convince themselves that whatever they do is saving more lives, in the long run, than it costs. Thus denial operates universally,

blinding us all to our responsibility for deadly violence.

Thousands of the victims of Hiroshima were children, the most clearly innocent of all innocent victims. But Americans rarely think about the victims of Hiroshima even *en masse*, and never as individual people. Dichotomization and dehumanization are sufficiently powerful to enable the mass killing of children, and denial is sufficiently powerful to leave it in the past.

Torture, Disappearances, and Mass Killing

I conclude this section on group violence with a few more examples from several additional categories. Systematic programs of torture have been widespread for millennia. In the 1970s and 1980s, torture was central to the Latin American dirty wars. Its best-known site in recent years has been Abu Ghraib in Iraq (Danner, 2004; Gourevitch & Morris, 2008; Zimbardo, 2007), but the United States has also engaged in systematic programs of torture at Bagram Air Force Base in Afghanistan, at Guantanamo Bay Detention Camp in Cuba, and at an unknown number of secret “black sites.” The United States has also practiced *extraordinary rendition*, in which prisoners are secretly and illegally transferred to other countries for the purpose of subjecting them to more heinous tortures (Mayer, 2008).

In sites where torture is performed, there is a clear dichotomization between those who can be tortured and those who can torture. Those to be tortured are seen as less than human – subversives, terrorists, extremists, fanatics – and the process of torture relentlessly reduces their humanity to the basics of biology. Torture is usually conducted secretly, often in secret places on secret prisoners. It is denied linguistically by calling it “interrogation” or “enhanced interrogation.”

To be disappeared is to be taken, typically by governmental agents, without acknowledgment. The intent may be in part to eliminate political groups and views deemed objectionable, in part to terrorize those actually or potentially associated with such groups or views,

and in part to permit denial of responsibility. The disappearances associated with Argentina's dirty war of the late 1970s were of a scale and nature to be deemed genocidal under most definitions.

The major program of disappearances in the first decade of the twenty-first century was the US abduction of an unknown number of people and their transport to secret "black sites" for torture. Because the victims were seen by most Americans as an amorphous and subhuman mass of Islamic terrorists, questions of their individual human rights did not arise. It remains to be seen whether this practice has been genuinely discontinued, whether the full story will ever be told, and whether anyone will be held accountable. Denial is often rooted in nationalist commitments that transcend political parties and changes in administration.

In mass killing, a large number of people are killed, usually because of the group to which they are thought to belong. If the intent is to kill enough individuals to eliminate the group itself, mass killing is genocide. Killings of multiple defenseless people on a smaller scale are usually called massacres. Killings of all people in a village, including children, are often called genocidal massacres.

Mass killings are usually not aimed at particular individuals as individuals, but their targets are not random. Almost always, they are crimes of group violence involving dichotomized social identities. Ongoing dehumanization of those to be killed renders the killing something less than murder. After the killing, powerful social and psychological processes extend the dehumanization of the victims by denying the crime, thus denying that they ever existed (Moshman, 2004a).

Minimizing Group Violence

To review briefly, identity has been defined as an explicit theory of oneself as a person (Moshman, 2011). To see oneself as a person is, in large part, to see oneself in relation to other people and to social groups. Social identity

is typically multidimensional, involving connections and commitments to multiple overlapping groups.

On the basis of identity considerations, a four-phase model of genocide (Moshman, 2007) was presented. The first phase involves a dichotomization of identities that divides the social universe into "us" and "them." Phase 2 involves a process of dehumanization that places "them" outside the realm of moral obligation. This enables and justifies violence against the out-group, up to and including genocide (phase 3). Such justification is supplemented, in a final phase, by denial of what really happened, thus enabling the perpetrators to maintain their moral self-conceptions.

Examination of other forms of group violence suggested that the three basic identity processes associated with genocide – dichotomization, dehumanization, and denial – may be general to group violence, which comes in many forms, including genocide, ethnic cleansing, terrorism, torture, disappearances, and mass killing. Large-scale acts of violence, moreover, usually fit multiple categories. The Holocaust encompassed all six of those listed above, and it is not unique in cutting across whatever conceptual categories we come up with. With respect to addressing group violence, then, what may be most important is not sharply distinguishing various forms of violence but rather recognizing their common themes of dichotomization, dehumanization, and denial.

