

Framing Social Values: An Experimental Study of Culture and Cognition*

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How and why does a given social value come to shape the way an individual thinks, feels, and acts in a specific social situation? This study links ideas from Goffman's frame analysis to other lines of research, proposing that dramatic narratives of variable content, vividness, and language-in-use produce variation in the accessibility of schematic, internal cultural frameworks, and, thereby, variation in the social value frames that gain situational primacy. Hypotheses derived from the argument are experimentally supported, and results encourage further research on the process of social value framing, which operates as a person crosses boundaries in the complex subcultural mosaic.

INTRODUCTION

How and why does a given social value come to shape the way a person thinks, feels, and acts in a specific social situation? An important part of the answer to this question lies in the way the social situation is culturally framed. The classic sociological statement on framing processes is Goffman's *Frame Analysis* (1974), and his work shapes important aspects of the present study. Ideas selectively borrowed from Goffman are integrated with recent ideas and findings by other scholars.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Foundations

According to Goffman, framing transforms the meaning of a social situation. We

limit our focus here to two conditions underlying such a transformation. First, "the materials" of the situation must be already meaningful to participants by virtue of a generalized cultural "schema of interpretation." Second, culturally meaningful "cues" must be available in the situation to demarcate boundaries around when and where the meaning transformation will occur¹ (Goffman 1974:45). Linking Goffman's insights to other lines of research expands our grasp of the social value framing process.

Framing, Culture, and Cognition

While Dimaggio (1997) does not cite Goffman, parts of his culture and cognition analysis resonate closely with Goffman's dramaturgical perspective. In several instances, even the language used by the two theorists suggests strong conceptual parallels between their accounts. For example, Dimaggio's (1997:277) logic of action, "an interdependent set of representations or constraints that influence action in a given domain," has a strong affinity with Goffman's "already meaningful (cultural) schema for interpretation." Further, Dimaggio's (1997) "schematically organized internal cultural toolkit" (Also see Swidler

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¹ The present study pursues only a few elementary facets of Goffman's intricate frame analysis.

1986) strongly resembles Goffman's (1974:13) cultural "organization of experience—something that an individual actor can take into his mind." Finally, Goffman's (1974: 45) focus on the part played by culturally meaningful cues in framing a specific situation is closely echoed by Dimaggio's focus on the "ways in which differing cultural frames or understandings may be situationally cued" (Dimaggio 1997: 265).

Goffman's and Dimaggio's analyses, while developed independently, reinforce one another strongly and mutually. We now bridge their analyses to other recent lines of research in the attempt to further clarify the process through which a social value is framed to define a social situation.

The Complex Cultural Mosaic: Intrinsic vs. Extrinsic Value Frameworks

Achieving such clarification is difficult, in part, due to the sheer complexity of everyday cultural life at the individual level. As Sewell (1999: 35–61) argues, a person's experience of "culture as practice" is often pluralistic and quite contradictory. And Dimaggio (1997: 264) notes that culture is hardly a "seamless web" of coherent values and beliefs, but rather is "fragmented across groups and inconsistent across its manifestations." How do values get situationally framed as a person navigates the boundaries of the variegated settings composing the complex cultural mosaic? How, why, and with what personal and social consequences are values situationally framed and reframed as a person traverses social boundaries defined by a myriad of sometimes problematic qualities, including race, class, religion, and so forth? Under what conditions will a person manage well or poorly the inevitable contradictions and conflicts likely to arise (Cf. Swidler 1986; 2001; Howard 1984; 2000)? These broad questions, while very important, are beyond the scope of the present research. To keep the task manageable, we confine our focus to a more limited range of theoretical issues. Specifically, the present analysis attempts to illuminate the dynamics through which a given social value framework

gains primacy in defining a specific social situation.

