2-2007

Perceived Cultural Importance and Actual Self-Importance of Values in Cultural Identification

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We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.—The Declaration of Independence

The founding fathers of the United States defined America by its core values. They claimed equality, human rights, life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness as America's core values. The founding fathers did not make this claim because some representative national value surveys revealed that Americans in 1776 endorsed these values. Instead, they, like most Americans who fought in the Revolutionary War, perceived that Americans hold these values. Indeed, the founding fathers believed so strongly in Americans' endorsement of these values that they declared it a self-evident truth.

On the surface, whether an individual American identifies with America is a personal choice, contingent on how important the American identity is to the individual's self-definition, relative to other self-attributes or identities. Upon closer examination, this personal importance of the American identity is also contingent on what values are generally believed to be the core values that define the American way (see Sedikides & Brewer, 2001; Triandis, 1995) and how important these values are to the individual

1

American. That is, cultural identification as a personal choice is based on people's social representations of what is important in the culture (Hong, Wan, No, & Chiu, in press). In spite of their apparent intuitive appeal, these ideas as well as their rich theoretical and empirical implications have not been systematically examined in the research literature. The primary objective of the present article was to fill this gap. We fill this gap in two steps. First, we show that assessing the perceived importance of values provides a useful tool for identifying core cultural values relevant to cultural identification. Second, we show that endorsement of values that the group perceives to be important to the culture has causal consequences on identification with the culture.

Actual Self-Importance Versus Perceived Cultural Importance

Values that are important to a culture guide how members of that cultural group should lead their lives and are at the center of association of many cultural practices. Values are conceptions of what is preferable, desirable, or important. They provide the basis for affective evaluation of life experiences and act as guides or justifications of behaviors, preferences, and judgments (Feather, 1996; Kluckhohn, 1951; Kristiansen & Zanna, 1995; Rokeach, 1973; Schwartz, & Bilsky, 1987). Values are organized in hierarchies of importance so that some values are more important than others (Rokeach, 1973; Schwartz, & Bilsky, 1987). At the culture level, value hierarchy indicates the normative preference of life principles in the culture.

Actual Self-Importance

A culturally important value can be one that most members in the culture consider to be important to the self or to the culture. In (cross-) cultural psychology, culturally important values are often defined as those that most members of a culture consider to be important to their self-concepts. Each person has a personal value system, which pertains to the person's own integrated system of interrelated values (Rohan, 2000; Rohan & Zanna, 2001). A cultural group's actual value priority is revealed by aggregating the personal value priorities of the group members. We refer to this approach for identifying cultural values as the *actual self-importance* approach.

Various measures have been developed to assess cultural value importance as actual self-importance. Examples of actual self-importance are the percentage of group members who endorse a value and the mean level of value endorsement in the group (e.g., Schwartz & Sagie, 2000; Triandis, & Gelfand, 1998; see also Conway & Schaller, 1998). Typically, researchers ask individual members of a culture to rate or rank the importance of a list of values and use the group aggregate as a proxy of culture level value importance. Thus, an actual self-importance measure describes culture by what cultural members themselves are actually like, not by what they think the culture is like.

Two difficulties emerge when defining cultural values through actual self-importance: First, it requires a representative sample from the target cultural group to draw an accurate description of the culture. When a sample is drawn from a subgroup in a culture, as with the common use of psychology students to study culture, it is often not clear whether the responses of the sample represent the subgroup's culture or the larger culture. Second, and more important theoretically, identifying core values by actual self-importance does not take into account the dynamic meaning negotiations among individuals who share a culture. Group process research has highlighted the fact that the outcome of interactions among a group of interconnected individuals is different from aggregates of unrelated, noninteracting individuals (Davis, 1992; Hinsz, Tindale, & Vollrath, 1997). Similarly, culture, as a product of collective processes, is more than a mere aggregate of individuals' personal characteristics (Matsumoto, 2003; Realo, 2003).

Perceived Cultural Importance

In the present article, we proposed an alternative approach to identifying culturally important values. In this approach, culturally important values are those that most members in the culture consider to be important to the culture. We refer to this approach as the *perceived cultural importance* approach. According to this approach, people in a culture have beliefs about the value priorities of the social group they belong to (Rohan, 2000). Thus, the importance of a value to a culture can be defined by the degree of importance that cultural members as a group believe the value to be in the culture.

The perceived cultural importance approach draws from the conception of culture as shared, widely distributed knowledge (Pelto & Pelto, 1975; Rohner, 1984; Sperber, 1996; Triandis, 1995). Keesing (1981) described culture as a shared system of competence among a group of people involving people's "theory of what his fellows know, believe and mean, of the code being followed, the game being played" (Keesing, 1981, p. 58). The content of cultural members' cultural knowledge evolved through social interactions (Blumer, 1969; Mead, 1934). Individuals in a culture interact with each other at different levels, from one-on-one communication to collective meaning negotiation. In these interactions, individuals take the perspective of their interaction partners and develop common representations of the culture. These common representations are then invoked to establish the common ground in subsequent interpersonal processes (Krauss & Chiu, 1998; Lau, Lee, & Chiu, 2004). Through these iterative processes, social representations are crystallized, maintained, and revised. The final product is a set of beliefs about the culture commonly held by members of the culture.

Perceived reality does not always mirror actual reality. For example, in a study on pluralistic ignorance, although only a small percentage of college freshmen find drinking enjoyable, the majority of them believe that most other freshmen enjoy drinking (Prentice & Miller, 1993). In a study on personality (Terracciano et al., 2005), people from 49 cultures rated a typical member of their own culture on the Big Five personality dimensions (perceived personality). The ratings were aggregated across individuals in each culture and compared with the aggregate self-report personality ratings of members in the culture (actual personality). When the two sets of aggregate ratings were compared across cultural groups, there was an imperfect correlation between perceived and actual personality. On the basis of these findings, we predict an imperfect correspondence between what people commonly believe as the important cultural values (perceived cultural importance) and the cultural values that are strongly endorsed by members of the culture (actual self-importance). We tested this prediction in Study 1. The presence of a positive correlation between actual self- and perceived cultural importance suggests that the social constructions of value priorities are based on concrete interpersonal experiences; they evolved as individuals interact with and extract value-relevant information from others. Meanwhile, a lack of perfect correlation leaves room for an assessment of the unique contribution of actual self-importance and perceived cultural importance of values in culture-related psychological processes.

Implications for Cultural Identification

What Core Values Matter?

Research has shown that people who identify strongly (vs. weakly) with their culture tend to endorse the culture's core values (e.g., Feather, 1994; Gouveia, de Albuquerque, Clemente, & Espinosa, 2002; Heaven, 1999; Jetten, Postmes, & McAuliffe, 2002). However, as we have mentioned, core cultural values can be identified through either actual self-importance or perceived cultural importance. Is one type of core values more closely related to cultural identification than the other?

3

Actual self-importance identifies core values through the personal values held by a group of participants. Values with the highest mean group endorsement are then taken to be the culture's core values. In contrast, with perceived cultural importance, we asked research participants to estimate how an average member in a cultural group would respond to a value survey. A value has high perceived cultural importance when participants as a group believe an average member in the group would strongly endorse it. If both types of importance are valid ways of identifying core cultural values, then endorsement of values identified by the two approaches should both be related to cultural identification. At the same time, the utility of perceived cultural importance as an alternative to actual self-importance for identifying core cultural values hinges on its ability to explain variances in psychological processes that are not explained by actual self-importance. The goal of Study 2 was to demonstrate that the perceived importance of values to a culture has incremental value for predicting cultural identification even after controlling for the actual self-importance of the values.

Although both actual self- and perceived cultural value importance should predict cultural identification, for several reasons, we expected perceived cultural importance to be more predictive of cultural identification than would actual self-importance. First, common cultural knowledge is often invoked in everyday interactions. Thus, individuals have many opportunities to apply and update their knowledge about the culture as shared by other members of the culture. In contrast, people seldom have direct access to the actual importance of personal characteristics such as values among others in the culture. Second, there is evidence that as long as people believe that their personal attitudes are socially shared, they hold these attitudes to be valid and tend to behave in an attitude-consistent manner (Sechrist & Stangor, 2001). In the research example of pluralistic ignorance (Prentice, & Miller, 1993), college students conform to the group-perceived college norm and acquire a drinking habit despite the fact that the norm is not an accurate reflection of the actual drinking attitudes. Finally, when a representative cultural sample is used, both actual self- and perceived cultural importance approaches should produce reasonable characterizations of the culture. However, when only a subgroup in a culture is used, the actual self-importance measure would identify values widely shared in the subgroup culture, whereas the perceived cultural importance measure allows one to identify values that this subgroup believes to be important in the larger culture. Therefore, when studying a subgroup's identification with the larger culture, endorsement of values with high group-perceived (vs. group actual) importance should be more closely associated with cultural identification.

Cause and Effect

To further evaluate the utility of the perceived cultural importance approach, in Studies 3–5, we examined the causal role of values with high perceived cultural importance in cultural identification. Drawing on social representation theory and social identity theory (see below), we predicted a bidirectional causal relationship between core value endorsement and cultural identification—endorsement of core cultural values would cause people to become identified with the culture (value-as-antecedent hypothesis), and strong cultural identification would lead to an increase in the endorsement of core cultural values (identification-as-antecedent hypothesis).

