

CHAPTER 18

Social Identity and Self-Regulation

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More than simply a store of autobiographical knowledge, self-concept is one's theory about oneself (Brown, 1998). It functions to organize past and present experience, illuminate one's future possibilities, sustain motivation, and control behavior in pursuit of the selves one might become. It provides answers to the basic self questions "Who am I?" and "How do I fit in?" and functions as a roadmap detailing how one goes about being oneself. Self-concept both feels stable, allowing one to answer the "Who am I" question by responding "Me," but is also fluid. Fluidity is experienced both as open potential—allowing one to believe in one's ability to grow, improve, and change—and as the result of automatic responsiveness to situational cues. In this sense, who one is depends on what is relevant in the situation and what people who are like oneself seem to be doing.

A basic premise of this chapter is that motivation is identity based. Situational cues about how to be a self are assimilated into one's working self-concept except when these cues set up a contrasting standard of things "they" but not "we" do, feel, or strive to achieve. Individuals are motivated to pursue the goals ingroup members pursue using the means ingroup members use. What these goals and strategies are is something that is contextually cued.

This chapter focuses on an aspect of self-concept—social identity—and an aspect of the process of being a self—self-regulation. Self-regulation is the coordination of affective and behavioral processes to maintain a reasonably positive sense of oneself while behaving in a socially appropriate manner and working toward one's goals. Whether conceptualized in terms of action or inac-

tion, self-regulation links the present, one's current self and current behavior, with the future, one's possible selves and longer-term goal pursuit (Oyserman, Bybee, Terry, & Hart-Johnson, 2004). Self-regulation involves individuals engaging in or refraining from behavior in the immediate or ongoing present to increase the odds of attaining self-relevant goals later. Thus, self-regulation evokes both behavioral inhibition and behavioral activation systems (Avila, 2001). Individuals are motivated to do what ingroup members do and to avoid doing that which ingroup members do not do. In that sense social identity is central to self-regulation.

By using a social identity perspective (Abrams, 1999; Onorato & Turner, 2002) and explicitly connecting social identity and cultural psychology perspectives (Triandis, 1989) a basic convergent outline of social identity emerges. From both cultural and social identity perspectives, the self-concept is conceived of as fundamentally social. Social contexts influence content of self-concept, and one of the major goals of self-concept is to provide a sense of fit with and integration into a larger social whole. While social identity theories emphasize momentary shifts in situation and cross-situation differences in salience of personal versus social role-based identities, cultural psychology theories place more emphasis on chronic or stable situations and cross-national differences in salience of personal identities versus social role-based identities. By integrating these separate but compatible theories, their complementary theoretical assumptions about the social nature of self-concept can be joined. However, because neither cultural nor social

identity frameworks were intended as process models of how social identities influence self-regulation, an integration of these two models alone is insufficient as a process model of how social identity influences self-regulation. To create a process model, an identity-based motivation model is proposed. It is based in a self-schema framework (Markus, 1977) and links cultural and social identity perspectives to a broader social cognition framework (Higgins, 1996; Schwarz & Bless, in press) that outlines how social contexts influence social identities in ways likely to shift motivation and self-regulatory success.

The basic principles that guide this chapter are (1) that individuals are influenced by what comes to mind when making a judgment and (2) that what it is that comes to mind can be contextually or chronically cued. All things being equal, individuals assume that what comes to mind is relevant; in the case of social identity and self-regulation, what comes to mind is assumed relevant to the things “we” do, feel, or believe. What this “we” is, is perceived as stable and even central to identity but may shift over time. Images of what “we” do provide an outline of one’s possible future, sketching out both the possible selves “we” can become and the kinds of strategies “we” use to attain these self-relevant goals. When possible selves thus articulated are linked with effective strategies they improve self-regulatory success. Conversely, when the possible selves thus articulated are linked with ineffective strategies they undermine self-regulatory success. In this way, social identities turn on self-regulation by turning on motivation to act like an ingroup member and engage in the pursuits that characterize ingroup members. Social identities provide both reasons to act and reasons not to act, and also ways to act or avoid action to attain goals. They not only cue us to try but also suggest standards for what trying looks like—what we do, what constitutes sufficient effort for us, and so on.

This basic perspective is congruent with current social identity models that suggest that social identities incorporate both positively valenced feelings of connection and specific group-defining attributes. It is also congruent with parallel arguments presented from a cultural perspective that cuing social connection makes salient social aspects of identity. Integrating these perspectives with a social cognition model allows for new predictions. Using an identity-based motivation perspective provides a mechanism to begin to explore otherwise puzzling discrepancies between espoused goals and self-regulatory behavior. While a social identity perspective proposes that all individuals have chronic propensity to make and maintain social connections and to define themselves in terms of these connections, a cultural psychology perspective emphasizes between-person and between-culture chronic differences in the propensity to focus on social connections. Neither perspective alone provides an articulation of how social situations cue self-judgments, when cued information will be included in or excluded from self-judgments, and how this influences self-relevant action over time.

Cultural psychology has proposed relatively stable differences (based in history, socialization, and social institutions) in the propensity to define the self and the social

world in terms of groups and embeddedness within groups as well as relatively stable differences in the kinds of groups that are self-defining (e.g., friendship, family, religious, and tribal). Accumulating evidence suggests that chronic differences do exist but within a more malleable context than a stable differences perspective would allow. Moreover, while a cultural perspective suggests a dichotomized perspective in which the self is defined as either social or personal, an identity-based motivation perspective fills out what is meant by a “social” identity—suggesting that these identities also contain traits, propensities, and characteristics that motivate action. It seems likely, as suggested by social identity perspectives, that when social identities are cued, self-defining traits, propensities, and characteristics are those assumed to be ingroup defining.

This is an important advance because it suggests that motivation is not either personal or social but rather simultaneously socially based and personalized. Unfortunately, cultural psychology has not moved much beyond documenting that social identities may be more central to self-definitions in some cultures (and situations) than others. While, as outlined in the following sections, this lack of progress in cultural psychology may be due to the nature of the tasks cultural psychologists use to study self-concept, it is clear that when socially primed, social identities are evoked and these social identities are likely to contain attributes that feel ingroup congruent.

Perhaps most important, while socially based ingroup defining attributes feel distinct, they may or may not be different from attributes characterizing other groups. In some cases, these ingroup defining attributes may be defined explicitly as the opposite of or in direct contrast to the attributes of another social identity group. However, this is likely to be a special case rather than the norm. Indeed, when self-definition requires contrast with another social group, it can be undermining of self-regulatory ability if the other social group has control of important social goals or of effective strategies to attain these goals.

Just as ingroup defining attributes and valued goals may actually be common across groups, so may be strategies to attain them. Of particular interest are situations in which goals are common but ingroups differ in the extent that various strategies are seen as ingroup-relevant ways to attain these goals. For example, both men and women may be able to claim leadership goals as ingroup defining. However, to the extent that effective assertive or aggressive strategies to pursue this goal are “male,” women may be more likely to use less effective strategies—and fall short of their leadership goal. Similarly, both boys and girls may be able to claim academic success as an ingroup defining goal. However, to the extent that effective strategies to attain this goal—studying, paying attention in class, following teacher instructions, handing in assignments that are neat and tidy, asking for help—are considered “female” things to do, then boys may be more likely to use less effective strategies—and fall short of their successful-in-school goal.

These are issues that can only be studied by thinking about the power of social identities. Individual women may want to lead and individual boys may want to do well

in school and may in fact be aware of appropriate strategies to effectively attain their goals. However, once social identities are contextually evoked, effective strategies may no longer feel appropriate. In this sense, social identities can be considered the most basic way in which we define ourselves. Once cued, evoked, or turned on, they override individual goals and aspirations unless individual goals and aspirations are sensed as congruent with social identities. In much the same way, social identities seen as more basic can override other social identities unless the various social identities are construed as compatible. Rather than being a woman or a leader, a boy or a scholar, compound social identities—female leader, athlete scholar, or future leader of one's community—allow for integration of goals and otherwise group-incompatible strategies. In each of the following sections, I outline how social identity has been approached, the additional utility of incorporating a cultural psychology framework, and advances made by integrating social identity, cultural psychology, and social cognition perspectives into an identity-based motivation model.

SOCIAL IDENTITY

Social identity theories have historically assumed a distinction between the self as defined by group memberships (the collective or social self) and the self as defined individually (the private self) (Hogg, 2003). All individuals can and do define themselves in both ways, switching between levels of self-definition depending on social contextual cues as to which level is relevant or useful in the moment (Turner & Oakes, 1986). Rather than describing identities as simply social as opposed to personal or private, social identities can be separated into those that focus on memberships in larger groups—collective identities—and those that focus on specific, face-to-face or personal relationships—termed “relational identities” (Brewer, 1991; Brewer & Gardner, 1996).

Collective social self-concepts contain information about the social categories to which one belongs, one's group memberships, as well as information about what members of one's groups are like, how they act, what they care about, and what their goals and values are (Abrams, 1994). Relational social self-concepts contain information about the specific relationships one is part of as well as how one is defined in relation to these specific others (Cross, Gore, & Morris, 2003; Cross, Morris, & Gore, 2002). Collective social identities focus on larger group identities such as those connected to memberships in a gender, racial-ethnic, nationality, religious, tribal, social class, or regional group. Relational identities focus on memberships in particular relationships—friendships, family, marital, peer, or work groups. Some social identities such as sports fan, fraternity member, student, or employee highlight the ambiguity of these distinctions in that any social identity could define both a particular relational identity and a general collective identity.

According to social identity theorists, social identities are at the heart of self-concept (Tajfel, 1972; Turner &

Oakes, 1989). From a social identity perspective, we first attempt to make sense of the social world in terms of social categories and social category memberships and use individuating information only if category membership does not apply. For example, men are faster at responding “not me” to words previously rated as feminine after being primed to think of “I,” “me,” or “my” in a lexical decision task, presumably because thinking of themselves brings to mind their belongingness to the social category “men” and carries with it all the things that men are and are not (Mussweiler & Bodenhausen, 2002).

Social identities are hot social categories. They include a positive feeling of being included in some groups, a valenced affective response to being excluded from other groups, and concomitant positive feelings about ingroup defining attributes and negative feelings about outgroup defining attributes. That which is included in one's social identity is rated more positively than that which is excluded from it. For example, Reed (2004) showed that being primed to think of “we” increased liking for objects associated with ingroup. After using the “we” priming paradigm, a palm pilot described as a way to stay connected with family was more liked than when the palm pilot was not linked to family. Similarly, participants primed with “we” rated ambiguous statements as more similar to their own beliefs than participants primed with “they” (Brewer & Gardner, 1996).

