

ARE YOU LIKE THIS...OR JUST BEHAVE THIS WAY?

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ABSTRACT. Becoming oneself occurs always within the context where intra-psychological functioning is interdependent with the inter-personal social world. Chaudhary (2008) stresses importance of culture and distinguishes human activity in its different forms that guide common features of identities among members within the same society—as in the case of a person's orientedness towards others in India. The question that emerges is how to explain construction of varieties of selves around a central dimension—self—other orientation—within a similar socialization environment. Identities involve features that represent tendencies which are in opposition to these that dominate within the given society at the given time. Chaudhary's target article explores the Self—Other—Group dynamics and its role in individual—culture integration in developmental processes. Here I provide an additional—intra-psychologically focused—look at the construction of context—based identity. In order to complement Chaudhary's discussion on monologicality within the dialogical frame, I bring in a focus on ambivalence and demonstrate how it constitutes a core resource in the dynamics of dialogical self.

Keywords: dialogical self, identity construction, hindrance as opportunity, *as-if* ambivalence.

Probably everyone who has experienced cultural diversities can confirm that differences between socio-cultural contexts really exist. The indicator here is our increasing self awareness and cognitive-affective reactions when we encounter new settings. For instance, we notice something while being in a new place, we label it as "strange", or as something that can never belong to our lives. While such experiences refer to differences between cultural contexts, they also bring out individual uniqueness of the person and indicate the possibility that after contact with unfamiliar culture, developmental trajectories of identities of the person might change. As persons move back into their customary environments (physical and symbolic) they usually feel comfortable. In some cases they will interpret events differently and see life "in changed colors". The temporarily changed symbolic background can initiate dynamics of the self at the intra psychological level.

Undoubtedly, relations between persons and their environment are highly complex in their nature. Chaudhary (2008) proposes an explanation of how the indivi-

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dual and the society are related with each other and how their dynamic interdependence feeds forward into their development. Focussing on self–other–group dynamics, she shows how constructive relations that mediate influences from specific sociocultural levels transfer onto the individual level, and glances at local cultural *differentiae* that can be useful to explain dissimilarities of self–structures and processes across cultures.

According to Chaudhary, more attention should be paid to inter–disciplinary and cross–cultural perspectives to make a sense of human nature. Surely this contributes to better understanding of the multifaceted reality. I would like to add to Chaudhary’s analysis a look at the dynamics at the intra–psychological level which is responsible for processing of incoming socio–cultural material and that reflects different responses–cognitive, emotional, and behavioural–to new encounters. As the self is contextual, I intend to analyse developmental processes in Self within its context. Along the lines charted out by Chaudhary I try to show the centrality of culture in studies on intra–psychological processes. These two–inter– and intra–cultural levels–work and function together, so, they must be studied together.

Chaudhary focuses on general collectively shared beliefs that contribute to construction of other orientated identities. More specifically she is concentrated to the “mainstream in identities” that are congruent in their directions of developmental trajectories with the socially suggested directions. Yet–how does the intra–psychological level react to a cultural context that does not support the intra–psychological directions of the self? This is not only the situation with which tourists are faced, but could occur in everyday reality when a person acts in ways that are different from the social expectations–like a self oriented towards individual gains within collectivistic contexts.

Culture–the blueprint for experience of the Self

Human beings are dialogically embedded actors who guide their development by social means. Their life is always relational as it occurs within a specific socio–cultural context. Regardless of the various readings of definitions of culture there is in principle an agreement between different authors–that in human development **culture always matters**. This also holds for the question of development of identity. Thus, when in the focus are questions about construction of identities, it is reasonable to pay attention to the social context as a source for investigation of Self. Both kinds of cultural settings – familiar (the semiotic context of long term socialization period) and foreign (encountered in new environments) give us hints about identities–their past, present and possible future developmental directions.

In parallel with external formative influences of socio–cultural settings upon becoming unique as an individual, we have to watch out for another side–the inner, intra–individual level. That makes us ask questions about dynamical forces within the Self. The notion of “dynamic forces” here refers to the all inner constructional

processes at the level of self (e.g., internalization, integration, externalization; inner dialogue between I-Positions) that have a role at developmental processes of identity and thereby are involved in reactions to external socio-cultural influences. Hence, **identity always matters**. Individuals' reactions (cognitive-emotional-behavioural) to the culturally structured settings contain information about the individual's Self. Dynamics in intra psychological level that are initiated by the relocation within socio cultural frame refer to the effect of personal history and previous experiences within certain semantic context. Society makes permanently creative efforts to "welcome" new individual by letting that person construct identities that, in turn, assure by interactions imparting of collectively shared knowledge.

Collectivistic and individualistic Self

Identities exist only in societies, which define and organize them as such. Any "search for identity" includes question of what is the proper relationship of the individual to society as a whole (Baumeister, 1986; Grotevant, Dunbar, Kohler, Esau, 2000). I ask the following question about establishment and maintaining this proper relationship between two moieties of the whole—**how can we see the ways both society and the intra-psychological level act** in this permanent integrative process. Or—in terms of Chaudhary—how do divergent self-structures and processes operate across cultures?

Despite of the myriad of cross-cultural differences, according to Triandis (1996; 2001), it is the feature of collectivism – individualism (C-I) that appears to be most salient among different societies. The cultural constructs of C-I have been identified with different conceptions of the self. Influence of C-I on the self-concept is assumed to emerge in the extent to which individuals define themselves in terms of social group in which they belong, and whether self-concepts include others and are determined by one's relationship with others (Triandis, 1995; Parkes, Schneider, Bochner, 1999). Numerous studies indicate that "the Indian culture" is collectivistic in vertically hierarchical power relations (Hofstede, 1980; Sinha & Verma, 1987; Triandis, 1995; Triandis & Bhawuk, 1997; Verma, 1999; Verma & Triandis, 1998; Sinha, Sinha, Verma, Sinha, 2001; Triandis, 2001).

