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REGULATORY FOCUS IN THE CONTEXT OF WORK:
THE SOCIAL IMPACT OF PROMOTION TACTICS

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation describes a set of three original studies that collectively explore when and how individuals in their twenties change jobs. This paper views a career as an identity project, a personal striving that is grounded in and responsive to core internal standards or identifications. Within this framework, decisions concerning job change represent inclinations toward maintaining continuity or making change while pursuing a life course goal. Building on the insights of Regulatory Focus Theory (Higgins 1997), I propose that change decisions regarding work are partly a function of the regulatory character of identity-based internal standards. I first demonstrate that standards characterized by a promotion focus lead to greater frequency of job change (Study One). Next, I argue that the mechanism for a promotion focus to achieve its effect is via interpersonal reputation (Study Two). Finally, I provide evidence that the assertive, approach tactics typical of a promotion orientation are the key mechanism by which said orientation affects reputation (Study Three). The paper concludes with a consideration of the ways this set of studies contribute to our understanding of career development, regulatory focus theory, and identity as a foundation for life course goal pursuit.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

How does one manage the progress of a long-term project? When is it time to push forward, and when has enough progress been made and it is time to hold still? When is it time to change course, and when is it best to stay on the current path? Our most important and enduring pursuits inevitably entail these questions.

This paper focuses on one such pursuit: a career. It utilizes primary data for a sequence of three original studies to highlight a personality variable related to stasis-change decisions in the life course domain of work. When discussing work, this paper views a career as an identity project, a personal striving that is grounded in and responsive to core internal standards or identifications. Thus, while the paper focuses on career related decisions, it treats these decisions as a specific instance of the relationship between identity and goal pursuit.

The impetus for a psychological theory of identity arose from a desire to better understand behavioral regulation. No one is more associated with the concept of a psychological identity than Erik Erikson. His original theorizing on the topic was grounded in clinical cases (Erikson 1963). Some of the most vivid involved World War II soldiers whose ability to organize and regulate their behavior had eroded. It was in the context of these difficult clinical cases that the concept of identity became relevant for Erikson. He observed that when an internal sense of self-sameness eroded, so did the behavior that responded to that sense of self. Thus, from the start the concept of a psychological identity was conceived of as guiding purposeful action.

Despite this early connection between identity and goal-driven behavior, the precise connection between the two has not been much developed. While Erikson's theorizing was impressive in its breadth and admirable for its evocative expression, the aspect of identity concerned with prospective action has not become a central theme in most work on identity. This may owe something to the fact that Erikson's theory never achieved a particularly systematic exposition. Additionally, those who took up Erikson's ideas tended to treat identity as a terminal developmental outcome rather than an ongoing dynamic structure (see Marcia et al. 1993, for example). The matter is further complicated by the fact that identity spans multiple levels of analysis and is treated as a collective, social phenomenon as often as an individual-level factor characterizing the person. For these reasons and others, theories of identity have placed less emphasis on identity's relation to purposeful striving.

By examining career as a form of identity-based striving, this project offers insight into three important questions. First, it invites consideration of the manner in which individuals play a constitutive role in their own ontogeny. There are, of course, critical biological, environmental, and cultural determinants of development over which any individual has little influence. At the same time, individuals do play an undeniable role in their own development, a point of view best articulated by Jochen Brandtstädter (2006). According to Brandtstädter, one of the principle mechanisms by which individuals contribute to their own ontogeny is via personal identity and its associated projects and strivings. This paper picks up this point of view and positions individual agency as a critical factor for understanding development.

Second, this paper offers insight into the process by which emerging adults develop their careers. The twenties have been described as a very active period of career exploration for emerging adults (Arnett 2000). The importance of career in this period is seen as a reflection of ongoing identity development (Arnett 2004; Konstam 2015; Young et al. 2011). All three studies in this paper examine career decisions in the context of emerging adulthood. This focus allows the paper to offer perspective concerning one factor that informs the way emerging adults navigate the process of exploring the world of work.

The central focus of the paper, however, anchors on the question of how to understand the relationship between identity and personal striving. Identity seems well suited to discussing the content of individual choice. Key identifications are important internal standards around which individuals organize their plans and actions. These internal standards subsequently represent key criterion for the substance of career decisions. (For one early and highly influential example, see Super 1953.) This paper, however, will advance a more subtle way in which identity informs goal pursuit. Specifically, this paper argues that identity can profitably be conceived of as relating less to decisions about the content of work and more to the way in which those decisions are made.

To make this argument, I incorporate regulatory focus theory as a means of characterizing the nature of identity commitments. Regulatory focus theory describes two distinct styles of organizing goal-directed behavior, a promotion focus and a prevention focus (Higgins 1997). I argue that the way individuals incorporate these styles impacts the way they make career decisions related to making change or staying put. More precisely, I argue that the stronger the presence of a promotion focus for key internal standards, the greater the degree of job change. The project further explores the underlying mechanism by which this happens—namely, the approach means favored by a promotion focus. Most research on regulatory focus theory emphasizes its effects on intraindividual functioning; this project adds to our understanding by examining one way regulatory focus theory has consequential interpersonal effects.

I begin by providing a review of regulatory focus theory. I introduce the theory and describe how I derive the hypothesis that it is connected to change decisions concerning work. Then, I describe the results of an initial study that provides support for the central hypothesis that regulatory focus theory helps to explain the frequency of job transitions. The argument then turns to the question of underlying mechanism. Two studies provide support for the proposed mechanism. I conclude with remarks concerning implications of this set of studies.

A Note Concerning Work

This paper focuses on activity in the domain of work. Work is a primary category of human activity and experience. Owing to this fact, its meanings are many. "Work" can refer to paid employment as well as unpaid occupation in the home or with family. Work can be seen as part of one's upkeep and survival but also as a manifestation of one's abiding passions. It can be a necessary evil, a source of joy, or a diversion. These meanings are so broad that it seems worthwhile to clarify the use of terms within this paper.

While acknowledging the broad array of meanings of work, herein the term is typically used to refer to a commitment to a type of employment. Some might prefer the term career for this meaning. As a term that suggests an underlying continuity that holds together a series of jobs, career is very useful. It is less used in this paper, however, due to the class connotations some attach to it, as well as to the notion of progression that it often evokes. Employment to which one is committed or in which one feels at home is the focal meaning of work in this paper.

Further, this paper focuses exclusively on paid work. Of course, there are forms of work to which many individuals are committed that are not paid. The work of maintaining a home, the work of caring for family, the work entailed in pursuing a personal project are all important, consuming, and a source of identity. Even so, this paper focuses exclusively on the experience of paid employment, which is a broad and important category of work.

A second critical term is job. Job typically has a much more focused meaning, referring to the paid position one holds. This paper adheres to this common definition. In delimiting job, a job title is considered a key index that marks when one departs from one job and inhabits a new one.

The terms occupation and employment are occasionally used as a variant for the term job. Occupation sometimes takes on broader meanings of continuity in the type of work one does. It can also refer to the more specific activity or tasks that "occupy" one's time or efforts. It's this narrower meaning that is typically used and as such, it approximates the meaning of the term job. Employment is likewise conceived of as conveying the nature of one's work-related activity, which makes it a useful variant for the term job.

There is a broader lexicon of work-related terms that includes profession, vocation, labor, calling, and others. These terms are largely avoided in this paper. This choice was made with the hope of aiding clarity. The fact that we have such a varied set of terms is a testament to the importance of work as a domain of human experience.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORY

This chapter provides a review of regulatory focus theory from which the hypothesis for the initial study was derived. Regulatory focus theory describes the ways individuals regulate their behavior as they strive to realize desired end-states. The theory starts with the observation that people are animated by different needs and that two of the most fundamental are needs for security and for advancement (Higgins 1997). Regulatory focus theory describes these two sets of needs as giving rise to distinct motivational systems: a prevention system for ensuring security and a promotion system for supporting advancement. These motivational systems are of interest in that they organize behavior toward the fulfillment of these needs in distinct and consequential ways.

This review will begin by articulating the connection between regulatory focus theory and identity. It then proceeds to outline important psychological and behavioral implications of the theory's two motivational systems, including the different qualities of emotional experience to which they give rise and the different behavioral means toward which they're inclined. The description of regulatory focus theory concludes with a discussion of how regulatory focus affects experiences of loss and gain and the resultant attitudes toward change that are thereby inspired.

Regulatory Focus Theory and Identity

Identity can be understood in terms of psychological attachments to key, self-defining ascriptions or what we might call identifications. As a process, identification entails an individual anchoring on and incorporating aspects of another person within his or her own sense of self. As a psychological entity, identifications often focus on particular attributes or characteristics of an admired subject. Their incorporation by an individual means that they inhere within him or her and have a transformative effect. The attachment to an identification is such that it has its own emotional weight and resultant gravitational pull that is evident in both judgments of oneself and of one's behavior. As such, identifications serve as critical internal standards for behavior.

The pattern of internal standards for an individual changes over the life course. Early in life, children identify with the aspects of the people who most affect them. Erikson noted that childhood is a period when experience with significant figures, typically within the family, suggest important roles and ways of being (Erikson 1963). These roles and ways of being are internalized and individuals become psychologically invested in them. According to Erikson, adolescence through early adulthood is a period of life in when individuals have an opportunity to revise and reorder previously internalized standards and also to incorporate new standards. The task of this stage of development, then, is to resynthesize identifications in a unique pattern of internal standards that responds to individual temperament and aptitudes, yet also reflects a coherent and socioculturally recognizable form (Erikson 1968).

Much of the importance of identity as a psychological construct lies in its role in organizing behavior. Identity certainly serves several critical purposes for individual health and functioning (Adams and Marshall 1996). Principle among them, however, is to provide coherence and organization to a sustained and productive pattern of behavior. The psychological investment that accompanies an individual's unique configuration of internal standards gives it significance and weight such that it becomes a touchstone, a point of reference for discernments of what's right, appropriate, and worthwhile. In this way, identity is as Erikson notes, a "criterion for the silent doings of ego synthesis" (Erikson 1980, 109).

Regulatory focus theory is built on a core of theoretical elements similar to Erikson's. At its foundation, regulatory focus theory emphasizes behavioral regulation, or in Higgins's words, "self-regulation toward desired end-states" (Higgins 1997, 1281). In other words, individuals act in order to make current states conform as much as possible to preferred goal states. Of course, the idea of behavior as goal directed is, broadly speaking, similar to Erikson's ideas, but also not dissimilar to many other theories.

What makes the comparison particularly apt is that Higgins defines the desired end-states around which behavior organizes, just as Erikson does, in terms of self-defining ascriptions. Higgins refers to these self-defining ascriptions as self-guides. These guides function as "self-directive standards or acquired guides for being" (Higgins 1987, 321). In other words, like identifications, self-guides carry their own gravitational pull with their own emotional and behavioral consequences. Exactly like identifications, self-guides become internal standards for the organization of behavior.

Both Erikson and Higgins place deeply ingrained internal standards at the heart of behavioral regulation. What makes Higgins's theorizing useful in the context of this project is his observation that there are two distinct types of internal standards, "oughts" and "ideals" (Higgins 1987). Further, these two types of internal standards are part of two larger, motivational systems, each with its own behavioral implications (detailed below) (Higgins 1997). Higgins's theory, then, allows us to characterize internal standards according to whether they are experienced as oughts or ideals and to predict corresponding behavioral implications. Interestingly, in making the case for this distinction, Higgins observes other theorists (including Freud) have similarly distinguished between these two categories of internal standards, thus drawing attention to a common theoretical antecedent for both Erikson and Higgins.

The first motivational system, which Higgins refers to as the prevention system, orients around maintaining safety and self-protection. These concerns emphasize internal standards related to “the ought” self. The character of this self anchors on a particular class of internal standards. The standards of the ought self are associated with our sense of duty. These standards are likewise associated with notions of responsibility and obligation. Meanwhile, the second motivational system, the promotion system, orients around creating personal advancement and progress. These concerns emphasize internal standards grounded in “the ideal” self and are different than those of the ought self. For instance, internal standards represented as hopes, wishes, and desires typically reflect the ideal self. Aspirations are also grounded in the ideal self.

Far from an esoteric distinction, the difference between obligation and personal ideals is commonly appreciated. The inner conflict of the character whose personal wishes are to do one thing, but whose duties ask her to do another is a familiar trope from *The Odyssey* to the 1953 film *Roman Holiday*.

