

17

Agency and Communion as a Framework to Understand Consumer Behavior

Didem Kurt

Boston University

Jeremy Frimer

University of Winnipeg

in press in M. Norton, D. Rucker & C. Lamberton (Eds.), *The Cambridge Handbook of Consumer Psychology*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.

In his seminal work, [Bakan \(1966\)](#) proposed agency and communion as two pillars of human personality – they describe how people are different from one another and how these differences influence individual and social desires. Agency represents a desire for independence and separation from other organisms; communion represents a striving for connection and unity with other organisms. They reflect personal and social motives that can conflict, cooperate, or merely coexist, depending on the context or the person. These intriguing constructs attracted a considerable amount of attention among psychologists, resulting in significant theoretical and empirical advancement over the last fifty years. Building on this large body of literature, consumer researchers have

started to examine the role of these two dimensions of human personality in various issues, including consumers' interactions with brands and other consumers in the marketplace. While doing so, they also contributed to the advancement of the agency-communion theory.

The goal of this chapter is to review this nascent literature and identify fruitful research opportunities. Four sections comprise this chapter. The first section provides a broad summary of agency and communion and discusses their relation to key behavioral outcomes such as motivation, memory, and prosocial behavior. The second section outlines the current state of consumer research on agency and communion and summarizes key findings. The third section highlights some of the methodological issues pertaining to the use and operationalization of agency and communion in the consumer behavior literature. The last section lays the groundwork for future research.

Agency and Communion Fundamentals

Agency is about getting ahead. To be agentic is to be competent, independent, competitive, ambitious, in control, and power seeking. Communion is about getting along. To be communal is to be warm, honest, compassionate, agreeable, and generous (Bakan, 1966). Agency and communion serve their respective adaptive functions by profiting the self and others, respectively (Abele & Wojciszke, 2007; Cislak & Wojciszke, 2008; Peeters, 2008).

Agency is self-profiting in that ambition, competence, and social power tend to directly gain the individual material wealth. Agency also has socially mediated benefits. In the eyes of others, agency is telling of a person's capacity

for carrying out intentions. This perceived capacity earns agentic people respect and social status (Stopfer, Egloff, Nestler, & Back, 2013; Wojciske, Abele, & Baryla, 2009; cf. Carrier, Louet, Chauvin, & Rohmer, 2014) and passive facilitation (e.g., strategic associations; Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2007, 2008). Managers prefer agentic employees, and, likewise, employees prefer agentic managers (Cislak, 2013). Thus, agency confers both material and social benefits to the individual.

Communion's other-profitability is also adaptive for the communal individual, albeit via social mechanisms. Communion is telling of others' intentions. People perceive communal people as allies and those low in communion as competitors (Cacioppo, Gardner, & Berntson, 1997). These attributions elicit active helping versus harming behavior (Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2007, 2008). As the potential beneficiary of others' communal generosity, people seek and value communal people (Cislak & Wojciszke, 2008; Fiske, Cuddy, & Glick, 2007; Stopfer et al., 2013; Wojciske, Abele, & Baryla, 2009). Hence, communal people tend to have a favorable reputation, which secures their inclusion in harmonious social groups. Individuals in these groups tend to out-compete lone individuals (Haidt, 2012). Thus, communion too has its adaptive function.

Individual Differences in Agency and Communion

Origins

Agency and communion are only somewhat heritable (viz. 30 percent; [Bleidorn et al., 2010](#)) with male the more agentic gender, and female the more communal gender ($.4 < d < .8$; e.g., [Lippa, 2001](#)). In friendships, males tend to seek agency (e.g., status, physical fitness), and females tend to seek communion (e.g., intimacy, loyalty; [Hall, 2011](#)). Also, during interactions with same-sex friends males and females conform to the stereotype: males are more agentic, and females are more agreeable ([Suh, Moskowitz, Fournier, & Zuroff, 2004](#)).

However, careful empirical examinations found that the agency-masculinity and communion-femininity associations are mainly products of social roles, not sex. The male-agency and female-communion stereotypes break down with romantic partners wherein men are more communal than women ([Suh et al., 2004](#)). Regardless of gender, breadwinners tend to be agentic, and homemakers tend to be communal ([Bosak, Sczesny, & Eagly, 2012](#)). During interactions with people of varying social status, agency changes in both genders. For instance, males are more dominant with their supervisees than they are with their supervisors, but so are females ([Moskowitz, Suh, & Desaulniers, 1994](#)). Thus, agency and communion may be aligned with masculinity and femininity because of historical differences in the roles males and females played in society. Indeed, the agency-male and communion-female links weakened between the

1970s and 1990s (Holt & Ellis, 1998). Both genders have the capacity to adopt the agentic or communal personality.

Measurement

Three types of measures exist: (1) self-report, (2) cognitive accessibility, and (3) verbal content analysis (see Table 17.1). The self-report category represents the most commonly used approach in the literature. This category includes alternative scales, some of which derived from well-known personality inventories. Each of these scales consists of a set of related adjectives pertaining to agency and communion dimensions.

Table 17.1.
Measures of Agency and Communion

Measure	Illustrative Items/ Content	
	Agency	Communion
Self-Report Measures		
Sex-Role Inventory ¹	Self-reliant, athletic, assertive	Yielding, cheerful, shy
Personal Attributes Questionnaire ²	Independent, active, competitive	Helpful, kind, aware of the feelings of others
Interpersonal Adjective Scale ³	Ambitious–dominant	Warm–agreeable
Agency and Communion Values ⁴	Competence, achievement, power	Forgiveness, altruism, loyalty
Warmth and Competence ⁵	Capable, skillful, intelligent	Good-natured, trustworthy, tolerant
Agency and Communion ⁶	Clever, efficient, ingenious	Fair, generous, honest
Implicit Measure		
Word Fragments Completion Task ⁷	---erior, con---dent, ---ct _	_ind, war_, gen---
Content Analysis		
Motives of Agency and Communion ⁸	Self-mastery, status/victory, achievement, empowerment	Love, friendship, dialogue, care/help, community
Values Embedded in Narrative ⁹	Power, status, possessions, achievement	Benevolence, universalism

Agency and Communion Dictionaries for LIWC ¹⁰	Achieve, dominant, leader	Charitable, listen, understanding
Prosocial Words Dictionary for LIWC ¹¹	—	Care, give, help, gentle, protect

Note. ¹ Bem (1974); ² Spence, Helmreich, & Holahan (1979); ³ Wiggins (1979); ⁴ Trapnell & Paulhus (2012); ⁵ Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick (2007); ⁶ Wojciszke, Bazinska, & Jaworski (1998); ⁷ Bartz & Lydon (2004); ⁸ Mansfield & McAdams (1996); ⁹ Frimer & Walker (2009); ¹⁰ Hart et al. (2011); ¹¹ Frimer et al. (2014).

The cognitive accessibility measure asks participants to complete word fragments that can be accomplished with agentic (vs. neutral) and communal (vs. neutral) words. The accessibility of each dimension on the part of the respondent is measured by counting the number of agentic and communal words generated. While it is intuitive and easy to use, this measure has not been widely adopted in the literature.

Finally, content analysis involves a human coder counting themes, or a computer program counting particular words, that are agentic or communal in open-ended verbal responses.¹ Individual differences measured with scales vis-à-vis content analysis tend to correlate only weakly and predict different classes of behavior (McClelland, Koestner, & Weinberger, 1989; Thrash & Elliot, 2002), suggesting that scales and content analysis tap different psychological systems. An advantage of content-analytic methods is their ability to assess how agency and communion interact within the individual (e.g., whether a person construes

¹ For example, the following goal has communion content: “I want all children to have shelter from the elements. I need people to help by donating money, time, and resources to building shelters and helping relocate children who need help.” In contrast, the following goal has agency content: “...to decide what career I want, and go to graduate school in that field. To do this I need to evaluate my interests, and look for graduate programs that are right for me.” (Frimer, Schaefer, & Oakes, 2014, p. 796).

agency as a means to an end of communion, e.g., Frimer et al., 2012). A disadvantage is coder bias (when human coded) or the ambiguity of linguistic markers of meaning (e.g., *fair* can mean *legitimate* or *blond hair*). Throughout the remainder of the chapter, we bracket these methodological heterogeneities and treat agency and communion as monolithic.

Behavioral Implications of Agency and Communion

Motivation and Emotion

Motivationally, agentic² desire to stand out and break from social norms. Reminding people of shaky, distant relationships increases the activation of agentic thought (Bartz & Lydon, 2004). When feeling threatened, agentic wish to distance themselves from others and become avoidant in their attachment style (Coolsen & Nelson, 2001). Moreover, agentic experience stress when trying to demonstrate competence (e.g., convey knowledge about a social issue), but not when arguing with a spouse (Smith et al., 1998). Among the elderly, agentic who experience threats to financial stability and social status are at a higher risk for suicide (Coren & Hewitt, 1999). Their expression of individuality can have ironic implications: In secular countries (e.g., Sweden, Germany) agentic tend to become religious (Gebauer, Paulhus, & Neberich, 2013). When online dating, agentic prefer status and attractiveness in their potential mates.

