In J. Suls (Ed.). (1993). Psychological perspectives on the self, Volume 4: The self in social perspective. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

7 The Sociocultural Self

Daphna Oyserman*
Hebrew University

Hazel Rose Markus
University of Michigan

The previous three volumes of this series, *Psychological Perspectives on the Self*, have explored and elaborated the structures and processes of the self-system. An implicit assumption underlying the majority of chapters in the volumes (certainly Markus & Sentis, 1982) is that structures of the self such as the self-concept and self-schemas, and those processes anchored in the self such as self-awareness, self-appraisal, self-consciousness, self-assessment, self-evaluation, and self-esteem are *basic* or *fundamental* in that they are relatively invariant across people, situations, and contexts. Certainly the *content* of the self-concept can differ, as can the domains in which one appraises, evaluates, or is conscious of the self, but the structure and functions of the self are conceptualized as essentially universal. Several chapters do focus on the possibility of divergence in the operation of the self—self-schemas are different in depression, self-awareness varies with alcohol consumption, processes of social comparison change across the life span—but there has yet to be a systematic consideration of how sociocultural contexts such as gender, ethnicity, religion, social class, region, and country of national origin may govern and shape the content and processes of the self.

One might contend that sociocultural factors have not been emphasized because this series focuses on *psychological* perspectives on the self. Yet such partitioning of concerns relegates the consideration of ethnicity, gender, and religion to sociology, political science, and anthropology where one is unlikely to find theoretical attention focused on the self. For example, Talcott Parsons (1954) in his classic essay "Age and Sex in the Social Structure of the United States" shows himself to be a keen observer of American life in the 1950s, but

*On sabbatical leave at Merrill-Palmer Institute

the ways in which these sociocultural factors give rise to, or are reflected in the self or identity, are not addressed. Most psychologists, especially those intrigued by the social nature of the self, probably never intended to create a genderless, classless, ethnicity-free self. Yet whatever the earlier intentions of the field, it no longer seems viable to examine the creation and functioning of the self without an explicit consideration of the role of sociocultural factors. The sources of psychology's recent sensitivity to the impact of sociocultural factors are diverse, and an analysis of them is beyond the scope of this chapter (for recent discussions of these issues see Bond, 1988; Cole, 1990; Fiske, 1990; Kim, in press-a, in press-b; Markus & Kitayama, 1991a; Markus & Oyserman, 1989; Miller, 1988; Moghaddam, 1987; Sampson, 1988; Shweder, 1991; Shweder & LeVine, 1984; Triandis, 1990a; Turner & Oakes, 1989). This awareness, however, encourages a new look at how these sociocultural influences may both constrain and afford the self-system.

THE SOCIAL SELF

A social psychological perspective on the self begins with the assumption that the responses of others are critical in defining the self. The self in social psychology is invariably described as a social product whose content derives from its relevant social contexts (Baldwin, 1911; Baldwin & Holmes, 1987; Brewer, 1990; Cooley, 1902; Mead, 1934; Rosenberg, 1965; Stryker, 1987). The emergent self-concept and how one feels about the self is a function of how the individual is viewed and responded to by important others in his or her significant life domains. Even within a highly individualistic Western psychological framework, it is immediately evident that one cannot be a self by one's self. Following Baldwin and Holmes (1987), we suggest that "the private as well as the public self is ultimately a social self" (p. 1090). As the social identity literature has shown, people experience their worlds and define themselves in terms of their sociocultural contexts (as Americans, as Israelis, as Southern Californians, as psychologists, as middle class, as women, as Blacks, as students, etc.) (Asch, 1952; Gurin & Markus, 1988; Tajfel & Turner, 1985; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987; Zavalloni, 1971). Moreover, individuals who belong to ethnic groups whose language, physical, and cultural characteristics make them distinctive with respect to the dominant group (e.g., in North America those who are not White, male, English-speaking, middle class, and urban) are likely to be responded to in terms of this group membership even if these categories are not particularly personally salient (Hughes & Demo, 1989; Jackson, Antonucci, & Gibson, 1989; Milner, 1984). Thus, a Japanese American boy and a Korean American boy may both be seen as Asians and as good in math and science even though these boys may not think of themselves in these ways at all. Similarly, not

all women define themselves in terms of their gender (Gurin & Markus, 1988), but as reflected in many recent well-publicized sexual harassment cases, others often respond to them in this way.

Despite the evident social nature of the self, most current models of the self are still decidedly *asocial* (Brewer, 1990; Taylor & Dubé, 1986; Turner et al., 1987). Almost all American social psychological research views the self as an autonomous, bounded, independent entity. Such a view may well prevent a realization and an exploration of the multilevel interdependence between the self and its embedding sociocultural contexts. As Oakes and Turner (1990) have noted, the idea that one is an exemplar of a social category or that individual freedom or agency is importantly configured by one's past or current group membership seems somehow undemocratic or unAmerican. Although, sociocultural contexts and their influences may be pervasive, powerful, and difficult to escape, their sources and boundaries are not easy to identify. These contexts often include values, goals, assumptive frameworks, categories, and labels which contain largely implicit and unexamined meanings (Jackson, in press; Russell, Cahill, & Spain, 1992).

Cole (1990), for example, examines the sociocultural context provided by one's country of origin. This context gives rise to compelling differences in the ways in which American and Japanese nursery school teachers understand the meaning of a child's behavior and the differences in their preferred response to the behavior. A child's boisterous, disobedient behavior is typically viewed within an American cultural frame as a sign that the child is bored, probably because he is intelligent and is not receiving enough individual attention. Teachers usually suggest isolating him (e.g., give him a time out) until he calms down and then providing him with increased, focused attention and more demanding tasks. Teachers operating within a Japanese cultural frame, view similar behaviors in a child as a sign that he has not learned proper obedience and dependence, probably because his mother does not spend enough time with him. They commonly suggest keeping him as part of a large group so he can learn the proper behaviors for contributing to group harmony.

The purpose of this chapter is to pose a series of questions about how various sociocultural contexts may influence the content of the self, the structures and processes of the self, as well as what it means to be a self. We simultaneously consider a variety of such sociocultural contexts (e.g., ethnicity, gender, class, region of origin) with the goal of generating a variety of speculations and some hypotheses about how such social contexts instigate, support, foster, and maintain various features and processes of the self-system. There is insufficient empirical work on any one of these sociocultural factors and their interdependence with the self or identity to allow reasonable generalizations, but just posing questions about the nature of their potential influence may serve to broaden and extend current theorizing about the self-concept and its function.

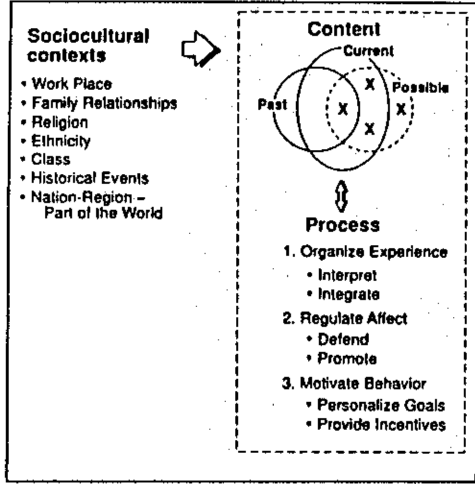

FIG. 7.1. The sociocultural self.

