

Identity motives and cultural priming: Cultural (dis)identification in assimilative and contrastive responses

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Abstract

The present article explores whether effects of cultural primes are influenced by identity motives as well as by construct accessibility. The authors hypothesized that assimilative responses (shifting one's judgments toward the norm of the primed culture) are driven by identification motives, whereas contrastive responses (shifting away from this norm) are driven by disidentification motives. Evidence for this claim was attained in reanalyses of past data sets and a new study of Chinese American biculturals, using improved measures of identification and disidentification motives. Consistent with the identity-motive hypotheses, assimilative responses to American-culture primes occurred for high (but not low) identifiers with American culture, and contrastive responses to Chinese-culture primes occurred for high (but not low) disidentifiers with Chinese culture. Results disconfirmed an alternative account predicting that contrast effects hinge on trait self-consciousness. Consistent with an accessibility saturation account, judgment patterns already heightened in accessibility by the task structure were not made more likely by priming.

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In order to gain insight about how and when culture influences judgment, psychologists have increasingly studied individuals who have internalized two cultures, biculturals. Biculturals report the everyday experience of switching between mental frames as they move between cultural settings (LaFromboise, Coleman, & Gerton, 1993). In priming experiments capturing this phenomenon, biculturals exposed to iconic images of one culture temporarily exhibit the characteristic biases of that culture on ostensibly unrelated judgment tasks (e.g., Hong, Morris, Chiu, & Benet-Martínez, 2000; Verkuyten & Pouliasi, 2002; Wong & Hong, 2005). Whereas most bicultural priming studies have observed assimilative responses, in which judgments shift toward the norms of the primed culture, results with some groups have failed to replicate the pattern

(Benet-Martínez, Leu, Lee, & Morris, 2002; Cheng, Lee, & Benet-Martínez, 2006). This raises the question of what moderate these responses differences. We investigate whether they depend on motivational orientations related to cultural identities.

This question is key to understanding cultural priming effects and frame-switching phenomena. Early accounts of cultural priming effects focused only on the accessibility of cultural knowledge (Hong & Chiu, 2001). From this view, the priming task creates excitation in the person's cognitive network related to a given culture, and this increases the accessibility of its judgment schemas, making them more likely to become activated as guides to subsequent judgments. This model accounts for assimilative effects in which priming a culture causes biculturals to behave more in line with that culture than they would otherwise. It also explains why cultural priming has more effect in increasing patterns that have a lower baseline accessibility rather than patterns already high in

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accessibility (Gardner, Gabriel, & Lee, 1999). However, the adequacy of this purely cognitive account has been called into question by some recent findings. Several studies have documented that some bicultural individuals show contrastive rather than assimilative responses; that is, they shift away from the norms of the primed culture (Benet-Martinez et al., 2002; Cheng et al., 2006). This dynamic of reacting against a cultural cue, rather than following its lead, appears in the autobiographical writing of many bicultural individuals (e.g., Durczak, 1997). A similar phenomenon of reacting against a cultural cue has also been observed in experiments with biculturals varying language of instruction (Bond, 1982).

This evidence suggests that biculturals' responses to cultural cues involve more than automatic cognitive processes; they may depend on their motives to embrace or disavow particular cultural identities. In the present article, we propose that biculturals are not mere chameleons who automatically shift colors to match the setting. Instead, shifting depends on their feelings about what colors are their true colors—on their motives toward the two cultures. Moreover, we believe that assimilative and contrastive responses to cues reflect qualitatively different identity motives, namely, identification as opposed to disidentification. Our proposal is that the positive motive of identification toward a culture fosters an assimilation response, whereas the negative motive of disidentification engenders a contrastive response. To derive these hypotheses, related literatures on culture, motives, and identity are reviewed below.

Cultural identification

Several research areas have yielded findings suggesting that cultural influences depend on a person's active motives (Metcalf & Mischel, 1999). The existential motive of buffering mortality anxiety leads people to act in more culturally traditional ways than they would otherwise (Greenberg, Pyszczynski, Solomon, Simon, & Breus, 1994). Similarly, the epistemic motive of need for closure leads to heightened conformity to the norms of one's culture in attributional judgments (Chiu, Morris, Hong, & Menon, 2000) and conflict resolution decisions (Fu et al., 2007). Biculturals with high levels of these existential and epistemic motives tend to conform to whichever of their two cultures has been made most salient by the situation (Halloran & Kashima, 2004; Kosic, Kruglanski, Pierro, & Mannetti, 2004).

