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Importance of Personal Goals in People with Independent Versus Interdependent Selves

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Abstract. This paper investigates how the importance attached to personal goals differs according to the person's independent or interdependent self. Results of one questionnaire study and two priming studies showed that, overall, independents considered their goals more important than interdependents. A closer analysis revealed, however, that interdependents assigned more relevance to social goals (e.g., harmony with others), than to individual goals (e.g., to be successful), whereas independents attached equal importance to both types of goals.

Keywords: personal goals, independent versus interdependent selves

Goals are often defined as internal representations of desired states. They lend meaning and direction to our existence. Failure to attain certain goals can cause pain, whereas successful accomplishment may bring pleasure (Kruglanski, 1996). The concept of goals is at the core of major psychological theories. The list of theories that incorporate goal constructs is substantial (e.g., *personal strivings*; Emmons, 1989; *current concerns*; Klinger, 1995; *personal projects*; Little, 1983). In this paper, we look at how importance attached to personal goals relates to differences in the self.

Markus and Kitayama (1991) distinguished between two ways in which people construe their selves. In the independent self, unique internal attributes and abilities that separate the person from others are at the core of the definition of the self. In contrast, interdependents see themselves as embedded in and interconnected with others. Here, social relations or the social groups of which the person is a part primarily define the self. Although there are many studies that address the ways in which differences in the self are connected to differences in cognition and emotion (see Hannover & Kühnen, in press, for a review), to date only very few studies have investigated how these differences relate to the importance individuals attach to personal goals.

From the above described differentiation between independents and interdependents, a straightforward prediction can be made. It is conceivable that independents and inter-

dependents attach particular relevance to different types of goals: While independents should consider goals that refer to attainment of abilities or expression of attributes that distinguish the self from others (individual goals) as most important, interdependents can be expected to consider goals that address strivings for belongingness to social groups or the realization of harmonious close interpersonal relationships (social goals) as particularly important. This prediction is consistent with the theorizing by Markus and Kitayama (1991), who proposed (but never tested empirically) that independents are more likely to be motivated to self-actualize and to differentiate themselves from others (because that is what makes them "independent"), whereas interdependents are expected to be more socially motivated: they want to feel "interdependent" and, therefore, feel the need to attain strong relations with significant others and to improve interconnectedness (see also Hannover, Birkner, & Pöhlmann, 2006).

An additional prediction as to the interrelatedness between self and the importance of personal goals can be deduced from research on the factors impacting goal accomplishment (e.g., Higgins, 1996; Koestner, Lekes, Powers, & Chicoine, 2002; Sheldon & Elliot, 1999). Here, it was shown that the likelihood that a person achieves his or her goals increases with the extent to which the person sets goals that reflect personal values and interests as opposed to goals adopted for external reasons such as social pressure or others' expectations. In applying this reasoning to the

differentiation between independency and interdependency of the self, Downie, Koestner, Horber, and Haga (2006) found evidence that irrespective of the goal content being individual or social, independents more likely attributed their present personal goals to intrinsic and identified sources (e.g., because of the fun and enjoyment which the goal will provide you), whereas interdependents were more inclined to consider external reasons as relevant motivational sources for their goal-pursuit (e.g., because somebody else wants you to).

From this research, the expectation is that independents generally attach more relevance to their personal goals (irrespective of their contents) than interdependents, since independency relates to pushing oneself in achieving those goals that reflect one's own interests and ideals. This assumption is also consistent with the finding that independency is related to a promotion focus (Lee, Aaker, & Gardner, 2000), since promotion focus is typically characterized by the desire to fulfill one's aspirations and ideals and to strive for one's goals in general (Higgins, 1996).

In this article we want to test both assumptions: (1) Independents generally consider their personal goals more important than interdependents, regardless of the goals' contents; and (2) independents and interdependents attach particular relevance to goals that pertain to the contents dominating in their respective self-construal.

