Article

State Authenticity as Fit to Environment: The Implications of Social Identity for Fit, Authenticity, and Self-Segregation

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Abstract
People seek out situations that "fit," but the concept of fit is not well understood. We introduce *State Authenticity as Fit to the Environment* (SAFE), a conceptual framework for understanding how social identities motivate the situations that people approach or avoid. Drawing from but expanding the authenticity literature, we first outline three types of person–environment fit: self-concept fit, goal fit, and social fit. Each type of fit, we argue, facilitates cognitive fluency, motivational fluency, and social fluency that promote state authenticity and drive approach or avoidance behaviors. Using this model, we assert that contexts subtly signal social identities in ways that implicate each type of fit, eliciting state authenticity for advantaged groups but state inauthenticity for disadvantaged groups. Given that people strive to be authentic, these processes cascade down to self-segregation among social groups, reinforcing social inequalities. We conclude by mapping out directions for research on relevant mechanisms and boundary conditions.

People strive to "be themselves." They gravitate toward situations in which they fit and distance away from situations they find alienating. We propose that this enigmatic fit of the person to the environment is a key determinant of state authenticity, the sense of being oneself when valued aspects of one's identity are aligned with, if not validated by, the situation. Our main goal is to explore the role of social identity in facilitating or impeding state authenticity. We will provide a comprehensive account for why individuals across race, class, ethnicity, and gender (among other meaningful social categories) sort themselves into situations that they perceive to be a good fit to their own identity, even when this practice might mean avoiding domains and activities that they cherish and are free to pursue. We argue, in particular, that social identity threat can erode person–environment fit.

In building this argument, we first introduce a model of *State Authenticity as Fit between one's identity and the Environment* (SAFE; Figure 1). The model specifies three distinct ways in which environments can be a good fit to a person: self-concept fit, goal fit, and social fit. We use the term "fit" to refer to a match between external characteristics of the environment and core characteristics of the individual. Each type of fit promotes an internal state of cognitive fluency, motivational fluency, and interpersonal fluency, respectively, that a review of the literature suggests are common precursors to a more gestalt sense of being authentic. State authenticity then is a key predictor of the tendency to approach or avoid that environment.

Having clarified what state authenticity is and when it will be elicited, we consider how a given environment often signals a fit to some social identities more than to others. A contextual misfit is posited to play a key role in predicting a lack of motivation, identification, or engagement in domains where one experiences social identity threat (Murphy & Taylor, 2012; Steele, Spencer, & Aronson, 2002). Although the extant literature on social identity threat seldom measures or considers people's experiences of state authenticity, we argue that it is an important conceptual frame for organizing and clarifying a wide range of phenomena. By integrating work from a social identity threat perspective with the SAFE model, we contribute a clearer language for describing fit and its implications for state authenticity, motivation, and engagement. We also argue that the invisible privilege enjoyed by those who possess majority or advantaged identities derives, in part, from the frequency of state authenticity compared with their counterparts from marginalized or devalued groups. As such, we examine how subtle situational cues to identity can produce differences in the choices people make for themselves, resulting in inequality that is distinct

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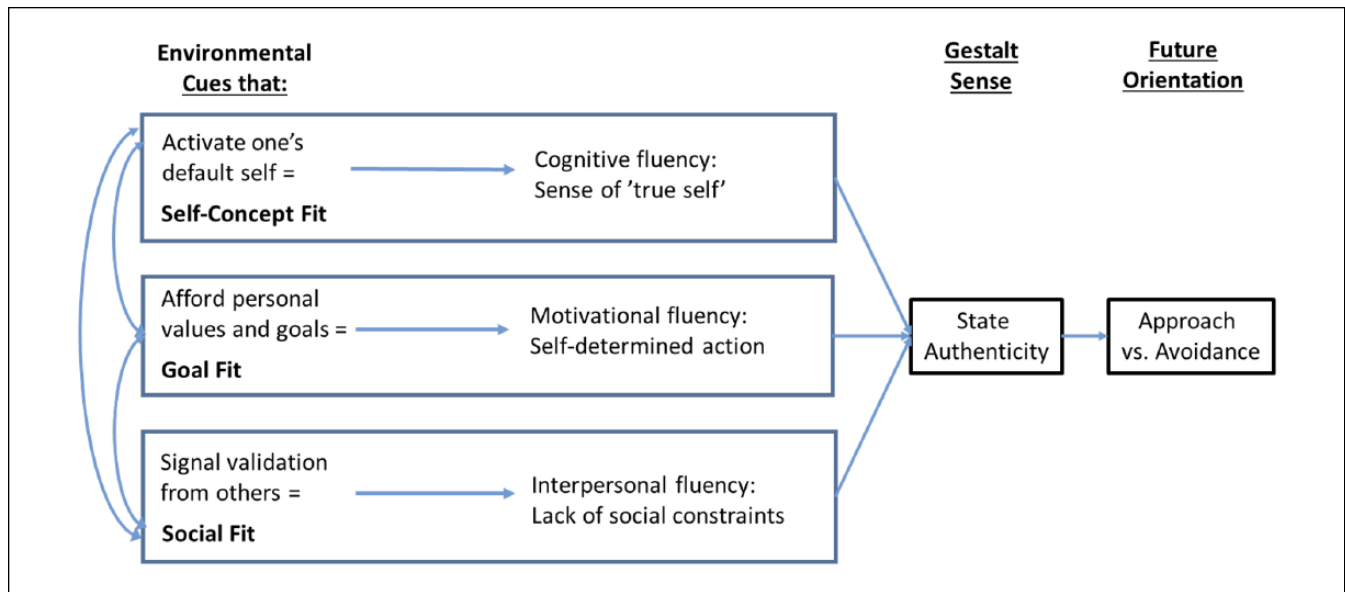
Figure 1. The SAFE Model: State Authenticity as Fit to Environment

from intergroup discrimination or conflict. We conclude by offering directions for future research.

What Is Meant by Authenticity?

Theorists have long been interested in how personality guides situation selection (Mehl, Gosling, & Pennebaker, 2006; Mischel & Shoda, 1995; Snyder & Ickes, 1985). However, a current synthesis of how environments do or do not signal fit to one's identity is needed. We make a starting assumption that people seek out person–environment fit, because it is essential to their authenticity. We identify authenticity as a central concern that motivates people's selection of situations. As we will describe, we also maintain that authenticity is fundamentally about how one's identity fits within a context, which is what makes it a key construct to understand more specific questions about social identity threat. Authenticity has been traditionally studied as a stable individual difference that is positively linked to psychological health (Goldman & Kernis, 2002; Sheldon, Ryan, Rawsthorne, & Ilardi, 1997; A. M. Wood, Linley, Maltby, Baliousis, & Joseph, 2008). Recent research, however, has begun to examine authenticity as a psychological state (Gino, Kouchaki, & Galinsky, 2015; Jongman-Sereno & Leary, 2016; Sedikides, Slabu, Lenton, & Thomaes, 2017), but no conceptual model exists to explicate the types of situations that elicit authenticity. Our first objective is to fill this void.

Trait Versus State Conceptualizations

Humanism maintains that within all individuals lies a deep-seated drive for personal growth. Classic humanistic theories gave self-actualization priority among various human strivings (Maslow, 1943; Rogers, 1961). Nearly 20 years after the construction of his famed pyramid, Maslow set atop its pinnacle an even more elusive striving, that of self-transcendence (Koltko-Rivera, 2006). It is at this level that Maslow thought people were capable of having peak experiences of "being-cognition" where "the person can then become relatively egoless" (p. 117), "leaving behind self-consciousness and self-observation . . . [and becoming] a strong real self" (Maslow, 1999, p. 125). Contemporary personality scholars have sought to articulate further the meaning of authenticity (Kernis & Goldman, 2006). For some researchers (Deci & Ryan, 1985), feeling authentic derives from enacting behaviors that are intrinsically motivated. For others (Fleeson & Wilt, 2010; Sheldon et al., 1997), authenticity is a state one might feel when their behaviors are congruent with their core traits or abilities, or what they see as their "true self" (Strohminger, Knobe, & Newman, 2017). As such, one who is dispositionally authentic feels more frequently that they are the same person or in possession of the same identity, irrespective of situational context or the social roles they enact.

Humanists and personality scholars have explored the concept of authenticity, because it is a subjective perception that is associated with self-esteem, positive affect, and well-being (Baldwin & Landau, 2014; Goldman & Kernis, 2002; A. M. Wood et al., 2008). For example, experiencing high levels of authenticity across diverse contexts and roles predicts better psychological and physical health (Sheldon, Gunz, & Schachtman, 2012; Sheldon et al., 1997; Thomaes, Sedikides, Van den Bos, Hutteman, & Reijntjes, 2017). Similarly, people whose true sense of self is highly accessible report greater meaning in their lives (Schlegel, Hicks, Arndt, & King, 2009; Schlegel, Hicks, King, & Arndt, 2011).

Thus, several decades after the humanistic movement was launched, empirical evidence has provided ample support for Maslow's claim that "being-cognition" promotes psychological adjustment.

Emerging research also points to the psychological benefits of state authenticity (see Sedikides et al., 2017, for a review). In contexts where people feel more authentic, they also experience higher psychological well-being. For example, experimentally induced authenticity directly elevates psychological well-being (Kifer, Heller, Perunovic, & Galinsky, 2013; Thomaes et al., 2017), and adolescents report greater well-being on those days where they feel they are themselves (Thomaes et al., 2017). Feeling authentic might partly be beneficial, because it taps into a positive and moral sense of self (Newman, Bloom, & Knobe, 2014). Indeed, state authenticity is more likely to be experienced for positive behaviors, and inauthentic experiences often make people feel less moral, motivating efforts to reaffirm their self-integrity (Gino et al., 2015; Jongman-Sereno & Leary, 2016). Thus, although research on state authenticity is nascent, there are already indications that state authenticity is beneficial to psychological adjustment.

Despite evidence for its benefits, state authenticity as a phenomenon itself has not been clearly articulated. Much like other abstract psychological states (e.g., love, nostalgia, happiness), people recognize authenticity when they experience it. Yet, from a researcher's standpoint, formulating a theory of its component processes poses a challenge. Thus, the first objective of this article is to offer a framework for defining authenticity, when it occurs, and how it is experienced.

Although there is already a literature on the components of trait authenticity (Kernis & Goldman, 2006; A. M. Wood et al., 2008), these same components might not best capture authenticity as a state (Lenton, Bruder, Slabu, & Sedikides, 2013; Lenton, Slabu, Bruder, & Sedikides, 2014). For example, the Authentic Personality Scale (A. M. Wood et al., 2008) includes three subscales that assess Self-Alienation (feeling out of touch with the true self), Accepting of External Influence (feeling overly influenced by social pressures), and Authentic Living (attributing one's behavior to external forces rather than internal values). This tripartite conceptualization and operationalization of trait authenticity has been influential (Robinson, Lopez, Ramos, & Nartova-Bochaver, 2013; Vess, Schlegel, Hicks, & Arndt, 2014). However, Lenton, Slabu, and Sedikides (2016) make the case, on the basis of experience sampling methodology, that there is greater within-person than between-person variation in authenticity, suggesting the need for empirical and conceptual refinement of authenticity as a state. Just as state anxiety is distinct from trait anxiety or neuroticism, state authenticity is also likely to be a unique phenomenological experience that should be studied independently from trait approaches.

To be able to explicate how social identities facilitate or impede authenticity, we first outline a process model of state authenticity, which we define "as the sense or feeling that one is currently in alignment with one's true or genuine self; that one is being their real self" (Sedikides et al., 2017). State authenticity, we argue, is proximally predicted by cognitive fluency, motivational fluency, and interpersonal fluency that are cued from one's fit to the environment. Thus, whereas dispositional authenticity often represents the fit of one's behavior to stable traits and values, we argue that state authenticity is experienced when aspects of the self and identity are a fit to the surrounding environment.

The SAFE Model: State Authenticity as Fit to the Environment

The SAFE model specifies three distinct ways in which environments can be a fit to the self (Figure 1). Thus, our use of the term "fit" refers specifically to features of the environment that match core aspects of the self. At the broadest level, static cues to the domain can merely bring valued self-aspects to mind (self-concept fit), more specific institutional structures can signal value fit or goal affordances (goal fit), and social cues can convey interpersonal validation and acceptance (social fit). We summarize theory and evidence relative to each of these distinct ways of conceptualizing fit. These three types of person–environment fit lead to experiences of cognitive fluency, motivational fluency, and interpersonal fluency, respectively. These outcomes, in turn, constitute precursors to a gestalt sense of state authenticity. Although we initially consider the three types of person–environment fit as conceptually distinct pathways to state authenticity, we acknowledge that many experiences will involve some blend of different types of fit; as such, we elaborate on the interrelations among these components later in the article.