In addition to these general motives, people have specific motives that refer to particular groups. Social identity theory holds that members of a group differ in their level of identification with the group (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). People with high levels of this motivation are more likely than other members to exhibit group-characteristic behaviors, especially when group identity has been made salient by a situational cue (Terry & Hogg, 1996). Although most research has focused on smaller groups, such as university

or club memberships, some studies have examined individual differences in identification with one's nationality as a predictor of conformity to national cultural norms. Jetten, Postmes, and McAuliffe (2002) found that among Americans, higher identification is associated with greater endorsement of individualism, whereas among Indonesians, it is associated with greater endorsement of collectivism.

Drawing on these prior ideas, we propose that biculturals who strongly identify with a given culture would respond assimilatively to cues of that culture. Relevant to this hypothesis is a study by Jung (2006), who included a measure of "importance of identity" ($\alpha = 0.73$) of Korean culture (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992) in a priming study of Korean American biculturals. This study used the standard attribution task in which participants judged the degree to which a group is influencing an individual in several ambiguous animated displays (Morris & Peng, 1994). In this task, participants from East Asian collectivist cultures tend to see more group influence. An analysis regressing attributions on the interaction of prime condition (American or Korean) with level of Korean identification found an interaction ($\beta = .49$), $t(78) = 2.43$, $p < .02$, such that a stronger assimilation effect was observed for the high-Korean identifiers. That is, they were more likely than others to apply group attribution in the Korean-prime condition than in the American-prime condition.

This result is consistent with the hypothesis that identification motives engender assimilation effects, yet it is far from conclusive. Without a control condition, we cannot identify whether it was the Korean prime or the American prime to which high and low identifiers were differentially sensitive. Without measures of other individual-difference dimensions, we cannot test alternative accounts of why some participants responded to the prime manipulation more than others. Before moving to describe how we tested the assimilation effect hypothesis more incisively, we first consider past research that elucidates the motives involved in contrast effects.

Cultural disidentification

If high identification engenders assimilative responses, then what is the motivational orientation that underlies contrastive responses? Is low identification a sufficient explanation? Social identity research suggests not. For example, Pickett, Bonner, and Coleman (2002) found that whereas high identifiers increase conformity to group norms in situations that cue group identity, low identifiers show no response to the situational cue. The absence of a positive motive toward a group is not enough. Contrastive responses would seem to require the presence of a negative motive toward a group.

The notion of negative motives toward one's identity group figures prominently in classic social psychological theory (Kelley, 1952; Newcomb, 1950). They were first posited in Newcomb's (1950) argument that people use posi-

tive and negative reference groups to define themselves and present themselves to others. A *negative reference group* is one that “the person is motivated to oppose, or one of which he or she does not want to be treated as a member” (p. 226). The self-presentational use of such groups was further elaborated by Goffman (1963), who described disidentification as the desire to distance oneself from a group that one might otherwise be associated with by observers. Goffman explained that a person who feels disidentified with a group will respond to situations in which the group’s norms are salient by acting contrary to these norms. Thus, we label the attitude toward a negative reference group as disidentification. An ethnographic study of disidentification by Kibria (2000) found that many Chinese American biculturals are motivated to resist being recognized or treated as “Asian”. For example, a Chinese American professional described his discomfort in situations when work colleagues would ask him for recommendations about local Chinese restaurants or expect him to speak to waiters in Cantonese in such a restaurant. His reaction was to act like he had no more knowledge of Chinese cuisine or language than any other American. In another example, a Chinese American student reported a strategy of acting “exactly the opposite” of the other Chinese students in his class when culture becomes salient. In these examples, a cue to Chinese culture impels the person not to enact the culturally expected behavior but to contradict it.