Building mainly from Goffman and Dimaggio, we propose that an individual internalizes general frameworks (interpretive schemata" or "logics of action") from the culture in which she/he is embedded and socialized. Some internal cultural frameworks are anchored in strongly held, emotionally significant social values. When operative, a given social value framework distinctively configures a person's thoughts, feelings, and actions within the confines of the social situation at hand. Because a given social value framework is permeated by a person's wishes, hopes, fears, and desires, he/she is unlikely to think, feel, and act in dispassionate, detached, objective, or impartial ways relating to the operative social value frame. He/she is likely to be value-biased whether or not she/he is clearly aware of or overtly displays such bias. That is, she/he is likely to have a clear-cut, personal value-based position in regard to the social situational outcomes she/he favors or opposes.² Finally, following Dimaggio (1997), we think the store of a person's social value frameworks are internally represented as a loosely integrated set of sometimes inconsistent or even starkly conflicting judgmental schemata.

To understand how a given social value framework comes to define a social situation for a person, it is useful to simplify some of the complexity that characterizes everyday "culture in practice" (Sewell 1999). To do so, we draw from Stolte's (2000) theoretical analysis. Stolte posits that some sociocultural situations give primacy to an intrinsic social value concern, where person A thinks, feels, and acts toward person B as if B were a valued outcome or end, rather than a means to other valued outcomes or ends. An intrinsic social

² A social value framework, as we envision it, is not identical with, but is similar in important ways to, an "ideology in action," as articulated by Fine and Sandstrom (1993). These authors describe such a framework as "a set of interconnected beliefs and their associated attitudes, shared and used by members of a group or population, that relate to problematic aspects of social and political topics. These beliefs have an explicit evaluative and implicit behavioral component" (and they are) "situated in given context" (Fine and Sandstrom 1993: 25).

value concern typically gains primacy in kinship and friendship situations. By contrast, other sociocultural situations give primacy to an “extrinsic social value concern,” where person A thinks, feels, and acts toward person B as if B were merely an instrumental means to other valued outcomes, instead of being a valued end. According to Stolte, an extrinsic social value concern usually acquires primacy in status, power, or authority hierarchies and in economic situations.³ (Also see Stolte, Fine, and Cook 2001).

Although either of these social value frameworks might, under different conditions, gain situational primacy, the present research limits focus to the conditions giving primacy to an intrinsic social value framework, as elaborated below.

Framing a Given Social Situation: Cultural Primers/Cues

Research by cultural psychologists on “contextual activation and cultural frame switching” (Lehman, Chiu, and Schaller 2003: 701; Hong, Morris, Chiu, and Benet-Martinez 2000; Hong and Chiu 2001) strongly supports the ideas on framing put forward by Goffman and Dimaggio. This work, centered on bicultural individuals, studies how “the individual shifts between interpretative frames rooted in different cultures in response to cues in the social environment” (Hong, Morris, Chiu, and Benet-Martinez 2000: 710). For example, Hong, Morris, Chiu, and Benet-Martinez (2000: 710) say that Padilla and Perez (2003) have described frame switching among Mexican-American bicultural people “in response to cues such as contexts (home or school) and symbols (language) that are psychologically associated with one culture or the other. Consistent with Dimaggio’s (1997) view of the schematically organized cultural toolkit, the research by Hong and her colleagues por-

trays internalized culture not as an integrated, consistent worldview but rather as “a loose network of domain-specific knowledge structures,” some components of which may be contradictory, even conflicting (710).

Further, and important for the present investigation, Hong and her associates help delineate the process through which a specific cultural framework gains primacy in defining a given social situation. Drawing from Bruner (1957) and Higgins (1996), these authors argue that an internal cultural framework’s accessibility is a crucial consideration. Various situational conditions and events can serve differentially as cues to signal (that is, make relatively more accessible) a given framework.

Suppose a bicultural person has internalized each of two quite different (perhaps inconsistent or even clashing) cultural frameworks, A and B. Hong, Morris, Chiu, and Benet-Martinez (2000: 711) argue that:

“Priming bicultural individuals with images from culture A . . . (spreads) . . . activation through network A, elevating accessibility of the network’s categories and implicit theories the network comprises . . . Likewise, priming with images from Culture B . . . (spreads) . . . activation through network B, elevating the accessibility of the constructs that network comprises.

