Broadening the Study of the Self: Integrating the Study of Personal Identity and Cultural Identity

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Abstract
This article reviews what is known and what remains to be studied, regarding the association between personal identity and cultural identity. Although these two conceptions of identity have inspired separate literatures and have developed independently of one another, globalization and mass immigration have increased the need to study these two conceptions of identity together. The article puts forth recommendations for integrating the literatures on personal identity and cultural identity. These recommendations include using multidimensional constructs to represent both personal identity and cultural identity, refining the measurement of personal identity and of cultural identity, and of studying these conceptions of identity across various ethnic, cultural, and national groups.

Identity is a critical aspect of psychosocial functioning. Identity encompasses the ways in which people view themselves, and it predicts a number of important psychosocial and relational outcomes (Côté & Levine, 2002). The study of identity has been pursued from a number of perspectives (Côté, 2006a; Hitlin, 2003; Sneed, Schwartz, & Cross, 2006). Different components of identity have their roots in different theories and sources, each of which has inspired a separate line of literature.

A prime example of this separateness, which will be the focus of this article, is the division between personal identity and cultural identity. Much of the individual-focused, psychological personal identity literature has its roots in the seminal work of Erikson (1950), who introduced the concept of psychosocial identity in his groundbreaking book, Childhood and Society.1 For Erikson, personal identity represents one’s set of goals, values, and beliefs. What is most important, for Erikson, is the extent to which this set of goals, values, and beliefs are internally consistent and, taken together, form a coherent sense of self (van Hoof & Raaijmakers, 2002). Such coherence may be especially important in Western cultural contexts, where one is expected to be ‘the same person’ at work, at home, and with
friends (Cross, Gore, & Morris, 2003; Suh, 2002). Indeed, the development of a coherent sense of personal identity has been found to predict a number of positive outcomes in adulthood, including creative potential (Helson & Pals, 2000) and generativity (Helson & Srivastava, 2001).

A number of constructs have been introduced under the rubric of personal identity, including identity exploration and commitment (Marcia, 1966), identity consistency (Dunkel, 2005), and identity capital (i.e., accrual of identity-related skills, orientations, and self-knowledge that can be used to negotiate for social resources; Côté, 1996). Consistent with Erikson, all of these constructs focus on the search for, and consolidation of, a self-definition that can be used to support self-directed negotiations and exchanges with society (Schwartz, 2001). As a result, we define personal identity in terms of an individual’s goals, values, and beliefs in areas such as political preference, religious ideology, occupational choice, family and friend relationship styles, and gender role ideologies (see Waterman, 1999, for an extended discussion).

At the same time, an entirely separate literature has developed around cultural identity and self-definition. Cultural identity focuses largely on (i) cultural values and practices, (ii) the ways in which one regards the ethnic or cultural groups to which one belongs, and (iii) relative prioritization of the individual and of the group. We (Schwartz, Zamboanga, Rodriguez, & Wang, 2007) have argued that a number of constructs can be included under the rubric of cultural identity. These include acculturation orientations (Berry, 1997), ethnic identity (Phinney, 2003), individualism and collectivism (Triandis, 1995), independence and interdependence (Markus & Kitayama, 1991), familism (Sabogal, Marin, Otero-Sabogal, Marin, & Perez-Stable, 1987), filial piety (Yeh & Bedford, 2003), and communalism (Boykin, Jagers, Ellison, & Albury, 1997). All of these constructs have been utilized across ethnic and cultural groups (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006; Kao & Travis, 2005; Oyserman, Coon, & Kemmelmeier, 2002). They focus on ways in which individuals regard and interface with others, as well as with the groups to which they perceives themselves as belonging.²

From an Eriksonian standpoint, personal identity focuses on the set of goals, values, and beliefs that an individual has developed and/or internalized (Schwartz, 2001). Personal identity therefore represents the answer to the question ‘Who am I?’ Cultural identity represents values internalized from cultural groups to which the person belongs (Jensen, 2003) and therefore represents an answer to the question ‘who am I as a member of my group, and in relation to other groups?’ It is important to note, however, that both personal identity and cultural identity highlight the importance of values (cf. Hitlin, 2003). Both the cultural values internalized from groups and the personal values that guide one’s life choices are part of the normological network of self – and, as such, they must be related in some way (cf. Roberts & Dohanue, 1994). Some authors (e.g., Reid & Deaux,
1996) have proposed that cultural identity represents a component of the larger construct of personal identity. Indeed, Schwartz (2001) has suggested that ethnicity and culture should be conceptualized as a domain of personal identity development—both for majority and minority group members.