In the immigrant acculturation literature, the stance of negatively identifying with both one’s heritage and host cultures is termed *marginalization*. For a Chinese American, marginalization would be measured by agreement with statements such as “I prefer social activities that involve neither Americans nor Chinese” (Berry, Kim, Power, Young, & Bujaki, 1989). Data from a Chinese American bicultural priming study that included this measure (Benet-Martinez et al., 2002, Study 2) can be reanalyzed for a preliminary exploration of cognitive consequences of disidentification. An index of group attribution, averaged across three stimulus items ($\alpha = 0.69$), showed an effect of the interaction of prime condition and the marginalization scale ($\beta = .30$), $t(111) = 2.42$, $p < .02$. In particular, high-marginalizing individuals decreased their group attribution in the Chinese-prime condition than the American-prime condition. This result is consistent with the hypothesis that disidentification motives spur contrast effects, although more incisive evidence would require a no-prime control condition and independent measures of disidentification motives toward each culture.

The present study

To test our proposal about specific identity motives that propel assimilative and contrastive responses to cultural primes, we developed scales measuring biculturals’ identification motives and disidentification motives toward American and Chinese cultures, respectively. We first outline key

premises in our conceptualization. First, identification and disidentification with a given culture need not be inverse; that is, although one motive could be high and the other low, a bicultural might feel neither motive toward the culture (indifference) or feel both toward the culture (ambivalence). Second, these motives are not necessarily symmetrical for a bicultural’s two cultures. Measures of immigrant identification have moved away from treating a person’s stances toward the host and heritage cultures as a package (Berry et al., 1989) to treating them as separate, orthogonal dimensions (Ryder, Alden, & Paulhus, 2000). Third, responses to primes of each culture should depend on distinctive motivational dispositions. Motives about Culture A should determine responses to primes of Culture A and not of Culture B. And further, within the cultural categories, the assimilative responses, and the disidentification motive should engender contrastive responses.

However, in refining our predictions, it is important to consider the role of construct accessibility as well as motives. Our judgment task, which asks “To what extent is the individual’s behavior influenced by the group?” by itself makes group attribution an accessible construct (Schwarz, 1999). Given that priming tends to make less of a difference when the construct is already accessible (Gardner et al., 1999), we may see effects only when the motivated response to the cue would push judgment away from the default answer—that is, toward reduced group attribution. Hence, the two effects that we can predict, considering motivation and accessibility, are:

1. An assimilation effect in which the American prime causes high-American culture identifiers to shift toward reduced group attribution, and
2. A contrast effect in which the Chinese prime causes high-Chinese culture disidentifiers to shift toward reduced group attribution.

In addition to testing our account of the motivational dimensions that moderate biculturals’ varying responses to cultural cues, we also sought to test several alternative explanations for dimensions that determine assimilative as opposed to contrastive responses. One alternative explanation is that contrastive responses to cues are more likely among individuals who are dispositionally high in self-consciousness. The theme that biculturals can be prone to self-consciousness about identity expectations is evident in autobiographies of (Durczak, 1997) and interviews with contemporary biculturals (LaFromboise et al., 1993). It is possible that reactance against cultural cues may arise in individuals who are high in self-consciousness and anxiety. Self-conscious concern (see Fenigstein, Scheier, & Buss, 1975) about situational biases on one’s behavior can give rise to overcorrection (Wegner & Petty, 1997), which results in contrast effects. Another possibility involving self-consciousness is suggested by Carver and Humphries’ (1981) finding that Cuban Americans high in dispositional

self-consciousness were more likely to hold Castro's government as a negative reference group. In summary, we explored the role of self-consciousness as an alternative for or antecedent of disidentification.

Second, several prior priming studies have linked individual differences in contrastive versus assimilative responses to biculturals' level of identity integration. This measure, in the case of Chinese Americans, the extent to which one perceives the Chinese and American identities as conflicting or compatible. Benet-Martinez et al. (2002) found that contrastive responses are moderated by this measure of identity conflict. This suggests that the anxiety aspect of self-consciousness may drive the contrast effects. Cheng et al. (2006) found a more complex pattern that high-conflict individuals respond contrastively to positive but not negative valenced primes. They suggested that mismatch between the valence of the primes and one's predominant personal experiences may trigger contrastive responses. Thus, our study includes also measures of identity integration and self-consciousness.

