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Why Citizen Kane was unhappy: Motive-Goal Incongruence

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Abstract

Why do some people benefit more from successfully pursuing their goals than others? Motivational psychology has recently come up with an answer to this question: People differ in the extent to which their goals are aligned with their implicit motives. That is, on a conscious level, people may strive for, for example, achievement goals although on an unconscious level their implicit achievement motive is low. In such a case of motive–goal incongruence, pursuit and realization of achievement goals are associated with little or no well-being. On the other hand, for people whose conscious goals and implicit motives are congruent, goal progress is strongly associated with well-being. Legendary movie character Charles Foster Kane from *Citizen Kane* illustrates this dilemma: Constantly pursuing and realizing power goals, he does not succeed in satisfying his affiliation–intimacy motive – and finally dies an unhappy man. The present article reviews what is known about the causes and effects of motive–goal congruence. In doing so, open questions are raised that future research ought to address.

1 | INTRODUCTION

In his 1941 movie classic *Citizen Kane*, Orson Welles portrays a man who seemingly has it all: He is so powerful that his word influences world politics, he is surrounded with symbols of his status, and his impact on people is such that he is greeted with respect and reverence by his followers or with hatred and disdain by his enemies. Yet his tragedy is that neither power nor the achievement of all his entrepreneurial enterprises makes him happy. Reviewing Kane's life story, one may suspect that he did not live a life reflecting his true self and that he failed to satisfy deeply grounded needs. Only when he dies a bitter and lonely man, his dying word reveals what it was that he yearned for all his life: unconditional affection. Thus, *Citizen Kane* is an example of a man who strives for and realizes conscious goals ("I think it would be fun to run a newspaper") that do not match his unconscious motives. In the psychological literature, this phenomenon is known as motive–goal incongruence. The present article will review what is known about effects and antecedents of (in)congruence between the unconscious and conscious motivational systems. Also, some open questions in the field will be highlighted. To do so, however, we will first present the two motivational systems in some detail.

2 | MOTIVATIONAL SOURCES OF BEHAVIOR

Various factors shape human mental and behavioral acts, with some of these determinants having their locus outside of and others inside the individual (Pepitone, 1976). With respect to intrapsychic sources, human motives are typically considered to be a crucial component of the personality that drives behavior. That is, motives energize and direct behavioral acts of the individual (McClelland, Koestner, & Weinberger, 1989). Thereby, it is often assumed that an underlying motive results in particular goals an individual is aware of and is able to translate into elaborated plans, which in turn guide instrumental activities to successfully realize the self-chosen endeavors (Brunstein, 2010). However, such reasoning is based on a model of a hierarchically ordered motivational system. Yet there is growing consensus among scholars that to understand determinants and consequences of human behavioral functioning, two distinct motivational systems are best considered (McClelland et al., 1989).

On the one hand, there is the so-called explicit motivational system that includes stable, language-based motivational cognitions such as self-attributed short- and long-term goals and value orientations. According to Schultheiss, Patalakh, Rawolle, Liening, and MacInnes (2011), the number of different values and goals that people ascribe to themselves is not inherently limited. People can volitionally report and consciously reflect on their intentions, strivings, and judgments. Thus, explicit motives affect declarative measures of motivation (Schultheiss et al., 2011). Components of the explicit system are stimulated by verbal social-extrinsic incentives like social demands and expectations (Weinberger & McClelland, 1990). In general, the motivational cognitions of the explicit system are decisive for individuals' effortful behavioral regulation; that is, they affect behavior and actions that are under conscious control and reflect an individual's self-concept.

Relatively sophisticated cognitive mechanisms are vital for the emergence and shaping of the explicit motivational system. Above all, the mastery of language as well as complex learning mechanisms seem to be crucial for children to acquire advanced access to and control over their mental and behavioral processes by allowing the taking into account of immediate environmental pressures, demands, and incentives. Thus, advanced cognitive abilities enable the child to grasp the significance of linguistic information (e.g., teaching by parents and others with respect to the importance of particular goals, rules, and values), and to organize its meaning into such constructs as self, others, and socio-cultural norms (McClelland et al., 1989).