To cause variation in cultural framework accessibility, these authors use “iconic cultural symbols,” cultural primers or cues selected and used by design “for their power to evoke in observers a particular frame of mind.” (Hong, Morris, Chiu, and Benet-Martinez 2000: 711).

For illustration, Hong, Morris, Chiu, and Benet-Martinez (2000) demonstrate effects of contextually cueing (priming) an internal “American” cultural framework in bicultural Chinese Americans using such icons as photographs of the American flag, the Capitol Building in Washington, DC, and Abraham Lincoln. To prime a contrasting “Chinese” cultural framework, the authors use photographs of a Chinese dragon, a Chinese opera singer, and the Great Wall of China. When Chinese/American bicultural subjects were randomly assigned to an experimental manipulation of the American vs. Chinese cueing/priming conditions, significant effects

³ Stolte (2000) builds from Fiske’s (1991) analysis of four elementary, culturally anchored psychological models. Fiske’s “communal sharing” and “equality matching” are grouped together as the main foundations of intrinsic social value, while his “authority ranking” and “market pricing” are grouped together as the principal bases of extrinsic social value.

on subjects' attributions were demonstrated. In reference to a picture of one fish swimming in front of a school of other fish, the American iconic cue/primer caused subjects to attribute the front fish's behavior to an internal cause: subjects said the front fish is leading the other fish. In contrast, the Chinese iconic cue/primer caused subjects to attribute the front fish's behavior to an external cause: subjects reported that the front fish is being chased by the other fish. These results accord with other research, demonstrating a tendency for a person who has internalized western ("individualistic") culture to lean toward making internal attributions and a tendency for a person who has internalized East Asian ("collectivist") culture to lean toward making external attributions (Also see Triandis (1995) and Triandis and Suh (2002)).

Language-in-use and Frame Accessibility

Besides iconic elements of culture, the entire *language system* employed by a bicultural, bilingual person may affect the relative situational accessibility of an internal cultural framework, because for such a person, "the two languages (she/he speaks) are often associated with two different cultural systems" (Hong, Morris, Chiu, and Benet-Martinez 2000: 717).

A study by Ross, Xun, and Wilson (2002) demonstrates the important relationship between language and accessibility. Individuals who had internalized both Chinese and Canadian culture, including the ability to speak both Chinese and English, were randomly assigned to either of two conditions. In one condition, subjects were provided instructions by an experimenter who spoke entirely in English, and they responded to a questionnaire written entirely in English. In the other condition, subjects were given instructions by an experimenter who spoke entirely in Chinese, and they responded to a questionnaire written entirely in Chinese. The questionnaire called for both open-ended and closed-ended descriptions of self. Subjects for whom English was exclusively the language-in-use displayed a relatively more "private," "individualistic," "western" self,

while those for whom Chinese was exclusively the language-in-use displayed a relatively more "public," "collective," "East Asian" self. The authors conclude that a language currently in use among bicultural, bilingual individuals renders a corresponding cultural framework relatively more accessible and thus activates that framework in the specific social situation at hand. The experiment reported below examines the effect of language-in-use as a cue in evoking an intrinsic social value framework.

Dramatic Narratives as Cultural Cues

We can build from this research in cultural psychology by returning again to Goffman. He examines the way "everyday talk" requires framing processes. When people converse in common, everyday situations, they often produce a "replaying of events" by providing dramatic narratives to one another. Borrowing imagery from the stage, Goffman claims, "What talkers undertake to do is . . . to present dramas to an audience." (1974: 508) When a person recounts past life events through brief stories or tales, she/he intends to engross, interest, and involve the listener(s). An everyday talker provides "an invitation to sit through a narrative, to follow along empathetically as a tale unfolds . . . Listeners can empathetically insert themselves into (a narrative), vicariously re-experiencing what took place" (Goffman 1974:504).