Overview of the Studies

To test these assumptions, in Study 1 we compared individuals who differ in their chronic self being predominantly independent or interdependent. In Studies 2 and 3, we additionally increased the accessibility of independency or interdependency via experimental priming. In previous studies it has been shown that the relative accessibility of independent vs. interdependent self-knowledge can both be measured (i.e., via an individual difference measure, see Singelis' Self-Construal Scale, 1994) and manipulated (i.e., by making the concepts of independency [e.g., "I am unique"] or interdependency [e.g., "We are together"] situationally more accessible; e.g., Kühnen, Hannover, & Schubert, 2001; Trafimow, Triandis, & Goto, 1991). In our studies we used both individual difference scores (chronic) as well as a priming technique (temporary) to measure and manipulate the accessibility of independency vs. interdependency.

Our predictions were as follows: (1) Compared to interdependents, independents assign more relevance to their goals in general, irrespective of goal-content. This should be manifested in a statistical main effect for self-construal. (2) Independents assign more relevance to individual goals than to social ones, whereas interdependents assign more relevance to social goals than to individual ones. This should be manifested in a statistical interaction between self-construal and goal content.

Pilot Study

To produce a list of possible individual vs. social goal-contents, a pilot study was conducted. Sixty-five students (11 male, 54 female; age $M = 25.48$, $SD = 7.66$) were asked to fill out an open-ended goal questionnaire. They had to write down spontaneously as many different goals as possible, but at least three, in each of the following four domains: career and study, family and friends, personality traits or personal growth, and other. The personal goal hierarchy of Wadsworth and Ford (1983) was used as a guideline for choosing these four domains. The differentiation between individual and social goals is consistent with earlier taxonomies of goals (Chulef, Read, & Walsh, 2001; Wicker, Lambert, Richardson, & Kahler, 1984).

To derive a list of individual and social goals, participants' answers to the open-ended questions were subjected to a qualitative analysis. From the 124 goals spontaneously produced by our participants, 61 goals were selected for further

Table 1. Contents of individual and social goals

Type of goal	Content
Individual goals	It is my goal to stay faithful to myself in different situations
	It is my goal to be self-confident
	It is my goal to be a unique individual
	It is my goal to stay to my decisions, whatever other people think of it
	It is my goal to be independent
	It is my goal to follow further my own interests, despite family
	It is my goal to be strong-minded
	It is my goal to be successful
	It is my goal not to let my opinion be influenced by others
	It is my goal to be ambitious
	It is my goal to give my opinion straightforwardly
Social goals	It is my goal to be there for my parents and to look after them when it is necessary
	It is my goal to identify myself to a high degree with my partner
	It is my goal to show my friends that they can count on me
	It is my goal to have time for people who are important to me
	It is my goal to keep the harmony in my family
	It is my goal to be a valuable member of my workgroup at the university
	It is my goal to keep contact with my family and friends at any rate
	It is my goal to be a reliable person
	It is my goal to contribute to a good collegial atmosphere
	It is my goal to support my family and friends as much as possible

study, excluding those goals that were too general (e.g., "I want to be happy") or too idiosyncratic (e.g., "I want to sell my parents' house"). The remaining 61 goals were presented to four independent raters (three researchers and one trained student) who had considerable knowledge on the topic. They were asked to rate each goal on a 5-point rating scale from (1) *very individual* to (5) *very social*. A bipolar rating scale was chosen to ensure that only those goals were selected that were rated as individual (and not social) in content, and vice versa. For each goal the mean of the ratings was calculated. Goals with a mean rating between 1 and 2 were selected as individual goals and those with a mean rating between 4 and 5 as social goals (all with a standard deviation of less than one), resulting in a final number of 21 goals (11 individual goals and 10 social ones). The exact wording of the goals used for the main study can be found in Table 1.

Study 1

Method

Participants

Seventy-six (23 male, 53 female; age $M = 25.39$, $SD = 5.88$) students participated in the study and received course credits for their participation.

Materials and Procedure

To assess the chronic self, research participants were asked to complete the Self-Construal Scale (Singelis, 1994). This questionnaire consists of a 12-item independence subscale (e.g., "I am comfortable with being singled out for praise or rewards") and a 12-item interdependence subscale (e.g., "I will sacrifice my self-interest for the benefit of the group I am in"). The items are rated on a 5-point scale from 1 (*strongly agree*) to 5 (*strongly disagree*).