The term ‘cultural identity’ has been used in a variety of ways by a number of authors. The definition that we use follows from Dien (2000) and Schwartz, Montgomery, and Briones (2006b). Collectively, these authors have argued that cultural identity is a special case of social identity, where social identity is defined in accordance with social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner (1986)). Within this theory, social identity is defined as representing the set of values internalized from the groups to which one belongs, as well as the affective valence assigned to membership in the group. Whereas social identity might refer to any group to which the person belongs (e.g., religion, club), cultural identity specifically refers to cultural groups—and in the case of immigrants, it refers to the heritage and receiving societies (Segall, 1986). The influences of heritage and receiving cultural contexts and communities appear to be salient both for first- and second-generation immigrants and for later generation immigrants (Ponterotto et al., 2001). The emphasis on multiculturalism in many contemporary Western societies, along with the heavy flow of immigrants, may prompt later generation immigrants to consider their cultural heritage. This may be especially true in ‘nations of immigrants’ such as the United States, Canada, and Australia (Côté, 2006b).

Cultural identity is, by definition, both an aspect of self and a referent for a group to which one belongs (Dien, 2000). Cultural identity may be seen as midway between personal identity (which refers almost exclusively to the self) and collective identity (which refers largely to groups in which one is a member; Ashmore, Deaux, & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004). Indeed, cultural identity is a multilevel construct, consisting of both group-level and individual-level components (Matsumoto, 2003). There are vast differences between the conclusions that can be drawn about cultural identity at the between-group level versus at the between-individual level (Watkins, Mortazavi, & Trofimova, 2000). For example, there may be much more variability in cultural indices between individual people than between groups or countries (Coon & Kemmelmeier, 2001; Matsumoto, 2006). In this article, we refer to cultural identity only in terms of the individual person’s cultural orientations.

Extant theory and research suggests that cultural orientations, values, and attachments may be part of (or at least relate to) the person’s overall sense of self (Dien, 2000). We define cultural identity here in terms of (i) attachment to one’s heritage–culture group (e.g., country, cultural group, religious group) and to the larger society in which one resides (Phinney, 1990); (ii) engagement in practices reflecting one’s heritage culture, the larger society in which one resides, or both (Stephenson, 2000; Szapocznik, Kurtines, & Fernandez, 1980); and (iii) value orientations referring to how the
individual and the group should be prioritized (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis & Suh, 2002). Since the 1960s, the majority of immigrant-sending countries have been those characterized as largely collectivist (mostly located in Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia, and Africa; Triandis, 1989), whereas the majority of these immigrants have been settling in largely individualist areas of the world such as the United States, Canada, Western Europe, and Australia (Berry et al., 2006; van de Vijver & Phalet, 2004). As a result, collectivism, interdependence, and related cultural orientations (e.g., familism, filial piety, and communalism) would be expected to cluster with heritage-culture orientation and attachment, whereas individualism and independence would be expected to cluster with receiving-culture orientation and attachment. Indeed, in an ethnically diverse sample of university students, Schwartz et al. (2007) found this to be the case.

Personal identity and social identity work in concert with one another (Hitlin, 2003; Schwartz et al., 2006b). Some aspects of personal identity are assigned or internalized through social roles and group memberships (Hitlin, 2003), whereas others are developed through purposeful consideration and self-directed exchanges with the social environment (Bosma & Kunnen, 2001; Côté & Levine, 2002). The groups to which one belongs – by choice or ascription – direct and constrain the personal identity alternatives available to the person (Phillips & Pittman, 2003; Yoder, 2000). At the same time, the set of goals, values, and beliefs that the person adopts shape the ways in which she or he negotiates with the social environment and the opportunities that she or he chooses to pursue (Côté, 1996, 2000).