The notion of having a particular regulatory focus refers to which motivational system is a prepotent and guiding concern at a given point in time. Regulatory focus has been treated both as an enduring individual difference and also as a response to situational cues. In both cases, the distinction between these two classes of internal standards has been central in studies of regulatory focus. Studies emphasizing regulatory focus as an individual difference have sought to assess the degree to which each motivational system is habitually accessible for use in navigating the daily demands of life. Habitually favoring the use of one system or another is assessed via a measure of Regulatory Focus Strength. Using a computer interface, research participants were invited to produce multiple adjectives (i.e., self-defining ascriptions), one at a time, that reflect the type of person they “ought to be” and then additional adjectives reflecting the type of person they "hope to be." These adjectives reflect the internal standards associated with each self. The time it takes to produce each adjective is measured. Longer response times for either ought or ideal suggest less habitual accessibility of that particular internal standard. Quicker response times suggest greater habitual accessibility of that particular internal standard. Greater accessibility of either standard suggests that this internal standard is more readily deployed as one navigates the demands and affordances of daily life (Higgins, Shah, and Friedman 1997).

Studies emphasizing regulatory focus as distinct motivational systems that are deployed in response to situational cues also rely on the distinction between ideal and ought internal standards. One common experimental manipulation, then, has been to bring a particular motivational system to the fore for the duration of an activity merely by asking individuals to write a paragraph about their duties and obligations or about their hopes and aspirations (Freitas and Higgins 2002). Subsequent task performances thereby tend to reflect the characteristics and style of the primed motivational system.

From the perspective of identity, regulatory focus theory offers a way of showcasing a qualitative difference in the character of particular internal standards. Internal standards grounded in the ought self give rise to a prevention orientation that is concerned with maintaining safety. Meanwhile, internal standards grounded in the ideal self draw on a promotion orientation that is concerned with the end-state of advancement. Not only is this distinction in the quality of referenced internal standards related to the nature of the underlying goal concern, but as I outline in the next two sections, the motivational systems attached to these different types of identification have consequential and distinct emotional and behavioral consequences.

The Emotional Experience of Prevention and Promotion Systems

Both systems serve to organize behavior so as to succeed in fulfilling their respective needs and to avoid failing to do so. Yet the experiences of success and failure within each system are notably different. In short, each entails different kinds of emotional pleasure for goal attainment and different kinds of emotional discomfort for goal failure (Higgins 1987).

A concern with ensuring security is at the center of the prevention system. Success, therefore, is experienced as maintaining an adequate level of safety. The experience of safety is less a matter of joyousness and instead more one of relief. Success in securing safety brings calm assurance and quietude. Conversely, failure involves entering a state of pending or real danger, the psychological experience of a negative outcome. This typically involves feelings of anxiety and/or agitation.

A concern with realizing an ideal is at the center of the promotion system. Success is experienced as the attainment of aspirations and valued accomplishments. Not surprisingly, these experiences are associated with cheerfulness and joy. Meanwhile, failure concerns unrealized aspirations, the absence of a positive outcome. This experience typically results in feelings of sadness and dejection.

Each system yields instances of both success and failure. Yet the emotional tone for each system involves distinct pleasures and pains. The success of earning a new work-related credential, for instance, will evoke different emotional experiences depending on whether that outcome is framed within a promotion or a prevention orientation. Within a prevention frame, the new credential, perhaps, ensures one’s employability, guards against the loss of economic means, and results in calm assurance. Within a promotion frame, the new credential is likely to be experienced as a gain that results in elation at the new accomplishment.

Goal Pursuit Strategies of Prevention and Promotion Systems

Both systems have preferred means for pursuing goals. Before describing these differences, it is worth emphasizing that promotion and prevention are not equivalent to approach and avoidance. We have already noted that both prevention and promotion systems include both approaching positive end-states and avoiding negative ones; that is, a prevention orientation includes striving for security and avoiding danger. A promotion orientation includes striving for ideals and avoiding a lack of progress toward those ideals. Thus both motivational systems are responsive to positively and negatively valued goal referents. Having said that, when it comes to the means they prefer to employ in goal pursuit, there is a notable difference that is related to approach and avoidance (Scholer and Higgins 2011).

Within a prevention orientation, the predominant safety and security concerns are best supported with vigilant, avoidance means. When considering how to move toward the desired end-state of assuring security, a prevention orientation prefers to avoid mismatches to safety. Less commonly, when considering how to move away from an undesired end-state, a prevention orientation prefers avoiding matches to danger. Thus, whether anchoring on a desired end-state or an undesired one, a prevention orientation favors avoidance means. Alternatively, within a promotion orientation, the primary concern for advancement is best supported with eager, approach means. When moving toward the desired end-state of an achievement, a promotion orientation prefers to approach a match to attainment. Less often, when considering how to forestall an undesired end-state, a promotion orientation prefers approaching mismatches to the negative state. In both cases, approach means are preferred.

Table 1: Strategic preferences for goal pursuit according to regulatory orientation

		Regulatory Focus System	
		Prevention	Promotion
Goal Reference	Desired End State	Goal has a positive valence Avoiding mismatches to safety & security	Goal has a positive valence Approaching matches to advancement
	Undesired End State	Goal has a negative valence Avoiding matches danger & threat	Goal has a negative valence Approaching mismatches to non-fulfillment

Support for this general dynamic was initially reported in a study concerning participants' preferences for different pursuit strategies (Higgins et al. 1994). In the third study of this paper, participants were given six strategies for experiencing the desired goal of friendship. Three of the strategies related to approaching matches to friendship such as "being emotionally supportive." Three of the strategies related to avoiding mismatches to friendship such as "not neglecting friends." Participants were invited to nominate their three preferred strategies. Participants who exhibited a stronger habitual tendency toward a prevention focus tended to nominate more avoidance strategies while those with a stronger habitual tendency toward a promotion focus tended to nominate approach strategies.

An example illustrates the behavioral consequences of operating from one system or the other. Consider a common job-related concern, ensuring a positive relationship with one's boss. Within a prevention orientation, the preferred strategy is to avoid a mismatch to the positive outcome of a good relationship (and/or to avoid a match to a negative relationship). This might translate into a broad strategy of being careful not to mess things up with one's boss. Even more specifically, this might result in being particularly vigilant for signs of displeasure from one's boss and responding quickly if any such signs are perceived. Or it might result in seeking to understand the preferences of one's boss so as to avoid contradicting them. Meanwhile, within a promotion orientation, the preferred strategy is to approach a match to the positive outcome of a good relationship (and/or approach a mismatch to a bad relationship). The general approach, then, would be to do everything you can to ensure a positive relationship. This might include routinely acknowledging one's boss—a card on her birthday, expressing thanks as appropriate, acknowledging her support, *et cetera*.

Loss and Gain in Prevention and Promotion Systems

Thus far we've noted the connection between identity and regulatory focus and reviewed key differences in the way two classes of internal standards work: anchoring on the ought self versus the ideal self, entailing emotions of either quietude or happiness in the context of goal success along with emotions of anxiety or sadness in response to goal failure, and preferring avoidance- or approach-oriented means in goal pursuit. Connected to all these differences, and central to the hypothesis of this study, is one final difference. These two motivational systems differ according to their native sensitivities to either loss or gain. (See Table 2 for a summary.)

Table 2: Characteristics of Regulatory Focus Systems

	Regulatory Focus System	
	Prevention	Promotion
Desired End	Ought self Duty, obligation, and responsibility	Ideal self Hopes, wishes, and aspirations
Emotional Experience	Quietude in success Agitation in failure	Joy in success Dejection in failure
Goal Pursuit	Prefers avoidance strategies	Prefers approach strategies
Loss versus Gain	Highly sensitive to and more responsive to the experience of loss Seeks the absence of a loss	Highly sensitive to and more responsive to the experience of gain Seeks the presence of a gain

The prevention emphasis on security frames motivational concerns in terms of loss. Individuals animated by a prevention orientation are purposely striving to protect themselves from loss or harm. Success in this endeavor results in the absence of a negative outcome—that is, success manifests as a non-loss, as the continuation of an adequate status quo. Meanwhile, failure entails the presence of a negative outcome, or the experience of loss. In both cases, it is the perception of negative outcomes, of loss, around which the individual organizes behavior. The emphasis on loss points to the fact that the prevention system is particularly vigilant for and responsive to negative outcomes. For a concrete example of this dynamic, imagine the situation of considering potential work projects and needing to make a decision about which one or ones to take on. Doubtless many criteria float through the decision maker's mind: how does this fit in with my larger goals, what's the time required, do I have the resources needed, *et cetera*. Within a prevention orientation, it's very likely that another criterion would be the likelihood of failure. This might be elaborated in the decision maker's mind as a concern with feasibility, the chances of success, or potential problems associated with the project. Whatever the specific terms the decision maker employs, the underlying concern is vetting potential projects so as to avoid taking ownership for something that carries significant risk or a perceived threat of failure. As a result, among the many ways of appraising a potential project, a prevention orientation would give significant weight to the perceived risk of failure and loss.

The promotion emphasis on advancement frames motivational concerns in terms of gains. In other words, individuals animated by a promotion orientation typically see themselves as striving to advance toward the attainment of new and positive outcomes. Success results in the presence of a positive outcome or a gain, a move away from the baseline of the status quo. Failure involves a lack of progress or the absence of a gain. Thus, it is the perception of positive outcomes, of gains, that are experienced as success or failure and around which behavior is organized. Given the same scenario of deciding among potential projects, a promotion orientation would doubtless entertain a similar range of evaluative criteria: connection with larger goals, time, resources, etc. Within a promotion orientation, however, there would likely be the additional criterion of the potential gain. This might be elaborated by the decision maker as a concern with the payoff, the advantages of the project, or the progress made. However it is conceived, the underlying concern is for preferring projects that offer significant opportunity for new distinctions, accomplishments, or advancement. In summary, among the many ways of appraising a potential project, a promotion orientation would likely give significant weight to the perceived opportunity for gain.

A particularly interesting study highlights the differences in sensitivity to loss and to gain. Markman, Baldwin, and Maddox (2005) created an experimental scenario in which participants were given a learning task. Incentives for performance were framed either in terms of loss (i.e., not losing points for correct responses or losing points for incorrect responses) or gain (i.e., gaining points or not gaining points). Those primed with a prevention orientation performed better on the task when incentives were framed in terms of loss. Meanwhile, those primed with a promotion orientation performed better on the task when incentives were framed in terms of gain (Markman, Baldwin, and Maddox 2005). The nature of this study highlights the importance of either loss or gain and also points to the fact that there are resultant implications for task performance based on the use of a particular motivational system.

The importance of organizing behavior so as to manage the experience of loss and gain is so powerful that it can reverse the preferred goal pursuit strategies described above. In a study that examined the prevention focus in the context of situations that entail loss, Scholer et al.

(2010) found that those operating from a prevention orientation departed from cautious avoidance means in favor of riskier approach means. This study employed a stock investment scenario. When participants had experienced a loss during an earlier investment round, they were given risky and conservative investment options for a subsequent investment round. Participants primed with a prevention orientation showed a stronger preference for the risky approach options than those primed with a promotion orientation. The reason is that a prevention orientation required atypical means in order to escape a situation of loss; the concern with avoiding loss was so great that a prevention focus evoked a willingness to select the riskier option (Scholer et al. 2010). Likewise, a study of the promotion focus in the context of gain revealed a similar shift in goal pursuit means. This study also employed a stock investment scenario. When participants had experienced a gain during an earlier investment round, they were given risky and conservative investment options for a subsequent round. Typically, a promotion focus is supported by riskier approach means that are more aligned with the larger aim of attaining gain. However, the study demonstrated that when one has already experienced significant forward movement, a promotion orientation requires more conservative means in order to ensure the gain is realized (Zou, Scholer, and Higgins 2014).

Regulatory Focus and Change

The effects of the two motivational systems' sensitivity to loss versus gain have consequences for attitudes toward change versus status. Specifically, attending to loss, on balance, orients one more to the maintenance of stasis while attending to gain orients one more toward seeking change. These broad tendencies are best explained within the context of control theories of behavioral regulation.