A PERSPECTIVE ON THE SELF

The self is viewed here as a multifaceted and dynamic entity—active, forceful, and capable of change—that mediates and regulates most significant intrapersonal and interpersonal functioning (Markus & Wurf, 1987). Its functions are: (a) to lend meaning and organization to one's experiences—thoughts, feelings, and actions; and (b) to motivate action by providing incentives, standards, plans, strategies, and scripts for behavior. As shown in Fig. 7.1, the self-concept is shaped by a diversity of sociocultural factors. It includes what individuals have come to think of themselves in the past, what they know about themselves currently, and very importantly, what they believe is possible for them in the future. These diverse conceptions of self include *social identities*—views of one's self as Hispanic and American, *role identities*—views of one's self as a parent and a mechanic, as well as individual attributes—views of one's self as caring and hardworking. The focus here is not on single indicators of the self or identity such as self-esteem or social identity, but on the content, structure, and function of the entire self-concept (for reviews and detailed discussions of this general perspective on the self see Greenwald & Pratkanis, 1984; Kihlstrom, Cantor, Albright, Chew, Klein, & Niedenthal, 1988; Markus & Herzog, 1991).

How an individual's various conceptions of self are integrated so that most people achieve a sense of oneness or continuity remains to be understood. But what has become increasingly clear is that although terms such as identity and self-concept suggest a single, monolithic entity, phenomena like identity and self should be viewed as plural and diverse even within the individual. This emphasis

on the multiplicity or multidimensionality has led to the realization that it is no longer feasible to refer to *the* self-concept. Instead, it is necessary to refer to the working, on-line, or accessible self-concept (Cantor & Kihlstrom, 1986; Markus & Nurius, 1986; Rhodewalt, 1986; Rhodewalt & Agustsdottir, 1986; Schlenker, 1985). Each individual has a vast repertoire of self-conceptions, but obviously not all of these conceptions will be accessible at any one time. What emerges in social behavior and is assessed with one or another instrument is the working self-concept. Although each individual probably has some chronically accessible self-conception, the self-concept is best viewed as a continually active, shifting array of accessible self-knowledge.

Within an individual's collection of conceptions of the self, some are tentative, fleeting, and peripheral, others are highly elaborated and function as enduring, meaning-making, or interpretive structures that help individuals lend coherence to their own life experiences. These domain specific knowledge structures can be called self-schemas (Markus, 1977), salient identities (Stryker, 1987), or core conceptions (Russell et al., 1992). They are conceived of as packages of self-knowledge that derive from past experience (e.g., I am independent, I work well with other people, I am shy, I can function under stress, I am a good mother, teacher, soccer player, community volunteer, etc.). The domains of an individual's self-schemas reflect what he or she thinks about, cares about, and spends time and energy on. They form the coordinates of the individual's experiential world and the set of an individual's self-schemas represent the core of the self-concept. Some attention has been given to how schemas vary in their extent of elaboration, in their valence, in their temporal focus (past, present, future), but their specific content as a consequence of social context and social history has not been systematically analyzed (Gurin & Markus, 1989).

Self-schemata are not only generalizations of past actions, characteristics, and skills, but are also claims of responsibility for one's present and future actions, characteristics, and skills in a given domain (Markus, Cross, & Wurf, 1990). Thus, a significant component of any self-schema is one's beliefs about what is possible in a domain in the future. Possible selves are the future-oriented components of the self-schema, the components that are essential for putting the self into action (Markus & Nurius, 1986). They are images and conceptions of the selves that individuals would like to become, could become, are afraid of becoming (see Cantor & Zirkel, 1990 for a review of representations of the self in the future).

A hallmark of this current view of the self is that construction of the self-concept does not avail itself of information indiscriminately, but is instead selective, inventive, and creative. The individual plays an important agentic role in designing a self and authoring a coherent and, when possible, a satisfying or pleasing self-narrative (Spencer, Josephs, & Steele, in press; Steele, 1988; Tesser, 1988). James (1890/1927), for example, declared "the seeker of his truest, strongest, deepest self must review the list (of possibilities) carefully, and pick

out the one on which to stake his salvation. All other selves thereupon become unreal, but the fortunes of this self are real. Its failures are real failures, its triumphs real triumphs carrying shame and gladness with them" (p. 310). Such a passage conjures images of James and his fellows settled in comfortable armchairs, projecting their futures and deciding among "doctor, lawyer, Indian, thief" with no constraints save personal desire.

While the individual's agentic role in creating a self, at least within this Western cultural frame cannot be denied, it is also the case that the sociocultural environment fosters and affords some types of self-definition while closing off many others. Moreover, some individuals, because of their positions in the social structure, are afforded many more easily realizable self-definitional opportunities than others. The sociocultural contexts people are embedded within provide them with the materials of identity construction. People then seek to create selves that are relevant and appropriate to the characteristics valued in these social contexts. Our view is that it is now productive to more broadly and thoroughly contextualize the active, agentic self with the goal of exploring how various sociocultural contexts give rise to the self, and also how these context are, in turn, created and maintained by particular perspectives on self.

THE SELF AS A SOCIOCULTURAL LOCUS

A sociocultural approach suggests that to gain an understanding of the content and processes of the self, it is important to highlight some of the characteristics of the environments within which one lives. Individual psychological processes are culturally mediated, in that they develop within a historical context and are based in everyday activities which have practical meaning to the individual (Cole, 1990). One makes sense of him or herself in terms of the characteristics valued by the immediate environments in which one lives. These environments are social products embedded within the larger society. Typically, an individual's sociocultural worlds are not passive (Goodnow, 1990). Instead, they are often quite active, comprised of individuals and groups of individuals who are continuously providing advice and direction with respect to "how to be" and "how not to be." Each significant context influences the kinds of selves—past, current, and possible—one can conceive of and the support one receives in developing and expressing these selves in everyday behavior.

The self-concept then can be considered a locus of sociocultural influence. It receives and organizes the diverse messages that are communicated by one's various contexts, for example, one's gender context, one's birth cohort context, and one's ethnic group context. These messages concern what matters in the world and, more generally, how to be an appropriate or valued member within a given context (Hsu, 1983; Kirkpatrick & White, 1985; Shweder, 1990). The self that integrates and personalizes these various messages functions as an orienting, mediating, and interpretative framework giving shape to what people are motivated to do, how they feel, what they notice and think about, as well as their overt actions (Markus & Kitayama, 1991a; Shweder & Miller, 1991).

Sociocultural contexts differ in size, complexity, and importance for everyday life as well as in their authority, legitimacy, and power to define realities for individuals and society as a whole. The focus here is on the messages about how to be a person, how to be a self, or more generally "how to be" that various sociocultural contexts provide. Our assumptions are (a) that all major sociocultural contexts provide such messages either explicitly or implicitly, and that (b) the messages that individuals receive may be similar or complementary, or in contrast, they may present different, perhaps even conflicting, ideas about how to be a self.

We have chosen to focus on the implicit and explicit messages that a sociocultural environment transmits about how to be a "good" or "acceptable" or "moral" or "appropriate" self because we assume that people everywhere have a need to answer questions such as "Who am I?" and "Where do I belong?," and to impose some order and coherence on their experiences (Shweder & Sullivan, 1990). Answers to these questions are embedded in the general cultural frame. Individuals seek them wherever they are to be found, and they thus provide a reasonably direct link between the sociocultural environment and the constructed self.

