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WHAT DRIVES WHOM? A CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE ON HUMAN AGENCY

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This paper examines agency as a mechanism that can predict cultural differences in human motivation. In elaborating on the theory of self-construal (Markus & Kitayama, 1991) and drawing on past research on culture, we propose that people from cultures stressing independence are more personally agentic, whereas people from cultures stressing interdependence are more collectively agentic—which results in culturally contrasting differences in cognition and human motivation. Specifically, it is hypothesized that personal agents perceive agency to emanate from the self and, in turn, exhibit greater intrinsic motivation toward actions perceived as self-initiated, whereas collective agents perceive agency to lie within the collective and, in turn, exhibit greater intrinsic motivation toward behaviors perceived to originate from a collective. Such a framework elucidates current empirical research in the area of culture, cognition, and motivation as well as enables predictions about the contexts that can engender or inhibit human motivation across cultures.

What drives whom? Historically, there have been two research traditions in the study of human motivation; one focusing on how people are motivated by personally initiated thoughts and behaviors and the other focusing on how people are motivated to do that which groups advocate. Decades of research have shown that people are primarily motivated by contexts fostering volition and self-determination (e.g., deCharms, 1968/1983; Deci & Ryan, 1985, 1991, 2000). In parallel, there has been a rich tradition of demonstrating the way human thought and behavior can be influenced by group and social pressures (e.g., Asch, 1952; Darley & Latane, 1968; Janis, 1972; Latane, Williams, & Harkins, 1979). Recent findings reviewed in this paper suggest that cultural differences in the preference for independence or interdependence may moderate differences in self and group initiated behaviors.

Further, a framework is proposed through which we can begin to understand current empirical research in the area of culture and motiva-

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tion as well as make predictions about the contexts that can engender or inhibit human motivation across cultures. In doing so, we will use the vehicle of agency to explain cultural differences both in the way situations are construed and in the way these construals invariably lead to differing motivational consequences. Specifically, we propose that people from cultures stressing independence are more personally agentic, whereas people from cultures stressing interdependence are more collectively agentic, which results in culturally contrasting differences in cognition and human motivation.

SELF-CONSTRUAL AND AGENCY

Drawing on the seminal cultural analysis provided by Markus and Kitayama (1991), it is hypothesized that for members of Western cultures, characterized as independent and individualistic (Triandis, 1990, 1995), contexts fostering the perception that one is acting volitionally (as an independent agent unencumbered by the dictates and wishes of others) will be integrally linked to their intrinsic motivation. By contrast, it is hypothesized that for members of non-Western cultures, characterized as interdependent and collectivist (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1990, 1995), contexts fostering the perception that one is acting in accordance with the dictates and wishes of others in one's social ingroup will be integrally linked to their intrinsic motivation.

According to Markus and Kitayama's (1991) theory, Westerners perceive themselves as consisting of a unique set of attributes which enables them to stand apart and to be separate from others in their environment. They find it more natural to describe themselves in terms of the singular "I," an entity that is context-free, in that they perceive themselves as possessing traits that are distinctive and independent of their social roles (Cousins, 1989). The normative imperative for such individuals is to become independent from others and to discover and express their unique attributes. Independent-selves, therefore, strive to achieve independence and autonomy by establishing their distinctiveness from others and by remaining uninfluenced by group and environmental pressures (Geertz, 1975; Johnson, 1985; Sampson, 1985, 1988, 1989; Waterman, 1981).

By contrast, Easterners perceive themselves as being interconnected with and interrelated to others in their social context (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). For such interdependent individuals, the focal point is not the inner self but rather the relationships the person has with others (Hamaguchi, 1985). Experiencing interdependence entails seeing oneself as part of an encompassing social relationship and recognizing that one's behavior is determined by, contingent upon, and to a large extent organized by what the individual perceives to be the thoughts, feelings,

and actions of others in the relationship (Sampson, 1988). In turn, they find it more natural to describe themselves not as individuals possessing stable traits, but instead as individuals possessing thoughts and behaviors determined and informed by the social role dictated by a given context (Cousins, 1989). Interdependent-selves strive not for autonomy or independence but instead pursue the goal of fitting in and conforming to the demands and expectations of their social ingroups.

Consequently, what distinguishes independent- from interdependent-selves is, first, their contrasting perceptions of the relationships between individuals and their social ingroups and, second, their contrasting goals for self-fulfillment. Thus, through the medium of self-construal, culture invariably constructs and determines human cognition and motivation.

Given the contrasting self-perceptions and self-goals of interdependent- and independent-selves, we might theorize about contrasting forms of agency. Drawing again upon Markus and Kitayama (1991), we theorize that agency will have its origin either in the person or in the collective, depending on whether the culture promotes independence or interdependence. If, as Markus and Kitayama argue, independent-selves both perceive themselves as and strive to be independent, then such individuals should both perceive themselves as volitional actors and be motivated by contexts fostering personal agency. Personal agency assumes that people will both perceive themselves as the origins of their own behavior and be motivated to act upon opportunities that allow one to be the sole initiator of their behavior. Because those motivated by personal agency have been shown to perceive themselves as the "prototypes of origins" in that they are striving for primary control over their environment (e.g., Ichheiser, 1949; Weisz, Rothbaum, & Blackburn, 1984), we hypothesize that they will interpret the world as consisting of lone agents, where it is the individual who is valuable, powerful, and accountable. By contrast, if, as Markus and Kitayama argue, interdependent-selves perceive themselves as striving for harmony and belongingness with others, then it may be hypothesized that such individuals will be particularly motivated by contexts that allow them both to be perceived as and to act as collective agents. Collective agency assumes a motivation towards activities in which the origin of thought and behavior emanates from a collective. Because those motivated by collective agency have been shown to perceive themselves as possessing secondary control in that their perceived task is to adjust to—rather than control—their environment (Weisz et al., 1984), we hypothesize that they will perceive their surroundings in terms of groups or collectives that are vital, influential, and liable. In sum, for those with independent-selves, agency will be experienced as an effort to express one's internal needs, rights, and capacities and to withstand undue social pressure,

whereas among those with interdependent-selves, agency will be experienced as an effort to be receptive to others, to adjust to their needs and demands, and to restrain one's own inner needs or desires.¹