Principles underlying the interface between personal and social identity also apply to the interface between personal identity and cultural identity – except that the social processes in question refer to a specific set of groups and to a specific set of values and identifications. More precisely, membership in a specific cultural, ethnic, or racial group may constrain the array of available personal identity alternatives (Yoder, 2000); and personal identity resources are consolidated, in part, through values internalized from the cultural groups to which one belongs (Schwartz et al., 2006b). Although these principles have been posited theoretically, they await empirical attention. It is for this reason that we turn our attention to the need for integrative research focusing on both personal and cultural identity.

Personal Identity and Cultural Identity: Why Have They Not Been Studied Together?

Although personal identity and cultural identity both refer to aspects of self, values, and ways of (or resources for) relating to others and to the social environment, they have rarely been studied together. There are at least two potential reasons for this. First, Eriksonian-based research on
personal identity, both in North America and elsewhere, has been conducted largely with White, non-immigrant samples (Sneed et al., 2006). Conversely, research on constructs included under the heading of cultural identity is often focused on non-white samples (e.g., Constantine, Gainor, Ahluwalia, & Berkel, 2003; Trung Lam, 2005) or on cross-ethnic or cross-national comparisons (e.g., Ghorbani, Bing, Watson, Davison, & LeBreton, 2003; Markus, Uchida, Omorogie, Townsend, & Kitayama, 2006). Although cross-ethnic and cross-national studies are a hallmark of cultural identity research (e.g., Benet-Martínez & Karakitapoglu-Aygın, 2003; Matsumoto, Kodoh, & Takeuchi, 1996), cross-ethnic and cross-national studies have only begun to appear in the Eriksonian-based personal identity literature in the past few years (e.g., Schwartz, Côté, & Arnett, 2005). Until recently, neo-Eriksonian personal identity theories were thought to apply only to people from primarily individualist-oriented Western societies (Marcia, 2001). Thus, the spheres covered by cultural identity and personal identity were largely independent and non-overlapping.

Second, the theoretical origins of these two streams of identity theory and research are entirely different. Erikson (1950) posited personal identity as a normative developmental task of adolescence and the transition to adulthood (see also Arnett, 2000), and he believed that identity would link to important tasks of adulthood, such as creativity and generativity (cf. Helson & Pals, 2000; Roberts & Donahue, 1994). For people to make their way in the world – at least in unstructured Western societies that place a great deal of emphasis on personal choice – they must develop a sense of agency, or self-direction, that will guide their decisions (Côté, 2000). Agency is essential for the development of personal identity in Western societies because young people are largely responsible for developing their own life paths (Côté & Allahar, 1994). Thus, thriving within an unstructured, post-industrial Western society may be predicated on developing a coherent sense of personal identity – and this is likely the case regardless of one’s ethnicity.

At the same time, the relevance of cultural concerns has previously been thought to differ across ethnic groups. Individuals of European descent, who hold the majority of social, political, and economic power in most post-industrial Western societies, have generally been thought to be relatively unconcerned with cultural issues. In the United States, for example, American culture is considered largely synonymous with White American beliefs, values, and practices (DeVos & Banaji, 2005; Tsai, Mortensen, Wong, & Hess, 2002). As a result, many White Americans may not think of themselves as members of an ethnic group, and they therefore may not perceive a need to think about defining themselves culturally.