Individuals develop or construct their selves and identities within a field of overlapping groups and collectivities. At birth and increasingly thereafter, people are cast into and come complete with membership and attachment to a diverse array of groups. Already at birth a whole set of social identities are there to be used in the identity formation process. One can be categorized as a White, middle class, Lutheran, Midwestern male or as an Hispanic, working class, Catholic, Southwestern female, and these categorizations carry meaning. And soon after birth, at least in Euro-American contexts, a set of individualizing, personal attributes—stubborn, smart, athletic, curious—are added to the repertoire. Social embeddedness thus refers to each of the layers or contexts within which one is anchored and through which one is perceived and learns to perceive (Condor, 1991; Gurin & Markus, 1988; Jackson, McCullough, & Gurin, 1987; Tajfel & Turner, 1985; Turner et al., 1987; Zavalloni, 1971).

Most obviously, differences in sociocultural contexts mean that the content of the self-concept will differ. A child growing up in Flint, Michigan after the 1973 oil embargo and the closing of the local auto manufacturing plants was presented with a different set of messages about how to be a self than a child growing up in Ann Arbor, Michigan in the mid-sixties. Similarly, children growing up middle class, Mormon, and in Salt Lake City, Utah are likely to view themselves and their possibilities in ways that are different from children growing up working class, African American, in Camden, New Jersey, and both sets of children will diverge markedly in their ideas about themselves from children growing up as

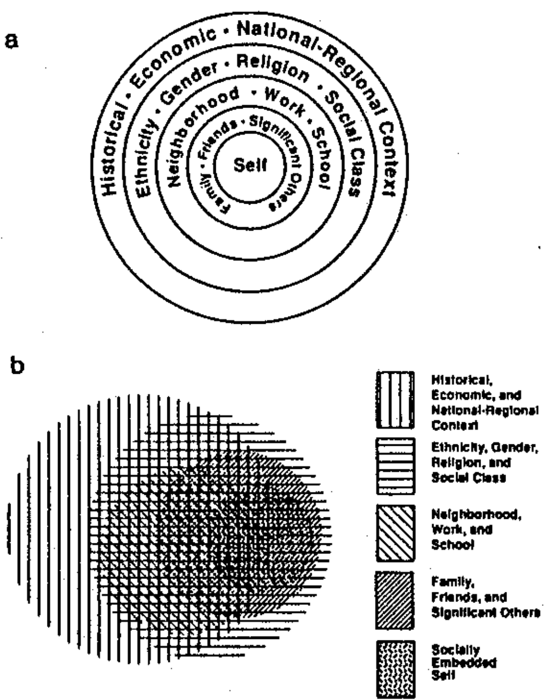

FIG. 7.2. The socially embedded self.

Fulani of Burkina Faso, Africa. Yet the impact of social groups on the self is not limited to differences in content of the self-concept. A connection to one or another of these social groups through ascription or achievement may influence the very processes of self and identity formation and the resulting structure of the self and identity (Hughes & Demo, 1989; Markus, Cross, & Wurf, 1990).

The social embeddedness of the individual can be conceptualized diagrammatically as shown in Fig. 7.2. The top of Fig. 7.2a presents an individual located within an interpersonal space and defined by his or her past and current contact with significant others such as family, friends, and coworkers. As shown, these particular interpersonal contacts and relationships themselves take place within the context of the sociocultural and economic conditions that prevail in the immediate environment of neighborhood and work place. Neighborhood and work place contexts are themselves embedded within the sociocultural units of class, ethnicity, gender, and religion, and are shaped by economic conditions, nationality, and historical context. These embedded contexts are nested, with the influence of each being mediated by the constraints placed on it by all the others. The main point is that these effects cannot be easily disentangled. One is not a

woman *and* a Catholic *and* an Hispanic *and* creative *and* sympathetic, but instead a sympathetic, creative, Hispanic, Catholic woman (or perhaps a Catholic, Hispanic, creative, sympathetic woman). The independent contribution of each sociocultural context to one's self or identity cannot be evaluated. Each attribute or identifying feature both provides meaning to, and recruits meaning from, all the others. The resulting self is some melding, collaging, or weaving together of one's various sociocultural influences (which metaphor is most appropriate here is important but at this point it is an empirical question). For example, being Asian American is experienced not as separate from being a woman or separate from being a 19-year-old, but from the perspective of a 19-year-old Asian American woman in 1992.

The bottom of Fig. 7.2b shows that the particular nesting of contexts and the relationships between these contexts and society at large are critical in understanding the self. In some cases, one's proximal, immediate context serves to translate, personalize, and reinforce the messages of the broader context within which they are embedded. In other cases, there will be tension among one's various sociocultural contexts and they will not be mutually and reciprocally reinforcing. For example, the messages provided by one's immediate family context about one's worth and value may be directly countered by the messages provided by peers in the neighborhood or by the larger society about one's position or value (Hurtado, Rodriguez, Gurin, & Beals, 1990; Ito, 1985; Steele, 1988). The self-definitional projects of those people whose various sociocultural messages cohere and provide a more or less unified view of how to be are likely to be quite different from the self-definitional projects of those who receive conflicting messages from their various sociocultural contexts.

Not all the messages that an individual receives about how to be a self will be taken in and incorporated into the self-concept. Detailing an individual's important sociocultural contexts is useful for understanding the distribution of messages of "how to be a self" one is likely to receive. Such an analysis is particularly useful for highlighting which types of self-schemas are *unlikely* to develop. For example, without a sociocultural context that creates and supports a view of one's self as competent or worthy or musical, or that encourages an appreciation of one's roles in maintaining harmony and smooth relationships among people, such self-schemas are unlikely to develop. Moreover, it is not enough that a particular message of "how to be" is communicated, it also needs to be reinforced and scaffolded. Thus, the nature of the relationship between the target of a given sociocultural message and its transmitter is probably also critical, as is the form of the message. Messages can be framed collectively, transmitted in the same way to all receivers, or individualized, tailored to the specific other receiving the message. Transmission may take place as part of an ongoing relationship with a particular other or the message may be conveyed by movies and television.

VARIATION IN CONTENT OF THE SELF

If we imagine that each major sociocultural context provides a message about how to be a self, both now and in the future, then there are many potential sources of self-schemas and possible selves. One's sociocultural context provides individuals with the very categories to use in thinking about one's self. Thus, being successful may be desirable for people in both Japan and the United States. In the United States, however, the focus in the pursuit of success is on the development of ability and skills. In Japan, and also among Asian-Americans, success is a result of effort and much greater attention is given to developing habits of persevering and enduring (Steinberg, Dornbusch, & Brown, 1992). The nature of the self-schemas that must be cultivated to foster individual success are quite different in the two cases.

The most powerful of all the sociocultural contexts may be the family (Kagitcibasi, 1989). It is a changing, but nevertheless persistent, influence on individuals' lives. It provides its own messages ("Us Andersons never quit") and it serves as the translator of most of the other sociocultural influences—gender, age, social class, and so on. Almost all everyday interchanges within the family convey some information about what it means to be a person. In the U.S., children are asked what they want for dinner and what they want to wear, and some parents knock on their child's door before entering. All of these behaviors communicate that the child is expected to have desires, preferences, and interests that are separate from, and not knowable, even by one's own parents (e.g., Shweder & Miller, 1991). Messages about which domains are important are also subtly conveyed to the individual (e.g., is the child sent out to play after school or sent to do homework, are siblings told to help one another with schoolwork or is a tutor hired).