We suggest that the dramatic narratives people use in their everyday lives are centrally implicated in the dynamics through which social situations are framed and re-framed. Such narratives probably constitute an important class of cultural cue/primer shaping the situational accessibility of various social value frameworks.

Following Goffman's and Hong's insights, we employ dramatic narratives as cultural primers in the study reported below. Such narratives might be conveyed not only through everyday talk, as Goffman discusses, but also through writing in the form of brief narrative vignettes. Virtually all the properties of everyday talk described by Goffman would also apply to a written vignette read by each mem-

ber of an audience.⁴ The present study follows an experimental strategy, developing dramatic narratives to situationally frame an intrinsic social value concern.

Dramatic Narrative Impact: Vividness

Dramatic narratives are likely to vary in the capacity to frame a social value in a situation at hand. In part, this expectation derives from Goffman's distinction between the "direct" versus "indirect" presentation of events in everyday talk. He claims, "It is likely that directly presented events can be conveyed by many indicators in many sensory channels, whereas indirectly presented ones must often rely on narrow indicators, on a few signs, not streams of them" (Goffman 1974:554).

Arguably, a concretely vivid dramatic narrative will involve more of Goffman's "multiple sensory channels" than a more abstract and less vivid narrative, which will tend to have a relatively pallid sensory impact by contrast. A concretely vivid narrative will probably evoke more "empathetic engrossment" than an abstract, pallid narrative, because it will mobilize a broader band of sensory stimulation in a person. This line of reasoning is followed in the design of the experiment reported below.⁵

From Cross-cultural to Sub-cultural Social Value Framing

The research reviewed above by Hong and others on bicultural/bilingual subjects shows that cross-cultural frame switching is a fruitful

focus for research. But social values are also likely to be framed and re-framed as a person navigates varying subcultural boundaries within a national culture. That is, internal cultural frameworks probably vary not only between international cultures such as East Asian vs. Canadian or Chinese vs. American, but also between and among a wide array of intranational subcultures based on age, gender, politics, religion, sexual orientation, and so on (Howard 2000).

For example, cultural psychological research (Padilla and Perez 2003; Triandis 1995; Triandis and Suh 2002) shows that American Latinas, as a subcultural group, are likely to have internalized a cultural heritage, language, and gender predisposing them toward "communal-family-collectivism." In Stolte's (2000) terms, they are likely to have a relatively strong internalized subcultural commitment to intrinsic social value concerns.⁶ Of course, American Latinas are also likely to have internalized other American cultural frameworks, including those predisposing them toward "individualistic success striving," which often requires acting in settings and in ways requiring an extrinsic social value concern. Just as for Hong and Chiu's Eastern and Western subjects, American Latinas are likely to have acquired a complex ("loosely integrated and schematic") set of internal cultural frameworks, which are anchored in both intrinsic and extrinsic social value concerns. Moreover, crossing boundaries within the complex cultural mosaic ensures there will be conflicts and contradictions as they move into and out of varying social situations. However, the experiment described below limits concern to the way a given social value (an intrinsic social value) gains primacy within a specific social situation for a small set of American Latina subjects.

⁴ Of course, researchers have long used narrative vignettes for experimental (Rossi and Nock 1982; Sniderman and Grob 1996) and ethnographic (Ewick and Silbey 2003; Fine 1995; Swidler 1986; 2001) research.

⁵ Much research has been done on the vividness variable in attitude research, and the picture of its effects is quite complex. Sometimes it enhances persuasion, sometimes not. See Taylor and Thompson (1982). Recent studies suggest that vividness enhances the persuasive impact of a message when; "(a) the message recipient has prior attitudes about the topic (b) the vivid information competes with less vivid information (c) the message is personally relevant to the recipient and (d) the vivid information produces an affective response or is emotionally arousing." (Block and Keller 1997:33). Arguably, all of these conditions characterize the context of vividness in the study reported below.