The viability of this assumption is decreasing, however, as the world becomes increasingly international. Mass immigration of primarily collectivist-oriented individuals to largely individualist-oriented societies may prompt majority-culture individuals to consider who they are at a cultural
level that they had not considered in the past. In the United States, for example, Americans of European descent are comprising a rapidly decreasing share of the population (Bernstein, 2007), and immigrants are settling not only in the urban areas that traditionally receive newcomers – but also in small towns and rural areas that were formerly quite monocultural or segregated. In Europe, as well, declining birth rates for Whites, along with a rising influx of immigrants from the Middle East, Africa, and Asia, are transforming the cultural landscape. In addition, globalization is increasing contact among culturally dissimilar individuals (Arnett, 2002). The Internet, electronic mail, and instant messaging allow people from opposite sides of the world to communicate in real time – almost as though they were across the street from one another. The net result of mass immigration and of globalization is the decreasing importance of national boundaries, such that ‘majority’ individuals, whose social, political, and economic power has been traditionally protected by the borders of their country, increasingly must recognize themselves as cultural beings.

As a consequence of these macro-level developments, the need has become apparent for personal identity and cultural identity to be studied together. With the rapid spread of Western culture around the world, agency and individualized decision making will be increasingly required of individuals from many different ethnic and cultural groups. As people define themselves personally, they will also have to define themselves culturally. As well, it is important to study the ways in which individuals from the receiving society may begin to acculturate to immigrants’ cultural values and practices – such as learning immigrant languages, eating immigrant foods, and the like (e.g., Berry, 2006; van Oudenhoven, Ward, & Masgoret, 2006).

**How Should Cultural Identity and Personal Identity be Related?**

With the increasing need to study conjointly personal identity and cultural identity, a primary question concerns the interrelationships between these dimensions of identity. Some groundwork has already been established for generating hypotheses in this line of research. Identity status (a dimension of personal identity) and ethnic identity (a dimension of cultural identity) have been studied together in a few instances (Branch, Tayal, & Triplett, 2000; Miville, Darlington, Whitlock, & Mulligan, 2005; Miville, Koonce, Darlington, & Whitlock, 2000; St. Louis & Liem, 2005). Although other aspects of personal identity and of cultural identity remain to be integrated, the findings for identity status and ethnic identity provide a springboard for generating hypotheses. Supporting the principle that identity is an integrative construct (Roberts & Donahue, 1994; Reid & Deaux, 1996), individuals with stronger or more developed personal identities may also have more strongly developed ethnic identities. Of particular note,
this pattern emerged for both White (Miville et al., 2005) and non-White (Miville et al., 2000) Americans, supporting our contention that cultural concerns are becoming important for ethnic majority as well as minority individuals.

**Umbrella Terms for Personal Identity and Cultural Identity**

As discussed throughout this article, we recommend the simultaneous study of personal identity and of cultural identity. In so doing, we caution researchers against doing fragmented, piecemeal work. To be most informative and useful, such research would need to utilize ‘umbrella terms’ that capture the complexity and multidimensionality of both personal identity and cultural identity. In the Eriksonian-based personal identity literature, the concept of *identity consolidation* (Schwartz, 2007) has been introduced to subsume a number of personal identity characteristics associated with functioning successfully within an unstructured, post-industrial society. These characteristics include having committed to a set of goals, values, and beliefs (Marcia, 1966); possessing an internally consistent, synthesized sense of self (Erikson, 1950, 1968); and being able to use this agentic and coherent sense of self to negotiate for social resources (Côté, 2000; Côté & Levine, 2002). Someone with a consolidated sense of personal identity is likely to have sorted through an array of possible goals, values, and beliefs and committed to a given set of these, to be able to present the same ‘self’ to the world regardless of the context or situation, and to possess the necessary agency to maintain these identity commitments and to draw on them in the service of bargaining for jobs, memberships, and other social resources. Identity consolidation is most adaptive in Western, largely individualistic, post-industrial cultural contexts where individual choice is prioritized over obligations to family and community. In non-Western cultural contexts where obligations to others take precedence over individual autonomy, the agentic self that promotes consistency across contexts may be less adaptive (Dwairy, 1999; Suh, 2002). Accordingly, personal identity may operate quite differently in collectivist, non-Western contexts (Cross et al., 2003) – thus, the present analysis should be restricted largely to the Western world and to places where Western cultural influences have taken hold.