Both social representation theory and social identity theory emphasize the co-constitution of social representations and social identities, with social representation theory focusing on the organizing role of social representations and social identity theory on that of social identification in the co-constitution processes. According to social representation theory (Moscovici, 1984), the public construct shared representations of their culture. Once these representations are present, individuals in a society may construct their social identities by incorporating the widely shared cultural meanings or social representations about the social group into their self-definition. Thus, as Duveen (2001, p. 268) puts it, "representations precede identities," and the contents of these representations shape the meaning of social

identities. However, identity concerns may also change the representations that people hold about their social group. Thus, identity and representation constitute each other (Breakwell, 2001). Although social representation theorists did not comment explicitly on the relationship between strength of cultural identification and endorsement of core cultural characteristics, an important message from the social representations perspective that often is omitted from the spotlight in other discussions of social identity is the importance of social representations as a meaning basis for people to make sense of their own self. Social representations already exist, and it is up to the individual to decide where to position the self in relation to these representations. An implication derived from this argument is that for a person to strongly identify with a culture, what this culture represents should be of personal significance. In other words, the cultural representations that are strongly attached to the culture should be seen as important to the self for a person to strongly identify with the culture. Accordingly, we generated the value-as-antecedent hypothesis, predicting that the personal endorsement of values that are of high perceived cultural importance would lead to cultural identification.

According to social identity theories (Hogg, 2003; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987), social identity is based in part on the prototypic characteristics of the social group (Turner, Oakes, Haslam, & McGarty, 1994), and in part on people's knowledge about the characteristics that define membership in the social group (Hogg, 2003). Among the many characteristics that can define a group, core values have been characterized as prototypic markers of group identities (Hogg, 2004). The cognitive consequence is that individuals who identify with a group often attribute to the self the group's defining characteristics (Hogg & Turner, 1987). Although social identity theories do not reject the possibility that value endorsement could lead to social identification, research based on the social identity perspective has focused on how self-categorization leads to depersonalization and self-stereotyping and how self-stereotyping supports self-categorization. Thus, following social identity theories, we derived the identification-as-antecedent hypothesis, predicting that cultural identification would lead to the endorsement of core cultural values.

Summary

Many theorists have reiterated the need to consider group perception of culture in defining core cultural values. Yet, little research has been done to identify cultural values with high-perceived cultural importance and to examine the implications of such values for cultural identification. A common practice in cultural psychology is to define cultural values with the actual self-importance of the values in the cultural group, such as via mean group endorsement. We contend that defining core cultural values by actual self-importance exclusively belies the complex social processes that constitute culture. The five studies in this article are the first step to directly identify cultural values with high perceived cultural importance, assess individual differences in the endorsement of such values, and in which the causal role of such values in cultural identification are evaluated. As we argue in the General Discussion section, the role of perceived cultural importance in cultural identification, if supported by our findings, had important implications for understanding the relationship between culture and self and for measuring cultures.

Study 1

The goal of this study was to assess the level of correspondence and dissociation between values of high actual self-importance and those with high perceived cultural importance. An important assumption in the present research is that the two sets of values are not the same, although there is some overlap between them. A widely researched value dimension is individualism-collectivism (Triandis, 1995). In this study, we identified and compared the individualist or collectivist values that are actually more (or less)

important to members of American culture than to members of Chinese culture and the individualist and collectivist values that are perceived to be more (or less) important to Americans and Chinese.

Method

Participants

The participants were 66 European American university students (37 men and 29 women) from a public university in the midwestern United States and 65 Chinese university students (23 men and 42 women) from a public university in Hong Kong, China. The mean age was 18.71 years ($SD = 1.55$ years) in the American sample and 20.18 years ($SD = 1.02$ years) in the Hong Kong sample. The sample participated for course credit.

Measures and Procedures

A survey of individualist and collectivist values was used in the present study. The participants filled out the measure three times. In Phase I, they indicated the values that were important to them. In Phase II, the participants indicated how people from their cultural group (Caucasian Americans in general for American participants and Hong Kong Chinese in general for Hong Kong participants) would respond to the measure. Finally, in Phase III, the participants indicated how people in the outgroup culture (Hong Kong Chinese in general for American participants and Caucasian Americans in general for Hong Kong participants) would respond to the measure.

In a review of individualist and collectivist values in the history of ideas and in popular sayings, Ho and Chiu (1994) identified nine conceptually different component ideas of individualism (self-reliance, individuality, autonomy, competition, individual interests, individual responsibility, financial independence, rights to privacy, and individual effort) and nine conceptually different component ideas of collectivism (collective effort with peers, collective responsibility with peers, conformity, cooperation, group spirit, striving for common good, majority rule, self-sacrifice, and mutual support among peers). These values were presented to the participants in a random order. The participants chose 10 values that were most important to them. The average person-total correlation was .47 for the Hong Kong sample and .48 for the U.S. sample, indicating an acceptable level of agreement in participants' self-value endorsement.

To measure perceived cultural importance, for each value in Phases II and III, the participants estimated the percentage of Caucasian Americans or Hong Kong Chinese who would choose the value as one of their 10 most important values (among the 18 values). The higher the mean percentage estimate was across participants, the higher the group perceived importance of the value. There was acceptable agreement in this perceived cultural importance measure. For estimates about Hong Kong Chinese, average person-total correlation was .55 for the Hong Kong sample and .57 for the American sample. For estimates about Caucasian Americans, average person-total correlation was .64 for the Hong Kong sample and .65 for the American sample.

Results and Discussion

Values With High Actual Self-Importance

Table 1 presents the actual self-importance of the values, as measured by the percentage of American and Hong Kong participants who actually chose the values as one of the most important to them. We compared the two groups on this actual self-importance measure for each of the 18 values. Six values

were more important among American participants than among Hong Kong participants; five of them were individualist values (competition, individual effort, individual interests, individual responsibility, and individuality), but one was a collectivist value (striving for common good), $\chi^2(1, N = 131) > 4.20$, ps $< .05$. Also, six values were more important among Hong Kong participants than among American participants; five of them were collectivist values (collective effort, collective responsibility, conformity, group spirit, and mutual support among peers), but one was an individualist value (autonomy), $\chi^2(1, N = 131) > 8.10$, ps $< .001$.

Table 1

Actual and Estimated Percentage of Endorsement of Values of American (U.S.) and Hong Kong (HK) Participants

Variable	U.S. estimate		HK estimate		Actual	
	U.S.	HK	U.S.	HK	U.S.	HK
Individualist values						
Autonomy	46.2	84.4[b]	71.3	41.3	19.7	76.9[b]
Competition	67.5	46.6[a]	73.3	67.5	50.0	32.3[a]
Financial independence	79.1	49.9[a]	81.1	76.0	66.7	53.8
Individual effort	67.3	54.3[a]	68.9	50.4	65.2	9.2[a]
Individual interests	71.5	38.0[a]	76.8	74.5	62.1	41.5[a]
Individual responsibility	70.5	54.7[a]	64.6	50.5	84.8	49.2[a]
Individuality	74.1	34.4[a]	77.8	54.9	81.8	53.8[a]
Rights to privacy	76.4	42.1[a]	83.5	76.1	71.2	67.7
Self-reliance	67.3	46.8[a]	85.6	72.3	84.8	72.3
Collectivist values						
Collective effort	38.4	74.4[b]	62.8	55.7	40.9	72.3[b]
Collective responsibility	42.3	73.3[b]	61.3	60.0	25.8	67.7[b]
Conformity	26.8	70.5[b]	46.6	50.8	3.0	18.5[b]
Cooperation	59.7	77.5[b]	66.3	65.2	69.7	81.5
Group spirit	44.8	73.0[b]	67.8	61.5	37.9	66.2[b]
Majority rule	58.2	66.1	65.1	61.1	21.2	30.8
Mutual support from peers	55.3	68.2[b]	64.6	68.9	57.6	98.5[b]
Self-sacrifice	33.1	67.8[b]	38.8	28.0	45.5	29.2
Striving for common good	59.8	78.6[b]	48.6	40.6	74.2	35.4[a]

[a] Significantly higher American percentage of endorsement for values than Hong Kong percentage of endorsement.   [b] Significantly higher Hong Kong percentage of endorsement than American percentage of endorsement.

Values With High Perceived Cultural Importance

Table 1 also shows American and Hong Kong participants' perceived cultural importance of the values, as measured by their estimates of the percentage of Caucasian Americans and Hong Kong Chinese who would have chosen the values as one of the most important. We identified values with high perceived cultural importance separately from American and Hong Kong participants' perspective. For the two cultural groups separately, we performed paired samples t tests on percentage estimates of value endorsement of Caucasian Americans versus Hong Kong Chinese to identify values that were seen to be more characteristic of Americans (vs. Hong Kong Chinese) and Hong Kong Chinese (vs. Americans).

American participants rated all eight individualist values as being more strongly endorsed among Americans than Hong Kong Chinese, ts$(65) > 3.35$, ps $< .001$, and eight collectivist values (self-sacrifice, collective effort, collective responsibility, conformity, group spirit, striving for common good, mutual support among peers, and cooperation) and one individualist value (autonomy) as being more strongly endorsed among Hong Kong Chinese than among Americans, ts$(65) > 3.80$, ps $< .001$. Thus, in American

participants' group perception of American versus Hong Kong Chinese culture, American culture is strongly associated with individualism, and Hong Kong Chinese culture is strongly associated with collectivism. The characteristic American values based on perceived cultural importance did not overlap completely with those identified on the basis of actual self-importance, illustrating the imperfect association of the two types of value importance measure.