From the C-I continuum researchers create oppositional static classes—"individualist" and "collectivist" "cultures." A "Collectivist Culture" is described to be an arena for creation of interdependent self-concepts through which persons give priority to the goals of ingroups, shape behaviour on the basis of ingroup norms, and are especially concerned with relationships. In the so-called "individualistic societies" people are autonomous and give priority to their personal goals over the goals of their ingroups, behave primarily on the basis of their attitudes rather the norms of their ingroups (Triandis, 2001).

To explain interdependence and the formation of orientation to the other, Chaudhary (2008) brings into discussion the notion of **social dynamics** and emphasizes their importance in the Indian family, and secondly, she concentrates on **elements** specific to the Indian culture. As mentioned, construction of identity is guided by social institutions, which use different social representations for their purposes. According to Moscovici (Moscovici, 1963; Wagner, Duveen, Farr, Jovchelovitch, Lorenzi-Cioldi, Marková, Rose, 1999) social representations are collective elaborations of a social object by the community for the purpose of behaving and communicating, and are expressed in verbal and overt behavior. They help individuals to orient themselves in their materialistic social world. By “offering” for individuals’ knowledge about what is right and accepted way of being in general, society can guide directions of development. Including understanding about what should be more desired and thus acclaimed self-conception. For example, how is for the person appropriate to think about her/himself–“I am the sister who must consider what my family members wish me to do in the future”. Hence, social representations function to establish an order. Additionally, based on Moscovici, social representations provide a code for naming and classifying aspects of world. Thus they decrease the ambiguity of individuals’ everyday experiences.

Different myths—often fortified by religious beliefs—exist in different societies with the educative aim to teach socially accepted ways of acting in specific situations. The Western Christian theology, for example builds upon fundamental suggestions about how to organize personal life via the Decalogue. Chaudhary refers to the collectively shared knowledge and beliefs due to the self and relationships that are expected to reflect in selves. For example, the irreducible core of selfhood (*ataman*) is believed to be experienced only through spiritual self-reflection; individual is seen incomplete without others; every relationship has consequences on the self; persons conduct in interpersonal activity has long-term impact on the life-circumstances of and individual (*karma*); talk about the self leads to egoism (*ahankar*). While persons’ perceptions depend on the information that is sampled from environment we presuppose to meet “culture-inclusive” (Hermans, 2001; Chaudhary, 2008) individuals within “self-inclusive” cultural context. Cultural constructions (religion, principles of Hinduism and Buddhism etc.) convey the knowhow of how to evaluate self and others, and how to apply this kind of knowledge in interactions with other people. Additionally, cultural constructions that guide individuals toward other orientation in their development of identities are “bolstered up” in India with the real conduct during interactions—mothers prefer not to refer to themselves in conversations with children, and often is the third person involved in socialization process as a powerful agent.

According to Chaudhary, the Indian family seems to be in some sense a “mini model” of the society as a whole: both are characterized by hierarchy, authority, and in reactions to persons’ support for an other-oriented worldview. This maps well on Urie

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Bronfenbrenner's notion of micro- and macro-systems. The message about others-orientation should be particularly influential while it comes to the individual through interactions with family members (significant others) and is supported by collectively shared knowledge. In terms of development of the self, social suggestion about trajectories of identity construction are well established through signs shared within the given community.

The external becomes internal: How is a cultural symbol viewed?

Inspired by Chaudhary's ideas, I conducted a simple inquiry into how one's context of socialization is involved in formation of cognitive-emotional bases of our reactions to symbolic elements of culture. Participants were students who attended classes of social skills and interpersonal relationships. Total number of participants was 90 (6 males and 84 females). I showed a picture with swastika on the doorstep of an apartment of Maharashtra, India (see Fig. 1) and asked students to write down their thoughts and feelings that that photo evokes. Of course, results were to some extent predictable.



Figure 1. The symbol of different meanings in India and Estonia

The swastika is considered holy by Hindus and is used to decorate items related to the Hindu culture. As expected, within local cultural-historical context, Estonian students' interpretations were due to Second World War, with Nazi symbolism, Hitler, holocaust, and words, which connotation triggered a negative meaning (85%). For example: prison, death, cold, depression, starvation, war, difficult life, coffin, fear, loneliness,

depression, sadness, power, unfairness etc. Seven percent of students reported that did not see “anything” in that picture (“This picture does not say anything to me”, “None of associations”, “I notice only legs and narrow room, that’s all what I do see” etc). Five students referred to the positive meaning of swastika, as an element from Hinduism, and 5 answers initiated to the positive meaning like “Funny picture, even if picture is so grey,” “The sun, goodness.”

It is impossible to claim anything profound on the bases of such brief investigation about how cultural and intra personal level, are interwoven is very risky. But still, I would like to point to tendency of interpretations behind of what I see internalised social representation and historical background. So, if complementary study were additionally conducted in India, I suppose that at least proportion of answers with negative and positive meanings will be different.

But what it tells about identities and their development? I conceive identity as a complex developmental process which trajectories are based on the work of a number of internal and external factors. Behind the changes in Self are coordination processes of two different levels (Kullasepp, 2007): the level of social–institutional representations and that of personal (intra–psychological) representations. Similarly are reactions to swastika formed as the result of previous contact with various social representations. So, if some sign (e.g., swastika) or aspect of everyday life (e.g., familial relationships) acquires certain meaning in culture (e.g., holy; significant, while individual is seen incomplete without others), it leads to the directed interpretations across situations, and/or evaluations of ones’ own reactions to socially meaningful events. For example, if an individual suffers while she knows that she did not follow her parents’ recommendation and blames herself for being not the “right” person. But the notion–“the right person” –is itself a cultural construction. In the future s/he tries not to repeat the same mistake so, s/he could define her/himself as the “the right Hindu”. In this case the trajectory of development is chosen and will be reinforced by other who s/he interacts with and construction of identity takes place on the basis of in–group norms.