After 1 h, during which other unrelated tests were completed (to prevent priming effects from the Self-Construal Scale), the goal-questionnaire was introduced (see Table 1). To measure the relevance participants assigned to the different goals, they were asked to rate the importance of each goal from 1 (*not at all important*) to 5 (*very important*) and to rate how regretful they would be if they could not achieve the goal from 1 (*not regretful at all*) to 5 (*very regretful*). To exclude order effects, the two questions were presented in two separate lists and the 21 goals were intermixed in random order in each list.

Results and Discussion

The reliabilities of the importance and the regretful scales for the individual and social goals, respectively, were high

(.74 < Cronbach's α < .81) and correlations between the two scales were also high ($r = .84$, $p < .001$ and $r = .64$, $p < .001$ for the social and the individual goals, respectively). The two self-construal measures did not correlated with each other, $r = .02$, $p = .88$. The reliability of the independence and interdependence scales were Cronbach's $\alpha = .52$ and .67, respectively.

In order to test whether independents and interdependents differed in the relevance they assigned to different contents of goals, we created a variable that would allow us to assign participants to the group of independents or the group of interdependents. To achieve this, we followed a computation rule used in prior research (e.g., Hannover et al. 2006; Holland, Roeder, van Baaren, Brandt, & Hannover, 2004; Pöhlmann, Carranza, Hannover, & Iyengar, 2007). First, a z-score was computed for each of the participants on both the independent and interdependent scales of the Self-Construal Scale. Thereafter, the z-score of each participant on the interdependent scale was subtracted from the z-score on the independent scale. A split was made at zero: Participants with a positive score were coded as having a dominant independent self ($N = 38$), while those with a negative score were coded as having a dominant interdependent self ($N = 38$). This difference-score was computed to put the emphasis on that self-knowledge (independent or interdependent) that is more accessible as compared to the other.

Because the above presented intercorrelations of the answering scales were high and the three-way interaction turned out to be not significant, $F(1, 74) = .46$, $p = .50$, an aggregated scale of the two question-lists (important and regretful) was calculated (Cronbach's $\alpha = .86$ for the individual goals and .91 for the social goals). In the following we will refer to this aggregate scale as the "relevance" scale.

A $2 \times 2 \times 2$ MANOVA with self-construal (independent/interdependent) as between-person variable and goal content (individual/social) and answering scale (importance/regretful) as within-person variables revealed a marginally significant main effect for self-construal. Indepen-
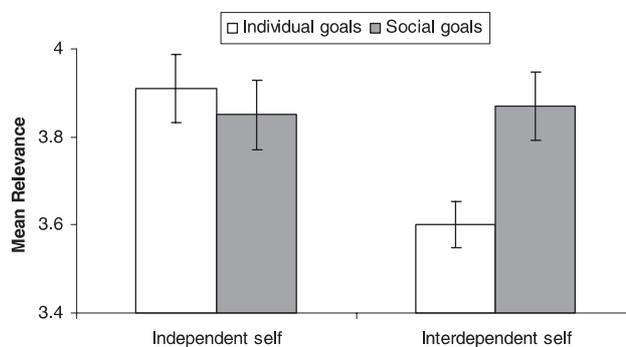

Figure 1. Mean relevance of goals as a function of self-construal (measured with Self-Construal Scale) and type of goals (Study 1). *Note:* Error bars indicate ± 1 SE of the mean.

dents assigned more relevance to goals in general ($M = 3.88$, $SD = .39$) than interdependents ($M = 3.73$, $SD = .32$), $F(1, 74) = 3.15$, $p = .08$. Furthermore, a significant interaction between self-construal and goal content was obtained, $F(1, 74) = 7.68$, $p = .01$. Results of the paired samples t-tests demonstrated that independents considered individual ($M = 3.91$, $SD = .47$) and social goals ($M = 3.85$, $SD = .48$) equally relevant, $t(36) = .68$, $p = .50$, whereas interdependents considered social goals ($M = 3.87$, $SD = .47$) as more relevant than individual goals ($M = 3.60$, $SD = .32$), $t(37) = -3.43$, $p = .001$ (see Figure 1)[1].

The results of the first study show that independents tend to assign more relevance to personal goals in general, however, this effect was only marginally significant. Closer analysis revealed that interdependents assigned more relevance to social goals than to individual ones, while independents described both types of goals as equally important.