Understanding the settings in which people feel authentic is important. People have a lay concept of their true self as being moral and good (Strohminger et al., 2017), and thus any motivation to experience the self in this way will prompt a desire to return to those settings that allow one to feel authentic and avoid those that do not (Lenton, Bruder, et al., 2013; Sedikides et al., 2017). Thus, we underscore the point that the fit of a context to one's identity cues approach motivation and engagement. Although state authenticity might have many consequences for social engagement, emotional well-being, and performance, we focus primarily on its role in motivating situational avoidance. We briefly discuss other possible consequences of state authenticity in a later section.

Following the presentation of the SAFE model, we assert that if social identities are a vital source of information about the self and one's fit to different contexts, then those who are members of the cultural default more often enjoy authentic experiences, whereas those who belong to socially devalued groups might often contend with inauthenticity. In this way, we offer an account of why groups so often self-select into

those domains or social contexts that reinforce entrenched stereotypes, no matter how undesirable these are.

Self-Concept Fit: Cuing the Cognitive Component of Authenticity

The first type of fit we consider is the match one might experience between the broad domain that an environment represents and valued aspects of the self. An art lover in an art gallery, a sports fan in a stadium, an intellectual on a college campus, and nearly anyone in the place they call home: All of these are examples of what might cue *self-concept fit*, which we argue occurs when environments automatically activate the most chronically accessible (or default) aspects of the self. Even with no one else around and no specific goal to pursue, simply being in certain spaces can allow one to feel authentic, because these spaces feel familiar. Cognitively, we suggest that this familiarity is a function of the perceptual fluency one experiences when a context activates chronically accessible aspects of the self (including traits, preferences, and memories).

The self is arguably the largest and most complex cognitive structure (Sedikides & Gregg, 2003; Sedikides & Spencer, 2007). Yet, cues in a given situation activate a working self-concept consisting of self-cognitions that are most relevant to the situation (Markus & Wurf, 1987). When specific self-cognitions are activated consistently in a given context, we can refer to them as the default self-concept for that situation (Schmader, Croft, & Whitehead, 2014). Those aspects of identity that are highly accessible and deemed to be an integral part of self-definition become core or central traits (Sedikides, 1993; Sedikides & Green, 2000). Extrapolating from mere exposure effects (Zajonc, 2001), one's unusually frequent exposure to the same working self-concept in the same situation or even across situations is likely to facilitate increasingly fluent processing of information, particularly information about the self.

The cognitive outcome of experiencing self-concept fit, we argue, is this fluency of self-processing and the resulting sense of the self as "true," which is often treated as an essential component of authenticity. We note that, in the perceptual fluency literature, messages that are processed more fluently are not only liked more but are also perceived to be more true (Alter & Oppenheimer, 2009; Reber & Unkelbach, 2010; Reber, Winkielman, & Schwarz, 1998). Thus, people's use of the term "true self" when they feel authentic likely reflects the truth value that they assign when self-relevant information is processed fluently. This analysis of the cognitive implications of self-concept fit aligns well with one of the key precursors of authenticity, what Maslow (1999) referred to as "being cognition." Without any cognitive friction that would trigger conscious self-reflection, experiences of perceptual fluency allow people to feel relatively unaware of themselves. Hence, the expression "I feel like my true self" in a given situation is the verbal label to this state of self-concept fit and the resulting fluency it enables.

Such reasoning aligns with various theories, which assume that cognitive systems gravitate toward maintaining balance. For example, situations can activate aspects of self-definition that are balanced with other cognitions about a relevant group identity and behavioral domain, thereby engendering greater cognitive fluency (Cvencek, Greenwald, & Meltzoff, 2012). From the perspective of cognitive consistency theories, the activation of a self-concept that is at odds with the default self may trigger threat in the form of cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957), cracks to self-integrity (Steele, 1988), lack of self-completion (Wicklund & Gollwitzer, 1982), drops in perceptions of meaning (Heine, Proulx, & Vohs, 2006), or memory deficits (Sedikides, Green, Saunders, Skowronski, & Zengel, 2016). When this inconsistency (which typically coincides with negativity) is introduced into the self-system by contradictory cognitions activated within a context, attempts are made to restore consistency and positive self-integrity by changing relations among concepts. We argue that one source of inauthenticity results from a situationally induced cognitive inconsistency about self-identity, which creates cognitive disfluencies. For example, people who consider themselves very independent are slower to identify independent words as self-descriptive after receiving feedback that they are a suggestible (and thus a dependent) person (Markus, 1977). The inconsistency of this feedback to their positive self-concept delays its processing.

What are the implications for situation selection? Assuming that people seek out meaning (Frankl, 1959/2006; Steger, Kasdan, Sullivan, & Lorentz, 2008), self-consistency (Swann, 2012; Wicklund & Gollwitzer, 1982), and positivity (Alicke & Sedikides, 2009; Sedikides, Gaertner, & Cai, 2015), they can be expected to approach contexts that facilitate processing fluency and avoid those that do not. Indeed, people are more avoidant of situations where processing fluency is low, because they think that such situations will be more unfamiliar, pose greater risks, and be more difficult to navigate (Song & Schwarz, 2008, 2009). Although the effects of information fluency and subtle threats to cognitive structures of meaning have largely been studied in the realm of decision making, cognitive tasks, and perceptual tasks, fluency of information processing is also likely to affect self- and social perception (Claypool, Housley, Hugenberg, Bernstein, & Mackie, 2012). Thus, just as individuals solicit social feedback that is consistent with their existing (and usually positive) self-views (Sedikides & Gregg, 2008; Swann, 2012), they are also likely to prefer and approach situations where cues activate and validate the default self-concept or core aspects of identity. By extension, when a social situation does not activate and validate one's default self-concept for a given domain, the self should feel "less true" and that situation will likely be avoided in the future. For example, lack of fit to a situation incites heightened self-awareness or uncertainty, which can reduce interest in that domain (Johns & Schmader, 2010; Leary, Adams, & Tate, 2006).

Goal Fit: Cuing the Motivational Component of Authenticity

With the above discussion of self-concept fit, we allow that some situations can cue a sense of fit simply by being in the environment. But more often than not, people are not passive; rather, they are actively engaging in some task or pursuing relevant goals (Guillaume et al., 2016). In the SAFE model, *goal fit* refers to the existence of institutional structures or norms in the environment that afford (rather than impede) one's internalized goals. The competitive person working in a competitive company culture, an introverted student working on an individual rather than a group project, a highly communal person volunteering at a soup kitchen: These are all examples of people who might be experiencing goal fit (regardless of the degree to which they also experience other kinds of fit). Drawing from literatures that discuss goal affordance, we note that the motivational effect of goal fit is to feel that one's actions are self-determined, which itself is a common component of feeling authentic.

One key theory of goal affordance is regulatory fit theory (Higgins, 2005), which posits that motivational engagement and interest are heightened in situations where one's orientation toward a task fits the structure of the task. Thus, if a person is motivated to attain positive outcomes, motivation will be strengthened when the task is framed in terms of gains instead of losses. In contrast, a person who is dispositionally or situationally motivated to avoid negative outcomes will be more engaged and motivated by tasks that are framed in terms of loss aversion. Indeed, people find tasks more enjoyable, and are thus more interested in pursuing them, when their motivational state fits the task structure (Higgins, Cesario, Hagiwara, Spiegel, & Pittman, 2010). The experience of regulatory fit also promotes a greater sense of value (Avnet & Higgins, 2003). Interestingly, as with cognitive fluency, regulatory fit leads to the sense that one's judgments are more correct or true (Camacho, Higgins, & Luger, 2003), suggesting that situations that promote goal fit might often promote self-concept fit as well. That said, because situations can cue self-concept fit even when no clear goal is being actively pursued, it is prudent to consider these conceptually distinct.

A second key theory to goal fit is goal congruity theory (Diekman, Steinberg, Brown, Belanger, & Clark, 2017), according to which people are attracted to and more engaged in roles and occupations that they anticipate will afford their values and goals. Although this theory applies to any type of fit between goals and roles (Sidanius, Pratto, Sinclair, & van Laar, 1996), Diekman and her colleagues have zeroed in on the degree to which core values for communion and agency are viewed as being afforded by careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). They find that such careers are often not seen as affording one's communal goals, a belief that predicts lower interest and motivation in these domains (Brown, Thoman, Smith, & Diekman, 2015;

Diekman, Brown, Johnston, & Clark, 2010). Furthermore, experimental manipulation of communal goal affordances from STEM boosts interest in pursuing these careers (Clark, Fuesting, & Diekman, 2016; Diekman, Clark, Johnston, Brown, & Steinberg, 2011).

The motivational fluency that comes from pursuing one's goals in an environment that values or affords them is likely to facilitate a sense that one's actions are self-determined. This sense of self-determination is often described as a central component of feeling authentic. For example, according to research in the tradition of self-determination theory, people feel authentic when the fundamental needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are all met (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Heppner et al., 2008; Thomaes et al., 2017). Of these, autonomy is thought to be the primary predictor of state authenticity. In experience sampling methodology studies, variability in satisfaction of need for autonomy is positively related to state authenticity (Heppner et al., 2008; Thomaes et al., 2017), and, in experimental research, satisfaction of the need for autonomy increases state authenticity (Thomaes et al., 2017). Other investigations suggest that pursuing nearly any activity that can be connected to a valued or self-concordant goal, or experiencing a state of flow, is associated with authenticity (Lenton, Bruder, et al., 2013; Lenton et al., 2016; Sheldon & Elliot, 1998).

What are the implications for situation selection? Theory and research on motivational fit suggest that, when one's motivational state does not fit the structure of the situation, the resulting sense of misfit cues disengagement and situational avoidance (Diekman et al., 2017). For example, in workplace settings, individuals who have a stronger communal orientation avoid settings where they have to interact with colleagues who are not communal (McCarty, Kaiser, & Monteith, 2014). In contrast, in those contexts where self-defining motivations or values fit the motivational structure of an environment, people feel more engaged and are also likely to experience their behavior as more self-determined and authentic. Perceptions of authenticity partly explain why effortful pursuit of goals predicts well-being (Vainio & Daukantaitė, 2016). In fact, when the context satisfies fundamental needs, people are more likely to engage in self-directed goal pursuit, as those situations elicit greater authenticity (Milyavskaya, Nadolny, & Koestner, 2015). Assuming that an authentic state is highly desirable, it will engender preferences to seek out situations that afford one's goals and avoid those that do not.

Social Fit: Cuing the Interpersonal Component of Authenticity

The final type of fit outlined in the SAFE model is social fit, which we define as the degree to which other people in the current environment accept and validate a person's sense of who they are. When people think about what it means to be authentic in a situation, often they refer to aspects of the

social environment and their real or implied acceptance by others. A person reminiscing about old times with a good friend, a job candidate whose talents are observed and appreciated by her interviewer, a depressed person having an empathetic conversation with a therapist: These are all examples of high social fit. A recent cross-national study suggests that the vast majority of situations people encounter offer the opportunity for social interaction (Guillaume et al., 2016). As such, social fit might play a pivotal role in people's everyday experiences. Here we note that an important outcome of social fit is the ability to express oneself without needing to navigate others' expectations or social constraints. Interpersonal fluency, the ability to *be oneself* with others, is a third key component of authenticity.

The need to belong has been identified as a basic human motivation (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). As a social species, forming, maintaining, and monitoring connections to others would have been essential to reproduction and survival (Sedikides & Skowronski, 2003; Sedikides, Skowronski, & Dunbar, 2006). Thus, humans are thought to have evolved mechanisms to detect even the subtlest cues to social acceptance or rejection. In the face of exclusion, even during a simple online game of catch, people experience decreases in self-esteem, belonging, and meaning (Hartgerink, Van Beest, Wicherts, & Williams, 2015; Williams, 2007). Although the presence of explicit social rejection and the absence of clear acceptance are both possible signs of low social fit, we focus here on the latter, given that our interest later will be on how subtle contextual cues can signal devaluation of one's social identity. Specifically, we focus on how environmental cues to social misfit might also elicit state inauthenticity.