Identity always has a strong component of social identity, which always entails some degree of in-group/out-group differentiation. The potential for dichotomization is thus always present (see Spears, Chapter 9, this volume). Resisting dichotomization is not a matter of suggesting that everyone feel equally related to everyone else or that no one ever feel part of a group or opposed to some other group. Rather, it is a matter of maintaining multiple connections, multiple affiliations, and overlapping groups. That is, we must "tame the wild beast of identity" (Maalouf, 2001, p. 157) by encouraging and maintaining multifaceted identities (Maalouf, 2001; Sen, 2006).

As noted earlier in connection with Rwanda, a common dynamic of group violence is that moderate claims about the rationality and humanity of the other are undermined by extremist ideologies and violence from that other side. The history since the 1948 partition of Palestine provides many examples of extremists on each side undermining moderates on the other and thus further dichotomizing the situation. For some this is just one piece, albeit a crucial one, in the broader “war of civilizations” between the “West” and “Islam,” dichotomization on a still grander and more dangerous scale. “Moderates,” in this context, are those working against dichotomization.

In resisting dichotomization, however, we must be wary of recreating it in the very distinction of extremists from moderates. The label “extremist,” moreover, is not just dichotomizing but also dehumanizing in suggesting a group beyond rationality and discourse, hardly even human, and a radical danger to us all. What obligations could we possibly have to extremists? Wouldn’t the world be a better place if we could just eliminate them all? Thus, we slip all too readily from dichotomization to dehumanization to utopian dreams of genocide (Weitz, 2003).

Fundamentally, I suggest, the problem is not terminology but conceptualization. Who counts as a person? This is reflected in our language but it is very much a matter of political and religious ideology and identity, with profound consequences for individuals and groups. Those failing to qualify as persons fall outside the universe of moral obligation. Challenging dehumanization requires argumentation and reconceptualization, not just careful language.

As for denial, it is pervasive and invisible, requiring active efforts to identify and overcome it. Even when historians debunk myths of the past, those myths often persist in the present and future. Israel, as discussed above, was born in an ethnic cleansing, with horrific ongoing consequences more than six decades later. Despite the work of Israeli historians such as Morris (1987) and Pappe (2004, 2006), this continues to be denied. Similarly, on a much larger scale, the nations of the Americas remain largely oblivious to the fact that they were born

through processes of ethnic cleansing and genocide directed at hundreds of indigenous cultural groups. And then there is the rest of the world. People everywhere live in denial of their history because the needs of patriotic national identity make the truth unacceptable (Moshman, 2009). Whatever else we do, we should determine and teach the truth.

Ordinary Identities

People typically see genocide as rare and attribute it to evil individuals or fanatical group hatreds. Perhaps the single most important conclusion of research on genocide has been the emerging consensus that genocide and other extreme forms of group violence are, on the contrary, all too common and are for the most part the work of “ordinary men” (and women) playing social roles in groups, institutions, and practices central to their identities (Arendt, 1994; Ashmore, Jussim, Wilder, & Heppen, 2001; Bandura, 1999; Browning, 1998, 2004; Gourevitch & Morris, 2008; Grayling, 2006; Mann, 2005; Markusen & Kopf, 1995; Moshman, 2005, 2007; Sereny, 1983; Shaw, 2007; Staub, 2001; Waller, 2002; Woolf & Hulsizer, 2005; Zimbardo, 2007).

Similarly, the present analysis suggests that genocide is the outcome of ordinary identities and ubiquitous psychological and social processes of dichotomization, dehumanization, and denial. The first challenge in explaining genocide and other group violence is to recognize that what we need to explain is not how “they” (who are evil, hateful, and violent) differ from “us” (who want only peace and justice) but rather why we all turn so often to group violence and support the violence of our own groups. The problem lies not in particular kinds of identity but in its general nature. As long as we have social identities – which is to say as long as we remain human – we will remain prone to group violence.

Genocide and other forms of group violence have played major roles in human history everywhere, and continue to do so. Perhaps they always will, not because we have genes for genocide but because we have social identities. Even

if group violence cannot be eliminated, however, we can reduce it substantially and sometimes prevent it from escalating to genocide, by taking into account what we know of our identity processes. Of course, there is more to learn, but we know at least three things: We should be wary of efforts to divide us from others; we should resist dehumanization of others; and we should identify and challenge denials of the truth.

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Epilogue: What's Next for Identity Theory and Research?