Many of the conversations within families also carry powerful, self-definitional messages. Children hear, "only babies cry," "You have to learn to stand up for yourself," "Play by the rules," "If you don't look after yourself who will?" (Shweder, 1982). For example, children of 2- or 3-years-of-age, regardless of their particular sociocultural environment, are likely to get into fights with each other if they play together for any length of time, and it is here where the first lessons of the value of aggression, group harmony, responsibility, and how to be a valued member of the group begin. A well-known study by anthropologists Whiting and Edwards (1974) explored the child rearing practices of a group of Texas mothers, a group of Mormon mothers, and a group of Zuni mothers. Whiting and Edwards reported that Texan parents allowed some fighting and quarreling with playmates, and then separated and/or punished children if they continued to fight. They often reported that if children were quarreling they let the children "fight it out," "settle it themselves," or "get it out of their systems." Mormon parents appeared almost as tolerant of aggression, but they seemed to step in earlier and were more likely to use distractions. Zuni parents, in contrast

to the Texans and the Mormons, consider fighting to be more serious and think that children should learn to control their tempers at a very early age. One mother reported, "How would you like it if your grandfather and father started to fight? Would you like that? Then there would be trouble in the family. Nothing would work right." In this admonishment there is an explicit emphasis on the value of relationship and the value of interpersonal harmony. Among Texan and Mormon families, the message was quite different. A lenient attitude toward aggression combined with a strong pressure for self-reliance and individual achievement appears to create an unparalleled appreciation of agency, self-assertion, and standing up for one's self.

More recent studies comparing Japanese and American families find that most American parents continue to value standing up for one's self and not letting others push one around. In sharp contrast, Japanese parents do not view yielding personal autonomy as giving up the self (Markus & Kitayama, 1991a; White & LeVine, 1986). Rather the message is that the way to be a self is to work with, and maintain engagements with, others. According to Kumagai (1981), from this perspective, cooperation is not a denial of self but an act of affirmation of the self.

Focusing on another sociocultural context, Heath (1982) analyzed the various messages that different social class environments send about literacy and its role in life. Her study compared a White middle class community, a Black working class community, and a White working class community. She found that as early as 6-months-of-age, middle class infants learn to pay attention to books and the information that comes from books. Books and book-related activities are considered entertainment. And very importantly "any initiation of a literary event by a preschooler makes an interruption, an untruth, a diverting of attention from the matter at hand (whether it be an uneaten plate of food, a messy room, or an avoidance of going to bed) acceptable" (p. 53). In contrast, in the working class communities, literacy events are not so central to self-definition. There are fewer bedtime stories. Reading is what is done to find something out and it is less likely to be considered an interactive, pleasurable activity. In the place of reading, the focus is on talking. According to Heath, working class children are rewarded for being able to recount events they have witnessed in an interesting and compelling way.

Schools and organized religions also transmit messages about how to be a person, and what characteristics of the self are to be valued. Thus, incoming 6th graders at one Ann Arbor middle school are required to memorize the school philosophy ("We are people first, then students and teachers. Everyone is entitled to make responsible mistakes. Everyone has a right to a pleasant day. No one should feel threatened in school."). The philosophy makes some clear statements about personhood and the self, for example, that one is more than one's social roles, that personhood per se is valued, and that positive affect is to be expected.

Gender is yet another powerful sociocultural context that both provides its

own messages and serves as an aspect of every other sociocultural context as well. Men and women from their earliest days receive somewhat different messages about what it means to be a "good person." Women learn the value of relationship and of preserving connections between the self and other (Gilligan, 1982; Markus & Oyserman, 1989; Miller, 1986; Stewart & Lykes, 1985). Men are more likely to be encouraged to see themselves as autonomous, separate, or not connected to others. Supporting evidence for this idea is found in a recent study (Josephs, Markus, & Tafarodi, 1992) that suggests that self-esteem can be linked to different processes in men and women. For men, self-esteem is connected with an individuation process in which personal distinguishing achievements are emphasized. In contrast, women's self-esteem can be linked to a process in which connections and attachments to others are emphasized.

Even within North America, where everyone is encouraged to value autonomy and achievement, women are still encouraged to focus on relationships and are, in one way or another, required to be the relationship experts. The source of this divergence is a matter of considerable debate (Chodorow, 1978; Eagly, 1987; Miller, 1986), but women continue to be the ones who are more likely to define themselves in terms of their relationships with specific others—children, spouses, work colleagues, and friends.

Facilitating Self-Definition

Within a given sociocultural context, certain ways of conceptualizing the self are modeled, valued, and therefore, easier or more "natural" to construct and maintain than others. Compare the high school senior who says that after college, she wants to devote herself to community development efforts and expects to marry a doctor or lawyer and become a "professional volunteer" with the student who hopes to have a job in a clothing store, and expects that she will probably be like her mother, have children and be responsible for them, although now what she would like is to have fun and enjoy herself. The graduating college, marrying a doctor or lawyer, and becoming a professional volunteer possible selves of the first teen are likely to be products of a context in which going to college is normative, community service is valued, and personal contact with eligible males, whether in law and medical school or postgraduation, is plausible. The second teen's assumptions about the plausible, likely, and to-be-expected selves seem quite different. She too conceives of a future that entails work, family, and nurturance yet these are framed in ways that make sense in her life space, and given the way that these constructs can be operationalized within her environment.

Sociocultural contexts provide detailed visions of some selves, and not of others. A vision or instantiation of what is possible for the self provided in one context may be contradicted or overriden in another. Take, for example, the 5-year-old who has been kicking a ball in the back yard with her father and is told she can be a soccer player, then signs up for soccer lessons only to find that the coach and all of the other players are boys. Alternatively, the possible selves nurtured in one context may not be directly opposed, discouraged, or denied in another context, they may simply be irrelevant to the possibilities and opportunities available in these contexts. Thus, today in many professional settings, woman employees are not actively discouraged from viewing themselves as mothers and family members, but neither are such conceptions of the self actively modeled or fostered. And it is reasonable to argue that when a possible self is not scaffolded or modeled, it is decidedly more difficult to maintain.

Which Messages are Salient?

The question of which of the various messages a person receives will be seized and elaborated into chronically accessible self-schemas, and which instead will be part of the repertoire of self-conception to be brought on line or made focal when circumstances require it, but not otherwise, is a challenging question. For example, studies on gender identity reveal that although nearly everyone can be expected to have some conception of themselves in terms of their gender, only some women think a great deal about their gender and develop gender-schemas (Cross & Markus, in press). For these women gender will have a master status within the identity (Stryker, 1984) and they will be "tuned into" and sensitive to gender, and events will tend to be framed and interpreted according to their relevance to gender. Social experiences will have order, meaning, and structure by virtue of what they reveal about gender (Deaux & Major, 1987; Gurin & Markus, 1989).

Similarly, ethnicity has also been found to be an extremely important aspect of identity for some, but not for all, individuals. Bowman (1987) and Allen, Dawson, and Brown (1989) find, for example, that African-Americans who are older and less well-educated from the South and from rural regions are more likely to feel close to other Black people, and are presumably more likely to define themselves in terms of their ethnicity. Recent studies on ethnic identity in various parts of the world reveal that those groups that are in the minority with respect to language, skin color, and religion are those most likely to define themselves in these terms (Husain, 1992; Husain & Suri, 1992). When a characteristic is unusual relative to the population as a whole, or when a characteristic stands out, over time this characteristic is likely to become the basis of an enduring self-structure (Markus & Sentis, 1982). These findings are consistent with the work of the McGuires (McGuire, 1984; McGuire & McGuire, 1982), who contend that people are most likely to describe themselves spontaneously in terms of those features that make them distinctive in a given social environment.