How authenticity and inauthenticity are socially constructed in interactions has been more thoroughly addressed in sociology (Vannini & Franzese, 2008; but see also Wallace & Tice, 2012), dating back to work on symbolic interactionism (Cooley, 1902; Mead, 1934; Stryker, 1980). For example, Goffman (1959) suggested that people feel authentic when they are able to enact their true self in their interactions with others as opposed to portraying a different face through impression management strategies. When situations cue a lack of belonging leading people to conform to others' goals, values, or expectations to fit in socially, authenticity will be eroded (Erickson, 1994, 1995). Not surprisingly, those who are higher in a need for social approval also report a reduced sense of authenticity (Franzese, 2007). In social-psychological studies, having secure and supportive relationships with others promotes authenticity (Didonato & Krueger, 2010; Gillath, Sesko, Shaver, & Chun, 2010). Also, people report greater authenticity in the presence of friends ("hanging out") or when they experience high levels of sociality, whereas they report greater inauthenticity in awkward or judgmental social situations or when they feel socially isolated (Lenton, Bruder, et al., 2013).

What are the implications for situation selection? When a cued sense of belonging or social fit elicits authenticity, it heightens approach motivation or engagement. Social fit can come from face-to-face interactions with individuals or groups, or from situations that merely cue the existence of validating relationships or identities. In fact, people experience a boost in motivation in settings where even subtle cues to social fit are present, again suggesting that there is likely to be overlap among the three types of fit and fluency we have outlined. For example, individuals who care more about math persist longer on an unsolvable math problem, if they are told they are part of a puzzle group than if they are merely labeled a puzzle person (Walton, Cohen, Cwir, & Spencer, 2012; see also Cwir, Carr, Walton, & Spencer, 2011). This minimal cue of mere belonging boosts motivational fluency for the task. Presumably subtle signals that one's identity does not fit in the social context similarly decrease motivation from a baseline level—a hypothesis in need of empirical verification.

Although the above-mentioned research on mere belonging has not explicitly measured authenticity, the connection can easily be made. Part of feeling authentic might coincide with the perception that others validate the central aspects of oneself and share one's valued goals; for example, people are more likely to accept social feedback that reinforces the way they see themselves (Swann, 1987). People might often be most motivated to seek out others who validate positive selves (Hepper, Hart, Gregg, & Sedikides, 2011). But, according to self-verification theory, they also will seek social verification for negative characteristics (both about themselves and their social groups) for which they have a high degree of certainty (Gómez, Selye, Huici, & Swann, 2009). The motivation to validate socially central aspects of identity suggests that people could choose situations inhabited by similar others to activate and validate their default self. And as mentioned earlier, self-validating feedback is also processed more quickly, suggesting that social fit can also elicit cognitive fluency (Markus, 1977). Importantly, though, social validation should have independent effects on interpersonal fluency. Approaching situations where one feels social fit (either due to similarity or past experiences of being validated) should eliminate the need for extensive impression management, freeing people from the social constraints that are often predictive of feeling inauthentic (A. M. Wood et al., 2008).

Interrelations Among Different Types of Fit

Our discussion so far has focused on articulating distinctions among these three types of fit and their corresponding correlates to key precursors of state authenticity. Of course, the types of fit can and often do co-occur or relate to one another. If a person's goals and values are misaligned with those of her workplace (low goal fit), she might also find that other people in that setting find it hard to accept her (low social fit). But these processes are not one and the same, and could be investigated independently. Similarly, a conservative graduate student in a liberal academic environment might not experience

subtle or explicit hostility from others (high social fit) but still might sense a mismatch of his values and core interests (low goal fit and self-concept fit). Our reading of some of current literature is that such experiences are often broadly described as a lack of belonging, but we would argue that there is conceptual utility to parsing these different types of misfit and the subjective consequences they might have, and acknowledging that a cost is paid to state authenticity.

Our objective was to draw attention to the need for this conceptual clarity; however, we lack a broad basis of literature to make evidence-based arguments about distinctions among these constructs. Yet, they can be conceptually distinguished. Given that we reserve the term "social fit" to refer to actual or perceived acceptance and validation from others, this type of fit is only relevant when people have or expect to have social interactions. But fit and resultant authenticity need not be limited to social interactions: They can be experienced in asocial goal-driven pursuits. A writer can feel a greater sense of fit and authenticity in a local café that affords her goals for writing (with free wifi), even if that authenticity has nothing to do with social interaction. At the same time, we do not limit authenticity to goal-driven behaviors. One can experience fit and authenticity in environments simply by being in them to the degree that they activate core and valued aspects of the self. A nature lover walking a forest path might feel authentic by simply being in a context that brings a valued aspect of the self to mind. Assuming though that our nature lover is a member of local street gang, who then faces subtle or explicit prejudice from other hikers, this lack of social fit would be at odds with his self-concept fit.

Although conceptually distinguishable, in practice these three types of fit might often be asymmetrically related to one another. That is, a sense of self-concept fit need not include goal fit, but situations that do involve goal-directed behavior will also be likely to activate a default self. We expect a tight connection between self-concept fit and goal fit, but still think that there is a useful distinction to make between them. For example, the Asian student who comes to an American university might feel strong self-concept fit to being on campus and in classes that match her intellectual self-concept, but, if the professor emphasizes oral expression in a way that conflicts with her collectivistic orientation toward quite reflection, she might still experience a lack of goal fit. And if other students and faculty expect her to be a math whiz when in fact she sees her strengths much more on writing, she might also experience a lack of social fit. These thought experiments illustrate that self-concept fit based on broad-based environmental cues can still be at odds with other more specific cues to a lack of goal and social fit.

### Summary of the SAFE Model and Broader Implications

We have argued that state authenticity can be derived from three distinct ways that environments can signal a fit to the person: self-concept fit, goal fit, and social fit. Moreover, these three types of fit have subjective consequences that map onto key precursors to state authenticity. A fit of the self to the domain elicits cognitive fluency of self-relevant cognitions, which in turn increases the sense of the self being true in that situation. A fit of valued goals to situational affordances fuels motivational fluency experienced as self-determined or autonomous action. Finally, when others in the environment provide validation, this promotes a sense of belonging and interpersonal fluency such that one's behavior need not be constrained by others' expectations. In contrast, when the situation cues a sense of self that is not the default (lack of self-concept fit), does not afford valued goals (lack of goal fit), or implies social devaluation (lack of social fit), people will experience greater self-alienation, extrinsic motivation, and social constraints—elements that have long been linked to a sense of inauthenticity when examined dispositionally. But by focusing now on how situational cues can elicit inauthenticity as a state, we aim to develop an improved understanding of the central role that authenticity is likely to play in situational selection and avoidance.

We regard the SAFE model as a top-down, rather than a bottom-up or data-driven, conceptual framework of state authenticity. However, recent state authenticity findings are informative for the model. In work by Lenton et al. (2016), participants reflected on their experiences over each of 14 days, and reported higher levels of authenticity in three types of contexts: (a) when they felt positive affect, (b) when they were engaged in goal-directed pursuits or experienced flow, and (c) when they were with others. Similarly, other studies assessed the common themes of recollections of events in which participants felt most like their true self (Lenton, Bruder, et al., 2013). The four most prevalent themes were having fun, engaging in familiar experiences (i.e., seeking self-concept fit), striving to achieve goals (i.e., seeking goal fit), and being with others (i.e., seeking social fit). Although "fun" does not appear to be isolated in the component structure we have specified, we speculate that this more general positive-affect label is given to experiences that span across two or more of these specific categories or is simply the affective outcome of feeling authentic.

Building out from this perspective on what it means to feel authentic, we consider next the links between social identity and (in)authenticity. Figure 2 provides a schematic that translates how having an advantaged or devalued social identity could lead to systematic group differences in fit, fluency, and subsequently state authenticity, which might then predict the self-segregation of groups into different environments. We begin with a brief discussion of the top pathway in this figure representing the relation between having an advantaged social identity, likelihood of experiencing person–environment fit, and state authenticity, with benefits for situational approach and engagement. Authenticity might be especially enhanced when situations signal a fit to one's social identity. That is, being the default social identity in a
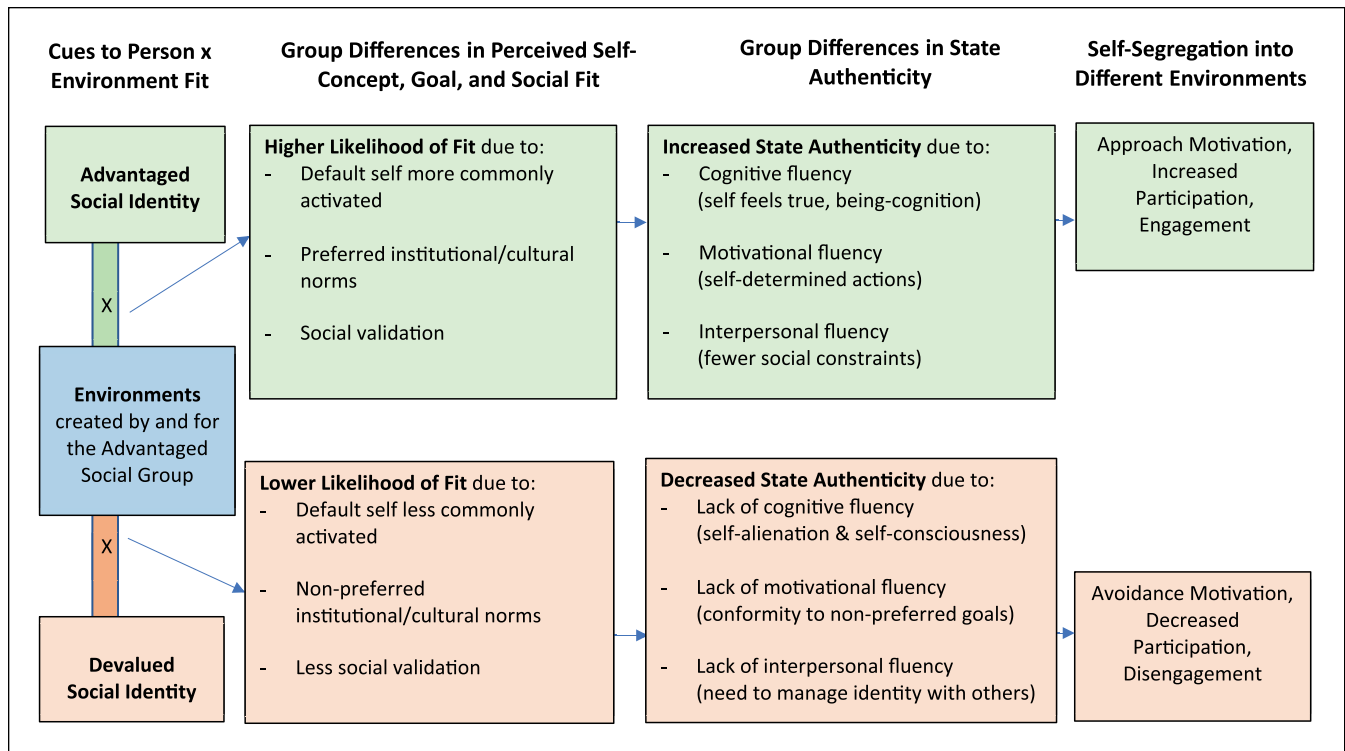
Figure 2. The Implications of Social Identity for Fit, State Authenticity, and Self-Segregation

given environment or culture provides more frequent experiences of cognitive fluency, motivational fluency, and interpersonal fluency. This reasoning forms the basis for our argument that inauthenticity liabilities are associated with membership in a minority or stigmatized group.

We then turn to a more detailed consideration of our core proposal that membership in a socially devalued group can often induce state inauthenticity, via these pathways of misfit, that impels one to self-select out of stigmatizing domains or potentially incur costs to emotional, social, and physical well-being. Although anyone can experience state inauthenticity in contexts that are a poor fit to their identity, those who are societally marginalized face these experiences more frequently, because their minority status is likely to be socially devalued across a broad array of domains (Crocker, Major, & Steele, 1998). The threat of being devalued due to one's membership in a stigmatized social group has been termed *social identity threat* (Steele et al., 2002).