Another point on which our account diverges from the identity conflict account is whether assimilation versus contrast tendencies should be symmetrical across the two prime conditions—that is, whether an assimilation response to a prime of Culture A goes along with an assimilation response to a prime of Culture B. Symmetry has been assumed in past studies (e.g., Benet-Martinez et al., 2002; Cheng et al., 2006) because the individual-difference dimension studied (identity conflict) pertains to both cultures. We do not assume this symmetry. Hence, we include a control condition so that responses to each prime condition can be measured independently. We posit that biculturals may exhibit contrast responses to primes of one of their cultures while exhibiting assimilation responses to primes of the other culture, depending on their specific identification and disidentification motives.

Method

Participants and procedure

The sample consisted of 90 Chinese American individuals (31 men and 59 women; $M = 25.4$, $SD = 7.46$) drawn from the campus of an Urban American University. All participants were either born in a Chinese country (People's Republic of China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, or Macao) and have lived, on average, about nine years in the United States ($M = 9.41$, $SD = 5.43$) or born in an American household in which a Chinese dialect was spoken (21 second generation; 69 first generation). We did not observe main effects or interaction effects of generation. Participants were recruited by means of campus e-mails and flyers and were each paid \$12 for their participation.

Upon arriving at the laboratory room, participants were told that the session would be conducted by several different graduate students and would involve four independent tasks on the computer. The experiment materials were

administered to participants on computer terminals running Media Lab experimental software. Participants started the experiment by filling a 20-item scale assessing their attitude toward the Chinese and American cultural identities in a random order. Drawing on related measures in past research (e.g., Hogg & Hains, 1996; Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992), we developed five items tapping identification and disidentification with Chinese and American cultures, respectively. Participants rated these statements on a 6-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*). Then, they were given an unrelated task of answering filler questions for about 3 min.

After the questionnaire section, participants were asked to do in an ostensibly unrelated study. They were randomly assigned to three experimental conditions: the control condition, the American-priming condition, and the Chinese-priming condition. In the control condition, participants were shown six drawings of geometric figures and asked to indicate the shape and the shadow. In the Chinese- and American-priming conditions, participants saw six iconic images related to the culture (e.g., a Chinese dragon, the Great Wall vs. the American flag, Superman) and were asked to briefly describe the picture and the culture the pictures symbolize.

Participants were then given an allegedly unrelated third task. They watched three animation displays of a single fish swimming in front of a group of fish. After watching each display, participants responded to a 6-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*) to indicate their agreement with the statement "The single fish is influenced by the group (e.g., chased, teased, or pressured by others)." This question is framed in terms of group attribution as the default frame, the type in which cultural differences are most consistently observed (for a review, see, Choi, Nisbett, & Norenzayan, 1999). Participants' attribution ratings across the three fish displays were averaged and used as the critical dependent measure ($\alpha = 0.65$, $M = 2.94$, $SD = 1.35$).

Afterward, they were given another set of questionnaires, including a six-item mood measure, bicultural identity conflict measure ($\alpha = 0.71$, $M = 3.19$, $SD = 1.04$), self-consciousness, and the demographic background variables. The self-consciousness scale (Fenigstein et al., 1975) consists of three dimensions: public self-consciousness ($\alpha = 0.77$, $M = 3.27$, $SD = 0.69$); private self-consciousness ($\alpha = 0.69$, $M = 3.34$, $SD = 0.55$); and anxiety ($\alpha = 0.76$, $M = 2.93$, $SD = 0.62$). The study ended with an adjusted funneled debriefing procedure suggested by Bargh and Chartrand (2000). No participant recognized the relationship between the priming task and the attribution task.

Scale development

To examine the novel scales for identification and disidentification with Chinese and American cultures, we first submitted the 20 items to an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) using a principal components model with varimax