Study 2

In our second study we wanted to further scrutinize these findings. To that end, we conducted a more direct test of our assumption that independency vs. interdependency of the self has a causal impact on the relevance someone attaches to personal goals by including an experimental priming of self-knowledge. The same two predictions were tested as in Study 1. For the chronic self-construal measure, they were identical to the ones in Study 1. Applied to the experimental priming, the two predictions read as follows: (1) The independency prime strengthens the importance attached to individual goals and the interdependency prime strengthens the importance attached to social goals, and (2) as compared to the interdependency prime, the independency prime strengthens the importance attached to both individual and social goals.

Method

Participants

A total of 82 (11 male, 71 female; age $M = 25.86$, $SD = 5.45$) undergraduate students participated in the study for course credits.

Materials and Procedure

Participants were told that the questionnaire concerned the importance of different goals. In order to make either independent or interdependent self-knowledge temporarily accessible, the priming method of Brewer and Gardner (1996) was used. Participants were asked to read a short story and to circle the pronouns. Participants in the independency priming condition were asked to circle the pronouns "I," "me," "mine," in order to increase the accessibility of independent self-knowledge. To prime interdependent self-knowledge, participants had to circle the pronouns "we," "us," "our."

Participants were randomly assigned to the independent or interdependent self prime condition. Following the priming manipulation they were asked to fill out the same goal-questionnaires that were used in Study 1. As the relevance of the different types of goals was measured by the use of two different scales (the importance and the regretful scale), a different pronoun-circling-priming story had to be read prior to each goal-questionnaire, in order to make sure that the effectiveness of the prime would be maintained. The first story dealt with someone going into the city and the second one concerned activities on a farm. Both stories have been used and validated in other studies (Brewer & Gardner, 1996; Haberstroh, Oyserman, Schwarz, Kühnen, & Ji, 2002; Kühnen et al., 2001).

After participants had filled out the two goal-questionnaires, they were asked to write a short story of about 300 words, which included the words bike, forest, scarf, flat, and cat, in order to undo the effect of the priming completely. Subsequently, participants had to fill in the Self-Construal Scale (Singelis, 1994) to measure chronic independency/interdependency self-construal.

Results and Discussion

The correlations between the importance and the regretful scales for the individual goals and for the social goals were high ($r = .84$, $p < .001$ and $r = .79$, $p < .001$, respectively). The reliabilities of the two goal questionnaires and the averaged "relevance" scales for both the individual and social goals proved to be high (all Cronbach's αs > .78). The reliability of the independence and interdependence scales were Cronbach's $\alpha = .51$ and .67, respectively, and the two scales did not correlate with each other, $r = -.04$, $p = .70$. Forty participants received the independent self prime and

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[1]   Follow-up regression analyses address the point that independency and interdependency can cooccur within one individual (Singelis, 1994; Trafimow et al., 1991). Consistent with the MANOVA reported in Study 1, the results of a multivariate multiple-regression analysis (Greene, 2007) showed that only the independence subscale ($\beta = .57$, $p < .001$), but not the interdependence subscale ($\beta = -.08$, $p = .46$), predicted the relevance of individual goals significantly, adjusted $R^2 = .24$, $F(3, 73) = 11.67$, $p < .001$. In contrast, both the independence ($\beta = .35$, $p = .01$) and the interdependence scale predicted the relevance of social goals ($\beta = .57$, $p < .001$), adjusted R-square = .34, $F(3, 73) = 19.02$, $p < .001$. Wald tests showed that the parameter estimates for the independence scale did not differ across the two equations, $F(1, 73) = 2.41$, $p = .12$, but that the parameter estimates for the interdependence scale did, $F(1, 73) = 26.84$, $p < .001$, which reveals the expected interaction effect

42 the interdependent self prime. Using the same computation rule as in Study 1, 43 participants had a predominant independent self-construal and 39 had a predominant interdependent self-construal.