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This handbook has brought together, for the first time, several different lines of identity theory and research. Indeed, as outlined in the introductory chapter, our goal has been to map the landscape of identity studies and to provide expert reviews of various areas of this landscape. In doing so, we have begun to answer some important questions about identity—but we have also raised new ones. Hopefully, we have also created exciting integrative possibilities for the field as it moves forward. Although it is impossible for any edited volume to cover all of the identity-related perspectives that have been advanced, we believe that we have surveyed a wide range of models and have captured much of the diversity within the field of identity studies.

We, the editors, have learned an incredible amount from editing this book. The richness and diversity within the field of identity studies is staggering—which offers both a tremendous challenge and a tremendous opportunity. We continue to believe that integration is both possible and desirable among the many perspectives presented in this book. Yet, it is important to create an integrative framework that can genuinely give space to the insights available from each perspective, rather than forcing diverse perspectives into an overly narrow and restrictive synthesis. With this in mind, in this closing

chapter, we revisit some of the key divisions in the literature that we identified at the beginning of the book. We consider how far we have come, as well as what remains to be done in order to facilitate the integration that we have envisioned.

Issue 1: Identity as a Multilevel Construct

Operationalizing “identity” is not an easy task. To truly capture the complexity of this construct, we must move beyond isolated sub-disciplines, put forward integrative theoretical propositions, and design innovative research studies that capture multiple components and processes of identity. For example, Umaña-Taylor (Chapter 33, this volume) illustrates how two prominent and largely separate perspectives on identity—the neo-Eriksonian approach and the social identity approach—actually complement one another well and can be used together to provide a much fuller understanding of the dynamics of ethnic identity than would be possible using either perspective on its own. To illustrate the possibilities for further integration of this kind, one might consider the role of identity in the workplace. On the one hand, Skorikov and Vondracek (Chapter 29, this volume) examine occupational identity at the level of the individual person—who am I as a worker, and where am I going in my working life? On the other hand, Haslam and Ellemers (Chapter 30, this volume) address the domain of work by viewing the workplace as a context

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for group activity. These perspectives highlight differing components of a single domain of life—the workplace—and as such, the potential may exist for integrating them into a larger model of how individuals choose careers and, at the same time, how group dynamics in the work context determine the effectiveness of leadership, feelings of motivation, and perceptions of stress among employees. Both the “inner” (choosing a career) and “outer” (workplace dynamics) worlds of work are important, and integrating them might indeed be important in helping individuals to develop a work identity—both in terms of the type of work one pursues and in terms of the effectiveness with which that work is performed.

The workplace is only one example of how exciting, innovative, and practically useful ideas can be pursued, based on bringing together diverse perspectives on identity. The issue of international migration—which is quite polarizing and divisive in many countries—can also be viewed from both “inner” and “outer” perspectives. That is, the phenomenon that we call “migration” is comprised of the experiences and views of the individual migrant, the “culture” (defined in many different ways) of the migrant group, and the ways in which the migrant group interacts with—and is perceived by—the receiving society. As such, chapters in this volume by Huynh, Nguyen, and Benet-Martínez (Chapter 35: the inner experience of the migrant person), Stepick, Dutton Stepick, and Vanderkooy (Chapter 37: the ways in which the choices available to individual migrants are constrained by the group to which they belong), and both Schildkraut (Chapter 36) and Licata et al. (Chapter 38: ways in which the receiving society views and interacts with migrant groups) suggest exciting directions in which the study of migration can be extended and expanded. How are the migrant’s sense of her/himself, group memberships, and relations with other people affected by the interplay among these various identity aspects and processes? These diverse perspectives, and their potential integration, suggest that the study of international migration is far more complex than is often portrayed in both academic and lay discourse.

Issue 2: Interplay of Short- and Long-Term Processes

Another important direction for integration involves exploring the links between short-term (e.g., moment-to-moment, daily variation) and long-term (e.g., across a span of months or years) identity processes (e.g., Klimstra et al., 2010). Short-term approaches, such as analyzing contextual shifts in the salience of personal and social identities (Spears, Chapter 9, this volume), the way individuals position themselves in conversations (Bamberg, De Fina, & Schiffrin, Chapter 8, this volume), or the ways in which people defend against threats to their self-esteem (Gregg, Sedikides, & Gebauer, Chapter 14, this volume), may represent the “building blocks” that comprise longer-term developmental trajectories in the development of self. The minute-by-minute, hour-by-hour, and day-by-day transactions in which one engages may bring about changes in identity exploration or commitment that may “add up” over longer periods of time (e.g., Luyckx, Schwartz, Goossens, Beyers, & Missotten, Chapter 4, this volume). And such changes in identity processes over longer periods of time may, in turn, represent the building blocks from which individuals construct an overall life story (see McAdams, Chapter 5, this volume). So the ways in which time is conceptualized within the study of identity allow for integration of different perspectives that focus on different timescales (Lichtwarck-Aschoff, van Geert, Bosma, & Kunnen, 2008).