The process of avoiding domains of inauthenticity might seem similar to devaluing those domains, one of the three coping strategies explored by Crocker and Major (1989) in their pioneering work on resilience in the face of societal stigmatization. However, we focus on understanding people's behavioral avoidance of domains that cue inauthenticity rather than a psychological devaluation of those domains or lower performance as specified in research on stereotype threat (Steele & Aronson, 1995). Indeed, research on devaluation often finds

little evidence that members of lower status groups in society systematically devalue domains in which their group underperforms, even when disparities in participation clearly exist (Schmader, Major, Eccleston, & McCoy, 2001; Schmader, Major, & Gramzow, 2001). We maintain that an understanding of state authenticity can offer an account for why groups self-segregate even in the absence of explicit prejudice or discrimination or differences in domain valuation.

At the other end of the spectrum, our analysis aims to explain the added benefits supplied by inhabiting situations that fit a valued social identity (Walton & Cohen, 2011). Drop a random individual into a random context, and there will always be some period of discovering if and how that situation is a fit to oneself. However, if one's social identity is valued in that context, self-concept fit, goal fit, and social fit will be cued more readily, thus facilitating cognitive fluency, motivational engagement, and interpersonal connection. The hidden benefits of being the cultural default involve boosts to motivation and engagement that we think stem from an enduring state authenticity—benefits that one can come to take for granted. Although studies on social identity threat and boosts seldom if ever measure state authenticity, our review will highlight the parallels between the three types of fit that we argue elicit state authenticity (as outlined in the SAFE model) and the literature on these topics. Our aim is to inspire research guided by the presumed vital role of state authenticity.

How Having an Advantaged Social Identity Affords Authenticity

We consider first the experience of those who are socially advantaged. Groups who are advantaged (in terms of numerical/social status, wealth, power, or positive stereotypes) in a certain context are often regarded as the cognitive default. For example, in the United States, people implicitly associate the concept of American with the racial category White, leading American-born ethnic minorities to be perceived as less American than White Europeans (Devos & Banaji, 2005; Rydell, Hamilton, & Devos, 2010). Similar notions of men as the default imply that a gender-unspecified target is often assumed to be male (Merritt & Kok, 1995) and the traits that are valued in a given culture are assumed to be possessed by men more than women (Cuddy et al., 2015). Taken together, those who are advantaged in any given context become the cognitive and social default, and the characteristics possessed by these high-status groups are presumed to be linked to success (Schmader, Major, Eccleston, & McCoy, 2001).

There are obvious political and material benefits to being the default or advantaged group in a given domain. We submit that there are cognitive, social, and motivational benefits as well. First, self-concept fit and processing fluency are enhanced in those situations where one's group is the default. Contexts contain identity-relevant information (Murphy & Taylor, 2012; Purdie-Vaughns, Steele, Davies, Ditlmann, & Crosby, 2008) that can automatically activate corresponding aspects of self-definition (Kawakami, Dovidio, & Dijksterhuis, 2003; McConnell, 2011). Thus, when situations and environments are constructed or created with a certain kind of person as the default, the context itself is more likely to activate automatically this person's most accessible and valued self-aspects in ways that are cognitively fluent and thus feel "true." Consequently, those who enjoy the advantaged status in a domain have relatively less need to be aware of the self, freeing up resources for "being-cognition" rather than self-perceiving cognition. This account might explain why situations that subtly prime one's membership in a positively stereotyped group can, on average, boost cognitive performance, perhaps by increasing processing fluency and a physiological state of challenge (Vick, Seery, Blascovich, & Weisbuch, 2008; Walton & Cohen, 2003).

In addition, there are motivational benefits to holding the default or advantaged status in a given domain. Situations that cue one's default identity should be more likely to afford valued goals and strengthen self-determination, leading to more efficient information processing and task engagement. Although status and power are distinct concepts (Henrich & Gil-White, 2001), they are often correlated. In hierarchical societies, those groups who have higher status also have greater power over others and greater control over resources. As a result, for those who are advantaged, contextual constraints on behavior can sometimes be weaker than for those with lower status in the same setting (Keltner, Gruenfeld, & Anderson, 2003). Under weak situational constraints, factors endogenous to the person will influence behavior more strongly (Mischel, 1977). As such, individuals who enjoy default status in a context will be more likely to experience their behavior as self-determined compared with those for whom the environment poses a threat to their social identity. For example, having power and being in control are inherently related constructs (Inesi, Botti, Dubois, Rucker, & Galinsky, 2011), and individuals who have power (even when induced situationally) experience greater self-consistency across contexts that relates to higher authenticity (Kraus, Chen, & Keltner, 2001; Sherman, Nave, & Funder, 2012). Based on such evidence, we argue that this enhanced sense of self-determined behavior among those with higher status or power also engenders greater state authenticity.

Finally, there are social benefits to default status. Although the physical environment can contain identity information (e.g., a building that has no wheelchair access for the disabled, a lack of unisex bathrooms for transgender individuals), the social environment is a signal of belonging as well. The mere presence of others similar to a person signals a tacit acceptance of this person's identity (Purdie-Vaughns et al., 2008). Styles of social interaction and communication might have the same effect. For example, some management specialists recommend using sports metaphors to promote how employees can work together as a team (Dew, 2008), but gender scholars have argued that the use of such language may be subtly inclusive to men more than to women (Gregory, 2016). If metaphor is an important way in which people communicate and understand abstract ideas (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Landau, Meier, & Keefer, 2010), then the use of metaphoric language that is more familiar to one group of people than to others should facilitate quicker and more fluid understanding as well as signal social acceptance. Indeed, conversational analyses reveal that task performance is higher among partners who readily mimic each other's style of conversation (Gonzales, Hancock, & Pennebaker, 2010).

These examples suggest that, when environments are inhabited by a homogeneous group, the context physically and socially evolves in ways that can facilitate the most fluid and automatic forms of behavior for that group. Although this effect might increase enjoyment and consensus (Keown, 1983; Postmes, Haslam, & Swaab, 2005), homogeneity of perspective can impede effective problem-solving and creativity (Galinsky et al., 2015; Greitemeyer, Schulz-Hardt, Brodbeck, & Frey, 2006; Nevicka, Ten Velden, De Hoogh, & Van Vianen, 2011). Moreover, contemporary research from a dual processing perspective suggests that many actions are cued automatically as a result of learned scripts. Whether it be making difficult decisions (Strick et al., 2011), enacting goal sequences (Gollwitzer & Bargh, 2005), or performing well-rehearsed skills (Beilock & Carr, 2005), behavior is optimal when people are conscious only of the task in front of them and not of themselves as the actors of those tasks (Babbitt & Sommers, 2011; Leary et al., 2006).

By enjoying a default status, one's identity does not need to be monitored, evaluated, managed, or verified to the same degree as if one has lower or devalued status (Frable, Platt, & Hoey, 1998). As a consequence, cognitive processing is more fluid, behavior is more self-determined, and acceptance can be comfortably assumed. Although research on stereotype lift has not assessed directly state authenticity, there is evidence that manipulating power raises authenticity (Kraus et al., 2011) and improves performance (Cuddy et al., 2015). We turn now to reasons why state authenticity would be reduced due to social identity threat.

How Having a Devalued Social Identity Erodes Authenticity

Social identity threat is experienced in situations that signal subtly that a person, by virtue of their membership in a stigmatized group, is socially devalued (Steele et al., 2002). Social identity threat is an expansion of stereotype threat, defined as the explicit or implicit concern that one might confirm a negative stereotype about one's group in one's own eyes or the eyes of another (Steele & Aronson, 1995). The vast majority of studies on stereotype threat have addressed the consequences of this experience for performance, in an effort to shed light onto persistent group differences in academic achievement by women and ethnic minorities. Several reviews of this literature have been reported (Inzlicht & Schmader, 2012; Spencer, Logel, & Davies, 2016; Steele, 2010), including some that focus on different forms of threat (Shapiro & Neuberg, 2007), mechanisms that underlie performance decrements (Schmader et al., 2008), and interventions for offsetting threat (Walton & Spencer, 2009; Walton, Spencer, & Erman, 2013).

The original conceptualization of social identity threat (Steele, 1997; Steele & Aronson, 1995) asserted that situations signaling one's devalued status might over time cue disidentification, that is, a disconnection of the self and motivational withdrawal from stereotype-relevant domains. Surprisingly, limited attention has been directed to systematically reviewing or providing a conceptual framework for how social identity threat motivates situation selection. Recent investigations include measures of belonging (Purdie-Vaughns et al., 2008; Walton et al., 2007), but this term has several meanings. For example, studies that measure belonging include items that refer to "fit" (Mendoza-Denton, Downey, Purdie, Davis, & Pietrzak, 2002), feeling "at home" (Yeager et al., 2016), and/or being "accepted" by others (Good, Rattan, & Dweck, 2012). We suggest that the term "state authenticity" captures more accurately what people are striving for in these experiences. The term "belonging" might be best reserved for its original focus on social acceptance (Baumeister & Leary, 1995), which in the SAFE model is one path toward feeling authentic. Thus, we aim to refine the current interest in belonging and fit by providing a more

conceptual analysis of what fit can mean that is informed by the emerging literature on state authenticity and the SAFE model. We propose that situations of social identity threat spark psychological disengagement and behavioral avoidance of a domain, because they cue state inauthenticity. In particular, we argue that brief encounters with negative stereotypes or cues to devaluation can impact each of the three components of identity fit that are integral to the experience of authenticity. We examine, then, three distinct pathways by which social identity threat impairs authenticity: by reducing self-concept fit, goal fit, and social fit.

Reducing Self-Concept Fit

One of the ways that we believe social identity threat cues state inauthenticity is by reducing the likelihood of self-concept fit. Whereas the experience of authenticity assumes lack of self-awareness when the self-concept fits the context, situations of social identity threat often trigger hyper-awareness of the self, one's social identity, and one's performance with respect to stereotyped expectations. For example, situations that cue one's membership in marginal or devalued groups are likely to trigger more conscious and narrow attention focused on the self and the social identity in question (McGuire, McGuire, Child, & Fujioka, 1978; McGuire & Padawer-Singer, 1976). Former First Lady, Michelle Obama, summarized her experience as a Black woman on a largely White Princeton University campus by stating,

> My experiences at Princeton have made me far more aware of my "blackness" than ever before . . . Regardless of the circumstances under which I interact with whites at Princeton, it often seems as if, to them, I will always be black first and a student second. (Bond, 2012, p. 43)

Researchers have argued that part of what consumes cognitive resources of those who experience social identity threat is the uncertainty over whether one will perform well (consistent with one's internal goals) or will perform poorly (consistent with an activated stereotype) (Johns & Schmader, 2010; Rydell, McConnell, & Beilock, 2009; Schmader et al., 2014). In an attempt to resolve this uncertainty, people who experience social identity threat engage in more conscious monitoring of their behavior (Schmader & Beilock, 2012; Schmader et al., 2008), become more attentive to errors (Forbes, Schmader, & Allen, 2008), and engage in more meta-cognitive processing of their performance (Johns & Schmader, 2010; Schmader, Forbes, Zhang, & Mendes, 2009). An older adult concerned with being seen as senile might become extremely vigilant and self-conscious when struggling to remember a name during conversation. When people experience social identity threat, they also exhibit greater physiological arousal along with increased attention to and memory for incidental information in the surrounding context (Frable et al., 1998; Murphy, Steele, & Gross, 2007).

If they perform well in spite of their stereotyped status, they become especially schematic for that domain (W. von Hippel, Hawkins, & Schooler, 2001).

This suite of effects provides evidence that situations of social identity threat cue a more conscious and deliberative focus on themselves and their behavior within that context. A recent set of studies also suggests that threat might prompt a more deliberate process of self-definition. Schmader et al. (2014) measured domain schematicity among women both before and after inducing stereotype threat about women's math incompetence. If the situation of taking a math test activates a true or default sense of self in math, then a strong positive correlation in math-schematicity measured at baseline and just prior to taking the test should emerge. This positive correlation was present for men and for women not exposed to stereotype threat. For them, math-schematicity measured just prior to a math test was positively predicted by math-schematicity measured at baseline. However, women exposed to stereotype threat showed no correlation between these two assessments of the same construct. Instead, a more explicit measure of self-identification with math was a better predictor of their activated self-concept under threat. These findings suggest that women's activated sense of self was a function of deliberative assessment of who they explicitly were or wanted to be rather than a default or implicit activation of their typical self-associations in that context.