² We use the term “agentic” to mean individuals who are more agentic than communal (i.e., relatively agentic). We use the term “communals” analogously (i.e., relatively communal).

This applies, however, only in countries that devalue status/attractiveness (e.g., France). Agentics' preferences for status/attractiveness and religiosity are a product of their desire to stand out (Gebauer, Sedikides, Verplanken, & Maio, 2012).

Motivationally, communion is a desire to belong and conform to social norms. Reminding people of intimate, healthy relationships (by priming secure attachment) increased activation of communal thought (Bartz & Lydon, 2004). Under threat, communals tend to become clingy and seek to restore a close connection (viz. anxious-ambivalent attachment style; Coolsen & Nelson, 2001). For elderly communals, threats to social stability are risk factors for suicide (Coren & Hewitt, 1999). Communals experience stress when arguing with a spouse, but not when trying to demonstrate competence (Smith et al., 1998). When online dating, communals tend to value attractiveness/status in potential mates only when they live in countries where attractiveness/status are important social values (e.g., Italy; Gebauer, Leary, & Neberich, 2012). Out of their desire to belong to something greater than themselves, communals tend to be religious. However, the relationship that communals seek in religion may be human rather than spiritual. Communals are especially likely to be religious in countries where the social norm is religiosity (e.g., Turkey). In secular countries (e.g., Germany), the relationship between communion and religiosity vanishes (Gebauer, Paulhus, & Neberich, 2013).

Memory and Learning

Agency and communion are important channels through which information is organized, stored, and retrieved in memory. Agentic and communal individuals record more memories that are consistent with their respective orientation (Woike & Polo, 2001). When recalling past events, agentic individuals recall moments of accomplishment, recognition, and failure. Communal individuals recall experiences of love, friendship, and betrayal of trust (Woike, Gershkovitz, Piorkowski, & Polo, 1999). The structure of memories also depends on agentic and communal orientation. Agentic individuals rely on contrasts and relative comparisons (i.e., differentiation), whereas communal individuals use links and similarities (i.e., integration; Woike et al., 1999). When learning new information, agentic individuals attend more to distinctions; communal individuals are more attentive to connections and integrations (Woike, Lavezzary, & Barsky, 2001).

Health and Happiness

Both agency and communion tend to have positive implications for physical and emotional health. Agentic individuals are physically active, eat healthily, have high self-esteem, and have few body shape concerns (Danoff-Burg, Mosher, & Grant, 2006; Mosher & Danoff-Burg, 2008; Wojciszke et al., 2011). For patients who suffered from a heart attack, agentic individuals experience the least anxiety and depression during recovery (Helgeson, 1993). Among arthritics, agentic individuals experience decreased distress, disability, and pain (Trudeau, Danoff-Burg, Revenson, & Paget, 2003).

These benefits may be sourced to agentics' belief in free will and their elevated sense of self-control (Baumeister & Brewer, 2012).

Agency is not beneficial for all health outcomes. When a friend discloses a problem, agentics exert control by offering advice, which induces stress in the friend (Fritz, Nagurney, & Helgeson, 2003). In contrast, communals are better at offering social support. When a friend discloses a problem, communals offer emotional support. Among spouses of heart attack sufferers, communals experience the least anxiety and depression (Helgeson, 1993). Communals are loyal and socially connected: they have relatively few sexual partners (Nagurney & Bagwell, 2009), and they tend to be happy (Fournier & Moskowitz, 2000).

In their extreme and pure forms, agency and communion seem to have uniformly negative health implications. Agency in the absence of communion – unmitigated agency – manifests as arrogance, boastfulness, and greed (Spence, Helmreich, & Holahan, 1979). Unmitigated agents make unilateral decisions and exercise power over others (Buss, 1990). In a parallel vein, communion in the absence of agency – unmitigated communion – manifests as being spineless, servile, and gullible. Unmitigated communals are “doormats,” placing the needs of others over their own (e.g., accepting verbal insults without retort; Helgeson, 1993; Helgeson & Fritz, 1998). Unmitigated agents and unmitigated communals have difficult relationships and poor health outcomes (Helgeson & Fritz, 1999, 2000). Specifically, unmitigated agents binge eat, drive recklessly, and abuse substances (Danoff-Burg, Mosher, & Grant, 2006). Unmitigated communals tend to engage in emotional eating and fasting (Mosher & Danoff-Burg, 2008).

Leadership and Prosocial Behavior

The stereotypical leader (e.g., manager) is more agentic than communal (Koenig, Eagly, Mitchell, & Risitkari, 2011). Indeed, agentic leaders have successful careers, whereas communal leaders have large families (Abele, 2003). Leaders achieve status using either a dominant style or the more liked prestigious style (combining their agency with communion; Cheng et al., 2013). Leaders of prosocial causes are both agentic and communal (Mansfield & McAdams, 1996; Matsuba & Walker, 2005; Walker & Frimer, 2007). These leaders combine their agency with their communion in their life stories and personal goals (Frimer & Walker, 2009; Frimer et al., 2011), framing their agency as a means to an end of a communal purpose (Frimer et al., 2012). This narrative framing of agency for communion is rare. Typical adults and even emerging communal leaders use agency for both agency and communion equally (Dunlop, Walker, & Matsuba, 2013).

Agency, Communion, and Social Judgment

When people evaluate the actions and characters of others, they make agentic and communal attributions, each of which can be positively or negatively valenced. These are at play both in judgments of individual persons and in judgments of groups (stereotypes).

Judging Individuals

The Double Perspective Model (Abele & Wojciszke, in press) posits that agency and communion play different roles in social judgment. For an agent trying to

complete a task, agency is the more important motive because the active doer is concerned with efficient goal fulfillment. When describing goals or recalling doing something well, people describe their agency (e.g., efficiency; Abele & Wojciszke, 2007; Frimer, Schaefer, & Oakes, 2014). Also, priming positive agentic memories enhances self-esteem (Wojciszke, & Sobiczewska, 2013).

However, for an observer of another person's action, communion is more important than agency because the observer is concerned with the social consequences of the action, be they profitable for the observer or not. Thus, communion is the primary dimension of social judgment (Abele & Wojciszke, in press). Communal traits are more cognitively accessible, and people rate them as more important than agency (Abele & Wojciszke, 2007; Wojciszke et al., 2011). People process communal information faster and more automatically than agentic information (viz. mentioned first and faster recognition, categorization, and inference from behavior; Abele & Bruckmüller, 2011; Bi, Ybarra, & Zhao, 2013; Ybarra, Park, Stanik, & Lee, 2008). When recalling doing something well from the perspective of another person, people describe their communion (e.g., relatedness; Abele & Wojciszke, 2007). People prefer communion in others unless they are mutually interdependent (e.g., working together), in which case the preference is for agency (Abele & Brack, 2013).

Judging Groups: Stereotype and Prejudice

The Stereotype Content Model (e.g., Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2008; Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002) and the BIAS map (Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2007) posit that combinations of agency and communion describe stereotypes of various groups

and can account for typical reactions toward these groups. Agency stereotypes elicit a desire to associate (or dissociate) with the group, whereas communion stereotypes elicit a desire to help (or harm) the group. Stereotypes of Asians, Jews, and the wealthy are agentic and not communal, eliciting envy and conflicting desires to associate with yet harm these groups (Wojciszke, Bazinska, & Jaworski, 1998). The disabled and the elderly are seen as communal and not agentic, eliciting pity and patronizing help and neglect. Stereotypically lacking agency and communion, the homeless and feminists elicit feelings of contempt, resulting in neglect and active harm. And housewives and the middle class are stereotypically both agentic and communal, eliciting admiration. People desire to both help and be socially connected to these groups (Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2007).

Situational Flexibility of Agency and Communion

People have the capacity for both agency and communion; they transition flexibly between them from situation to situation. Agentic self-concept changes in response to successes and failure (e.g., Abele, 2003; Diekmann & Eagly, 2000; Leszczynski, 2009; Moskowitz, Suh, & Desaulniers, 1994; Twenge, 1997). And communal self-concept increases when empathizing with another person (Uchronski, Abele, & Bruckmüller, 2013). People are more agentic on weekdays, and more communal on weekends (Brown & Moskowitz, 1998; Uchronski, 2008). As people move through their careers, they become less agentic and more

communal (Diehl, Owen, & Youngblade, 2004). Agency and communion vary depending on the situation.

To garner the benefits of both agency and communion, a common strategy is to behave agentially while maintaining a communal appearance. These mutually conflicting motives turn social life into a kind of theatrical play, with vast differences between onstage and offstage performances (Goffman, 1959). On stage, people tend to become deceptively communal, claiming sanctimonious saint-like attributes and exaggerating their agreeableness and self-restraint (Gebauer, Sedikides, Verplanken, & Maio, 2012; Paulhus & John, 1998). Off stage (i.e., when feeling anonymous), people rarely engage in communal behavior (Hoffman, McCabe, Shachat, & Smith, 1996; Shariff & Norenzayan, 2007) even if they committed themselves to doing so (Batson et al., 1997). To maintain this “moral masquerade” (Batson, 2008), people tend to present a communal self-identity and expend great efforts to repair deficiencies in communal reputation (e.g., Ybarra et al., 2012). People can also claim to be more agentic than they actually are to garner respect. Agentic deceivers make narcissistic superheroic revelations of their own social and intellectual status (Paulhus & John, 1998).