The intellectual history of personal agency can be traced through a variety of social and economic practices predominating in Western society. The concept of personal agency can be traced to the Judeo-Christian belief in the individual soul, the English legal and philosophical tradition of individual rights, Adam Smith's economics of individual self-interest and free markets, and the exaltation of individual freedom in social thinkers such as Nietzsche and Freud (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipton, 1985; Lukes, 1973). Indeed, this glorification of personal agency manifests itself in the seemingly trivial everyday socializing practices of Americans. For instance, American parents emphasize the need for infants to be given their own beds and their own rooms to encourage and foster autonomy (Shweder, Jensen, & Goldstein, 1995). Moreover, in schools and homes, caretakers and teachers progressively "individualize" and decontextualize children. The goal is to turn the dependent child into an independent person with distinct preferences and unique attributes (Heine, Lehman, Markus, & Kitayama, 1999). Reflected in these cultural norms and practices, is an idealization of the individual as a powerful, self-sufficient agent (Bellah et al., 1985).

Collective agency can also be understood through various social and economic practices pervasive throughout the East. The concept of collective agency predominant in Asian societies such as China, Korea, and Japan can be traced to the tradition of the Confucian ideal of the

1. A different approach to agency has surfaced in personality literature. Following Bakan (1966), a recent argument widely supported by Wiggins (1991) theorizes that agency and communion are two fundamental modalities of human experience that act as coordinates for understanding and measuring social interactions. In Wiggins' terms, "agency" is the state of being a differentiated individual and it is manifested by the drive to enhance and protect this differentiation, while "communion" is the condition of being a part of some larger social system and it is exhibited in strivings for unity with this larger entity. According to this theory, combinations of agency and communion are possible in any society or individual (i.e., a person may be agentic but not communal, communal but not agentic, or equally agentic and communal). Wiggins and Trapnell (1996) argue that agency and communion function similarly to the constructs of individualism and collectivism (Triandis, 1990, 1995). When distinguishing personal from collective agency, we do not support the definition that agency is solely the condition of being a differentiated individual or that agency is one of two meta-concepts for interpreting social behaviors (Wiggins, 1991), but, rather, agency simply refers to any individual's drive to perform an action. Indeed, our intention is to elaborate on this latter definition of agency to include how different cultures, specifically cultures that either emphasize the self or relationships, can shape the motivational patterns of individuals to either perform actions for the benefit of the self (characteristic of "personal agents") or for the benefit of the group (characteristic of "collective agents").

community man (*qunti de fenzi*) or social being (*shehui de renge*) who derives both role and awareness from the social collective to which he or she belongs (Kubin, 1991). Confucian conceptions of society take relations to family as a core metaphor for relations to other groups (Menon, Morris, Chiu, & Hong, 1999). Obligations to family must be followed even when they lead to wrongdoing. An example of how the collective and its role structure permit misconduct are found in *The Analects*, in which Confucius states that there is integrity when "a father covers up wrongdoing for his son [and] a son covers up wrongdoing for his father" (1997, p. 63). In fact, such ideology is reflected in many modern day Asian practices. For instance, in contemporary Japan, the power of groups is visible in corporate life in which the *ringi* system gives decision-making power to groups rather than individuals (Erez, 1992). In general, individuals in Asian societies are enmeshed in powerful collectives such as family, school, and work groups that both support and constrain through the lifetime (Hu, 1991). Furthermore, social norms oblige conformity to these groups and institutions (Hsu, 1948; Su et al., 1999).

Thus, we theorize that agency will have its origin either in the person or in the collective, depending on whether the culture promotes independence or interdependence. In this paper, we first investigate the cognitive determinants of personal and collective agency by providing empirical evidence to suggest that members of independent and interdependent cultures perceive themselves differently in relation to others and, consequently, perceive the agents of influence and power as being either in the individual or in the collective, depending on their self-construal. We review considerable empirical evidence which suggests that members of independent cultures may be more motivated by contexts that allow them to perceive themselves as volitional—persons acting independently of others—while members of interdependent cultures may be more motivated by contexts that allow them to perceive themselves as fitting in with a social ingroup, in turn enabling them to enhance their relationships with others.

COGNITIVE DETERMINANTS OF AGENCY

Current psychological theory and research suggest that human cognition—the process by which humans interpret and encode information to draw inferences and make judgments—is a culturally driven phenomenon (Nisbett, Peng, Choi, & Norenzayan 2000; Norenzayan, & Nisbett, 2000; Peng, Ames, & Knowles, in press). Consistent with our theory regarding personal versus collective agency, observed cultural differences in cognition suggest that members from contrasting cultures differ in their evaluation of how individuals relate to their social groups and, further, how these differences are reflected in the manner in which percep-

tions of the relationship of objects to their surrounding environment are encoded and remembered.