Issue 3: Identity Discovery and Identity Construction

In the introductory chapter, we raised the issue of whether identity is discovered, personally constructed, or socially constructed. A number of chapters in this book addressed this issue (e.g., for self-discovery, Soenens & Vansteenkiste, Chapter 17, and Waterman, Chapter 16; for personal construction, Berzonsky, Chapter 3; and for social construction, Bamberg, De Fina, &

Schiffirin, [Chapter 8](#)). To address empirically the issue of how identity comes into being, innovative methodologies may need to be developed. A number of issues need to be considered regarding how these methodologies might be created. First, we are somewhat skeptical of the value of relying straightforwardly on individuals' self-reports of the extent to which they have discovered their "true selves" (e.g., Waterman, [Chapter 16](#), this volume). Individuals may not be able to distinguish, or they may even be motivated to avoid considering objectively, whether the "true self" that they are experiencing existed prior to its discovery or whether in reality they are experiencing a sense of fit and authenticity with a sense of self that they have constructed. Experimental methods, such as those used in social psychology, may be useful in determining the extent to which individuals are aware of precisely *what* they are discovering (cf. Schlenker & Weigold, 1990). For example, one might randomly assign participants to conditions where they receive descriptions of themselves that they are encouraged to believe are "true" or "authentic," when actually these are known to be either biased or random. If such an experimental manipulation is successful in prompting individuals to report feelings of self-discovery, then this could suggest that people's experiences of true self are in fact personally or socially constructed—or at least that this can sometimes be the case.

It may also be useful to conduct qualitative (narrative or discursive) studies to understand better how people experience the processes involved in self-construction and self-discovery. Such studies might utilize structured interview measures, similar to those that have been used to assess identity status (e.g., Marcia & Archer, 1993). A set of questions would be devised, such as "How did you come to know who you are?" and "Do you feel that you have discovered who you really are—and if so, how did you do this?" Such questions would allow individuals to describe their experiences of personal self-construction and self-discovery and to answer the question of *how* individuals come to realize, or feel, that they have discovered their "true" selves.

Future research must also explore in greater depth the interplay between personal and social processes of identity construction. This is connected to what Côté and Levine (2002) have labeled the "structure-agency debate" within sociology: how much of individual behavior is the result of free choice versus contextual constraint? As an interesting example of how this might be addressed, consider the construct of "commitment" as defined within the neo-Eriksonian (Kroger & Marcia, [Chapter 2](#), this volume; Luyckx et al., [Chapter 4](#), this volume) and symbolic interactionist (Serpe & Stryker, [Chapter 10](#), this volume) perspectives. Within the neo-Eriksonian approach, commitment is typically taken to imply an individual's conscious decision to adhere to a specific set of goals, values, and beliefs (Bosma & Kunnen, 2001). Seemingly in contrast, within symbolic interactionism, commitment refers to a person's occupying a specific social structural position that will tend to prescribe certain identities and behaviors and proscribe others (Stryker, 2003). At first blush, neo-Eriksonian commitment and symbolic interactionist commitment look like radically different constructs, despite the shared name. Yet, on closer inspection, there may be a lot more commonality between the processes underlying these constructs than at first appears. From a neo-Eriksonian perspective, a person may form a commitment largely based on social contextual influences or even pressures—not so different from the symbolic interactionist concept. Similarly, from a symbolic interactionist perspective, a person may enter willingly into a social structural position of commitment—for example, by starting a new job or getting married—which might be viewed in neo-Eriksonian terms as the behavioral component of a personally endorsed commitment. So agency operates within the constraints of structure while, at least to some extent, agency can help to determine the structural position in which individuals find themselves. Thus, the difference between the two concepts of "commitment" arguably turns out to be a difference of emphasis, rather than a difference of kind.