The $2 \times 2 \times 2$ MANOVA with primed self-construal (independent/interdependent) and predominant self-construal (independent/interdependent) as between-person variables and goal content (individual/social) as within-person variable showed a significant main effect for prime, $F(1, 78) = 3.93$, $p = .05$. Participants who had received an independent self prime assigned more relevance to both types of goals ($M = 3.89$, $SD = .42$) than participants who had received an interdependent self prime ($M = 3.71$, $SD = .38$). The two-way interaction between primed self-construal and content of goals proved not to be significant, $F(1, 78) = 1.15$, $p = .29$. The two-way interaction between predominant self-construal (measured via the Self-Construal Scale) and goal-content was significant, $F(1, 78) = 16.84$, $p < .001$. Paired samples t-tests demonstrated, as in Study 1, that independents considered individual goals ($M = 3.72$, $SD = .52$) as relevant as social goals ($M = 3.79$, $SD = .51$), $t(42) = -.91$, $p = .37$, whereas interdependents attached more relevance to social goals ($M = 4.13$, $SD = .42$) than to individual goals ($M = 3.56$, $SD = .49$), $t(38) = -6.50$, $p < .001$ (see Figure 2).[2]

The results showed that following the priming for independent self-knowledge, participants considered personal goals to be more relevant, in general, than after the priming for interdependent self-knowledge. The priming for independent or interdependent self-knowledge did not strengthen the relevance attached to the respective goal type. Consistent with the results of Study 1, we found that predomi-
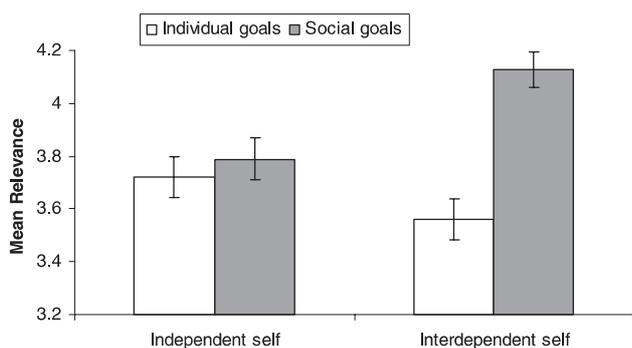
nant independents found both types of goals equally relevant, whereas predominant interdependents assigned more relevance to social goals than to individual ones.

It could be argued, however, that the priming effect we have found was the result of an increase of self-focused attention or thoughts about personal goals (Duval & Wicklund, 1972): As Wiekens and Stapel's (2008) work suggests, circling the pronouns "I," "me," or "mine" (but not circling the pronouns "we," "us," and "our") may have increased participants' private self-awareness. In Study 3 this alternative interpretation is addressed.

Study 3

Instead of using a priming method that is directly related to the self (as was the case for the independency self prime in Study 2), we used short stories to prime independent or interdependent self-knowledge. These stories were written in the third person, which makes it more distant from one's own self. This should prevent the elicitation of self-focused attention or of any thoughts related to one's own goals and goal pursuit.

Method

Participants

Fifty-six (16 male, 38 female; age $M = 26.54$, $SD = 4.72$) undergraduate students participated and received course credits for their participation. The participants were randomly assigned to an independent self prime condition or an interdependent self prime condition.

Materials and Procedure

The procedure was identical to the one used in Study 2, with the only difference that the priming method of Trafimow et al. (1991) was applied. To prime the independent or interdependent self, participants had to read a short story about the warrior Sostoras, who had to decide who to put in command of a detachment of soldiers sent to aid his superior Sargon I. In the independent self prime condition the participants read that Sostoras decided to send a very talented general, so Sostoras' own prestige would increase and he would be rewarded for sending such an excellent general. In the interdependent self prime condition Sosto-

Figure 2. Mean relevance of goals as a function of self-construal (measured with Self-Construal Scale) and type of goals (Study 2). *Note:* Error bars indicate ± 1 SE of the mean.