Mapping Consumer Behavior onto Agency and Communion

Agency and communion emerged as key themes in studies of consumer research during the last decade. A primary aim was to better understand the role of social forces (e.g., impression management, transmission by word of mouth) in consumer decision making. The goal of other studies was to further our

understanding of the processes governing consumers' individual decision making (e.g., financial risk taking). The two fundamental modalities of human nature provide a useful framework for analyzing and interpreting differences in consumer behavior in socially dynamic settings, where individuals interact with other social actors or their choices are publicly observable to others. Agency and communion are also useful for understanding consumer behavior in socially isolated settings, where individuals are not subject to an explicit social influence. While the latter setting has received only limited attention of researchers to date, both contexts offer rich opportunities for understanding various dimensions of consumer decision making. Consistent with the spirit of this volume, we begin by identifying key theoretical and empirical advances in earlier research and then discuss relatively underresearched areas.

Agency, Communion, and Consumers' Interactions with Brands

Self-Identity and Consumption

Agentic and communal values are built into individuals' view of the self. As such, they are overarching concerns that motivate people in consumption episodes. Consumers' buying decisions, by their very nature, may be inherent manifestations of agency as they are ultimately intended to satisfy the needs of the self (Sedikides, Gregg, Cisek, & Hart, 2007). This view, however, does not fully explain many purchase situations in which consumer choices are imbued with concern for others.

Engaging in consumption activities may enable people to create a sense of self. In particular, consumers' prior experiences may accumulate as self-stories that help the individual define who they are and what they want (Escalas & Bettman, 2000). Escalas' (1996) brand story study provided evidence supporting this argument. Her analysis of consumers' brand stories revealed that brands helped people achieve their goals related to both agency (e.g., differentiating the self from others) and communion (e.g., connecting the self with others), strengthening the connection between the brand and one's sense of self.

Consumer–Brand Relationships

Marketers use agency and communion strategically to communicate and connect with consumer groups. Some brands aim to establish a communal relationship with consumers (Aggarwal, 2004); a common strategy is to offer certain benefits to show the brand's concern for customers' needs (rather than to get something in return). While such a strategy may increase customer loyalty, it also exposes the brand to the risk of violating norms of communal relationships (e.g., helping others without expecting monetary payments). Customers who feel a communal versus exchange relationship with a brand respond more negatively when the brand charges a fee for extra services linked to a prior transaction.

A key source of the appeal of luxury products to consumers is the agentic feelings (e.g., superiority and status) provided by such products. This effect is likely to fade as luxury brands attempt to establish a stronger connection with their customers via introducing user-created items (i.e., items designed by customers instead of the firm's internal designers). Labeling luxury fashion

brands (e.g., Prada) as user-designed decreases demand for such products because such labels attenuate consumers' experience of agency (Fuchs, Prandelli, Schreier, & Dahl, 2013). On the other hand, labeling mainstream brands (e.g., Zara) as user-designed increases demand. Mainstream brand users may be less concerned about agentic feelings and place more emphasis on communal feelings, leading them to endorse more strongly the idea of user-design to foster a sense of connection to like-minded others.

The agentic orientation of narcissists manifests as instrumental relations with not only those around them but also with brands (Lambert & Desmond, 2013). Narcissists have little loyalty to brands and thus exhibit elevated brand-switching behavior. Their portfolio of brands changes as they encounter better ones; yet it consistently includes brands that communicate self-sufficiency, superiority, and status. In contrast, nonnarcissists adopt a communal orientation toward people and brands, leading them to establish deeper and long-lasting relations when dealing with both. The brand choices of nonnarcissists reflect the values they embrace in their personal relations, such as loyalty and modesty.

Advertising Strategies

Jorgenson's (1981) content analysis of more than five thousands ads that appeared in an American magazine targeting a primarily female audience for the period 1910 to 1979 revealed that communal themes were more prevalent than agentic themes. However, the ratio of communal themes to agentic themes decreased during the 1970s, consistent with the increasing emphasis on the self over those years. As people became more concerned with self-indulgence and

differentiating themselves from others, marketers adjusted their messages to remain relevant.

Agentic and communal values embraced by consumers of different gender determine consumers' reactions to the self- and other-oriented advertising messages (Meyers-Levy, 1988). Males primed with agentic values exhibit a more favorable attitude toward a product than females primed with communal values when the product message is self-oriented (e.g., it kills germs and bacteria that cause decay), whereas the opposite is true when the message is other-oriented (e.g., it provides pleasing fresh breath). Nonetheless, the self-oriented message does not result in less favorable attitudes toward the product among females as compared to the other-oriented message, which is consistent with the argument that agentic values are increasingly embraced by female consumers.

Consumer-to-Consumer Interactions

Social Self-Threat

Social self-threat (e.g., being unloved and rejected by close others) influences how much consumers value the things they own (Dommer & Swaminathan, 2013). Both agentics and communals respond to social self-threat by attaching greater value to in-group items (i.e., a product with the home institution logo) as compared to generic items (i.e., a product with no logo). However, social self-threat causes agentics (but not communals) to devalue out-group items (i.e., a product with the rival institution logo). This finding is consistent with the argument that when it comes to items associated with out-groups, the link

between possessions and the self is likely to be weaker, particularly among agentic individuals, as they have a tendency to separate themselves from others.

Social Presence

Agentic's drive to stand out alters their consumption when a peer is present (Kurt, Inman, & Argo, 2011). Agentic who are accompanied by a friend during a shopping trip spend more (e.g., choose a more expensive brand) than those who shop alone. On the contrary, the presence of a friend does not change spending among communals. The explanation for this observation is that the two groups have different impression-management concerns, leading them to adopt different self-presentation styles when shopping with friends. In particular, agency stresses self-promotion, leading agentic to pursue an acquisitive self-presentation style (i.e., getting ahead) through higher spending. Communals prefer a protective self-presentation style (i.e., getting along) by keeping their spending under control.

Word of Mouth

Consumers' willingness to exert social influence upon other consumers through word of mouth depends on their agency–communion orientation (Zhang, Feick, & Mittal, 2014). As the strength of the relation between the self and the recipient gets weaker, the likelihood of sharing a poor consumption experience with others diminishes among agentic individuals who are high in image impairment concern. That is, when image impairment concern is high enough, agency reduces people's tendency to prevent others from making a similar mistake

unless others are very closely related to the self. This is because transmitting negative word of mouth involves the risk of looking foolish in the eye of the recipient (e.g., being seen as someone making bad purchase decisions). On the other hand, communal individuals are equally likely to tell their negative experiences to others regardless of the strength of their relationship to the recipient (e.g., a close friend vs. a casual acquaintance).

Charitable Donations

Agency and communion also determine the amount of money people spend to satisfy a sense of personal morality (Winterich, Mittal, & Ross, 2009). The amount of money donated to out-group targets (i.e., the victims of Indian Ocean Tsunami) increases with moral identity among communal (but not agentic) donors. When donation targets belong to an in-group (i.e., the victims of Hurricane Katrina), however, moral identity positively influences donations of agentic donors. The proposed explanation for this effect is that communion, which includes in-group others as a part of the self, allows for the expansion of the one's circle of moral regard to include members of other-groups. In contrast, agency limits the expansion of the boundaries of one's moral regard from the self to only those who are associated with the self in a meaningful manner (i.e., in-group others).

Agency and communion not only influence prosocial behavior but also impact how the beneficent feel afterward (Grant & Gino, 2010). Helping others causes the helper to experience stronger feelings of both agency (i.e., self-efficacy) and communion (i.e., social worth) when the beneficent received thanks

for his or her efforts. However, only his or her level of communal feelings predicted whether the helper would engage in further prosocial behavior. That is, gratitude expressions motivate helpers to help more by increasing their perceived social value.

Agency, Communion, and Consumers' Interactions with Service Providers

Agency Is the Default

Agency may be the default in the various encounters of consumers with service providers. In-depth interviews with both bill collectors and consumer debtors suggest that agency characterizes the relationship between the two parties (Hill, 1994). Collectors tend to depersonalize and isolate themselves from debtors. By objectifying debtors, collectors may suppress empathic concerns for debtors, which may allow collectors to manipulate debtors to collect the desired amount without feeling guilt. This agentic approach, however, often escalates conflicts and sometimes leads to the use of excessive collection tactics.

Adding Communion to the Mix

Customer satisfaction is higher when the customer displays an agentic behavior pattern and the service provider exhibits a communal behavior pattern – or vice versa – in their interactions as compared to the case where both parties interact using the same style (Ma & Dube, 2011). For example, patrons at the dining room of a health care facility reported a lower level of satisfaction with the service

when the patrons and servers both exhibited a dominant style. Reported satisfaction increased if either the patron or the server exhibited a submissive style. Similarly, when both the patron and the server exhibited agreeable behavior (vs. one party exhibiting quarrelsomeness), reported satisfaction was low. These findings suggest that agency and communion are complementary in social interactions, working together like yin and yang.

