Chapter 13
Perspectives on Personal Identity Development in Western and Non-Western Contexts

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Introduction

Systematic research on the development of personal identity started in the United States in the 1960s. Inspired by Erikson's (1950) writings, Marcia (1966) developed the Identity Status Interview to assess individuals' success in achieving this key task of psychosocial development. From a North American and Northwest European perspective, it seems that research on personal identity research initially spread across mainly only these Western countries, only to reach other parts of the world much later (Schwartz et al., 2012). In this chapter, we will examine whether this conclusion is accurate by including novel insights into the historical roots of identity formation research.

Building on previous overviews (e.g., a 2012 special issue in *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development*; Schwartz et al., 2012), we will first describe different conceptualizations of personal identity as developed in the Western world and review the most prominent findings and ideas on identity development and its association with well-being and psychopathology as obtained in these countries. Next, we will evaluate identity studies in the Majority World (i.e., non-Western

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countries) conducted both within and across different cultural contexts, considering both emic (culture-specific) and etic (cross-cultural) perspectives. It is important to note that broad categorizations such as the Western and non-Western world obscure the real diversity in cultures across the globe, as well as the diversity within cultures. This should be kept in mind when reading this chapter.

The main goal of the chapter is to review the extent to which Western perspectives on identity development hold in the Majority World and provide ideas on how to make the study of identity truly cosmopolitan. This chapter thus aims to inspire research that does more justice to the specific challenges individuals from various Majority World settings deal with, in light of well-established theoretical perspectives on identity development.

Conceptualizations of Personal Identity: Developmental Perspectives

Erikson (1950) inspired much of the current research on personal identity. He described identity formation as a search for a new sense of sameness and continuity after children no longer take the teachings provided by adult authority figures for granted. Based on clinical observations, Erikson emphasized the significance of a well-developed and integrated identity, linking identity issues to problems such as delinquency, extremism, and psychotic episodes. He further emphasized that, although more pronounced during adolescence, identity formation is a lifelong developmental task, with its roots in childhood and continuing significance throughout adulthood.

From Erikson's writings, three major functions of identity can be derived: *distinctiveness*, *coherence*, and *continuity* (Pasupathi, 2014). Distinctiveness generally refers to a sense of uniqueness relative to others. It can be derived from psychological and physical distance to others, as well as social position (e.g., status), but is most often derived from perceived differences in personal characteristics such as abilities, physical characteristics, and personality characteristics (van Doeselaar et al., 2019). Coherence refers to perceiving a sense of unity across roles and across one's behavior, cognitions, and emotions in different situations. Although coherence has been conceptualized differently across studies, not experiencing conflicts may be more important than merely experiencing differences between one's identity across roles and situations (van Doeselaar et al., 2018a). Continuity is often associated with stability in psychological research, and therefore, it could be mistaken for reflecting rank-order or mean-level stability in identity levels. However, continuity as a function of identity reflects the sense of feeling that one is largely the same person today that one was in the past and will be in the future (e.g., van Doeselaar et al., 2018a). Although there are many studies on distinctiveness and coherence (for a review, see van Doeselaar et al., 2018a), there is some ambiguity regarding their conceptualization. In addition, the lion's share of research on

identity development has focused on identity continuity. This chapter too, therefore, will focus on continuity.

Even within identity continuity, there are still several different approaches. Currently, the *narrative* approach is among the most prominent. Research on narrative identity was initiated in the 1970s and 1980s, when researchers started to (re-) appreciate the psychological value of stories. Narrative identity is an internalized and evolving story that gives individuals a sense of continuity and integrity (McAdams & McLean, 2013). This life story is often derived using interviews, but written or online narratives also elicit large amounts of identity-relevant information (Adler et al., 2016). The researcher starts out with qualitative data, but various constructs can be coded from such stories and thus quantified. These include meaning making (learning something about oneself or about life through an event) and redemption (something good taken from something bad that happened before). The approach provides rich information but is time intensive and therefore harder to implement in large samples.