In evolutionary terms, the consciously accessible explicit system of motivation has developed on top of the implicit system that represents a more primitive system of human motivation comprised of a small number of biologically based and emotionally saturated motives (McClelland et al., 1989). An implicit motive is defined as a relatively stable disposition to experience a given class of incentives as pleasurable (Schultheiss et al., 2011). In the past decades, research has concentrated above all on the needs for achievement (*n* Achievement), affiliation intimacy (*n* Affiliation), and power (*n* Power). Individuals high in *n* Power aspire to have impact on others' behavior and emotions, individuals with a strong *n* Affiliation appreciate warm and close interpersonal contact, and individuals characterized by a strong *n* Achievement derive satisfaction from personal mastery (for a recent overview, see Schultheiss & Brunstein, 2010).

Ontogenetically, the implicit motivational system is formed before its explicit counterpart. Theoretical assumptions and available empirical evidence suggest that implicit motives involve considerable affectively toned learning, particularly in prelingual childhood (McClelland & Pilon, 1983). As implicit motives operate outside of conscious awareness and control, they are difficult to verbalize. Thus, implicit motives are typically assessed indirectly by analyzing individuals' imaginative stories typically assessed by picture story exercises (PSEs; for an overview on PSEs used for the assessment of implicit motives, see Schultheiss & Pang, 2007).

In contrast to explicit motives, implicit motives act in response to nonverbal stimuli and reflect themselves in measures of behaviors and psychological processes that are not controlled by a person's self-concept or verbally represented intentions, that is, non-declarative measures (Schultheiss et al., 2011). Individuals' implicit learning, their nonverbal communication, their attention towards others' emotions, and their spontaneous actions and long-term behavioral trends are some examples for such non-declarative measures (e.g., Hofer, Busch, Bond, Campos, et al., 2010a; Schultheiss & Brunstein, 2002; Schultheiss & Hale, 2007; Schultheiss et al., 2005).

Without question, it is advantageous for humans to be equipped with two different motivational systems (McClelland et al., 1989): On the one hand, the affect-based implicit motivational system has evolved to energize and direct life-sustaining behavior (e.g., to seek contact with conspecifics and to gain privileged access to resources). On the other hand, the cognitive system, which efficiently organizes information of high levels of abstraction, allows the individual to translate behavioral tendencies into specific plans and goals which can also take given ecological and social circumstances into account. Unfortunately, the two motivational systems are not preprogrammed to be attuned to each other. Quite the contrary, implicit and explicit motives are typically found to be only weakly correlated or even uncorrelated within a given group of individuals (see Köllner & Schultheiss, 2014, for a recent meta-analysis on this issue). It seems that broadly defined motives are not automatically transformed into specific intentions and goals (Brunstein, 2010).

In the following, findings on the recent research highlighting consequences and also determinants of motive congruence will be addressed. Thereby, using self-report measures on the side of the explicit motivational system, researchers examined congruence effects of a variety of psychological constructs such as self-attributed motives, goals, and value orientations. These constructs have in common that they represent different, interrelated facets of the explicit motivational system; that is, they illustrate an individual's self-related knowledge about what he or she intends to do (Brunstein, 2011). To some extent, components of the explicit system are hierarchically related to each other. For example, goals and values can be subsumed under the term explicit motives. However, it is argued that more abstract values reflect the criteria against which goals may be chosen (Kluckhohn, 1951). That is, while values mandate how a person ought to act, goals indicate how a person wants to act. Consequently, being more specific in their focus, goals are closer to individuals' actual behavior (Jolibert & Baumgartner, 1997).

Considering the implicit motivational system, predominantly PSE (McClelland et al., 1989) measures were administered to assess implicit motives. However, in a small number of studies on motive–goal congruence, different instruments were used such as the Operant Motive Test (OMT; e.g., Baumann, Kaschel, & Kuhl, 2005), the semi-projective Multi-Motive Grid (MMG; e.g., Schüler, Job, Fröhlich, & Brandstätter, 2008), and the Partner-Related Agency and Communion Test (PACT; e.g., Hagemeyer, Neberich, Asendorpf, & Neyer, 2013). Even if evidence on convergent validity of these measures with the PSE is relatively scarce (e.g., Baumann, Kazén, & Kuhl, 2010; Sokolowski, Schmalz, Langens, & Puca, 2000), they are likely to tap facets of the implicit motive construct typically assessed with PSEs.