This compatibility of agency and communion – and incompatibility of agency and agency – in social relationships does not always apply and can sometimes reverse. When marketing their service, sellers may find that their self-promotion efforts backfire when trying to connect with clients with communal orientation. [Scott, Mende and Bolton \(2013\)](#) asked participants to read a magazine article about a lawyer and then indicate their interest in doing business with the lawyer. When the article emphasized the wealth of the lawyer, communal clients' interest in doing business with the lawyer declined. Contra the [Ma and Dube \(2011\)](#) study, this finding suggests that self-promotion (a key characteristic of agency) is incompatible with the communal orientation of some consumers and can thereby undermine the relationship between service providers and consumers.

Agency, Communion, and Material Wealth

Affluence

People often attribute greater agency to affluent individuals ([Christopher & Schlenken, 2000](#)) and expect that individuals with a high income to have agentic

qualities, such as competence, and to have few communal qualities (Johannesen-Schmidt & Eagly, 2002). This suggests that when making attributions about others based on their income, agency and communion may function in a mutually exclusive manner. One explanation is that wealth and success typically breed self-promotion, a prevalent manifestation of agency. This movement may be at odds with communion's focus on avoiding separation and losses to maintain unity.

Issue Capability and Financial Risk Taking

Agency and communion may also influence how people gain affluence, through financial risk-taking behavior. Agency makes consumers sensitive to achievement of gains, whereas communion enhances consumers' sensitivity to avoidance of losses (He, Inman, & Mittal, 2008). As a result, higher issue capability (i.e., higher level of perceived resources or skills to resolve an issue) leads to greater risk seeking in investment decisions of agentic individuals, whereas the same effect was observed in insurance decisions of communal individuals. Specifically, issue capability increases agentic's willingness to invest their savings in the stock market instead of a savings account through shifting their focus more on the upside potential of their decision. While issue capability does not alter the likelihood of investing in the stock market among communals, it reduces their tendency to purchase insurance against potential losses (i.e., they take more risk).

Power and Financial Risk Taking

Having power or authority over others could serve many different purposes, agentic or communal. For example, managers can use their power to help their team function well together (communal purpose) or to gain accolades for themselves (agentic purpose). Agentic individuals tend not to think of social power in such a nuanced and contingent way. Rather, agentic individuals default to the assumption that social power is, first and foremost, an opportunity for amassing personal wealth and expanding the boundaries of their power; communals do not make such a simplistic association. Supporting this perspective is evidence that feeling powerful induces greater financial risk taking among agentic individuals when such risks provide high self-benefit (Kurt, 2015). In contrast, feeling powerful has no impact on the financial risk taking of communals. For agentic individuals – and only for agentic individuals – feelings of power, by default, are associated with the pursuit of self-enhancement through personal gain.

Not only does feeling powerful rather than powerless have differential impact on agentic and communal consumers, but it also facilitates agentic behavior on the part of consumers (for a detailed discussion, see Rucker, Galinsky, & Dubois, 2012, and Chapter 12 in this handbook). Consumers, when they feel powerful, report a higher level of self-importance (a typical characteristic of agency) and spend more money on the items they purchase for themselves than on the items they purchase for others (Rucker, Dubois, & Galinsky, 2011). That is, for those who feel powerful, self is associated with greater psychological utility as compared to others, resulting in higher monetary worth allocated to spending on the self rather than others.

Methodological and Analytic Issues in Consumer Research

The operationalization of agency and communion was a key issue emerging in our review of the extant consumer behavior literature. In this section, we briefly review how consumer researchers have measured agentic and communal orientations and how they have analyzed their data. We also discuss whether agency and communion are simply a variant of other related personality constructs that are of interest to consumer researchers.

Measuring and Manipulating Agency and Communion

Gender as a Proxy Measure

Using gender as a proxy for agency-communion orientation is quite common (e.g., Dommer & Swaminathan, 2013; He, Inman, & Mittal, 2008; Kurt, Inman, & Argo, 2011; Zhang, Feick, & Mittal, 2014). This approach has its roots in Bakan's (1966) observation that agency is more of a characteristic of males, whereas communion is more of a characteristic of females. A key advantage of this approach is that it allows researchers to operationalize agency and communion in secondary datasets in which these dimensions were not explicitly measured (e.g., He, Inman, & Mittal, 2008; Kurt, Inman, & Argo, 2011). A major disadvantage of this approach, however, is that it relies on the questionable premise that all males are agentic and all females are communal. Dindia (2006, p.

11) summarized this issue as follows: “Women are more communal and men are more agentic, ... [but] they differ in degree, not kind.”

Self-Report Inventories

Several researchers have used personality inventories to measure agentic and communal orientations directly.³ Winterich, Mittal, and Ross (2009), for instance, employed the Bem’s (1974) Sex Role Inventory, which contains twenty items related to each dimension. Others also used items selected from the Extended Version of Personal Attributes Questionnaire (Spence, Helmreich, & Holahan, 1979), which includes eight items on each dimension.

Because scoring high on agency does not necessarily imply a strong self-versus other-focus, as someone can score high on both agency and communion dimensions, some researchers adopted a “difference score” approach to assess the extent to which individuals endorse agentic versus communal values and thus have a truly self- rather than other-focus (e.g., Dommer & Swaminathan, 2013; Kurt, Inman, & Argo, 2011). This approach, which involves subtracting each respondent’s communion score from his or her agency score, has a long tradition in the literature and recognizes that it is not the level of agency or communion but the difference between the two dimensions that determines one’s self versus other orientation (e.g., Costos, 1986; Strahan, 1975; White, et al., 1986).

³ Content analysis also allows researchers to assess individuals’ agentic and communal orientations. While this approach is gaining popularity in the psychology literature, it has not been adopted by consumer researchers yet. We urge future researchers to consider this alternative methodology as well (for an application, see Frimer et al., 2011).

Experimental Manipulations

While acknowledging that priming agency and communion may be difficult (these characteristics are internalized through socialization at early ages; Eagly, 1987), researchers have nonetheless developed experimental manipulations for agency–communion orientation. These experimental manipulations typically involve asking participants to read statements about agentic and communal qualities (Myers-Levy, 1988), write a short paragraph explaining how they embody these qualities (Winterich, Mittal, & Ross, 2009), or perform a scrambled work task (Kurt, Inman, & Argo, 2011).

Agency–Communion and Related Constructs

Independence–Interdependence

Agency and communion are linked (but not identical) to other relationship orientation constructs used in the consumer behavior literature. Among these constructs stand out the independent and interdependent self-construals (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Singelis, 1994), which also reflect an emphasis on one's uniqueness and self-sufficiency versus connectedness and social synergy. Agency–communion differs from independent–interdependent self-construal in two important ways. First, agency–communion was conceptualized broad enough to capture such characteristics as self-confidence, competitiveness, and emotional expressivity besides independence versus interdependence. Agency, for instance, is about being independent from others but also getting ahead of

them. Thus, while the independent self-construal may capture the self-sufficiency aspect of agency, it does not truly reflect one's desire to feel superior to others.

Second, agency–communion has its roots in personality psychology, whereas independent–interdependent self-construals originate from cultural psychology and are motivated by differences in interpersonal relations between Western and non-Western societies.⁴ Accordingly, the former can be meaningfully used to motivate and explain variation in individuals' self- and other-oriented behavior within a particular culture. In contrast, the latter is a more appropriate construct to analyze cross-cultural differences in individuals' self versus other focus. That is, agentic qualities (e.g., decisiveness, competitiveness, leadership) and communal qualities (nurturance, emotional expressiveness) are part of every society regardless of whether a society is primarily independent (e.g., the United States) or interdependent (e.g., China). Accordingly, valuing independence over interdependence at a broader level does not necessarily imply that a person would embrace agency more than communion. For instance, people who belong to a primarily independent culture may prefer to nurture those around them in a way that those dependents will have the resources and ability to make their decisions independently in the future, whereas people from a primarily interdependent culture may exhibit

⁴ For instance, the extent to which someone feels comfortable using one's first name soon after meeting a person (which is more of a characteristic of Westerners) is one of the dimensions of independence in Singelis' scale. Similarly, one's willingness to offer a seat to his or her professor on the bus (which is more of a characteristic of non-Westerners) relates to interdependence. In that sense, independent and interdependent self-construals are more closely related to the concepts of individualism and collectivism (e.g., Hofstede, 1984) than are agency and communion.

nurturance in a way that it facilitates interdependence between the two parties. This, however, does not mean that the former group exhibits lower communion (and higher agency) than the latter group. It is just that communion may be practiced differently across cultures.