Another, perhaps even more prominent, set of approaches to the empirical study of identity continuity date back to Marcia's (1966) work. Marcia provided a first empirical definition of identity continuity along two dimensions: *commitment* and *exploration*. Commitment refers to whether individuals have made choices in particular life domains and engage in concrete activities to implement these choices. Exploration indicates whether different potential choices are sought and compared before commitments are made. Based on these two dimensions, individuals are classified into one of four identity statuses. These are *diffusion* (weak commitments, little exploration), *moratorium* (extensive exploration, but no strong commitments yet), *foreclosure* (relatively strong commitments that were adopted from others without the individuals themselves engaging in exploration), and *achievement* (strong commitments after extensive exploration). Marcia used an interview to examine commitment, exploration, and individuals' resulting identity status. His model of identity formation inspired thousands of studies, some of which used a narrative approach to provide an in-depth view of what identity formation looks like (Carlsson et al., 2015). However, a larger number of studies later used questionnaire-based operationalizations of commitment and exploration (e.g., Adams et al., 1979).

Following critiques on the limited ability of identity status-like approaches to capture identity development (e.g., Bosma, 1985; Grotevant, 1987), Berzonsky (1989) developed an approach targeting individual differences in decision-making and problem-solving processes related to identity. In this identity styles approach, a distinction is made between information orientation (i.e., deciding after actively searching and evaluating information), normative orientation (i.e., trying to conform to norms held up by important others), and diffused orientation (i.e., procrastination, letting immediate situational demand dictate choices). The identity styles approach fits less well into the more functional perspective following from a distinctiveness–coherence–continuity framing of identity; the approach has been a source of inspiration of current questionnaire-based work. This current work, further inspired by the aforementioned critiques of Bosma (1985) and Grotevant (1987), extended Marcia's model by adding more dimensions to better capture the dynamics of the identity formation process.

Two such extensions of Marcia's (1966) model are currently particularly prominent. The first of these is a three-dimension model (Crocetti et al., 2008), in which *commitment* (confidence derived from made choices), *in-depth exploration* (reflection on the merits of one's current commitments without necessarily questioning these), and *reconsideration* (doubt about one's current commitments and considering alternatives) are distinguished. The second model distinguishes five dimensions (Luyckx et al., 2008a). Commitment is split into dimensions of *commitment making* (the extent to which commitments to life choices are made) and *identification with commitment* (the extent to which one derives a sense of self and certainty from these commitments), while three types of exploration are distinguished: *Exploration in depth* is the same as in-depth exploration (as described by Crocetti et al., 2008), whereas *exploration in breadth* refers to searching for new commitments without necessarily comparing these to existing commitments. *Ruminative exploration* entails mulling over what commitments to make without coming to a satisfying answer.

The dimensions of these models are thought to be intertwined in two developmental cycles of identity formation (Luyckx et al., 2006; Meeus, 2011). The first is the identity formation cycle, in which individuals work to (re-)establish stable commitments. Dimensions that fit in this cycle are reconsideration, exploration in breadth, and commitment making. Second, there is an identity evaluation or maintenance cycle, in which commitments are evaluated and optimized. In-depth exploration and identification of commitment fit this cycle. The commitment dimension of the three-dimension model (Crocetti et al., 2008) fits this cycle since, as Waterman (2015) points out, it is highly similar to the identification of commitment dimension described by Luyckx et al. (2008a). These authors add that individuals can get stuck in ruminative exploration in either of the cycles (Luyckx et al., 2008a). Generally, individuals are thought to move back and forth between these cycles, in line with Erikson's (1950) assertions that identity is a lifelong process.

More recently, Cieciuch and Topolewska (2017) proposed and tested a circumplex of identity-formation modes. This model integrates the aforementioned identity styles (Berzonsky, 1989), the three-dimension model (Crocetti et al., 2008), and the five-dimension model of identity formation (Luyckx et al., 2008a). However, in the circumplex model, eight "modes" (e.g., normativity and moratorivity) are distinguished. These modes are personality style-like constructs, much like Berzonsky's identity styles. Hence, the circumplex model fits less well into the distinctiveness–coherence–continuity framing of identity and, despite its potential, will, however, not be discussed further in this chapter.

Personal Identity Development in the Western World

Using the aforementioned conceptualizations, a large number of longitudinal studies on identity development have been conducted. Relatively few of these are on narrative identity. A recent review (McAdams & McLean, 2013) showed that narrative identities become more coherent from childhood into adolescence. Throughout

adolescence, narratives contain an increasing amount of meaning. Thus, by late adolescence, many individuals are able to construct meaningful and coherent life stories, which become an important part of their broader personality (McAdams & Pals, 2006). A longitudinal case study covering 35 years (Josselson, 2009) illustrated that narratives continue to evolve over the lifespan and that the same identity-relevant event can have a very different meaning at different ages. Thereby, research on narrative identity supports Erikson's (1950) observation that identity formation is a lifelong process.