3 | CONSEQUENCES OF MOTIVE CONGRUENCE/INCONGRUENCE

Discrepancies between implicit and explicit motivational sources of individuals' goal-oriented behavior have long been considered to entail trouble for the individual (McClelland et al., 1989). Thus, investigating correlates of motive congruence represents a significant issue to enhance our knowledge in how far the interaction between diverse personality components shapes individuals' behavior, their experiences, and their perceived satisfaction with the quality of their lives (Brunstein, 2010).

As one of the first, Brunstein and colleagues (Brunstein, Lautenschlager, Nawroth, Pöhlmann, & Schultheiß, 1995; Brunstein, Schultheiss, & Grässmann, 1998; see also Langens & McClelland, 1997) examined the effect of implicit motives on the link between individuals' goal striving and reported emotional well-being. Brunstein (1993) showed that individual differences in well-being are predictable by considering three distinct goal-appraisal dimensions: goal commitment, goal attainability, and progress in goal achievement. Thus, commitment to personally meaningful goals is likely to result in experiences of well-being, if the individual's life situation offers supportive opportunities to realize a particular goal, which in turn will facilitate success in goal pursuance (see also Brunstein, 2010).

Extending the original *personal-goal model of emotional well-being* by implicit motives, Brunstein et al. (1995) categorized goals and PSE-assessed implicit motives into agentic and communal concerns (Bakan, 1966). While agency-oriented striving primarily emphasizes an individual's autonomy and impact on his or her physical and social environment, community-oriented human endeavors focus on acquiring or maintaining close social relationships. Consequently, power and achievement themes represented agency and affiliation intimacy-related themes communion. In

line with their hypotheses, Brunstein and colleagues showed that only commitment to motive-congruent goals was associated with enhanced emotional well-being: Striving for communion-oriented goals was associated with elevated mood among students with a strong implicit motive for affiliation intimacy. Correspondingly, engagement in agency-oriented goals predicted enhanced mood among students characterized by a strong implicit agency motive. Results of the study also indicate detrimental effects of commitment to goals that do not reflect individuals' implicit motives on affective mood: Investment into incongruent goals seems to hinder individuals from successfully realizing congruent goals, which in turn may cause a decline in well-being (see Brunstein et al., 1998).

A number of studies examined whether engagement in motive-congruent strivings is equally beneficial for individuals' happiness in different cultural contexts. Such findings derived in non-Western cultural contexts are particularly important as most research in psychology is conducted in Euro-American samples. Consequently, the generalizability of findings is often limited.

Administering PSE measures of implicit motives, Hofer and Chasiotis (2003) examined effects of motive-goal congruence on perceived quality of life in a sample of male adolescents in Zambia. The authors report that commitment to intimacy-oriented and achievement-oriented life goals was associated with elevated life satisfaction only if those goals were matching individuals' implicit needs for affiliation intimacy and achievement, respectively. As adolescents were recruited among the Gwembe Tonga who, despite social and cultural changes in sub-Saharan Africa, uphold the traditional cultural orientations and values taught by significant agents of socialization in the community (e. g., significance of kinship ties and a strong feeling of community affiliation), the study clearly broadens the scope of findings on beneficial effects of an alignment of implicit and explicit motivational sources on individuals' well-being.

Additional support for the beneficial effects of the fit of consciously represented motivational constructs with their implicit counterpart on well-being of individuals raised in diverse cultural settings is reported by Hofer, Chasiotis, and Campos (2006b) who assessed, using a bias-free PSE measure, implicit motives from adults in Germany, Cameroon, and Costa Rica. Instead of goals, data on value orientations were collected in the study. Regardless of the culture of origin, individuals were more satisfied with their lives when the importance they assigned to guiding principles representing an esteem of positive interactions with and a concern for the welfare of close others, that is, benevolence, matched the strength of their implicit affiliation-intimacy motive.

A cross-cultural study exclusively focusing on the motivational domain of power further underscores universal effects of motive-goal congruence. Hofer, Busch, Bond, Li, and Law (2010c) collected data on the strength of the implicit power motive (PSE measure), commitment to explicit power values and goals, and participants' well-being in three adult samples from Germany and China (Hong Kong and mainland China). The study points to distinct effects of values and goals, respectively, on individuals' well-being: While power-related value orientations did not directly predict well-being, across cultural groups, those individuals who translated their power values into less abstract power goals reported higher levels of positive mood and life satisfaction if commitment to power goals mirrored the strength of their implicit need for power.