Umbrella constructs have also begun to be developed within the study of cultural identity, including some of our own work. Schwartz et al. (2007), for example, studied the relationships among cultural behaviors, ethnic identity, individualism and collectivism, independence and interdependence, and familism in an ethnically diverse sample of college students in Miami. Two superordinate constructs emerged. The first cluster reflected American–culture identity and consisted of American cultural behaviors (e.g., speaking English and eating American food), individualism, and independence. The second cluster reflected heritage–culture identity.
and consisted of heritage cultural behaviors (e.g., speaking the family’s ancestral language and eating ethnic foods), collectivism, interdependence, ethnic identity, and familism. Schwartz et al. (2007) found that American and heritage cultural identities were positively intercorrelated. That is, there was a strong tendency toward biculturalism, where individuals could both hold individualistic attitudes reflecting the ‘American Dream’ and hold onto their or their families’ heritage values, beliefs, and behaviors.

Moving these ideas further, Schwartz, Zamboanga, and Jarvis (2007) found that, in a sample of Hispanic early adolescents in western Michigan, both heritage and American cultural behaviors were positively related to prosocial behavior (helping others). This finding is consistent with prior research suggesting that both individualistic (Chung & Gale, 2006) and collectivistic (Chen, Chan, Bond, & Stewart, 2006) values have been associated with increased well-being and decreased psychological distress. Schwartz, Zamboanga, Weisskirch, and Wang (forthcoming) found that the relationships of American and heritage culture identities to well-being and distress operated through personal identity consolidation. This supports the contention that identifying with the values and behaviors of a cultural group – the United States, a largely collectivist-oriented heritage culture, or both – helps the person to develop a consolidated sense of personal identity. In turn, as previously reported by Suh (2002), a consolidated sense of personal identity helps to promote positive well-being. Schwartz et al. (2007) found that these associations were evident for all three ethnic groups included in the sample – Whites, Blacks, and Hispanics. This pattern of results suggests that the interface of personal identity and cultural identity, both in and of itself and in relation to psychosocial functioning, may be consistent across majority and minority ethnic groups in the United States. The same may be true in other Western countries, although more research will be needed to explore this possibility.

Indeed, much more work remains to be done to more fully integrate personal and cultural identity and to bridge the literatures on these two dimensions. In the sections that follow, we outline issues that need to be addressed to facilitate such integration.

**Issues to Be Addressed in Integrating Personal and Cultural Identity**

**Definitional clarity**

One of the primary areas in need of attention is consistency of definitions across researchers and across studies. For example, the term ‘cultural identity’ may be used to refer to a number of different variables, including ethnic identity, individualism–collectivism, and independence–interdependence. Such an umbrella term should be used only with regard to latent or composite variables that draw on most (or all) of the variables that
theoretically should be included under the heading of cultural identity. A similar principle applies with regard to personal identity consolidation. Many identity status studies imply that they are measuring ‘identity’ or ‘ego identity’, although only one aspect of identity is included (Schwartz, 2005). Studies that use only one or two variables from each set should clearly identify the variables used and should not draw conclusions beyond these specific variables. Moreover, because the term ‘personal identity’ carries different meanings within different literatures (Côté, 2006a; Hitlin, 2003), it is important to be specific regarding precisely how the term is used.

Measurement

Ascertaining the relationship of cultural identity and personal identity to one another and to psychosocial functioning requires that cultural identity and personal identity be measured in ways that are valid, reliable, and consistent with theory. Cultural identity should be measured such that heritage-culture and receiving-culture identity are represented as separate scales – rather than as opposite ends of a single scale (Phinney & Flores, 2002; Ryder, Alden, & Paulhus, 2000). For example, one commonly reported finding in the literature on acculturation (immigrant adaptation to the receiving society) holds that orientation toward American cultural practices is associated with drug use (Ramirez et al., 2004), sexual risk taking (Ford & Norris, 1993), delinquency (Dinh, Roosa, Tein, & Lopez, 2002), and poor nutrition (Unger, Reynolds, Shakib, Spruijt-Metz, Sun, & Johnson, 2004). This finding, however, has been based on unidimensional scales where heritage-culture retention and American culture acquisition were cast as opposing ends of a single continuum. As a result, in these studies, it cannot be determined whether the increased risk for problematic outcomes was due to increased adoption of American cultural practices or to loss of heritage cultural practices. However, studies using separate scales for heritage and American cultural practices have suggested that identification with one’s ethnic group (Raffaelli, Zamboanga, & Carlo, 2005; Zamboanga, Raffaelli, & Horton, 2006) or relinquishment of heritage culture practices (Sullivan et al., 2007), and not acquisition of American cultural practices, carries the association with health risk behaviors. As a result, measuring cultural identity in ways inconsistent with theory may yield misleading conclusions.