PERCEPTION OF SELF AND GROUPS

A growing body of research increasingly supports the hypotheses that members of independent and interdependent cultures vary, first, in their perceptions of the way the individual relates to others in their social environment and, second, in their judgments of whether it is the individual or the group that plays the role of the doer or the recipient of actions. In a now classic study, researchers asked Asian and American students to rate how similar they were to others in their reference group and also to rate how similar others were to them. Typically, among Americans, the self is judged to be more dissimilar to the other than the other is to the self (Holyoak & Gordon, 1983; Srull & Gaelick, 1983). These findings, however, were reversed with participants from India—in that they judged the self to be somewhat more similar to the other than was the other to the self (Kitayama, Markus, Tummala, Kurokawa, & Kato, 1990). One interpretation of these findings is that, whereas personal agents perceive themselves as being the “leaders of the pack” whose designated role is to influence others, collective agents may perceive themselves as an integral member of “the pack” whose designated role is to adjust themselves to the dictates and wishes of others (Morling, Kitayama, & Miyamoto, 2000).

In support of this interpretation, a growing number of studies suggest that the repeatedly demonstrated finding that people have a need to view themselves positively, particularly as distinctive from others, may not be culturally shared (e.g., Allport, 1955; Epstein, 1973; James, 1890; Maslow, 1954; Rogers, 1951; Steele, 1988; Tesser, 1988). Findings from a number of studies suggest that, compared to interdependent cultural members (e.g., Chinese and Japanese), Americans are more likely to perceive themselves as being better than others (Bond, 1991; Heine & Lehman, 1997, 2000; Yik, Bond, & Paulhus, 1998; for a review see Heine et al., 1999).² However, one circumstance in which interdependent cultural members demonstrate an enhancement bias is when evaluating groups of which they are members, particularly their families (Endo, Heine, & Lehman, *in press*). Such findings may suggest that in an effort to establish themselves as influencing agents, independent cultural members may wish to perceive themselves as being distinctive from oth-

2. Some evidence suggests that cultural differences in the tendency towards self-enhancement may be a function of age—that is, these cultural differences may not manifest themselves in early childhood (Falbo, Poston, Triscari, & Zhang, 1997).

ers in their social ingroup, while interdependent cultural members—in an effort to adjust to the wishes of their reference group—may wish to perceive themselves as belonging to a social group that is harmonious. Not only do such findings show variability in perceptions of self-other relations, but they also suggest the possibility that personal agents may perceive the self as the ultimate reference point, while collective agents may perceive others as the ultimate reference point from which belief systems and behaviors originate.

Indeed, when examining cultural differences in causal reasoning, findings repeatedly suggest that members of independent cultures judge the individual to be the responsible agent of action, while members of interdependent cultures judge situations or social groups to be the directors of action. Several recent studies provide an empirical challenge to the fundamental attribution error—that when judging the behavior of others all people will be prone to overestimate the influence of dispositional causes (Holland, Holyoak, Nisbett, & Thagard, 1986; McCloskey, 1983; Ross, 1977). Initial findings from ethnographic studies suggested that Indian participants refer more to situational factors and less to dispositions when describing persons they know and also when explaining behaviors exhibited by these persons (Miller, 1984, 1987; Shweder & Bourne, 1984; see also Argyle, Shimoda, & Little, 1978). A compelling series of studies conducted by Morris and Peng (1994) provided strong empirical support for the hypothesis that members of independent cultures are more likely to perceive the individual as the causal agent from which behavior emanates while members of interdependent cultures exhibit a greater tendency to perceive behavior as being situationally determined and, at times, even being directed by groups. These studies demonstrated that Chinese and American individuals differed in their construals and judgments of social events but not physical events. When shown the same descriptions of events, such as mass murders, and asked to determine the cause, Americans predominantly focused on the presumed mental instability and negative dispositions of the murderers, while Chinese made more references to societal and institutional factors which may have affected the murderers (such as emphasizing corruption by bad example or disruption instigated by social changes). Moreover, these cultural differences in attribution were similarly replicated even when participants were explaining culturally neutral social events. When shown a picture of a group of fish with one fish swimming slightly ahead of the group, American participants saw the individual fish as leading the group (dispositional cause) while Chinese participants saw a group rejecting or chasing away the lone fish (situational cause). Although these depictions of fish served as a culturally neutral context, this social scenario invoked contrasting attributions for the event. Interestingly, no cultural differences in attribution were ob-

served when Chinese and American participants were asked to explain physical events—the movement of shapes in a pattern of behavior similar to that of the fish.

To what extent do these observed cultural differences in the generation of situational versus dispositional attributions suggest contrasting perceptions of causal agents? Menon and colleagues (1999) provide a more direct examination of these culturally contrasting perceptions of agency. Specifically, investigations of East Asian and American lay theories regarding human motivation also suggest that Americans perceive individuals as causal agents of their behavior, and East Asians perceive groups or collectives as the determinants of their behavior. For instance, findings from one study revealed that American news reporters, when compared with their Japanese counterparts, focused more on the central individuals in financial scandals as the wrongdoers, whereas Japanese reporters focused more on the organizations as the dysfunctional entities. In a second study, students from Hong Kong and the United States were provided a purposely ambiguous vignette in which they assessed individual or collective factors contributing to a decline in performance and teamwork in a work group including a maladjusted employee. Participants could have either perceived the individual as a "free rider" who disregarded obligations toward the group or perceived the group as failing to integrate this member. When evaluating this scenario, American students held the individual responsible while Chinese students held the group responsible. Such findings may suggest that because personal agents perceive the other as separate from the self, the other's behavior is always perceived as being that of a lone agent and, because the collective agent perceives others as being interconnected with the self, the behavior of others is therefore viewed as having been necessarily influenced by a larger social context. These compelling findings demonstrate the cognitive consequences of agentic orientation and how cultural differences in beliefs about agency can actually influence human judgments concerning social events. Thus, the repeated findings of several studies of first-person beliefs about the self suggest that North Americans have an inflated sense of individual control, whereas East Asians perceive that they cannot control their destinies independent of groups (for a review, see Fiske, Kitayama, Markus, & Nisbett, 1998).