Exchange and Communal Relationship Styles

Relationship styles – exchange versus communal relationship (Clark & Mills, 1979) – also map onto agency–communion theory, particularly in the dimension of communion. This construct, however, has a narrower focus. Relationship styles primarily concern providing a benefit to a counterpart and the motivation behind this act. Undergirding these styles are implicit rules and norms that govern the process of giving benefits to others and receiving benefits from them. In exchange relationships, people benefit others with the expectation of the return of the favor. In communal relationships, people expect no such return on beneficence. The ultimate motivation in communal relationships is simply to respond the needs of others.

To map relationship styles onto agency and communion requires a distinction between means and ends (Frimer et al., 2012). Exchange relationships entail using communion (other-benefit) as a means to an end of advancing one's agency (the return on beneficence). In contrast, communal relationships entail treating communion (other-benefit) as an end in itself. Although communal relationship orientation captures communion's emphasis on attending to the needs of others and helping them, it is not broad enough to include such values as modesty, intimacy, and a sense of belonging. Hence, we

urge researchers to consider the two sets of constructs (i.e., exchange and communal relationships and agency–communion) as complements rather than substitutes.

Directions for Future Research

In this section, we propose future research directions pertaining to consumer–brand relationships, social interactions in the marketplace, consumption through social media, and consumption habits.

Consumer–Brand Relationships

Brands as Servants or Partners

Consumers assign personality characteristics to brands (Aaker, 1997), partly because marketers present brands and products in a humanized form. Brand anthropomorphization often comes either in the form of a human partner or as a servant (Aggarwal & McGill, 2012). Just as agency and communion can explain stereotypical reactions to Asians, housewives, and the elderly (Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2007), so too may agency and communion explain consumers' attitudes toward human brands. Specifically, we propose that agentic individuals will favor a servant brand over a partner brand because agentics prefer to be in control of others. We propose that communal individuals prefer partner brands because communals seek close, collaborative relationships. Parallel processes may be at play for product performance expectations and customer satisfaction.

Brand characteristics can determine whether pairing two brands (e.g., co-branding) invokes positive or negative reactions on the part of consumers. Here, competing hypotheses arise. If agency and communion function synergistically, consumers may respond positively when an agentic and a communal brand team up. On the other hand, if agency and communion are competitive in this context, then pairing agentic with agentic and communal with communal brands would elicit a more positive consumer response. Characteristics of the consumer may also influence reactions to co-branding. Joining forces with another brand may favorably affect the brand image among communal individuals. However, agentic individuals may respond negatively to this same pairing because they are concerned with separation and self-sufficiency. Testing these predictions has the potential to offer useful formulae for managers, particularly for those who primarily target either the agentic or communal segment of a consumer group.

Loyalty Programs

Loyalty programs represent an important aspect of consumer–brand relationships and offer various benefits to consumers, such as special discounts, shopping points, and reduced wait times. In exchange, companies gain access to valuable information about their customers' shopping habits. Signing up for loyalty programs thus involves an agreement to exchange of benefits between companies and consumers. These programs often differ in the degree to which they provide customers with communal vis-à-vis status-related benefits (e.g., birthday gifts vs. restricted check-in counters; [Dréze & Nunes, 2009](#); [Henderson, Beck, & Palmatier, 2011](#)). This suggests that various steps of loyalty programs,

from design to usage by customers, involve agentic and communal styles. We urge future research to examine how agentic and communal characteristics of customers and of loyalty programs influence the efficacy of loyalty programs at strengthening brand–customer relationships and customer satisfaction.

Product Disposal

Agentic individuals strive for material wealth (Frimer et al., 2011). Thus, agentic individuals' willingness to dispose of an item may critically depend on the material value they obtain from its disposal. Agency is also about separation. This characteristic can facilitate the disposal process through reducing the pain of giving up an item, particularly when products take on an anthropomorphic quality (Chandler & Schwarz, 2010). However, agentic individuals may be less likely to dispose of an item that reflects their independent identity and helps them establish superiority over others. Communal individuals, on the other hand, may be reluctant to dispose of items that maintain or strengthen their connection to others. A related issue is the choice of disposition method. Agentic individuals may tend to dispose of items through selling and replacing. Communal individuals may be more inclined to gift, donate, or recycle their unwanted products. That is, both acquisition and disposition decisions of communal individuals may be driven by their striving for connectedness with others.

Aesthetics

Seemingly disconnected areas of consumer behavior also offer fruitful opportunities for integrative research on agency–communion orientation.

Aesthetics is one such area. Perhaps agentic individuals prefer particular colors or certain clothing designs that might help them stand out in a group and highlight their dominance. On the contrary, communal individuals may avoid unique colors or designs to ensure that their choices match those of the others around. Certain shapes that are inherently isolated and finite could induce feelings of agency (e.g., dots, lines), whereas others that have a more inclusive, connected nature could evoke feelings of communion (e.g., circles, ovals). If so, using agency- or communion-compatible shapes in an advertisement could improve the persuasiveness of the communicated message on the target group.

Social Interactions in the Marketplace

Consumer Choice in a Group Setting

Within group settings, people often change their consumption preferences based on prior selections of other group members, even at the expense of selecting nonfavorite items (e.g., Ariely & Levav, 2000; Quester & Steyer, 2010). Agency and communion offer a theoretically meaningful framework for future research aimed at extending this stream of literature. Insofar as “agency manifests itself in the formation of separations; communion in the lack of separations” (Bakan, 1966, p. 15), one’s tendency to diverge from the previous choices of others may increase with agency. In contrast, communal individuals may be especially likely to conform to the group’s most popular choice. However, one also needs to consider that agency involves putting pleasures of the self at the center stage. Therefore, deviating from others’ choices at the cost of personal consumption

satisfaction can create a tension between agentic individuals' eagerness to differentiate themselves from others and their desire to please the self.

Agentic and communal qualities of consumers may influence their risk-seeking tendency when making financial decisions surrounded by peers. Prior risky choices of other group members may induce greater financial risk taking among both agentic and communal individuals, but this effect may be more pronounced among agentics. That is, agentics' desire to get ahead of others may lead them to make riskier financial decisions than other members, while communal individuals' desire to get along with others may cause them to exhibit a risk-seeking behavior comparable to that of other members.

Interactions with Salespeople

Salespeople exert important social influence in the marketplace (e.g., Evans, 1963; Woodside & Davenport, 1974) but various consumer and salesperson characteristics moderate the efficacy of persuasion and selling tactics (e.g., Campbell & Kirmani, 2000). A customer's purchase decision, in part, depends on whether he or she considers salesperson a friend (Evans, 1963; Mayer & Greenberg, 1964). However, the specific behaviors that comprise "friendly" influence tactics of salespeople remain unclear. Future research should look into whether a friendly salesperson generates an impact similar to the presence of friends in a shopping trip on agentic and communal individuals' spending behavior. While agentics may alter their spending behavior to highlight their status vis-à-vis those around them, they may be less likely to establish friendly relations with salespeople due to their independent and self-reliant nature.

Lying

Consumers often tell white lies to service providers (e.g., providing positive verbal feedback about poor service; [Argo & Shiv, 2010](#)). The immediate function of these lies is to smooth over social interaction. However, the end result is that the liar behaves in such a way that benefits the wrongdoer (e.g., leaving a large tip to the server) at the expense of the consumer. We propose that communal individuals are especially prone to making white lies because they tend to place more emphasis on others' feelings and take actions that benefit others rather than the self.

Consumers also lie to other consumers ([Argo, White, & Dahl, 2006](#)) as a response to self-threatening social comparisons. That is, to avoid looking foolish, people tend to lie about the price they paid for a product when they find out that the other person actually paid much less for the same product. We propose that agentic individuals are more likely to engage in this sort of lying because doing so would enhance their self-image and maintain their perceived superiority over others. Further, customers sometimes provide misleading information to companies in the hopes of attaining material benefits for the self ([Anthony & Cowley, 2012](#)). We expect that this tendency may also be more pronounced among agentics.

Confrontation and Apology

Customers, salespeople, and cashiers experience confrontation over wait times, service quality, and pricing policies. Agentic and communal cues in the shopping

environment can moderate the severity of confrontation. For instance, communal cues in a shopping environment may reduce consumers' tendency to engage in arguments with marketers because such cues prime consumers' motive to get along. Agentic cues, on the other hand, may exacerbate arguments by priming self-serving drives. Future research on this issue can examine implications that can potentially lessen the stressfulness of shopping environments.

Companies apologize to customers for product failures. Servers apologize to clients for service errors. And shoppers apologize for interrupting each other. Agency and communion may play a role in the causes and consequences of apology behavior in the marketplace. For example, agentic individuals may experience elevated self-worth after receiving an apology, whereas the same apology may increase a communal individual's sense of social-worth. Accordingly, the apology may help restore the relationship with a communal individual but not with agentic individuals.

Consumption through Social Media

Self-Presentation

With the increasing popularity of social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter over the last few years, peer influence has had an increasing influence on consumer decision making. Individuals now share information with their friends digitally in the form of messages, photos, and videos. While people are increasingly using social networking channels, they differ widely in terms of

volume, type, and quality of the digital content they generate and consume (Trusov, Bodapati, & Bucklin, 2010). Agentic and communal individuals may present themselves differently online. We propose that agentic individuals tend to share experiences that highlight their individuality and superiority, whereas communal individuals' posts reflect their emotional expressivity and warmth. This tendency may in turn affect the traffic and attention their profiles attract, determining the success of their self-presentation efforts.