Control theories of behavioral regulation (Powers 1973; Carver and Scheier 1998; Scholer and Higgins 2011) argue that behavior is organized via comparisons of the present circumstance against an internal standard. Internal reference values serve as the end-state individuals seek to establish. A thermometer continually assesses temperature, turning the furnace on or off in order to hold temperature constant. In the same way, our own internal standards or referents function as the desired temperature and resulting behavior seeks to adjust circumstance to match these reference points. Thus, regulatory process involves a discrepancy reducing feedback loop in which the present circumstance is compared with the referent or internal standard and as one experiences discrepancy between the two, one acts to close this discrepancy.

The prevention and promotion systems in regulatory focus theory point to fundamental differences with respect to the reference value employed for regulating behavior. Within a prevention orientation, there is a tendency for the internal referent to anchor on an adequate status quo. The prevention system seeks to maintain a state of non-loss with respect to this status quo. Thus, success is inherently about maintaining satisfactory states, about ensuring the absence of problems, and preventing bad things from happening. Meanwhile, failure is about slipping away from the adequacy of an established status quo. The motivation for change occurs only with failure to maintain adequate security. The implication is that maintenance of an adequate situation is what is most critical to a prevention orientation.

Meanwhile, within a promotion orientation, there is a tendency for the internal referent to anchor on something that represents a gain relative to the status quo. Success is defined as movement away from the status quo and toward some kind of improved circumstance, about making good things happen. On the other hand, failure is about stagnating and not experiencing positive movement, about remaining stuck. The implication is that "progress," the experience of movement away from an established status quo and toward something better, is critical to a promotion orientation.

That promotion orientations involve a stronger fit with change and prevention orientations with stasis is illustrated within an example from behavioral medicine (Fuglestad, Rothman, and Jeffery 2008). In one study, the authors examined how inclinations to employ a given regulatory focus conditioned participants' outcomes in a smoking cessation program. The program met weekly for eight weeks, during which participants were encouraged to quit smoking at week four, and included follow-up reporting on smoking behavior for fifteen months. It was found that a stronger habitual orientation toward a promotion focus resulted in greater likelihood of initiating a change in smoking behavior in the early phases of the program. It was likewise found that among those who successfully initiated a change in smoking behavior, a stronger habitual orientation toward a prevention focus was associated with greater likelihood of maintaining the change in the follow-up period. This study highlights the particular virtues of each orientation. A promotion orientation supports greater initiation of change while a prevention orientation greater maintenance. Similar findings were reported for interventions concerning weight loss.

This dynamic has been found with respect to several different activities. A promotion orientation, more than a prevention orientation, is associated with a willingness to exchange an acquired reward for a different reward (Liberman et al. 1999). A prevention orientation, more so than a promotion orientation, is less willing to put down a task for a new and different task, even when the new task is perceived as a more agreeable one (Chernev 2004). A promotion orientation involves greater openness to trying and using new products (Herzenstein, Posavac, and Brakus 2007).

This is not to say that a prevention orientation does not allow for change. Rather, change within a prevention orientation appears to be a function of two conditions. First, if one perceives the current state as entailing loss, a prevention orientation will be concerned with making change in order to re-instantiate an adequate status quo. This dynamic was described above in the case of the stock investment paradigm. To summarize, in the context of having accrued a loss, prevention-focused participants were motivated to make subsequent investment choices that would return them to the baseline from which they started. Second, when change is experienced as part of a necessary responsibility, as opposed to something that is only personally desirable, a prevention orientation will be motivated to change. For instance, when primed with a prevention orientation, study participants preferred initiating work on a task sooner than those in a promotion orientation because the task was conceived of as a necessity with negative consequences accruing if it was delayed (Freitas et al. 2002).

CHAPTER THREE

HYPOTHESIS: REGULATORY FOCUS AND JOB CHANGE

The internal standards of identity serve as touch stones for the organization of behavior. Their substance represents the content of the personal goals toward which one strives. Yet regulatory focus theory helps us extend our understanding of the influence of identity to the process of goal pursuit. Depending on whether the internal standards of identity are grounded within a promotion frame or a prevention frame differentiates the processes according to which one's resultant strivings take shape. This observation was the source of the initial hypothesis for this project. Within the life course domain of career, the inclination of a promotion orientation toward change and of a prevention orientation toward stasis led to the following conjecture: the stronger one's habitual use of a promotion focus, the more often one will change jobs.

In focusing on the life domain of work, the author sought a difficult context for demonstrating the dynamic of identity influencing the process of goal striving. After all, work is a very complex phenomenon. Work itself is a multifaceted domain that serves multiple needs—economic, social, and personal—in different proportions for different individuals (Blustein 2006). Additionally, when considering job change, there are many environmental variables that condition the process from economic need, to local labor markets, to institutionalized barriers to accessing various types of work (Andres and Adamuti-Trache 2008; Côté and Bynner 2008; Shanahan 2000). Finally, idiosyncratic concerns can easily mask a general dynamic. For instance, changing jobs may be a matter of where one's love interest currently resides, whether one likes one's boss, or any number of other personal circumstances.

The nature and difficulty of this hypothesis prompted three design considerations with respect to the initial study. One consideration was the specific demographic to involve. It has been noted that as individuals age, median years of tenure in a job appear to rise. (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2014) For individuals aged 25 to 34, the median length of tenure in a job is approximately three years, regardless of educational level. Meanwhile, it jumps to between five to six years for individuals aged 35 to 44. Some of this difference may own to a shorter time frame for labor market participation for younger individuals. Even so, the phenomenon of job transition seems more in evidence for younger adults, something much discussed in the emerging adult literature (Arnett 2015).

Emerging adults appear to experience greater job transition for at least three reasons. First, the labor market has experienced a great deal of turmoil since 2008. This instability undoubtedly contributed to greater rates of job change. A more enduring source of job change was first articulated by Donald Super over fifty years ago (Super 1957). He noted that during the early phase of one's career, individuals typically seek to establish themselves in the world of work. The aim of securing a stable status often results in seeking to move up and build momentum for one's career, which can lead to job change. Thus, aspects of initiating a career may encourage more frequent changes in employment. The life course is another context that may encourage greater job change. Many have noted that this historical moment appears to favor a prolonged period of exploration before forming commitments to a particular type of work. (Hamilton and Hamilton 2006; Konstam 2015; Domene, Landine, and Stewart 2015) Arnett (2015) has noted that one of the principle means of exploration is experiencing different types of work. Focusing on participants in their twenties, then, was deemed likely to ensure frequent enough job change so as to allow personality-based differences in job transition to emerge.

A second consideration was the time period. The nature of the phenomenon of interest, job transitions, seemed to necessitate a longer time line. Data from the U.S. Census (2010) confirmed this intuition. The most recent full census indicates that the average American holds more than three different jobs in the five-year-span between ages 23 and 27. A span of at least three to seven years, then, emerged as a desirable period for observing individual differences in job change behavior.

The selection of a longer time frame also reflects a point of view concerning individual differences. The argument of this study is that in individual difference—specifically, the habitual use of a promotion focus—accounts for some significant amount of variance in the behavior of changing jobs. The nature of personality differences is that they are a persistent influence, but also that their effect on behavior is moderated by situational variables. As such, the influence of a tendency to use one form of regulatory focus may or may not be clearly visible in a given instance. While specific instances may not reliably offer an opportunity to observe the effect of an individual difference, one would, however, expect to observe it longitudinally.

A final consideration concerned which emerging adults to involve in the study. It has been observed that life domains must achieve a requisite level of personal salience in order for significant identity-based, internal standards to form (Grotevant 1992). As was previously noted, work, as manifest in paid employment, takes on different meanings and levels of importance for different people. Within the spectrum of attitudes toward work, this study sought out participants for whom paid employment is a salient domain of life experience that matters to the individual. If paid employment was something that had low import for the individual, it might be a life circumstance that did not arouse the interest of the individual's internal standards, and decision making would be more a function of situational context. This concern made desirable a population that has signaled that work is a salient life domain.

One objection to this concern stems from the earlier observation that a prevention focus does allow for change. Once again, prevention orientation does incorporate change. Still, the dynamic for prevention-oriented change is most typically in evidence only in the case of the status quo being experienced as inadequate. There is an assumption built into this argument that, on balance, people are not operating from a position in which life is experienced as inadequate. Put another way, the assumption is that most people, at most moments in time, are habituated to their life circumstances as normal, as the way things are, and it is this comparison point against which they consider alternatives. Such an assumption, while not incontestable, seems reasonable, particularly in light of the notion of a hedonic treadmill (Brickman and Campbell 1971).

Study One

Hypotheses

This study seeks to test the argument that over time, individual differences in the use of motivational systems impact the phenomenon of job transitions. The specific hypotheses are:

1. *The stronger the habitual accessibility of a promotion regulatory focus, the greater the degree of job change.*
2. *The stronger the habitual accessibility of a prevention regulatory focus, the small the degree of job change.*

Method

Participants

Participants for this study were sought from a professional business school, The Booth School of Business at the University of Chicago. Full-time Booth students range in age from 23 to 35 with a mean age of 28. Given this is a professional school requiring a significant commitment of personal resources, its students have typically prioritized work as an important, identity-relevant life domain.

Student participation was solicited via a snowball sampling approach. Individuals in the researcher's personal network were initially approached, apprised of the nature of the project, and invited to participate. Participants were screened for having English as a first language as a prerequisite for participation due to the nature of one of the measures. Each participant was then invited to nominate the name of someone who had pursued "a different career path from their own prior to business school." Nominated individuals were then subsequently contacted using the same procedure as those originally contacted. This sampling strategy was used so as to enhance the variability of pre-business school work experiences.

Using this procedure, 94 students were contacted and 90 then signed up for interview appointments. Three of the 94 were screened out because English was not a native language. One of the 94 was not interested in participating. Of these 90 potential participants, 89 actually completed all the study procedures. One potential participant was unable to keep scheduled interview times. No data were collected for the five individuals who were contacted but did not participate.

Additional demographic information are as follows:

- Of the 89 participants, 37 were women and 52 were men.
- Participants ranged in age from 25 to 33. The average age of participants was 28.5.
- The number of months participants had participated in the labor market prior to business school ranged from 22 to 98. The average number of months was 53.9; the median was 51.

- Self-reported racial identification for participants is as follows: Asian/Indian/Pakistani – 15 participants; Black/African-American – 5 participants; Hispanic/Latino – 9 participants; and White/Caucasian – 60 participants.

Procedure

Interview appointments consisted of two procedures: completing a measure of regulatory focus strength and completing a work history survey.

<u>Regulatory Focus Strength</u>

Below is a description of the measure of regulatory focus strength. A full protocol for the measure can be found in Appendix A.

The regulatory focus strength measure (Higgins, Shah, and Friedman 1997) involves completing an activity run on a personal computer. Participants were invited to complete a practice round of questions to familiarize themselves with the operation of the activity. The practice round focused on participants' actual self with questions such as "What is your favorite color?" Participants were advised to "[p]lease answer these questions AS QUICKLY AND ACCURATELY AS YOU CAN."

After completing the initial practice round, participants were then invited to complete the set of questions that comprise the measure of regulatory focus strength. Participants were advised that they would be asked to provide "attributes that describe how you HOPE TO BE (the attributes of the person you would ideally like to be; the attributes of the person you wish or desire to be)" and also "attributes that describe how you OUGHT TO BE (the attributes of the person you should be; the attributes of the person you believe it is your duty or responsibility to be).” Participants were further advised to “[p]lease answer these questions AS QUICKLY AND ACCURATELY AS YOU CAN,” to “[p]lease limit the description of each attribute to ONE WORD,” and “DO NOT LIST ANY OF THE ATTRIBUTES MORE THAN ONCE IN THIS SESSION.”

For each nominated ideal self, two standard follow-up questions were then asked. First, “For the last attribute __________, rate the extent to which you would IDEALLY LIKE to possess the attribute.” A four-point scale was offered: 1 = SLIGHTLY, 2 = MODERATELY, 3 = A GREAT DEAL, 4 = EXTREMELY. Second, “For the last attribute __________, rate the extent to which you ACTUALLY possess the attribute.” The same four-point scale was offered. For each nominated ought self, two similar follow-up questions were then asked. First, “For the last attribute __________, rate the extent to which you believe you OUGHT TO possess the attribute.” The same four-point scale used for IRFS is offered: 1 = SLIGHTLY, 2 = MODERATELY, 3 = A GREAT DEAL, 4 = EXTREMELY. Second, “For the last attribute __________, rate the extent to which you ACTUALLY possess the attribute.” Again, the same four-point scale was offered.