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[2]   The multivariate multiple-regression analysis showed, consistent with the MANOVA, that only the independence subscale ($\beta = .56$, $p < .001$), but not the interdependence subscale ($\beta = .013$, $p = .91$), predicted the relevance of individual goals significantly, adjusted $R^2 = .19$, $F(3, 79) = 9.43$, $p < .001$. The relevance of social goals was predicted by the interdependence scale ($\beta = .76$, $p < .001$), but not by the independence scale ($\beta = .10$, $p = .33$), adjusted $R^2 = .44$, $F(2, 79) = 31.70$, $p < .001$. Wald tests showed that the parameter estimates for the independence and interdependence scales differed across the two equations, $F(1, 79) = 12.62$, $p < .001$, and, $F(1, 79) = 39.50$, $p < .001$, respectively, which reveals an interaction effect for both scales. The unexpected effect for the independence subscale was, however, much smaller than the predicted one for the interdependence subscale.

ras decided to send a member of his family, which would increase the power and prestige of his family and Sostoras' loyalty to his family would be proven.

Because of the use of two different scales, a different story had to be read prior to each goal-questionnaire, in order to make sure that the effectiveness of the prime would be maintained. Therefore, one new story was created in addition to the Sostoras story. In the process of creating this story, it was kept in mind that the structure and the amount of advantages in favor of the decision were equal (see Appendix A for the exact story). In the exit-question-list it was assessed whether participants had read the stories completely and to what extent they could imagine the stories.

Results and Discussion

The correlations between the importance and regretful scales for the individual and social goals were high ($r = .88$, $p < .001$ and $r = .89$, $p < .001$, respectively). The reliabilities of the two goal questionnaires and the averaged relevance scales for both the individual and social goals proved to be high (all Cronbach's αs > .77). The reliabilities of the independence and interdependence subscales were Cronbach's $\alpha = .53$ and .64, respectively. The two scales did not correlate with each other, $r = .02$, $p = .91$. Eight participants were taken out of the sample, as they had indicated that they had not read all the priming stories. This could have lowered the effectiveness of the prime. Of this reduced sample, 21 participants had received an independent self prime and 17 participants had received an interdependent self prime. Using the same computation rule as before, each participant was categorized as either predominantly independent ($N = 24$) or predominantly interdependent ($N = 24$).

The $2 \times 2 \times 2$ MANOVA with primed self-construal (independent/interdependent) and predominant self-construal (independent/interdependent) as between-person variables and goal content (individual/social) as within-person variable revealed a trend for prime, $F(1, 44) = 3.06$, $p = .08$. Participants who had received an independent self prime assigned more relevance to both types of goals ($M = 3.68$, $SD = .40$) than participants who had received an interdependent self prime ($M = 3.47$, $SD = .50$). As in Study 2, the two-way interaction between primed self-construal and the content of goals was not significant, $F(1, 44) = .22$, $p = .64$. The two-way interaction between predominant self-construal and goal-content was, however, significant, $F(1, 44) = 5.50$, $p = .02$. Independents considered individual goals ($M = 3.49$, $SD = .68$) as relevant as social goals ($M = 3.63$,
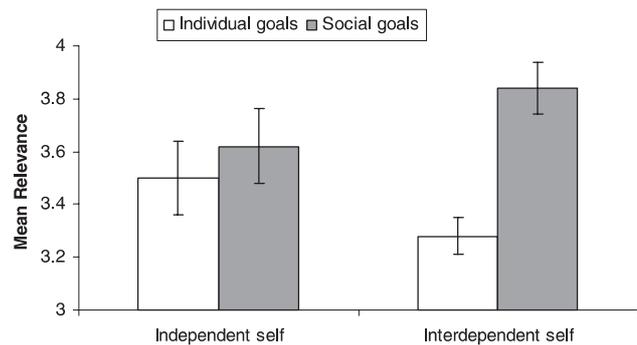

Figure 3. Mean relevance of goals as a function of self-construal (measured with Self-Construal Scale) and type of goals (Study 3). *Note:* Error bars indicate ± 1 SE of the mean.

$SD = .70$), $t(23) = -.96$, $p = .35$, whereas interdependents assigned more relevance to social goals ($M = 3.83$, $SD = .47$) than to individual goals ($M = 3.28$, $SD = .35$), $t(23) = -4.93$, $p < .001$ (see Figure 3).[3]

The results of Study 3 replicate exactly the findings from Study 2. We found a trend that participants primed for independency considered personal goals, irrespective of their contents, more important than participants primed for interdependency. Furthermore, we found, as in Studies 1 and 2, that predominant interdependents assigned more relevance to social goals than to individual goals, whereas predominant independents considered both types of goals equally relevant.