It is interesting to note that Hong Kong participants estimated 16 (out of 18) values as more important to Americans than to Hong Kong Chinese. The t statistics for 11 of these 16 values were significant, ts ranged from 2.22 to 7.07 (ps < .05). Only conformity, $t(64) = 1.34$, ns, and mutual support from peers, $t(64) = 2.17$, $p < .05$, were perceived by Hong Kong participants to be more important to Hong Kong Chinese than to Americans. This pattern might arise from Hong Kong participants' perception that personal values (vs. societal norms) are more important to Americans than to Hong Kong Chinese (see Triandis, 1989).

Study 2

Study 1 results showed that values of relatively high actual self-importance to a cultural group may not be of relatively high-perceived cultural importance to the same group. In Study 2, we examined the association of actual self-importance and perceived cultural importance with cultural identification. We identified values with high actual self-importance and those with high perceived cultural importance in a cultural group and tested the relative contribution of the two types of values in predicting cultural identification. The aim was to show that perceived cultural importance as an alternative way to identify core cultural values has utility beyond that of actual self-importance.

Specifically, we examined a group of psychology students' values and identification with the student culture on campus. Although students in a psychology class are part of the student population on campus, they are not representative of the whole student population. Thus, we expected perceived cultural importance to play a more important role in cultural identification than actual self-importance. We first identified values with high actual self-importance and those with high perceived cultural importance. Next, we examined the relationship between students' endorsement of these two types of values and their identification with the student culture.

The value survey used in Study 1 is not a standard value measure of cultural values. It consists of a set of individualist and collectivist values identified in Lukes' (1973) authoritative review of individualist and collectivist values in the history of ideas. It could be argued that some items in this measure may not measure what contemporary value researchers consider to be cultural values. Although this possibility does not undermine our results, Schwartz's (1992) Value Survey, a standard value measure, was used in this study.

Method

Participants

Participants were 100 (21 men, 78 women, and 1 who did not report gender) undergraduate students in a psychology class at a public university in the midwestern United States. The mean age of the sample was 20.25 years ($SD = 2.04$ years). The mean length of attending the university was 3.86 semesters ($SD = 2.06$ semesters). Participants received $6 for participation.

8

Measures

We used [Schwartz's (1992)](#) list of 56 values in the present study because it covers a wide range of values and is a widely used survey of university students' values. The list covered 10 value types identified by past research with various samples across different countries in the world ([Schwartz, 1992](#)): power (e.g., authority, wealth), achievement (e.g., successful, ambitious), hedonism (e.g., pleasure, enjoying life), stimulation (e.g., a varied life, an exciting life), self-direction (e.g., freedom, independence), universalism (e.g., broad-minded, wisdom), benevolence (e.g., honest, loyal), tradition (e.g., devout, moderate), conformity (e.g., obedient, politeness), and security (e.g., family security, social order). To ensure that we did not omit any values of importance, we asked the participants in Study 2 to list values that they thought were missing from the list. No additional value was mentioned frequently enough to warrant inclusion. The most frequently mentioned additional value (trust) was mentioned five times only. Therefore, only the 56 Schwartz values were included in our analysis.

As in previous studies designed to identify values with high actual self-importance, we had the participants rate the importance of each value to the self on an 8-point scale ranging from 0 (*not important*) to 7 (*very important*). Specifically, the participant was given the following instruction:

Rate how important each of the following values is in YOUR life. When you answer these questions, think about how important each of these values is in YOUR self-concept, how much the value influences YOUR goals, aspirations, beliefs, and actions.

The sample's mean endorsement of each value indicated the level of actual self-importance of the value.

To measure the values' level of perceived cultural importance, in the second part of the survey, we had the participants rate the 56 values again, this time on the importance of the values to "an average student at the university." This measure provided the sample's estimates of how much an average university student would endorse each value. Although the instruction is only slightly different from the actual self-importance instruction, the perceived cultural importance instruction should shift participants' attention from the self to a generalized cultural other, which provided a measure of their representations of the culture. Although the average cultural member does not physically exist, the purpose of this instruction was to tap participants' beliefs of the values that a generic member of the culture should hold. Finally, the participants indicated on an 11-point scale, ranging from 0 (*not at all*) to 10 (*very strongly*), how strongly they identified with the student culture of the university.

Results and Discussion

There was clear support for our predictions. Actual self-importance and perceived cultural importance were imperfectly related. For both kinds of values, level of endorsement predicted cultural identification. More important, endorsement of values with high perceived cultural importance predicted cultural identification above and beyond endorsement of values with high actual self-importance.

Correspondence Between Actual Self- and Perceived Cultural Importance

There was high agreement among participants in their ratings of the 56 values: intraclass correlation = .97 for self-ratings, and .98 for estimates of culture. We used the mean self-ratings across participants as a measure of a value's actual self-importance and the mean cultural estimates across participants as a measure of a value's perceived cultural importance (see Table 2). The 10 values with the highest actual self-importance were true friendship, family security, mature love, successful, healthy, enjoying life, self-respect, meaning in life, loyal, and freedom. The 10 values with the highest perceived cultural importance

were enjoying life, successful, pleasure, freedom, true friendship, choosing own goals, sense of belonging, ambitious, intelligent, and healthy. Comparing the two groups of top 10 values, five values ranked the highest on both actual self-importance and perceived cultural importance. Thus, there was some, but incomplete overlap in the two sets of values. Five values that ranked the highest on actual self-importance did not rank the highest on perceived cultural importance, and five values that ranked the highest on perceived cultural importance did not rank the highest on actual self-importance. Thus, the results of Study 1 were replicated.

The correlation between the values' actual self-importance and perceived cultural importance was strong but far from being perfect, $r(54) = .68$, $p < .001$. The high correspondence between actual self- and perceived cultural importance indicates that social constructions of cultural value priorities in a culture is grounded in information about cultural members' actual characteristics extracted from social interactions, as noted earlier. Meanwhile, the lack of perfect overlap between values with high actual self-importance and values with high perceived cultural importance enables us to test the independent contribution of each of the two types of value importance measure in predicting cultural identification, although the high correspondence between the two measures works against our hypothesis and renders the test a conservative one.

Table 2

Mean Actual Self- and Perceived Cultural Importance of the 56 Values

Value	Actual self-importance	Perceived cultural importance
Enjoying life	**6.31**	**6.35**
Successful	**6.39**	**6.16**
Pleasure	5.72	**6.13**
Freedom	**6.22**	**6.12**
True friendship	**6.63**	**6.02**
Choosing own goals	6.20	**5.99**
Sense of belonging	6.17	**5.96**
Ambitious	5.68	**5.86**
Intelligent	6.15	**5.86**
Healthy	**6.37**	**5.83**
Independent	5.88	5.75
Family security	**6.57**	5.74
Social recognition	5.19	5.63
Capable	6.00	5.60
An exciting life	5.82	5.54
Wealth	4.86	5.52
Equality	5.74	5.44
Preserving my public image	4.62	5.43
Meaning in life	**6.26**	5.42
National security	5.06	5.42
A world of beauty	5.22	5.40
Self-respect	**6.31**	5.40
A varied life	5.01	5.31
Broad-minded	5.94	5.29
Influential	5.47	5.26
Loyal	**6.24**	5.21
Curious	5.41	5.09
Wisdom	6.05	5.09
Daring	4.34	5.06
Creativity	5.41	4.94
Mature love	**6.39**	4.94
Responsible	6.05	4.88
Authority	4.36	4.86
Inner harmony	6.15	4.83
Helpful	5.59	4.61
Social justice	5.30	4.54
A world at peace	5.29	4.51
Social power	3.47	4.46
Self-discipline	5.59	4.42
Social order	4.80	4.42
Honest	6.16	4.41
Forgiving	5.52	4.39
Honoring of parents and elders	5.61	4.33
Obedient	4.86	4.31
Accepting my portion of life	4.54	4.24
Devout	3.47	4.10
Respect for tradition	4.42	4.10
Reciprocation of favors	5.25	4.08
Politeness	5.50	4.07
A spiritual life	4.16	3.86
Protecting the environment	4.73	3.85
Moderate	4.10	3.68
Humble	5.10	3.65
Unity with nature	4.39	3.57
Clean	4.73	3.30
Detachment	3.11	3.07

Note. The values are arranged according to perceived cultural importance, with the 10 highest ranked values for each category in boldface.

Predicting Cultural Identification From Cultural Value Importance

We expected a positive relationship between cultural identification and endorsement of values with high actual self- or perceived cultural importance. To test this prediction, we created six sets of values: (a) the 10 values with the highest actual self-importance, (b) the 10 values with the highest perceived cultural importance, (c) the 10 values with the lowest actual self-importance, (d) the 10 values with the lowest perceived cultural importance, (e) the 10 values in the middle range of actual self-importance (values that ranked 24th–33rd on actual self-importance), and (f) the 10 values in the middle range of perceived cultural importance (values that ranked 24th–33rd on perceived cultural importance). We calculated each participant's mean endorsement of the values in each set.

As predicted, endorsement of values with highest perceived cultural importance and cultural identification were significantly and positively correlated, $r(98) = .21$, $p < .05$. The more strongly the participants endorsed values with highest perceived cultural importance, the more strongly they identified with the university's student culture. The correlation between endorsement of values with highest actual self-importance and cultural identification was positive but not significant, $r(98) = .17$, $p = .10$. Participants' endorsement of the remaining four groups of values was not related to cultural identification, rs(98) ranged from $-.06$ to $.02$, ns.