If people in situations of social identity threat do engage in more conscious processes of self-definition, this should necessarily disrupt the selfless being-cognition and processing fluency effects discussed earlier. Such situations of active and deliberate self-definition should feel less true and authentic. In indirect support for this idea, socially stigmatized individuals are more immune to the effects of stereotype threat cues on performance to the degree that they are well practiced at monitoring the self and adjusting their behavior to the social context (Inzlicht, Aronson, Good, & McKay, 2006). In contrast, those who enjoy a default status in a domain will be less conscious of the self and more likely to attain a state of flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975). Semantic structures of self-knowledge might be primed automatically, consistently across contexts, and largely outside of conscious awareness, resulting in authenticity and the sense that the self is true. For example, successful and confident individuals (i.e., leaders) are less likely to use first-person pronouns (Pennebaker, 2011), suggesting that those who are advantaged in a situation become unaware of "I."

For individuals who are susceptible to social identity threat, in contrast, we might expect to observe increased effort at self-definition. For example, individuals under threat may seek out more social comparison information, or more varied social comparisons, as a means to assess their social position in the context (Gibbons, Persson Benbow, & Gerrard, 1994; Sedikides, 2012; Taylor & Lobel, 1989). There is some evidence that those who are socially stigmatized engage in more downward social comparisons to enhance their emotional well-being (Finlay, Dinos, & Lyons, 2001; Finlay & Lyons, 2000; Siegel, 1995), a strategy that can be psychologically beneficial among college students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds (Johnson, Richeson, & Finkel, 2011). However, there is also evidence that, in performance contexts, those primed to think about negative stereotypes engage in more social comparisons with both the disadvantaged ingroup and the advantaged outgroup (Van Loo, Boucher, Rydell, & Rydell, 2013; C. von Hippel, Issa, Ma, & Stokes, 2011), indicating a more general inclination to define oneself through social comparison.

In addition, individuals under threat might be more strongly influenced by self-perception and reflected appraisal processes. A sense of self might become more contingent on the outcome of current performance or others' evaluation of one's abilities. For example, stereotype-vulnerable Black undergraduates experience greater day-to-day fluctuations in self-efficacy compared with other students (Aronson & Inzlicht, 2004). Also, self-evaluations become more contingent on performance among those who are stigmatized, with negative predictive consequences for health (Pachankis & Hatzenbuehler, 2013). This greater contingency of self-evaluation can have implications for motivation and a broader sense of belonging (Walton & Cohen, 2003). Specifically, individuals can be disproportionately influenced by feedback under stereotype threat, manifesting a boost in engagement after positive feedback and a decrease in engagement after negative feedback (Leitner, Jones, & Hehman, 2013).

In summary, whereas people who enjoy the default status within a social context can more easily be themselves, those who are socially devalued have to work actively to construct a sense of self in that context. The literature we reviewed includes a host of groups devalued on the basis of ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, or sexual orientation. We predict that this cognitive friction to self-definition will be experienced as less authentic, given that it is at odds with being-cognition and the cognitive fluency that stems from having one's default self-concept fit the situation at hand.

Reducing Goal Fit

As outlined in the SAFE model, state authenticity can also be derived from engaging in goal-directed actions that align with internalized values. Whenever one's behavior is coerced, feels forced, or is at odds with one's own sense of self, authenticity should be diminished. For those who are socially stigmatized, such occurrences become more probable, as one is more likely to confront environments where one's lower power or devalued status is made salient.

There are at least two ways that goal fit is often disrupted for those whose groups are socially devalued. One is when members of low-status groups feel compelled to reject the values and preferences of their own group in a move to deflect prejudice and discrimination. The woman who feels that she has to dress like a tomboy to be taken seriously in

her math classes makes a strategic decision that will enable her to fit in, but that might make her feel less authentic (Pronin, Steele, & Ross, 2004). The second way in which goal fit is disrupted is when stigmatized individuals realize that their current situationally induced behavior, albeit stereotypical of their devalued group, is inconsistent with their prior behavior. The first-generation college student who finds himself feeling anxious and underperforming in his university classes due to stereotype threat might find that his reaction is incongruent with the strong academic self-concept he had in high school—a feeling that could reduce his authenticity in the current situation.

Either process can imply that identity threatening contexts engender goal-directed behavior that deviates from one's authentic self, as the low-status group member attempts to maneuver around the gravitational pull of their devalued identity. However, as a member of the default or advantaged group, behavior is less likely to feel consistently contingent on these activated identities, because there will likely be an alignment between one's internalized values or goals and societally approved goal-related pursuits. We consider each of these routes to reduced goal fit among low-status members in more detail below.

Value mismatches. Trying to navigate smoothly through a world where one's group is socially devalued often requires a degree of strategic assimilation to how success is defined by the high-status group. For example, Black students, who risk being labeled as "acting White" if they strive to excel academically, distance themselves from stereotypically Black activities when in a context where these activities are socially devalued (Steele & Aronson, 1995; W. von Hippel et al., 2005). In contrast, those who wish to preserve their Black identity and retain a sense of social fit with same race peers might find themselves needing to disidentify with academics. In fact, in his earliest writing on the topic, Steele (1992) describes this latter phenomenon in terms of authenticity: "Pressure to make [academic disidentification] a group norm can evolve quickly and become fierce. Defectors are called 'oreos' or 'incognegroes.' One's identity as an authentic black is held hostage, made incompatible with school identification" (p. 75). In the context of the SAFE model, we would describe students who find themselves in this predicament as caught between wanting social fit from their ingroup and goal fit with their own academic motivations.

As discussed earlier, goal congruity theory asserts that individuals seek out roles and occupations that afford important goals and avoid those that do not (Diekman et al., 2017). The issue, however, is that stereotypes themselves often constrain which goals and values different groups endorse. Given its outgrowth from social role theory, goal congruity theory has most often be applied to understand gender segregation in occupational interests. For example, women more than men are socialized to internalize communal values (Croft, Schmader, & Block, 2015; Diekman & Eagly, 2008;

Polhmann, 2001). But these stereotypically constrained values can then lead to gender differences in occupational interest (Evans & Diekman, 2009). Indeed, people with more traditional gender role attitudes even experience greater positive affect when merely imagining social situations that fit their gender schemas (W. Wood, Christensen, Hebl, & Rothgerber, 1997). Thus, the tendency for women to express greater interest in activities involving people rather than things (Lippa, 1998, 2010) may be interpreted as evidence that individuals self-select into vocations that afford their underlying goals (Diekman et al., 2017). Research inspired by goal congruity theory has indicated that women's disinterest in STEM careers is partly a function of them having relatively stronger communal goals than do men—Goals that women do not think will be afforded by a career in science (Diekman, Brown, Johnston, & Clark, 2010). However, when science and engineering are framed as a means of helping others through collaborative efforts, women's (and often men's) interest in these fields increases (Belanger, Diekman, & Steinberg, 2017; Diekman et al., 2011).

Although these studies have not measured state authenticity or been extended to consider other devalued groups, such results are consistent with the broader thesis that socially devalued minority groups might often be more likely than the advantaged majority to experience a lack of fit between their goals and the situation. For example, first-generation college students who come from a more interdependent (e.g., East Asian) cultural background experience greater stress in an academic context when primed with a more independent norm of achievement typical of American universities (Stephens, Fryberg, Markus, Johnson, & Covarrubias, 2012; Stephens, Townsend, Markus, & Phillips, 2012). The mismatch between the norms of one's minority group and those of the larger majority often creates a tension. As a result, members of socially devalued groups might try to reject or bifurcate aspects of their self-concept in an effort to assimilate (Huynh, Nguyen, & Benet-Martinez, 2011; Pronin et al., 2004; C. von Hippel, Walsh, & Zouroudis, 2011), but, if doing so feels inauthentic, they might eventually exit those domains in favor of a context that affords greater goal fit.

Conformity to ingroup stereotypes. Another more subtle way that being socially devalued might increase inauthenticity due to lack of goal fit is when contexts compel performance or behavior consistent with negative stereotypes about one's group. Three distinct phenomena—stereotype threat, self-fulfilling prophecy, and social tuning—suggest that goal fit might be decreased in situations where negative stereotypes are activated. Whereas these past literatures have been largely concerned with documenting effects on behavior and performance, we review this work to argue that such phenomenon should also trigger state inauthenticity.

The large literature on stereotype threat has documented how contextual reminders of being negatively stereotyped can impair performance (Inzlicht & Schmader, 2012; Steele

& Aronson, 1995) and obscure one's latent potential (Walton & Spencer, 2009). A key assumption is that stereotype threat and the performance impairment it can produce are felt most acutely by those who are highly identified with the relevant domain (Steele, 1997). In addition, the experience of stereotype threat often cues increased effort at the task alongside impaired attentional ability (Forbes & Schmader, 2010; Jamieson & Harkins, 2007; Mrazek et al., 2011). Put otherwise, situations of stereotype threat can cause individuals motivated to perform well to do the opposite, that is, to perform below their potential and at odds with their goals.

Somewhat distinct from stereotype threat is the phenomenon of self-fulfilling prophecy (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968; Rosenthal & Rubin, 1978). Such experiences occur when stereotypes or performance expectancies activated in perceivers' minds bias their treatment of stigmatized targets in ways that confirm and draw out behaviors consistent with those stereotypes. Self-fulfilling prophecies operate in interracial interactions (Word, Zanna, & Cooper, 1974) and cross-sex interactions in male-dominated domains (Logel et al., 2009; Zanna & Pack, 1975). For example, male engineering students with more implicitly sexist beliefs are more dominant and flirtatious while discussing an engineering-related topic with a female peer (Logel et al., 2009). After chatting with these more implicitly sexist men (compared with men who did not exhibit sexist biases), women perform more poorly on a subsequent engineering test. Thus, women exhibit relatively poor performance cued by the behavior of their partner, and at odds with their stated motivation to become engineers.

A third related phenomenon is social tuning, where people subtly adjust their behavior toward the presumed expectancies or attitudes of others (Sedikides, 1990; Sinclair, Lowery, Hardin, & Colangelo, 2005). When one's social identity is salient, people activate a working self-concept that is more stereotypic of their group and at times describe themselves in more stereotype consistent ways both in terms of implicit associations and explicit self-perceptions (Kawakami et al., 2012; Lun, Sinclair, & Cogburn, 2009). Indeed, individuals are most likely to tune their self-concept to fit their social expectancies when the prospective interactant is a close other or when they are motivated to get along with him or her (Sinclair, Huntsinger, Skorinko, & Hardin, 2005; Sinclair & Lun, 2006). Such automatic cuing of a more stereotypical self can prepare people for a smooth interaction (Cesario, Plaks, & Higgins, 2006) but may also prompt behavior that feels a poor fit to one's true goals.

People are often unaware that others' beliefs, behaviors, or stereotypes might be shaping their own performance or actions. For example, subtle, if not implicit, triggers of stereotype threat can sometimes create more powerful performance decrements than explicit ones (Kray, Thompson, & Galinsky, 2001; Nguyen & Ryan, 2008), in spite (if not because) of people being strongly motivated to excel (L. C. Davies, Conner, Sedikides, & Hutter, 2016; Jamieson &

Harkins, 2007). If one is so motivated to do well, why is one performing poorly? In such instances, a person's behavior must be at odds with internal goals and intrinsic sources of motivation. We claim that this discrepancy between one's internal motivation to do well and actual behavior can be experienced as lack of authenticity that eventually motivates avoidance of circumstances where this goal mismatch is likely.

Reducing Social Fit

The third component of authenticity, as per the SAFE model, refers to the social validation and belonging that one experiences when others share, support, or corroborate one's self-concept and goals. By definition, the experience of social identity threat involves inferred social devaluation or a threat to belonging (Steele et al., 2002; Walton & Cohen, 2007). Researchers have adopted an identity contingencies perspective (an outgrowth of social identity theory) to test how cues to identity threat induce lowered belonging (Murphy & Taylor, 2012). Findings indicate that those who are socially stigmatized experience greater threats to belonging in domains where they are underrepresented (Walton & Cohen, 2007).