In addition to gender and family, racial-ethnic, religious, and other social groups or categories may be incorporated into self-concept as social identities. Research has demonstrated influences on self-esteem, motivation, and self-regulation from categorizing oneself in terms of membership in a diverse array of groups including racial-ethnic groups (Oyserman, Gant, & Ager, 1995), gender (Schmader, 2002), cultural groups (Seeley & Gardner, 2003), and other culturally meaningful groups, such as blondes or athletes (Seibt & Förster, 2004). In each of these cases, positive and negative social stereotypes about in- and outgroup members exist.

In this way, social identities can be thought of as self-stereotypes in that they are generalizations about groups to which one belongs that influence the sense one makes of who one is and can become and one's place in the social world (Sherman, Judd, & Parke, 1989; Wilson & Dunn, 2004). Because social identities are part of self-concept, they can be used to make predictions about how others will respond to the self as well as what is likely to feel good and what one is likely to do well at. To be useful as the basis of predictions, social identities have to feel stable just as personal identities do (Swann, 1990). This preference for stability of social identity content was demonstrated by Chen, Chen, and Shaw (2004), following Swann's (1990) self-verification model. Chen and colleagues created social group identities in the lab. They demonstrated that participants preferred to interact with others who viewed their ingroup as they did, even if the social identity of their ingroup was negative.

Although research on social identities typically focuses on a particular social identity, self-concepts are assumed to contain multiple social and personal identities. Individuals can categorize themselves at various levels of ab-

stratness and can define themselves in terms of multiple social identities that connect and intersect in different ways (Burke, 2003; Roccas & Brewer, 2002). Moreover, social identities are not simply self-definitions in terms of social category memberships (e.g., “I am a girl” or “I am a Midwestern democrat”). Social identities also include the traits that come with the categories of gender, social class, political affiliation, and so on (Oyserman, Kimmelmeier, Fryberg, Brosh, & Hart-Johnson, 2003). Thus if being Black or African American is defined in terms of academic engagement then the social identity “I am Black” includes academic engagement so that behaviors such as studying, asking questions after class, or persisting at difficult schoolwork are part of one’s self-definition. Generally, traits and characteristics seen as ingroup defining are more likely to be accepted as potential self-definitions as well.

In addition to highlighting the importance of one’s group memberships in self-concept, social identity theory clarifies the contingent nature of self-concept content (Hogg, 2003). That is, depending on the situation, the self can be seen as separate, unique, and distinct from others, as part of a single social identity, as part of multiple, overlapping, or conflicting identities, or as part of a merged and connected set of identities. Group memberships provide not only a sense of what or who one is but also a way of locating oneself in relation to in- and outgroups (Hogg, 2003). Who one is includes the totality of self-definitions one has, including traits one has or may acquire because they are ingroup defining and traits one does not have or cannot acquire because they are outgroup defining. The totality of one’s group memberships creates a distinct self (Hogg, 2003).

Some traits and characteristics are part of multiple ingroup definitions; for example, doing well in school is part of ingroup definition of a number of racial-ethnic groups. However, sometimes social groups vie to claim the same positive domains as defining their ingroup. A number of social identity theorists have noted that given unequal social power, majority groups are likely to be more successful in claiming valued domains as ingroup defining than minority groups so that minorities must develop alternative means of maintaining positive ingroup identity (for reviews, see Blanton, Christie, & Dye 2002; Branscombe & Ellemers, 1998). This between-group tension is likely to be particularly intense in areas that are critical for social advancement and social power. A group may be willing to concede some domains as defining an outgroup more than an ingroup (e.g., athleticism or prowess in sports, rhythm or talent in music) but not others (e.g., intelligence or academic performance). Thus, by highlighting the between-group tension or struggle to define one’s group in terms that are both positive and sufficiently distinct from other groups, social identity theory clarifies that a socially constructed self is constructed from those ways of being that have been claimed by one’s ingroup.

To maintain positive identities and avoid incorporating negative outgroup appraisals or stereotypes into concept of social identity, minority groups can reframe their ingroup identity in a number of ways. They can devalue

the domains that define the outgroup, discount negative feedback about performance in outgroup defining domains, or take a more blanket approach and use ingroup rather than outgroup both for definitions of success and for feedback about progress toward self-relevant goals (e.g., Branscombe, Schmitt, & Harvey, 1999; Crocker & Major, 1989; Crocker, Voelkl, Testa, & Major, 1991; Osborne, 1995; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). All these ways of defining one’s social groups are likely to have consequences for how one sees oneself and the goals one is likely to pursue, though social identity theory does not itself provide a process model of how content of social identity is likely to influence ongoing self-regulation.

Social Identity from the Perspective of Cultural Psychology

Compared with social identity-based descriptions, with some exceptions, cultural psychological models of the self have paid less attention to the traits contained within an interdependent conceptualization of the self. Rather, cultural psychology has emphasized the impact of cultural milieu on propensity to define the self in terms of the private and personal as compared to the social and collective (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). While social identity theories do not explicitly connect content of identity to cultural milieu, social identity reasoning is clearly relevant to differences in cultural milieu. Because cultures are shared systems of meaning that are intergenerational, they are likely to shape which groups are meaningful and how they are characterized, and in that sense culture is basic to social identities. Cultures provide standards of meaning so that members of a culture share not only a common language and location but also shared beliefs, perceptions, evaluations, and ways of acting (Oyserman & Lee, in press).

Although there are likely to be multiple dimensions on which cultures differ that are relevant to content of social identity and the process of self-regulation, the two organizing dimensions that have received the most attention are individualism and collectivism. Individualism has been defined as a focus on rights above duties, concern for oneself and immediate family, emphasis on personal autonomy and self-fulfillment, and basing one’s identity on one’s personal accomplishments (Hofstede, 1980). It is a worldview that centralizes the personal–personal goals, personal uniqueness, and personal control– and peripheralizes the social (e.g., Kâğıtçibasi, 1994; Oyserman, Kimmelmeier, & Coon, 2002; Triandis, 1995). Individualism is contrasted with collectivism; whereas individualism focuses on the personal, collectivism focuses on groups and relations that bind and mutually obligate individuals.

According to a cultural perspective on the self, cultures can be divided into those that highlight values of individualism and those that highlight values of collectivism in socialization practices (see Oyserman, Coon, & Kimmelmeier, 2002, for a review). Societies that centralize individualism in socialization practices are more likely to promote parenting and other social institutional practices that bolster an individual or personal identity-

focused form of self-concept in which the self is seen as an independent, separate, and causal agent. Societies that centralize collectivism in socialization practices are more likely promote parenting and other practices that bolster a related, social or collective identity-focused form of self-concept in which the self is seen as part of social groups and having meaning and agency through group memberships (Kâğıtçibasi, 2002).

Like social identity theorists, cultural psychologists have assumed that the self can be defined in terms of both social and personal identities. However, cultural psychologists have focused on between-culture differences in the likelihood that the self is social or personal in focus (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Individualism implies a personal self-focus, that feeling good about oneself, being unique or distinctive (Oyserman & Markus, 1993; Triandis, 1995), and defining the self with abstract traits as opposed to social or situational descriptors are central to self-definition (Fiske, Kitayama, Markus, & Nisbett, 1998). Conversely, collectivism implies a group or collective self-focus, that group membership is a central aspect of identity (Hofstede, 1980) and that the valued personal traits contained in self-concept reflect the goals of collectivism, such as sacrifice for the common good and maintaining harmonious relationships with close others (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Oyserman, 1993; Triandis, 1995).

As articulated by Markus and Kitayama (1991), this distinction has been described as differing models of the self, the self as “independent” and as “interdependent.” Whereas the initial independent–interdependent self model drew from examples of differences between Japanese and Americans and has been criticized by researchers unable to empirically validate this particular cross-national difference in content of self-concept (e.g., Matsumoto, 1999), follow-up use of the model has moved well beyond a particular cross-national comparison. Indeed, the idea that self-concepts differ in foci parallels earlier work on gender differences in self-concept that documented differences in tendency to define the self in terms of agency versus connection (for reviews, see Cross & Madson, 1997; Markus & Oyserman, 1989). Whether due to gender- or culture-based socialization, it seems reasonable to assume between-person differences in the likelihood that one will conceive of oneself as an agentic entity that is separate or independent of others or as a part embedded within a relational web (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Oyserman & Markus, 1993).

Although sometimes simplified as if to describe the self as either independent or interdependent, cultural psychologists do explicitly describe the self as defined in both ways (e.g., Trafimow, Triandis, & Goto, 1991; Triandis, 1989). That is, across all societies, both independent and interdependent elements are incorporated into self-concepts (Oyserman, Kimmelmeier, & Coon, 2002). What is likely to differ cross-culturally and across societies is the number of everyday moment-to-moment contexts that cue or turn on one or another aspect of self-concept. An emerging literature shows that when reminded to think of oneself as a social entity (part of a “we” group) or as a separate entity (a singular

“I”) individuals do respond differently to social cues (Haberstroh, Oyserman, Schwarz, Kühnen, & Ji, 2002) and process and remember information differently (Kühnen & Oyserman, 2002; Oyserman & Lee, in press).

It seems reasonable that social identity and cultural perspectives be integrated to provide an identity-based sociocultural model of motivation, in which content of self-concept differs both chronically (based on differences in cultural milieu) and momentarily (based on momentary salience of social roles or group memberships). Whether due to chronic or momentary focus, when social roles or group memberships are salient, individuals should define themselves in terms of these roles and the traits and ways of being relevant to these. When individual difference is made salient, individuals should define themselves in terms of their traits and individual preferences. In both cases, motivation to act or refrain from acting will be identity based.

Unfortunately, the empirical base for such integration is as yet limited. An earlier review found that most cultural and cross-cultural research on content of self-concept was correlational and used as the dependent variable content coding from Kuhn and McPartland’s (1954) Twenty Statements Task (see Oyserman, Coon, & Kimmelmeier, 2002, for a review). Although, as outlined below, quite a few priming studies were published in the past few years, these studies still rely on content coding of the Twenty Statements Task as the single dependent variable (see Oyserman & Lee, in press, for a review). While taken together, results of these studies do support the notion that content of salient or online self-concept shifts when one is primed to take into account social groups as opposed to individual differences, the Twenty Statements methodology does not lend itself to understanding the traits, characteristics, and future self-goals nested within social identities. To understand why this is so, the specific instructions and coding methods are outlined below. As will be seen, though at first seeming to be a reasonable method for highlighting content difference, the method does not live up to its promise.