For each prompt, the time it took to complete all three items for a given attribute were recorded in milliseconds. These responses were used (as described in the Measure section) to create a response latency measure for each supplied attribute (whether for ideal or ought self).

After all three questions were asked for a given attribute, the participant was prompted to provide the next attribute and again asked the two follow-up questions. Participants were invited to offer three ideal self attributes and three ought self attributes. Participants were invited to nominate these in an order that appeared random (Higgins, Shah, and Friedman 1997): Ideal – Ought – Ought – Ideal – Ought – Ideal.

When participants completed the final prompt, they received a message indicating the activity was complete.

Work History Survey

After completing the computer activity, participants were invited to join the researcher at a table where the researcher then conducted a structured interview to review each job the participant had held between graduation from college and matriculation into business school.

Participants reviewed their work history and noted each instance in which they changed jobs or positions. Changes in position could have taken a variety of forms: a promotion, leaving a position to take a new position with the same organization or company, leaving a position to accept an offer with a different organization or company, being let go, or simply quitting.

Some job changes are bigger than others. For instance, being promoted from an assistant to an associate within your current department is one degree of change. Leaving your current employer to take on an entirely different kind of work with a new employer is a different degree of change. To assess the degree of job change, each job transition was also assessed for four kinds of change: (a) a change in employer, (b) a change in job function (e.g., moving from a finance role to a marketing role), (c) a change in industry (e.g., moving from a position in the energy sector to one in the finance sector), (d) a change in work group or division within the same employer.

Assessing changes in job function and industry involved the independent judgment of the researcher. As a result, cases in which either judgment was not rote were noted. These instances were then reviewed by an independent rater who was blind to the hypotheses of the study. Twenty-one cases were noted for change in job function. Interrater reliability was high (α = .90). Thirty-two cases were noted for change in industry. Interrater reliability was, again, high (α =

.88). For all disagreements, cases were discussed by both raters resulting in a single, agreed upon rating.

Each form of change for a particular job transition received a point. Thus, a given transition could result in different point values. For example, moving from an accounting function within one company to a marketing function within a different company, assuming both companies operate within the same industry, would receive three points—one for the change in job, one for changing companies, and one for changing job functions.

Individuals also have a subjective sense of the change. To assess this, two additional questions were asked. The first question concerned whether the transition was sought and/or desired. Job changes, even promotions, can be made without being sought. Job transitions can also take place without being desired, such as a transfer between locations or departments. The second question concerned whether the transition reflected a change in the direction of one's work; that is, did the job transition reflect a change in the intended work trajectory of the participant? Likewise, each of these two forms of subjectively experienced change received a point so that give job transitions could reflect greater or lesser degrees of subjectively experienced change.

Finally, the month and year of each job change was also recorded.

Measures

Ideal-Self Guide Strength

This is a measure of the habitual accessibility of a promotion regulatory focus. Response latencies for each of these nine questions concerning nominated ideal self attributes were measured in milliseconds. As is common for response latencies, these latencies were each log-transformed and then summed to produce a summary score (Robinson 2007, Higgins, Shah, and

Friedman 1997). To convert the score from a measure of latency in response to a measure of speed in response, the final step involved multiplying the sum of latencies by -1. The mean Ideal-Self Guide Strength score, in milliseconds, was
-33.27 (SD = 1.27).

Ought-Self Guide Strength

This is a measure of the habitual accessibility of a prevention regulatory focus. Response latencies for each of these nine questions concerning nominated ought self attributes were measured in milliseconds. These latencies were each log-transformed and then summed to produce a summary score. To convert the score from a measure of latency in response to a measure of speed in response, the final step involved multiplying the sum of latencies by -1. The mean Ought-Self Guide Strength score was
-33.22 (SD = 1.45).

Objective Job Transition Index

This is a measure of the volume of objective job change participants experienced between graduating with an undergraduate degree and matriculation into a graduate MBA program.

Each time a participant transitioned from one job to a new job, degree of change was assessed for four kinds of change: (a) a change in employer, (b) a change in job function (e.g., moving from a finance role to a marketing role), (c) a change in industry (e.g., moving from a position in the energy sector to one in the finance sector), (d) a change in work group or division within the same employer. Each type of change received one point. The collective number of points across all job transitions was summed to yield a single figure. To reflect the fact that some participants were in the labor market longer than others, this sum was then divided by the number of years the participant was employed. So if she was employed for 27 months, the change index for this participant was divided by 2.25.

The mean Objective Job Transition Index score was 0.69 (SD = 0.44).

Subjective Job Transition Index

This is a measure of the volume of subjective job change participants experienced between graduating with an undergraduate degree and matriculation in a graduate MBA program.

Each time a participant transitioned from one job to a new job, degree of subjectively experienced change was assessed in two ways: (a) was the transition sought and/or desired and (b) did the transition reflect a change in the intended work trajectory of the participant? The collective number of points across all job transitions was summed to yield a single figure. To reflect the fact that some participants were in the labor market longer than others, this sum was then divided by the number of years the participant was employed.

The mean Subjective Job Transition Index score was 0.63 (SD = 0.31). Objective Job Transition Index and Subjective Job Transition Index were highly correlated ($r = .67$, $p < .001$). It appears that while they tap into a similar sense of change, each captures some unique aspect of a job transition.

Job Transition Index

This is a measure of the magnitude of job change participants experienced between graduating with an undergraduate degree and matriculation into a graduate MBA program. This index was calculated by summing the measure of Objective Change by Year Index and Subjective Change by Year Index. The mean Job Transition Index score was 1.32 (SD = 0.69).

Results

Significant interrelations between ideal-self guide strength scores and ought-self guide strength scores are typical when measuring regulatory focus strength via response latencies (Higgins, Shah, and Friedman 1997). The correlation between Ideal-Self Guide Strength and Ought-Self Guide Strength was $r = .50$ and was statistically significant ($p < .001$).

As is typical for this measure, the unique relationship between each type of self-guide strength and job transition was assessed while controlling for the alternate type of self-guide strength—that is, scores reflecting job transition were regressed on both the ideal-self guide strength score and the ought-self guide score.

The primary analysis regressed the job transition index on ideal-self guide strength and ought-self guide strength. Consistent with the study hypotheses, as ideal-self guide strength increased (controlling for ought-self guide strength), participants' job transition index rose ($\beta = .52$, $p < .001$). Also consistent with study hypotheses, as ought-self guide strength increased (controlling for ideal-self guide strength), participants' job transition index fell ($\beta = -.49$, $p < .001$).

Two supplementary analyses were performed. First, objective job transition index was regressed on ideal-self guide strength and ought-self guide strength. Results indicated the same pattern. As ideal-self guide strength increased, objective job transition index rose ($\beta = .50$, $p < .001$). Likewise, as ought-self guide strength increased, objective job transition index fell ($\beta = -.46$, $p < .001$).

Finally, Subjective Job Transition Index was regressed on ideal-self guide strength and ought-self guide strength resulting in a similar pattern. As ideal-self guide strength increased, subjective job transition index rose ($\beta = .43$, $p < .001$). Likewise, as ought-self guide strength increased, subjective job transition index fell ($\beta = -.41$, $p < .001$).

Discussion and Proposed Mechanism

This study provides initial evidence that individual differences in the quality of identity-based internal standards affect how individuals pursue their career goals. Degree of change in job was substantially related to the strength of a preference for a particular form of regulatory focus. The greater the habitual reliance on a promotion focus, the greater the degree of change in work; the greater the habitual reliance on a prevention focus, the smaller the degree of change in work. This pattern was replicated when using a more objective definition of change in work. It was also replicated when using a change index that emphasized subjectively experienced changes in the direction of one's work.

As noted above, part of the observed volume of job change was undoubtedly a function of the life course context of the twenties. By all accounts, emerging adulthood is a period that promotes and, to some degree, supports change in work. The desire for individuals to find themselves in and through their work animates this period of life, all the more so for this group of career-minded individuals. This fact may have accentuated a tendency toward greater change for many. Additional research is required to assess whether a personality-based individual difference manifest in the same way at other points in the life course.

Even while this study sheds light on job change in the twenties, it only points to the fact that job change and the regulatory quality of internal standards are related. It doesn't speak to the matter of how a habitual promotion focus might lead to increases in job change. A review of prior research suggests one potential mechanism: that regulatory focus may moderate the effects of loss aversion. Loss aversion refers to the phenomenon that the prospect of a potential loss of a given size weighs more significantly in one's mental accounting than the prospect of a potential gain of the same size (Kahneman and Tversky 1984). In other words, while a potential loss and gain may be the same in objective terms (e.g., $X), the potential loss is personally experienced as more significant. This emphasis on managing risk often contributes to a tendency of sticking with the familiarities of the status quo. Previous studies have touched on the idea that a promotion focus may have the effect of equalizing the experienced proportions of a potential gain with those of a potential loss when considering change (Chernev 2004; Liberman et al. 1999) This mechanism would achieve its effect intraindividually by altering the personal accounting of individuals based on the accessibility of a promotion focus.

This project, however, makes an alternate claim: a promotion focus also achieves an effect by altering the interpersonal circumstances of the individual. Specifically, the author argues that the approach-oriented behavioral strategies favored by promotion-oriented internal standards have the effect of enhancing one's reputation in a way that leads to more opportunities in the realm of work. In short, the characteristic means of goal pursuit employed within a promotion focus, on balance, elicit more opportunities for new work from the individual's environment. This is not to say the change in personal accounting described above is not real and does not help to explain job change. Rather, the argument here is that personal inclinations for change don't seem enough to explain the strong association of a promotion focus with job change. In addition, one's circumstances have to afford opportunities for one to act on a personal inclination for change.

The research base concerning the interpersonal effects of regulatory focus on work is relatively thin. Even so, evidence for such effects can be found. A small number of studies detail differences in job-related behavioral patterns characteristic of alternate regulatory foci and the social impact they have. One of the most relevant concerns the behavioral tendency associated with a promotion orientation of speaking out early and often in interactions. One study (Kilduff and Galinsky 2013) found that those primed with a promotion orientation during a single, twenty-minute group activity had higher status ratings upon the completion of the activity. Participants operating from a promotion orientation received higher ratings from peers concerning the extent to which they were "respected and admired." They also received higher ratings concerning the extent to which they "had influence over task decisions."

Not only can promotion-oriented tactics result in higher status within a group interaction, there is evidence that a promotion orientation entails a desire to stand out relative to others. A second study suggests that promotion-oriented individuals may be particularly sensitive to social positioning (Molden et al. 2009). Owing to their different sensitivities to loss versus gain, it appears that promotion and prevention orientations index adequacy in personal interactions in different ways. This study highlights that simply being ignored counts as a social loss within a promotion orientation while it takes active rejection to count as a loss within a prevention focus. This suggests that within a promotion orientation, remaining unrecognized and simply a member of the crowd is experienced as something in need of change.

The desire to stand out may be instrumental to the nature of promotion-oriented goals. If making progress from the status quo is the goal, one requires the means and influence for doing so. Another study (Sassenberg et al. 2007) highlighted the idea that regulatory focus can affect the groups with which one feels most at home. In particular, groups with greater perceived power were more valued by promotion-oriented individuals while groups with lower perceived power were more valued by prevention-oriented individuals. Promotion orientations appear to anticipate a stronger sense of personal fit with the regulatory strategies available to higher power groups. Simply put, their focus on gain and achievement makes the environmental and agentic freedom associated with greater power attractive.

A more concrete example of the ways in which a promotion orientation may stand out in group settings concerns the expression of novel ideas and insight. Friedman and Forster (2001) found that as the strength of a habitual promotion orientation rose, so did individual's performance on a task related to creative insight. Additional research has supported the contention that as the nature of the challenge increases, a promotion orientation leads to greater generation of novel ideas in relation to a task (Sacramento, Fay, and West 2013). In a field study of work teams, Sacrament, Fay and West found that as the strength of a habitual promotion orientation rose so did that individual's ratings from supervisors on items such as "actively suggested new possibilities for the project" and "demonstrated originality in his/her work." The tendency to vocalize more ideas and more diverse ideas is a tangible way in which a promotion orientation will likely stand out in work contexts.