To summarize—widespread social representations are brought in to organize development, and are behind similarities between individuals from the same socio–cultural context. Coming back to the results of my small query, the question that rises is how to explain differences in students’ answers. Some of them were free from negative connotation. Or how identities acquire and preserve their uniqueness? Chaudhary (2008) concentrates mainly on other orientation as the socially suggested and frequently appearing feature of identity in India, and on its formation within Indian society. But there is also another possible developmental trajectory for individuals. Not all individuals from collectivistic culture behave on the bases of socially suggested norms and standards. They remain persistently immune toward shared standards. This fact requires turn attention to intra–personal level.

“Restricted freedom”: Differences as based on the unity of opposites

It should be not assumed that everybody in “individualist” or “collectivist” cultures is respectively self-orientated and other orientated across different contextual settings (time, social context, location, physical environment). For instance, Sinha and Tripathi (1994; Sinha, et al., 2001) found cases of Indians who live joint life with family and do not contribute equitably to family resources. So, inter-individual variation in interdependence and orientedness to other exist among members in any cultural context. According to Triandis (Sinha, et al., 2001), in the “collectivist culture” *the majority* of people are collectivists, or in other words, most of people manifest collectivist orientations, values and behavior—while some do not. This evidences that collectively shared standards, values etc. have been involved in constructions of number of selves, but also directs attention of others—resistant to certain social influences—to the opposite. In my opinion, exploring this group could be also fruitful source for studies on dynamics in Self. Hence, inter-individual divergence exists within the orientation to other and self in *both* “collectivistic” and “individualistic” cultures. Chaudhary (2008) also questions the dichotomy of cultures on the bases of traits like individualism/collectivism. Chaudhary and Kaura (2001) found that parents’ expectations are not always in congruence with typical collectivistic worldview when they wished that their children express competitiveness at school. Based on the assumption of open systems in development –sameness is excluded in the case of open systems. So, diversities on the individual level within one culture are rather norm than exception.

Internalization and integration –the bases for identity construction

In many cultural studies the accent is often on the similarities between individuals among one cultural context, as it is evidenced with the references to the typical, most frequently appearing traits of personality. It is assumed that shared cultural context promotes standardization of the psychological functions and thus, identities are expected to contain characteristics of culture. This assumption leaves out the aspect of intentionality, individuals’ active participation at the process of self development. Although persons construct their identities under the guidance of others, nevertheless—such construction is a deeply personal psychological process.

As mentioned above, there are cases that show that social representations encounter hindrance and are not sufficiently influential to guide trajectories of development of the self. They seem to lose their power under certain circumstances. The laminal model of internalization/externalization (Valsiner, 1997) helps to illuminate this phenomenon and highlight the role of intra psychological level that is responsible for becoming different and maintaining the uniqueness. According to the model,

incoming messages must pass through three layers that process moving material. Layers function as barriers and thus, hinder direct impact of social influences to Self. Social suggestions can be involved in ontogenesis of the Self only when they are **constructively internalized**—re-constructed in novel ways within the intra-personal domain (the personal culture). Irrelevant messages that individuals do not notice can not affect processes at the intra-personal level and initiate developmental changes – for that social signs must possess some relevance for the person. Individual differences in being opened to external suggestions are manifest here. These could include situational factors like needs, temporary intentions, psychological state (e.g., mood) etc. as well as more stable dispositions.

Aside from the universal biological inherent needs exist those that are shaped by social institutions during practices of daily living, and reflect experiences from the personal history. These needs contain features of socialization context and are often perceived by individuals as “natural”. For example, need to give priority to familial relations over personal ambitions across situations, need to have an access to Internet, need to earn a PhD degree etc. Triandis (2001) claims that human perception and thinking depend on the information that is sampled from environment and cultures develop conventions about what to pay attention to and how much to weigh the elements that are sampled.

From the person’s viewpoint, incoming social messages are input for the creation of inter-individual differences and personal uniqueness among members from the same society. It depends, for instance, on cultural origins of messages. Contemporary life conditions – mobility, Internet communication, tourism, mass media etc. offer for individuals from certain cultural context additional “competitive reality”, possibility to re-interpret local cultural messages and anchor them in a shared social reality. Contact with new unfamiliar ways of thinking triggers transformation of meanings (Bangerter, 2000). Dialogical relation with the “alien” culture can also lead to the new way of thinking about Self and re-directing developmental trajectories.

Thus, precisely because of the shared social background of society, personal life history (and identity) of any individual stays unique. In the ontogenesis of the Self there exists the state when message is internalized, but not yet **integrated** with the core (core as an intra-personal level). Integration is accomplished after social message makes part of dialogue with oneself (inner self talk). But message can be rejected, or temporally blocked out and its internal assimilation, and also accommodation, is delayed (Valsiner, 1997). In other terms, message is not adapted to the existing knowledge and emotional structures.

One example about “not fitting” material is a cultural shock that is very intensive response to cultural dissimilarities and it is known as the shock of the new. It implies that the experience of the new culture is unpleasant surprise and it affects

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people intellectually, emotionally, behaviourally (Stewart & Leggat, 1998). When a tourist travelling abroad receives information about her/himself with which s/he strongly disagrees, then development of Self toward certain point is stopped—in the blocking of intentional involvement into construction of identity toward suggested point in this moment. In the case of cultural shock, social sign is noticed and taken in, but it encounters hindrance at the further integration into core of individuality is stopped.

I also would like to emphasize that the not acceptable information about ourselves may participate in the formation of identity, but it serves as a preserver of existing directions. The person confronts material that reflects back to her/him in the form—“THIS IS who I am not and do not want to become”. For example, member of minority group in X society blames for her/his life conditions majority of population. Her/his further integration into society is hindered while s/he does not accept the way of thinking, life style, values, and beliefs of the majority. S/he is not willing to become one of THEM. This information will not lead to the re-construction of schemas about self, but it initiates intra psychological dynamics (e.g., inner talk). Internalised suggestion is “under discussion”, but it has no power to intervene. Its further assimilation is blocked. Socially shared representations’ “weakness” at guiding development of identity is partly caused by individuals’ personal life histories that add the “flavor” of uniqueness” to the personal representations –to re-coded versions of internalized institutional representations. They spring up when the external semiotic material is turned into an internally different form. So, we can say that there are differences at the integration of the same social representation among members of the same culture.