Studies on identity development inspired by Marcia's (1966) approach can be divided into categorical studies on status transitions and dimensional approaches. Kroger et al. (2010) summarized much of the work on status transitions. Their meta-analysis showed that about half of the adolescents and young adults did not change their identity status over time. However, one third appeared to change progressively (i.e., to an identity status characterized by stronger commitments, such as achievement), and only about 10% changed regressively (i.e., to an identity status characterized by weaker commitments, such as moratorium). Although this meta-analysis included studies with methodological limitations (e.g., median-split techniques to classify individuals into statuses), a large-sample empirical study that used state-of-the-art statistical analyses to study transitions between identity statuses had similar results (Meeus et al., 2010). Interestingly, Meeus et al. (2010) also found that membership to high-commitment statuses (achievement and the foreclosure-like status of early closure) was more stable across time than membership to other statuses. Studies on adult identity development showed that progressive changes continued into middle adulthood (age 40–50) but that there was less developmental change in late adulthood compared to earlier stages in the lifespan (Cramer, 2004; Fadjukoff et al., 2010).

Studies using a dimensional approach confirmed these results but provided more details. For adolescence, these studies found mean-level stability (Klimstra et al., 2010) or modest increases (Luyckx et al., 2013a, 2014) for commitment. In young adulthood, mean levels of commitment first weakened in the transition to college (Luyckx et al., 2013b). In the later college years and when individuals neared the age of 30, commitments tended to become stronger again (Luyckx et al., 2013a, b). Mean levels of in-depth exploration only started to change in late adolescence, when they increased. Several studies also found evidence for increases in exploration in breadth and reconsideration in this period (Becht et al., 2016, 2017; Luyckx et al., 2013a, 2014), illustrating that late adolescents may be in a search for where they should go with their lives. In young adulthood, several studies suggest that this search process continues (Luyckx et al. 2008b, 2013b), but in the late 20s exploration in breadth does decrease (Luyckx et al., 2013a, b). Thus, the late 20s may be the time when the average individual starts to settle down.

Research on narrative and status approaches with a predominant focus on identity continuity suggests that, on average, individuals' identities become stronger and more complex with age. These patterns confirm theoretical predictions and therefore demonstrate that the current identity measures do at least have some construct validity (however, see Waterman, 2015, for an excellent critical review on the

three- and five-dimension models of identity formation). Still, several studies have demonstrated large individual differences in identity development, and these are informative on individual differences in psychological well-being and psychopathology symptoms.

Research on narrative identity underscores the importance of redemption, which is the ability to take something positive from experiences that started out as negative (Adler et al., 2016). Individuals who show the ability to redeem negative events tend to report higher levels of well-being. Deriving more meaning from one's key life experiences typically also predicts higher levels of well-being, but for early adolescent boys, it initially predicts lower levels of well-being (Chen et al., 2012; McLean et al., 2010). This suggests that the universality of findings on identity may be limited, even within cultures.

Research on identity formation within the identity status framework showed that individual differences in identity development are associated with psychological well-being and psychopathology symptoms (e.g., Becht et al., 2016; Lillevoll et al., 2013; Meeus, 2011; van Doeselaar et al., 2018b). The main message derived from such studies is clear: Stronger commitments, or statuses defined by stronger commitments, tend to be accompanied by fewer psychopathology symptoms and (thus) higher levels of well-being.

We have now sketched a seemingly coherent picture of identity development and its association with adjustment and psychopathology symptoms. However, the aforementioned studies were all conducted in Western (North American and Northwest European) or Westernized (Oceanian) countries. This is a major limitation, as identity formation as a concept may already be linked to Western values that emphasize the importance of individuality. Furthermore, research suggests that prevailing cultural master narratives strongly affect individuals' identities (e.g., Hammack, 2008). This suggests that identity development and identity processes may be very different across countries, cultures, and ethnic groups. For that reason, it is important to examine whether the conclusions derived from our review on identity development in the Western(ized) world generalize to Majority World countries. We aim to answer this question in the sections that follow.

Personal Identity in the Non-Western World

In non-Western countries, it is important to note that much work has examined personal identity during adolescence and emerging adulthood—both life stages considered crucial for identity considerations. However, to our knowledge, there are few studies examining the *development* of personal identity in non-Western contexts (see Hatano & Sugimura, 2017, for a longitudinal study). Much of the work focuses on (a) evaluating the value of established Western models on personality identity in non-Western contexts through the etic (cross-cultural) approach or (b) seeking to define personal identity as uniquely non-Western through the emic (culture-specific) approach. Below, we will discuss both etic and emic approaches to personal identity in the non-Western world.