Taken as a whole, these studies support the claim that the more assertive behavioral tactics characteristic of a promotion focus are likely to have interpersonal consequences. Speaking up early and often, vocalizing novel ideas, not being content to blend in, and seeking to affiliate with higher power individuals and groups, especially when compounded over time, all impact one's interpersonal circumstances and reputation.[1] As such, it seems reasonable to suppose that the behavioral patterns associated with a promotion focus are likely, on balance, to elicit the attention of others and favorable assessments concerning one's work.

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[1] Stated as such, it may appear that a strong habitual tendency toward a promotion focus might seem overwhelming or entirely too self-promoting. Yet one needs to remember that these behavioral patterns are broad tendencies and that they needn't override normative expectations of tact and warmth toward others.

It’s important to note that regulatory orientation is not automatically determinative of behavioral means; that is, individuals don’t always behave exactly as regulatory focus suggests. Yet even while individuals adopt tactics according to a variety of situational affordances and constraints, over the long run characteristic patterns in behavior should be in evidence enough to elicit the predicted effect. It’s also important to acknowledge that the proposed mechanism is not universal The characteristics of a promotion focus tend to be highly valued in North America (Higgins 2008), so this general tendency to favor typically promotion-oriented behavior may vary by culture. Further, even in a North American context, this dynamic might not always hold. For instance, work contexts where safety is a prime concern may not value the behavioral style of a promotion focus as positively.

Study Two

Hypothesis

Study One demonstrated that the internal standards of identity are related to the strivings of identity-relevant pursuits and goals. In particular, key aspects of goal pursuit are partly guided by whether internal standards of identity are grounded within a promotion frame or a prevention frame. In essence, the inclination of a promotion orientation toward change and of a prevention orientation toward stasis resulted in a significant difference in the way individuals transitioned between jobs as they pursued a career.

Toward explaining this finding, this study seeks to test the argument that a habitual use of a promotion focus is associated with eliciting more work opportunities from the environment. The specific hypothesis is:

> *The stronger the habitual inclination toward a promotion focus, the greater the degree of endorsement for more work opportunities by colleagues.*

The desire to evoke context that was a microcosm of the workplace environment informed the design of this study. The manner in which individual differences inform behavior was the first concern. As was noted above, personality-based differences represent a persistent influence, but one that is heavily moderated by situational variables. This made a longitudinal context, one in which the effects of personality would have enough time to show up, desirable. A second concern was based on the hypothesis of a social effect. As such, it was desirable to create a context that was not already conditioned by pre-existing relationships due to personal history or organizational culture. Finally, a relatively flat organizational context was considered desirable. It was reasoned that a work environment relatively undifferentiated by levels of hierarchy would provide greater range of expression for individual differences.

Given these concerns, this study utilized a sequence of two laboratory classes concerning teamwork as a context to test this hypothesis. The sequence of classes consisted of a ten-week class—one-quarter (part 1)—and concluded with a ten-week class the following quarter (part 2). Enrolled students were assigned to work on teams whose work spanned the length of both classes. Each team had a set of deliverables that required them to work closely together over the course of the experience. On class evaluations, students reported that they spent between 15 and 25 hours a week working on the class. The interdependent nature of the work, the duration of the class, the requirement of a significant investment of time each week all ensured that students got to know each other and form impressions about each other.

At the conclusion of the class, students completed an assessment for each of the peers with whom they worked. Students used the impressions they formed to assess their peers on a number of topics. These assessments were used to collect data on the operation of the class and also data concerning students' appraisals of one another regarding work and performance criteria, including endorsements for more work opportunities. Data for this study were gathered at the conclusion of the second laboratory class and reflect summary impressions based on 20 weeks of working together.

Of course, there may be other reasons why one would endorse a person for more work opportunities. An especially intelligent person may find her cognitive ability translates into stronger work performance and stronger peer endorsements. Alternatively, a particularly friendly student may find his likeability translates into stronger peer endorsements. As a result, measures for both cognitive ability and for friendship were obtained in order to control for their effect on peer endorsements.

Method

Participants

All participants in the laboratory class were full-time MBA students at the Booth School of Business at the University of Chicago. Students ranged in age from 25 to 31 with a mean age of 28.

Students applied to be awarded one of the forty enrollment slots in this class. Typically three times as many students applied as were accepted to enroll. Students were selected largely because of their genuine motivation to participate in the class. The nature of this process typically ensured that all students fully applied themselves to the work associated with the class.

Additional demographic information are as follows:

- Of the 40 participants, 18 were women and 22 were men.
- Self-reported racial identification for participants is as follows:

  Asian/Indian/Pakistani – 8 participants; African-American or Black – 2 participants; Hispanic/Latino – 4 participants; and White/Caucasian – 26 participants.

- 23 participants were citizens of the United States. The other 17 participants came from Australia, Canada, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, France, India, Ireland, Israel, Japan, Pakistan, Spain, and the United Kingdom.

Procedures

Data collection consisted of two different procedures. First, participants completed several questionnaires and assessment measures as a part of the class. Most of these were administered at an introductory class meeting in a group setting. As a part of this battery, students completed the Regulatory Focus Pride questionnaire, a measure of the strength of an individual's preference for a style of regulatory focus. The entire questionnaire consisted of 11 items and is included in Appendix B.[2] This questionnaire assesses the level of pride and attachment individuals have for either promotion behavioral tactics or prevention behavioral tactics based on past personal experience. Individuals with high levels of Promotion Pride, for instance, have a personal history of success using promotion oriented means. Their sense of connection with characteristically promotion means signals an inclination to use these means in reference to new tasks and new goals. Likewise, a sense of Prevention Pride inclines individuals

[2] The Regulatory Focus Pride measure has adequate reliability. Higgins, Friedman, Harlow, Chen Idson, Ayduk and Taylor (2001) report that a two-month test retest reliability study over a two-month period found a .79 correlation ($p < .0001$) between time one and time two measures of Promotion Pride. For Prevention Pride they found a .81 correlation ($p < .0001$) over the same time period. Measures of Promotion Pride and Prevention Pride also display appropriate convergent and divergent validity. General information concerning the construction and validation of the scale are reported by Higgins and colleagues (Higgins et al. 2001).

to employ characteristically prevention means (Higgins et al. 2001). As such, this measure indexes a habitual tendency to employ a particular regulatory focus.

Second, near the conclusion of the class, the peer rating assessment was administered. Students were emailed a link to an on-line survey. The survey invited each student to complete a set of questions for each peer with whom he or she worked closely with on a team. Students were advised to take this assessment seriously and were given two weeks to complete the assignment. Within the set of questions, two questions were included that reference the dependent measure that comprises "endorsement for more work opportunities." Also included in this assessment was a question that assessed friendship.

Measures

Promotion Pride

This measure of the inclination to use promotion-related behavioral means is obtained with the Regulatory Focus Pride questionnaire. Six items—1, 3, 7, 9, 10, and 11 (included in Appendix B)—contribute to a score of Promotion Pride. Items 1, 9, and 11 are reverse scored. A sample item that captures the feel of the Promotion Pride measure is, "I feel like I have made progress toward being successful in my life" with a five-point scale ranging from "certainly false" to "certainly true." To calculate the score, reverse scored items were subtracted from six and then scores for each item were summed.

Scores ranged from 16 to 29 with an average score of 23.5, and a standard deviation of 3.0. Promotion Pride scores were similar for both international and domestic participants. The mean score for international participants was 23.88 and for domestic participants was 23.26. This difference was not significant $t(38) = -0.63$, $p > .05$. Promotion Pride measures also showed no significant difference according to gender of the participant. The mean score for female participants was 23.06 and for male participants was 23.91. This difference was not significant $t(38) = 0.87$, $p > .05$.

<u>Prevention Pride</u>

This measure of the inclination to use prevention-related behavioral means is obtained with the Regulatory Focus Pride questionnaire. Five items—2, 4, 5, 6, and 8 (included in Appendix B) —contribute to a score of Prevention Pride. Items 2, 4, 6, and 8 are reverse scored. A sample item is, “Not being careful enough has gotten me in trouble at times” (reverse scored) with a five-point scale ranging from “never or seldom” to “very often.” To calculate the score, reverse-scored items were subtracted from six and then scores for each item were summed.

Scores ranged from 10 to 24 with an average score of 18.0 and a standard deviation of 4.1. Prevention Pride scores were similar for both international and domestic participants. The mean score for international participants was 17.82 and for domestic participants was 18.26. This difference was not significant $t(38) = 0.32$, $p > .05$. Prevention Pride measures also showed no significant difference according to gender of the participant. The mean score for female participants was 19.00 and for male participants was 17.32, $t(38) = -1.28$, $p > .05$.

Promotion Pride and Prevention Pride scores were unrelated, $r = -0.27$, $p > .05$.

<u>More Work Opportunities Scale</u>

This scale measures the inclination of peers who worked alongside an individual to endorse him or her for more work opportunities. The scale consisted of two items that were included in the final peer assessment. The first item was, “If I had an important project, I would trust this person to work on it.” The second was, “I would gladly recommend this person for an open position in a company that I work for.” Respondents selected the response that reflected the degree to which they agreed with the statement using a seven-point scale, one referring to "not at all" and seven for "very much."

Each study participant received ratings from seven other students with whom they worked closely. Ratings for each item were averaged. Average scores on each of the two items were summed in order to create a single score for the scale. Scores for these two items were highly intercorrelated (r = .94).[3]

The scale performed similarly for both international and domestic participants. The average score for international participants was 11.76 and for domestic participants was 12.01. This difference was not significant $t(38) = 0.67$, $p > .05$. The scale likewise performed similarly for both female and male participants. The average score for female participants was 11.79 and for male participants was 12.01. . This difference was not significant $t(38) = 0.62$, $p > .05$.

Friendship

This measure assessed the closeness of friendship that existed between study participants. The measure consisted of a single question that was included in the final peer assessment. The question was, "I consider this person to be a close friend." Respondents selected the number that reflected the degree to which they agreed with the statement using a seven-point scale, one referring to "not at all" and seven for "very much."

Each study participant received ratings from seven other students. Ratings were averaged. Scores ranged from 4.29 to 6.71. The average score across all participants was 5.40 with a standard deviation of 0.60. The item performed similarly for both international and domestic

[3] Characteristics of the two items are as follows. For the first item, scores ranged from 4.43 to 6.86. The average score across all participants was 5.89 with a standard deviation of 0.58. For the second item, scores ranged from 4.86 to 6.86. The average was 6.02 and the standard deviation was 0.54.

participants. The average score for international participants was 5.42 and for domestic participants was 5.39. This difference was not significant $t(38) = -0.14$, $p > .05$. The measure likewise performed similarly for both female and male participants. The average score for both female and male participants was 5.40.

Cognitive Ability

As a proxy for cognitive ability, student scores on The Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT) were collected. The GMAT measures a general set of cognitive skills related to analyzing and solving business-related problems. Specific skills include "the ability to analyze and synthesize data in different formats from multiple sources," the ability to "read and comprehend written materials, reason and evaluate arguments," and the ability to "reason quantitatively, solve quantitative problems, and interpret graphic data." Prior research suggests that the GMAT is moderately predictive of mid-course grades in business school (Talento-Miller and Rudner 2005).

The GMAT is scaled such that scores range from 200 to 800 and from 2011 to 2013 the average score was 547.35 with a standard deviation of 121.08 (Graduate Management Admissions Council 2015). GMAT scores for study participants ranged from 640 to 790. The average GMAT score was 715.5. The GMAT score was related to citizenship. The average score for international participants was 702.94 and for domestic participants was 724.78. This difference was at the margin of significant $t(38) = 1.96$, $p > .05$. The GMAT score was unrelated to the gender of participants. The average score for female participants was 705.56 and for male participants was 723.64. This difference was not significant $t(38) = 1.6$, $p > .05$.

Results

The initial analysis regressed the measure of more work opportunities on Promotion Pride, while controlling for Prevention Pride. This was a test of the degree to which a habitual focus on promotion means contributed to the inclination of immediate colleagues to endorse one for additional work opportunities. Consistent with the study hypothesis, as Promotion Pride increased, colleagues' endorsement for more work opportunities likewise rose ($\beta = .39$, $p < .017$).[4] Meanwhile, Prevention Pride was unrelated to endorsements for more work at a statistically significant level ($\beta = .17$, $p > .287$).