rotation. Results supported the premise of four distinct dimensions. To refine the scales, six items that cross-loaded on more than one factor were deleted, and a second EFA was run. The Appendix displays the resulting factor structure. To test the structural premise—that a person's disidentification motives are distinct from identification motives (and not just their inverse)—we then conducted a confirmatory factor analysis. For each culture, we compared one-factor and two-factor models. The one-factor model is nested with the two-factor model, so we subtracted the smaller from the larger chi-square value and did the same for the degrees of freedom to compare fit across the two models (Hayduk, 1987). The superiority of the two-factor model was indicated by a significant $\Delta\chi^2(1, N = 90) = 7.27, p < .006$, for Chinese culture and, $\Delta\chi^2(1, N = 90) = 30.98, p < .001$, for American culture. The reliability of the scales was supported by Cronbach's alpha coefficients that were appreciable considering the relatively few items ($\alpha_{\text{Chinese identification}} = 0.84, M = 4.78, SD = 0.98$; $\alpha_{\text{Chinese disidentification}} = 0.61, M = 2.58, SD = 1.00$; $\alpha_{\text{American identification}} = 0.82, M = 4.07, SD = 1.01$; $\alpha_{\text{American disidentification}} = 0.54, M = 4.25, SD = 0.92$).

Results

Intercorrelations of independent variables

The correlations among the individual-difference measures are shown in Table 1. Consistent with our conceptualization of identity motives, high levels of identification and disidentification are not mutually exclusive. These motives have only a slight negative correlation, for Chinese culture ($r = -.23, p < .05$) and American culture ($r = -.20, p < .06$). Except for the marginal association between the two disidentification motives ($r = .19, p < .08$), the motives to Chinese culture and the motives to American culture are not associated ($p_s > .2$). This supports our assumption that motives to one culture are independent from motives to another culture. Not surprisingly, the variable of years

lived in the United States is negatively associated with Chinese identification ($r = -.31, p < .005$) and positively with American identification ($r = .51, p < .001$). It is interesting to note that public self-consciousness is positively associated with participants' motives about Chinese culture, both identification ($r = .30, p < .002$) and disidentification ($r = .19, p < .07$). Self-conscious anxiety likewise correlated with Chinese disidentification ($r = .22, p < .05$). Although modest in size, these positive correlations highlight that self-consciousness may be associated with disidentification and needs to be examined as a potential alternative account.

Effects of the priming on mood

Given that past research (Cheng et al., 2006) has linked assimilation and contrast effects to the emotional valence of cultural primes, it is important to check that our experiment did not manipulate the valence of cues along with their cultural content. We conducted a multivariate analysis of variance to test the effect of priming conditions and their interactions with the four motives on the six emotion variables—feeling good, happy, pleasant, excited, energetic, and aroused. None of them differed across the priming conditions (all $F_s < 1$).

Identity motives hypotheses

To test our hypotheses that identity motives engender different responses to cultural primes, we tested whether individual-difference variables moderate the effects of the cultural primes. We created dummy variables for the Chinese-prime and the American-prime conditions, and the interactions of these with the individual-difference variables were entered into regression analyses (Baron & Kenny, 1986). There was neither main effect of identity motives ($p_s > .1$) nor main effect of prime condition on group attribution ($M_{\text{Chinese}} = 2.93, M_{\text{control}} = 3.31, M_{\text{American}} = 2.88$).

Table 1
Means, standard deviations, and correlations among study variables

Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Sex (female)	.66	.48										
2. Age	25.40	7.46	-.06									
3. Years in US	9.41	6.43	.03	.19 ^a								
6. Chinese identification	4.76	.98	.16	.13	-.31 ^{**}							
7. Chinese disidentification	2.60	1.00	-.14	-.09	.05	-.23 [*]						
8. American identification	4.09	.99	-.01	.19 ^a	.51 ^{***}	.08	.05					
9. American disidentification	4.21	.90	.09	-.05	-.17	.06	.19 ^a	-.20 ^a				
10. BII—conflict	3.19	1.04	-.12	.02	-.13	-.05	.48 ^{***}	-.02	.24 [*]			
11. Public self-consciousness	3.27	.69	.18 ^a	-.32 ^{**}	-.10	.30 ^{**}	.19 ^a	.15	-.06	.16		
12. Private self-consciousness	3.34	.55	.03	-.17	.08	-.02	.09	.17	.07	.18 ^a	.49 ^{***}	
13. Anxiety	2.93	.62	.05	-.12	-.02	.07	.22 [*]	-.05	.06	.10	.41 ^{***}	.29 ^{**}

Note. $N = 90$.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

*** $p < .001$.

^a $p < .1$ (two-tailed).