As imbued with personal understanding – messages may move back into the environment as an **externalized** version (Valsiner, 1997). Externalisation occurs always within the context, under certain conditions and has many different forms (conduct, conversations, expressions of feelings etc.). It must be taken into consideration that the external world is very well organized by social institutions and self expressions have consequences for individuals. When a person’s externalised personal culture is consistent with social suggestions, s/he experiences more or less approval that in turn contributes to the construction of identity (toward the “right one”). In this light externalisation of personal culture is like an opportunity for social institutions to intervene into shaping identities of members of society and attempt to change the course of personal representations. At the same time—it is not always the case that individuals’ reactions reflect inner tendencies and chosen trajectories. A person under direct impact—reactions from family members—punishment etc., and pressure of social institutions—can resist, and counteract against the social demands.

Feedback from the Other influences construction of cognitive-affective structures that will guide individuals in the future in their interpretations and conduct. The extent of control and intervention of social institutions into individual responses determines which trajectories of self development, aspects of individuality belong to

public display. Chaudhary (2008) described the Indian society as built on hierarchical relations and compliance to authority. She also brought in very fascinating topic-monological “voice” of authority that is common in Indian community and that is believed to be reassuring and favourable in most situations. Under such conditions of acceptance of such voice—ones’ identity trajectories are very well assigned and directed by external factors.

However, collectivism can be the arena for selected display of personal tendencies and hidden individualistic intentions. Leon Festinger’s look at the cognitive dissonance is an example of disrupted congruence between behaviour, thoughts and emotions. So, knowledge, emotions and overt behaviour are not always in accordance with each other—and that affirms the possibility that conduct may not reflect individuals’ predispositions. Chaudhary makes distinction between two types of selves: one operates as an inter-personal external activity (more dominant) and another, as an intra-personal one (activated internally). I see here a kind of an analogue: “something” that is also a part of individuality is held back, whereas what is expressed in accordance with norms, like the other-orientation. This is in accordance with the claim that Indians are found to maintain an inner private psychological space that is the central to their individuality. This inner self is a highly protected reservoir of their needs, ambitions, desires enabling them to become individuated, differentiated and separated from their collectivist orientation (Roland, 1988; Sinha et al., 2001).

Hence, dispositions to become self-oriented exist—but are not necessarily displayed in public. Sinha et al. (2001) also argue that Indians way to respond to situation depends on place (*desh*), time (*kaal*), and the person (*paatra*). It allows us to assume that individuals learn to express themselves across situations properly (especially when “monological voice” demands/suggests it), deal with intra personal conflicts that rise from the encounter of social expectations and present trajectories of Self in socially accepted fashion. It can—but not always will—culminate in the construction of the other-oriented Selves.

Hindrance as an opportunity: *As if* ambivalence and confrontation as possibility

However, what kind of processes proceed to handle incoming material and make identities open to the external (social suggestion) and internal (e.g., how to follow personal ambitions) construction? How being different, for example, self orientated within collectivist culture, works in intra psychological level? Dialogical Self theory (Hermans, Kempen & van Loon, 1992) enables to shift focus to the intra psychological processes. According to this self-model self system consists of various I-Positions that create interconnection between each other in inner talk (dialogue). Characteristic of this approach is that new I-Positions emerge over the time and existing change. Called into existence, an I-Position is an impetus in development and it acquires the power to guide psychological functioning.

Development through tension

Any appearance of an I-Position can be due to any sort of personal experiences in gaining knowledge that make new directions of Self for individual more desirable and finally allow to define her/himself in new terms. For instance, after a trip to India person from an “individualistic” culture finds “new personal way” (the *Indian way*) of being in relations with others very inspiring. S/he re-evaluates her/his present membership in family and starts to pay more attention to people close to her/him. Experience abroad (e.g., emotional reactions to other-orientated Hindus – intensive feeling of surprise) refers to already existing I-Position (present I Position–*I am a self-oriented individual*) as well as to aspects of Self that do not exist, yet (possible future I-Position). Experienced feeling of surprise can be conceived as the mark about WHAT ONE IS NOT–to the boundary of identity (individual is self orientated, NOT other oriented). The internalized message is NEW and does not fit with personal culture, but it evokes developmental tension. Tension that arises from discrepancy (acknowledged possibility to interpret relations in new fashion) is crucial in re-direction hitherto trajectories. This is the moment when identity is opened to changes of trajectories while comprehends another meaning of relationships. I assume that ambivalence is one of the key factors in re-directions of developmental trajectories of self. Suddenly a relationship acquires additional meaning and the current non-ambiguity due to HOW TO RELATE TO THE OTHER disappears. Humans live under conditions wherein two different realities–objective and subjective–are presented simultaneously.

The objective reality exists *a priori* and remains beyond the reach for individuals. The subjective reality is the outcome of interpretations about the objective reality and is central at the guiding individuals psychological functioning, including shaping identities. To create this reality, individuals borrow materials from the collective culture. Psychological reality is constructed with semiotic devices and it makes human world inherently ambiguous. Regardless to the fact that symbols are result of social agreement, there is always possibility to make different meanings of certain events, symbols and interpret them in a new fashion that reflects personal history of individuals.

Cognition and communication are always perspectivized and each thought and utterance talk something not only about the things talked about but also about the actors background (Linell, 1998). Semiotic mediation helps to decrease uncertainty that is natural for world where human beings exist. Meaning making is not only due to external phenomenon, but is also concerned with individuals Self. In principle we can say that individuals define and redefine themselves across situations–while it depends on Others with whom they interact. One can define her/himself as a member of family and then act accordingly, think and feel (e.g., a brother’s need is a priority). In another situation s/he sees her/himself as a competitive colleague and give priority to her/his own intentions. S/he feels, thinks and behaves as a colleague and not as a sister or

brother. We can also decide to become somebody else, call into existence a new I Position (e.g., I want to become more other orientated, I do not want to be anymore the persona who I used to be) and then start to move toward desired position. Humans ability to think in terms *as if* allows to imagine her/his possible (desirable or not-desirable) future Self, see her/himself from perspective of others and imagine her/himself as if he or she were the Other (Simão and Valsiner, 2007). Thinking as if s/he is somebody else is central at changes of identity.