PERCEPTION OF PARTS AND WHOLE

At the most basic level, it appears that cultural differences in the way the relationship between the self and other are perceived can even influence basic cognitive processes, including formal logic, analytical thinking, and the encoding of information. The cultural proclivity to focus either on the holistic picture, as with Eastern cultures, or singular components,

as with Western cultures, is apparent in a recent study by Masuda and Nisbett (1999). American and Japanese participants were shown vignettes of underwater scenes in which each scene depicted a "focal fish," a large fish with salient colors and shapes, moving in front of an elaborate scene. In later memory recall tests, Japanese participants were more likely to mention inert, background information, and American participants more often remembered information regarding the focal fish. This study reveals that American and Japanese individuals have divergent perceptual strategies; Americans may readily deconstruct their field to hone in on individual, focal figures while paying relatively little attention to peripheral information, whereas Japanese may instinctively construct an all-inclusive field of information, which includes the image as a comprehensive entity.

These cultural differences in the ways Easterners and Westerners perceive and interpret situations are even reflected in cultural differences in basic reasoning. Recent theory and research supports the argument that current Western philosophy regarding human cognition—with origins in Greek traditions—is highly influenced by analytic tradition, whereas contemporary East Asian mentalities and thought processes—with origins in Chinese cultural traditions such as Taoism, Chinese Buddhism, and Confucianism—are cognitively integral and holistic (Nisbett, 1998; Nisbett et al., 2000; Peng et al., in press). In a series of empirical studies, Peng and Nisbett (1999) showed that dialectical thinking (the cognitive tendency to accept contradictions) is more prevalent in Eastern culture. More so than Americans, Chinese participants preferred dialectical proverbs rich in contradictions, such as "too humble is half proud," and also favored dialectical resolutions to social conflicts, such as presenting both sides in an argument. In contrast, Americans preferred nondialectical proverbs, such as "for example is no proof," and generally found exclusive fault with one side of an argument or the other. Peng and Nisbett attribute the tendency of Easterners toward dialecticism in part to their system of thought, which emphasizes complexity, change, and contradiction. Conversely, Westerners tend to emphasize Aristotelian logical reasoning; that is, the adherence to rules and categories as essential.

In summary, the exploration of cognition as a culturally mediated phenomenon suggests that members of independent and interdependent cultures really do differ in their processing of information. People with independent self-construals tend to cognize their surroundings in regard to their components (Masuda & Nisbett, 1999), focus on individual dispositions to the exclusion of the other components in an environment (Miller, 1984; Morris & Peng, 1994; Shweder & Bourne, 1984), and attribute power and authority to the individual (Menon et. al, 1999). In contrast, individuals with interdependent self-construals tend to cognize their en-

vironment holistically (Masuda & Nisbett, 1999, Peng & Nisbett, 1999), make more judgments on the behavior of others based on situational factors (Miller, 1984; Morris & Peng, 1994; Shweder & Bourne, 1984), and bestow power on the collective (Menon et. al, 1999). In terms of agency, these varying cognitive dispositions inherently imply that Western cultures assign control and stability to the individual while Eastern cultures project such qualities on their greater social collective.

PERSONALLY AGENTIC MOTIVATION

Perhaps deCharms (1968/1983) best characterized what it means to be a personal agent when he theorized that people are viewed as actors seeking to exercise and validate a sense of control over their external environments. Consistent with the theory of the independent-self proposed by Markus and Kitayama (1991), decades of research in American psychology have demonstrated, across a variety of contexts, that American participants are especially motivated by contexts that enable them to perceive themselves as the initiators and directors of their behaviors (Condry, 1977; Condry & Chambers, 1978; Deci & Ryan, 1991; Lefcourt, 1973; Malone & Lepper, 1987; Nuttin, 1973; Rotter, 1966; Taylor, 1989).

While traditional theories of human motivation hypothesize the centrality of personal agency and self-determination as the motivating forces underlying all human behaviors, a growing body of research suggests that our fundamental assumptions regarding human motivation may not be as relevant among members of more interdependent cultures. If interdependent cultural members perceive agency to lie in the collective, and are motivated by contexts that allow for belongingness and the development of relationships, then we should expect motivational processes associated with the desire for independence and self-determination to be relatively less prevalent among members of more interdependent cultures.

PURSUIT OF SELF-DETERMINATION

Consistent with Markus and Kitayama's (1991) delineation of the motivating goals for independent-selves, much psychological theory and research support the hypothesis that Westerners are most motivated in contexts allowing for the perception of choice, control, and self-determination. Yet, increasingly, research suggests that, consistent with Markus and Kitayama's theory of the interdependent-self, the pursuit of self-determination may not be universally shared.

Consider, for instance, the seminal theory of cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957; Festinger & Carlsmith, 1959). According to this well documented theory, people are interested in perceiving themselves as

independent agents of thought and behavior; as a result, when confronted by the dilemma that one's behaviors are inconsistent with one's attitudes, people are motivated to change their attitudes in order to restore internal consistency (Cooper & Fazio, 1984; Goethals & Cooper, 1972; Linder, Cooper, & Jones, 1967). The underlying premise of this theory, of course, is that people will regard it as hypocritical to fail to act in accord with personal attitudes—even if doing so may damage personal relationships. To accommodate others may seem to involve going into external constraints and failing to be true to one's self. Thus, personal agents are motivated to attain consistency between their private thoughts and public behaviors.