Consistent with our hypotheses, two interaction terms were significant, American Identification \times American Prime, reflecting an assimilation response to the American prime moderated by American identification ($\beta = -.32$), $t(89) = -2.16$, $p < .03$, and Chinese Disidentification \times Chinese Prime, reflecting a contrast effect to the Chinese prime moderated by Chinese identification ($\beta = .25$), $t(89) = -1.88$, $p < .05$. The other two possible interactions between motives and primes were not significant ($\beta_{\text{Chinese Identification} \times \text{Prime}} = .02$), $t(89) = 0.11$, $p > .5$; ($\beta_{\text{American Disidentification} \times \text{Prime}} = .13$), $t(89) = -1.21$, $p > .2$. It is worth noting that these priming are those that move away from the group attribution, as expected from the logic of accessibility saturation. The above four interaction terms were tested simultaneously in a regression. Further analyses including all possible interactions between motives about one culture and primes of the other culture did not change the aforementioned findings.

To test whether the interaction effects reflect the specifically predicted causal patterns (that assimilation responses are engendered by identification motives and contrastive responses by disidentification motives), we conducted a median split on the individual-difference variables and graphed the interactions using these dichotomous motive factors. As Fig. 1 shows, the assimilation response to the American prime occurs for participants possessing strong American identification but not for those lacking this motive. That is, for strong American identifiers, the American prime shifts judgments toward the American norm of low group attribution ($M_{\text{Chinese}} = 3.45$, $SD = 1.75$; $M_{\text{Control}} = 3.75$, $SD = 1.61$; $M_{\text{American}} = 2.56$, $SD = 1.51$).

Likewise, for the second interaction effect, the pattern is as predicted. As Fig. 2 shows, the contrast response to the Chinese prime occurred for participants possessing strong Chinese disidentification but not for those lacking this

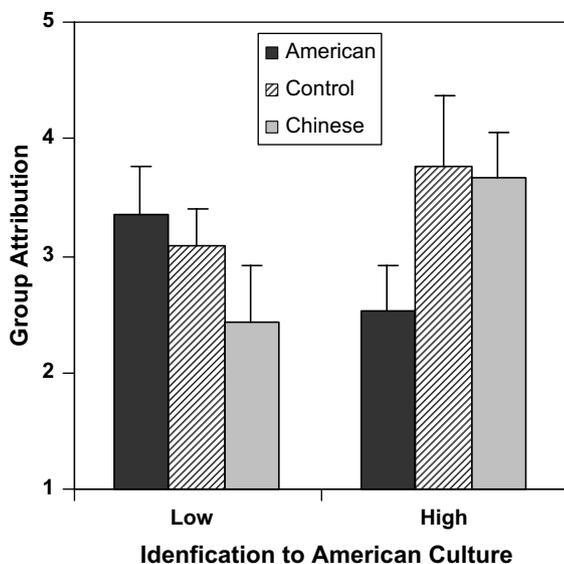


Fig. 1. The moderating effect of identification motive on American culture prime. The Identification Motive is drawn at the median split. Error bar presents the standard error of the mean.

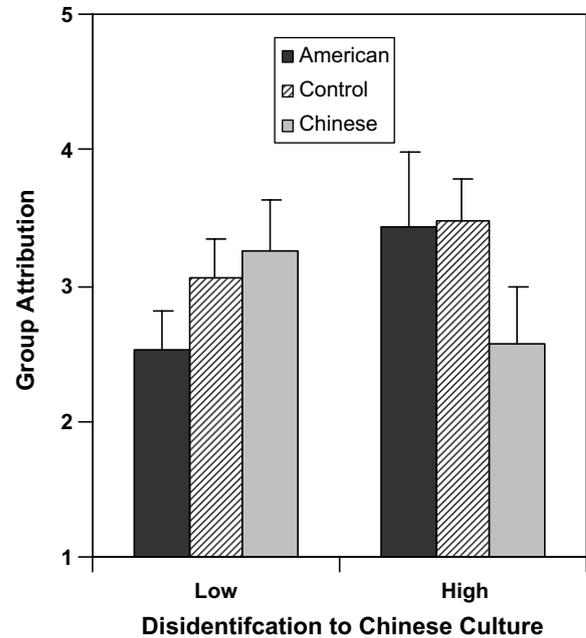


Fig. 2. The moderating effect of disidentification motive on Chinese culture prime. Disidentification motive is drawn at the median split. Error bars represent the standard error of the mean.

motive. That is, for strong Chinese disidentifiers, the Chinese prime shifts judgments away from the Chinese norm of high group attribution ($M_{\text{Chinese}} = 2.47$, $SD = 1.56$; $M_{\text{Control}} = 3.49$, $SD = 1.26$; $M_{\text{American}} = 3.42$, $SD = 1.87$).