⁶ American Latinas are not the *only* sub-group characterized strongly by this value theme. Women in general, in contrast to men, and many other ethnic groups are likely to have a similar value commitment. But, as noted below, American Latinas, due in part to their bilingualism, are a strategic subject group for the present experiment.

Social Values and Emotional Identification

A dramatic narrative invites a listener to participate vicariously in recounted events and to identify with central characters and their actions. As Goffman (1974: 504) asserts, dramatic narratives encourage listeners to become "empathetically engrossed" in the events impinging upon depicted characters. It seems likely that when a dramatic narrative evokes a specific value frame for a person (making such a frame highly accessible within the situation at hand), she/he will tend unambiguously to "take sides" in reference to various characters depicted in the narrative. Specifically, if a given social value concern has been framed to gain primacy within a situation, the person will tend to emotionally identify more strongly with a character employing that value frame than a character demonstrating an opposing value frame.

Goffman's insights about emotional identification with narrative characters can be amplified by linking them with work by Aron and his colleagues (1991), who suggest that person A may feel relatively close to or distant from person B interpersonally. Closeness entails A's emotion-based identification with B and is gauged by the extent to which A incorporates B into him/herself. Distance, in contrast, entails A's affect-based opposition to B and is gauged by the extent to which A separates him/herself from B. Aron and his associates have created and tested a reliable measure of such interpersonal emotional identification, the IOS (incorporation of other into self) scale. This tool is used to measure the dependent variable in the experiment reported below.

METHOD

Subjects

Ninety-six bilingual, Spanish and English speaking, Latina Americans volunteered to serve as subjects. These women, aged 18–21, were recruited from among the student population at a large Midwestern university and at several off-campus community locations to

participate in what was described as a study of social perceptions.⁷

Procedure and Hypotheses

The dramatic narratives read by the research subjects were designed to serve as cultural primers. These brief vignettes depicted a central female character in a social life situation, where a sequence of events requires her to make a significant decision. The first part of each of both vignettes was identically written. The dramatic content of this first vignette part was designed to render "communal-family-collectivism," that is, an intrinsic social value concern, highly accessible within the situation at hand. The second part of each vignette was written to systematically vary the motivation underlying the central character's decision. In the first vignette, the central character's motivation clearly fits the intrinsic social value frame, while in the second vignette her motivation clearly fits an opposing, extrinsic social value frame.⁸

⁷ Prior to participating, each subject read, dated, and signed a standard form of informed consent to participate in research, that, along with other experimental materials, had been approved by a university human subjects review committee.

⁸ The intrinsic social value frame was primed by having subjects read the following narrative:

"Consider the relationship between a mother and her adult daughter. The mother is quite elderly and frail. In fact, the mother's general health and mind have begun to decline. The mother needs a lot of help and support with the daily activities of life. In light of the mother's condition, the daughter is considering what decisions to make. After struggling with all of the issues, the daughter finally decides to have her mother move into her own home, so that she (the daughter) can care directly for all of her mother's needs. The daughter is moved to make this decision mainly in light of her high personal regard for and strong devotion to her mother. The daughter knows that this decision will make her own life more burdensome than placing her mother in a nursing home, but the daughter places her mother's welfare above her own, and simply wants to express her great affection for her mother."

The extrinsic social value frame was cued by having subjects read the following narrative:

"Consider the relationship between a mother and her adult daughter. The mother is quite elderly and frail. In fact, the mother's general health and mind have begun to decline. The mother needs a lot of help and support with most of the daily activities of life. In light of the mother's condition, the daughter is considering what decisions to make. After struggling with all of the issues, the daughter

As discussed above, Aron's IOS scale (Aron et al. 1991) was used to measure the level of a subject's emotional identification with the central character (the daughter) in the dramatic narrative, and this measure was taken as the dependent variable in the experiment. Aron's scale is composed of seven pairs of Venn Diagrams arranged to display different degrees of overlap, indicating low-to-high social closeness. After carefully reading a dramatic narrative, each subject considered herself as the first diagram, and considered the central character depicted in the narrative (the daughter) as the second diagram. A subject then circled a diagram-pair to indicate how close to or distant from the daughter-character she felt. After the data were collected, the seven levels of emotional identification (social closeness) were coded from 1 through 7, with higher numbers indicating greater social closeness.⁹

Since dramatic narratives evoke social value frames, as we have argued above, and by denoting a given subject as A and the central vignette character (the daughter) as B, we therefore predicted:

Hypothesis 1: A will emotionally identify more strongly with (feel closer to) a B whose actions fit an intrinsic social value frame than a B whose actions fit an extrinsic social value frame.