However, for cultures that emphasize relationships, it may be regarded as selfish, immature, or disloyal to act in accord with personal attitudes—or even to express such attitudes—if they conflict with the maintenance of a smooth, social equilibrium. Accommodating personal desires may frequently seem to involve a self-indulgent failure to acknowledge legitimate commitment to others (Azuma, 1984; Weisz et al., 1984). In other words, one's internal attributes (e.g., private attitudes or opinions) are not regarded as the significant attributes of the self. Furthermore, one's private feelings are to be regulated in accordance with the requirements of the situation. Restraint over the inner self is assigned a much higher value than is expression of the inner self (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Consequently, since collective agents are more concerned with their relationships with others than the inner self, then not only may they not pursue consistency between private thoughts and public deeds but, in fact, private thoughts and opinions will be secondary to those which are publicly expressed.

Recent empirical findings support the hypothesis that personal agents, as compared to collective agents, exhibit a greater tendency for consistency between private thoughts and public deeds (Heine & Lehman, 1997). Using the free-choice cognitive dissonance paradigm, respondents in Heine and Lehman's study were given a choice between two equally attractive compact disks, or CDs. Classic dissonance theory would predict that participants should experience dissonance and, as a consequence, change some cognitions. In fact, Heine and Lehman found that North American participants showed a considerable "spread" of preference after the choice—that is, liking for the chosen CD increased and liking for the unchosen CD decreased. They failed to find the comparable effect among Japanese respondents. This supports the idea that the requirement of internal consistency is less strong for people who are motivated by the desire to fit in and not by the desire to stand out.

Unlike people motivated by the pursuit of internal consistency, collective agents do not even appear to be persuaded by their own past chosen behaviors. Building on the finding that cognitive dissonance may be less

prevalent in interdependent cultures, recent studies have examined whether traditional weapons of influence are as persuasive in interdependent cultures. For instance, drawing on this need to be internally consistent, many salesmen and researchers alike have discovered that once an American commits a small deed in support of a belief, then they are likely to do even more (Cialdini, 1993; Freedman & Fraser, 1966). Given the contrasting goals for independence, we would predict that this "foot-in-the-door" technique would be a more powerful weapon of influence for those wishing to maintain internal consistency. To test this hypothesis, American and Polish participants were asked to report their willingness to comply with a request to fill out a survey after considering their past compliance to similar requests. The results showed that one's past actions have relatively more impact on Americans (the more independent culture) than on the Polish (the more interdependent culture) (Cialdini, Wosinska, Barrett, Butner, & Gornik-Durose, 1999). In short, since the need to be consistent with one's prior preferences may not be as relevant for members of more interdependent cultures, there is no expectation for past preferences to be reflected in current ones.

In general, research has shown there to be a link between the perception of choice or control and intrinsic motivation which, in turn, has been correlated with numerous psychological benefits (Condry, 1977; Condry & Chambers, 1978; Deci & Ryan, 1991; Lefcourt, 1973; Malone & Lepper, 1987; Nuttin, 1973; Rotter, 1966; Taylor, 1989). Such benefits have been observed in children during the preschool and elementary school years (Cordova & Lepper, 1996), among the institutionalized elderly (Langer & Rodin, 1976; Rodin & Langer, 1977), and with college students (Deci, 1975, 1981; Deci & Ryan, 1985; Dember, Galinsky, & Warm, 1992; Taylor & Brown 1988). Indeed, the benefits of choice have been observed even in circumstances in which the choice itself has proved trivial, incidental, or entirely illusory (Brickman, 1987; Cordova & Lepper, 1996; Langer, 1975; Langer & Rodin, 1976; Swann & Pittman, 1977; Taylor 1989). Conversely, the absence or removal of choice or control has been shown to have detrimental effects on intrinsic motivation, performance, and even health status (Brehm, 1966; Deci, Spiegel, Ryan, Koestner, & Kaufman, 1982; Schulz & Hanusa, 1978; Seligman, 1975; Wicklund, 1974; Zuckerman, Porac, Lathin, Smith, & Deci, 1978).

Just as prior findings suggest that interdependent cultural members place considerably less value on being consistent with their prior preferences, so too might we observe interdependent cultural members to be less intrinsically motivated by the provision of choice or control. To date, the strongest empirical support for the hypothesis that independent cultural members are more motivated by contexts in which they can act as their own agents, as compared to interdependent cultural members who may experience fewer motivational benefits in such a personally agentic

context, has been provided by Iyengar and Lepper (1999). In two studies, the provision of personal choice motivated American independent cultural members more than Asian interdependent cultural members. In the first experiment, patterned after traditional choice paradigms, Asian and European American children were exposed to either a choice condition in which they were offered an option of engaging in one of six activities or a no-choice condition in which they were told by an experimenter which of the six activities to undertake. Subsequent findings revealed that while performance on the activity did not vary by culture, European American children proved significantly more committed to personally chosen activities than were the Asian Americans.