Etic Approaches for Studying Personal Identity

Using the etic perspective, well-validated and established measures of personal identity continuity that have been developed in the Western world were applied in non-Western contexts. Typically, authors turned to established quantitative methodologies to examine models of continuity (e.g., Crocetti et al., 2008; Luyckx et al., 2008a; Marcia, 1966) for personal identity development. The main concern with these models is their comparability when transferring them non-Western contexts. This equivalence is examined through measurement invariance (see Milfont & Fischer, 2010). For example, B. G. Adams et al. (2020) found invariance of a personal identity with a measure tapping into a blend of coherence and continuity (identity subscale of Erikson's Psychosocial Inventory [EPSI]; Rosenthal et al., 1981). Similarly, studies by Crocetti et al. (2015) and Dimitrova et al. (2015) found invariance of the Utrecht-Management of Identity Commitments Scale (U-MICS), which captures identity continuity with the aforementioned three-dimension model (Crocetti et al., 2008). While these studies were able to establish invariance at the configural level, only partial metric invariance (see B. G. Adams et al., 2020; Crocetti et al., 2015) and partial scalar invariance (see Adams et al., 2020; Crocetti et al., 2015; Dimitrova et al., 2015) were established.

A closer look at the above studies suggests that processes of personality identity as conceptualized by commitment and aspects of exploration are distinguishable between, and comparable across, samples from various countries. However, it is important to take the following caveats into account: First, while personal identity seems to be conceptualized in the same way (configural invariance) across samples from different countries, the underlying measures of the construct (metric invariance) and comparability of scores across groups (metric invariance) seem questionable. Second, given that the countries included in these studies were all (partly) situated in Europe, East Asia, South America, and sub-Saharan Africa, evidence for the universal generalizability of Western models of identity formation is far from complete.

Several other studies also sought individual strategies to establish continuity using etic approaches. In their study of independent identity formation among Japanese youths, Mizokami et al. (2018) examined how the sample's self-formation activities related to their personal identity styles and their coherence and continuity, as measured by the EPSI. What is clear from their study is that 70% of the youth seemed to actively engage in defining themselves as independent; this, interestingly, seems to be more present in female youth. The way that Japanese youth who seemed to actively develop themselves as independent also achieved higher scores on the EPSI synthesis scale blend of coherence and continuity. This suggests at least partial similarity in identity formation across cultures.

Berman et al. (2011) came to a slightly different conclusion in a study of personal identity that compared Asian countries (China, Japan, and Taiwan) and the United States. However, their focus was on different constructs. Based on invariance tests, they argued that youth may be distressed about their identities in ways

that are consistent across the four included countries. However, lacking invariance for a commitment and an exploration scale suggests that the way that continuity is experienced (commitment) and achieved (exploration) is different across the four included countries. The authors argued that identity in a non-Western context may be conceptualized more from within the social contexts in which adolescents and youth find themselves and more targeted at gaining a sense of inclusion in a larger collective.

Ozer et al. (2019) showed that an important factor in determining whether identity constructs developed in the Western world may be endorsed in non-Western cultures is the cultural orientation of an individual. Students from, and studying in, the northern Indian region of Ladakh who endorsed a greater Western cultural orientation were also more likely to engage in exploration processes. Those who endorsed their local or Indian values more were more likely to be highly committed. Thus, cultural orientation may affect the way in which individuals try to establish a sense of continuity.

This brief overview of (predominantly) etic approaches does not suggest that a more internationally inclusive perspective necessarily requires giving up on approaches that were developed in the Western world. What it does show is that scores on these Western-world measures cannot always be compared across cultures and that further insight is to be gained of what constitutes personal identity in non-Western contexts. Furthermore, it is very important to emphasize that beyond cultural orientation, individual differences within cultures also seem to matter. Personal identity formation within the identity status framework is associated with well-being (e.g., Adams et al., 2020; Hatano & Sugimura, 2017; Morsunbul et al., 2016; Skhirtladze et al., 2016). However, as it is highly likely that the full picture of identity formation in specific cultures is not always captured, culture-specific (emic) assessment of identity should complement etic approaches.