To investigate the role of self-consciousness, we first confirmed that none of the three trait dimensions (public self-consciousness, private self-consciousness, and self-conscious anxiety) were affected by the manipulation. We then tested whether they interacted with the two prime manipulations. None were significant (all $p_s > .1$). Hence, there is no support for the idea that individual differences in biculturals' responses to primes come from different kinds of self-consciousness rather than from different identity motives.

It is also important to investigate whether identity motives can elucidate previous findings of an association between bicultural identity conflict and contrastive responses to cultural primes. We replicated the previous moderating effect of cultural conflict on the Chinese prime ($\beta = .46$), $t(89) = -2.43$, $p < .02$, although not on the American prime ($\beta = -.17$, $p > .5$). Fig. 3 shows that this interaction is driven by high-identity conflict participants' contrast response to the Chinese prime ($M_{\text{Chinese}} = 2.40$, $SD = 1.27$; $M_{\text{control}} = 3.19$, $SD = 1.70$; $M_{\text{American}} = 2.89$, $SD = 1.62$).

Because both identity conflict and Chinese disidentification significantly moderate the effect of Chinese prime, we conducted mediation tests to explore the casual order of these two variables in leading to the contrast response. We first confirmed that disidentification and identity conflicts are significantly correlated ($r = .46$, $p = .05$). Next, we conducted a regression analysis by regressing the interaction term of Identity Conflict \times Chinese Prime together

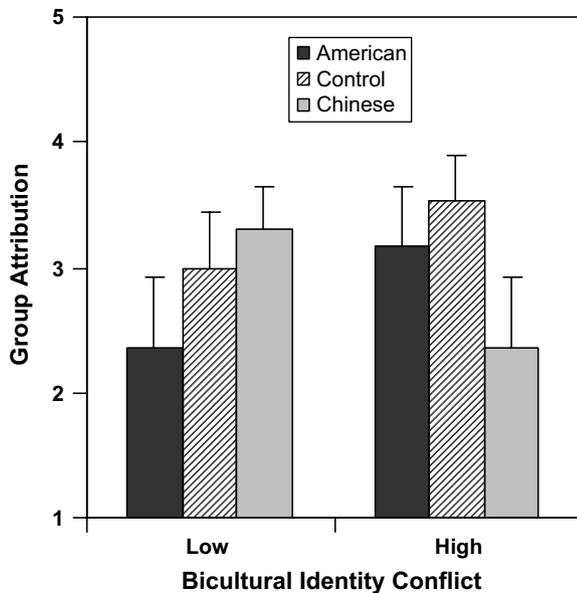


Fig. 3. The moderating effect of bicultural identity conflict. Cultural identity conflict is drawn at the median split. Error bar presents the standard error of the mean.

with the interaction term of Chinese Disidentification \times Chinese Prime in predicting group attribution. The moderating effect of identity conflict remained significant ($\beta = -.32$, $t(89) = -2.08$, $p < .03$), but the moderating effect of Chinese disidentification motive became insignificant ($\beta = -.11$, $t(89) = -0.64$, $p = .52$). The mediation role of identify conflict is further supported by the significant reduction on the effect of Chinese identification, Sobel $Z = -2.07$, $p < .04$. A test of the reverse direction mediation shows that the effect of identity conflict does not decrease significantly after controlling for the effect of Chinese disidentification, Sobel $Z = .32$, $p > .5$. This suggests that past research was correct in conceptualizing biculturals' identity conflict as a proximal individual-difference variable in understanding contrastive responses to primes; however, the results qualify past claims by showing that identity conflict need not moderate primes for both cultures symmetrically. These results also suggest that feelings of conflict between one's two cultures may arise from prior feelings of disidentification with one of them.