In the McGuires' (McGuire, 1984; McGuire & McGuire, 1982) studies, the content of the self was shown to vary with the environment so that the short children in a class were the ones most likely to mention their height in their self-

description and the ones with red hair the most likely to mention hair-color. Thus, to the extent that some Blacks or Hispanics or women find themselves in settings where they are chronically distinctive as a consequence of their ethnicity or gender, it is likely that their ethnicity or gender will become salient. And indeed McGuire, McGuire, Child, and Fujioka (1978) find that integrated settings in which ethnicity is less distinct are associated with a decrease in the salience of ethnicity.

The McGuire (McGuire, 1984; McGuire & McGuire, 1982) studies have not, however, analyzed how the self-definitional process may vary depending on the value attached by the individual himself or herself and by others to the distinctive attribute. Thus, some findings suggest that those raised in racially concordant environments will be more likely to establish a positive racial identity (Broman, Jackson, & Neighbors, 1989). Others suggest that integration into the mainstream, as measured by interracial contact and adult socioeconomic attainment, is associated with less Black group attachment but more positive Black group identification (Demo & Hughes, 1990). Hall (in press) suggests that Black racial group identification is the result of cultural attachments as well as social-structural forces.

Forms of Self-Knowledge

Such findings raise the possibility that the sociocultural context influences not only the content of the self—what it is people come to believe about themselves—but the form this self-knowledge takes. Neisser (1988) makes a distinction among five types of self-knowledge—ecological (i.e., self as perceived with respect to the physical environment), interpersonal (i.e., a sense of self in human interchange), extended (i.e., sense of self based on personal memories and anticipations), private (i.e., an awareness of experience not shared with others), and conceptual (i.e., one's theory of self) self. Studies of the self have to this point highlighted particular aspects of the conceptual self. It is possible, however, that this emphasis on the conceptual and on generalized or abstracted self-knowledge is what Gergen (1990) has termed *logocentric*. It is certainly possible that the self is conceptualized in ways other than in abstracted trait attributes (e.g., I am competitive, I am shy, etc.) or roles. It is possible that in some cultures the self is more embodied and represented somatically or enactively.

Triandis, Leung, Villareal, and Clack (1985) have repeatedly found that respondents in Asian cultures are more likely to characterize themselves in terms of their roles and social categories than in attribute terms. Similarly, Akbar (1984), in discussing the African self, suggests that the self will be experienced and represented as connected with others. He cites the African adage "I am because we are, and because we are, therefore I am" (p. 407), implying that the content of

self-concept and the experience of self can be based in a sense of the will, needs, and desires of the group. Recently, Markus, Herzog, Holmberg, and Dielman (1992) find that White, urban, middle class males with some college education are the ones most likely to characterize themselves in terms of trait attributes. In contrast, women, Blacks, those with less formal education, and those from rural areas are decidedly more likely to characterize themselves in terms of their actions (e.g., I bowl on Thursday nights, I take care of my grandchildren). For some people, the self seems represented in terms of one's concrete actions—what one does.

Studies of respondents in some other non-Western cultures suggest that the self is conceived of and represented in a variety of ways, many of which are decidedly different from current conceptions. Jacobson-Widding (1990), for example, describes the lower Congo view of the self as a shadow, as elusive, and as based in emotion and intuition. From another cultural frame, as described by Kirkpatrick (1985), Marquesans' do not view the self as the seat of motivation, rather, various body parts are credited with a degree of autonomy, viewed as self-governing bodies within the person. It is the throat that thirsts, the genitals that lust. These body parts are viewed as singular in their motivation, driving behavior to satisfy their needs. The individual is not to feel shame at behaviors rooted in these bodily demands because they are not under the control of the self. For a Marquesan, motivation is not located *only* in the self.

VARIATIONS IN PROCESSES OF THE SELF

As noted in Fig. 7.1, our perspective assumes that the function of the self is to lend meaning and organization to one's experiences, to regulate affect, and to motivate action. The nature of one's sociocultural context and the messages about "how to be" should have a marked impact on how various self-processes (self-awareness, self-consciousness, self-monitoring, self-verification, etc.) unfold and take shape. Such a perspective affords a variety of questions. To take an example from recent empirical work, what happens to the self-evaluation processes of individuals who must contend with persistent, unwanted, and/or unsolicited feedback which focuses on their membership in various social categories or groups and ignores their individual characteristics, attributes, and actions? How might the need to consistently disavow, discount, or deny the feedback of some others influence the process of self-evaluation and self-definition? For the most part, current models of self-processes have assumed first that to the extent that individuals attend to their social environment they will receive fairly unambiguous feedback about themselves as individuals which can be integrated into the self-concept if desired. And second, these models have assumed that with some effort these individuals should be able to convey various conceptions of themselves to others with reasonable accuracy.

Yet for example, distinctiveness because of one's membership in a normatively valued group, and distinctiveness because of one's membership in a group devalued or stigmatized by some other groups are likely to engage quite different self-definitional processes. Defining one's self as native American may be easy because of this groups' distinctiveness in American society, but it is also fraught with conflict because by adolescence most native Americans are aware that their group is often perceived negatively by others in American society. St. Clair (1989) suggests that being a member of a less powerful group (her example is women) can sometimes be considered a handicap because it focuses attention away from the individual and onto assumed group characteristics that are not always positive. It is also possible, however, that in the process of discounting or disavowing a stigma or a negative evaluation of others, one's identity or self-concept may become more clear or sharply focused. Research that might answer such questions is just beginning to be carried out.

In a series of studies, Crocker and colleagues have explored the possible consequences of such negatively valenced group distinctiveness (Bylsma, Tomaka, Luhtanen, & Crocker, 1992; Crocker & Major, 1989; Crocker, Voelkl, Testa, & Major, 1991). Their findings suggest that members of stigmatized groups may seek to discredit negative feedback as due to prejudice, and compare the self only with similarly stigmatized individuals (Crocker & Major, 1989). Positive feedback is also suspect and may not have a positive effect because it may be based on one's stigmatized group membership as opposed to one's individual attributes (Crocker et al., 1991). An individual may ask herself, "Was my performance truly good?" or "Was the evaluator being polite and trying to avoid giving negative feedback?" or "Was my performance actually poor but still better than expected from someone from my group?" While negative feedback can be dismissed or defended against as due to prejudice, the attributional ambiguity surrounding positive feedback means that it cannot be easily incorporated into the self either. Further, once the self has been challenged or threatened in this way, it may be more difficult to mobilize the self as an "on line" organizer of experience (Bylsma et al., 1992).

Individuals embedded in contexts that provide conflicting, contradictory, or negative messages must struggle to find a balance between the negative selves thrust upon them and the positive senses of self they would like to create. This type of identity work is unnecessary for those who do not receive conflicting or negative messages. Pemberton (1992) has recently graphically described this identity work for Blacks and claims that the "necessity of concentrating on surviving in Black skin saps the energies; not only does it keep real political and social power in the hands of Whites, but it makes the self no more than a sociological fact, dancing marionette-style, to a degrading tune." She argues that confronting the meanings that others provide can be a full time task, leaving little room for self-constructed individuality.