Emic Approaches for Studying Personal Identity

The examination of personal identity in the non-Western context seems to be predominantly emic in nature. This may be the result of the elusive nature of examining identity (in general) in these contexts. The literature on personal identity in non-Western contexts is often exploratory, with the aim of defining the construct for the people from whom the sample is drawn. Below, we provide some illustrations—but by no means an exhaustive review—of approaches to identity formation that stay close to the concept of developing a sense of continuity. Researchers studying identity formation in the Western world should also take note of this research for its focus on non-privileged groups, the personal identity processes of whom are also understudied in the Western world.

Although identity formation in the Western world has also been described as a relational process with social context playing an important role (Bosma & Kunnen, 2001), group processes and opinions are less emphasized (see also Schwartz et al.,

2008). In a study on personal identity in China, personal identity continuity from a Chinese perspective is argued to be achieved more through group dynamics and opinions, rather than individual feats (Savickas, 2011). A study by Ouyang et al. (2016) argued that with respect to making vocational decisions, youth would account more for interpersonal consequences and benefits than for personal ones. The aforementioned studies were conducted in China but may be descriptive for other non-Western countries. That is, the greater role of social aspects, such as group processes, in achieving a sense of continuity has been described as a general feature distinguishing identity development in non-Western instead of Western contexts (see Erikson, 1950, 1968). We find that this makes sense because personal identity processes in these societies are generally fostered by group membership, with personal aspects of identity (i.e., values, goals, and aspirations) influenced by social aspects such as gender, ethnicity, and social class (Azmitia et al., 2008; Ouyang et al., 2016). While there has been a recent move in Western psychological science toward an integrative view of identity aspects, this seems to be present within non-Western contexts already.

In light of this, it seems clear that non-Western psychologists first seek to gain a cultural understanding of personal identity unique to their contexts using qualitative methodologies, before examining the impact that it may have for psychosocial functioning. Sigad and Nour's (2018) study, which we will describe next, provides a perfect example of how both group membership and context may inform personal identity development. Therefore, it can serve as an example for studying how personal identity formation unfolds in non-privileged groups, both within and outside of the Western world.

The researchers evaluated the identity development of Palestinian youth collaborators (i.e., Israeli informants inside Palestine in the Palestine–Israel conflict) in Israel in what they defined as an ambiguous identity situation. That is, these youth live on the fringes of both Palestinian and Israeli societies (Sigad & Nour, 2018). The findings of the study show that while participants understand the importance of community and belonging for their sense of identity and well-being, they clearly know that they do not belong and that they are excluded and often rejected not only by these two distinct societies but also by their families and extended families. These youth are therefore left to negotiate their identities on the margins of society. This study is also an example of how having a sense of continuity is not necessarily adaptive (Klimstra & Denissen, 2017). For Palestinian collaborators, it may reflect a continuous sense of rejection.

In our reading of the literature of personal identity development in non-Western contexts, it became clear that personal identity continuity presented in a different manner in at least some of these contexts. It was also evident that it is impossible to draw broad generalization across the non-Western world, as every cultural context has its own unique features. Note that this is also true within the Western world, with, for example, differences in the sense of continuity as indicated by commitment being present between countries such as Italy and the Netherlands (e.g., Crocetti et al., 2012). However, one generalization that can be made is that outside of Western contexts, continuity through a sense of personal identity can be achieved

in ways that would not directly stand out to a researcher looking through a Western lens. This makes emic approaches crucial, as is also demonstrated in other chapters within this book (see Crafford; Dudgeon & Bray; Jessop; all this volume).

While we seek to provide some structure for how the development of personal identity takes place in non-Western contexts, there are also studies that draw on *combined emic–etic perspectives* for studying personal identity. One such example considered the personal identity development of Black South African adolescents. Arndt and Naudé (2016) evaluated continuity through in-depth interviews. In a diverse South African context, there seems to be a struggle between African traditional values and Western individualistic values. In this study, Black South African adolescents clearly emphasized aspects of individuality and uniqueness. However, these were in conflict with a desire to belong and be accepted, the traditions in which they took pride, their culture, and Black history. The result of this was a sense of confusion. Hence, this study provides a clear illustration of how difficulty in integrating traditional and Western values may lead to a lacking sense of continuity.