People intend to decrease uncertainty as well as struggle toward clear (clearer) knowledge of the self. For that they use strategies like acceptance of socially suggested ways of thinking (use of an external source), or, in the case of being different, individuals would develop internal sources (e.g., specific thoughts to handle dissonance that is evoked by permanent external pressure and maintain chosen trajectory). Becoming different within certain cultural context and diverge from suggested way of being, an individual must have consequences in psychological functioning. Whereby one can become “the different” even when s/he maintains present developmental trajectories, but the context changes. For example, immigrants, tourists and anybody who interprets events in ways different from the current socio-cultural frame introduce new transformations into these frames.

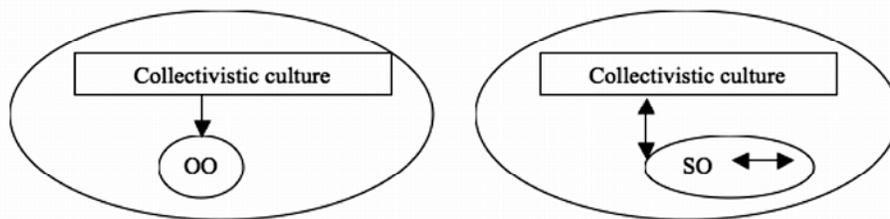


Figure 2. Collectivistic IP “other orientation” = OO; individualistic IP “self orientation” = SO
 —→ dialogical relations do not evoke confrontation
 ↔ dialogical relation evoke confrontation

Conditions under which two different types within the same socio-cultural context exists must have different outcomes for these individuals psychological activity. For a self-oriented individual this situation (Fig. 2) tends to result intra- and interpersonal conflict. Intra-personal conflict arises while incoming material confronts with existing personal culture, increases ambivalence. Inter personal conflict can be a part of everyday interactions while externalization brings out inner dispositions that do not fit with general common believes. Having “the right identity” is beneficial in certain context, while one gets approval from others and finds external support to chosen trajectories. Both of types are developing, but one of them constructs DIFFERENT identity.

Becoming different: comparing with others and with oneself

From the current theoretical perspective construction of identity is conceived of as ever lasting and directed process without a specific goal. Construction itself does not have a final objective. It is not determined to create selves wherein certain influences dominate over others. External social influences are not meant to dominate over the inner tendencies of individual and vice versa. So, individuals “destiny” is not to become other orientated within collectivistic culture or self orientated within individualistic culture. Formation of identity resembles rather the infinite interlude of domination, in some sense, of opposite sides. Of course, if we can consider self and other orientations as opposites. The dynamic process can maintain a “steady state” of one’s temporary dominance over the other. Example of temporary dominance of one I-Position (and suppression of another possible opposite I-Position in this situation) could be the appearance of contrary attitudes toward self centred behaviour.

Example: I-Position “ I can not follow my personal wishes, it would be very selfish” marks orientation to other in situation X (e.g., woman who has a dilemma—to have a plastic surgery to look better or use money to pay for a child’s studies at college). In situation Y her priority is her own needs.

If identity is conceived of as an ever-continuing process, then explanations that emphasise completeness of aspects of Self are excluded. From that follows that orientation to others or to self is a temporary “steady state” that alters according to conditions. So, individual is constantly becoming different comparing to her/himself and others. Trajectories of development are always under construction. Their directions can be last (the dominant I-Position is in next moment still the same; other orientated person retains her/his orientation to others) or change—becomes re-directed (dominant I-Position becomes the opposite—previously suppressed—I-Position; self-orientedness becomes replaced by other orientation).

Being oriented on the self or the other depends on configuration of all external and internal factors that affects construction at the intra psychological level. As I pointed out above, socio-cultural context could be a source of studies on construction of identities whilst its responses to expressions of developmental trajectories of Selves, and that individuals’ reactions to the cultural context refer to boundaries of Self (e.g., experienced “culture shock” refers to the dominant I-Position). Both of types of reactions elicit intra psychological dynamics. To analyze responses at the intra-psychological (e.g., decreased or increased ambivalence as developmental tension) level I assume that dialogical relations between individual and socio-cultural context are very complex and many aspects should be taken into account simultaneously:

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- a) The general socio-cultural context that determines which identity and displayed reactions are expected/not expected; approve/disapprove is communicated back to individual in Self-Other relations.
- b) The content of both of internalized social and personal messages that are consistent/inconsistent with one another.

Co-presence of these factors creates the unique developmental conditions that become the source of ambivalence. As mentioned above, I consider ambivalence of as a constructional force at the shaping of identities.

Contents of messages and developmental changes

Congruence/incongruence between the content of internalised social messages and existing personal messages is a crucial factor at development of identity while it can diminish or magnify ambivalence. Existing personal messages reflect present I-Position (Fig. 3). The situation in Fig. 3 results in no tension that could re-direct directions of development –no changes in Self-trajectories are expected

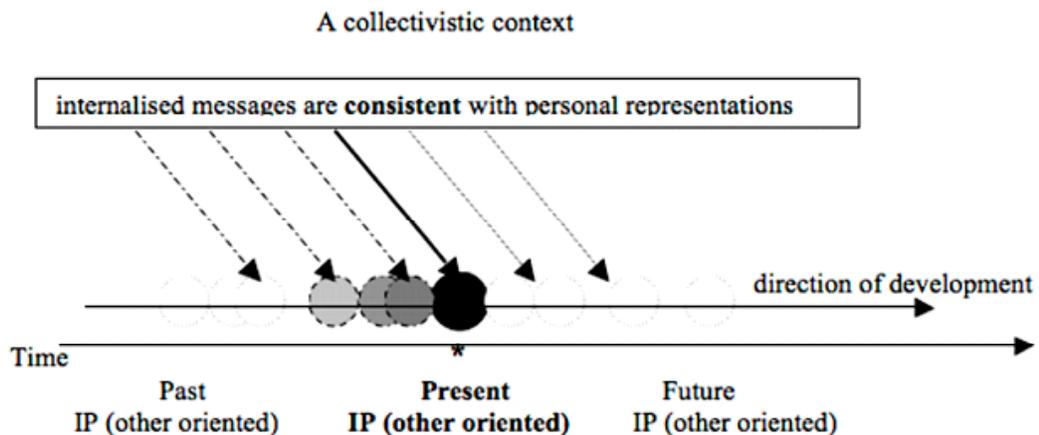


Figure 3. A description of conditions that do not evoke conflicts, while ambivalence and uncertainty are decreased.