Task instructions follow the form “In the twenty blanks below please make twenty different statements in response to the simple question (addressed to yourself), ‘Who am I?’ Answer as if you are giving the answers to yourself, not to somebody else. Write your answers in the order they occur to you. Don’t worry about logic or importance. Go along fairly fast.” These instructions are followed by 20 blank lines beginning with the words “I am.” In some versions (e.g., Cousins, 1989), respondents are then told to go back over their responses and mark the five responses that are most important to them. Across all the studies using the Twenty Statements Task to study content of self-concept, respondents were primed with personal versus social self-focus, then generated responses to an “I am . . .” stem.

In a classic study, Cousins (1989) found that whereas Americans described themselves in terms of traits more than Japanese students when using the standard (decontextualized) version of the Twenty Statements Task, this tendency was reversed when the task was modified to ask for self-descriptions in context. Once contextualized,

that is, when instructions were to describe oneself “at home,” “at school,” and “with close friends,” Japanese were more likely to use trait descriptors than Americans. Cousins shows that, instead of having decontextualized trait-based selves, Japanese participants had a set of contextualized trait-based selves. The idea that the traits and attributes that are part of a social identity (e.g., student) should become self-defining when that social identity is made salient is basic to social identity theory. However, this way of thinking about content of self-concept is not standard within a cultural psychology framework. Thus, this study was an important first step in making the link between cultural and social identity frameworks; cultural and social identity perspectives converge in predicting first that Japanese would be more likely to describe themselves in terms of the social identities (in this case as child, student, friend) and that once a social identity is made salient, relevant traits and attributes would come to mind. This interesting methodology has not been replicated by other cultural psychology researchers, with the exception of a conceptual replication is by Kanagawa, Cross, and Markus (2001), which unfortunately had inconclusive results.

Further cultural psychology research on content of self-concept used three different priming tasks. Trafimow and colleagues (1991) developed two of these priming tasks. In one priming task, participants read about a Sumerian warrior who needs to choose a general. The criteria he is described as using are the basis of the prime. In one condition, he makes the choice based on the general’s traits (meant to be an individual self-prime). In the other condition, he makes the choice based on the general’s ingroup connections to family and tribe (meant to be a collective self-prime). Participants read the paragraph and then respond to dependent variables. In the second priming task developed by Trafimow and colleagues, rather than read a passage, participants are asked to take a moment to think about either their similarities to or their differences from family and friends. The authors argue that thinking about difference should prime the private or personal self, while thinking about similarities should prime the collective, relational, or interdependent self. The third priming task involves a more subtle manipulation. Brewer and Gardner (1996) asked participants to read a paragraph and circle either first-person plural (“we”) pronouns in a paragraph or third-person (“they”) pronouns. This task was revised by Gardner, Gabriel, and Lee (1999). They created a paragraph-length story about a trip to the city in which pronouns to be circled were either first person singular pronouns (I, me, mine) or first person plural pronouns (we, our, us). Circling first-person singular pronouns was the independent self-prime whereas circling first-person plural pronouns was the interdependent self-prime.

Across studies using these primes to assess content of self-concept, the Twenty Statements Task was almost always used as the dependent variable. To determine whether an interdependent (social) self was evoked, content coding focused on collective or group-level self-descriptors (e.g., I am a woman or I am a student). The count or proportion of collective self-descriptors was pre-

dicted to increase following interdependent self-prime. To determine whether an independent (personal) self was evoked, content coding focused on personal trait self-descriptors (e.g., I am determined or I am smart). The count or proportion of trait-focused self-descriptors was predicted to increase following independent self-prime.

Across all studies, the modal response focused on traits (e.g., “I am smart”), coded as “private” self, with many fewer responses focused on group memberships (e.g., “I am a boy” or “I am a student”), coded as “collective” self. Less commonly coded for (or reported on) are responses focused on interpersonal aspects of self-concept (e.g., “I am shy”), those traits that explicitly require the presence of others. Some authors have suggested that these results imply that personal aspects of identity are always more motivationally powerful than social aspects of identity (Gaertner, Sedikides, Vevea, & Iuzzini, 2002). However, it is not possible to infer from the large preponderance of trait descriptors that content of self-concept is mostly focused on personal identities because, as demonstrated in Cousins’s (1989) study and as argued by social identity theory, having primed social identities should increase the salience of traits relevant to the social identity. Because researchers in the described studies that follow focus on significant increase in collective identities but do not report on any attempt to code for social identity-relevant traits, it is not possible to tell if the traits brought to mind are appropriately thought of as part of personal or social identity aspects of self-concept.

Thus, six studies using the Sumerian warrior task show an increase in collective self-descriptors in the Twenty Statements Task when the collective versus the individual prime was used (between-subjects design). Participants were U.S. college students (Trafimow et al., 1991), Native American adults (Trafimow & Smith, 1998), European American college students (Ybarra & Trafimow, 1998), a nonspecified U.S. sample (Mandel, 2003), Hong Kong Chinese high school students and adults (Trafimow, Silverman, Fan, & Law, 1997), and European American and Asian American students (Gardner, Gabriel, & Dean, 2004).

In the latter study, “we” priming resulted in a significantly larger increase in responses focused on collective identity for Asian Americans compared to European Americans (Gardner et al., 2004). This may reflect the chronic propensity of people socialized in Asian cultures to conceive of the self in terms of social identities. Language used in each case was English, which may be an important contextual feature of the prime; Trafimow and colleagues (1997) found no effect of priming when materials were presented in Chinese. When responding in Chinese, about three-quarters of the responses were categorized as private and about one-quarter of the responses were categorized as social or collective. Of course, it is possible that responses in Chinese showed more subtle effects—traits may have been those relevant to the social identity brought to mind by the prime—though information about the identity the warrior prime brought to mind was not obtained.

Similarly, three studies using the similarities to/differences from family and friends prime show increase in collective self-descriptors in the Twenty Statements Task when the collective versus the individual prime was used (between-subjects design). Participants are European American and Chinese college students in the United States (Trafimow et al., 1991), Hong Kong Chinese high school and college students (Trafimow et al., 1997), and female U.S. college students (Vohs & Heatherton, 2001). Language used in each case was English. As with the Sumerian prime, when Chinese was used in the Hong Kong-based sample, no effects of priming were found. However, effects do not appear to be limited to English. A fourth study conducted in German found significant results using as the dependent variable three collective self-items from the Singelis (1994) self-construal scale. Collective responses increased among German college students in the similarities to friends and family condition (Kühnen, Hannover, & Schubert, 2001). Because this study used a different dependent variable, it is not entirely clear whether effects would have been found with the Twenty Statements Task, again raising the question of whether current methods are adequate to detect effects.

The final set of studies shows shift in self-concept content following the pronoun-circling prime. In studies with European American participants the “we” prime increased interpersonal and collective self-descriptions compared with a “they” prime (Brewer & Gardner, 1996) as well as compared with the “I” prime (Gardner et al., 1999, 2004; Gardner, Gabriel, & Hochschild, 2002). Gardner and colleagues (2004) also showed effects with Asian American participants, effects that were significantly larger than in their European American sample; effects were of the same size whether the Sumerian warrior or the pronoun-circling tasks were used.

Thus, across prime type, “we” priming did shift content of self-concept toward social identities, suggesting that momentary contextual effects influence working or online self-concept. Thus, evidence supports a socio-cultural approach to when social identity is cued or made salient. Evidence is limited by the fact that almost all the research involves American samples, and perhaps more importantly, by the method of combining all trait responses into a “private” self code. Studies were not set up to examine the content of primed social identities. It is possible that the traits described are those relevant to the primed social identity. This is a main feature of the social identity approach and is in fact congruent with a cultural psychology approach that would posit that the traits chosen to define the self are those that are culturally valued. Individuals who endorse individualistic cultural values are indeed more likely to describe themselves in terms of individualistically oriented traits, while individuals who endorse collectivistic values are more likely to describe themselves in terms of collectivistically oriented traits (Oyserman, 1993). Given that both perspectives would posit that individuals are motivated to take on the traits and characteristics valued by ingroups, the lack of research that could examine this assumption is particularly puzzling.

While cultural and social identity approaches both suggest that content of self-concept is cued by relevant contextual cues, neither approach provides explicit models of the process by which self-concept influences self-regulation. This process-level framing of self-concept has been articulated within a self-schema approach. As reviewed in the next section, a self-schema approach is highly compatible with a social identity framework and could be integrated within a cultural perspective, together creating an identity-based motivation process model.

IDENTITY-BASED MOTIVATION: A SELF-SCHEMA APPROACH

Social identity approaches assume a hierarchical organization to self-concept, suggesting that content of self-concept is organized within a series of hierarchically organized identities that may or may not feel connected with one another (Roccas & Brewer, 2002). The notion of hierarchical structure is not emphasized in the self-schema model; rather, this approach focuses attention on self-concept process and function (Markus, 1977; Markus & Wurf, 1987). Within a self-schema approach, self-concept is assumed to be made up of cognitive schemas about the self that mediate perception and regulate affect, motivation, and behavior, lending meaning and organization to thoughts, feelings, and actions and motivating action by providing incentives, standards, plans, strategies, and scripts for behavior (Oyserman & Markus, 1993). Rather than focus on hierarchical organization, this approach emphasizes temporal flow. Self-concept content includes an articulation of how one was in the past, is in the present, and might possibly be in the future. These temporal selves include both content relevant to social categories and social roles and content relevant to individual attributes.

The schema approach has already been adapted to a cultural frame (Oyserman & Markus, 1993). How the self is described, which content is included in self-concept, and the incentives, strategies, and scripts adopted to motivate and regulate the self are all likely to be culturally framed (Oyserman & Markus, 1993). That is, individuals are not schematic for all of the characteristics, traits, skills, and abilities that are true or observable about them (Markus, 1977). Instead, self-schemas reflect meaningful domains, those domains that are valued or marked as important in one’s social context (Oyserman & Markus, 1993). Thus not all self-relevant content and knowledge becomes integrated into a self-schema, some images or conceptions about the self are tentative, fleeting, peripheral, or not well integrated, while others are more highly elaborated and more chronically accessible. It is these latter selves that function as enduring meaning-making interpretive structures, fostering coherence and forming the core of self-concept.