Future Direction for Personal Identity in Non-Western Contexts

In light of the complexity associated with the examination of the literature on personal identity in a non-Western context, we have three main recommendations. First, it is clear that the diversity of cultural contexts, theoretical perspectives, and methodological approaches toward studying identity provide a clear drawback for understanding and defining personal identity. This field might benefit from an extensive and exhaustive set of reviews of the literature on personal identity across the globe. In every particular review within this broader set, it would be crucial to have a narrow focus (e.g., conceptualizations of identity in line with its function of providing continuity) to provide structure. Furthermore, there should be focus on particular age groups, perhaps starting with individuals in their late teens and early 20s, as this age group is the most frequently studied. Each of these reviews could then be further structured by categorizing studies by nation, then categorizing these nations by regions (e.g., East Asia, Northern Africa), and then categorizing regions by continent. Such a structured way of working may help to examine the extent to which generalizations can be made and integrative models of personal identity could be derived. In line with Murray and Kluckhohn's (1953) observation that each person is like every other person, each person is like only some other people, and each person is like no other person, it might also be possible to derive a taxonomy of personal identity-distinguishing aspects with varying degrees of universality. In this, a critical analysis of the similarities and differences that exist between established Western models and models from non-Western contexts is also crucial, as jingle-jangle fallacies (assuming that two scales with same name measure the same construct and naming identical constructs differently and therefore assuming that they are different, respectively; e.g., Van Petegem et al., 2013) are always looming.

Second, given the diversity of methodological approaches available to researchers, we would argue that Western models and measures of identity require more critical evaluation by those studying identity in non-Western contexts, not in the sense that these models should be considered invalid, but rather to evaluate whether these models truly capture what personal identity is for people within the particular context in which one's study is situated. It is evident that much of the research in non-Western contexts is predominantly qualitative due to its exploratory nature. We would recommend that researchers seek to standardize the qualitative methodological design. By that, we do not mean that similar measures should be used across cultures, but that the same broader method (e.g., focus group interviews) could be used as a starting point of bottom-up qualitative investigations across the globe. Even some of the lead-up questions (e.g., "How do people in your society find out about who they are and where they want to go in life?") in such open-ended procedures could be standardized. Similarly, narrative prompts (for an example, see Adler et al., 2017) could be adapted to elicit not only information about the meaning of an event to individuals themselves but also on the meaning of the event for their family and broader community. In adapting open-ended procedures to be sufficiently inclusive, researchers from a wide range of cultures should first agree that the method is indeed applicable to multiple cultures. To make such efforts truly collaborative and inclusive, modesty from those who are regarded as the experts in their field (typically White individuals residing in the Western world) is essential. The results of such efforts toward standardization may improve the replicability and comparability of qualitative studies and aid the development of non-Western theoretical models on personal identity. However, in any attempt at standardization, it remains essential to retain a research design that is flexible enough to detect identity processes that are specific and unique to a particular cultural context as identified by individuals residing in those contexts.

Third, more insight is required into the distinction made between personal identity and other identity aspects (i.e., relational and social identity; see Dudgeon & Bray; Javakhishvili; both this volume). It seems clear that personal identity seems indistinguishable from other identity aspects, both within and outside of the Western world. That is, personal identity is defined with the context of both the roles and relationships one possesses and the social context and group membership important for defining who one is. The social context also plays a large role in personal identity formation in the Western world, but the importance of the social context in some regions outside of the Western world may be even larger. For example, conforming to group processes and prevailing opinions may play somewhat more of a role in establishing a sense of continuity in countries such as China, compared to the Western world (Ouyang et al., 2016). At the very least, given their greater emphasis on the social context, studies in non-Western countries like the ones we have described may provide scholars with perspectives for understanding the role of continuity within the established social contexts in Western countries, too.

Conclusion

The main objective of this chapter was to understand the notion of personal identity from broadly Western and non-Western perspectives. From the current review, it is evident that Western perspectives have developed clear theoretical models from which personal identity is conceptualized (i.e., identity continuity). Given the established framework, methodological advances have evolved to provide deeper insight into the role of personal identity continuity, through narratives or the established dimensional models grounded in the Eriksonian–Marcian tradition for development and psychosocial functioning. While non-Western research has sought to transfer these measures to their respective contexts, it is clear that personal identity extends beyond the established models and may require more contextualized, nuanced examination. Such a contextualized view on identity would also benefit identity research within the Western world. Research in the non-Western world should thus retain its contextualized view of identity as this could inspire researchers in the Western world to adopt a more contextualized perspective in their studies, too. After all, identity formation and development in general can only be understood as an iterative process of coaction between individuals and their context.

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