Similarly, others contend that relative to young boys, young girls may have to devote considerable effort to self-definition and to maintaining a coherent view of self because as they mature they receive conflicting or negative messages about how to "be" (Gilligan, Lyons, & Hanmer, 1989). Further, they may receive more positive feedback for following rules, being cooperative, friendly, and obedient, than they receive for being assertive, creative, independent, or aggressive (Cross & Markus, in press). Even in terms of physical characteristics, a recent series of studies suggests that a woman is likely to be viewed as small, short, or petite, as compared with a man, whether in fact she really is or not (Manis, Biernat, & Nelson, 1991; Nelson, Biernat, & Manis, 1990). Apparently girls are often given feedback that focuses their attention on certain aspects of the self, and not on others. Yet, to focus on the self as cooperative, friendly, and physically small, is to miss opportunities to self-define in other domains valued in our achievement-oriented society and may also be the source of negative self-definitions (what if one is not physically small, not particularly socially adept, and enjoys competition?).

Showers (1992) contends that if negative feedback is relevant to important life domains, then individuals may be forced to maintain negative information within the self. Girls may receive messages about how to be an "appropriate" woman and also messages about how to be a "good" or "appropriate" person. If satisfying one set of imperatives means failing to satisfy the other, women may necessarily carry more negative self-knowledge in their self-concepts. Further, conflicting messages about "how to be" may well handicap performance. There is some recent evidence, for example, that when perceived stereotypically, individuals may perform stereotypically. Consider the group-level proposition: "women perform worse than men in math." In a series of studies aimed at exploring women's vulnerability to this vision of their own possibilities, Spencer and Steele (1992) found that women will perform worse than men in a math task unless this expectation is explicitly lifted and the women are told that males and females do not score differently on the math test in question. When this occurs women's scores are not significantly different from men's scores. Spencer and Steele term this responsiveness "stereotype vulnerability," suggesting that women behave in terms of the stereotype, are vulnerable to it, and seem to have included it in their definitions of self.

Women who are given the message that success, achievement, and competence are important criteria on which to build a positive sense of self-worth, and are also given the message that nurturance, sharing, and caring are primary components of their role as women (Gurin & Markus, 1989), must work at personalizing, organizing, and integrating these messages. They must develop a means to mediate these contradictions in the process of regulating affect and motivation (e.g., should one feel good or poorly at being told that one is "compe-

tent," perhaps this means that one is not caring?). Without a clear strategy for weighting or compartmentalizing various messages, women may be left chronically unsure or uncertain about the meaning of the feedback they receive, making integration of experience, regulation of affect, and setting a clear motivational agenda difficult, at least relative to those who receive less ambiguous feedback. As noted earlier, however, the exact consequences of such identity work are unclear and await empirical exploration. Such self-definitional effort could be viewed as challenging, pushing the individual to develop capacities such as self-awareness and empathy that would be less likely to develop without such challenge.

An extreme example of these difficulties is highlighted in the situation of Black athletes who, having achieved athletic success at great effort, are told that these achievements are due to a Black "athleticism" trait (Steele, 1990). Such a conceptualization can rob the athlete of a highly valued sense of personal control over his or her success. In American culture, people are socialized to believe that true athletic ability involves dedication, competitiveness, perseverance, and skill. To reduce success to innate characteristics in this case (e.g., "I was just born that way") reduces the internality of the attribution. If athletic success is not a result of will, if it is not *me* who willed this success, then the success cannot be owned, it cannot be self-defining.

For people in certain sociocultural contexts, successful performance cannot be automatically internalized and assumed to reflect an individual attribute of ability. Success in a particular domain may not be internalized as self-defining if one's group has been previously defined as unsuccessful in this domain (Eccles & Jacobs, 1986; Eccles, Wigfield, Flanagan, & Miller 1989; Wigfield, Eccles, MacIver, & Reuman, 1991). Thus, girls have been found to describe their academic success, particularly math success, as due to hard work (e.g., "I just studied extra hard") rather than to a personal characteristic (e.g., "I am good at math"). Teachers, parents, and the students themselves are susceptible, often quite unknowingly, to the strong and coherent American stereotype of women's inferiority in math and science. Thus a good grade in math does not have the same diagnostic value for boys and girls, and it will not contribute to their view of self in the same way. In this individualistic American culture it is assumed that each individual has certain traits, skills, and characteristics which can be maximized by hard work. Yet, lacking the trait, skill, or characteristic, "mere" hard work is not believed to be sufficient. Lacking a conceptualization of the self as "owning" the desired trait, that is, lacking a schema for the self as mathematically adept, girls may find it more difficult to persevere in math tasks and thus may, in fact, put less effort into math success. The schema of the self as *trying*, or as *lucky* cannot substitute for the culturally determined "skilled" schema.

Despite various obstacles, individuals must find ways to construct a positive sense of self (Rosenberg, 1989). One powerful strategy seems to involve a refusal to attend to negative self-relevant information or an unwillingness to construct it as relevant. Steele and his colleagues (Spencer & Steele, 1992; Steele, 1990) have labeled the process "dis-identification" and they have documented its occurrence in Black students from elementary school through college. Black students, particularly male students, very often refuse to identify with school; they do not incorporate school and learning as self-defining domains, and in this way they avoid incorporating any and all feedback from the school. School is framed as an institutionally racist system in which Blacks are bound to fail because they are devalued from the start. Dis-identification then becomes an attractive alternative. Steele (1992), in fact, argues that one's view of self is constructed so that achievement is not a basis of self-evaluation. Students who identify with the school experience put themselves in a perilous situation. School failure suggests that one lacks ability and they also confirm stereotypes of the inferiority of one's group.

Evidence that such dis-identification occurs can be found in studies conducted by Hare (1980, 1984, 1988) and by Hughes and Demo (1989). Hare's studies suggest that while self-esteem for Whites, especially middle class Whites, is based on self-definition in domains of family, peers, and achievement, for Blacks and poor Whites, achievement in school is not related to self-esteem. Instead, especially for Black youth, self-esteem is heavily based on peer-based self-characterizations. Hughes and Demo review literature on Black self-esteem and self-efficacy, suggesting that, as documented in Hare's research, for Blacks self-esteem is typically not related to school success. They found no Black-White differences on self-esteem, whether the population studied is youth or adult, but that Blacks exhibit lower efficacy scores. Further, while efficacy and esteem are positively related for Whites, they appear to be independent for Blacks. The authors conclude that although it seems to be possible to build a sense of esteem based on interpersonal relationships and not on achievements in work and school, development of self-efficacy is strongly related to occupational prestige, and academic achievement. Institutional inequality and racial devaluation have worked to make success in these domains unlikely.

Self-efficacy is usually defined as one's sense of competence, or more generally, positive affect associated with making things happen, the pleasure of knowing that one is the cause of some effects (Bandura, 1977; Gecas, 1989). Self-efficacy has also been related to a sense of control, self-determination, and autonomy (Gecas, 1989). Although efficacy is not necessarily related to the domains of school and work, these are a dominant feature of the daily life of youth and adults in the United States. Within the American Individualistic society, rooted in Protestant work ethic, individuals are valued and value themselves to the extent that they achieve success, material, academic, professional (e.g., Giorgi & Marsh, 1990; Markus & Kitayama, 1991a; Tropman, 1992).