These salient identities (Burke, 2003; Stryker & Burke, 2000) or self-schemas (Markus, 1977) are packages of self-knowledge reflecting what an individual cares and thinks about and spends time and energy on, dimensions

along which individuals hold clear and distinct perceptions about themselves. They are domain-specific organized cognitive structures that provide generalizations about one's past and present and claims about one's possible future characteristics, actions, and skills (Montepare & Clements, 2001; Oyserman & Markus, 1993). As cognitive structures, self-schemas direct attention to self-relevant information and so influence what is perceived in the environment (Markus & Sentis, 1982). They direct memory and so influence what is remembered and what cues are recalled (Markus, 1977).

Information is assimilated into existing schemas where possible. Individuals process schema-relevant information more quickly and more efficiently than schema-irrelevant information (Markus, Smith, & Moreland, 1985) and are likely to misremember information in ways that reflect their own schemas (Markus, Crane, Bernstein, & Siladi, 1982; Markus & Wurf, 1987). Information irrelevant to self-schemas is likely to be disregarded (Markus, Hamill, & Sentis, 1987); ambiguous information is likely to be framed in ways relevant to self-schemas (Catrambone & Markus, 1987). When a domain becomes self-schematic, it becomes important to maintain a particular view of the self within this domain. Individuals are more likely to challenge, disbelieve, or try to refute negative or disconfirming schema-relevant rather than schema-irrelevant feedback (Markus, 1977). Negative or disconfirming feedback that is schema irrelevant is unlikely to result in mobilization of effort and resources to combat it.

Self-schema research has typically focused on self-concept at the level of personal or individual identities and has been criticized for being explicitly individually focused (Onorato & Turner, 2002). However, while the initial research focused on an individual trait (e.g., defining the self as "independent"), the self-schema conceptualization itself is not limited to personal identities (Oyserman et al., 2003). A self-schema approach has been used to examine the impact of self-concept defined in terms of social category memberships, such as being a man or a woman, being heavyweight and being a member of one's age category. This research shows that not all men and women have gender self-schemas (Markus et al., 1982), not all heavyweight people have "fat" self-schemas (Markus et al., 1987), and not everyone is schematic for his or her age (Montepare & Clements, 2001). Across each of these domains, those who are schematic are more likely to organize information in terms of these schemas and are better able than aschematic individuals to defend the self from negative schema-relevant feedback. Because they are likely to be chronically salient, social identity self-schemas, like personal identity self-schemas, are likely to influence ongoing meaning making, motivation, and persistence.

Following this logic, not all social roles and social categories to which one belongs will become schemas. For example, with regard to minority race and ethnicity a number of authors have argued that one's membership in a minority racial or ethnic group are likely to shift from being simply facts about the self to being important social identities only if life experiences make them central (e.g.,

Cross & Fhagen-Smith, 1996). When one's minority race-ethnicity is salient and contextually valued or marked, it is likely that self-schemas focused on this race or ethnicity will develop. Even when race-ethnicity is culturally marked, not everyone will have a racial or ethnic self-schema, just as not everyone has a gender self-schema (Oyserman, Brickman, & Rhodes, in press; Oyserman et al., 2003). Those who are aschematic will make sense of who they are without spontaneously thinking about race-ethnicity. Those who have a racial-ethnic schema are likely to make sense of themselves and their possibilities through the lens of this schema when it is made momentarily or chronically salient by social contexts. Like other self-schemas, racial-ethnic self-schemas (RES) are stable processing structures that guide the perception, encoding, and retrieval of information relevant to one's racial-ethnic group membership and the connection between membership in this ingroup and membership in larger society (Oyserman et al., 2003).

Following the self-schema model, race-ethnicity aschematic individuals will be more vulnerable to negative feedback based on race-ethnicity, including stereotypes or situational factors emphasizing their otherness, because they lack a cognitive structure to automatically process and fend off the negative self-relevant implications of racially tinged information. Those who define themselves in terms of their racial-ethnic ingroup are RES schematic and will make sense of their circumstance and focus their self-regulatory effort in terms of the content of the schema. Given that many groups would prefer to self-define in terms of generally valued traits and goals such as academic success, to the extent that RES does not explicitly contain links to these goals, schema-based processing carries the risk of disengaging effort from these goals (Oyserman et al., 1995, 2003; Rhodes, Oyserman, & Brickman, 2006).

Oyserman and her colleagues (2003) found evidence that racial-ethnic self-schemas function like other self-schemas in that they focused self-regulatory effort; when primed, RES that contained focus on school as ingroup defining improved academic persistence. When students' RES "bridged" ingroup and larger society by explicitly taking both into account, students were more academically engaged and fared better in school than when their RES focused on the ingroup only or they were RES aschematic. Controlling for prior grades, over the course of the school year, grades of low-income African American and Latino middle school students did not exhibit decline when their racial-ethnic identity schema contained both ingroup and larger society but did decline when they were aschematic for race-ethnicity and when their racial-ethnic identity schema was focused only on the ingroup.

Two subsequent studies of low-income middle and high school-age African American and Latino students also showed that content of RES influenced self-regulation (Rhodes et al., 2006). An experimental manipulation demonstrates the causal process: When content of RES was experimentally primed by having students write about what it means to be a member of their racial-ethnic group either before or after doing a math task, ef-

fects of bridging RES were found. That is, when RES was primed and content of RES focused on both positive connection to ingroup and bridge to larger society, math persistence improved (Oyserman et al., 2003). Thinking about motivation as identity-based clarifies the underlying process. When ingroup identity is contextually cued, individuals are motivated to engage in ingroup-relevant behaviors. If the ingroup is seen as linked with larger society, then larger societal goals like school attainment are cued. The impact of cuing larger societal goals and strategies should be positive—indeed increased persistence was found across various groups, including American Indians, African Americans, and Arab Israelis.

The notion that content of racial-ethnic identity self-schemas influences important behaviors was further explored in a series of studies examining the extent that health promotion behaviors are or are not included in social identity (Oyserman, Fryberg, & Yoder, 2006). Oyserman and her colleagues (2006) posed two questions:

1. Does racial-ethnic social identity include health promotion (such as exercising regularly) or unhealthy lifestyle behaviors (such as smoking or eating candy)?
2. How does content of racial-ethnic social identity influence cognitions and perceptions about health?

Minority college students rated health behaviors as White and middle-class things to do and were more likely to rate unhealthy than healthy behaviors as racial-ethnic ingroup things to do.

Not only did unhealthy behavior appear to be part of RES, but this content, when made salient, seems to have motivational consequences. When primed with race-ethnicity and social class, college and middle school students who are African American, Mexican American, and American Indian are significantly more likely to endorse a fatalistic perspective about health than in the control condition when social class and race-ethnicity are not made salient. A follow-up study with middle school students showed that priming RES also makes health information less cognitively accessible for low-income minority middle school students as compared to control condition. Follow-up studies with American Indian college students and reservation adults demonstrate that the undermining affects of making RES salient occur only when unhealthy behavior is incorporated into RES. Thus, an integration of social identity and self-schema approaches is fruitful in beginning to understand how social identities influence motivation and self-regulation.

Both sociocultural identity and self-schema approaches assume that content of self-concept is socially derived and demonstrate that when social contexts bring social groups or relational ways to thinking about the self to mind, social identities and social self-schemas are primed. However, neither social identity nor self-schema approaches provide an explicit process model of how social contextual information is incorporated into self-concept. To begin to build an identity-based motivation process model that articulates how social contextual

information is incorporated into self-concept, it is necessary to turn to social cognition approaches.

Identity-Based Motivation: Integrating a Social Self-Schema Approach with Social Cognition Frameworks

A social cognition framework is a useful starting point in making predictions about the influence of contextual factors on salient content of self-concept and the influence of salient self-concepts on self-regulation and behaviors. In particular, the inclusion-exclusion (Schwarz & Bless, 1992, in press) or assimilation-contrast (Blanton, 2001; Schwarz, Bless, Wänke, & Winkielman, 2003) model provides insight into when social information is likely to be assimilated into one's judgment of who one is and what one might become and when this social information is likely to be used as a standard, excluded from self-concept, such that one's own successes or failures are judged relative to the standard. Because we live in a social world, social comparisons are ubiquitous. Answering the "who am I" and "how do I fit in" questions necessarily involves others, as role models, as yardsticks, or as parts of how we define ourselves.

The social comparison literature has classically proposed that individuals contrast themselves with others, feeling good when another is doing comparatively worse (a downward social comparison) and bad when another is doing comparatively better (an upward social comparison) (see Blanton, 2001; Collins, 1996, for reviews). Much research has focused on the use of downward social comparisons to improve self-evaluation (Gilbert, Giesler, & Morris, 1995; Pelham & Wachsmuth, 1995; Wills, 1981). These comparisons to a worse-off target provide a pleasing reminder of one's own superiority, especially if one cannot easily generate plausible parallels between the other's fate and one's own (Brewer & Weber, 1994). Downward comparisons are equally effective when the comparison target is an individual or a group; indeed, social identity theorists argue that downward outgroup comparisons contribute positively to social identity and that a primary function of social identities is to provide the basis for favorable self-evaluation (Tajfel, 1981).

Although downward comparisons are clearly effective, this strategy can be risky if downward comparison is seen as gloating (on a personal level) or when done on an intergroup level as blatant prejudice—whether racism, sexism, or classism or other negative group-based comparison. How can social comparisons avoid this particular problem yet still produce the desired positive self-evaluative boost? One possibility is upward comparisons, which can promote positive evaluation to the extent that the other is seen as a role model, or the other's success is viewed as similar enough to one's own to directly provide a boost (Collins, 1996). However, this strategy is risky because it clearly highlights the gaps between the other's positive characteristics and one's own less positive characteristics and it risks suggesting that these differences are unbridgeable, which may result in dampened self-

evaluation (Mussweiler, Rüter, & Epstude, 2004; Taylor & Lobel, 1989).