An important direction for future work, then, is to situate agency-based methodological approaches to identity (e.g., Schwartz, Côté, & Arnett, 2005) within the larger auspices of methodologies drawn from the symbolic interactionist and other role-based perspectives. For example, Bosma and Kunnen (2001) and Phillips and Pittman (2003) have suggested that contextual factors, such as socioeconomic status and cultural expectations, constrain the potential identity alternatives that are available for the person to select (see also Oyserman & James, Chapter 6, this volume). Ethnographic methodologies—as well as multilevel studies that study both individual and contextual variables—should be used to explore the ways in which contextual processes promote or inhibit the range of identity elements and positions from which one can choose (see the next section for an example of this approach). Additionally, the concept of “individuals as producers of their own development” (Lerner & Busch-Rossnagel, 1981) might be invoked, perhaps through narrative or discursive analyses, to examine the ways in which the commitments that individuals intentionally enact may subsequently become structural roles that then constrain the range of identity commitments that can be enacted at a later time. For example, entering into marriage and becoming a parent may contraindicate certain career moves that require a great deal of flexibility and traveling. Interdisciplinary, cross-perspective work is necessary to examine the processes involved in the interplay between explicit and implicit commitments.

Issue 4: Multiple Methodologies

In addressing these complex theoretical issues, much could be gained from the combined use of qualitative and quantitative methods. Of course, this is not a new idea (see, e.g., Bryman, 1988; Denzin, 1978; Flick, 1992; Reicher, 1994). For example, some have suggested a circular movement between the two methodological approaches: qualitative analyses might be

used to explore new and complex phenomenon, leading to the generation of more sophisticated hypotheses for subsequent quantitative testing, and then further qualitative analyses might be conducted to explore surprising or unexplained results from the quantitative analysis, etc. But, although many writers have called for mixed-method research on identity processes, such research in the identity studies field remains relatively scarce (for exceptions, see Rodriguez, Schwartz, & Whitbourne, 2010; Verkuyten, 2005). Admittedly, mixed method research is difficult, because each method requires detailed training and experience (e.g., inferential statistics versus grounded-theory methods), and qualitative and quantitative methods require different sets of skills. Nevertheless, a good first step would be for quantitative-based researchers to read and seriously consider what they can learn from qualitative identity research, and vice versa.

As an example of this latter approach, Pehrson, Vignoles, and Brown (2009; see also Licata, Sanchez-Mazas, & Green, Chapter 38, this volume) conducted a quantitative analysis to test a prediction that they had derived originally from critical discourse theory (Parker, 1992; see also Bamberg et al., Chapter 8, this volume). A key theoretical idea underlying their study was that macro-level ideological discourses (in this case, particular social constructions of nationhood) can make certain identity positions easier to occupy and others less so (in this case, how easy it is to be strongly identified with one's nation while simultaneously espousing positive attitudes toward immigrants). In a multilevel analysis of survey data from 31 nations, they found support for this prediction. Specifically, in those nations where national membership was defined to a greater extent in terms of shared language, they found that national identification was correlated with negative attitudes to immigrants (in these nations, either one could identify with the nation, or one could have a positive attitude to immigrants), whereas in those nations where national membership was defined in terms of shared citizenship, no such

correlation was found (in these nations, the discursive climate made it easier to identify strongly and yet also express positive attitudes toward immigrants).

This study, along with Verkuyten's (2005) pairing of discursive and experimental approaches, illustrates ways in which qualitative and quantitative approaches can be used together to develop and test broader and more sophisticated theoretical propositions. And, given that methodological approaches are often associated with specific theoretical worldviews and with certain types of research questions, mixed-method studies provide exciting possibilities for integration. Through such combined qualitative–quantitative lines of research, we can achieve the best of both worlds—drawing on the strengths, and compensating for the weaknesses, of both methodological approaches.

Concluding Remarks

In closing, this handbook represents one of the first steps in—and hopefully it will be an important catalyst for—a coming together of the various currents of identity theory and research. Such an integration, extension, and expansion of current work may be the most effective response to critics such as Brubaker and Cooper (2000) and Gergen (1991), who have asserted that identity represents a “catch-all” term for anything related to the self. We hope to have clarified our conceptions of what identity is, and what it is not—as well as delineating the various dimensions of identity and how they fit together to create the whole that is the person, the relationship, the group, and the society. However, much work remains to be done, and it is important for future theoretical and empirical efforts to draw from a variety of fields, disciplines, and perspectives including and even beyond those in this handbook (see also Wetherell & Mohanty, 2010). It is our hope that the collection of chapters in this book inspires a new, integrative, and expansive line of identity theory and research.

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