We also conducted the analysis using value importance profiles (Rohan & Zanna, 1996). Each participant's endorsement of the 56 values constituted his or her personal value profile. The actual self-importance of the 56 values (aggregated across participants) constituted the culture's actual value profile, whereas the perceived cultural importance of the 56 values (aggregated across participants) constituted the culture's perceived value profile. The correlation between a participant's personal value profile and the culture's actual value profile ($r$personal-actual) indicates how similar or dissimilar the participant's personal value endorsement was to the actual self-importance of cultural values. Likewise, the correlation between the personal value profile and the culture's perceived value profile ($r$personal-perceived) indicates how similar or dissimilar the participant's personal value endorsement was to the perceived cultural importance of cultural values. Consistent with our predictions, when personal value endorsement was similar to perceived cultural importance of cultural values ($r$personal-perceived was high), identification with the university's student culture tended to be strong, $r(98) = .31$, $p < .05$. Similarly, when personal value endorsement was similar to actual self-importance of cultural values ($r$personal-actual was high), identification with the university's student culture also tended to be strong, $r(98) = .24$, $p < .05$.

Relative Contribution of Actual Self- and Perceived Cultural Importance

Our next research question concerns the relative contribution of values with high actual self- and perceived cultural importance to the prediction of cultural identification. We regressed cultural identification on participants' mean endorsement of the 10 values with highest actual self-importance and their mean endorsement of the 10 values with highest perceived cultural importance. The model explained 4.5% of the total variance and was not significant, $F(2, 95) = 2.25$, $p = .11$. However, when we removed mean endorsement of values with highest actual self-importance from the model, the goodness-of-fit of the model became significant, $F(1, 96) = 4.50$, $p < .05$. In addition, the R^2 of the model did not change ($R^2 = 4.5\%$), indicating that endorsement of values with highest actual self-importance made no independent contribution to the prediction of cultural identification. In fact, including endorsement of such values in the prediction model reduced the model's predictive efficiency. By contrast, when endorsement of values with highest perceived cultural importance was removed from the original model, the new model had a nonsignificant goodness of fit, $F(1, 96) = 2.83$, ns, $R^2 = 2.9\%$. Therefore, endorsement of values with highest actual self-importance by itself was not a significant predictor of cultural identification, whereas

endorsement of values with highest perceived cultural importance by itself was sufficient to predict cultural identification.

We also regressed cultural identification simultaneously on the similarity of personal value profile to actual value profile ($r$personal-actual) and the similarity of personal value profile to perceived value profile ($r$personal-perceived). The model was significant, $F(2, 97) = 5.48$, $p < .01$, and explained 10.1% of the total variance. Again, consistent with our hypothesis, the effect of $r$personal-perceived was significant ($\beta = .26$), $t(97) = 2.16$, $p < .05$, whereas that of $r$personal-actual was not ($\beta = .08$), $t(97) = 0.69$, ns.

Summary

Not all values play equally important roles in predicting cultural identification. The above results show that only values that are considered to be important in a culture, either through the values' actual self-importance or by their perceived cultural importance, are related to cultural identification. In addition, the findings attest to the utility of using perceived cultural importance to define core cultural values. Despite the substantial overlap in actual self- and perceived cultural importance, perceived cultural importance had a unique contribution beyond the contribution of actual self-importance in predicting cultural identification. In contrast, the contribution of actual self-importance in predicting cultural identification beyond the effect of perceived cultural importance was limited. To understand the role of cultural values in cultural identification, collective beliefs about the culture cannot be overlooked.

Although the measures in the present study are all self-reports, it is unlikely that the findings were the result of demand characteristics. First, the self measures were given before the estimation measures. As such, the participants did not know they needed to estimate the responses of their own cultural group when they gave their own responses. More important, the perceived cultural importance criteria used in the present study were based on group responses rather than individual participants' personal responses.

Study 3

In Studies 3–5, we examined the causal role of culturally important values in cultural identification. We took a longitudinal approach in Study 3 and tracked changes in endorsement of values with high actual self- and perceived cultural importance as well as changes in student culture identification in a sample of college freshmen. The design of this study assumes that value endorsement is changeable. Past research has shown that although there is a high level of value stability over time at the collective level (Inglehart, 1985), personal values may change as a person has new cultural experiences. For example, migrants may change their personal values when they acculturate in a new culture (Feather, 1979). Similarly, value change may also occur as a high school graduate transitions into the role of a college student. Thus, despite the stability of values, there is enough malleability in value endorsement to permit a valid test of our hypotheses.

In Studies 4 and 5, we examined the causal relationship in an experimental setting concerning American national culture. We tested the value-as-antecedent hypothesis in Study 4 by manipulating the salience and threat to values with high versus low-perceived cultural importance and examined the effect of the manipulation on cultural identification. We tested the identification-as-antecedent hypothesis in Study 5. We followed past research on social identity and self-stereotyping (e.g., Hogg & Turner, 1987) and examined the effect of cultural identification manipulation on personal value endorsement.

13

Method

The participants were 47 freshmen (25 women and 22 men) at a public university in the midwestern United States and received $8 for participation. They completed the survey in Study 2 twice, the first time 2 weeks into their first semester on campus (Time 1) and the second time 1 week before the end of the semester (Time 2). There was an approximately 10-week gap between the two measurements. A cross-lagged panel design and hierarchical regression analysis were used to assess the two causal hypotheses.

Results

There was high agreement in participants' self-ratings (intraclass correlation = .89 and .88 for Time 1 and Time 2, respectively) and estimated cultural ratings (intraclass correlation = .95 for both Time 1 and Time 2). Following Study 2, for both Time 1 and Time 2 data, we identified (a) the 10 values with the highest actual self-importance, (b) the 10 values with the highest perceived cultural importance, (c) the 10 values with the lowest actual self-importance, (d) the 10 values with the lowest perceived cultural importance, (e) the 10 values that fell in the middle range of actual self-importance, and (f) the 10 values that fell in the middle range of perceived cultural importance. Next, we computed participants' mean endorsement of each group of values at Time 1 and at Time 2. To test the hypotheses, we first correlated (a) Time 1 endorsement of each group of values with Time 2 student culture identification and (b) Time 1 student culture identification with Time 2 endorsement of each group of values. We then conducted hierarchical regressions to test the predictive power of Time 1 identification and value endorsement, respectively, on Time 2 value endorsement and identification.

Value as Antecedent

As shown in the left column of Table 3, the only significant correlations were between Time 1 endorsement of the top 10 perceived cultural values and Time 2 student culture identification, $r(45) = .42$, $p < .01$, and between Time 1 endorsement of the middle 10 perceived cultural values and Time 2 student culture identification, $r(45) = .31$, $p < .05$. The more the participants endorsed values that were commonly perceived to be important to the culture at the beginning of the semester, the stronger their identification with the student culture of the university at the end of the semester. This finding supports the value-as-antecedent hypothesis. Corroborating the results in Study 2, endorsement of the 10 values with the highest perceived cultural importance was related to identification at Time 2, whereas endorsement of the 10 values with the highest actual self-importance was not related to cultural identification. This again illustrates the utility of using perceived cultural importance as a criterion for identifying core cultural values.

Table 3
Correlations Between Endorsement of Values at Time 1 (Time 2) and Level of Identification With Student Culture at Time 2 (Time 1)

Time 1 value endorsement with Time 2 identification	r	Time 2 value endorsement with Time 1 identification	r
		Actual self-importance	
Top 10	−.14	Top 10	−.20
Middle 10	−.07	Middle 10	−.28
Bottom 10	−.02	Bottom 10	−.04
		Perceived cultural importance	
Top 10	.42**	Top 10	.07
Middle 10	.31*	Middle 10	−.16
Bottom 10	.06	Bottom 10	−.01

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$.

Next, we conducted hierarchical regressions for each of the six groups of values. In Step 1, we entered Time 1 identification and Time 2 value endorsement as predictors of Time 2 identification. This controlled for the autocorrelation between Time 1 and Time 2 identification and the synchronous relationship between Time 2 identification and Time 2 value endorsement. In Step 2, we entered Time 1 value endorsement as a predictor of Time 2 identification. For the 10 values with the highest perceived cultural importance, the model in Step 1 explained 41.1% of the total variance. Adding Time 1 endorsement of the values as a predictor in Step 2 explained an additional 11.0% of the total variance. This change in model fit was statistically significant, $F(1, 43) = 9.88$, $p < .01$. After controlling for Time 1 identification and Time 2 value endorsement, the more the participants endorsed values with the highest perceived cultural importance at Time 1, the more they identified with the university's student culture ($\beta = .36$), $t(43) = 3.14$, $p < .01$.

For the 10 values with moderate perceived cultural importance, the model in Step 1 explained 40.6% of the total variance. Adding Time 1 endorsement of the values as a predictor in Step 2 explained an additional 4.4% of the total variance. This change in model fit approached significance, $F(1, 43) = 3.43$, $p = .07$. After controlling for Time 1 identification and Time 2 value endorsement, participants' Time 1 endorsement of the 10 values with moderate perceived cultural importance somewhat predicted their Time 2 identification with the university's student culture ($\beta = .22$), $t(43) = 1.85$, $p = .07$. None of the regression models for the other four groups of values showed significant effect of Time 1 value endorsement on Time 2 identification after controlling for Time 1 identification and Time 2 value endorsement.