The results of Study 3 also go beyond Study 2, however: The manipulation used in Study 3 rules out the possible bias of the manipulation used in the former study. As the short stories dealt the decision of a third person, it is very unlikely that this manipulation would trigger self-focused attention or any thoughts related to one's own goals and goal pursuit, which could have been the case with the manipulation used in Study 2.

General Discussion

We examined how independency and interdependency of the self are related to the relevance attached to personal goals. In three studies, we tested whether individuals would consider goals related to these prevailing aspects of their self-construal particularly important and whether independents would generally consider personal goals more important than interdependents. We found evidence for both as-

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[3]   The results of the regression analysis showed, consistent with the MANOVA, that only the independence subscale ($\beta = .51$, $p = .002$), but not the interdependence subscale ($\beta = .016$, $p = .93$), predicted the relevance of individual goals significantly, adjusted $R^2 = .10$, $F(3, 53) = 3.02$, $p = .05$. The relevance of social goals was predicted by the independence scale ($\beta = .26$, $p = .05$) as well as by the interdependence scale ($\beta = .72$, $p < .001$), adjusted $R^2 = .21$, $F(3, 53) = 6.94$, $p = .001$. Wald tests showed that the parameter estimates for the independence scale did not differ across the two equations, $F(1, 53) = 2.78$, $p = .10$, but that the parameter estimates for the interdependence scale did, $F(1, 73) = 10.34$, $p < .001$, which reveals the predicted interaction effect.

sumptions: It seems that the two predictions we tested concomitantly produced the patterns we have consistently found across our three studies.

In accordance with our first assumption, predominant interdependents assigned the most relevance to those goals that best fit their self-construal: They considered goals that maintain their social relations and improve their interconnectedness with others more important than individual goals. However, deviating from the first assumption, but consistent across all three studies, independents attached the same importance to both types of goals, individual *and* social. A possible interpretation is that social goals are highly relevant to everyone, since positive relations with others are a prerequisite condition for the attainment of all kinds of personal goals (e.g., Leary & Baumeister, 2000): Social exclusion or low acceptance in interpersonal relations not only jeopardize the attainment of social goals but the attainment of individual goals as well. This interpretation is consistent with the results of Utz (2004). She found that *I-primes* (used in Gardner, Gabriel, & Lee, 1999 to experimentally prime independency) activate the self and central values, in general, rather than an independent self-construal.

Consistent with our second assumption, we found in all three studies some evidence that access to independent self-knowledge led individuals to assign more relevance to both their individual and their social goals. More specifically, in Study 1 predominant independents tended to assign more relevance to personal goals than predominant interdependents, and in Studies 2 and 3, participants assigned more relevance to both types of goals following the independent self prime than following the interdependent self prime. However, these effects were only marginally significant in Studies 1 and 3.

Interestingly, the finding from Study 1, according to which interdependents considered social goals more relevant than individual ones while no corresponding difference was found for independents, was replicated in Studies 2 and 3 on the chronic measure but not with respect to the priming. In addition, the finding from Study 1, according to which independents considered goals in general more relevant than interdependents, was replicated in the main effect for priming in Studies 2 and 3, but not on the chronic measure.

These findings leave open how exactly chronic and situational accessibility of independent vs. interdependent self-knowledge interacted in our studies. Whereas Trafimow et al. (1991) found that culture (as a chronic source of independency or interdependency activation) and a situational experimental-priming of either independency or interdependency additively affected participants actual self-views, Gardner et al. (1999, Experiment 2) found an interactive effect, such that a situational self priming had a stronger effect for participants for whom it was inconsistent with their culture-specific chronic self-view. Our findings neither match the additive effects reported by Trafimow et al. nor the interactive effect reported by Gardner et al. Rath-

er, in our studies we either found an effect of the chronic variable *or* an effect of the priming variable.