Findings of the study indicate that striving for power, even if congruent to an implicit concern to have impact, entails beneficial effects for people's well-being depending on the stage in one's life as motive-goal congruence in the power domain did not relate to life satisfaction among adolescents (see Hofer & Chasiotis, 2003). Thus, a serious concern for power and status might be an adequate and significant issue in adulthood but less important in adolescence (see also Kazén & Kuhl, 2011, on the role of individuals' context for significance of motivational domains).

In sum, evidence derived from cross-cultural research strongly supports the argument that congruence of the implicit and explicit motivational systems enhances peoples' well-being as reflected in life satisfaction and affective mood. Cross-cultural support for the motive-goal congruence hypothesis is particularly relevant as cultural norms, socialization goals, and ethnotheories are accepted to strongly condition individuals' developmental pathway over the life course including their motivations and behavior (Keller, 2007). The data from respondents from widely different cultural traditions, however, suggest that commitment to goals that are able to satisfy corresponding implicit motives are universally linked to enhance well-being as those goals are furnished with incentives that give rise to positive affective experiences. In other words, implicit motives may universally be considered as a type of emotional

weighing disposition determining whether the pursuit of a particular goal is experienced as satisfying and pleasurable (Brunstein, 2010).

When arguing in favor of commitment to motive-congruent strivings, it is, however, assumed that people who are strongly committed to a motive-congruent goal show more effort in goal pursuit and, if the context fosters goal attainment, are more likely to successfully realize their goal strivings in the end, which will lead to pleasurable experiences. Thus, commitment to motive-congruent strivings is per se not sufficient to produce positive effects on well-being; rather, attainability and successful realization finally determine whether an implicit motive associated with the goal can be satisfied.

The studies reported by Brunstein et al. (1998) directly tested the hypotheses regarding the significance of goal attainability and goal success for individuals' well-being. Differentiating between motivational domains of agency and communion (PSE measure of implicit motives), only when personal goals met students' predominant implicit motive disposition, was progress in goal realization reflected in affective experiences of well-being. Analogously, a lack of progress in motive-congruent goals predicted a decline in well-being. In the second longitudinal study, poor conditions for goal attainment were associated with detrimental effects on well-being in both motivational domains. However, students' well-being could be predicted longitudinally when a strong commitment to motive-congruent goals was coupled with favorable contextual conditions for goal realization, that is, high attainability of goals. The authors argue that the realization of goals that satisfy implicit motives enhances well-being as goals charged with motive-relevant incentives allow the experience of many pleasurable experiences throughout the process of goal pursuit.

In line with this argument, Schultheiss, Jones, Davis, and Kley (2008) found that goal progress predicted variations in happiness and depressive symptoms only among participants characterized by high levels of implicit motivation (PSE measure). In contrast to motive-incongruent "cold" goals, the authors coined the term "hot" goals for motive-congruent strivings. Congruent strivings allow an individual to experience emotional highs through consummation of affectively charged incentives but also entail the risk for motivational frustration if goal achievement is blocked. Cross-cultural support for the goal achievement-motive satisfaction hypothesis (Brunstein, 2010) is reported by Hofer, Busch, Bond, Kärtner, et al. (2010b) who focused on the achievement motive (PSE measure) in their study. Study samples were recruited in Cameroon, China (Hong Kong), and Germany. Across cultural samples, evidence clearly suggests that importance of motive-congruent goals is associated with global life satisfaction when goals are successfully realized (see also Hofer & Busch, 2011a, 2011b, on correlates of need satisfaction/frustration among Cameroonian and German adults).