Above, we argued that a more concretely vivid dramatic narrative will activate "multi-sensory channel processing," while a less vivid narrative will stimulate more abstract, "non-sensory channel processing." To experimentally vary vividness, half of the written narratives included and half excluded color

photographs of the central narrative characters (daughter and mother). These photographs showed a younger adult and older adult Latina American. In light of the theorizing above, we predicted:

Hypothesis 2: A concrete-high-vividness (photos present) narrative will have a greater causal impact on subject A's level of emotional identification with central character B than an abstract-low-vividness (photos absent) narrative.

We proposed above that American Latinas are likely to have internalized two cultural heritages. The Latina heritage and Spanish language are likely to be strongly associated with "communal-family-collectivism," or, more generally, an intrinsic social value framework. By contrast, the Anglo cultural heritage and English language are likely to be strongly associated with "individualistic-success-striving," or, more generally, an extrinsic social value framework. We expected language-in-use to influence accessibility of a given cultural framework and thus the situational primacy of a given social value frame, in this study an intrinsic social value frame. Based on this reasoning, half of the dramatic narratives were written and read by subjects exclusively in Spanish, while half of the narratives were written and read exclusively in English. In regard to the Latina American participants, we predicted:

Hypothesis 3: The language in which the narrative is written and read, Spanish vs. English, will interact significantly with the intrinsic vs. extrinsic social value factor and concrete-high-vividness vs. abstract-low-vividness factor to produce variation in the level of emotional identification on the part of subject A in reference to central character B.

Design Summary

Based on the argument, hypotheses, and techniques described above, a $2 \times 2 \times 2$ complete factorial design was created and implemented, with 12 subjects randomly assigned to each of the 8 cells of the design. The experiment manipulated three factors: dramatic narrative-based intrinsic social value frame vs. extrinsic social value frame, language-in-use,

decides to have her mother move into her own home, so that she (the daughter) can care directly for all of her mother's needs. The daughter is moved to make this decision mainly in light of practical economic circumstances. The daughter knows that this decision will cost much less than placing her mother in a nursing home, and the daughter strongly wants to conserve her mother's wealth, so that when her mother dies, her (the daughter's) inheritance will be much greater than it would be otherwise."

⁹ A large body of psychometric research conducted by Aron and his associates (Aron et al. 1991) has shown this scale to be highly reliable across a number of different experimental situations. For the present study, the scale also has high face validity as an indicator of emotional identification.

and narrative concrete-high-vidviness versus abstract-low-vidviness. The dependent variable was a subject's level of emotional identification with the daughter-character depicted in the dramatic narrative, measured with Aron's IOS scale of felt closeness versus distance (Aron et al. 1991).

RESULTS

The experimental variation in dramatic narrative-based social value frame, intrinsic versus extrinsic, produced a significant main effect [$F(1, 88) = 37.9, p < .000$] on the IOS measure of emotional identification with the central narrative character. These data support Hypothesis 1. The partial Eta squared shows that this main effect explained about 30% of the variance in the IOS measure of emotional identification.

The experimental data also support Hypothesis 2. The concrete-high-vidv versus abstract-low-vidv factor had a significant main effect [$F(1, 88) = 14.87, p < .000$] on the IOS measure of subjects' emotional identification with the central character. The partial Eta squared indicates this factor accounted for approximately 15% of the variance in emotional identification.