A second analysis sought to test whether this relationship held when friendship and cognitive ability were considered. A second step added friendship and cognitive ability to the regression analysis. Both friendship and cognitive ability predicted more work opportunities. Consistent with the study hypothesis, Promotion Pride remained a significant predictor of more work opportunities ($\beta = .35$, $p < .011$)

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[4] The p-values for this analysis as well as other regression analyses within this paper that uses peer rating data should be considered closely. The analyses involve a level of interdependence between subject ratings that is not ideal for regression analysis, though it does represent a common analytic tactic for peer ratings data (Lespsinger and Lucia 2009).

Table 3: Study Two—Analysis 1

	B	SE B	β
Step 1			
Constant	7.79	1.68	
Promotion Pride	.14	.06	.39*
Prevention Pride	.05	.04	.17
Step 2			
Constant	-2.99	3.21	
Promotion Pride	.13	.05	.35*
Prevention Pride	.06	.04	.11
Friendship	.70	.38	.67**
Cognitive Ability	.01	.00	.32*

R^2 = .15 for Step 1, ΔR^2 = .29 for Step 2 (p <. 001); * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

Discussion

Taken together, Studies One and Two suggest that the regulatory character of internal standards affect the means by which individuals pursue the identity-related goal of career. Study One demonstrated that individual differences in the orientation of internal standards, whether favoring more of a prevention or a promotion focus, have consequences for changes in work over a several year period. A stronger prevention orientation leads to fewer changes in work while a stronger promotion orientation leads to more changes in work.

Study Two utilized classroom environment as a simplified work context to further explore how the results from Study One might plausibly be understood. It provides support for the contention that one way in which a promotion orientation contributes to change in work is the effect it has on one's interpersonal context. Specifically, the stronger the tendency toward promotion-behavioral tactics, the more likely immediate colleagues will endorse a person for more work opportunities. Intellectual ability also contributed to endorsements for more work as did strength of friendship. However, the unique contribution of a promotion focus was relatively unchanged by the inclusion of these two factors.

While these studies illustrate the impact of promotion-focused internal standards on changes in work and also demonstrate an interpersonal effect, they don't establish the proposed mechanism. It is the contention of this paper that the characteristic means of goal pursuit employed within a promotion focus generate more opportunities for new work from the individual's social environment. More specifically, it is the more assertive, approach behaviors favored by a promotion orientation that contribute to more work opportunities. As noted above, this style likely includes a variety of general strategies and specific behaviors: speaking up early and often, vocalizing novel ideas, and not being content to blend in. A need for more direct evidence in support of this contention is the purpose of Study Three.

Study Three

Hypothesis

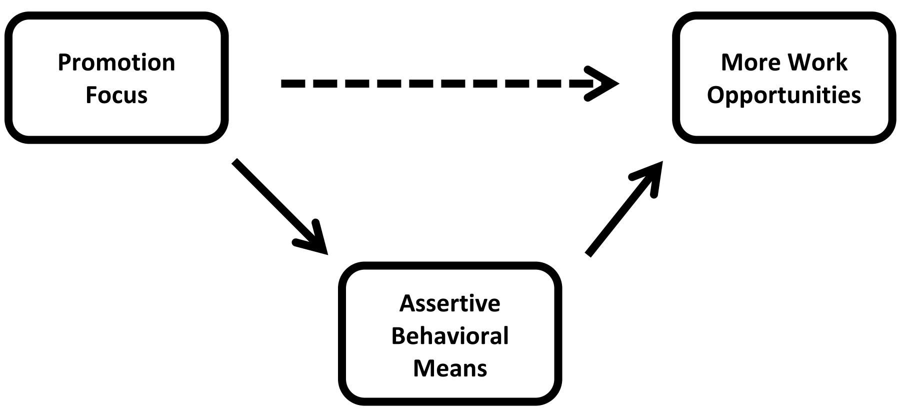
Study Two provided support for the argument that the regulatory character of internal standards has an interpersonal effect. A habitual orientation toward promotion behavioral means appears to elicit more favorable reactions from others, at least in a work context. The precise means by which this effect achieves its ends, however, was not explored. It is the purpose of Study Three to test the proposed explanation that the mechanism of more assertive behavior characteristic of a promotion focus (e.g., speaking up, voicing one's opinions, seeking to stand out) creates this effect.

This study, then, tests two hypotheses. The first is simply a replication of the central finding from Study Two. The second emphasizes assertive behavior as the proposed mechanism for the relationship between a promotion focus and endorsements for more work opportunities.

1. *The stronger the inclination toward a promotion focus, the greater the degree of endorsement for more work opportunities by colleagues.*
2. *The relationship between a habitual promotion focus and collegial endorsements for more work opportunities will be mediated by assertive behavior.*

Figure 1 illustrates the nature of the proposed relationships. Specifically, the relationship between promotion focus and more work opportunities observed in Study Two will be significantly mediated by the proposed mechanism of assertive behavior.

Figure 1: Proposed Relationships for Study Three



Like Study Two, this study requires a context that can serve as a simplified microcosm of a workplace environment. As such, it utilizes the same site as Study Two. As noted above, this ensures a longitudinal setting in which personality-based differences have time to achieve an effect. It also ensures a context in which participants enter without prior relationships, which allows the work context itself to condition the attitudes of participants toward each other. Finally, it is a relatively flat organizational context in which individual differences are more likely to surface. Utilizing this site also allows for a replication of Study Two.

The study context, however, differs from that of Study Two in two respects. Obviously, Study Three involves a different set of forty participants. Additionally, this study utilized data for a group of participants who were enrolled in the first of the two-part class sequence. As a result, these participants have half as much work experience with each other—only 10 weeks—as opposed to Study Two participants who worked together for 20 weeks.

Method

Participants

All participants in the laboratory class were full-time MBA students at the Booth School of Business at the University of Chicago. Students ranged in age from 25 to 32 with a mean age of 29.

Additional demographic information are as follows:

- Of the 40 participants, 20 were women and 20 were men.
- Self-reported racial identification for participants is as follows: Southeast-Asian/Indian – 11 participants; Black – 1 participant; Latino – 2 participants; Native American – 1 participant; and White/Caucasian – 25 participants.
- 26 participants were citizens of the United States. The other 14 participants came from Australia, Canada, France, India, Israel, Malaysia, Nigeria, Peru, United Kingdom, and Vietnam.

Procedures

As with Study Two, data collection consisted of two different procedures. First, participants completed the Regulatory Focus Pride questionnaire, described in Study Two, at an introductory class meeting. Second, near the conclusion of the class, students completed a peer rating assessment very similar to that used in Study Two. Students were emailed a link to an online survey and completed a set of questions for each peer with whom he or she worked with closely on a team. The same items were used to measure “endorsement for more work opportunities” and friendship. Three items were used to measure assertive behavior. Those items are described below.

Measures

Promotion Pride

As with Study Two, this measure of the inclination to use promotion-related behavioral means was obtained with the Regulatory Focus Pride questionnaire. Scores ranged from 14 to 29 with an average score of 23.23 and a standard deviation of 3.34. Unlike Study Two, Promotion Pride scores were notably different for international and domestic participants. The mean score for international participants was 21.71 and for domestic participants was 24.04. This difference was significant $t(38) = -2.32$, $p < .05$. Promotion Pride measures likewise showed a larger mean difference between male and female. The mean score for female participants was 24.15 and for male participants was 22.30. This difference, however, was not statistically significant $t(38) = 1.85$, $p > .05$.

Prevention Pride

The Regulatory Focus Pride questionnaire also yields a measure of the inclination to use prevention-related behavioral means. Scores ranged from 13 to 22 with an average score of 18.03 and a standard deviation of 2.99. Prevention Pride scores were similar for both international and domestic participants. The mean score for international participants was 17.00 and for domestic participants was 18.58. This difference was not significant $t(38) = -1.58$, $p > .05$. Prevention

Pride measures also showed no significant difference according to gender of the participant. The mean score for female participants was 18.60 and for male participants was 17.45, $t(38) = 1.15$, $p > .05$.

Promotion Pride and Prevention Pride scores were unrelated, $r = 0.12$, $p > .05$.

<u>More Work Opportunities Scale</u>

This scale measures the inclination of peers who worked alongside an individual to endorse him or her for more work opportunities. The scale contains two items and is unchanged from that described in Study Two. Scores for the two items were highly intercorrelated ($r = .92$).

The scale performed similarly for both international and domestic participants. The average score for international participants was 11.38 and for domestic participants was 11.88. This difference was not significant $t(38) = 0.50$, $p > .05$. The scale yielded almost identical scores for female and male participants. The average score for female participants was 11.71 and for male participants was 11.69. This difference was not significant $t(38) = 0.02$, $p > .05$.

<u>Friendship</u>

This measure assesses the closeness of friendship that existed between study participants. The measure consists of the same, single question that was employed in Study Two. Scores ranged from 2.8 to 6.3. The average score across all participants was 4.50 with a standard deviation of 0.79. The item performed similarly for both international and domestic participants. The average score for international participants was 4.41 and for domestic participants was 4.55. The difference was not significant $t(38) = -0.14$, $p > .05$. The measure likewise performed similarly for both female and male participants. The average score for both female participants was 4.39 and for male participants was 4.62. This difference was not significant $t(38) = .23$, $p > .05$.

Cognitive Ability

As with Study Two, student scores on The Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT) were collected and used as a proxy for cognitive ability. The average GMAT score was 727.50 with a standard deviation of 35.14. The GMAT score was not related to citizenship. The average score for international participants was 733.57 and for domestic participants was 724.23. This difference was not significant $t(38) = -9.43$, $p > .05$. Conversely, the GMAT score was related to the gender of participants. The average score for female participants was 713.00 and for male participants was 742. This difference was significant $t(38) = 29.0$, $p < .01$.

Assertive Behavior

This scale was new. It measures the degree to which participants demonstrated more assertive behaviors in the context of group work. The scale consisted of three items that were included in the final peer assessment. The first item was, “This facilitator acted confidently during team interactions and discussions.” The second was, “This facilitator seemed unsure of his/her position during team decisions” and is reverse scored. The final item was, “This facilitator took the initiative in team meetings.” Respondents selected the response that reflected the degree to which they agreed with the statement using a seven-point scale, one referring to “not at all” and seven for “very much.”

Peer ratings for each item were averaged. Average scores on each of the three items were then summed in order to create a single score for the scale. Scores for these items were highly intercorrelated ($\alpha = .92$), suggesting they tap into a unidimensional construct.

The scale yielded a mean difference for international and domestic participants. The average score for international participants was 15.56 and for domestic participants was 17.29. This difference was significant $t(38) = 1.73$, $p < .05$. The scale, however, did not yield a notable difference for female and male participants. The average score for female participants was 16.80 and for male participants was 16.57. This difference was not significant $t(38) = -.23$, $p > .05$.

Results

The first study hypothesis is: *The stronger the inclination toward a promotion focus, the greater the degree of endorsement for more work opportunities by colleagues.*

In support of this contention, an initial analysis regressed the measure of more work opportunities on Promotion Pride while controlling for Prevention Pride, as is typical in studies of regulatory focus. This is a test of the degree to which a habitual promotion focus contributed to the inclination of immediate colleagues to endorse one for additional work opportunities. Consistent with both the results from Study Two and with this study's hypothesis, as Promotion Pride increased, colleagues' endorsement for more work opportunities also rose ($\beta = .34$, $p < .036$), while Prevention Pride was unrelated to more work ($\beta = .00$, $p > .05$).[5]

In order to test whether this relationship holds when other factors are considered, a second step added friendship and cognitive ability to the regression analysis. Friendship remained a significant predictor of endorsements for more work opportunities and, in fact, increased substantially in potency. Unlike in Study Two, cognitive ability was not related to ratings for more work opportunities. Consistent with the study hypothesis, Promotion Pride remained a significant predictor of more work opportunities ($\beta = .24$, $p < .041$), though it lost some of its predictive power.

[5] See footnote number 4 above.