Identification as Antecedent

As shown in Table 3, Time 1 student culture identification was not related to Time 2 value endorsement. We again conducted hierarchical regressions for each group of values. In Step 1, we regressed Time 2 value endorsement on Time 1 value endorsement and Time 2 cultural identification. This controlled for the autocorrelation between Time 1 and Time 2 value endorsement and the synchronous relationship between Time 2 value endorsement and identification. In Step 2, we added Time 1 identification as a predictor of Time 2 value endorsement. For all six groups of values, Time 1 identification did not predict Time 2 value endorsement after controlling for Time 1 value endorsement and Time 2 identification. As such, the identification-as-antecedent hypothesis was not supported. Identification with student culture at

15

the beginning of the semester did not predict change in value endorsement over the course of the semester.

Discussion

The results show more support for the value-as-antecedent hypothesis than for the identification-as-antecedent hypothesis. Participants' endorsement of core values at the beginning of the semester predicted their cultural identification at the end of the semester, after controlling for their level of identification at the beginning of the semester and their endorsement of the core values at the end of the semester. More important, only core values identified through perceived cultural importance, but not actual self-importance, had such effect. This again shows the importance of perceived cultural importance in identifying core cultural values.

The findings also eliminated an alternative explanation of the Study 2 results. In Study 2, the measures were presented in the following fixed order: value self-rating, value other-rating, and cultural identification. Because the cultural identification measure was given immediately after the value other-rating, it was possible that the value other-rating had sensitized the participants to values that are perceived to be culturally important and hence aligned their identification response with their endorsement of these values. This explanation rests on the assumption that being aware of the values perceived to be culturally important is sufficient to enhance the correspondence between endorsement of these values and cultural identification. This assumption is consistent with our theory. However, Study 3 results suggest that the association between cultural identification and endorsement of values perceived to be culturally important can be obtained independent of this order effect. Specifically, Time 1 value endorsement predicts Time 2 cultural identification even after controlling for the synchronous relationships between value endorsement and cultural identification at both Time 1 and Time 2.

Study 3 has several limitations. First, the participants were freshmen who had spent only a short time in the university. As such, Time 1 student culture identification might be based on superficial impressions of the culture, and hence was not predictive of subsequent value endorsement. Additionally, perhaps self-stereotyping driven by cultural identification would occur only when people are familiar with the culture. These considerations do not discredit the evidence for the value-as-antecedent hypothesis. Nonetheless, a longitudinal study spanning a longer time period is needed for a definitive evaluation of the identification-as-antecedent hypothesis. Second, the cultural identification measure in Study 3 (and in Study 1) is a one-item measure. Thus, its reliability is questionable. Third, in this study, we used a correlational design. Thus, some extraneous factors that were associated with value endorsement but were not assessed in the study may be responsible for the change in participants' cultural identification.

Given these concerns, in Studies 4 and 5, we tested the causal hypotheses with experienced members of a culture in controlled experimental settings using multiple measures of cultural identification. The focus of the studies was European American college students' identification with American culture. The students had lived in the United States for most of their life and were hence experienced in American culture.

Study 4

Following the value-as-antecedent hypothesis, making the importance of cultural values with high perceived cultural importance personally salient should increase people's identification with the culture. In Study 4, we manipulated the salience of important American values on the basis of perceived cultural importance by having American college students either promote or denounce these values. We predict that having participants promote or denounce values that are perceived to be important to America would make the importance of these values salient or accessible and hence increase identification with American culture. Moreover, when the importance of these values is challenged (vs. affirmed), an American may experience the challenge as a threat to his or her American identity and would be particularly motivated to engage in identity affirmation behaviors (Jetten et al., 2002). Similar effects are not expected to occur when the values being challenged (or promoted) are not perceived to be important to American culture.

The values that we used in Study 4 were identified from perceived cultural importance but not actual self-importance. In Studies 2 and 3, values with high-perceived cultural importance were consistently predictive of cultural identification, whereas values with high actual self-importance were oftentimes not related to cultural identification at all. Even when both types of values were related to cultural identification, as in Study 2, values with high perceived cultural importance had unique predictive effect on cultural identification, whereas values with high actual self-importance did not. With its more consistent role in cultural identification, we focused our attention on values identified from perceived cultural importance.

Method

Participants

Participants were 83 (20 men and 63 women) European American introductory psychology students at a public university in the midwestern United States. They had lived in the United States for an average of 18.97 years (*SD* = 2.28 years) and participated for course credit.

Manipulation

To manipulate the salience of core versus peripheral values in the experimental setting, we had the participants make a speech on the pertinent values. Additionally, to manipulate the need to affirm cultural values, we asked the participants to either promote or denounce the assigned values in their speech. The two manipulations created a 2 (value: core vs. peripheral) × 2 (speech: promotion vs. denouncement) between-participants design. Each participant attended an individual session and was randomly assigned to one of the four conditions. The participants were told that the session consisted of several different studies put together for administrative convenience. Prior to the experimental manipulation, American identification was measured. Next, the manipulation was presented under the cover of a pretest for a future study. Then, the participants were given the dependent measures, which involved a measure of perceived value importance (a manipulation check), a linguistic attitude measure of cultural affirmation, and a post-experimental measure of American identification. The participants were fully debriefed at the end of the study.

In a pilot study to identify core and peripheral American values based on perceived cultural importance, 100 American undergraduates rated the importance of the 56 Schwartz (1992) values to an average American on an 8-point scale ranging from 0 (*not important*) to 7 (*very important*). The two values (enjoying life, true friendship) with the highest ratings (*M* = 6.18, 5.69) were identified as the core

American values, whereas the two values (detachment, moderate) with the lowest ratings ($M = 3.15, 4.03$) were identified as the peripheral values.

In the manipulation, the experimenter explained that the researcher was planning for a future persuasion study on how speaker enthusiasm might affect persuasion. To prepare for the study, the researcher needed to collect speech samples from college students speaking on a topic very enthusiastically, and the participant was invited to provide one such speech sample. The experimenter presented to the participants four envelopes, each allegedly contained a possible topic for the speech. The topic was "enjoying life and true friendship are important" in the core value promotion condition, "enjoying life and true friendship are unimportant" in the core value denouncement condition, "detachment and being moderate are important" in the peripheral value promotion condition, and "detachment and being moderate are unimportant" in the peripheral value denouncement condition.

Next, the participants were given six main arguments, with three arguments for each of the two values in the topic. The participants were instructed to elaborate on the arguments using their personal experience. These main arguments were carefully selected to ensure that they would focus participants' attention on the target value in the topic instead of invoking other values. For example, one main argument under "true friendship is unimportant" was "friends are troublesome," and one main argument under "being moderate is important" was "it regulates your life." This procedure was particularly important in the value denouncement conditions, as participants might say a value was unimportant because other values were more important.

The participants were asked to think of an event in their experience that illustrated the main point and write down their relevant personal experience on the topic sheet. They were also told to tell their personal experiences as vividly as possible when they rehearsed the speech. The participants were left alone in the experimental room for 10 min to prepare their speech. At the end of the 10-min preparation, the experimenter went back into the room, switched on the recorder, and left the participant alone to give the 5-min speech into the recorder.

As noted, we predicted that making core values salient (by instructing the participants to speak either for or against core values) would increase cultural identification. We also predicted that instructing participants to denounce core values would create a need to affirm the threatened core values and hence increase the likelihood of engaging in identity affirmation strategies. It should be emphasized that these manipulations were not intended to change the perceived cultural importance of values. Instead, we contend that making core values salient is enough to increase level of cultural identification and being instructed to speak against the core values in one's own culture is sufficient to evoke identity affirmation behaviors.

Measures

Identification with American culture

Both before and after the manipulation, participants indicated their agreement to statements of American identification by marking on an analog scale (a horizontal line) anchored with *strongly disagree* and *strongly agree* at the two ends. To reduce consistency bias, the length of the analog scale in the pretest was different from that in the posttest. The items included "being an American is important to me," "I strongly identify with American culture," "I am proud of being an American," "I belong to American culture," and "I like American culture." The five items in the pretest were inserted randomly into 30 unrelated filler items to disguise the purpose of the pretest.

Premanipulation and postmanipulation identification were scored on a scale ranging from 0 to 1, by measuring the position of the check mark that the participants placed on the respective analog scale. The closer the identification score was to 1, the stronger the participant's identification with American culture. Both the pre- and postmanipulation measures of identification had satisfactory reliability (Cronbach's α = .95 and .97, respectively).

Measure of linguistic attitudes

One widely researched identity affirmation strategy is positive evaluation of the speech characteristics of one's cultural group. For example, in response to a cultural identity threat, Welsh may affirm their Welsh identity by evaluating speakers of Welsh more positively than speakers of English (Bourhis, Giles, & Tajfel, 1973). Accordingly, as a measure of identity affirmation, participants were given a chance to make positive evaluation of American English following the experimental manipulation.