Another possibility is to avoid social comparison altogether and to simply assimilate the target's positive attributes into one's own self-evaluation, to "bask" in the reflected glory (BIRG) of the other (Cialdini et al., 1976). Assimilating the target to the self feels good without risk of threatening social comparison. Moreover, because assimilating the other's success does not denigrate the other, basking in reflected glory (BIRGing) is likely to be both safer than upward social comparisons and a more socially acceptable way to enhance self-worth than downward social comparisons. To BIRG, it is necessary to create a sense of closeness and to reduce boundaries that would otherwise trigger self-other contrasts (Arnett, German, & Hunt, 2003; Pelham & Wachsmuth, 1995). BIRGing is especially likely to produce gains in positive self-regard when the target's positive attributes are in self-irrelevant domains (Chen et al., 2004; Hirt, Zillman, Erickson, & Kennedy, 1992). Because the domain itself is not central to self-definition, the other's success can simply be included in the self and does not provide an upward comparison standard. By creating a symbolic link between the self and the target, one can feel good when the target succeeds. Thus, nonathletes can BIRG athletes; nonartists can BIRG musicians, artists, and the stylistically cutting edge; and the non-ecologically minded can BIRG those who preserve the natural environment.

In the initial demonstration of this effect, Cialdini and his colleagues (1976) showed that students were more likely to wear school-themed clothing and refer to their university as "we" rather than "they" on weekends in which the college football team won the game. In this way, students symbolically took on the positive attributes of the winning team. Follow-up research has focused on the impact of BIRGing of successful or prestigious individuals, organizations, and groups (e.g., a successful sports team—Bernhardt, Dabbs, Fielden, & Lutter, 1998; Boen, Vanbeselaere, & Feys, 2002; a high-ranked university—Bhattacharya, Rao, & Glynn, 1995; a winner in political elections—Boen et al., 2002; or a successful marketer—Arnett et al., 2003).

However, successful targets are not always assimilated into self-views. Lockwood and Kunda (1997) provide a useful example. After reading materials about a "superstar" student, participants were asked to rate their own current and possible future success. When rating current success, students used the information about the superstar as a standard, relative to which their own current success looked more modest than without the standard. When rating possible future success, however, students incorporated the superstar as a possible self and rated their own future possibilities more highly after being exposed to the superstar. That is, in the former case, the superstar was a standard against which one's own performance was contrasted, while in the latter case the superstar informed one's judgment about what was possible and so became incorporated or assimilated into the target of judgment—one's future chances. A number of

follow-up studies have asked whether the propensity to assimilate versus contrast information about the other into one's judgments about oneself is influenced by factors other than the whether the judgment is focused on the present versus one's possible future. In particular, researchers have asked whether the tendency to incorporate or assimilate information about another into one's self-judgment is carried by a chronic or primed tendency toward interdependence.

Research from a number of studies suggests that the tendency to assimilate or incorporate social information into one's self-judgment as opposed to using this information as a yardstick to assess one's relative standing is indeed influenced by interdependence. Kimmelmeier and Oyserman (2001) showed that both Palestinian Israeli women and European American women are more likely to assimilate a downward target into their self-judgment than are men. They replicate this work with Palestinian Israeli, German, and Turkish students asked to generate an upward social comparisons, again showing that women are more likely to assimilate their self-judgment to that of a same gender comparison who is performing better than they are, whereas men are more likely to show contrast effects (Kimmelmeier, Oyserman, & Brosh, 2005). Unfortunately, this work does not provide a direct assessment of the prediction that assimilation is driven by tendency to interdependence, relying instead on research documenting that women are chronically higher in interdependence than men (Cross & Madson, 1997).

Fortunately, this issue has also been addressed directly in the experimental literature utilizing the pronoun-circling prime developed by Brewer and Gardner (1996; Gardner et al., 1999). In a series of studies with Dutch college students, Stapel and Koomen (2001) show that "I" priming makes salient contrast with other; "we" prime makes salient assimilation with other. The pattern of assimilation with "we" priming is also shown in studies with German participants using the pronoun-circling task (Kuhnen & Haberstroh, 2004) and by writing down independence (interdependence)-relevant words in scrambled sentences (Kuhnen & Hannover, 2000).

Stapel and Koomen (2001) note that there is a self-serving asymmetric pattern to these contrast effects: Contrast effects are larger when comparing self to low-performing standard or when the other's positive results are in an unimportant domain. However, when instead of using the "I" priming task, participants were primed by unscrambling sentences with the words *compare*, *distinguish*, *differ*, and *opposition*, the asymmetry disappeared and respondents contrasted themselves to standards even when this resulted in negative self-definitions (Stapel & Koomen, 2001).

Although not addressed by the authors, this latter finding is important because it suggests that when focused on the self as different from or in opposition to others—as may occur in either intergroup or interindividual contexts—individuals are likely to use other's performance not as a model for one's own possibilities but as a contrasting standard, against which one's own perfor-

mance looks relatively worse. This negative assessment of one's current state and future possibilities may trigger disengagement from the goal, either because one no longer sees the goal as possible or one no longer feels competent to engage in relevant goal pursuit activities (Bandura, 2001; Wrosch, Scheier, & Carver, 2003). Indeed, Gardner and colleagues (2002) find that when primed to think in terms of social category memberships using the Trafimow and colleagues (1991) Sumerian warrior prime (in which participant read about a warrior who chooses a general due to his family and tribal ingroup connections), participants rated their friends as likely to succeed on a self-relevant task, whereas participants primed to think about individuals as having separate traits and characteristics (after reading about a Sumerian warrior who chose a general due to his skills) are significantly less likely to do so.

Although preliminary, taken together these studies suggest first that assimilation of information about another is more likely for individuals chronically (e.g., women) or situationally (e.g., after priming tasks) interdependently oriented and less likely for individuals chronically (e.g., men) or situationally (e.g., after priming tasks) independently oriented. Conversely, these studies suggest that using information about another as a contrasting standard from which to evaluate the self is more likely for individuals chronically or situationally independently oriented and less likely for individuals chronically or situationally interdependently oriented. When cued, ingroup belonging should evoke both motivation to be like the ingroup and information about ingroup characteristics. Ingroup belonging can be cued chronically or by specific situational information. Cues can be subtle and the process should proceed automatically once cued.

As a more general frame, the inclusion-exclusion model (Schwarz & Bless, in press) proposes that social information is included in the self-judgment unless the information is judged incompatible with the self. Social information that cannot be included in the self is used as a standard of comparison. Social information is more likely to be judged incompatible with self-concept when it is extreme relative to current self-content and when the social information is explicitly or implicitly presented as separate from the self. The inclusion-exclusion model articulates the circumstances in which information about another will be included in the self, so that the other's successes and failures become part of oneself, and when this information will be excluded from the self, so that the other's successes and failures will become a standard of comparison.

Because social information that is irrelevant to the judgment task is unlikely to be used, not all social information will be included in or excluded from self-judgments. Some social information will be ignored. Relevance is subjective. Thus, for some, knowledge of American students' low ranking in international comparisons of math and science achievement creates a sense of urgency because international comparisons are relevant. Other countries are a standard against which "we" are doing badly. For others, the information is simply not relevant—other countries are not "us." Of course, what

constitutes a relevant comparison is likely to be context dependent. A social cognition perspective makes clear that what social information is deemed relevant and how it is used is highly dependent on what makes sense in context. Meaning is made in the moment, it feels sensible, obvious, and natural in the moment, but slight shifts in context will shift meaning.

Early Formulation of the Self as a Motivational System

Once an image has been deemed relevant and either included in self-definition or formulated as a standard against which one should compare oneself, how does the self proceed? James (1890/1927) developed what can be considered a precursor of current self-motivation theories. He conceptualized the self as the metacognitive experience of being a self on the one hand and as containing cognitive and affective content (self-knowledge and self-feelings) on the other. He proposed that all things being equal, individuals would desire to be and become all possible selves simultaneously ("a Greek scholar, a bon vivant"), expanding to incorporate ever more self-goals to strive toward.

He argued that this tendency to incorporate ever more selves as possible future selves is limited or reigned in by a number of factors. First, some self-projects simply cannot be pursued simultaneously because the actions needed to pursue them are incompatible. The bon vivant wants to stay out late with friends; the scholar wants to return to his books—resulting in the need to choose which of two competing goals to focus energies on. Second, some self-projects turn out to be unattainable either because of failure of strategies to attain the future self or because of lack of ability. After years of lessons fail to create the desired child prodigy self, and yet more years fail to create even a gifted pianist self, at some point the self-goal will need either to be abandoned (e.g., "I played the piano when I was younger") or reshaped (e.g., "I play the piano just for fun").

When future imagined selves cannot be worked on, they are unlikely to engage much attention or affective response and so may wither away. Holding onto a blocked or failed self-goal or possible self has negative consequences for self-valuation. Continued engagement in blocked or failed self-projects is limited by one's ability to tolerate the negative feelings that failures to attain possible selves entail. Rather than continue lessons imagining that one will become a gifted pianist, one may over time revise the goal to instead imagine an "enjoying music" possible self or to abandon the goal altogether.

Within James's model there is an implied innate desire to self-regulate and to attain ever more self-goals. This desire is limited only by the need to succeed in some proportion of one's efforts. In James's model, self-regulation is associated with self-esteem, operationalized as proportionate success, the ratio of selves one is attempting to become to selves one is succeeding in attaining.

Thus, James's framework articulates a model of self-regulation that is focused on incorporating all the selves a person can imagine becoming. The system is assumed

to have finite energy, so that some self-regulation tasks are incompatible with each other. Self-regulation is also assumed to have emotional consequences; it feels good to succeed at self-regulation and it feels bad to fail. These components are present in current social cognition frameworks of self-regulation as well.

WHAT IS SELF-REGULATION?

While self-regulation is a universal capacity that develops along with other cognitive and socioemotional capacities, it is at the same time a deeply personal and self-defining capacity. Not only is motivation identity based, but success at pursuing a goal feels good because it reinforces the identity in which it is based. Self-regulation is the self-in-action—successful self-regulation feels good; failed self-regulation feels bad. Without the capacity for self-regulation, goal attainment would be impossible. Self-regulation entails the channeling of energy, effort, and motivation toward a goal, the strategies relevant to goal attainment, and the goal itself. Thus when racial identity is cued, one is primed to pursue relevant goals. If goal pursuit is successful, it feels good in part because successful goal pursuit affirms membership in the social identity group.