The second study by Iyengar and Lepper showed even more powerful cultural differences in circumstances in which the actual choices involved seemed quite trivial. Using a paradigm patterned after the one employed by Cordova and Lepper (1996), Asian and European American fifth-graders engaged in a computer math game in either a personal choice condition or a no-choice condition. In the personal choice condition, participants were given half a dozen instructionally irrelevant and seemingly trivial choices (e.g., "Which icon would you like to have as your game piece?"). In the no-choice condition, participants were assigned the same icons as the ones selected by participants in the choice condition. Once again, compared to the Asian American participants, European American children preferred more challenging math problems, showed more task engagement, and actually reported liking the subject of mathematics more when they had been allowed to make such seemingly trivial choices. Indeed, the results from these two studies are intriguing not just because of the observed cultural differences in the power of choice but also because of the observed cultural differences in the power of externally dictated preferences on human motivation. We will elaborate on cultural differences in the no-choice condition later.

Moreover, might we observe cultural differences in the types of contexts that induce self-initiated behaviors? Drawing once again on the contrasting perceptions of agency—of personal agents as influencers and collective agents as adjusters—one might hypothesize that persons striving for personal agency will be more likely to initiate behavior in contexts enabling their desire to stand out, while persons striving for collective agency will be more likely to initiate behavior in contexts enabling their desire to fit in. To test this hypothesis, in a recent study, Canadians and Japanese were told that they either succeeded or failed on a bogus creativity test and were then left alone in the room with a related task while the experimenter was ostensibly away trying to locate a computer file (Heine, Kitayama, Lehman, Takata, & Ide, 2000). The experimenter observed the participants through a hidden camera and timed how long they persisted on the second, voluntary task. Results in-

licated that Canadians persisted significantly longer on the second task when they had been led to believe that they had succeeded on the first task than when they had been told that they had failed. In stark contrast, when Japanese believed that they had failed the first task they persisted significantly longer on the second. Such findings are consistent with the theory that people motivated by the desire to be personally agentic will wish to build on their strengths in order to stand out, while people motivated by collective agency may wish to correct their shortcomings in order to succeed in fitting in with a socially desirable ingroup.

In summary, traditional theory and research on human motivation reflects the glorification of ideals involving a commitment to the person as a sole agent by emphasizing individual duty and responsibility. Inducing feelings of individual responsibility and autonomy can change people's attitudes and their behaviors (e.g., Festinger, 1957), cause people to act in a more altruistic manner (e.g., Cialdini et al., 1975; Freedman & Fraser, 1966), and can improve people's physical and psychological health (e.g., Rodin & Langer, 1977; Seligman, 1975), to name just a few of the benefits. Such findings are consistent in a culture that glorifies the person as motivated by personal agency. These positive consequences, however, do not appear to the same degree among members of more interdependent cultures, hypothesized to be more collectively agentic. What then are the motivational consequences of exposing individuals motivated by personal agency, as compared to individuals motivated by collective agency, to contexts that invite group cohesion and group responsibility?

COLLECTIVELY AGENTIC MOTIVATION

Perhaps Confucius (1997) best characterized what it means to be a collective agent when he said, "Filial piety and fraternal submission! Are they not the root of all benevolent action?" (*Analects*, circa B.C.E.). As independent social psychologists motivated by personal agency, we have historically been suspicious of the belief that "benevolent action" will result from acting in accordance with the demands and wishes of a collective. Although social psychologists have, for decades, recognized the power others have to motivate the behavior and thoughts of individuals, an inherent assumption underlying this research is that acts of submission and conformity may result in negative outcomes, perhaps even in malevolence. Indeed, theories have suggested that acting under the influence of others leads to irrationality in judgment, such as conformity (Asch, 1952) and groupthink (Janis, 1972); and to the relinquishing of social responsibility, such as obedience to authority (Milgram, 1961, 1963), diffusion of responsibility (Darley & Latane, 1968), and social loafing or free riding (Latane, Williams, & Harkins, 1979). Simply put, social psy-

chological theory assumes, generally, that group influence violates individual integrity and rarely has a positive impact. How might these phenomena be exhibited and interpreted in a world idolizing the edicts of Confucius, where agency is actually assumed to lie within the group?

PURSUIT OF SOCIAL CONFORMITY

Actions conceived as conformist among those motivated by personal agency may be perceived as acts of fitting in or belongingness among those striving to be collectively agentic. Drawing once again on the theory of Markus and Kitayama (1991), we may hypothesize that for those striving for personal agency, to act in accordance with the demands and wishes of others may threaten the goal of self-determination. In contrast, interdependent-selves will reinforce the value of following norms essential for group cohesion. For the latter individuals, the intrinsic sense of responsibility to others may not be interpreted as a weakness; for example, the meaning of *sunao*, a term used by Japanese parents to convey a value reinforced with their children, implies that working with others does not suggest giving up the self but that cooperation is the appropriate way of expressing, enhancing, and affirming the self (Kumagi, 1981; White & LeVine, 1986).

In support of our hypothesis, there is considerable evidence to suggest that members of more interdependent cultures may be more motivated by opportunities to conform than to stand out. Findings from recent meta-analysis on conformity suggested that participants from interdependent cultures tended to show higher levels of conformity than did participants from independent cultures (Bond & Smith, 1996).

This greater tendency toward conforming behavior does not appear to be devalued behavior in interdependent cultures—to know what others are doing appears to be regarded as heuristic information and, in turn, may serve as the benchmark for the formation of personal preferences (Iyengar & Brockner, 2001). Recent empirical works have examined how collective agents use the behavior of others as informative factors on which to base their own decisions and behaviors. Consider again the aforementioned study by Cialdini and his colleagues (1999), in which they conducted a study comparing how much value American and Polish participants would place on information concerning their personal preferences as opposed to information about the preferences of their peers. In their study, they surveyed the willingness of American and Polish participants to fill out a questionnaire when considering both their own prior compliance rates along with the prior compliance rates of their peers. Results showed that, in comparison to American participants, Polish participants were more likely to report wanting to adopt behaviors in which their peers had engaged; moreover, for Polish partic-

ipants, it was necessarily more important to engage in behaviors they knew their peers had undertaken than to engage in behaviors they knew they themselves had previously undertaken.