Moreover, expectations of social misfit within a domain cue avoidance of that domain. Consistent with this notion, women exhibit greater anxiety, and less interest in science and technology settings, to the extent situational cues signal a lack of social fit with others in that setting (Cheryan, Plaut, Davies, & Steele, 2009; Murphy et al., 2007). Evidence suggests that expectations about domains can signal low belonging before one even enters them, fueling self-segregation. For example, overweight women and older adults prefer to exercise alongside similar others rather than with young and/or in-shape exercisers who are more positively stereotyped in these settings (Dunlop & Beauchamp, 2011a, 2011b; Dunlop & Schmader, 2014). What remains less clear about these types of findings is whether they stem from a fear of being negatively evaluated by the outgroup in the setting (lack of social fit) or by broader assumptions about whether the self is a good match to the domain (lack of self-concept fit). As per the SAFE model, a threat to belonging could mean either of these.

From the perspective of belonging threat, interventions designed to shore up fit by normalizing the experience of stress and uncertainty are effective, as they increase motivation and performance even over the long term. For example, Black students show improvements in college grades up to 3 years after they read testimonials designed to validate their experience of stress during the transition to university (Walton & Cohen, 2007, 2011). Also, salient role models can signal a sense of belonging in domains where one is otherwise negatively stereotyped (Cheryan, Drury, & Vichayapai, 2013; Dasgupta, 2011; Dennehy & Dasgupta, 2017). Interestingly, whether or not the role model is an ingroup

member might be less important than the degree to which they are a person to whom one feels similar (Cheryan et al., 2013; Cheryan, Siy, Vichayapai, Drury, & Kim, 2011) or who signals acceptance and respect (Hall, Schmader, Aday, & Croft, 2017; Hall, Schmader, & Croft, 2015). From our perspective, the first is an intervention that shores up self-concept fit, but the second shores up social fit. Either can elicit greater interest in or engagement with that domain.

Social devaluation essentially means that one lacks prestige or status within a social hierarchy (Anderson, Hildreth, & Howland, 2015; Mahadevan, Gregg, Sedikides, & De Waal-Andrews, 2016). Because the motive to belong is fundamental (Baumeister & Leary, 1995), those with lower status might be cognizant that their acceptance within the broader social group is precarious. As a result, those with lower status seek to adhere to the behavioral norms dictated by those who have status or prestige (Henrich & Gil-White, 2001). Thus, when people find themselves navigating those domains where they are socially devalued, those who are marginalized become more vigilant to potential environmental threats and more mindful that their choices are often constrained by others' expectations (Frable et al., 1998; Kaiser, Vick, & Major, 2006; Murphy et al., 2007).

Although social identity theorists have not sought to understand the broader implication of attending to context, an emerging literature examining the social cognitive consequences of lower socioeconomic status is relevant. Having lower social status precipitates the development of a more contextual view of the world and greater acknowledgment of external forces on behavior (Kraus, Piff, Mendoza-Denton, Rheinschmidt, & Keltner, 2012). In particular, compared with those from upper-class backgrounds, those who are raised in lower-class backgrounds (a) are more sensitive to threats in the environment, (b) feel a reduced sense of personal control, (c) have a more communal and less agentic orientation, (d) have higher empathic accuracy of others' feelings, (e) are more attuned to situational explanations of behavior, and (f) prefer a contextualized explanation of social class.

Socioeconomic status is but one type of attribute (albeit a powerful one) that can signal one's devalued status in a context. Drawing from social identity, expectation states, and status value theories (Berger, Cohen, & Zelditch, 1972; Ridgeway, 1991; Steele et al., 2002), we include under the SAFE model umbrella many other attributes and characteristics related to gender, race, age, disability, immigration, or international student experience (and not only these) that can also be socially devalued in a given context. Thus, by extension, some of the same social cognitive effects found for those who are low in socioeconomic status might also be obtained for other groups who are situationally induced or chronically exposed to lack of access to resources.

One outcome of this process involves compensatory behaviors designed to manage or offset negative biases that others might have about oneself or one's group. Those who

are overweight become friendlier and more outgoing when they believe that others have visual access to them and might judge them negatively due to their weight (Miller, Rothblum, Felicio, & Brand, 1995). In addition, racial minorities behave in a more socially engaging manner during interactions with a White partner in an effort to put their partner at ease (Shelton, Richeson, & Salvatore, 2005). This strategy is effective for their partner who does indeed develop a more favorable impression of their minority peer, but leaves the minority student feeling more inauthentic in the interaction. Furthermore, if members of devalued groups more commonly find that they need to suppress their emotional experiences especially during intergroup interactions, this practice of hiding one's true feelings will predict reduced authenticity and poorer social functioning (English, John, Srivastava, & Gross, 2012).

Discerning one's position in a social hierarchy is an adaptive feature of social cognition (Mahadevan et al., 2016; Sedikides & Skowronski, 1997). Even subtle cues to lacking status or being stigmatized should engage the same attentiveness to contextual constraints. For example, even those of relatively middle-class backgrounds can feel socially devalued in a context populated by more upper-class individuals (Johnson et al., 2011). Yet, whereas attending to context can facilitate successful navigation of a world where one is marginalized, it might make it more difficult to feel that one's actions and behaviors are intrinsically derived. Thus, a focus on externalized sources of behavior in an effort to gain social fit is a third avenue by which the experience of social identity threat may lead to state inauthenticity.

Self-Segregation Due to Search for Authenticity or Avoidance of Inauthenticity

An important outcome of the processes we describe is people's preferences to self-segregate into environments that cue and affirm their identities. There is considerable evidence from disparate literatures that people self-segregate by identity, even after taking into account the role of explicit intergroup biases. Some of these findings come from studies of geographical mobility. For example, economists and sociologists have sought to understand the degree to which housing segregation by race and ethnicity is at least in part the result of self-selection (cf. DeFina, 2007; Ihlanfeldt & Scafidi, 2002). Personality scholars have also noted that people relocate to live near others with similar personality traits or ideological views (Motyl, 2016; Rentfrow, Gosling, & Potter, 2008).

Other evidence for identity-based self-segregation can be found in studies of occupational choice. For example, occupational self-segregation by gender is often cited as a key contributor to the gender wage gap (Peterson & Morgan, 1995). In particular, researchers have argued that the largest contributor to the underrepresentation of women in sciences is that young girls do not consider (or are not encouraged to

consider) such careers in the first place, despite all children receiving exposure to math and sciences in their early schooling (Ceci, Ginther, Kah, & Williams, 2014; Cheryan, Ziegler, Montoya, & Jiang, 2017). More generally, researchers note that people seek out occupations that fit their ideological beliefs (Diekman et al., 2017; Sidanius et al., 1996).

A third way in which self-segregation is studied is in terms of friendship formation. In diverse schools, students form friendship networks that are segregated by race, ethnicity, immigrant status, or social class (Bonilla-Silva & Embrick, 2007; Musterd & Ostendorf, 1998; Titzmann & Silbereisen, 2009; Villalpando, 2003). Moreover, such patterns of self-segregation are stronger among minority students, who are more conscious of their ethnic identity (Mollica, Gray, & Trevino, 2003). Even among pre-school-aged children, those with hearing impairments seek out the company of other hearing impaired rather than normal hearing children (Levy-Shiff & Hoffman, 1985).

These three types of evidence for self-segregation roughly map onto our three types of person–environment fit: moving to places that fit the self (self-concept fit), pursuing careers that afford goals (goal fit), and seeking friends that are likely to accept or validate who one is (social fit). In spite of this diverse evidence for identity-based self-segregation, we could find no systematic review to interrogate the psychological processes that might be involved in this ubiquitous phenomenon. Such preferences are, in part, connected to general trends to solicit and affiliate with similar others as a means of maintaining a positive social identity (Brewer, 1979; Ellemers & Haslam, 2011) or associate with others who verify existing self-views (Swann, 2002, 2012). But we would argue that patterns of self-segregation extend beyond homophily to include the self-selection of people into nonsocial environments, activities, and roles that reinforce and reflect their identities. A broader understanding of the phenomenon is thus warranted, and here our goal is merely to lay the groundwork for understanding the role of authenticity and identity fit in patterns of self-segregation.

First, we recognize that there will be other psychological motivations in addition to state authenticity that contribute to self-segregation. A portion of these will even be specific to some groups and not others. Some ethnic minorities live near close others in an effort to preserve and share their cultural traditions. New immigrants congregate together, as it is easier to communicate in their native tongue. Women might cluster together in situations to avoid sexual advances from men. Gays and lesbians will seek to socialize with one another in part to find a same-sex partner. And across a variety of groups, especially those that are socially devalued, the tendency to gravitate toward spaces inhabited by similar others might simply offer very real protection from social biases and discrimination from the outgroup.

Setting aside all of these unique and shared effects, we posit that a strong predictor of self-segregation is also likely to be the motivation to feel authentic in domains and environments that activate the default self, afford valued goals, or validate who one is. The broader social implication is that, even in the absence of overt discrimination, those who frequently find themselves as socially devalued in society will be inclined to avoid domains where they experience inauthenticity—a shift that can precipitate self-segregation and perpetuate social inequality. There is no easy way to put such an idea to empirical test. However, computer simulations might be revealing. In a classic economic simulation, even a mild preference to be around similar others (e.g., leaving a context if less than a third of people there are like you) produces segregation in a bounded world (Hart & Case, 2016; Schelling, 1971). Preferences to be in settings that afford valued goals or activate a default sense of self might have similar effects to the degree that those goals and self-attributes are to some degree shared within an identity group. For example, if women are more likely than men to want to feel they are helping others, then that preference for goal fit can lead to some amount of self-segregation of women into helping professions (Diekman et al., 2016).

Although tendencies toward self-segregation can be strong, other competing goals, motives, and experiences do promote integration. At highly ethnically diverse universities, for example, integration not only becomes the norm but is often highly valued (Cowan, 2005). In online dating, people show a strong initial preference to initiate an interaction with potential partners of the same race or ethnicity, but those who have been messaged by a cross-group partner become more likely to initiate an interracial interaction in the future (Lewis, 2013). Such evidence suggests that, although people might assume they would face rejection or feel inauthentic in interactions with outgroup members, experience to the contrary will allay their concerns and promote greater integration. Again, simulations are informative in that introducing even a small preference for diversity (e.g., exiting a context if more than 90% of people in it are like you) greatly enhances integration (Hart & Case, 2016). Relatedly, experimental research demonstrates that encouraging individuals to embrace the value of diversity reduces intergroup anxiety in cross-group interactions (Plant & Devine, 2008; Richeson & Nussbaum, 2004).

We acknowledge that the full articulation of social-psychological antecedents of self-segregation falls outside the scope of this article. Nevertheless, these patterns of situational self-selection are important to highlight, as they are likely to underlie those times when members of socially devalued groups preemptively leave or choose not to enter various environments due to the lack of authenticity they have experienced or expect to experience in them. In some respects, our focus on situation selection is akin to Steele's (1992, 1997) notion of disidentification. In stereotype threat theory, Steele articulated how subtle signs of exclusion in the academic context cannot only impair Black students' performance, they can also lead to disidentification, exit, and

avoidance of academic pursuits. In the two decades since these ideas were first proposed, much more attention has been directed at the effects of stigmatization on performance, but relatively little ink has been spilt to understand the effects on motivation to avoid or leave the domain. For example, a PsycINFO abstract search on "stereotype threat" and "performance" yielded 643 hits in April 2017 (32 with more than 100 citations), but only 98 hits for "stereotype threat" and "motivation or disidentification" (only two with more than 100 citations, and one of these is Steele, 1997). Clearly, there is a need for a greater understanding of the process by which social contexts motivate individuals to approach or avoid identity-relevant environments.

Although we have chosen to limit our analysis to the relevance of the SAFE model for patterns of self-segregation that might perpetuate inequalities, we acknowledge that other outcomes will be important to investigate in future work. These might include implications for academic and professional performance, psychological and physical health and well-being, and intergroup relationships. For two reasons, we have opted against providing a full summary of these other possible downstream consequences. First, in many cases, extensive reviews of the link between social stigma and these outcomes have been written by other authors: for performance (Kalokerinos, von Hippel, & Hannes, 2014; Schmader, Johns, & Forbes, 2008; Shapiro & Neuberg, 2007; Smith, 2004; Spencer et al., 2016), for health and well-being (Major & O'Brien, 2005; Major & Schmader, 2017; Smart Richman & Leary, 2009), and for intergroup relations (Shelton, Richeson, & Vorauer, 2006).

Second, because we posit that people will primarily seek to avoid state inauthenticity unless other motivations override this tendency, the predicted effects on self-segregation will have later costs and benefits to these other outcomes depending on a complex array of dynamic processes. On one hand, remaining in a setting that cues inauthenticity might lead to lower performance, higher stress, and strained intergroup interactions; however, remaining in that setting might also allow for greater upward mobility for the individual, role models, and access to positions of status and power where change can be fomented. A woman in engineering who persists in her chosen domain despite frequently experiencing aspects of misfit might experience ongoing psychological challenges to her psychological health, even if she does manage to achieve higher status and success.