Similar to the effects of the physical presence of friends, the participation in social networking sites may alter consumer behavior. Agentic individuals may be more likely to self-promote through their spending decisions (e.g., going on an expensive trip, buying a new car, dining at a fancy restaurant, etc.). If so, the extensive use of online social networks coupled with agentic individuals' desire to get ahead of others may have deleterious effects on agentic individuals' financial well-being.

Financial Risk Taking

Participation in online social networks can also impact people's sense of connectedness to and perceived support they receive from others. People who participate in online communities are willing to take greater financial risk than those who do not participate in an online community (Zhu, Dholakia, Chen, & Algesheimer, 2012). The authors explain this finding with the "cushion hypothesis" – individuals are more likely to make risky financial decisions when they feel that their peers and family members would cushion them in the event of a potential financial difficulty (Weber & Hsee, 1998). This effect may be more

prevalent among communal individuals, who place emphasis on social relationships and connections with others. On the other hand, agentic individuals may rely on support from others less when making risky financial choices. Future research should explore this possibility.

Consumption Habits

Self-Control

Self-control failures result in habits of excessive, unhealthy eating and smoking (e.g., Baumeister, Heatherton, & Tice, 1994). While a great deal of research has examined the causes and consequences of such habits, little evidence exists regarding how consumers' self-focus versus other-focus influences their breakdowns in self-control. Both agentic and communal individuals may exhibit high self-control, but for different reasons. Agency may protect individuals from picking up harmful habits because self-control and self-direction are key characteristics of agency (Helgeson, 1994; Helgeson & Lepore, 2004). On the other hand, communal individuals' other-focus may manifest as self-control when they are surrounded by supportive others. Thus, the presence or absence of others may influence agentic and communal self-control differently. Moreover, agentic and communal individuals may respond differently to self-control failures. The success-oriented nature of agentic individuals may make them more sensitive to self-control failures, resulting in a loss of confidence and thus future ability to exert self-control.

The unmitigated forms of agency and communion may be linked to consumers' compulsive buying behavior. For example, when experiencing emotional stress, unmitigated communals may be prone to excessive gift giving, and unmitigated agentics may be prone to excessive self-gifting. This may help explain the well-established link between these unmitigated forms of agency and communion and poor social and health outcomes (Helgeson, 1994).

Multitasking

People who highly value achievement and success may attempt to create time by engaging in multiple activities at the same time (Cotte & Raneshwar, 2000), suggesting that multitasking pertains to agency. Communals could also multitask to free up time to spend with others. Hence, time consumption is another interesting setting in which to examine the role of agency and communion in consumer behavior. A related issue is paralysis in the face of decision making. Agency involves self-confidence and being decisive (Eagly, 1987). We reason that agentic individuals are less likely to experience "choice overload" (Iyengar & Lepper, 2000). Accordingly, when making a choice, they may rely less on justification-based mechanisms (e.g., picking utility over pleasure) when faced with a large set of alternatives (Sela, Berger, & Lie, 2009).

Conclusion

Half a century ago, Bakan (1966) introduced the concepts of agency and communion as the fundamental modalities that define and distinguish human beings. His seminal work sparked great interest among psychologists examining

various dimensions of human behavior, contributing to a generation of research that produced a nuanced understanding of human decision making. While we trace the first use of these constructs in the consumer behavior literature to the 1980s, not until the twenty-first century did agency and communion gain popularity among consumer researchers.

A series of studies demonstrated the usefulness of agency and communion in understanding important differences in consumers' preferences and choices observed in both private and public settings. We categorized these studies under four broad topics: (1) consumers' interactions with brands, (2) consumer-to-consumer relations, (3) consumers' interactions with service providers, and (4) material wealth. Beyond offering valuable implications for research and practice, this stream of research has contributed significantly to the establishment of agency and communion as relevant constructs in consumer behavior. Our review demonstrates several fruitful avenues for future research. Broadly, we call for future research on the following topics: (1) consumer-brand relationships, (2) social interactions in the marketplace, (3) consumption through social media, and (4) consumption habits. We believe additional research on these topics would enhance the field's understanding of the role of interpersonal dynamics in consumption.

References

Aaker, J. L. (1997). Dimension of brand personality. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 34, 347-356.

Abele, A. E. (2003). The dynamics of masculine-agentic and feminine-communal traits: Findings from a prospective study. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 85*, 768–776.

Abele, A. E., & Brack, S. (2013). Preference for other persons' traits is dependent on the kind of social relationship. *Social Psychology, 44*, 84–94.

Abele, A. E., & Bruckmüller, S. (2011). The bigger one of the "Big Two"? Preferential processing of communal information. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 47*, 935–948.

Abele, A. E., & Wojciszke, B. (2007). Agency and communion from the perspective of self versus others. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 93*, 751–763.

_____ (in press). Communal and agentic content in social cognition: A dual perspective model. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*.

Aggarwal, P. (2004). The effects of brand relationship norms on consumer attitudes and behavior. *Journal of Consumer Research, 31*, 87–101.

Aggarwal, P., & McGill, A. L. (2012). When brands seem human, do humans act like brands? Automatic behavioral priming effects of brand anthropomorphism. *Journal of Consumer Research, 39*, 307–323.

Anthony, C. I., & Cowley, E. (2012). The labor of lies: How lying for material rewards polarizes outcome satisfaction. *Journal of Consumer Research, 39*, 478–492.

- Argo, J. J., White, K., & Dahl, D. W. (2006). Social comparison theory and deception in the interpersonal exchange of consumption information. *Journal Consumer Research*, *33*, 99–108.
- Argo, J. J., & Shiv, B. (2010). Are white lies as innocuous as we think? *Journal of Consumer Research*, *38*, 1093–1102.
- Ariely, D., & Levav, J. (2000). Sequential choice in group settings: Taking the road less traveled and less enjoyed. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *27*, 279–290.
- Bakan, D. (1966). *The Duality of Human Existence: An Essay on Psychology and Religion*. Oxford: Rand McNally.
- Bartz, J. A., & Lydon, J. E. (2004). Close relationships and the working self-concept: Implicit and explicit effects of priming attachment on agency and communion. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *30*, 1389–1401.
- Batson, C. (2008). Moral masquerades: Experimental exploration of the nature of moral motivation. *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences*, *7*, 51–66.
- Batson, C., Kobryniewicz, D., Dinnerstein, J. L., Kampf, H. C., & Wilson, A. D. (1997). In a very different voice: Unmasking moral hypocrisy. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *72*, 1335–1348.
- Baumeister, R. F., & Brewer, L. E. (2012). Believing versus disbelieving in free will: Correlates and consequences. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, *6*, 736–745.
- Baumeister, R. F., Heatherton, T. F., & Tice, D. M. (1994). *Losing Control: How and Why People Fail at Self-Regulation*. San Diego, CA: Academic Press.

- Bem, S. L. (1974). The measurement of psychological androgyny. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, *42*, 155–162.
- Bi, C., Ybarra, O., & Zhao, Y. (2013). Accentuating your masculine side: Agentic traits generally dominate self-evaluation, even in China. *Social Psychology*, *44*, 103–108.
- Bleidorn, W., Kandler, C., Hülshager, U. R., Riemann, R., Angleitner, A., & Spinath, F. M. (2010). Nature and nurture of the interplay between personality traits and major life goals. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *99*, 366–379.
- Bosak, J., Sczesny, S., & Eagly, A. H. (2012). The impact of social roles on trait judgments: A critical reexamination. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *38*, 429–440.
- Brown, K. W., & Moskowitz, D. S. (1998). Dynamic stability of behavior: The rhythms of our interpersonal lives. *Journal of Personality*, *66*, 105–134.
- Buss, D. M. (1990). Unmitigated agency and unmitigated communion: An analysis of the negative components of masculinity and femininity. *Sex Roles*, *22*, 555–568.
- Cacioppo, J. T., Gardner, W. L., & Berntson, G. G. (1997). Beyond bipolar conceptualizations and measures: The case of attitudes and evaluative space. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, *1*, 3–25.
- Campbell, M., & Kirmani, A. (2000). Consumers' use of persuasion knowledge: The effects of accessibility and cognitive capacity on perceptions of an influence agent. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *27*, 69–83.