In this case access to different semiotic realities that cultivate different directions of trajectories of Self is absent. There are no new messages that could evoke developmental tension and thus lead to re-directions of trajectories. The dominant I-Position is preserved. In addition, it is also possible that—regardless of the internalization of messages that *could* re-direct developmental trajectories while they rely on novel meanings—cognitive-emotional reactions to this novel content of messages do not detect that the incoming material is somehow different. Based on already existing cognitive-affective fields within the personal culture, the individual

continually interprets current information in the fashion that “ignores” its novelty. The outcome of the active mind work is still the same (but never identical).

Example 2: A self-oriented individual reads an article about other-oriented behaviour in a collectivistic culture and finds that s/he is exactly like these other oriented individuals who consider with family members opinions. Present IP – “My family is important for me too”. No changes in trajectories of identity.

In this case, the person cannot tell the difference between different type of tendencies of behaviour, even if differences really exist. This phenomenon is well known in cognitive psychology—individuals’ reflections on others are social and subjective in their nature that points to the central role of previous personal (unique) experiences in the social world (creates bases for universal features of experiences of many individuals) that create the fundament following interpretations. Two persons can observe the same stimulus, but their inferences about it remain different. The same person can under changed conditions (e.g., psychological) interpret the same stimulus in the new manner (Fig. 4).

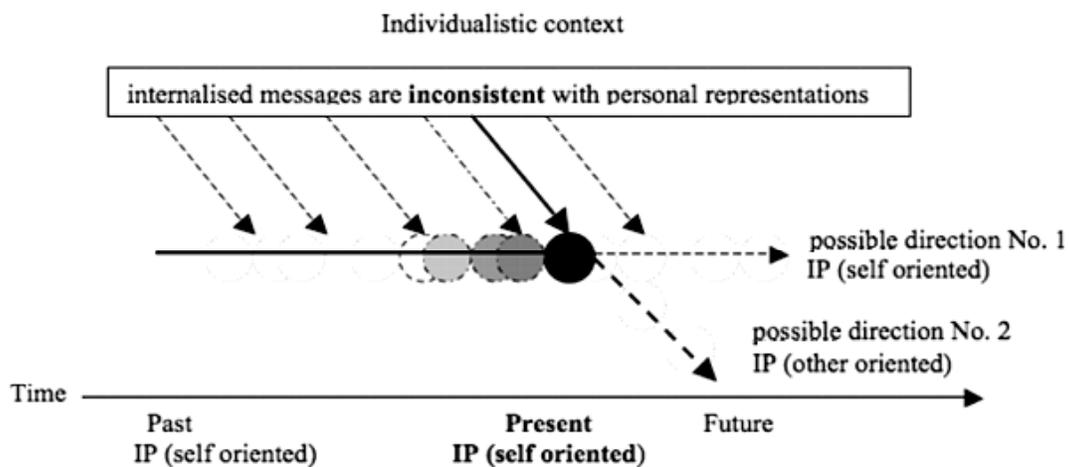


Figure 4. A description of conditions that evoke intra personal conflict while increased ambivalence that can cause re-directing developmental tension (possible changes of Self trajectories are expected).

Access to different cultural context (via Internet) opens up possibility to change trajectories (e.g., to become more self orientated). New possibility is acknowledged; it can evoke dissonance and initiate changes. Reasons to reject new messages and maintain direction of trajectories could be the real or imagined inter personal conflicts (“*as if* I were X, then I would have problems in relationships”) that can arise when person starts externalise transformed personal culture that is now with elements from

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“alien” culture. *Imagined* consequences of being/becoming different must be considered as well influential as the *real* one. This is also in accordance with Chaudhary’s notion that during socialization one can socialize without direct participation in certain situations and be the observer, bystander.

Example 3: An individual with the present IP “I am family oriented” travels abroad and after coming back has a dilemma, while recent experiences make her/him wonder about “How it could be, *if ...*”

Behaviour and social expectations in developmental changes

Expressed personal culture can be open to social appraisal in Self-Other interactions that enable intervention of institutional guidance into the psychological functioning (Fig. 5). Here the ambivalence and uncertainty are decreased that results no developmental tension –no changes in Self-trajectories are expected.

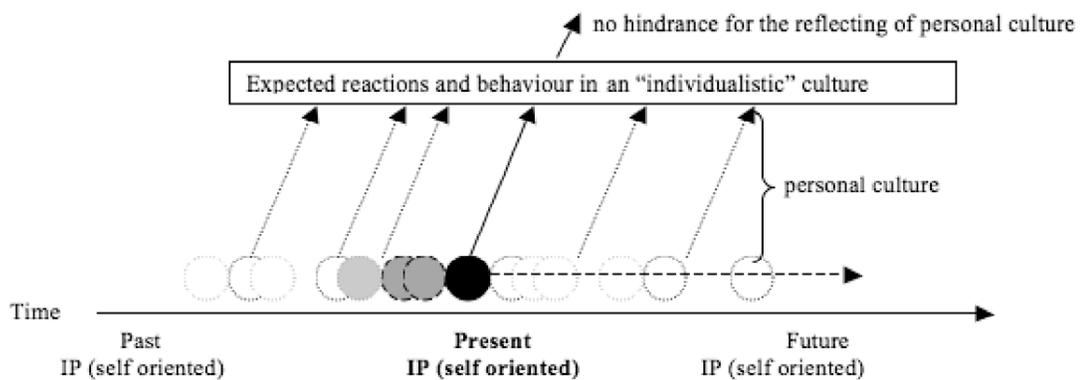


Figure 5. Conditions that do not evoke either intrapersonal nor interpersonal conflicts.