On the other hand, leaving a setting that cues inauthenticity might allow members of devalued groups to experience compensatory performance success in another domain, reduced stress, and improved interactions with more similar others in familiar (although perhaps stereotyped) settings; however, because one remains in a segregated setting, inequalities persist over time. For example, the international student who elects only to socialize and study with students from his home culture might feel more authentic in these contexts and thereby protect his psychological well-being and even physical health.

But this pattern of self-segregation might also inhibit his academic progress, language proficiency, and sense of social integration in his host culture. Finally, patterns of self-segregation both by the advantaged and disadvantaged groups will likely undermine efforts toward greater integration and intergroup understanding to the degree that group members lack positive contact with one another.

In sum, we argue that state authenticity has a proximal effect on an immediate decision to approach or avoid the situation, either in the present or the future. More distal effects on performance, well-being, and relationships are likely to be dependent on the decision to select or avoid a situation and will often involve a complex set of trade-offs.

Promising Research Directions

We offer the SAFE model as a new framework for understanding the different ways in which people can experience a lack of fit to their environment, with consequences for state authenticity and self-segregation. Making these distinctions is not simply an exercise in semantic housekeeping (though that alone can be a useful goal); it also provides a framework for making more theoretically nuanced predictions. Below we discuss several fruitful research paths.

Testing Key Assumptions of the SAFE Model

We have described a model which assumes that authenticity is a core construct influenced by various types of fit and a potent motivator of situation selection, especially as impacted by social identity threat and advantage. We hope that the SAFE model inspires greater conceptual clarification and empirical extensions to research both on state authenticity and social identity threat. With respect to the former literature, researchers would need to develop ways for assessing these three distinct types of fit and then testing whether each fit contributes unique predictive utility to (gestalt) state authenticity. Furthermore, a key assumption of our model is that state authenticity is a primary motivator of why people self-select into some situations and not others. However, research is needed to put this proposition to a critical test against plausible alternatives, such as positive affect. Empirically, it might be difficult to isolate experiences that distinguish feeling authentic from feeling good, although theoretically this should be possible as authenticity is specific to identity-relevant experiences. Although we suspect that most if not all instances of feeling authentic are experienced positively, not all positive experiences should elicit authenticity. This disconnect provides an opportunity to distinguish whether situation selection is indeed more strongly predicted by authentic experiences.

We also hope that the SAFE model guides new research on social identity threat. Admittedly, very little of the research we reviewed from a social identity threat perspective includes measures of authenticity. However, if we are correct that

authenticity is the key subjective consequence of experiencing person–environment fit and a key predictor of group-based self-segregation, then state authenticity might be essential to understanding of how identity shapes motivation. Some scholars and social critics have challenged the idea that stereotype-based biases exist by claiming instead that self-segregation is a matter of choice (Ceci et al., 2014). We do not think that decisions to choose some situations, environments, and roles over others are made purely on basis of decontextualized interests and preferences. Rather, people seek out those situations that offer the best fit to their identity and, as we have argued, afford authenticity. Research is needed to demonstrate that situational inductions of social identity threat reduce one's sense of being authentic in ways that can lead to self-segregation. More importantly, efforts to foster authenticity for devalued and marginalized groups might offer unique solutions for promoting greater integration and inclusion. Secured by a sense of authenticity, such groups may be more likely to approach situations, environments, or roles that otherwise cue social identity threat.

In addition, one would do well to distinguish empirically between ways in which social stereotypes erode one's fit to a domain, with implication for situation selection (or exit). In recent research, the SAFE model has been used to test competing hypotheses for why female engineers with an implicit Engineering = Male association report lower organizational commitment to (and intention to leave) their company. One reason could be that a masculinized association with engineering leads women to assume they are deficient in the characteristics that are well-matched to the organization (lack of self-concept fit). Alternatively, women with a more masculinized view of engineering could anticipate that the organization and the people in it will not accept or support them fully (lack of social fit). Results reveal more evidence for the former than the latter (Block, Hall, Schmader, Inness, & Croft, 2017). Women with these implicit gender associations do not anticipate greater social identity threat, but they do report lower fit of their own abilities and values to the organization, which in turn mediates their decreased organizational commitment. These distinctions are important given that different kinds of misfit would require different types of intervention. This is just one recent example where research is already validating the utility of making these distinctions among different types of fit and measuring them accordingly.

On the Role of Culture

Another promising research path is to consider the role of culture. On one hand, if autonomy is a precursor to state authenticity (Heppner et al., 2008; Thomaes et al., 2017), then one might imagine that authenticity will be more prevalent in Western or individualistic cultures (presumed to foster independent self-construal) than in Eastern or collectivistic cultures (presumed to foster interdependent self-construal)

(Markus & Kitayama, 1991, 2010; but see Vignoles et al., 2016, for a more nuanced view on the cultural self). That is, if the Eastern self is embedded in relationships, then authenticity is a product of Western ideals, and the psychological health benefits of authenticity will be confined to the West. Furthermore, if members of Eastern cultures are more likely to engage in dialectical thinking (Peng & Nisbett, 1999) and to be less threatened by self-inconsistency (Suh, 2002), then mismatches between the self and context will put less of a dent in authenticity and will be less damaging to psychological health for those with a more interdependent self. Some evidence coheres with this viewpoint. Members of Eastern cultures (e.g., Chinese, Indians, Singaporeans) report lower trait authenticity than Americans, in part due to cultural differences in self-construal and thinking style (Slabu, Lenton, Sedikides, & Bruder, 2014). Also, self-inconsistency is a weaker predictor of authenticity (and well-being) even among Western participants with a more interdependent than an independent self-construal (Cross, Gore, & Morris, 2003, Study 3).

On the other hand, we would not equate autonomy with individualism or independence (Ryan, 1993; Ryan & Deci, 2006). In fact, choosing to be involved in committed, interdependent relationship is itself an autonomous decision. Thus, autonomy and its psychological health benefits could be viewed as universal. For example, autonomy is positively related to well-being in both individualistic and collectivist cultures (Chirkov & Ryan, 2001; Chirkov, Ryan, Kim, & Kaplan, 2003; Deci et al., 2001). Furthermore, trait authenticity predicts high well-being among Japanese participants regardless of their level of independent or interdependent self-construal (Ito & Kodama, 2007). Other findings indicate that the processes underlying state authenticity generalize across cultures. In both Eastern and Western cultures, sustained emotional suppression predicts poorer social functioning as mediated by inauthenticity (English & John, 2013). Moreover, the phenomenology of state authenticity is similar across cultures (Slabu et al., 2014). When recalling a time in which they felt most like themselves (vs. least like themselves), participants in both Eastern and Western cultures report more positive affect, less negative affect, greater satisfaction of core needs, higher self-esteem, and reduced public self-consciousness. Only extreme experiences of feeling authentic or inauthentic are reportedly more likely among Westerners than Easterners (Lenton et al., 2014).

We suspect that authenticity is a universal phenomenon, albeit one that might sometimes be influenced systematically by cultural norms and values. Due to the introjection of sociocultural norms (W. Wood et al., 1997), people will feel authentic when situations allow them to behave in accordance with their internalized cultural imperatives (Sherman et al., 2012), similar to the notion of goal fit described in the SAFE model. Evidence aligns with this reasoning. For example, participants judge a member of their own cultural group as higher on authenticity when his or her style of

expression matches cultural standards. That is, expressing only one's likes while withholding dislikes is seen as authentic for a Chinese person (by other Chinese), whereas expressing both likes and dislikes is seen as authentic for a German (by other Germans) (Kokkoris & Kühnen, 2014). More to the point, although role-inconsistency is positively linked to inauthenticity across cultures, role-inconsistency is defined differently across cultures. Among East Asian Americans, the self is expected to be stable within a role, and so people feel inauthentic when their behavior is inconsistent within a given relational context (English & Chen, 2007). In contrast, European Americans expect to have a stable sense of self across roles, and thus feel inauthentic when they do not (English & Chen, 2007).

Assuming the generality of authenticity, or the processes that produce it, several questions pertinent to the SAFE model will need to be addressed. Do self-concept fit, goal fit, and social fit manifest themselves similarly or differently across cultures? Do these three types of fit have culturally distinct consequences in terms of decision making or goal pursuit? For example, goal fit may prompt less harmonization of one's goals with those of the family environment in Western (than Eastern) cultures, where the family appears to be less central to one's identity (Cai, Sedikides, & Jiang, 2013). Finally, are there differences in how cultural majorities, in general, cope with minority self-segregation and the social inequality? For example, perhaps majorities in cultures that place a high premium on authenticity are more likely to tolerate social inequality by perceiving patterns of self-segregation as a matter of choice.

Applications to Living and Learning in a Diverse Context

The issues we explored in this article are relevant to globalization, as people learn, live, and work in increasingly diverse environments. And yet when contexts assume a cultural default, those who do not fit that mold are prone to marginalization. Consider the experience faced by immigrants to a host culture and more specifically international students at university. In 2012, there were 5 times as many students studying abroad as there were in 1975 (Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development [OECD], 2014). The United States and the United Kingdom are the two most popular destinations for international study, and a substantial proportion of students to these and other Western countries travel there from various countries (e.g., East and South Asia, Central and South America, Africa). The result is a complex web of intergroup experiences often confounded by cultural differences. Although any traveler to a foreign land often struggles to feel a sense of fit in a novel cultural context (Church, 1982), the ability to adjust quickly is exacerbated by language barriers and implicit or explicit cultural norms (Titzmann & Silbereisen, 2009).

Some of the processes we outlined here are likely to apply to international students, and to immigrants or sojourners more broadly. A dearth of familiar contextual cues or reminders of one's own cultural background might make it difficult to access easily a default sense of self. Evidence that those who move away from their homeland show greater preference for the familiar (e.g., music, shopping malls, housing developments; Oishi, Miao, Koo, Kisling, & Ratliff, 2012) might point to such challenges associated with the relative lack of self-concept fit. However, as adjustment encourages the development of a bicultural identity, such individuals might find that contextual cues can flexibly activate aspects of the self that pertain either to the home or the host culture (Sui, Zhu, & Chiu, 2007). Coping mechanisms, such as nostalgia, may also temporarily offset the psychological adversity associated with mismatches in self-concept, goal, or social fit (Sedikides, Wildschut, Routledge, Arndt, & Zhou, 2009). Adjustment (i.e., psychological well-being or self-esteem) might also be facilitated to the degree that one's own personality (i.e., extraversion, promotion focus, locomotive regulation) matches the broader personality dimensions that are normative in the culture (Fulmer et al., 2010).

In addition, international students might face cultural mismatches between the behavioral norms of their home culture and that of their host culture. In academic or work settings, different performance expectancies in a new cultural context might feel a poor fit to one's cultural background. For example, Asian American students perform better in contexts that encourage quiet reflection as a means to solve challenging problems as opposed to a Western norm of thinking out loud, which benefits the performance of Americans (Kim, 2002). As international students strive to adapt to their host cultural standards, they may experience a gap between their true identity and their enacted identity, a gap that is predictive of depressive symptoms (Jung, Hecht, & Wadsworth, 2007).

Finally, international students, especially those from more distant cultural backgrounds, may face serious detriments to social belonging. International students from non-Western countries on American campuses can be subjected to both perceived symbolic threats to American culture and realistic threats associated with higher grading curves and lower job prospects (Charles-Toussaint & Crowson, 2010; Cho, 2009; Lee & Rice, 2007). Anticipating or reacting to this rejection, international students are confronted with a dilemma. One option would be to intensify efforts to assimilate. These efforts, though, may culminate in the adoption of a social identity that fails to match their true identity and exacts other psychological costs (e.g., depression; Jung et al., 2007). Another option would be to identify more strongly with fellow international students, protecting and maintaining psychological well-being. In this case, however, they may defer integration into the broader culture (Schmitt, Spears, & Branscombe, 2003) as well as prolong language learning (Titzmann & Silbereisen, 2009), thus trading short-term

authenticity and adjustment for longer term misfits and vulnerability.