Similarly, measurement issues in personal identity also need to be addressed. The identity status model, which has dominated the neo-Eriksonian personal identity literature (Kroger, 2000), provides important information on personal identity development. Identity status is based on the dimensions of exploration and commitment, where exploration refers to sorting through potential sets of goals, values, and beliefs (Grotevant, 1987) and commitment refers to adopting one or more of these sets (Bosma & Kunnen, 2001). These two dimensions are each bifurcated into
‘high’ and ‘low’ levels and are crossed to derive four identity statuses: achievement (commitments enacted following a period of exploration), moratorium (active identity exploration in the relative absence of commitments), foreclosure (enacting identity commitments without much prior exploration), and diffusion (lack of concern or direction regarding identity issues). The statuses have inspired more than 500 theoretical and empirical publications (Kroger, 2000) and have each been associated with a set of personality, psychosocial, and relational correlates (see Waterman, 1999, for a review).

However, when used alone, the identity status model may misrepresent the spirit of Erikson’s theory of identity (Côté & Levine, 1988; van Hoof, 1999). The achieved status maps fairly closely onto Erikson’s identity synthesis and the diffused status maps onto Erikson’s identity confusion (Côté & Schwartz, 2002). However, the placement of foreclosure and moratorium on Erikson’s dimension is unclear. Moratorium, which involves exploration of prospective alternatives and presumably represents a route to achievement, is more similar to diffusion than to achievement in terms of confusion and distress (Luyckx et al., in press). The placement of foreclosure on Erikson’s dimension is even less clear (Côté & Schwartz, 2002), given that foreclosure represents a commitment enacted without much prior exploration. It is therefore difficult to discern whether foreclosure represents identity coherence, identity confusion, or something else entirely.

In measuring personal identity, the spirit of Erikson’s (1950) writing should be followed – even if the goal is to go beyond his theoretical and clinical works and to apply personal identity to cultural and public health concerns (Schwartz, 2005) or to develop integrative views that transcend disciplinary boundaries (Hitlin, 2003). As mentioned above, personal identity consolidation refers to a coherent, synthesized, and agentic sense of self, and it subsumes adaptive identity indices drawn from Eriksonian, identity status, and identity capital perspectives. Assessing identity consolidation, then, requires items or subscales derived from each of these approaches (Schwartz, 2007). Eriksonian measures generally assess a continuum between identity synthesis and identity confusion (e.g., Rosenthal, Gurney, & Moore, 1981); identity status measures assess either (i) exploration and commitment (Balistreri, Busch-Rossnagel, & Geisinger, 1995) or (ii) each of the four statuses separately (Bennion & Adams, 1986); and identity capital measures assess the extent to which one has reached adulthood and has found a validating community (Côté, 1997).

To facilitate measurement of personal identity consolidation, researchers should assess those content areas that are most relevant to the target population (Marcia, 2001). For most American and European adolescents and emerging adults, for example, future life plans may represent an especially salient domain in which identity work is directly related to subsequent quality of life (Nurmi, 1991). For highly religious individuals,
on the other hand, religious affiliation may represent a domain in which personal identity should be assessed. Many identity status measures, however, utilize the same set of content areas for all respondents — which assumes that each domain is equally relevant to the population being studied. Collapsing across domains that are more versus less important to respondents is one reason why internal consistency estimates for identity status measures are generally low (e.g., Schwartz, Adamson, Ferrer-Wreder, Dillon, & Berman, 2006a). For American and European college students, domains such as future life plans and intimate relationships may be particularly salient, and personal identity in these areas may relate most strongly to cultural identity. For young people who are active in religious or political organizations, the domains of political preference and religious beliefs would be expected to relate most strongly to cultural identity. The bottom line here is that, when using measures that assess personal identity within multiple domains, one should tailor the set of domains to most closely match the lives of the respondents.