Likewise, the data support Hypothesis 3. Language-in-use interacted significantly with the other two manipulated variables [$F(1, 88) = 4.39, p < .039$], to shape subjects' emotional identification with the central narrative character. As shown in Figure 1, when responding to a concrete-high-vidv narrative, participants who used English felt affectively closer to the daughter fitting the extrinsic social value frame ($M = 5.41, S.D. = 1.31$) than did participants who used Spanish ($M = 4.50, S.D. = 1.67$), [$t(df 22) = 1.98, p < .05$]. By contrast, when the concrete-high-vidv vignette portrayed a daughter fitting the intrinsic social value frame, participants who used Spanish felt affectively closer to the daughter ($M = 6.91, S.D. = 0.28$) than did participants who used English ($M = 6.16, S.D. = 0.83$), [$t(df 22) = 2.14, p < .05$]. When the narrative was abstract-low-vidv, language-in-use did not have a significant effect on participants' emotional identification with the central character in the extrinsic social value frame condition ($M = 3.08, S.D. = 2.35$ for English-using participants; $M = 3.83, S.D. = 1.69$ for Spanish-using participants, [$t(df 22) = -1.39, n.s.$] or toward the central character in the intrinsic social value frame condition ($M = 5.75, S.D. = 1.28$ for English-using participants; $M = 5.58, S.D. = 1.67$ for Spanish-using participants, [$t(df 22) = 0.38, n.s.$].

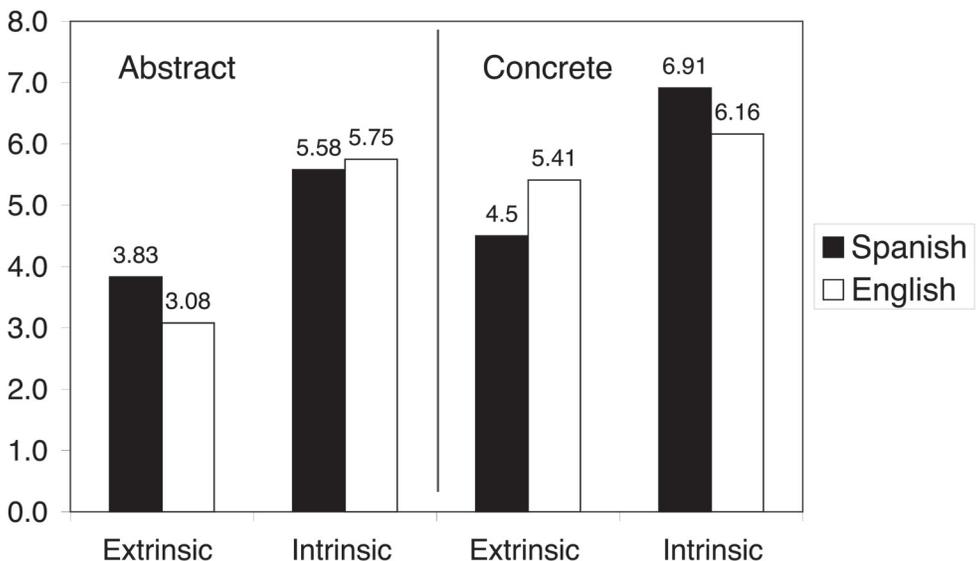


Figure 1. Variation in IOS Scale Responses by Experimental Condition

DISCUSSION

Summary

When an intrinsic social value frame was rendered highly accessible, subjects emotionally identified more strongly with a narrative character whose thoughts, feelings, and actions fit that frame than with a character whose thoughts, feelings, and actions fit an alternative frame. Also, the data demonstrated that a concrete-high-vivid narrative had a larger impact on subjects' emotional identification with a depicted character than an abstract-low-vivid narrative. And, finally, the research showed that language-in-use, manipulated by the language in which the dramatic narrative was written and read by subjects, interacted significantly with the intrinsic versus extrinsic social value frame factor and the concrete-high-vividness versus abstract-low-vividness narrative factor to produce variation in subjects' emotional identification. These findings are consistent with the theoretical argument regarding the conditions that shape the relative accessibility of a cultural framework, and therefore the relative primacy of a social value concern, for an individual in a specific social situation.