- Carrier, A., Louvet, E., Chauvin, B., & Rohmer, O. (2014). The primacy of agency over competence in status perception. *Social Psychology, 45*, 347–356.
- Chandler, J., & Schwarz, N. (2010). Use does not wear ragged the fabric of friendship: Thinking of objects as alive makes people less willing to replace them. *Journal of Consumer Psychology, 20*, 138–145.
- Cheng, J. T., Tracy, J. L., Foulsham, T., Kingstone, A., & Henrich, J. (2013). Two ways to the top: Evidence that dominance and prestige are distinct yet viable avenues to social rank and influence. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 104*, 103–125.
- Christopher, A. N., & Schlenker, B. R. (2000). The impact of perceived material wealth and perceiver personality on first impressions. *Journal of Economic Psychology, 21*, 1–19.
- Cislak, A. (2013). Effects of power on social perception: All your boss can see is agency. *Social Psychology, 44*, 138–146.
- Cislak, A., & Wojciszke, B. (2008). Agency and communion are inferred from actions serving interests of self or others. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 38*, 1103–1110.
- Clarks, M. S., & Mills, J. (1979). Interpersonal attraction in exchange and communal relationships. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 37*, 12–24.
- Coolsen, M. K., & Nelson, L. J. (2001). Desiring and avoiding close romantic attachment in response to mortality salience. *Omega: Journal of Death and Dying, 44*, 257–276.

- Coren, S., & Hewitt, P. L. (1999). Sex differences in elderly suicide rates: Some predictive factors. *Aging & Mental Health*, *3*, 112–118.
- Cotte, J., & Ratneshwar, S. (2000). Time style and consuming time: Why we do what we do with our time. In S. Ratneshwar, D. G. Mick, & C. Huffman (eds.), *The Why of Consumption: Contemporary Perspectives on Consumer Motives, Goals, and Desires* (pp. 216–236). New York: Routledge.
- Costos, D. (1986). Sex role identity in young adults: its parental antecedents and relation to ego development. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *50*, 601–611.
- Cuddy, A. C., Fiske, S. T., & Glick, P. (2007). The BIAS map: Behaviors from intergroup affect and stereotypes. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *92*, 631–648.
- Cuddy, A. C., Fiske, S. T., & Glick, P. (2008). Warmth and competence as universal dimensions of social perception: The stereotype content model and the BIAS map. In M. P. Zanna (ed.), *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology* (vol. 40, pp. 61–149). San Diego, CA: Elsevier Academic Press.
- Danoff-Burg, S., Mosher, C. E., & Grant, C. A. (2006). Relations of agentic and communal personality traits to health behavior and substance use among college students. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *40*, 353–363.
- Diehl, M., Owen, S. K., & Youngblade, L. M. (2004). Agency and communion attributes in adults' spontaneous self-representations. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, *28*, 1–15.

- Diekmann, A. B., & Eagly, A. H. (2000). Stereotypes as dynamic constructs: Women and men of the past, present, and future. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *26*, 1171–1188.
- Dindia, K. (2006). Men are from North Dakota, women are from South Dakota. In K. Dindia & D. J. Canary (eds.), *Sex Differences and Similarities in Communication* (pp. 3–20). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Dommer, S. L., & Swaminathan, V. (2013). Explaining the endowment effect through ownership: The role of identity, gender, and self-threat. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *39*, 1034–50.
- Dréze, X., & Nunes, J. C. (2009). Feeling superior: The impact of loyalty program structure on consumers' perceptions of status. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *35*, 890–905.
- Dunlop, W. L., Walker, L. J., & Matsuba, M. (2013). The development of moral motivation across the adult lifespan. *European Journal of Developmental Psychology*, *10*, 285–300.
- Eagly, A. H. (1987). *Sex Differences in Social Behavior: A Social-Role Interpretation*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Escalas, J. E. (1996). *Narrative Processing: Building Connections between Brand and the Self*. Dissertation, Duke University.
- Escalas, J. E., & Bettman, J. R. (2000). Using narratives to discern self-identity related consumer goals and motivations. In S. Ratneshwar, D. G. Mick, & C. Huffman (eds.), *The Why of Consumption: Contemporary Perspectives on*

Consumer Motives, Goals, and Desires (pp. 237–258). New York: Routledge.

Evans, F. B. (1963). Selling as a dyadic relationship: A new approach. *American Behavioral Scientist*, *6*, 76–79.

Fiske, S. T., Cuddy, A. C., & Glick, P. (2007). Universal dimensions of social cognition: Warmth and competence. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, *11*, 77–83.

Fiske, S. T., Cuddy, A. C., Glick, P., & Xu, J. (2002). A model of (often mixed) stereotype content: Competence and warmth respectively follow from perceived status and competition. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *82*, 878–902.

Fournier, M. A., & Moskowitz, D. S. (2000). The mitigation of interpersonal behavior. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *79*, 827–836.

Frimer, J. A., Schaefer, N. K., & Oakes, H. (2014). Moral actor, selfish agent. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *106*, 790–802.

Frimer, J. A. & Walker, L. J. (2009). Reconciling the self and morality: An empirical model of moral centrality development. *Developmental Psychology*, *45*, 1669–1681.

Frimer, J. A., Walker, L. J., Dunlop, W. L., Lee, B., & Riches, A. (2011). The integration of agency and communion in moral personality: Evidence of enlightened self-interest. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *101*, 149–163.

Frimer, J. A., Walker, L. J., Lee, B. H., Riches, A., & Dunlop, W. L. (2012).

Hierarchical integration of agency and communion: A study of influential moral figures. *Journal of Personality*, *80*, 1117–1145.

Fritz, H. L., Nagurney, A. J., & Helgeson, V. S. (2003). Social interactions and

cardiovascular reactivity during problem disclosure among friends.

Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, *29*, 713–725.

Fuchs, C., Prandelli, E., Schreier, M., & Dahl, D. W. (2013). All that is users might

not be gold: How labeling products as user designed backfires in the

context of luxury fashion brands. *Journal of Marketing*, *77*, 75–91.

Gebauer, J. E., Leary, M. R., & Neberich, W. (2012). Big two personality and big

three mate preferences: Similarity attracts, but country-level mate

preferences crucially matter. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*,

38, 1579–1593.

Gebauer, J. E., Paulhus, D. L., & Neberich, W. (2013). Big two personality and

religiosity across cultures: Communals as religious conformists and

agentic as religious contrarians. *Social Psychological and Personality*

Science, *4*, 21–30.

Gebauer, J. E., Sedikides, C., Verplanken, B., & Maio, G. R. (2012). Communal

narcissism. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *103*, 854–878.

Goffman, E. (1959). *Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. New York: Doubleday

Anchor.

- Grant, A. M., & Gino, F. (2010). A little thanks goes a long way: Explaining why gratitude expressions motivate prosocial behavior. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *98*, 946–955.
- Haidt, J. (2012). *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion*. New York: Pantheon/Random House.
- Hall, J. A. (2011). Sex differences in friendship expectations: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, *28*, 723–747.
- Hart, C. M., Sedikides, C., Wildschut, T., Arndt, J., Routledge, C., & Vingerhoets, A. M. (2011). Nostalgic recollections of high and low narcissists. *Journal of Research in Personality*, *45*, 238–242.
- He, X., Inman, J. J., & Mittal, V. (2008). Gender jeopardy in financial risk taking. *Journal of Marketing Research*, *45*, 414–424.
- Helgeson, V. S. (1993). Implications of agency and communion for patient and spouse adjustment to a first coronary event. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *64*, 807–816.
- _____ (1994). The relation of agency and communion to well-being: Evidence and potential explanations. *Psychological Bulletin*, *116*, 412–428.
- Helgeson, V. S., & Fritz, H. L. (1998). A theory of unmitigated communion. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, *2*, 173–183.
- _____ (1999). Unmitigated agency and unmitigated communion: Distinctions from agency and communion. *Journal of Research in Personality*, *33*, 131–158.

- _____ (2000). The implications of unmitigated agency and unmitigated communion for domains of problem behavior. *Journal of Personality*, *68*, 1031–1057.
- Helgeson, V. S., & Lepore, S. J. (2004). Quality of life following prostate cancer: The role of agency and unmitigated agency. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, *34*, 2559–2585.
- Henderson, C. M., Beck, J. T., & Palmatier, R. W. (2011). Review of theoretical underpinnings of loyalty programs. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, *21*, 256–276.
- Hill, R. P. (1994). Bill collectors and consumers: A troublesome exchange relationship. *Journal of Public Policy and Marketing*, *13*, 20–35.
- Hoffman, E., McCabe, K., & Smith, V. L. (1996). Social distance and other-regarding behavior in dictator games. *American Economic Review*, *86*, 653–660.
- Hofstede, G. (1984). *Culture's Consequences: International Differences in Work-Related Values*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Holt, C. L., & Ellis, J. B. (1998). Assessing the current validity of the Bem Sex-Role Inventory. *Sex Roles*, *39*, 929–941.
- Johannesen-Schmidt, M. C., & Eagly, A. H. (2002). Diminishing returns: The effects of income on the content of stereotypes of wage earners. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *28*, 1538–1545.
- Jorgenson, D. O. (1981). Agency and communion trends in consumer goods advertising. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *7*, 410–414.