Example 4: Individual with present IP “I am self oriented” finds that every adult (older than 18 years) member of family must be mature enough to make independent decisions that concerns one’s future, especially these like profession, selection of mate, marriage etc.

Society supports her/his standpoints (e.g., mass media, postmodernist writings that emphasise individuals own responsibility for life experiences, or vocational councillors in schools, universities who proceed in their professional activity from high school students abilities, grades, students personal preferences, etc.). While one can find proofs about validity of her/his standpoint that is in congruence with common understandings, there is no “disturbance” in certainty how to feel, think and behave, including how to think about her/himself (Fig. 6). Reactions (e.g., behaviour) are not

congruence with others' expectations that increases developmental tension—possible changes in trajectories of Self.

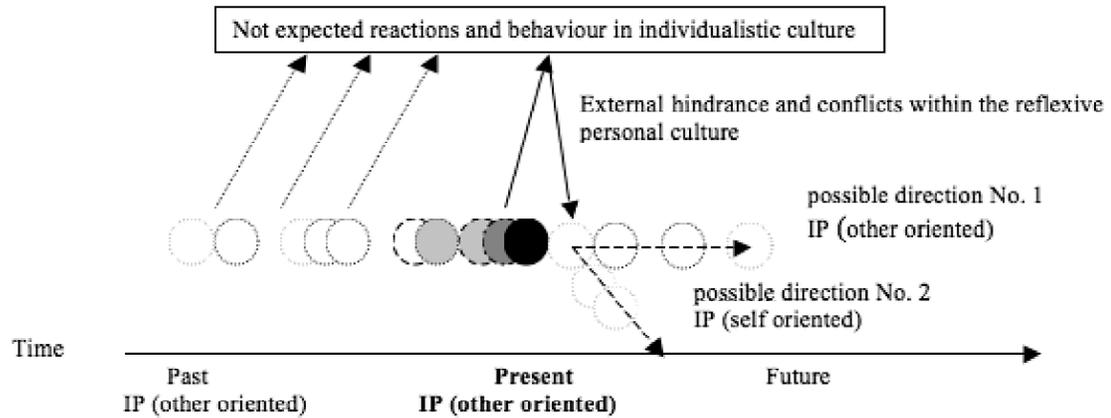


Figure 6. A description of conditions that evoke intra- and inter-personal conflicts.

That type experiences external pressure to change present developmental trajectories and this could be also the source for intra personal conflict. Her/his inner tendencies are not hidden and social institutions have an opportunity to intervene on construction of identity. Given her/his orientation it is rather expected than not that s/he confronts Others' opinions during interactions. Tensions that rise from inter-personal confrontations due to difference in values, expectations, wishes etc. can make a person question the adequacy of personal culture and increase uncertainty.

Example 5: Individual with the I-Position "I am other oriented" expects from husband/wife that s/he value her/his "unconditioned" commitment to the family members, including to spouse. S/he is frustrated when other members in family suggest her/him to concentrate more to her/himself and less intervene to others choices.

Personal culture is expressed here selectively across situations. Confrontation of cultural context and individuals' inner tendencies does not have to be the result of Self-Other interactions.

In cases like this, individuals' real intentions do not appear in overt behaviour. Overt reactions do not give hints to Others about deviant directions of trajectories of identity—as these deviate from expected and suggested "norm" identity. Thus, inter-personal conflicts are avoided, but persons can experience permanent inner tension and pressure toward changes while they are exposed to semiotic material that has a potential to re-direct trajectories of identity.

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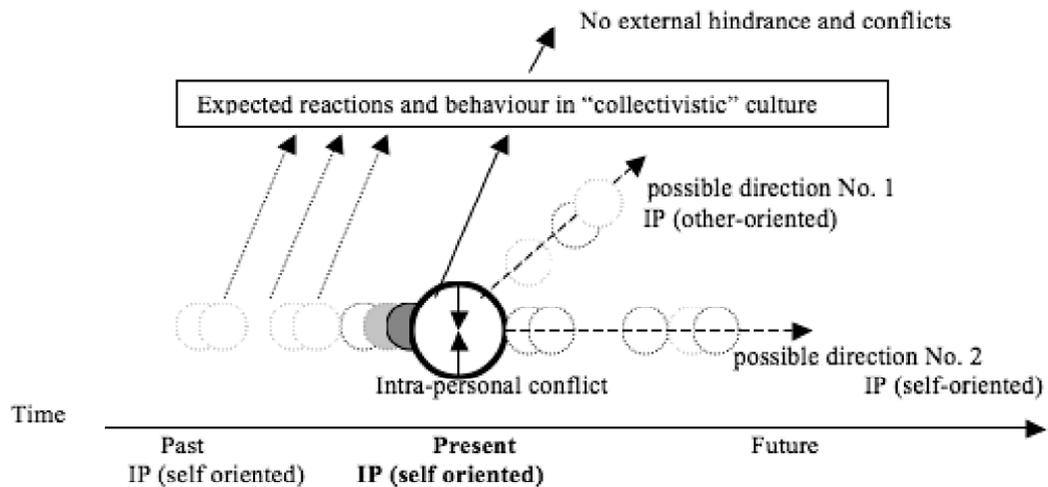


Figure 7. Conditions that evoke intra personal conflict and increase developmental tension while behaviour and personal tendencies diverge –possible changes in the trajectories of Self

Example 6: An individual with the present IP is “I am self orientated” within the other oriented cultural context follows peers’ instructions and rules. S/he used to study/work few years abroad and experienced a different, more individualistic style of life that s/he considers more beneficial. In spite of that, after return home s/he still acts in conformity with Others’ (e.g., family members) expectations and socially shared norms to avoid Others’ scornfulness.