Directions for Future Research

These results encourage further work along the lines of the study reported here. Theoretically, a dramatic narrative might be designed to render an opposing cultural framework relatively more accessible, thus granting primacy to an alternative social value concern. For example, an extrinsic instead of intrinsic value concern might be granted social situational primacy, in which case subjects would be predicted to display greater emotional identification with a character whose thoughts, feelings, and actions fit the extrinsic than intrinsic value frame. Demonstrating such a result experimentally would complement the present research and lend additional strength to the basic theoretical argument proposed here.

More generally, future research might further explore the processes through which varying social value concerns are framed across varying subcultural contexts. For reasons out-

lined above, 18–21 year old Latina Americans were a strategic subject set for the present experiment. Nevertheless, the narrow focus on a small set of subjects in this age, gender, and ethnic category limits the empirical scope of the present findings. How might broader variations in such characteristics as age, gender, social class, and the like among Latin Americans, or, indeed among members of other ethnic and racial groups, shape the social value framing process? Future work should address this and related questions. Varying dramatic narratives in the design of experiments in large-scale, representative sample surveys might be a useful tactic for expanding the empirical scope of the work reported here.

Culture in practice (Sewell 1999) as a person moves through the complex cultural mosaic entails a number of important variables qualifying the social value framing process. As an individual traverses subcultural boundaries defined by politics, kinship, education, etc., what sorts of cultural cues will shape the accessibility of internal schematic cultural frameworks and grant primacy to specific social value concerns? How might social interaction in a mixed gender situation versus an all-one-gender situation condition the value framing process? What sorts of internal cultural frameworks and related social value concerns become accessible when a member of a given ethnic, racial, or social class group interacts with peers versus outgroup members? These and similar questions point to important issues for further study.

Future research also needs to more fully explore the effects of varying narrative vividness in the social value framing process. Using color photographs of narrative characters was an expedient and effective research tactic for testing the relevant hypothesis in the current study. However, a manipulation-check for this operationalization was not employed in the present research, and thus we lack supplemental data to support the inference that color photographs of dramatic characters did indeed operate through the vividness variable. Although conclusions must remain constrained, we are cautiously confident in light of other research (Stolte 1996) showing, in a different theoretical context, that photographs

significantly enhanced the impact of text-only vignettes on subjects' perceptions. Still, it would be prudent explicitly to build a check of the photograph manipulation into future research.

Beyond this methodological refinement, dramatic narrative vividness is probably conceptually richer and more intricate than has been captured through the color photograph manipulation employed in the present study. The issue, again invoking Goffman, is that a relatively more vivid dramatic narrative more fully engrosses a person by stimulating a relatively wider band of sensory channels than a less vivid dramatic narrative. This insight ought to be pursued more fully in future research. Suppose additional sensory dimensions were included, separately or in combination, to design vividness variations in experimental narratives (e.g., audio and/or full motion video variables or even, perhaps, olfactory or touch variables). Would these additional sensory dimensions amplify the vividness effect found in the present research? While present theorizing and results lead us to expect so, these expectations call for careful experimental testing in follow-up studies.

Finally, future research should explore the language-in-use variable more fully across subcultural variations. Although the focus on the formal Spanish vs. English bilingualism of Latina Americans permitted a strategic test of the relevant hypothesis in the present study, language-in-use might be construed with greater subtlety and conceptual richness across subcultures. Individuals speak not only a formal language (English, Spanish, or another language), but they also employ different dialects, jargon, argots, slang, or vernacular associated with varying subcultures based on region, age, occupation, sexual orientation, and so on. Subcultural variations in these aspects of language-in-use would also produce variations in cultural frame accessibility and social value primacy across varying social situations. Demonstrating such sub-cultural variation in language-in-use would strengthen the present findings and foster further progress in understanding the social value framing process as it operates across the complex cultural mosaic.

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