Specifically, participants read about an aspiring author, Pat, who submitted his writings to various Web sites for amateur writers around the world for proofreading help and had recently submitted his writings to two Web sites. Participants then read the proofreading feedback from the editors of the two Web sites: Jessica from *The Literary Group* and Laurie from *The Literate*. The first part of the message contained a short letter from the editor that told Pat that the quality of the writing was acceptable but that he needed to improve his spelling. The second part of the message contained the editor's corrections of Pat's submission. The original writing contained mostly spelling errors, which mainly involved words that spell differently in British and American English (e.g., *flavour* vs. *flavor*, *centre* vs. *center*). One editor corrected the errors using British spelling, whereas the other editor corrected the errors using American spelling. The submissions to the two Web sites were travelogues that described two different places. Also, the wording of the editor letters and the layout of the messages were slightly different. The pairings of the submissions with the Web site layout and language of the Web site were counterbalanced.

After reading each message, the participants rated their impression of the editor on pairs of bipolar attributes on a 7-point (1–7) scale. For each pair, one attribute was anchored at 1, and the other attribute was anchored at 7. The attributes represented two major dimensions of person impression in linguistic attitude research: solidarity and social status (Stewart, Ryan, & Giles, 1985). The solidarity dimension consisted of pairs of person adjectives such as *not aggressive–aggressive* and *unfriendly–friendly*. The social status dimension consisted of adjective pairs such as *incompetent –competent* and *unintelligent–intelligent*. Past research has shown that individuals with a threatened cultural identity tend to affirm cultural identity by evaluating the linguistic ingroup (vs. the linguistic outgroup) more favorably on the solidarity dimension only (Stewart et al., 1985). The reliability of the solidarity measure for both American English and British English was satisfactory after dropping the aggressiveness item, thus leaving seven items for solidarity perception (Cronbach's α = .87 for both languages). The reliability of the social status measure was also satisfactory (Cronbach's α = .88 and .87 for British English and American English, respectively).

Value importance estimate

We expected the manipulation to change participants' cultural identification and linguistic preference. However, the manipulation should not change the perceived cultural importance of the values. To ensure that this was the case, participants were asked to rate six values: the two target values in their speech and four filler values. The filler values, selected from the pilot study described above, had comparable perceived cultural importance as the target values. Participants estimated how a typical American would rate the importance of each value to his or her life on an 8-point scale ranging from 0 (*not important*) to 7

(*very important*). Then, they estimated the percentage of Americans who would choose the value as one of their most important values.

Results

Value Importance Estimate

Participants in the core value conditions and the peripheral value conditions rated different values. Thus, we conducted the analyses for the core and peripheral value conditions separately. Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) showed that promoting or denouncing the core values (enjoying life, true friendship) did not change the perceived importance of these values to a typical American, $F(2, 38) = 0.48$, *ns*. Likewise, promoting or denouncing peripheral values (detachment, being moderate) did not change the perceived importance of these values to a typical American, $F(2, 39) = 1.87$, *ns*.

We repeated the analysis on the (arcsine transformed) estimated percentage of Americans who picked a particular value as one of their most important values. Participants who promoted the core values did not differ from those who denounced these values in the percentage estimates for enjoying life and true friendship, $F(2, 38) = 1.24$, *ns*. Likewise, promoting or denouncing the peripheral values did not alter the percentage estimates for detachment and being moderate, $F(2, 39) = 1.30$, *ns*. Thus, the manipulation did not change the values' perceived cultural importance.

Identification With American Culture

A 2 (value: core vs. peripheral) × 2 (speech: promotion vs. denouncement) general linear model controlling for mean-centered premanipulation identification was fitted to postmanipulation identification. As both promoting and denouncing a value should render the value salient, we expected participants who spoke on the important (vs. peripheral) values to show an increase in identification with American culture. The predicted value main effect was significant, $F(1, 78) = 3.90$, $p < .05$, $\eta p^2 = .05$. Controlling for premanipulation identification, participants who spoke about core American values ($M = 0.79$, $SD = 0.16$) were more identified with American culture after the speech than participants who spoke about peripheral American values ($M = 0.74$, $SD = 0.20$). The speech main effect and the Value × Speech interaction were not significant, $F(1, 78) = 0.01$ and 0.26, respectively, both *ns*. Consistent with the results from Study 3, making values high on perceived cultural importance salient increased American identification, even when the perceived cultural importance of these values did not change.

Linguistic Attitudes

Table 4 shows the effect of the manipulation on linguistic attitudes. Because the linguistic attitude measures tap identity affirmation responses subsequent to an identity threat, we would expect more identity affirmation responses only when the participants were asked to denounce values that were perceived to be important to American culture. As expected, a Language (American vs. British English) × Value (core vs. peripheral) × Speech (promotion vs. denouncement) mixed ANOVA showed a significant three-way interaction, $F(1, 79) = 4.24$, $p < .05$, $\eta p^2 = .05$. On the basis of the interaction, we performed a Language × Value mixed ANOVA for each of the two speech conditions. For participants who promoted values, none of the effects were significant, $Fs(1, 40) < 1.10$, all *ns*. Promoting core values or peripheral values did not affect attitudes toward American versus British English. For participants who denounced values, the Language × Value interaction was significant, $F(1, 39) = 5.79$, $p < .05$, $\eta p^2 = .13$. Participants in the core value denouncement condition perceived more solidarity in the American English ($M = 5.39$, $SD = 0.73$) than in the British English editor ($M = 4.71$, $SD = 0.96$), $t(19) = 2.30$, $p < .05$, Cohen's $d = 0.80$. Participants in the peripheral value denouncement condition did not have different solidarity

perception of the American English ($M = 4.90$, $SD = 0.82$) and the British English editors ($M = 5.20$, $SD = 1.02$), $t(20) = 1.06$, ns. This finding is consistent with the prediction that challenging the importance of values with high perceived cultural importance would evoke an identity threat and the attended identity affirmation strategy.

Table 4

Effects of Value Manipulation on Linguistic Attitudes

| | Manipulation condition | | | |
Variable	Core value promotion	Core value denouncement	Peripheral value promotion	Peripheral value denouncement
Solidarity				
American English				
M	5.10	5.39	4.92	4.90
SD	0.85	0.73	1.12	0.83
British English				
M	4.97	4.71	4.69	5.20
SD	0.87	0.96	0.78	1.02
Social status				
American English				
M	5.15	5.23	4.95	4.76
SD	0.70	0.80	0.67	0.95
British English				
M	4.70	4.90	4.41	4.73
SD	0.94	0.74	1.15	0.82

Effects of Value Manipulation on Linguistic Attitudes

For social status, the only significant effect in the Language × Value × Speech mixed ANOVA was the language main effect, $F(1, 79) = 8.57$, $p < .01$, $\eta p^2 = .10$. Participants attributed higher social status to the editor who used American English ($M = 5.02$, $SD = 0.79$) than to the editor who used British English ($M = 4.68$, $SD = 0.93$).

Discussion

Study 4 further explicated the causal role of values with high-perceived cultural importance in cultural identification. When values with high perceived cultural importance were salient (as when participants spoke for or against these values' importance), identification with American culture increased. Also, when participants denounced values with high perceived cultural importance, they experienced a threat to their American identity and subsequently affirmed their cultural identity by positively evaluating the solidarity of an American editor (vis-à-vis a British editor). A measure of the participants' personal values was not included after the manipulation. Therefore, we do not know whether participants' personal endorsement of the values has changed after the manipulation. Nonetheless, the results show that core cultural values as identified from perceived cultural importance have causal consequences on cultural identification processes.

Study 5

In Study 5, we tested the **identification**-as-antecedent hypothesis by manipulating American **identification** and assessing its effect on American students' value endorsement. We expected participants in the high-American **identification** condition to endorse American **values** with high **perceived cultural importance** more than participants in the low-**identification** condition.

21

Method

Participants

Participants were 112 (35 men and 77 women) European American introductory **psychology** students at a public university in the midwestern United States and participated for course requirement credit. They had lived in the United States for an average of 19.42 years (SD = 1.59 years).

Independent Variable

Participants were told that the researchers were interested in how people evaluated designer postcards. They were presented with a collage of pictures, allegedly a draft of a postcard designed by a graphic designer for the 1998 Art and History Festival held in New York City. Participants looked at the postcard for 1 min and then filled out the questionnaire with the postcard in front of them throughout the whole session. Half of them saw the high-identification postcard and the remaining half saw the low-identification postcard. The high-identification postcard depicted images of American culture: the first man on the moon, a sign of the historical Route 66, a photo of a baseball game, a map of the United States, a picture of the World Trade Center, and a photo of a Chevrolet. The phrase "embrace our cultural heritage" appeared in the middle of the picture. The low-identification postcard contained a picture of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum and four modern artworks unrelated to American culture. The phrase "embrace the arts" appeared in the middle of the picture.

Measures

The participants first rated the postcard's artistic appeal and their liking of it. Next, they responded to the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988), which contained 10 positive affect and 10 negative affect adjectives. They rated on a 5-point scale, ranging from 1 (*very slightly or not at all*) to 5 (*extremely*), the extent to which they felt the emotion described by the phrase "at the present moment." Both the Positive Affect and Negative Affect subscales had acceptable reliability (Cronbach's α = .84 and .79, respectively). This measure was included to check whether the manipulation affected participants' mood.

Next, the participants rated the importance of the 56 Schwartz (1992) values on an 8-point scale ranging from 0 (*not important*) to 7 (*very important*) twice, once according to the importance of the values to the self and a second time according to their estimates of the importance of the values to an average American. The order of the two sets of ratings was counterbalanced.