Discussion

Our findings highlight that cultural influence on behavior depends on not only cool cognitions but also hot motivations (Metcalfe & Mischel, 1999). Biculturals' responses to cultural primes hinge on their specific identity motives with regard to the primed cultures. Identification motives engender assimilative shifts toward norms of the primed culture, and disidentification motives engender contrastive shifts away from norms of the primed culture. Our findings also suggest that disidentification with one's culture is not simply a mechanism of general self-consciousness. The null

effect of self-consciousness trusts weighs against accounts based on conscious overcorrection processes.

This role of motives in the current findings resonates with those in other priming literatures. For example, Aarts and Dijksterhuis (2003) found that priming the "library" situation led participants to behave more quietly, yet this was primarily the case for participants who had the motive or goal of visiting the library. Cesario, Plaks, and Higgins (2006) found that participants' implicit attitudes toward the elderly moderate the effect of priming stereotypical words on participants' walking speed. Most participants have a positive motive toward the elderly and hence move toward the elderly behavioral norm, yet those participants with a negative motive toward the elderly show an opposite effect—they shift toward faster walking speed after an elderly prime. Whereas the prior research focused on motives as goals and attitude towards others, our study examines another important form of motives—cultural identity. Both the positive and the negative identity motives can significantly moderate the effect of cultural primes.

In addition, our four-fold model of biculturals' identity motives may provide a psychological account to explain the cross-generation differences. Among the first-generation participants ($n = 69$), identification and disidentification with Chinese culture were negatively correlated ($r = -.43$, $p < .001$). In the first-generation group, the number of years lived in the United States was positively correlated with American-culture identification ($r = .48$, $p < .001$) and was negatively correlated with American-culture disidentification ($r = -.27$, $p < .03$). Chinese-culture identification was positively correlated with American-culture disidentification ($r = .30$, $p < .02$). Yet among second-generation participants ($n = 21$), they were uncorrelated, which is consistent with past results concerning identity attitudes among Chinese Americans (Tsai, Ying, & Lee, 2000). We also found in our data support for a change in motivational dispositions between generations by comparing mean levels of motives. First-generation participants were higher in identification with Chinese culture ($M_{1st} = 4.93$, $M_{2nd} = 4.19$), $F(1, 88) = 10.14$, $p < .01$, whereas second-generation participants were higher in identification with American culture ($M_{1st} = 3.94$, $M_{2nd} = 4.59$), $F(1, 88) = 7.55$, $p < .01$.

Nevertheless, evidence in the present paper is not without limitations. Future studies should examine the micro-processes through which identity motives drive assimilative versus contrast responses to primes. The process underlying the effect of identity motives may be akin to the stage of judged usability in the knowledge activation model (e.g. Higgins, 1996; Martin, Strack, & Stapel, 2001). In this process, accessible schemas are applied only if they are considered relevant and appropriate. When people identify with the culture, they judge the accessible cultural schema as relevant and appropriate to apply. Conversely, if they disidentify with the culture, they may feel their freedom is infringed upon by cues to the culture and subsequently judge the accessible cultural schema as inappropriate. This

effect of disidentification may resemble the process of psychological reactance (Behem, 1966) that leads people to acting in the opposite of what they feel they are being cued to do and often occurs preconsciously (Chartrand, Dalton, & Fitzsimons, 2007). Future studies might explore further motives that contribute to the reactance response. In addition, future research should closely investigate the effect of self-consciousness and its interaction with different priming methods. Recent research on the prime-to-behavior effects showed that high self-consciousness can elicit both assimilation and contrast effects depending on such factors as priming methods and self-monitoring levels (Wheeler, Morrison, DeMarree, & Petty, 2008).

In summary, individuals' chronic motivation about their cultural identities is a crucial variable in understanding when and how cultural primes influence their behavior. Motives determine how people play off the cultural currents surrounding them when navigating the river of social life. Some adhere to the cultural mainstream. Others negotiate the eddy currents in its margins. To understand these different trajectories, cultural psychologists need to capture different identity motives that impel their respective journeys.

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Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary data associated with this article can be found, in the online version, at [doi:10.1016/j.jesp.2008.02.001](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2008.02.001).

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