The monological voice: external and internal guide of development

According to Chaudhary (2008), the monological voice is characteristic of shared understandings (monological interobjectivity) that becomes “audible” in interactions with authority. Unfortunately she introduces the concept of monological voice too briefly and it remains unclear. The use of the term “monological” within the dialogical context itself attracts attention that asks for more profound specification. Does it mean that monological voice has common features with a non–dialogical language that is language of non–commitment of speakers, language that could be described as a system of rules, instructions, information that must be understood in the same way by everybody (Marková, 2003)? Does the concept of monological voice pertain to monologism that tends to treat communication as a “*from-to*” process and not as the “*between*” process as it is understood in dialogism (Linell, 1998)?

However, based on given information about monologicality (“..shared understandings of people are characterised more by monologicality than otherwise; monologicality is periodically attained when a person settles with an understanding”;

“...monologicality is defended because the other person knows better”—Chaudhary, 2008) I assume that this “monological voice” creates an unambiguous reality while it offers for individual sort of knowledge about that. I also would like to link this mentioned “monological voice” as it was described by Chaudhary, with intra personal conflict and hidden personal tendencies. Not all individuals follow suggestions and agree with shared beliefs—they have their own subjective reality that weakens any influence of social representations and their further involvement into shaping of self is stopped (or temporary blocked). Being in dialogical relations does not mean that individual is open to any kind of changes and is affected by every social influence. Some of messages can be only internalised, taken into inner talk, but not integrated into existing knowledge and thus, would not guide directions of development of Self. In sum—overt compliance to authorities is not a reliable basis for conclusions about inner tendencies of individuals. Internally not accepted messages, but their public presentation during externalisation—compliance to authority is expected and strongly suggested – is the reason for ambivalence and inner dissonance.

Of course individuals can retain present direction of identity that do not belong to the public display. Additionally, individuals can manage to reduce uncertainty that evolves from incongruence between personal and social representations regardless of the fact that they are continuously related to the social world that is intervened with and controlled by the culture that differs from the personal culture. Or in other terms, ambiguity that the monological voice is expected to elicit when it is “heard by not expected/suggested/common identity”, does not appear as re-directing the developmental tension. Changes in developmental trajectories do not depend only on the semiotic material that is available for a person. This assumption is accordance with the idea about the intentional self-development and individuals own activity and centrality at the construction of identity. Uniqueness of identity will be attained through the selected acceptance of incoming representations from social level and their further analysis.

Here is a possible linkage with Barresi’s (2002; Chaudhary, 2008) assumption that “monologicality is periodically attained when a person settles with an understanding...” If the sustained understanding (e.g., “I think that people should be more other oriented rather self centered. Like me, for instance”) is conceived of as a mark of monologicality, then, according to my interpretation, the “monological voice” could be a similar phenomenon (if not the same) to that that I described above—new semiotic material wont cause increase of uncertainty. Possibly the “monological voice” is heard, —but *not accepted*. And again, the “monological voice” reduces uncertainty about reality. Incoming information wont cause changes in believes etc, and individual maintains set of understandings (“I want to stay other oriented. This is the right decision. No matter what they say about advantages of the individualistic life style”). If so, then “monological voice” seems to have the role at developmental processes while it

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works for becoming unique and allows design ones' future trajectories. One does not move toward all possible directions at the same time even if semiotic reality affords it.

Chaudhary (2008) notes that “monologicality is defended because the other person knows better.” Can we say that this claim is still valid when the authority is for the person the person her/himself and individual itself can speak with the “monological voice”? If it so, then the “monological voice” can be also produced internally and thus, is the intra psychological phenomenon. What is the difference in terms of monologicality between shared understandings of people that by Chaudhary, “are characterized more by monologicality than otherwise”, and personal understandings? When a person settles with an understanding s/he takes a certain position that, in my opinion, restricts possibilities to interpret certain events from different perspectives, though ability to do it remains (I proceed from assumption that individuals' mind is always imaginative). Individual can be related to the world through the fixed and rigid believes, prejudices, and in very stereotyped way (e.g., one is convinced that self or other orientation is the only way to be related with Others).

From the discussion above and notions about “monological voice”, presented by Chaudhary, I suppose that when the monological voice is “audible” and accepted then it supports to attain uncertainty and decreases temporary ambiguity, that in turn can be due to changes in directions of developmental trajectories of identity or maintaining of present orientation. Some examples:

- Monologicality is defended because the other person knows better–“ Now I know how to think or be in relations. I should be more self/other oriented”.
- Monologicality is periodically attained when a person settles with an understanding – “Now I can be sure what is right–to be self/other oriented”.

Conclusions

The Individual-culture dynamics create a fruitful ground for developmental changes of both. Culture accompanies individuals all through their lives: It is presented when one is born, it is used by others to supervise one's continuing becoming into oneself along life course, and finally, it is reflexive center of the Self. Interdependence of the culture and the individual integrates them into the whole and demands that approach to developmental changes takes into account both of its parts. To make sense of construction of identity, intra-personal dynamics must be treated within the context of cross-cultural studies.

The focus on the construction of identity leaves open the appearance of variety of Selves within the similar socio-cultural context. Individuals' freedom to re-create themselves is always restricted by different external factors (e.g., social environment) that can diffuse our attention from individuals' actual activity and the centrality of the *becoming-into-oneseif* process. Culture offers a reality that is selectively utilized by

individuals who actively engage in construing their own subjective realities. Not all of available material in the socio-cultural environment turns into intra-personal cultures and thus does not acquire the power to (re-) direct trajectories of identity. The filter that determines which material will be picked up and in which way it is interpreted is set by the person's constructive psychological acts. The present state of transformation of personhood grows out of its previous states, and ongoing processes in presence prepare individuals for the future lines of development. Directing one's self towards the future requires that one operates under conditions of diversity of social and personal meanings. This variety of semiotic realities determines incipience of ambivalence-the intra psychological phenomenon that can lead to new directions of development.

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