Self-regulation or self-control is the coordination of neural, cognitive, affective, and behavioral processes to moderate reactivity, excitability, and arousal (Rothbart & Rueda, 2005). Self-regulation requires both behavioral inhibition and behavioral activation (Avila, 2001). Self-regulation allows planned, sustained, and sequenced action in service of desired end states to occur (Mischel & Ayduk, 2004). It involves controlling, channeling, or mastering the self to produce sought after results whether these results are attaining a better mood, more satisfactory grades, being liked, fitting in, or gaining power (Brandstätter, Lengfelder, & Gollwitzer, 2001).

Self-regulatory capacity can be described as a motivational resource that can be turned on to pursue one's goals. It can also be described as inhibition of a dominant response—sleeping in, hanging out, saying whatever comes to mind, eating snacks, and replacing the dominant response with another response—getting up at the sound of the early alarm, doing homework, maintaining civility during an unpleasant social event, eating healthy. Thinking of self-regulation as inhibition implies that we self-regulate because we have to, not because we want to (Baumeister, 2002; Baumeister & Heatherton, 1996).

Yet competent self-control is rewarding (White, 1959, 1960). Because it is essential for goal striving, self-regulation is a necessary component of happiness; to self-actualize (Maslow, 1970), to attain a state of “flow” when one is positively focused on fulfilling life tasks (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996), one must be able to focus attention on one's goals. Because it is critical for goal attainment, self-regulation is basic to human happiness, self-worth, and social regard (Bandura, 2001). Efforts to self-regulate are not necessarily effective; one may or may not succeed in movement toward one's goals and self-regulatory efforts may backfire and make things worse

(Thayer, 2001). Individuals differ in their propensity for and success with self-regulation (Baumeister & Vohs, 2003; Bogg & Roberts, 2004).

Self-regulation may be in service of finding out what one can do, convincing others of one's worth, changing or improving one's self, obtaining resources for one's self, or fitting into one's social context. Self-regulation always involves focusing attention and resources on responses relevant to a focal goal to the relative neglect of other goals. At any particular moment in time, focusing attention on one self-relevant goal necessarily means reduced attention to other self-relevant goals. Focusing one's attention on one goal (e.g., the goal of completing homework) means not focusing on other self-relevant goals such as being athletic, popular, or a cooperative group member.

Self-Regulation Is a Socially Scaffolded Developmental Process

Whatever capacity for self-regulation one has will be brought to bear when identity is turned on. There is a normal developmental increase in self-regulatory capacity, a shift toward increased ability to control reactions to stress and to maintain focused attention and increased ability to interpret one's own and other's mental states in order to successfully predict the likely responses to one's self-regulatory efforts. Early effortful control involves ability to focus and shift attention while maintaining perceptual sensitivity, inhibitory control, and low-intensity pleasure (Rothbart & Rueda, 2005). Although infants differ (Bronson, 2000), there is a normative developmental process of improved control over reactivity, excitability, and arousal (Rothbart & Rueda, 2005). Ability to self-regulate is related to early response to novel stimuli, termed “reactivity,” “excitability,” or “arousability,” but also develops through maturation and experience with the social world. Early caregiving involves attunement to individual differences in reactivity and setting up appropriate experiences that scaffold infants' efforts at self-regulation, providing infants with a sense that the context can be controlled (Brooks-Gunn & Markman, 2005; Serbin & Karp, 2004).

Such maternal scaffolding is predictive of successful self-regulation at age 16 months (Conner & Cross, 2003). Effortful control, as assessed by gaze, is observable at 9 months (Bronson, 2000) and predicts effortful control in toddlers at age 18 months (Bronson, 2000). Effortful control that is discernible in toddlers (18 months of age) (Rodriguez, Ayduk, & Aber, 2005; Rodriguez, Mischel, & Shoda, 1989), becomes stable across lab tasks by age 2.5 (Rothbart & Rueda, 2005). Early (preschool) ability to delay gratification predicts adolescent academic and social skill (Ayduk et al., 2000).

At later ages, scaffolding by parents and other adults entails focusing children's attention on effort (Dweck & London, 2004). The actions that allow for self-regulation—not eating that extra bowl of potato chips, not having that third brownie—may not sound hedonically satisfying yet developmental research suggests

that self-regulation is intrinsically pleasurable (Bronson, 2000). Feeling that one is controlling contingencies is likely to produce a positive affective response whether the feeling is that one is making positive things more likely to happen (self-will) or that one is making negative things less likely to happen (self-control).

As children learn about and experience the world, they begin to develop theories about contingencies. The capacity to self-regulate develops from this early base of “if I-then” relationships—that kicks and hand thrusts produce movement of a rattle or mobile, that crying engages soothing caregivers’ attentions. Because self-regulation is so essential to humanness, caregiving is likely to universally foster this emerging self-regulatory capacity. Early self-regulation is scaffolded by caregivers who set up environments to facilitate it. Children experience “if I-then” contingencies within social contexts that set up which goals are worth pursuing and what strategies are worth using. These “if I-then” contingencies alone do not direct motivation but rather are cued a part of identity-based motivation. Thus, when identity as “girl” is cued, motivation to act like a girl is cued, if girls behave well in class, pay attention to the teacher, and take notes, these identity-based behavioral beliefs will be translated via a series of “if I-then” contingencies to behavioral sequences to become more like a “girl.”

Self-Goals and Self-Regulation

Self-goals are temporally proximal or distal images of oneself in the future. They can be images of the selves one ideally wants to become or feels one ought to become (Higgins, 1996), the possible selves one expects to become, hopes to become, or is afraid one may become but wishes to avoid becoming (e.g., Markus & Nurius, 1986; Oyserman et al., 2004). The gap between one’s current self and these future selves is assumed to motivate efforts to reduce the gap or discrepancy between current selves and positive future selves and increase or enlarge the gap between oneself and negative possible selves (Carver, Sutton, & Scheier, 2000).

Self-regulation in pursuit of a self-relevant goal may fail in spite of ongoing investment of effort due to utilization of inappropriate, ineffective, inefficient, or even iatrogenic strategies. What we do to try to attain our goals can produce much heat but little light or even make things worse (like dieting strategies that involve such rigid monitoring that they eventually cannot be kept up, resulting in eventual weight gain instead of loss). Self-regulation may fail not because the outcome is not valued but because the effort required to attain the goal is underestimated or because the strategies brought to bear are not effective.

Even when the outcome is valued and strategies are effective, self-regulation may fail if attainment is directed to another goal. Clearly, not all goals can be pursued with equal vigor. Individuals are likely to have multiple goals that might draw their attention and resources. Goals are likely to differ along a variety of dimensions—some are short term and concrete, others longer term and more abstract. Pursuing some more

proximal goals may increase chances of attaining more distal goals—the goal of college is more likely when the goal of good high school grades is pursued, the goal of good high school grades is more likely when the goal of good middle school grades is pursued. Indeed, when the future feels far away, self-regulation may require linkage of distal goals to more proximal ones or goals will not be pursued at all.

But goals are not necessarily compatible with one another, so that focus on one goal may necessarily mean reducing likelihood of attaining another goal. For example, the goal of buying a first home may not be compatible with the goal of being home with one’s children if buying a home requires saving money and saving money requires working longer hours. Assuming that individuals have multiple goals, some in the present and some in the future, some congruent and others incongruent, not all goals can be simultaneously pursued. Self-regulation to attain one goal must mean at least temporary abandonment of another goal. A key question then is which of competing goals will be chosen for self-regulatory attention.

As outlined in Figure 18.1, personal and social identities include all these future images. These selves carry motivational characteristics, providing reasons to act and to refrain from acting in any particular situation, specific behaviors to engage in as well as persistence and desistance scripts (how much and how long to keep trying and when to pull back effort). In this way, social identities scaffold one’s goals. To the extent that goals trigger action, when these social identities are brought to mind, they should trigger goal-focused behavior. Because even skilled behaviors, once acquired, are grouped together as behavioral sequences or scripts that can be performed without conscious awareness (for reviews, see Kruglanski et al., 2002; Wegner & Bargh, 1998), identities do not necessarily need to be consciously triggered for relevant behaviors to occur. That is, an identity carries with it behavioral tendencies, scripts for action, that are cued when the identity is cued.

While all cybernetic-control or feedback models (e.g., Carver & Scheier, 1990) assume motivation to work toward becoming like positive goals and to avoid becoming like negative or antigoes, these models do not suggest particular linkages between goals and how they are worked toward or the strategies likely to be chosen. This further specification of process depending on self-goal is provided by self-regulatory models that distinguish between behavioral activation and behavioral inhibition or approach and avoid systems (Avila, 2001; Carver, Sutton, & Scheier, 2000; Carver & White, 1994; Elliot & Covington, 2001; Gray, 1990; Higgins, 1996, 1997). The behavioral activation system responds to signals of reward, nonpunishment, and escape from punishment, while the behavioral inhibition system responds to signals of punishment, nonreward, and novelty (Carver et al., 2000; Gray, 1982).

Higgins’s (1997, 1998) self-regulatory focus model builds on these distinctions between behavioral activation and behavioral inhibition and further articulates two systems, one focused on attaining successes and avoiding

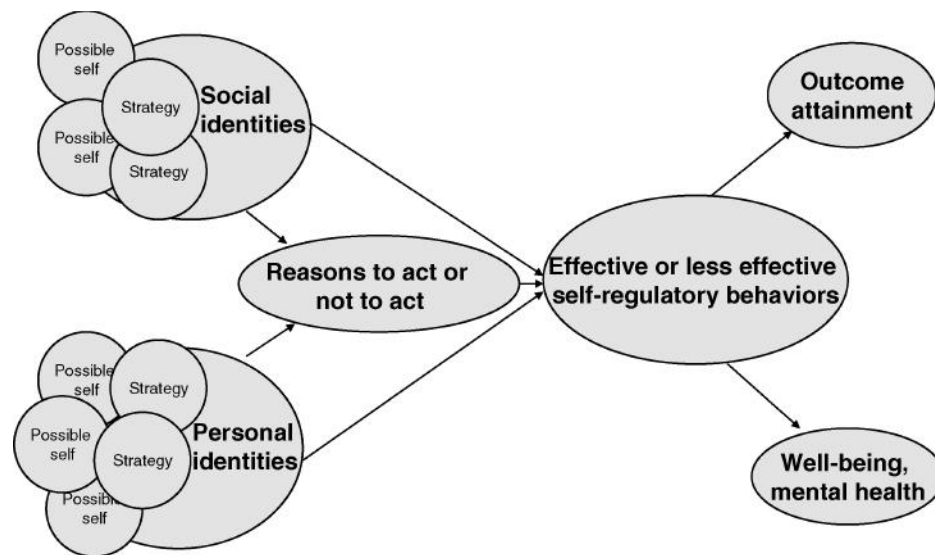


FIGURE 18.1. Identity-based motivation process model.

nonsuccesses (promotion focus) and the other focused on attaining nonfailure and avoiding failures (prevention focus). Different self-goals are likely to be regulated by differing self-regulatory systems; when seeking to attain or avoid failing to attain goals related to becoming like one's ideal selves, self-regulation focuses on promotion, a concern with attaining advancement, growth, and accomplishment. A parallel process occurs when one is seeking to attain or avoid failing to attain goals related to becoming like ought selves. In this case, self-regulation focuses on prevention, a concern with ensuring safety, being responsible, and meeting obligations (Higgins, 1997).