Recent findings even suggest that interdependent cultural members prefer options that appear more conformist than unique. Studies by Kim and Markus (1999) suggest that when confronted by minority and majority choices, Asians are more likely to choose the majority choice as compared to Americans, who exhibit greater preferences for minority choices. Additionally, their content analyses of advertisements cross-culturally suggest that Asian advertisers selling to Asian consumers are more likely to draw on themes of conformity as persuasive devices in comparison to American advertisers, who make use of themes of individuality and uniqueness. Such findings may suggest that people who perceive agency in the collective will voluntarily choose to do that which others are doing—an act that may be regarded as “conformist” for personal agents but may be “good common sense” for collective agents.

PURSUIT OF SOCIAL HARMONY

Does acting in accordance with the wishes of others necessarily lead to the relinquishing of social responsibility? A number of studies by Earley and his colleagues suggest not. The well documented social phenomenon defined as “social loafing” (e.g., Latane et al., 1979)—or the markedly reduced performance of those who think they are working with others in a group effort—appears to be non-existent among members of more interdependent cultures (Earley, 1989). A comparison of Chinese and American factory workers in contexts in which they were either responsible for their work individually or in groups revealed that, whereas Americans perceived themselves as more capable and performed better in contexts in which they were individually responsible, Chinese perceived themselves as more capable and performed better when their groups were responsible (Earley, 1993). Furthermore, a study of managerial students found that North Americans have stronger expectations of individual control in a performance task, whereas Chinese have stronger expectations of group control (Earley, 1993). Ultimately, circumstances that appear to invite negative effects for Westerners (such as social loafing) might induce social responsibility in interdependent societies.

Can a heightened sense of responsibility, as manifest by behaviors reflecting a sense of duty and obligation, justify why interdependent cultural members are more likely to associate with and pattern their behavior after others? Survey research has suggested that the concepts of duty and obligation vary across independent and interdependent cultures (Miller, 1994). When comparing American and Hindu Indian pop-

ulations, Miller found evidence to support the claim that an individually oriented interpersonal moral code develops among Americans stressing personal freedom of choice, individual responsibility, and a dualistic view of individual motivation. In contrast, a duty-based interpersonal moral code develops among Hindu Indians stressing broad and socially enforceable interpersonal obligations, the importance of contextual sensitivity, and a monistic view of individual motivation. Essentially, the type of interpersonal moral code found among interdependent cultural members, such as Hindu Indians and Chinese, may be considered duty based in its view that interpersonal responsibilities are mandatory in character and based simultaneously on one's position in the social whole and on one's nature, while the interpersonal moral code found among independent cultural members is more rights based (Chiu, Dweck, Tong, & Fu, 1997; Miller, 1994).

In fact, recent studies suggest that situations that appear authoritative to independent cultural members may instead be perceived as situations that invite the fulfillment of one's duties and obligations to others. Recall again the studies conducted by Iyengar and Lepper (1999), which tested the hypothesis that members from more interdependent cultures will be more intrinsically motivated by the choices made by others as compared to their own choices. Earlier, we discussed the differential effects on European and Asian American children of the choice and no-choice conditions. Now, consider the cultural differences within the (two) no-choice conditions. For half of the students in the no-choice conditions, the person making the choice for them was a previously unencountered adult (i.e., the experimenter) while, for the other students, the person making the choice was a person with whom participants shared a close and interdependent relationship (i.e., their mothers). Results showed that, in contrast to the European American participants, Asian Americans were much more motivated and performed the best when their mothers had made the selection.

In the second study conducted by Iyengar and Lepper (1999), participants' closeness to the source of social influence varied. Specifically, it was hypothesized that the effect of social information on the intrinsic motivation level of independent cultural members would be relatively unaffected by whether the source of influence was a member of an ingroup or an outgroup. In contrast, the identity of the influencing agent was expected to be both more salient and more influential among interdependent cultural members. In this study, European and Asian American fifth graders encountered either a choice or a no-choice manipulation while playing a computer math game. Participants were either given trivial, instructionally irrelevant choices or had their selections assigned to them by either an equal-status peer group (i.e., their classmates) or by a lower-status group (i.e., third graders at a rival

school). The findings were striking. They showed that, in contrast to European Americans, Asian Americans were more intrinsically motivated and learned more when the choices had been made by their classmates than when they made their own choices, which, in turn, produced better results than when the choices had been made for them by unfamiliar and lower-status others. For European Americans, on the other hand, the critical distinction proved to be between having a choice and not having a choice; that is, they showed significantly more commitment, more motivation, and higher learning in the context offering them trivial choices as compared to either of the two no-choice contexts.