Possibly, this is related to the fact that the reliability of the Singelis (1994) self-construal measure was rather low (.51 < Cronbach's α < .53 for the independents subscale and .64 < Cronbach's α < .67 for the interdependent subscale). We, nevertheless, assume that the self-construal measure tapped something more chronic than the relative situational accessibility of independent vs. interdependent self-knowledge because (a) reliabilities obtained in other studies using self-construal scales have been comparably low (see Levine et al., 2003, for a review) and (b) our priming did not affect the self-construal measure, neither in Study 2 nor in Study 3 (all F values < 1). Summarizing, even though our data are mute with respect to the question of how exactly self-construal and priming interacted, they are consistent with the view that chronic and situational sources of self-knowledge activation are functionally equivalent (Higgins, 1990).

The finding that priming of independency increased the relevance assigned to all kinds of personal goals is in line with the view that the motivational concerns of independents are to self-actualize and to follow individual wishes whatever these wishes are about (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). The finding also fits the notion that independents are "promotion-focused," i.e., they have a strong need to fulfill their aspirations and ideals and to strive strongly for their goals (Lee et al., 2000), irrespective of what the contents of the desired end states are. However, we would have possibly obtained a different pattern of findings had we used goals that vary with respect to a promotion vs. prevention focus: All the goals our participants had to evaluate were promotion related and pertained to attaining or accomplishing rather than to avoiding something. To further scrutinize how far the stronger importance that independents attached to all of their personal goals was the result of their self-regulatory focus, future studies should include goal measures that do not only vary on the social vs. individual dimension but also in the extent to which the goal is focused on promotion or prevention.

The effects of our priming speak against the alternative interpretation that it is only the overlap between the independent variable, i.e., the chronic self as measured via Singelis' Self-Construal Scale, and the dependent variable, i.e., the importance attached to social and individual goals, which produced the statistical interaction between chronic self and goal type. If the interaction that we found consistently in all three studies had been an artifact of the common variance of independent and dependent variables, we would have expected (a) a corresponding statistical interaction between priming and goal type, instead of a main effect for priming, and (b) independents to attach more importance to individual than to social goals.

In this article we tested the assumption that differences in individuals' prevailing self-construals reflect differences in the contents of goals they consider to be relevant. Goals are, however, not just representations of desired end-

states, but they also energize and direct activities that are aimed at their attainment. It is, therefore, of interest for future research to investigate if differences in self-construal are also related to differences in how individuals pursue their goals. According to the semantic-procedural interface model of the self (Hannover & Kühnen, 2004; Kühnen et al., 2001), interdependents and independents differ not only in the contents dominating in their self-definitions, but also in that interdependents are more inclined to process information in a context-dependent manner (they relate information to the context in which it appears), while independents prefer context-independent processing (they focus on task-relevant information and ignore contextual information). Applied to differences in goal pursuit, it is conceivable that, for instance, independents will, in general, be less distracted from their goals by other possible options provided by the context and, therefore, more focused on their current goals than interdependents who are more likely to change their goals when confronted with contextual constraints. To further elucidate the ways in which self-construal and personal goals may be interrelated, future studies should not only differentiate between the contents of goal end-states but also between context-dependent and context-independent ways of goal pursuit.

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Appendix

Priming Manipulation (Study 3)

Ode for Caesar

Gaius Ludovicus lived in Rome during the high times of the Roman Empire. He was a very well-known and highly esteemed music teacher. He taught at one of the best music schools of the city. Furthermore, he gave private lessons. When Caesar returned to Rome after an important battle, Master Ludovicus had been asked to send one of his best pupils to Caesar to sing an ode for this successful general. Master Ludovicus had to decide who to choose from his pupils for this honorable task. Finally he decided for his pupil Tertius.

Independency Manipulation

Tertius was one of his private pupils and he had a beautiful voice. Choosing Tertius meant that Gaius Ludovicus could show that his own teachings had produced a star. That would make him an even more respected teacher; his status and reputation would grow. If the singing of Tertius pleased Caesar, even more pupils would apply for private lessons from Gaius Ludovicus. Furthermore, Tertius would be very grateful to him for such a big opportunity.

Interdependency Manipulation

Tertius was a pupil from the music school and he had a beautiful voice. Choosing Tertius meant that Gaius Ludovicus could show his commitment to the school. This choice would contribute to the success of the school; its reputation and prestige would increase significantly. If the singing of Tertius pleased Caesar, the school would become even more well-known, which in turn would imply that even more pupils would apply for admission to the school.