Primed or chronic promotion focus is associated with eagerness, risk taking, sensitivity to the presence or absence of gains, and motivation to ensure acceptance of relevant new behaviors and avoid incorrect rejection of relevant new behaviors. Conversely, primed or chronic prevention focus is associated with minimizing risk, sensitivity to the presence or absence of losses, and motivation to ensure correct rejections and avoid incorrectly accepting irrelevant new behaviors as relevant (Camacho, Higgins, & Luger, 2003; Crowe & Higgins, 1997; Higgins, 1997; Higgins, Idson, Freitas, Spiegel, & Molden, 2003; Liberman, Idson, Camacho, & Higgins, 1999; Liberman, Molden, Idson, & Higgins, 2001). This research suggests that individuals differ in their chronic styles and prefer using self-regulatory strategies that match their self-goals over mismatching ones (Higgins & Silberman, 1998). We prefer to work toward positive goals using eager approach strategies and to prevent negative goals using vigilant, caution-oriented strategies. Termed "value from fit," the underlying notion is that working toward a self-goal feels better when carried out with means that match the ends—eager pursuit of promotion goals feels better than vigilant pursuit of these goals; vigilant pursuit of prevention goals feels better than eager pursuit of these goals.

An identity-based motivation paradigm, a sociocultural identity model that includes self-regulation, is important because movement toward any of the basic self-goals—knowing, improving, bolstering, enhancing, or maintaining one's self all require self-regulation. While these self-goals are often assumed to be aspects of one's personal identity, following the logic of social identity and self-categorization theories (Foddy & Kashima, 2002; Onorato & Turner, 2002; Turner & Oakes, 1989) there is no reason why self-regulation cannot be part of social identity. Social identities include information about the self as a member of one or more social collectives (Abrams, 1994) as well as socially contextualized ways of being (Fiske, 1991; Fiske, Kitayama, Markus, & Nisbett, 1998; Oyserman, Coon, & Kimmelmeier, 2002). Therefore, self-goals and self-regulatory processes could equally be part of the one's social identity or interdependent self-concept. In this sense, motivation is identity based and personal goals are likely to be scaffolded by relevant social identities and the goals and strategies cued by these social identities.

Social and Personal Goals Require Self-Regulatory Focus

Which kinds of self-goals are the focus of self-regulation? To date, research on self-regulation has either omitted reference to whether something is or is or is not a self-goal or focused almost exclusively on personal goals (Gollwitzer, Fujita, & Oettingen, 2004; Gollwitzer, & Kirchhof, 1998). Thus, researchers have either asked about self-regulatory goals such as dieting and exercising (Bagozi & Kimmel, 1995; Herman & Polivy, 2004), or asked about pursuit of research tasks such as pressing buttons in response to the appearance of a letter or number (Brandstätter et al., 2001). These latter studies assume that the research task becomes a self-goal. Similarly, when children are studied, self-regulation often

focuses on children's ability (or willingness) to follow instructions of adults (typically the instructions of the child's mother or of the researcher). Children are asked to wait and not to eat a treat or to work on a boring task and not play with toys (Mischel, Shoda, & Rodriguez, 1989). Indeed, in children self-regulation is often called effortful control and delay of gratification to highlight the appetitive nature of the self-regulation being studied. Thus studies of "self-regulation" often omit actual self-goals. Yet motivation and thus "self-regulation" must be identity based to be meaningful.

When a self-goal is taken into account, goals are described in terms of personal identity. Yet social identity (Abrams, 1994; Abrams & Brown, 1989), self-categorization (Foddy & Kashima, 2002; Onorato & Turner, 2002), and cultural psychology (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Oyserman, Kimmelmeier, & Coon, 2002) models all highlight the importance of examining the self as consisting of personal traits, abilities, and goals and the traits, abilities, and goals one takes on as part of inclusion in social units—such as the family—and social categories—such as gender, race-ethnicity, and other cultural groups. More generally, the goals that are the focus of self-regulation may be conceptualized as individual or group level. That is, the image one is controlling one's behavior in pursuit of can be a possible self embedded in a social identity. Thus, doing homework may be part of a "smart" or "successful" personal possible self, but it might also be part of self-regulation to attain "smart African American" social identity.

For example, doing homework may be seen as part of what "we" do. The "we" or social identity at the root of self-regulation may vary. In the case of doing homework, the social identity may be that of team member, family member, racial-ethnic, social class, or gender group. Doing homework may be part of meeting the minimal grade-point average (GPA) requirement to participate in sports, part of meeting the GPA requirements needed to be a "scholar athlete," part of being a good son or daughter, part of being a girl, or part of one's social class or racial-ethnic identity. To the extent that homework is linked with engagement in a social identity, desire to engage this identity will increase self-regulation. The same goal—high GPA—can thus be cued by a variety of social identities. In each case, pursuit of the goal will feel genuinely self-defining because motivation is identity based.

If the identity loses luster (e.g., becoming a good son feels less central to identity during adolescent identity development), then so too will the self-regulatory effort put into attaining goals relevant to the social identity. While self-regulation is central to our understanding of what it means to be a self, self-regulation is not commonly associated with social aspects of self-concept; social or collective identities and questions about differences in self-regulatory style or focus are only beginning to be examined in the fields of cultural and cross-cultural psychology.

In spite of its relative neglect in current research and theorizing, the notion that self-regulation is importantly directed by social identity has roots in Cooley's (1902) and Mead's (1934) frameworks. These early conceptual-

izations directed attention to the importance of social and interpersonal context in self-focused emotion and self-regulation. Indeed, it seems intuitively obvious that self-regulation is linked with the social aspects of identity and not simply with the personal aspects of identity. Much of self-regulation involves a combination of inhibition of socially inappropriate responses and centralization of socially appropriate responses or goals. Self-conscious emotions (i.e., shame and guilt) are likely to play an important part in motivating self-regulation to behave in socially appropriate ways (Baldwin & Baccus, 2004; Tracy & Robins, 2004).

What constitutes being socially appropriate, of course, depends on social identity—the person one is as characterized by fit with ingroup others. We imagine how others would respond, we feel pride or shame at ourselves as a result of these imagined responses, and these self-generated emotions focus self-regulatory effort to become the kind of person of whom relevant others are proud, not ashamed. In this sense, social identities provide ongoing context, clarifying both what would be prideful for people like me and what would be shameful for people like me. Because humans are wary of social approbation, we are mindful not to behave in ways that would cause shame. Because what would cause shame depends on what is valued, what is devalued, and what is irrelevant to the groups we belong to and have incorporated into our sense of self, social identities are important. Even the ways in which self-regulation is carried out are likely to be importantly shaped by social context and the social content of self-concept.

Possible Selves and Self-Regulation

Self-regulation is central to attaining one's self-relevant goals—one's possible selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986; Oyserman et al., 2003), one's wished for ideal selves, or obligated ought selves (Higgins, 1997). Possible selves have been shown to influence outcomes requiring self-regulation such as academic striving (Oyserman et al., 1995) and health-related behavior (Hooker & Kaus, 1994). Importantly, even when possible selves embedded in different social identities focus on the same issues, differences in social identities seem to inform content of strategies to attain these possible selves. For example, Oyserman and her colleagues (1995) found that whereas both African American and White first-generation college students had possible selves focused on academic attainment, the strategies these students described differed. African American students focused on what they could do to avoid becoming like their negative, feared academic failure possible selves, while White students described strategies to work toward positive academic possible selves.

Social identities that feel centrally defining and important are more likely to influence strategies. In the case of academic possible selves, compared with minority students, White students report that the social identity of "college student" is a more central and important identity and are more likely to believe that having this identity will facilitate attaining their important possible selves

(Cameron, 1999). However, relatively little attention has been paid to the ways that social identities influence self-regulation.

Even though self-regulation is typically described in terms of focus on attaining personal possible selves, because the goals one strives to achieve are likely to be the goals valued in one's social context, self-regulation is also central to social esteem and attainment of social possible selves (Bandura, 2001). Indeed, to the extent that all members of society are responsible for carrying out plans and fulfilling obligations, self-regulation is central to the social construction of humanness and social identity. While goals are typically described as part of the individualistically focused self, one's goals clearly are also embedded in social identities as well.

The efficacy of a possible self framework for improving self-regulation has been documented in research focused on school-focused possible selves and health-focused possible selves. Oyserman, Terry, and Bybee (2002) randomly assigned eighth graders to receive a seven-session after-school program of small-group activities that focused on possible selves. Youth in the intervention group attained better grades, had better in-class behavior, and skipped class less often. This initial test of a possible selves-based intervention was conceptually replicated as an in-school randomized clinical trial. Oyserman, Bybee, and Terry (2006) randomly assigned the cohort of eighth graders in three Detroit middle schools to receive the intervention as the first part of their elective sequence, during the first 11 weeks of school, with control youth receiving their regular elective. Follow-up data were collected at the end of the eighth-grade school year and again in the following year for a 2-year follow-up. The possible self-focused intervention improved both the self-control and the self-will aspects of self-regulation. In terms of self-control, school records showed fewer unexcused absences (youth refrained from skipping class) and teacher report showed less engagement in disruptive behavior (hitting, threatening the teacher). Increase in self-will was reflected in teacher-reported increase in active engagement with learning (asking questions after class, coming to class prepared); youth also reported more time spent in homework preparation (based on a weekly diary method). Self-regulation had positive affective consequences—self-control (e.g., not skipping) predicted fewer depressive symptoms—and positive consequences for goal attainment—self-will (e.g., more time doing homework)—predicted better grades.