In current American society, valued personal attributes include independence, achievement, success, hard work, and creativity. But individuals can lay claim to

these attributes or identities only if they can behave accordingly and thereby validate the identity. In most cases this means employment outside the home, an occupation, a career (and preferably achievement within them), at the very least, a job. A substantial literature on White–Black employment differences documents that Blacks are overrepresented in low status, unstable, and low wage jobs, are more likely to be unemployed, and may be overrepresented in the population of individuals who have given up hope of finding employment and are not counted in official employment statistics (Allen & Farley, 1985; Bowman, 1991a, 1991b). As a consequence, it may be difficult to create an identity that includes independence, success, and achievement as they are normatively defined (Bowman, 1990). What these identities will be built of remains an open empirical question. It is of course possible to define efficacy in other ways, but doing so requires going against the mainstream created by the institutions and practices of American culture. The claim is not that those individuals who cannot find work will reveal unstable or diffuse identities (although this is possible), but only that the identity must, of necessity, assume a different form and that the work of self-definition may be decidedly more fraught with tension, conflict, and resistance than James (1890/1927) or even Erikson (1968) envisioned.

In this section we have focused only on variation and processes of the self as a consequence of receiving negative or conflicting messages about how to be a self. Certainly, however, the processes of the self could also vary depending on the content of one's important self-schemas, in the way that self-knowledge is represented, and on the larger meaning that one's sociocultural context gives to being or having a self.

VARIATION IN THE MEANING OF SELF

To this point we have been examining variation in the content and processes of the self. The implicit assumption has been that there is a universal need or desire to define one's self and to differentiate one's self from others. This self-definitional process involves weaving together self-schemas based on personal attributes with those rooted in social identities to create a separate, bounded, unique self. According to most self theorists, development involves a life-long progressive differentiation of self-knowledge (e.g., Erikson, 1968). It is possible, however, that there can be divergence in what ontology or theory of being is characteristic of a given sociocultural context. Thus, the very meaning of being or existence (i.e., the meaning of self) can assume different forms in different contexts, and it is likely that this variation will have powerful consequences for the resulting self-system. For the most part, such differences have not been analyzed but they are potentially significant for understanding the workings of the self.

Thus for example, Anderson (1991) maps out similarities and differences across the three major ethnic group cultures in Singapore (Chinese, Indian, and Malay) in terms of their dominant temporal focus (past, present, future), their understanding of the meaning of human activity (doing, being, becoming), the nature of intergroup relations (autonomy, interdependence, hierarchy), the person–nature relationship (mastery, subjugation, harmony), and the basic nature of human beings (good, neutral, evil). These differences, in what is highlighted by a given cultural group, should determine what kind of self-system is likely to develop, and will constrain and afford its functioning, although such consequences have not been drawn out.

Anderson (1991) does suggest that while all three ethnic groups view the family group as the basic unit for defining the individual, Malay culture views family groups as interdependent, Indian culture assumes an intergroup hierarchy, and Chinese culture assumes interfamily autonomy. These differences are likely to lead to different foci of attention in defining the self. In related work within an American cultural context, a number of authors (e.g., Jackson, McCullough, Gurin, & Broman, 1991; Martin & Martin, 1985; Taylor, Chatters, Tucker, & Lewis, 1990) have suggested that Americans of African descent have traditionally viewed themselves as importantly defined by their family, kin, and ethnic origins, and that self-definition is often linked with the provision of help to others within their community.

Recently, Lebra (1992) has sketched a series of ontological differences between North America and Japan, or more broadly between the East and the West. She argues that what it means to be differs quite dramatically within these two regions. Her contention is that much of the East values what she labels the "Shinto-Buddhist submerged self," while much of the West values a "Cartesian, split self." The particular ontological space she describes is defined by two axes—the horizontal anchored by Culture and Nature, and the vertical anchored by Being and Nothingness. Within this space, Lebra (1992) locates two contrasting models of the self. The North American and European self is located in the quadrant defined by Culture and Being. The goal of all existence from this ontological perspective is *self-objectification*—a highlighting of the division between the experiencer and what is experienced. Becoming autonomous and separate and distinct from others is valued and emphasized, as are words, the head, and processes like ideation and abstraction. The emphasis is on knowing and knowledge and thus on self-knowledge and self-knowing as the goal of existence.

This Cartesian model of the nature of being and the self overlaps, but is importantly different from that model located in the quadrant defined by Nature and Nothingness. The goal of all existence from this latter perspective is not self-objectification but instead *freedom from self*—a downplaying of the division between the experiencer and the object of experience. It is not separation from others and becoming distinct that are to be valued but instead connection with

others and the surrounding context that are emphasized. Instead of an emphasis on the head there is an emphasis on the body, and a highlighting of feelings and immediacy. Lebra's (1992) analysis is elaborate and detailed and reveals, for example, how a concern with permanence and causation will be important features of a meaning system rooted in self-objectification, whereas a concern with impermanence and co-occurrence will be highlighted in a system rooted in gaining freedom from the constraints or boundaries of an individual self.

Lebra (1992) analyzes only two ontological systems; there are obviously some number of other systems as well, and a variety of other distinctions that could be made. But the point, for our purposes here, is that virtually all of our knowledge about the self and its functioning, and for that matter, all of psychological knowledge is rooted in just one ontological system, which has a particular view of existence and of the meaning of being a self. And if the self is an interpretive, integrative, or orienting framework for individual behavior, as many models of self assume, whether you have a self based in self-objectification, or alternatively, a self rooted in freedom from self should make an important difference for how the self is structured and how it functions in the mediation and the regulation of behavior. The argument is that these systems then are not just metaphysical byproducts. Instead they comprise the framework for individual lived experience. They are different but equally viable and each one appears as right, obvious, or natural to its adherents (Shweder, 1991).

The Cartesian ontology gives rise to the Western notion of the self as an entity containing significant dispositional attributes which is detached from the social context. This view has been called the Western, separate, individualist, or independent view of self (Markus & Kitayama, 1991a; Oyserman, 1992; Triandis, Bontempo, & Villareal, 1988). It is characteristic of North American and European, but particularly White, urban, middle class, secularized, contemporary people. The Shinto-Buddhist ontology is associated with a very different model of the self—one that is characteristic of China, Japan, Korea, the Philippines, South America, and Africa. It is typically a collectivist or interdependent view of the self. The self is viewed as interdependent with the surrounding social context, and it is the other or the self or the self-in-relation-to-other that is focal in individual experience. According to this view, people are seen as connected with others, not as separate. The individual is viewed not as an autonomous whole but as a fraction that becomes whole when in interaction with others. The cultural goal is to fit-in with others, to fulfill and create obligation, and, in general, to become part of various interpersonal relationships—to submerge the individual self and to regulate wants and needs in accordance with the wants and needs of others.