Table 4: Study Three —Analysis 1

	B	SE B	β
Step 1			
Constant	8.39	1.94	
Promotion Pride	.14	.07	.34*
Prevention Pride	.00	.08	.00
Step 2			
Constant	-.85	4.18	
Promotion Pride	.10	.05	.24*
Prevention Pride	.01	.06	.01
Friendship	1.19	.20	.67***
Cognitive Ability	.01	.01	.16

R^2 = .11 for Step 1, ΔR^2 = .47 for Step 2 (p <. 001); * p < .05; *** p < .001

The second study hypothesis is: *The relationship between a habitual promotion focus and collegial endorsements for more work opportunities will be mediated by assertive behavior.*

Following Barron and Kenny's (1986) recommendations for demonstrating mediation, the analysis just described provides evidence for the proposed interpersonal effect of a promotion focus on endorsements for more work. In other words, it demonstrates that promotion pride does indeed predict colleagues' endorsements for more work.

In order to demonstrate mediation, two additional analyses are required. First, the assertive behavior scale will be regressed on Promotion Pride. This is a test of whether a promotion orientation predicts the proposed mediator, assertive behaviors. The findings were consistent with the hypothesis that assertive behavior mediates the relationship between promotion and endorsements for more work. As an individuals' Promotion Pride increased, the ratings of individuals received concerning assertive behavior also rose (β = .31, p < .048). Meanwhile, Prevention Pride was unrelated to assertive behavior (β = .00, p > .05).

The final analysis required to demonstrate the proposed mediation involves regressing more work opportunities on both Promotion Pride and the assertive behavior scale. For mediation to be demonstrated, two criteria must be met: (1) the beta value for the assertive behavior scale must be significant and (2) the beta value for Promotion Pride will be smaller in this analysis than in the original regression obtained in support of Hypothesis One.

Table 5: Study Three—Analysis 2

	B	**SE B**	**β**
Step 1			
Constant	-.85	4.18	
Promotion Pride	.10	.05	.24*
Prevention Pride	.01	.06	.01
Friendship	1.19	.20	.67***
Cognitive Ability	.01	.01	.16
Step 2			
Constant	1.75	3.74	
Promotion Pride	.05	.04	.13
Prevention Pride	-.05	.05	-.10
Friendship	.95	.19	.54***
Cognitive Ability	.00	.00	.04
Assertive Behavior	.25	.07	.40**

R^2 = .58 for Step 1 (p <. 001), ΔR^2 = .10 for Step 2 (p <. 001); * p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001

Consistent with the proposed mediation, the introduction of assertive behavior into the equation resulted in the loss of significance of Promotion Pride as a predictor of more work endorsements. In the initial analysis, the beta value of Promotion Pride was .24 and was significant at the .05 level. However, with assertive behavior included in the analysis, the beta value dropped to .13 and was no longer a statistically significant predictor of more work endorsements. Likewise, consistent with the proposed mediation, assertive behavior was a strong predictor of more work opportunities (β = .25, p < .01).

As a check on these findings, one final test was run to assess whether there was any way a habitual promotion orientation might be seen as moderating the relationship between assertive behavior and endorsements for more work. Regressing more work opportunities on assertive behavior yielded a strong and statistically significant relationship ($\beta = .64$, $p < .001$). A second step added Promotion Pride to the analysis and yielded the result that Promotion Pride was not related to work endorsements at a statistically significant level ($\beta = .13$, $p > .05$). Further the strength of the relationship between assertive behavior and work endorsements was almost unchanged ($\beta = .60$, $p < .001$). These results suggest that it is *not* feasible to view a habitual promotion orientation as a moderator of the effects of assertive behavior on endorsements for more work.

Discussion

Study Three replicated the findings from Study Two—that is, a reasonably strong association was found between an inclination toward promotion oriented means and favorable ratings from peers as a worker. The strength of the association dropped ($\beta = .35$ in Study Two to $\beta = .24$ in Study Three). This may be due to a difference in the timing in which the ratings concerning endorsements for more work were gathered. Ratings for Study Two were gathered after the completion of both ten-week classes, while ratings for Study Three were gathered after only the first of the two classes; that is, Study Three involved half the time for impressions to form. A further analysis was conducted that incorporated the data from the samples for both Study Two and Study Three. Consistent with the hypothesis of this project, Promotion Pride remained a significant predictor of more work opportunities ($\beta = .29$, $p < .001$).

The results from Study Three were consistent with the proposed mechanism that promotion oriented means elicit more favorable reactions from others due to their assertive behavioral style. The analysis indicated that when assertive behavior was taken into account, Promotion Pride ceased to be a statistically significant predictor of endorsements for more work.

The findings also offer some insights concerning assertive behavior. First, there are likely multiple factors that contribute to an assertive behavioral style. As this project proposed, a promotion orientation appears to contribute to assertive behavior in a team context. At the same time, the strength of the association between assertive behavior and endorsements for more work is strong enough that there are clearly other contributing factors. Second, assertive behavior appears to be highly consequential for the reactions of coworkers. Across both studies, friendship was the most significant factor in predicting endorsements. Yet assertive behavior was a highly influential factor and almost as significant as friendship.

When considering these findings, it's worth returning to some of the design considerations that inform the study. Three considerations guided the selection of the research context. The first is the view that the most significant effects of individual differences are only achieved over time. Thus a longitudinal context was critical to this project. A period of ten to twenty weeks created room for enough variety and repetition of interaction that individual differences would likely manifest, enough to become recognizable aspects of one's work style. The second design concern stemmed from the fact that we were looking for individual differences to achieve an interpersonal effect, namely, to affect the formation of impressions. For this reason, it was desirable to select a context relatively unconfounded by a network of previously existing relationships, whether grounded in personal contact or in organizational culture. One of the virtues of a classroom setting is that students typically arrive to the work setting (i.e., the class) without significant prior relationships or attitudes concerning their work partners. Finally, a flat organizational environment was sought. It was believed that this would ensure that participant behavior was more a function of personal choice and less conditioned by hierarchical structure. In this way, the research context sought to evoke a microcosm for studying the ways the internal standards of identity would inform behavior.

The features of this microcosm, however useful for this particular project, invite questions about the ways these findings may or may not generalize to other work environments. For instance, the relatively flat and egalitarian feel of the research context may only mirror a small number of organizational situations. As such, this invites questions about whether these findings would hold in the context of organizations with greater hierarchical differentiation. Another feature of the research context is that on the scale of corporate endeavor, it is relatively small. The entire group consisted of only forty people, and teams were mainly organized in groups of eight. Again, this invites questions concerning how these finding would translate to larger and more complex organizations. Third, while there was notable ethnic diversity and good gender balance, in many ways the collection of individuals was relatively homogeneous. In particular, participants were all relatively young, cosmopolitan, and global in their outlook, as well as achievement oriented. Given the fact that the proposed mechanism involves creating a social effect, it's worth considering how a more heterogeneous social environment might affect this dynamic. Finally, the context for this study was distinctly North American. While the participants hailed from many different parts of the world, there was a single cultural frame of reference for the research context. The class is part of business education in a North American university, and the associated values of this context were a significant part of the work environment. With these considerations in mind, it is worth considering how conclusions from such a context transfer to other contexts. This is a question that will be taken up in the conclusion.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION

The aim of this paper has been to extend our understanding of the connection between identity and life-course projects, such as career, by attending to the ways identity informs the pursuit of such projects. Toward this end, regulatory focus theory serves as a way of elaborating how identity-based internal standards can differ from one another. It further describes some of the regulatory consequences of these differences. In so doing, it provides an account of the evaluative and regulatory mechanisms by which identity shapes a key kind of decision related to goal striving, when to favor stasis and when to favor change. Undertakings of any length involve ongoing appraisals of one's current status relative to the overarching goal (see, for instance, Beach 1998). These appraisals can yield determinations that one is in the right place and continuity is needed. Alternatively, they can yield determinations that change is in order. This section of the paper picks up ways this line of thinking might productively be further elaborated.

Career Development

The construct of identity has engendered a very productive line of theorizing and research in the field of career development.

- Donald Super (1953) argued, "Career is the implementation of a self-concept." Central to his theory are the many ways self-defining ascriptions influence career decision making.
- David Tiedeman's theory emphasized the ego processes that describe how identity contents crystallize into an implicit understanding that informs career behavior (Tiedeman and O'Hara 1963).

- Linda Gottfredson (1981) examined the ways in which the contents of key identifications, formed over the course of childhood, inform career behavior. Specifically, identifications related to gender and ability narrow the scope of careers an individual considers.
- John Holland (1997) is best known for his research on career interests. His theory describes six different interests that serve as intrinsic motivations concerning the types of things and activities one is prone to enjoy. The success of his efforts can be seen in the fact that his theory is the basis for the most widely used psychometric test in the United States, the Strong Interest Inventory. Accompanying this theory of individual differences, he postulated that with experience, we tend to recognize our interests, to incorporate our interests as a part of the way we construe ourselves, and thereby achieve greater clarity in personal identity. In Holland's view, it is clarity in the contents of personal identity that supports successful career decision making
- Most recently, Mark Savickas (2002) has argued for a constructivist view of career. He takes Donald Super as a starting point in that key identifications represent touch stones for career choice. Recognizing oneself as gregarious, for instance, will help to delimit the possible decision set for career choice. Savickas, however, proposes a more flexible means than Super by which these identifications can change over time.

This connection between identity and the career literature makes sense when we consider that vocation is typically seen as one of the principle components of identity. Erikson (1968) cited vocation as a life domain that informs personal identity. Researchers using James Marcia's means of operationalizing identity have found that while many life domains—relationships, ideology, *et cetera*—support the development of a coherent identity, vocation is most often the most developed domain (Marcia et al. 1993).

What this lineage showcases is that the connection between identity and career is based on the idea that identity is a critical locus of self-understanding. The contents of identity, the specific identifications and internalized standards that people incorporate into their understanding of themselves, serve as a critical referent for the process of discerning career direction and for making career choices. This is a deeply important understanding of the relationship between identity and the life-course project of a career. At the same time, it misses one of the most important aspects of career-related behavior: the actual process of pursuing a career.

With respect to an important identity project, such as career, the predominant regulatory orientation associated with identity-based internal standards carry an additional set of concerns. Career is likely experienced as a means of self-expression, advancement, and fulfillment within a promotional orientation. This concern with career as forward progress, generally speaking, contributes to greater openness to change. Meanwhile identity-based standards grounded in a prevention orientation seek security and are, generally speaking, better served by continuity. In this way, identity can be seen both as related to the content of career decision and also to the way a career is pursued. The incorporation of regulatory focus helps us understand how the nature of our internal standards inform behavioral inclinations as we pursue a career.

Emerging adulthood represents one life-course context in which the value of this point of view is especially relevant. Emerging adulthood refers to a point in the life course when individuals are moving toward commitment to an identity within a variety of life domains, from work to relationships to personal projects (Arnett 2015.) Exploration has long been seen as a central aspect of the movement toward establishing adult commitments. For instance, Erikson (1968) noted that role experimentation is a key part of forming an identity. Likewise, Marcia

(1966) cited exploration as a foundational process in forming commitments. The importance of exploration is such that it has prompted further elaboration concerning different types of identity-based exploration (Luyckx et al. 2011).

Exploration consists, in large part, of sampling different roles by trying them on for size. Exploration is less a matter of studying from afar and more a matter of inhabiting a new role or position. Within the domain of career, people explore work via different ways—volunteer work, hobbies, internships, school work, and actually holding different jobs. With this in mind, the dynamic described in this paper appears both relevant and consequential. As noted in Study One, the regulatory character of key internal standards can tilt promotion-oriented individuals toward experimenting with more work roles and prevention-oriented individuals toward less. As such, the regulatory character of domain relevant identifications may be seen as an important contributing factor to the manner in which emerging adults explore career.[1]

If the regulatory character of identifications conditions exploration, new questions emerge. In particular, what are the developmental consequences of a style that involves either more or fewer job transitions in one's twenties? Broadly speaking, more thorough exploration is associated with better life-course outcomes, at least in early adulthood (Kroger 2007). However, it may also be the case that more exploration is not always better and that too many job transitions either signal or contribute to less positive outcomes (Krahn, Howard, and Galambos

[1] The connection between identity formation and regulatory focus was explored in an unpublished study that extends beyond the boundaries of this project. Therein it was found that a habitual prevention orientation was strongly associated with a foreclosed identity using Marcia's identity status paradigm (Marcia et al. 1993). Foreclosure describes an identity formation process that involves minimal exploratory behavior prior to the formation of adult commitments. Such a finding is consistent with the findings from Study One.