What is interesting about the cultural differences in the way these contrasting agentic individuals respond to the influence of others is, first, their differing perceptions of externally dictated constraints and, second, their differing responses to the various influencing agents. Consistent with the hypothesis that people striving for collective agency will be motivated by contexts that allow them both to fit in and to fulfill their duties and social obligations, the Asian American participants proved intrinsically motivated by particular types of no-choice contexts—specifically, contexts in which the influencing agent was someone with whom the interdependent-self might conceivably wish to be interconnected. As observed in these two studies, when the influencing agent is an outgroup member—someone to whom the interdependent-self owes no social obligation—collective agency is not invoked; however, the reverse is observed when the influencing agent is an ingroup member—someone to whom the interdependent-self is obligated. Not surprisingly, since any no-choice context conceivably thwarts personal agency, the European American participants proved unmotivated by these contexts. In other words, while the mere removal of choice for European American children precipitated negative consequences on intrinsic motivation, regardless of the usurper, the intrinsic motivation of the Asian American children depended on whether they perceived this usurper as a benevolent agent or as an outsider (Iyengar & Lepper, 1999; Iyengar, Lepper, & Ross, 1999). This sensitivity to the identity of the influencing agent has been demonstrated not just among children but also among employees in organizational settings (Earley, 1993).

Although prior research has primarily concerned itself with the detrimental consequences resulting from the influence of others, an examination of cross-cultural studies increasingly suggests that if people are motivated to be among the collective, then the very same situations that are construed as "dictatorial" by people striving to be personally agentic, may instead be construed as opportunities for engendering "harmony" and for the fulfillment of social responsibility by people striving to be collectively agentic.

THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

Independent cultural members are more motivated by contexts allowing personal agency; interdependent cultural members are more motivated by contexts allowing for collective agency. Such cultural differences in agency suggest that our theories regarding human motivation need to be both elaborated upon and redefined. In particular, cultural differences in the way the person is conceptualized have significant ramifications for the way theorists have hypothesized about the boundaries between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Iyengar & Brockner, in press; Iyengar & Lepper, 1999). In Western culture, for instance, it is typically presumed that when one engages in some behavior merely in order to please, or to conform to the ideals of others, then that action is extrinsically motivated (deCharms, 1968/1983; Deci, 1975; Harter, 1981). In deCharms' (1968/1983) terms, "The crux of the distinction between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation lies in the knowledge or feeling of personal causation" (p. 328). Yet, as the studies reported here increasingly reveal, members of more interdependent cultures may find it more natural and more motivating to adjust to the desires of others. Hence, when taking into account the interdependent cultural member, for whom conformity to one's ingroup is an integral aspect of the self-system, the boundaries between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation may need to be reconsidered.

When considering cultural differences in motivation, one might hypothesize that the extent to which persons are motivated by the pursuit of personal agency or collective agency may vary not only as a function of culture but possibly as a function of situational factors as well. Such a hypothesis would predict that, regardless of one's cultural membership, when exposed to potentially opposing cultural ideology people might display a greater tendency to think and act in accord with this opposing culture. While to date no studies have examined contexts in which independent cultural members may be motivated by the pursuit of collective agency, or in which interdependent cultural members may be motivated by the pursuit of personal agency, some preliminary studies suggest the possibility that exposure to opposing cultural ideology may influence human cognition. To begin with, studies show that while there are considerable cultural differences between Americans and Japanese in their tendency toward exhibiting the self-enhancement bias, persons from Hong Kong—historically influenced by the cultural ideology and political and economic systems of the West—exhibit similar self-enhancement to that observed among Americans (Bond & Cheung, 1983). Moreover, a recent study (Hong, Morris, Chiu, & Benet-Martinez, 2000) examined whether bicultural individuals (exposed to Chinese and American cultures) would vary their attributional style as a function of

contextual priming (for a review, see Higgins, 1996). Bicultural individuals were shown images of icons from either Chinese or American culture, including: symbols (e.g., the American flag versus a Chinese dragon), famous cultural figures from folklore or cartoons (e.g., Superman versus Stone Monkey), and landmarks (e.g., the Capitol Building versus the Great Wall). Subsequently, participants primed with Chinese icons made more group disposition attributions, an expected response from interdependent cultural members, and participants primed with American icons made more individual dispositions, an expected response from independent cultural members. These bicultural participants demonstrated that individuals influenced by multiple cultures can self-direct cognition. Such a display of elasticity in human cognition may provide a glimpse into predicting that, quite possibly, agency orientation may be interchangeable and malleable among bicultural individuals and perhaps even among all individuals depending on contextual priming.

Thus, an inherent bias both in the theory presented here and the empirical research that has been conducted as yet is the belief that personal agency will be absent among interdependent cultural members and that collective agency will only lead to negative consequences among independent cultural members. Of course, there are examples of personally agentic icons—people who have, as individuals, had a hand in shaping history in terms of political, legal, economic, and social reforms—across both independent and interdependent cultures. Consider, for example, two men from vastly divergent cultures that impacted their societies drastically: Thomas Jefferson, the author of the American Declaration of Independence; and B. R. Ambedkar, the “untouchable” who, against all odds, became the author of the Indian Constitution. Likewise, there are examples of collectively agentic coups—groups that have, together, created revolutions, changing the status quo in both social and technological arenas—across contrasting cultures; for example, despite differing cultural contexts, the movements of Mahatma Gandhi and Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. organized and mobilized millions to act together for social, political, and legal reform. Indeed, despite North American social psychologists’ suspicions of collective efforts, are not many such efforts—including the writing of the U.S. Constitution, the controversial Manhattan project, the development of the Apple personal computer, and the design of Disney World—to name a few, the exemplification of some of the most creative joint ventures in American history (Bennis & Biederman, 1997)?

Herein lies the challenge for future empirical research on human motivation: Why is the consideration of such real-world phenomena absent from our theories? Can we as social psychologists shrug our biases and strive for a comprehensive theory of human motivation enveloping all

people? and How will theories of human motivation evolve in an increasingly global environment in which cultural members interact on a daily basis?

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