The participants also reported their identification with American culture by stating their degree of agreement to four identification items on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). The items were "I strongly identify with American culture," "I am proud of being an American," "I belong to American culture," and "I like American culture." The reliability of the four items was satisfactory (Cronbach's α = .91). Finally, as a manipulation check, participants were asked to look at the picture again and write down what the picture reminded them of and what things came to mind when they looked at the picture.

Results and Discussion

Manipulation Checks and Affect

Participants' responses to the question about what came to mind when they looked at the picture were coded for whether they had mentioned America or American culture. A response was coded as having mentioned America/American culture if it included any of the following words or phrases: "America," "American," "The United States," "U.S.," "our culture," "our nation," and "our country." A majority (69.6%) of participants in the high-identification condition mentioned America/American culture, whereas very few (5.4%) participants in the low-identification condition did, $\chi^2(1, N = 112) = 47.84$, $p < .001$. Thus, the American identity was more accessible in the high- (vs. low-) identification condition.

We performed an Identification Condition (high vs. low) $\times$ Order (self first vs. American first) between-participants ANOVA on American identification. The identification condition effects (both main effect and interaction) were not significant, $Fs(1, 108) < 3.36$, all ns. Thus, our manipulation was partially successful; it changed American identity salience but did not change the strength of American identification.

An Affect (positive vs. negative) $\times$ Identification Condition (high vs. low) mixed ANOVA showed that participants experienced more positive affect ($M = 2.53$, $SD = 0.73$) than negative affect ($M = 1.36$, $SD = 0.44$), $F(1, 110) = 239.36$, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = .69$. The identification condition main effect and the Affect $\times$ Identification Condition interaction were not significant, $Fs(1, 110) = 1.88$, ns. Therefore, the manipulation did not affect participants' mood.

The low-identification picture ($M = 5.93$, $SD = 1.89$) was more artistically appealing than the high-identification picture ($M = 4.45$, $SD = 1.88$), $t(110) = 4.17$, $p < .001$, Cohen's $d = 0.79$. However, participants in the two conditions did not differ in their picture liking ($M = 5.50$, $SD = 1.97$ for low identification; $M = 5.43$, $SD = 1.59$ for high identification), $t(110) = 0.21$, ns.

Value Endorsement

We identified the core and peripheral American values for the four Identification $\times$ Order conditions separately. Within each condition, we computed actual self-importance by taking the mean self-endorsement ratings and perceived cultural importance by taking the mean importance estimate to an average American. The 10 values with the highest and the 10 values with the lowest actual self-importance were respectively identified as core and peripheral values on the basis of actual self-importance for that condition. The 10 values with the highest and the 10 values with the lowest perceived cultural importance were respectively identified as core and peripheral values on the basis of perceived cultural importance for that condition. We computed participants' endorsement of the core and peripheral values of their own condition.

We performed a Value (core vs. peripheral) $\times$ Identification Condition (high vs. low) $\times$ Order (self first vs. American first) mixed ANOVA on value endorsement. For values based on actual self-importance, none of the effects involving identification condition was significant, $F(1, 108) = 0.57$, 0.44, 0.001, 0.0002, all ns, respectively, for the identification condition main effect, the Value $\times$ Identification Condition interaction, the Identification Condition $\times$ Order interaction, and the Value $\times$ Identification Condition $\times$ Order interaction. For values based on perceived cultural importance, again, none of the effects involving identification condition was significant, $F(1, 108) = 0.48$, 0.92, 0.59, and 0.86, all ns, respectively, for the identification condition main effect, the Value $\times$ Identification Condition interaction, the Identification Condition $\times$ Order interaction, and the Value $\times$ Identification Condition $\times$ Order

interaction. Thus, manipulating cultural identification did not change endorsement of any values, which failed to support the identification-as-antecedent hypothesis.

Replication of Study 2 Results

Although the findings showed that increased identity salience was not accompanied by change in core values, Study 2 results were replicated. We regressed American identification on endorsement of actual self-important values and perceived culture-important values. For participants who completed the self-value ratings first, endorsement of perceived culture-important values predicted American identification in the model ($\beta = .62$), $t(56) = 4.48$, $p < .001$, whereas endorsement of actual self-important values did not ($\beta = -.13$), $t(56) = -0.92$, *ns*. Similarly, for participants who estimated the American value ratings first, endorsement of perceived culture-important values predicted American identification ($\beta = .63$), $t(50) = 3.41$, $p = .001$, whereas endorsement of actual self-important values did not ($\beta = -.13$), $t(50) = -0.71$, *ns*.

We found similar results with value profiles. As in Study 2, we correlated each participant's personal value profile with the actual value profile ($r$person-actual) and with the perceived value profile ($r$person-perceived) from their own condition. For participants who completed the self-value ratings first, multiple regression with the two correlations as predictors of American identification showed a significant effect of $r$person-perceived ($\beta = .44$), $t(56) = 3.71$, $p < .001$, but not of $r$person-actual ($\beta = -.05$), $t(56) = -0.45$, *ns*. Similarly, for participants who estimated the American value ratings first, the effect of $r$person-perceived was significant ($\beta = .57$), $t(50) = 4.93$, $p < .001$, whereas that of $r$person-actual was not ($\beta = -.05$), $t(50) = -0.46$, *ns*. Therefore, perceived cultural importance had a unique contribution in predicting cultural identification beyond the effect of actual self-importance. Again, the order of value ratings did not affect the relationship.

Summary

As in Study 3, we failed to find conclusive evidence for the identity-as-antecedent hypothesis. The **identification** manipulation increased identity salience but did not change the endorsement of core and peripheral American **values**. Unfortunately, the manipulation did not change strength of **cultural identification**. Hence, the question of whether an increased strength of **identification** would cause an increase in value endorsement cannot be answered. However, Study 5 replicated the results of Study 2 by showing that **cultural identification** was positively associated with people's endorsement of **values** with high **perceived cultural importance**. This replication is heartening because it shows that the relationship between personal endorsement of **values** with high **perceived cultural importance** and **cultural identification** remains significant when the dependent measure was **identification** with national culture (vs. a student culture), when **identification** was measured with a reliable multiple-item measure, and when the order of **self** and **cultural** ratings was counterbalanced.

General Discussion

The primary goal of the present research was to introduce perceived cultural importance as an alternative to the conventional way of identifying core cultural values through actual self-importance. Whereas *actual self-importance* refers to a cultural group's actual endorsement of values, *perceived cultural importance* refers to a cultural group's representation of the group's endorsement of values. Although core cultural values could be those that are high on actual self-importance or perceived cultural importance, our findings consistently showed that when it comes to cultural identification, values of high perceived

cultural importance (a) play a more important role than values of high actual self-importance and (b) serve as the causal basis influencing cultural identification.

Studies 1 and 2 demonstrated the separability of the actual self-important values and perceived culture-important values. Study 2 further demonstrated the basic relationship between value endorsement and cultural identification. This study showed that endorsement of values with high perceived cultural importance predicted cultural identification better than endorsement of values with high actual self-importance. In this study, the more the students endorsed values with high perceived cultural importance, the more they identified with their university's student culture. Endorsement of values with high actual self-importance had little incremental predictive value above and beyond endorsement of values with high perceived cultural importance. These results were replicated in Study 3, which used a longitudinal design, and in Study 5, in which the order of the self-rating and the other-rating tasks were counterbalanced. The results from these two studies eliminated the concern that the results of Study 2 are the result of order effect. The results of Study 5 also extend the generality of our findings from identification with student culture to identification with national culture.

In Studies 3–5, we tested the causal role of values with high-perceived cultural importance in cultural identification. The value-as-antecedent hypothesis received direct support. In Study 3, students' Time 1 endorsement of values of high perceived cultural importance (but not endorsement of values of high actual self-importance) predicted cultural identification at Time 2 in a cross-lagged panel design. In Study 4, the salience of American values with high perceived cultural importance caused participants to identify with American culture more, whereas a threat to the importance of these values resulted in the deployment of identity affirmation strategy. In short, the findings from the five studies converge to the following conclusion: A cultural group's representations of a culture give meanings to cultural identity. As such, identification with a culture involves internalizing the collectively held cultural elements and positioning the self within this common cultural representation. Thus, a person who identifies with a culture would likely align the self with the commonly represented culture, which serves as a basis for cultural identification.

We did not find evidence to support the identification-as-antecedent hypothesis. In Study 3, participants' cultural identification did not predict their change in value endorsement. The null finding in this study could be caused by the inexperience of the participants in the culture and the short time span of the study. In Study 5, experimental manipulation of American identification did not result in differences in endorsement of American values with high perceived cultural importance. The manipulation check showed that we have successfully manipulated the salience of American identity, but the identification measure did not show the intended difference in identification. Whether this indicates a weak manipulation or a diminished difference between the conditions after participants responded to the value surveys would need clarification from future studies. However, in light of past research on self-stereotyping showing that salience of social identity results in people endorsing the prototypic characteristics of the social group (e.g., Hogg & Turner, 1987) and the methodological concerns of our two studies, we await further studies to draw conclusions on the validity of the identification-as-antecedent hypothesis.

Taken together, our findings suggest that for a person to identify with a culture, there should be an alignment between the person's personal values and the culture's values. More important, the alignment only matters for cultural values with high perceived cultural importance.