Applicability to diverse populations

It is also essential to chart the relationships between personal identity and cultural identity across gender and across diverse ethnic, socioeconomic, and national groups. Because Eriksonian and neo-Eriksonian notions of personal identity (e.g., consolidation) are rooted in Western cultural contexts, it is not known how the interface between personal identity and cultural identity would operate in non-Western settings. Cultural identity indices such as individualism and collectivism, for example, have been shown to operate across a wide range of countries, contexts, and ethnic groups (e.g., Oyserman et al., 2002). However, because the salience of personal choice varies across cultural contexts, the relationship between personal identity and cultural identity may vary by cultural context as well. Although the associations of cultural identity indices to psychosocial functioning may operate through personal identity consolidation in Western cultural contexts, the mechanisms through which cultural identity relates to outcomes in non-Western contexts may well be different. This is an area in need of further study.

Indeed, the construct validity of personal identity — at least from the individualistic perspectives adopted by identity status and identity capital — in non-Western cultural contexts needs to be established before relationships between personal identity and cultural identity can be explored in these contexts. In collectivist-oriented contexts, models of personal identity that draw upon group ideals and social role structures (e.g., Hitlin, 2003) may be more appropriate than agency-based models of personal identity. Clearly, more research is needed to ascertain the workings of personal identity in primarily collectivist cultural contexts. Among the important remaining questions is this: has globalization has increased the need for
agentic functioning in such contexts, or do obligations to the group continue to take precedence over individual choice and self-development?

**Conclusion**

In the present article, we have called for more theoretical and empirical work integrating personal and cultural conceptions of identity, which have been studied separately in prior literature. The implications of heritage-culture retention, American-culture acquisition, and biculturalism for the development of personal identity in immigrants and their descendants remain to be investigated. Although Rudmin (2003) has argued that biculturalism induces a sense of confusion, it is also possible that balancing the heritage and receiving cultural contexts may also lead to a more coherent and synthesized sense of personal identity. Preliminary research (Schwartz et al. 2007) suggests the latter, but much more work – with more varied immigrant groups, age groups, and receiving societies – will be needed to provide additional confidence in such a conclusion.

Furthermore, personal identity and cultural identity may be associated with important health outcomes. Cultural identity, where heritage-culture retention and receiving-culture acquisition are operationalized as separate dimensions; and personal identity, where the operationalizations used have been faithful to Erikson, have been shown to relate to conduct problems, substance use, and sexual risk taking (Schwartz, Mason, Pantin, & Szapocznik, forthcoming; Zamboanga et al., 2006). Specifically, greater endorsement of heritage and of receiving cultural practices, and greater coherence of personal identity, has been associated with lower degrees of health risk behaviors. Much more research is needed in this area, examining more diverse samples (including population-based samples to facilitate generalization of predictors of health outcomes) and a wider range of risk behaviors. It is through such efforts that the identity literatures – both personal and cultural – may bear the most fruit.

**Short Biography**

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Endnotes

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1 There is also a sociological literature on personal identity within role theory and social identity theory (e.g., Hitlin, 2003), but much of this literature views the self in terms of values and beliefs drawn from structural roles and internalized from groups to which the person belongs. The Eriksonian-based personal identity literature, on which we focus here, does not attend specifically to roles or to group memberships.

2 Other aspects of cultural identity, such as machismo and marianismo (exaggerated masculine and feminine gender roles in some Hispanic cultural contexts), are largely applicable to specific ethnic groups (e.g., Moreno, 2007).

3 It should be noted that the authors who originally wrote about these constructs did not necessarily think of them as dimensions of identity, and that we take responsibility for their inclusion under the heading of cultural identity.

References