The differences these two contrasting views of the self and the nature of being make for behavior have been systematically analyzed in a number of recent papers. Markus and Kitayama (1991a) have detailed how self-relevant cognition, emotion, and motivation are markedly divergent depending on the view of self that anchors them. For example, Japanese, Korean, and Thai respondents tend to view others as better, smarter, more sociable, and more in control than the self, while the reverse tends to be true for United States respondents. In the United States, respondents tend to view the self as better than others in a variety of positively valenced domains. The tendency to believe that the self is distinctive or unique, termed a false uniqueness bias, has been documented in a variety of studies in which U.S. respondents are asked to document how much of a positive attribute they have relative to others (Markus & Kitayama, 1991b; see, however, Suls, Marco, & Tobin, 1991; Suls & Wan, 1987; Suls, Wan, Barlow, & Heimberg, 1990; Suls, Wan, & Sanders, 1988 for a more detailed discussion of false uniqueness bias). The typical Japanese, Korean or Thai response has been termed a self-harmonizing or self-efficacy bias in which there is a tendency to be other-serving rather than self-serving and to view the other as better, smarter, more sociable, or more in control than the self (Markus & Kitayama, 1991a). This bias is in keeping with trying to submerge the self or to find freedom from the self, just as believing one's self to be better than one's peers is in keeping with the goal of self-objectification.

Similarly, Kitayama, Markus, Kurokawa, and Negishi (1992) find that the range and intensity of emotional experience is tied to one's mediating view of self. So, for example, anger is a commonly expressed emotion in the West. Typically it is a consequence of the sense that one's rights have been abridged or one's goals have been blocked or frustrated. In an independent view of self, one's goals and rights are important defining elements, so frustration or infringement of these goals and rights must be taken seriously and will motivate action. In contrast, for those with interdependent selves, it is not internal attributes like rights and goals that are quintessentially self-defining, but instead relations with others. So feeling bad as a consequence of having one's own goals blocked or frustrated may be less likely to be internally elaborated and less likely to be expressed. Instead, emotions that are directly based in one's relations with others such as shame, friendliness, or close feelings will be those that are experienced the most frequently and given the most internal elaboration.

A review of the literature suggests that these divergent views of personhood also have consequences for interpersonal and group behavior (Oyserman, in press). Individualism and the idea of an autonomous self focuses attention on attainment of personal goals and is characterized by interactions with many others in a variety of nonpermanent or fluid ingroups (Georgas, 1989; Kagitcibasi, 1987; Triandis, 1987). Within this view, the self is viewed as the basic unit of survival, the development and maintenance of a separate personal identity is extolled, and the importance of striving for self-actualization is highlighted (Hui & Villareal, 1989; Markus & Kitayama, 1991a). Differences between the group and the individual are clearly delineated, individuals are supposed to discover and attain their own "true" selves by reflecting on and attending to themselves (Hsu, 1983). To an individualist, relationships are achieved, not

ascribed, they often function to facilitate attainment of self-defining goals (Hsu, 1983; Markus & Kitayama, 1991a). Relationships are maintained to the extent that they continue to be useful (Hsu, 1983; Waterman, 1984).

On the other hand, collectivism and interdependence as a world view focuses attention on maintenance of social norms and performance of social duties as defined by the ingroup and is characterized by interactions with relatively few others in long term and stable relationships (e.g., Sinha & Verma, 1987; Triandis, 1990a; 1990b). The group is viewed as the basic unit of survival (Hui & Villareal, 1989). The development and maintenance of a set of common beliefs, attitudes, and practices is extolled, and the importance of cooperation with ingroup members is highlighted (Georgas, 1989; Hui & Triandis, 1986; Markus & Kitayama, 1991a). Attempts to distinguish between the personal and the communal are likely to appear false and be suspect (Triandis, 1990a, 1990b), social responsiveness is valued, and individuals are expected to attain understanding of their place within the ingroup by reflecting on and attending to the needs of the group (Cousins, 1989, Markus & Kitayama, 1991a). Relationships are ascribed as a function of ingroup membership; they are intense, enduring, and not described in utilitarian terms (Miller, Bersoff, & Harwood, 1990; Triandis, 1987).

An individualistic view of the self suggests that each individual is to be judged by the degree to which he or she has achieved personal success. Individuals are said to be in competition with one another for scarce resources, such that conflict and competition are primarily conceived of on an interpersonal basis (Fiske, 1990). Coalitions between and among individuals are established for the purpose of maximizing personal gain, and these coalitions change as circumstances change with each individual seeking relationships with those most able to be of use at any particular point in time (Hsu, 1983). Relationships can be established with anyone who can aide the self in the process of self-actualization, individualists are adept at creating ad hoc groups (Triandis et al., 1988).

A collectivist view of the self suggests that each individual is to be judged as centrally defined by his/her in- or outgroup membership. Collectivists are socialized to interact in a friendly way with ingroup not outgroup members, conflict is conceived of as an intergroup phenomena (Triandis, 1990a, 1990b), and relatively high levels of such conflict are perceived (Oyserman, in press). Outgroup members are treated with suspicion or even hostility, and ingroup members are to take advantage of outgroup members when it is possible (Triandis, 1987, 1988). Since cooperation occurs primarily with ingroup members, peaceful coexistence is heavily dependent on perception of the other as a member of an ingroup. This ingroup may be on a higher order of abstraction than is relevant for every day interchange and may be called upon only when necessary to ensure cooperation and peaceful coexistence (Triandis, 1987). However, ingroups cannot be created at will, for collectivists only certain groups are meaningful and culturally prescribed norms dictate which attributes are necessary for meaningful group formation (Hsu, 1983).

Although the literature has often presented these world views as monolithically available within a particular cultural milieu, a number of authors have argued that various world views are available within a given society and that individuals will internalize various levels of each (Oyserman, in press; Schwartz, 1990; Triandis et al., 1985). A recent study exploring levels of individualism and collectivism among Arabs and Jews in Israel found that collectivists were more likely to view social identities as chronically available, and were less likely to view such "individualistic" characteristics as flexibility, independence, and autonomy as important to the way that they viewed themselves, and were more likely to endorse "collectivist" characteristics such as self-sacrificing as both self-defining and important (Oyserman, in press). Thus when taking a broad, cultural perspective, it is clear that the worlds being construed are importantly different, and that these differences will be related to differences in the way that the self is constructed and the purposes it serves.

Very few studies exploring differences in the nature of the self-concept as a function of divergent theories of being have yet to be carried out. As suggested earlier, there are a number of studies implying that self-knowledge may assume somewhat different forms in different self-systems so that self-knowledge may be role-based or action-based rather than characterized in trait attribute terms. But a careful analysis of how the content or process of self might differ with the underlying ontology is still to be accomplished. In a recent study, Kitayama and Markus (1992) have noted that American parents emphasize the ways in which their children are positively distinctive or unique, while Japanese parents tend to focus on the circumstances or situations where their children aren't fitting-in and how to correct it. They reasoned that given this differential social feedback Japanese and American students might well evidence different types of self-evaluative schema. American students might become very tuned into or sensitive to positive, self-relevant information, and Japanese students might become much more tuned into negative, self-relevant information.

In a recent study, Cross et al. (1992) examined cultural variation in Tesser's (1988) self-evaluation maintenance model. Tesser has shown with American respondents that people feel good when a close other performs well in a non self-relevant domain, but feels threatened when a close other performs well in a self-relevant domain. Cross et al. reasoned that for those individuals who include others as part of the self, or have an interdependent self in which relations with others are the self-defining unit, self-evaluation maintenance may assume a different form. They found that in contrast to Americans, Chinese students in Taiwan, particularly males, are not threatened when a close other performs well.

These preliminary explorations of divergent ontologies, or theories of being, raise compelling new questions about which aspects of self-definition and identity maintenance are universal and relatively invariant and which are a product of particular sociocultural configurations. An initial reading suggests that the "Who am I" question and the goal of constructing a sense of one's place in the social