Effects were mediated by the impact of the intervention on possible selves. Youth in the intervention group had more balanced (positive and negative) school-oriented possible selves and were more concerned about avoiding off-track possible selves, such as becoming pregnant or involved with drugs, than youth in the control group. Self-regulation was also targeted; balanced school-oriented possible selves predicted more engagement with school and time spent in homework, not less skipping or less disruptive behavior. Feared off-track possible selves predicted less skipping school and less disruption but not more time spent in homework or engagement

with school. While these possible selves might be assumed to be part of these teen's personal identities, Oyserman and colleagues argued that they had become part of the teen's RES, showing that school-focused possible selves were positively associated with racial-ethnic identity in intervention youth but orthogonal to this social identity for control group youth (Oyserman, Bybee, & Terry, 2006).

Possible selves have also been used in a number of health and exercise-focused interventions. In one, possible selves of adults (averaging 68 years of age) were predictive of effective use of an exercise program (Whaley & Shrider, 2005). Another, briefer, possible selves-based intervention involved college students. Those asked to envision what they would be like in 10 or 20 years if they did not exercise regularly were more likely to report increased exercise a week later in a follow-up ostensibly unrelated phone interview (Ouellette, Hessling, & Gibbons, 2005). A third brief intervention had college students write for 20 minutes each day for 4 consecutive days about an important trauma, one's best (most positive) possible self, both, or neither (King, 2001). Five months later, those who wrote about a possible self, a trauma, or both a possible self and a trauma had better health outcomes; effects of writing about a possible self were as good or better than those for writing about a trauma. King (2001) suggests that either task evoked self-regulatory behavior. While these studies do not contextualize possible selves as part of either personal or social identities, our research on connection between racial-ethnic and social class-based social identities (Oyserman, Fryberg, & Yoder, 2006) suggests that these possible selves are likely to have been embedded in relevant social identities.

SELF-REGULATION OF SOCIAL IDENTITIES IS A CULTURALLY EMBEDDED PROCESS

Being able to control oneself is likely a universally developed skill. What is likely to be culturally determined are the goals toward which one self-controls and how one goes about controlling oneself as well as the circumstances that cue self-control. Clearly, pursuing traditional values requires self-regulation, so does pursuing post-modern values (see Inglehart & Baker, 2000). Whether living in a culture focused on individualism (vs. collectivism), secularism (vs. tradition), or self-expression (vs. survival) (Inglehart & Oyserman, 2004), the ability to control one's actions and will oneself into action is necessary. Self-regulation should be just as necessary whether focused on achieving idiosyncratic personal possible selves and goals or on consensually accepted social or relational possible selves and goals. Indeed, self-control is part of Schwartz's (Schwartz & Bilsky, 1987) restrictive-conformity value domain. Because self-regulation more generally is required to attain other universally valued goals, it is likely to be universally part of socialization. Childrearing values across countries do include socializing for self-regulation—variously termed “responsibility,” “obedience,” “determination,” “perseverance,” “thrift,”

and “good manners.” Cultures differ in which of these particular aspects of self-regulation they most centrally endorse (e.g., Inglehart & Baker, 2000), but not on whether some form of self-regulation is a desired outcome of socialization. Like other core social values, universality of self-regulation does not mean uniformity in style (e.g., Schwartz & Bilsky, 1990); cultures are likely to vary systematically on the form that self-regulation takes—focusing on self-control and self-will in varying proportions and across different domains.

Developmentally, there is evidence of interplay between that which is culturally rewarded and self-regulation. Rodriguez and colleagues (2005) document cross-cultural difference in the relationship between effortful self-control and positive affectivity (extraversion/surgency) versus negative affectivity by 6 or 7 years of age. They compare U.S. and Chinese samples. Specifically, in Chinese (People’s Republic of China) children of these ages, effortful control is negatively associated with extraversion/surgency—operationalized as activity, smiling and laughing, high-intensity pleasure, impulsivity, lack of shyness, and positive anticipation. Yet extraversion/surgency is orthogonal to effortful control among U.S. children of these ages. Conversely, in the United States, effortful control is negatively associated with negative affectivity—operationalized as being fearful, angry, sad, difficult to sooth, and high in discomfort—yet negative affectivity is orthogonal to effortful control among Chinese children. These findings suggest between-culture differences in the behaviors viewed as worthy of control (negative affect in the United States, outgoing behavior in China). These early differences in factors related to effortful control are congruent with differences in cultural values found among college students (e.g., Oyserman, Coon, & Kimmelmeier, 2002).

These results suggest that self-regulatory style and capacity are not only personal but also contextually and culturally shaped. Contexts make salient appropriate future horizons for self-regulation, varying from more proximal (e.g., getting through the afternoon without insulting Aunt Millie) to more distal (e.g., finishing high school) and even lifelong (e.g., being successful). Cultures endorse and therefore make salient some ways of self-regulating over others (e.g., Is it best to “shoot for the stars” and “say what you think” or does “haste make waste” and “fools rush in where angels fear treading”?). Within the context of universal socialization for self-regulation, the style with which goals are pursued may differ—does one take aim at attaining the goal, focusing on success with little concern for possible negative consequences of failure, or take care in attaining the goal, focusing on possible repercussions and negative implications along the way (Higgins, 1997, 2000; O’Brien & Oyserman, 2006)? Indeed, initial work in this area suggests that cross-culturally, prevention focus (typically studied as loss-framed focus) is more common in Eastern than in Western contexts (Aaker & Lee, 2001; Briley & Wyer 2002; Lee, Aaker, & Gardner, 2000).

Differences in focus of self-regulatory style do not imply differences in valuation of self-regulation. For example, within American culture, self-regulation is a valued

trait; failures are assumed to be due to insufficient effort or insufficient exertion of will. Self-help manuals can be seen as the cultural artifact embodying this belief. They are produced in an ever updated abundance and bought in great numbers by individuals who believe that the potential for change is limited only by one’s willingness to self-improve. Americans believe in the perfectible possible self—one could be one’s thinner, better-toned, more patient, more ecologically friendly, better parent and more religiously observant self, if one just tried. At the same time, Americans also believe that talent is a fixed entity, not something that can be learned or attained through effort (Dweck, 2002). Things one cannot do well are assumed to be “not me” arenas, the proclivity to accept that which is as that which is inevitable melds with the belief that the willful yet untalented can only go so far. As reflected in the “for dummies” manuals, there are many things that the willful yet untalented can learn even if mastery is reserved for the talented.

American cultural frame embodies a Protestant focus on free will. The ability to control one’s self is a basic assumption regulating not only personal goal setting but also one’s relation to others and obligations within the social system. Yet belief in will power is not solely a Protestant cultural artifact—Catholicism also carries with it a focus on will via endurance of conditions that cannot be changed (Tropman, 2002). Moreover, self-regulation is clearly not simply an American or a Western cultural style. Non-Western cultures also centralize the ability to endure, to cheerfully do one’s duty in the face of odds. This formulation of will is deeply part of other distinctly different cultural frames such as Hinduism (Weber, 1958) and Confucianism (Finegan, 1952).

Will in these non-Protestantism-infused contexts may focus less on the self as controlling the environment as on controlling oneself to fit the needs of the context or one’s station within a larger context. Self-regulation thus can involve learning to control oneself to meet the demands of the context just as much as it can involve using one’s resources to pursue personal goals. In this way, self-regulation can be just as central to humanness when the goal is shaping the self to the exigencies of the context as when the goal is pursuit of personally defined goals. Self-regulation can assume that effort; improves all goal pursuit or that effort only goes so far; in either case, the nature of motivation is identity based.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

While the exact nature of what is universal and what is culture specific in the relationship between social identity and self-regulation has yet to be fully researched, it seems reasonable to assume that the process model described in this chapter is broadly applicable. Cultural and social factors are likely to influence the centrality of possible selves explicitly embedded in social identities as well as the appropriate style chosen to pursue these possible selves. While there is some reason to assume that self-regulatory style, and therefore the strategies one uses to avoid failure and attaining

success, is culturally linked, it is also clear that strategies are more concretely linked to specific social identities, what people like “us” do.

I have developed an identity-based motivation process model linking social identity with self-regulation by integrating a number of relevant lines of research. Within this model, culture matters for self-concept because it influences both content and process of self-concept. It influences what is of value, what matters, and therefore how one is likely to define the self but also which means toward goal attainment are endorsed, which are merely accepted, and which are denigrated. All cultures value self-regulation—controlling the self and molding the self to become more like valued possible self-goals. However, cultures differ in which self-regulation processes are likely to be primed and whether self-regulation is framed more in terms of fitting into a social role or creating a unique self.

When studied in terms of the individualism–collectivism axes, culture influences chronic salience of social identities as well as how one is likely to self-regulate—by eagerly pursuing goals in ways likely to maximize chances of success or cautiously moving forward in ways unlikely to produce errors and regret. Social identities contain traits and characteristic ways of being that are relevant to the social group defined by the identity. Therefore, they influence the possible self-goals and strategies to attain them of individuals who define themselves in terms of these social identities. Individuals are likely to incorporate social information as part of their identity unless the social information is framed as separate from the self. This is likely when social identities are primed and the information is tagged as relevant to an outgroup that cannot be assimilated into ingroup identity and when a bridge between the outgroup and ingroup identities has not previously been created.

Current social cognition theories focus on self-regulation as a contextually cued cognitive or “hot” cognitive process, infused with affect. The cognitive processes underlying self-regulation are likely to be universal, triggered by self-goals formulated as an “I” or “we” identity and carried out with strategies that are “I” or “we” identity congruent. Thus, self-regulation can involve controlling the self via inaction—not engaging in currently hedonically pleasurable activities (not sleeping in, refraining from smoking, not eating certain foods). This form of self-regulation or self-control makes sense when inaction is in pursuit of longer-term goals (being successful, being healthy, being a good member of one’s religious group) that require not engaging in undermining actions along the way. Self-regulation can also involve willing the self into action or sustaining action—engaging in action that may or may not be pleasurable (preparing for class, studying, setting an alarm). This form of self-regulation or self-will makes sense when action is in pursuit of longer-term goals (e.g., learning, getting good grades, becoming successful, or fulfilling social role obligations) that require constant vigilance and action. Whether providing reasons for action or for inaction, social identities are central to the self-regulatory process, motivation is identity based.

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