Cultural Knowledge and Cultural Self

Some researchers have made a distinction between cultural knowledge and cultural self (Hong et al., in press). Cultural knowledge consists of cognitive representations of a culture's beliefs, values, life practices, norms, and other characteristics that are shared among people in the same culture. The cultural self is formed when a person has internalized the knowledge tradition in the culture and chosen to define the self with reference to the knowledge tradition. People need certain knowledge of their culture in order to identify with a culture; however, acquisition of extensive knowledge of a culture does not entail identification with the culture. An American anthropologist who spends considerable time on a Samoan island may be fluent in Samoan culture. Yet, this anthropologist may not highly identify with Samoan culture. Even people who are typically labeled as members of a cultural group (e.g., Americans, Japanese, and Irish) may not strongly identify with the knowledge tradition in their group.

Past research on cultural knowledge (Hong, Morris, Chiu, & Benet-Martinez, 2000) and cultural self (e.g., Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1989) has not examined the connection between cultural knowledge and cultural self systematically. The present research illustrates one nuanced relationship between cultural knowledge and people's cultural self. Not all members of a cultural group have equal identification with the culture. Identification with a culture depends on the endorsement of the core knowledge tradition, in this case, values with high perceived importance to the culture.

The nuanced relationship between cultural knowledge and cultural self provides an interface between two major research perspectives in the social psychology of culture. The culture and self perspective assumes that culture influences behaviors through internalized cultural values (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1989). The shared reality perspective (Hardin & Higgins, 1996) emphasizes normative influences on behaviors, positing that people do not need to internalize culture in order for culture to influence behavior. As long as people in a culture have collective representations of the culture, they will position their behaviors in the directions of such representations. Our findings suggest an interaction between cultural self and shared reality. Specifically, people have collective representations of the importance of certain knowledge in their culture. They would then appropriate such knowledge to construct their cultural self, particularly when they find such knowledge personally meaningful (when they endorse the values commonly perceived to be highly important in their culture).

Implications for Measuring Cultures

Research on culture has relied heavily on self-reports on Likert scales to identify characteristics that allow for meaningful cross-cultural comparisons. The most widely studied cultural dimensions are individualism and collectivism. On the basis of Easterners' and Westerners' mean responses to the scales of individualism and collectivism, researchers have categorized most Eastern cultures into collectivist cultures and Western cultures into individualist cultures. However, despite the large number of studies comparing different cultures on these dimensions and the common belief in the field that European Americans are more individualistic and less collectivistic than cultural groups such as East Asians and Latinos, studies in which cultural differences are tested on these dimensions do not consistently reveal this pattern. Our findings in Study 1 serve as an example. When we compared American students' own values with Hong Kong Chinese students' own values, values that were more important among American students were mostly individualist values, whereas values that were more important among Hong Kong students were mostly collectivist values. However, there are exceptions to this generalization. Some individualist values (autonomy) are highly popular among Hong Kong Chinese students, and some collectivist values (striving for common good) are more popular among European Americans. In fact, a meta-analysis on studies of individualism and collectivism (Oyserman, Coon, & Kemmelmeier, 2002) shows that European Americans are not more individualistic than Latinos, nor are they less collectivistic

than Japanese. Also, when cultural differences are found, they are often specific to certain content of the measure used.

Some researchers argue that such inconsistencies are because of people's tendency to compare themselves with others in their own culture instead of making responses about the self (Heine, Lehman, Peng, & Greenholtz, 2002; Peng, Nisbett, & Wong, 1997). For example, according to Heine and colleagues (Heine et al., 2002), when participants make their responses, their natural reference group is other people in the same culture. Japanese participants compare themselves with fellow Japanese and conclude that they themselves are less collectivistic than their fellow Japanese, whereas American participants compare themselves with fellow Americans and conclude that they themselves are more collectivistic than their fellow Americans. This would then result in a "counterintuitive" finding, with Americans being either more collectivistic than or as collectivistic as Japanese. Thus, the presence of reference group effect creates noise in the measure of true cultural characteristics for meaningful cross-cultural comparisons.

Our findings offer a different view on this issue by distinguishing between reality and representations. According to Heine et al. (2002), when respondents spontaneously reference the collective representations in their culture, their responses to a Likert scale measure of values will be contaminated and distorted. Thus, researchers need to discount the effect of the reference group to restore the true scores of a culture from the group mean of the participants' own responses to a value survey. Our analysis suggests that the reference group effect, instead of being noise per se, may represent important normative aspects of culture. First, in Study 1, although actual value endorsement norms measured by actual self-importance did not differentiate American culture from Hong Kong culture very consistently on the dimension of individualism and collectivism (a finding consistent with Oyserman et al.'s, 2002, conclusion), the prevailing perceived value norms among American participants are more consistent with cultural psychologists' intuitions about East–West differences in values. In the eyes of American participants, Americans more consistently cherished individualist values, and Hong Kong Chinese more consistently cherished collectivist values. One might argue that such responses are cultural stereotypes and therefore should not be taken seriously. However, as our findings illustrate, these "cultural stereotypes" are integral parts of the common beliefs shared among cultural members that make up culture (McIntyre, Lyons, Clark, & Kashima, 2004), and they may have real consequences on the way people construct their cultural self. Instead of dismissing group-perceived norms as noise, cultural psychologists should treat them as substantive parts of a culture and study their implications for various cultural processes.

Limitations and Future Directions

As a first step to illustrate the utility of perceived cultural importance in the study of culture, we have limited our investigation to self-reports of cultural value importance. We were able to show that perceived cultural importance is more predictive of cultural identification than the conventional measure of culture using actual self-importance. However, there are various methodological problems associated with the use of self-reports (Schwarz, 1999) that may result in biases in our measures. For example, it is possible that asking participants to rate the importance of the values to different targets in the same study session created a demand characteristic that leads to deliberate contrast between the different targets. More studies in which different measures are used would be needed to fully address this issue.

We have also limited our studies mainly to American college students. The aspect of culture that interests us most in the present studies is the representations of culture that people who have some experience in the culture hold. As such, we consider American college students' representations of the culture of their own university and of America an appropriate first step for us to examine how representations of culture may influence cultural identification. Although these students can represent neither the student culture of their university nor American culture, we have shown that their representations of these cultures, although

biased, played an important role in their identification with the cultures. As we have posited in the introduction, in a more representative cultural sample, actual self-important values may be more predictive of cultural identification. However, the perceptions that people hold about a culture should continue to have strong influence on cultural identity processes.

Also, a person's cultural experience consists of more than just values. A culture involves values, beliefs, and also life practices and behaviors. In the realm of cultural life practices, actual self-important practices refer to the common behaviors and practices that most people in the culture engage in under similar circumstances, whereas perceived culture-important practices are what most people in the culture believe others would carry out. The study of self-reported values is our first step to uncover the rich dynamics between collective cultural representations and individual psychological processes. Whether our findings can be replicated when measures other than self-reports are used, and when other cultural contents such as behaviors and practices are examined, is an empirical question. In this connection, in a recent study, we were able to extend the perceived culture importance approach to predicting identification with political culture, implicit political attitudes, and voting intention in the 2004 U.S. Presidential election (Wan, Chiu, & Tam, 2005).

In this article, we used mean importance ratings as criterion to identify core cultural values. In doing so, we have ignored the within-culture variations in people's personal characteristics and their perceptions about the culture. However, no two people in a culture have exactly the same personal characteristics, nor do they hold exactly the same representation of the culture. Therefore, there would be variations in what people considered to be the values important to themselves and to the culture. Culture theorists consider the most central aspect of culture to be the most widely shared by members of the culture (Brumann, 1999; Sperber, 1996). In other words, core values should have not only high mean importance ratings by members of the culture but also high agreement in the ratings. The study of dispersion in identifying core cultural values would help researchers further understand the role that a cultural collective's common representations play in cultural processes.

Finally, our studies have demonstrated that perceived cultural importance has additional utility in the study of cultural identification beyond that of actual self-importance. However, perceived cultural importance may not always be a better measure of cultural characteristics than actual self-importance. An important question, then, to ask is when actual self-importance would be a better predictor of psychological processes than perceived cultural importance and vice versa. The basis of actual self-importance is the similarity in cultural members' personal characteristics. The basis of perceived cultural importance is the similarity in cultural members' representations of the culture. The former refers to what culture members are actually like, whereas the latter refers to what culture members think the culture is like. Therefore, it is possible that perceived cultural importance would have a stronger association with processes moderated by social sanctions, whereas actual self-importance would have a stronger association with processes moderated by people's personal need to be unique and free from social regulation. Future research that addresses this possibility would be another important contribution to researchers' understanding of the relationship between culture and self.

Conclusion

Humans are cultural beings. By virtue of living in a collaboratively constructed symbolic environment, people have acquired knowledge of how widely shared different values are in their community. Such knowledge makes up a shared reality and provides individuals with a frame of reference to make sense of their social experiences as well as valuable cultural resources that individuals appropriate in their cultural identification process.

Footnotes

[1] Of the 10 values with highest actual self-importance at Time 1, 9 were also the top 10 values on actual self-importance at Time 2. "Freedom" dropped out of the top 10 actual self-important values from Time 1 to Time 2, whereas "loyal" became one of the top 10 actual self-important values at Time 2. Similarly, 9 of the top 10 perceived culture-important values at Time 1 remained in the top 10 at Time 2. Between Time 1 and Time 2, "choosing own goals" dropped out of the top 10 perceived culture-important values, whereas "wealth" joined the top 10 perceived culture-important values.

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