Identity Safety and Authenticity

Social identity threat theory maintains that people from socially devalued groups can feel a sense of belonging and perform up to their potential in contexts that are identity safe. We will attempt to articulate, on the basis of the SAFE model, what identity safety might mean. First, identity safety assumes a careful consideration of the contextual cues in the environment that foster state inauthenticity in terms of lack of self-concept fit. Universities and businesses, for example, increasingly attempt to convey a diverse environment by using gender neutral language, publicizing images that suggest demographic diversity, and issuing missions with diversity as the central element. Although such messages can have the downside of making discrimination seem less likely or problematic (Kaiser et al., 2013), diversity messaging does signify a more inclusive environment (Derks, Van Laar, & Ellemers, 2007; Purdie-Vaughns et al., 2008). For example, women and minorities are more interested in joining companies or academic contexts that signal inclusion (Murphy et al., 2007; Purdie-Vaughns et al., 2008). In addition, women experience less social identity threat in more gender inclusive companies, in part, because their interactions with male colleagues engender feelings of acceptance (Hall, Schmader, Aday, Inness, & Croft, 2017). More research is needed on whether anticipated authenticity (as opposed to simply lower expectation of discrimination) explains why identity safety makes these environments more attractive and positive.

Second, leaders might consider ways in which domains and tasks are structured to promote greater goal fit for a diverse body of individuals. Just as careers in science and politics become more attractive to women when described in terms of communal goals (Diekman et al., 2011; Schneider, Holman, Diekman, & McAndrew, 2016), other disciplines might attract a more inclusive pool of interested candidates by providing diverse role models or by broadening people's preconceived notions of those fields. For example, computer science appears to be a better fit for women when they encounter computer scientists who do not conform to the narrow, masculine stereotype of programmers (Cheryan et al., 2009; Cheryan et al., 2017). Furthermore, gender and ethnic underrepresentation across academia is predicted by prevailing assumptions about the role of brilliance in predicting success (Leslie, Cimpian, Meyer, & Freeland, 2015). Interventions that stress the malleability of intelligence, underscore incremental processes of achievement, or emphasize the importance of students from different backgrounds do narrow performance gaps in education and result in better well-being for devalued students (Alter, Aronson, Darley, Rodriguez, & Ruble, 2010; Good, Aronson, & Inzlicht, 2003;

Stephens, Townsend, Hamedani, Destin, & Manzo, 2015). The SAFE model suggests that active efforts to reemphasize the role of teachable skills over innate brilliance might allow women and minorities feel more authentic when working in these areas as well.

Finally, interventions can also be targeted to boost authenticity by fostering greater social fit for devalued groups. Although it is often most difficult to control the social environment and especially the implicit biases that govern interactions between diverse groups, there is a large literature pointing to the benefits of structured intergroup contact for reducing perceivers' biases toward those who are marginalized (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006; Toosi, Babbitt, Ambady, & Sommers, 2012). These contact experiences are particularly effective when they succeed in establishing friendships across group boundaries (K. Davies, Tropp, Aron, Pettigrew, & Wright, 2011). Interestingly, contact experiences are relatively ineffective in reducing the biases and mistrust held by minority groups for members of the majority (Tropp & Pettigrew, 2005). For example, as already mentioned, minority college students may emphasize commonalities with majority college students in an effort to forge friendships. These efforts to find common ground often succeed in reducing the racial biases held by their White peers, but make racial minority students feel inauthentic because they require them to suppress any discussion of their ethnicity and the stress it might cause them at school (Shelton et al., 2005).

There is tentative support for the idea that intergroup contact might reduce social identity threat (Abrams, Eller, & Bryant, 2006; Crisp & Abrams, 2008). However, a task for intergroup contact research is to consider what elements of the contact situation need to be changed to benefit the experience of minority members and increase their authenticity. One downside to facilitating positive intergroup contact is that, as attitudes toward the outgroup improve, the motivation to detect and engage in collective action to combat lingering forms of bias is reduced (Becker & Tausch, 2015; Tausch, Saguy, & Bryson, 2015). A promising approach entails motivating members of the advantaged group to become allies for social change and to seek out diverse experiences (Becker, Wright, Lubensky, & Zhou, 2013; Richeson & Nussbaum, 2004). By motivating members of advantaged groups to embrace diversity (and perhaps their own experiences with inauthenticity during intergroup encounters), members of devalued groups might feel empowered to express what they consider to be their true self and thus feel more authentic during these interactions. For example, open dialogues about race might feel uncomfortable even to egalitarian-minded White Americans to the extent that they worry about saying something offensive, but might still allow racial minorities to feel that they can openly and authentically express ways in which their racial identity defines their experience.

Challenges and Controversies

Up until now, we have discussed only how leaders and administrators may structure situations to foster safe environments that facilitate state authenticity for members of socially devalued groups. Importantly, members of these groups also play an active part in advocating for social change for the promotion of greater identity safety. For example, the increasing awareness of the role of implicit bias (as distinct from institutionalized discrimination) in creating subtle barriers for socially devalued groups seems to have aligned with growing demands among students and parents for more inclusive environments in schools and universities. And yet, when university administrators remind students of how their actions or expressions can signal exclusion to others, they have been accused of stifling students' freedom of speech (Lukianoff & Haidt, 2015). Thus, there is a growing challenge to create identity safe environments for traditionally devalued groups, while also promoting constructive dialogue around controversial topics where disagreements can occur (Galinsky et al., 2015).

When considering these controversies in light of the SAFE model, it would be interesting to examine whether members of the traditionally advantaged group feel inauthentic in environments that explicitly favor diversity. Research suggests, for example, that diversity is not understood by Whites to include them (Jansen, Otten, & Van der Zee, 2015; Stevens, Plaut, & Sanchez-Burks, 2008). Thus, explicit cues to value diversity can feel exclusionary to the White majority, inducing a sense of threat and concern with facing discrimination (Dover, Major, & Kaiser, 2016). However, we can imagine different possible outcomes. Perhaps those who are most accustomed to feeling authentic in their surroundings would be most sensitive to a sudden change from this default status. For example, when put in the equivalent situation of being passed over for a job by a different ethnicity manager who instead hires someone of his own ethnicity, Whites more than Latinos view this as discrimination (Major et al., 2002). There is also substantial evidence that Whites feel more self-conscious and constrained during their interactions with racial minorities and worry about being liked (Bergsieker, Shelton, & Richeson, 2010; Shelton et al., 2006), effects that would be consistent with belongingness threats that can fuel inauthenticity. However, it is also possible one's advantaged status affords an entitlement and assumption of collective efficacy to assume that the environment should be changed to fit to the self, rather than the self being inauthentic within a broader context. Teasing apart these distinctions could be a ripe area for future research.

Beliefs about the legitimacy of status differences between groups, the stability of those status relations, and collective efficacy to impact change are all likely to play a role in determining when marginalized individuals act collectively to change institutions to promote greater identity safety. These ideas converge, of course, with a large literature on collective action that is outside the scope of this article (but see Klandermans, 1997; Van Zomeren, Postmes, & Spears, 2008). Here, we merely intend to make the connection to that literature and point out the need for more investigation into how members of socially devalued groups engage the cooperation of advantaged groups in an effort to diversify contexts, thus maximizing authenticity for everyone. Such efforts involve a shift from seeing power struggles in zero-sum terms to appreciating the benefits for all that diversity can yield.

Exceptions to the Rule

We have proposed that people pursue situations that make them feel authentic and avoid those that do not. Do people ever solicit situations that will make them feel inauthentic? Individual differences in such traits as openness to experience (John & Srivastava, 1999) or novelty seeking (Cloninger, Svrakic, & Przybeck, 1993) may predict variation in the desire to search for new environments regardless of fit to identity. Some persons may not evade situations that are a poor fit to their identity, because they are less affected by a sense of misfit. For them, feelings of contextual misfit may be desirable and even authentic. Given the various components of the SAFE model, there is also the possibility that different traits influence each type of state authenticity we have described. Whereas some traits might be associated with reduced susceptibility to lack of self-concept fit (e.g., need for uniqueness, narcissism), other traits might be related to decreased susceptibility to lack of goal fit (e.g., need for achievement, creativity) or lack of social fit (e.g., low levels of self-monitoring or stigma consciousness).

Relatedly, even if there is an automatic propensity to retreat to contexts that facilitate authenticity, more controlled processes can resist this temptation in the service of alternative goals or current concerns (Emmons, 1989; Fishbach, Friedman, & Kruglanski, 2003). For example, the disabled veteran who loves to ski might continue to pursue his sport after his injury, despite the fact that resorts are largely equipped for able-bodied skiers and many of his encounters with able-bodied skiers might make him feel inauthentic. Of greater relevance to intergroup encounters, motivation for self-expansion, when activated, can prompt individuals to solicit and benefit from positive interactions with outgroup members (Dys-Steenbergen, Wright, & Aron, 2016). Thus, some individuals under certain conditions might be prone to stepping outside of their comfort zone and to including diverse others in the self.

This last point reflects properties of reciprocal determinism, namely, that the situations people select can shape their identities over time (Bandura, 1978). People are often surprisingly resilient (Bonanno, Romero, & Klein, 2015), and those who are able or motivated to assimilate to social environments that initially cue inauthenticity might find that they

eventually develop an identity that fits better to that environment. For example, an international student might join a fraternity to take on a new social identity, and associated norms or friendships, that will make her feel more authentic in the host culture. Importantly, however, although this strategy can facilitate integration and coping, it might necessitate a bifurcation of one's identity (Huynh et al., 2011). This is a slow and demanding process, and the outcome is often a qualified success. As a case in point, one's self-concept as a professional and member of a gender group is often less integrated for women than for men (Hodges & Park, 2013; von Hippel et al., 2011). Finally, the cascading mechanisms inherent in reciprocal determinism imply that individuals may be able to alter somewhat their new environments as well. Assuming that these environments are malleable enough to be changed, integration and coping may be optimized (Berry, 1997). For example, as more women have been elected into the U.S. legislature, greater attention is given to policies related to education, health care, and women's issues, because female politicians, even after taking into account party affiliation, are more likely to advocate for these policies and put them on the legislative agenda (Swers, 2013).

Concluding Remarks

Authenticity has been lauded as a value by existential philosophers such as de Beauvoir (1947/1970), Heidegger (1927/1962), Kierkegaard (1846/1992), and Sartre (1943/1992). It has been considered a primary need by humanists such as Maslow (1999) and Rogers (1961). And it has been advocated as a key component of psychological health by personality scholars such as Kernis and Goldman (2006), Deci and Ryan (1985), Fleeson and Wilt (2010), and Sheldon et al. (1997). Authenticity has been viewed not only as a trait but also as a state (Heppner et al., 2008; Jongman-Sereno & Leary, 2016; Lenton et al., 2016; Lenton, Slabu, Sedikides, & Power, 2013).

We have endeavored to enrich the conceptual analysis of state authenticity in terms of person–environment fit. State authenticity represents the sense that individuals are truly themselves when valued facets of their identity are congruent with and validated by the social context. According to the SAFE model we propose, the safety afforded by state authenticity (which derives from self-concept fit, goal fit, and social fit), or the unsafety afforded by state inauthenticity, explains why members of socially disadvantaged groups self-segregate into environments (e.g., neighborhoods, occupations, and interactions), thus reinforcing engrained and negative stereotypes and maintaining social inequality. This self-segregation can occur even in the absence of explicit prejudice or discrimination and even at the expense of valued and open-to-pursue activities or domains.

The SAFE model thus provides a framework for future research to uncover the dynamics of state inauthenticity and its role in creating self-segregation. At the level of basic research, more work is needed to uncover the individual differences, competing goals, and cultural factors that can make inauthenticity more tolerable if not desirable. At the level of application, organizational leaders, members of the advantaged majority, and members of devalued minorities could consider applying the ideas we suggest to combat self-segregation and benefit intergroup relations and social equality. Importantly, throughout this review, we have woven together disparate areas of research, many of which do not explicitly measure authenticity. Thus, more research is needed to provide direct evidence of how social groups self-select into and feel at home in those domains that foster authenticity.

All people have had the experience of feeling authentic, being themselves, or feeling true. This common experience, until recently, has not been systematically studied. Similarly, the idea that groups self-segregate is a common experience, but one that social psychologists have not sought to address systematically. Here, we have argued that a greater conceptual understanding of these literatures will be gained by considering the way in which they interface. A key component to self-segregation by group identity might stem from a simple but powerful tendency to be attracted to SAFE spaces that afford state authenticity as fit to the environment.

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