2015). Is the regulatory character of identity-based standards related to the deficits associated with either too much exploration or too little?[2]

Regulatory Focus Theory

More generally, this project helps to extend our appreciation of the character of regulatory focus theory. Research on regulatory focus has been remarkably successful in defining and describing the effects of different foci on intraindividual aspects of emotional experience, cognitive functioning, and behavioral inclination. (See, for example Scholer and Higgins 2010 and Molden and Higgins 2012.) This project contributes to this realm of theory by turning to examine the interpersonal effects of regulatory focus. In the domain of project-based work, this research suggests that within certain contexts, a promotion focus can have a consequential impact on worker reputation. The meaning of this is significant as the reputational effect is connected to the individual's prospects for future work.

The closer consideration of regulatory focus within the life domain of work also invites at least two additional sets of questions. First, one might consider how regulatory focus affects other key life domains. For instance, how do respective inclinations, either toward stasis or change, affect the domain of interpersonal relationships? Intimacy is a key relational experience throughout the life course. Whether considering relationships grounded in existing family,

[2] It's important to note that while emerging adulthood represents a critical period for commitment formation, the process of managing and updating identity commitments remains a vital concern in later adulthood as well. (See, for example, Sneed and Krauss Whitbourne 2001 and Helson and Soto 2005.) Thus, the dynamic of exploration that this project has examined largely in the context of the twenties could likewise be explored in the thirties, forties, and beyond. The frequency of job changes may taper as people age, as census data seems to indicate. But if, as Erikson (1980) observed, "identify formation neither begins nor ends with adolescence: it is a lifelong development" (122), then life course shifts of identity-based internal standards will likely prompt work related transitions at whatever age.

friendships, or romantic relationships, what kinds of interpersonal effects may be characteristic of either focus? What life course consequences might then result from these effects?

Considering regulatory focus within a specific domain of activity also invites questions concerning the scope of regulatory focus as an individual difference. Many personality-based variables, from efficacy beliefs to identity status, have been found to gain in explanatory value when limited to a specific realm of activity or concern. Might it be the case that habitual regulatory orientations function similarly? If so, we might find a particular regulatory orientation toward relational domains and another related to work. Following this line of thinking moves to considerations of the nature of regulatory focus as an individual difference and, more generally, to the nature of personality itself.

Identity Projects

The question of greatest interest to this author is the way identity represents a focal point for personal agency and development over the life course. Erikson (1968) suggested that identity can be thought of as a form of adaptation to the sociohistorical moment. Identity formation is a process in which individuals reorganize the previously incorporated identifications from childhood. In so doing, they are able to draw on current cultural referents so as to assemble an identity that responds to the trends of their time. This enables youths to move beyond the concerns and preoccupations of their parents, which may be grounded in a set of cultural referents now a generation old, while committing to a way of life that remains grounded in recognizable social types.

Another way of viewing identity, however, is less as adaptation and more as a causal force. From this point of view, identity and its associated projects and strivings become one of the principle mechanisms by which individuals contribute to their own ontogeny. Essentially, the deeply held identifications that constitute the heart of identity come to play a role in important decisions, judgments, and in the actions to which they give rise. These identifications can be observed in the identity projects, or goals, that animate personal strivings. As Brandtstädter (2006) notes "we construe representations of ourselves and of our material, social, and symbolic environments, and these representations guide and motivate activities, which shape and influence our behavior" and ultimately our development (516). The power of identity as a developmental catalyst becomes even greater as youths mature into increasingly adult roles and experience greater discretion in the use of their time and the application of their efforts.

This treatment turns identity from developmental outcome to a dynamic, causal structure. Making the move toward an action perspective on development, given the central place it accords identity-related striving, requires an updated theory of identity. To be relevant for an action perspective on development, a theory of identity must provide some purchase concerning how identity informs judgment and animates goal pursuit. Erikson has been one of the guiding thinkers concerning the formation of identity; yet, his work lacks the specificity and clear operational terms required for an action based account of development. Given the larger project of developing a suitable theory of identity, Higgins's work has much to offer. Regulatory focus draws attention to identity as a mechanism for goal pursuit. It attends to the internal standards employed in self-appraisals and the effects of these appraisals on tactics for goal-directed behavior.

This project has illuminated some of the ways the regulatory character of internal standards guide decisions about when to seek continuity and when to seek change. The project emphasized a weighty, non-routine decision (i.e., when to leave a job). It is an open question as to whether this approach can be applied to smaller, more routine decisions such as whether more work is needed on a project at this moment, or whether things are fine as they currently stand. The project was also conducted within the life-course context of emerging adult, a period of life where change is normative. This raises the question of whether this perspective would prove as useful within a life-course period where change is less normative. Finally, as noted above, it is an open question concerning whether this approach would describe stasis-change decisions in other domains. If it does, what proximal mechanisms might be involved?

Concluding Remarks

This project has sought to demonstrate the relationship between the regulatory character of identity-based internal standards and goal pursuit. This paper first demonstrated that regulatory focus plays a significant role in understanding behavior related to staying put or seeking change within the life domain of work (Study One). It was found that promotion-oriented standards tend to lead to greater frequency of job change while prevention-oriented standards tend to lead to greater job stability. Toward understanding the proximal mechanisms for this dynamic, an interpersonal process was hypothesized. Support for this mechanism was found in that individuals with a stronger inclination toward promotion oriented means were viewed more favorably and were more likely to be positively endorsed as workers (Study Two). Finally, a test of whether more assertive, promotion oriented means appear to mediate the relationship between a promotion orientation and favorable peer endorsements proved positive (Study Three). Collectively, the studies suggest that internal standards can be understood in terms of their regulatory character and that these characterizations prove significant for understanding goal pursuit. This work contributes to our understanding of the ways identity-based internal standards serve not only to delineate the content of individual goals, but to explain the means by which those goals are pursued.

APPENDIX A: FULL PROTOCOL FOR REGULATORY FOCUS STRENGTH MEASURES

Welcome to the Study!

Press SPACEBAR to BEGIN

As a part of this study you will be asked to list:

- attributes that describe how you HOPE TO BE
  (the attributes of the person you would ideally like to be; the attributes of the person you wish or desire to be)

- attributes that describe how you OUGHT TO BE
  (the attributes of the person you should be; the attributes of the person you believe it is your duty or responsibility to be)

Press SPACEBAR to CONTINUE

You will be asked to provide these attributes ONE AT A TIME.

In addition to listing the attributes, you will also be asked to determine:

1. the EXTENT to which YOU WOULD IDEALLY LIKE TO POSSESS each attribute that you hope to be

2. the EXTENT to which YOU FEEL YOU OUGHT TO POSSESS each attribute that you ought to be

3. the EXTENT to which YOU ACTUALLY POSSESS each of the attributes"

Press SPACEBAR to CONTINUE

DO NOT LIST ANY OF THE ATTRIBUTES MORE THAN ONCE IN THIS SESSION.

Please limit the description of each attribute to ONE WORD.

Please list each attribute and answer each extent question AS QUICKLY AND ACCURATELY AS YOU CAN.

If you have any questions, find the experimenter now. Otherwise, press the SPACEBAR to continue.

PRACTICE ROUND

Before we begin, we will first ask you a few questions about you.

Please answer these questions AS QUICKLY AND ACCURATELY AS YOU CAN.

Press SPACEBAR to CONTINUE

What is your first name?

CLICK HERE to go to the NEXT QUESTION

What are the last four digits of your phone number?

CLICK HERE to go to the NEXT QUESTION

What is your favorite color?

CLICK HERE to go to the NEXT QUESTION

For the color you listed, please rate the extent to which you favor this color over other colors.

Use the mouse to click on your answer. (smaller font size)

(Four point rating scale with each number labeled as follows: 1 = SLIGHTLY, 2 = MODERATELY, 3 = A GREAT DEAL, 4 = EXTREMELY)

REMINDER OF INSTRUCTIONS FOR SOLICITATION OF ATTRIBUTES

Thank you!

You will now be asked to list:

- attributes that describe how you HOPE TO BE
  (the attributes of the person you would ideally like to be; the attributes of the person you wish or desire to be)

- attributes that describe how you OUGHT TO BE
  (the attributes of the person you should be; the attributes of the person you believe it is your duty or responsibility to be)

Press SPACEBAR to CONTINUE

Remember!

Please answer these questions AS QUICKLY AND ACCURATELY AS YOU CAN.

Please limit the description of each attribute to ONE WORD.

DO NOT LIST ANY OF THE ATTRIBUTES MORE THAN ONCE IN THIS SESSION.

We will now begin.

Press SPACEBAR to go to the FIRST QUESTION

SOLICITATION for Ideal-Self Attributes

Please list an attribute of the type of person you HOPE TO BE

Do NOT list an attribute you have already listed. (smaller font size)

CLICK HERE to go to the NEXT QUESTION

For the last attribute, rate the extent to which you would IDEALLY LIKE TO possess the attribute

Use the mouse to click on your answer. (smaller font size)

(Four point rating scale with each number labeled as follows: 1 = SLIGHTLY, 2 = MODERATELY, 3 = A GREAT DEAL, 4 = EXTREMELY)

(Upon their click, advance automatically to the next item)

For the last attribute, rate the extent to which you believe you ACTUALLY possess the attribute

Use the mouse to click on your answer. (smaller font size)

(Four point rating scale with each number labeled as follows: 1 = SLIGHTLY, 2 = MODERATELY, 3 = A GREAT DEAL, 4 = EXTREMELY)

(Upon their click, advance automatically to the "transition page" as described below)

SOLICITATION for Ought-Self Attributes

Please list an attribute of the type of person you OUGHT TO BE

Do NOT list an attribute you have already listed. (smaller font size)

CLICK HERE to go to the NEXT QUESTION

For the last attribute, rate the extent to which you believe you OUGHT TO possess the attribute

Use the mouse to click on your answer. (smaller font size)

(Four point rating scale with each number labeled as follows: 1 = SLIGHTLY, 2 = MODERATELY, 3 = A GREAT DEAL, 4 = EXTREMELY)

(Upon their click, advance automatically to the next item)

For the last attribute, rate the extent to which you believe you ACTUALLY possess the attribute

Use the mouse to click on your answer. (smaller font size)

(Four point rating scale with each number labeled as follows: 1 = SLIGHTLY, 2 = MODERATELY, 3 = A GREAT DEAL, 4 = EXTREMELY)

(Upon their click, advance automatically to the "transition page" as described below)

Transition Page

Place your hands on the keyboard and when you are ready, press SPACEBAR to go to the NEXT QUESTION.

APPENDIX B: MEASURE OF REGULATORY PRIDE

Directions: This set of questions asks you HOW FREQUENTLY specific events actually occur or have occurred in your life. Please indicate your answer to each question by circling the appropriate number below it.

1 Compared to most people, are you typically unable to get what you want out of life?

1	2	3	4	5
never or seldom		sometimes		very often

2 Growing up, would you ever "cross the line" by doing things that your parents would not tolerate?

1	2	3	4	5
never or seldom		sometimes		very often

3 How often have you accomplished things that got you "psyched" to work even harder?

1	2	3	4	5
never or seldom		sometimes		very often

4 Did you get on your parents' nerves often when you were growing up?

1	2	3	4	5
never or seldom		sometimes		very often

5 How often did you obey rules and regulations that were established by my parents?

1	2	3	4	5
never true		sometimes true		very often true

6 Growing up, did you ever act in ways that your parents thought were objectionable?

1	2	3	4	5
never or seldom		sometimes		very often

7 Do you often do well at different things that you try?

1	2	3	4	5
never or seldom		sometimes		very often

8 Not being careful enough has gotten me into trouble at times.

1	2	3	4	5
never or seldom		sometimes		very often

9 When it comes to achieving things that are important to me, I find that I don't perform as well as I ideally would like to do.

1	2	3	4	5
never true		sometimes true		very often true

10 I feel like I have made progress toward being successful in my life.

1	2	3	4	5
certainly false				certainly true

11 I have found very few hobbies or activities in my life that capture my interest or motivate me to put effort into them.

1	2	3	4	5
certainly false				certainly true

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