- Iyengar, S. S., & Lepper, M. R. (2000). When choice is demotivating: Can one desire too much of a good thing? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 79, 995–1006.
- Koenig, A. M., Eagly, A. H., Mitchell, A. A., & Ristikari, T. (2011). Are leader stereotypes masculine? A meta-analysis of three research paradigms. *Psychological Bulletin*, 137, 616–642.
- Kurt, D. (2015). *Feeling Powerful and Chasing High Returns: The Interactive Effect of Power and Agency–Communion on Financial Risk Taking*. Working Paper, Boston University.
- Kurt, D., Inman, J. J., & Argo, J. J. (2011). The influence of friends on consumer spending: The role of agency–communion and self-monitoring. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 48, 741–754.
- Lambert, A., & Desmond, J. (2013). Loyal now, but not forever! A study of narcissism and male consumer-brand relationships. *Psychology & Marketing*, 30, 690–706.
- Leszczynski, J. (2009). A state conceptualization: Are individuals' masculine and feminine personality traits situationally influenced? *Personality and Individual Differences*, 47, 157–162.
- Lippa, R. (2001). On deconstructing and reconstructing masculinity–femininity. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 35, 168–207.
- Ma, Z., & Dube, L. (2011). Process and outcome interdependency in frontline service encounters. *Journal of Marketing*, 75, 83–98.

- Mansfield, E. D., & McAdams, D. P. (1996). Generativity and themes of agency and communion in adult autobiography. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *22*, 721–731.
- Markus, H. R., & Kitayama, S. (1991). Culture and the self: Implications for cognition, emotion, and motivation. *Psychological Review*, *98*, 224–253.
- Matsuba, M., & Walker, L. J. (2005). Young adult moral exemplars: The making of self through stories. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, *15*, 275–297.
- Mayer, D., & Greenberg, H. M. (1964). What makes a good salesman. *Harvard Business Review* (July–August), 119–125.
- McClelland, D. C., Koestner, R., & Weinberger, J. (1989). How do self-attributed and implicit motives differ? *Psychological Review*, *96*, 690–702.
- Meyers-Levy, J. (1988). The influence of sex roles on judgment. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *14*, 522–530.
- Mosher, C. E., & Danoff-Burg, S. (2008). Agentic and communal personality traits: Relations to disordered eating behavior, body shape concern, and depressive symptoms. *Eating Behaviors*, *9*, 497–500.
- Moskowitz, D. S., Suh, E., & Desaulniers, J. (1994). Situational influences on gender differences in agency and communion. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *66*, 753–761.
- Nagurney, A., & Bagwell, B. (2009). Relations of the gender-related personality traits and stress to sexual behaviors among college students. *North American Journal of Psychology*, *11*, 85–96.

- Paulhus, D. L., & John, O. P. (1998). Egoistic and moralistic biases in self-perception: The interplay of self-deceptive styles with basic traits and motives. *Journal of Personality*, *66*, 1025–1060.
- Peeters, G. (2008). The evaluative face of a descriptive model: Communion and agency in Peabody's tetradic model of trait organization. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, *38*, 1066–1072.
- Quester, P., & Steyer, A. (2010). Revisiting individual choices in group settings: The long and winding (less traveled) road? *Journal of Consumer Research*, *36*, 1050–1057.
- Rucker, D. D., Dubois, D., & Galinsky, A. D. (2011). Generous paupers and stingy prices: Power drives consumer spending on self versus others. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *6*, 1015–29.
- Rucker, D. D., Galinsky, A. D., & Dubois, D. (2012). Power and consumer behavior: How power shapes who and what consumers value. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, *22*, 352–68.
- Scott, M. L., Mende, M., & Bolton, L. E. (2013). Judging the book by its cover? How consumers decode conspicuous consumption cues in buyer–seller relationship. *Journal of Marketing Research*, *50*, 334–347.
- Sedikides, C., Gregg, A. P., Cisek, S., & Hart, C. M. (2007). The I that buys: Narcissists as consumers. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, *17*, 254–257.
- Sela, A., Berger, J., & Lie, W. (2009). Variety, vice, and virtue: How assortment size influences option choice. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *35*, 941–951.

- Shariff, A. F., & Norenzayan, A. (2007). God is watching you: Priming God concepts increases prosocial behavior in an anonymous economic game. *Psychological Science, 18*, 803–809.
- Singelis, T. M. (1994). The measurement of independent and interdependent self-construals. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 20*, 580–591.
- Smith, T. W., Gallo, L. C., Goble, L., Ngu, L. Q., & Stark, K. A. (1998). Agency, communion, and cardiovascular reactivity during marital interaction. *Health Psychology, 17*, 537–545.
- Spence, J. T., Helmreich, R. L., & Holahan, C. K. (1979). Negative and positive components of psychological masculinity and femininity and their relationships to self-reports of neurotic and acting out behaviors. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 37*, 1673–1682.
- Stopfer, J. M., Egloff, B., Nestler, S., & Back, M. D. (2013). Being popular in online social networks: How agentic, communal, and creativity traits relate to judgments of status and liking. *Journal of Research in Personality, 47*, 592–598.
- Strahan, R. F. (1975). Remarks on Bem's measurement of psychological androgyny: Alternative methods and a supplementary analysis. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 43*, 568–571.
- Suh, E., Moskowitz, D. S., Fournier, M. A., & Zuroff, D. C. (2004). Gender and relationships: Influences on agentic and communal behaviors. *Personal Relationships, 11*, 41–59.

- Thrash, T. M., & Elliot, A. J. (2002). Implicit and self-attributed achievement motives: Concordance and predictive validity. *Journal of Personality*, *70*, 729–756.
- Trapnell, P. D., & Paulhus, D. L. (2012). Agentic and communal values: Their scope and measurement. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, *94*, 39–52.
- Trudeau, K. J., Danoff-Burg, S., Revenson, T. A., & Paget, S. A. (2003). Agency and communion in people with rheumatoid arthritis. *Sex Roles*, *49*, 303–311.
- Trusov, M., Bodapati, A. V., & Bucklin, R. E. (2010). Determining influential users in internet social networks. *Journal of Marketing Research*, *47*, 643–658.
- Twenge, J. M. (1997). Changes in masculine and feminine traits over time: A meta-analysis. *Sex Roles*, *36*, 305–325.
- Uchronski, M. (2008). Agency and communion in spontaneous self-descriptions: Occurrence and situational malleability. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, *38*, 1093–1102.
- Uchronski, M., Abele, A. E., & Bruckmüller, S. (2013). Empathic perspective taking and the situational malleability of the communal self-concept. *Self and Identity*, *12*, 238–258.
- Walker, L. J., & Frimer, J. A. (2007). Moral personality of brave and caring exemplars. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *93*, 845–860.
- Weber, E. U., & Hsee, C. (1998). Cross-cultural differences in risk perception, but cross-cultural similarities in attitudes towards perceived risk. *Management Science*, *44*, 1205–1217.

- White, K. M., Speisman, J. C., Jackson, D., Bartis, S., Costos, D. (1986). Intimacy maturity and its correlates in young married couples. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *50*, 152–162.
- Wiggins, J. S. (1979). A psychological taxonomy of trait-descriptive terms: The interpersonal domain. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *37*, 395–412.
- Winterich, K. P., Mittal, V., & Ross, Jr., W. T. (2009). Donation behavior toward in-groups and out-groups: The role of gender and moral identity. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *36*, 199–214.
- Woike, B., Gershkovich, I., Piorkowski, R., & Polo, M. (1999). The role of motives in the content and structure of autobiographical memory. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *76*, 600–612.
- Woike, B., Lavezzary, E., & Barsky, J. (2001). The influence of implicit motives on memory processes. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *81*, 935–945.
- Woike, B., & Polo, M. (2001). Motive-related memories: Content, structure, and affect. *Journal of Personality*, *69*, 391–415.
- Wojciszke, B., Abele, A. E., & Baryla, W. (2009). Two dimensions of interpersonal attitudes: Liking depends on communion, respect depends on agency. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, *39*, 973–990.
- Wojciszke, B., Baryla, W., Parzuchowski, M., Szymkow, A., & Abele, A. E. (2011). Self-esteem is dominated by agentic over communal information. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, *41*, 617–627.

- Wojciszke, B., Bazinska, R., & Jaworski, M. (1998). On the dominance of moral categories in impression formation. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 24, 1251–1263.
- Wojciszke, B., & Sobiczewska, P. (2013). Memory and self-esteem: The role of agentic and communal content. *Social Psychology*, 44, 95–102.
- Woodside, A. G., & Davenport, Jr., J. W. (1974). The effect of salesman similarity and expertise on consumer purchasing behavior. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 11, 198–202.
- Ybarra, O., Chan, E., Park, H., Burnstein, E., Monin, B., & Stanik, C. (2008). Life's recurring challenges and the fundamental dimensions: An integration and its implications for cultural differences and similarities. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 38, 1083–1092.
- Ybarra, O., Park, H., Stanik, C., & Lee, D. (2012). Self-judgment and reputation monitoring as a function of the fundamental dimensions, temporal perspective, and culture. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 42, 200–209.
- Zhang, Y., Feick, L., & Mittal, V. (2014). How males and females differ in their likelihood of transmitting negative word of mouth. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 40, 1097–1108.
- Zhu, R., Dholakia, U. M., Chen, X., & Algesheimer, R. (2012). Does online community participation foster risky financial behavior? *Journal of Marketing Research*, 49, 394–407.