To note again, goal attainability and goal progress seem to be crucial when considering positive and negative effects of motive-goal congruence on individuals' quality of life. Typically, the attainability of goals is conceived to depend on characteristics of context, that is, whether the individual's life situation supports goal realization (e.g., social support of personal goals and enough time to implement goals; see Brunstein, 2010). However, goal attainment may also be influenced by other intrapsychic components of the individual. For example, findings reported by Langens (2007) suggest that motive congruence in the domain of achievement (PSE measure of *n* Achievement) is particularly beneficial for personal well-being if the individual does not restrain his or her motivational impulses (for additional moderators of the relationship between motive congruence/incongruence and well-being/health indicators, see also Langan-Fox, Cauty, & Sankey, 2010, and Schüler, Job, Fröhlich, & Brandstätter, 2009). Using different instruments for the assessment of implicit motives (PSE, OMT, and MMG), Schüler et al. (2008) also demonstrated that, above all, study participants with a congruent high implicit and explicit affiliation motivations who additionally showed a large amount of behavior required for the satisfaction of the implicit motive reported the lowest negative affectivity and the highest level of life satisfaction. That motive-goal congruence can indeed facilitate corresponding behavior was exemplarily shown in that congruence of the implicit (assessed with the OMT), and the explicit power motive was associated with spontaneous helping behavior (Aydinli, Bender, Chasiotis, Cemalcilar, & van de Vijver, 2014) and in that congruence of the implicit (again assessed via OMT) and the explicit achievement motive was associated with task performance in a work setting (Lang, Zettler, Ewen, & Hülshager, 2012).

In sum, evidence on the alignment of the explicit and implicit motivational systems indicates that individuals whose goals are attuned to their implicit motives score higher in various markers of well-being. Those beneficial effects of motive congruence on quality of life depend, however, on further intrapsychic and extrapsychic factors, which ultimately enable the individual to experience the pleasure of motive satisfaction.

In contrast, motive incongruence has detrimental effects on happiness and mental health. For example, commitment to goals that do not reflect implicit personal needs seems to prevent individuals from sufficient investment into congruent goals. Baumann et al. (2005) define motive-incongruent goal striving as a "hidden stressor" that causes deficiencies in well-being and mental health (see also Job, Oertig, Brandstätter, & Allemann, 2010, for the link between motive incongruence, negative affect, and unhealthy eating behavior). Kehr (2004) argues that detrimental effects of motive discrepancies on individuals' well-being result from a decline in volitional strength as it is more difficult to keep motive-incongruent strivings on track.

4 | DETERMINANTS OF MOTIVE CONGRUENCE

Given that aligned motivational systems is obviously something "good" to have, Thrash, Cassidy, Maruskin, and Elliot (2010) pose the question why, then, so many individuals are incongruent. In general, three candidates might be considered when identifying factors that influence the level of congruence between components of the implicit and explicit motivational systems (Thrash & Elliot, 2002): characteristics of motive constructs (e.g., motive domain and valence), methodological factors (e.g., validity of selected instruments), and substantive moderating variables. While characteristics of motives as a source of differences in motive congruence were not directly examined so far, methodological issues were occasionally addressed in literature. For example, Thrash, Elliot, and Schultheiss (2007) could demonstrate that correlations between both types of measurement were underestimated as measures have not been designed to correspond directly in content. Following this line of reasoning, Thrash et al. (2010) discuss a number of methodological issues that need to be addressed when considering factors affecting motive congruence. Considering implicit motive measurements, the given instrument (e.g., PSE, OMT, and selection of picture or verbal cues) and manual used for the assessment and the coding of implicit motive imageries, respectively, represent an example of a possible source of bias causing variance in the observed alignment of motivational systems. Another source variance caused by methodological aspects might be attributed to administration bias (see Van de Vijver & Leung, 1997) by varying administration conditions. Also, individual response tendencies such as social desirability might result in data noise when considering self-report measurements of explicit motives, goals, and values.

Despite those hints at methodological drawbacks connected (not only) to research on the congruence of motivational systems and that ought to be addressed in more detail in future research (e.g., by implementing a multitrait-multimethod approach; Thrash et al., 2010), a number of recent studies identified psychological variables that help to explain differences between individuals in motive alignment.

Some decades ago, Miron and McClelland (1979) suggested that systematic experience based on self-observation may permit one to align both types of motives (see also McClelland et al., 1989). Findings so far have corroborated this assumption: In their experimental study, Schultheiss and Brunstein (1999) report that implicit needs for power and affiliation (PSE measure) predicted commitment to an assigned goal furnished with power- and affiliation-related incentives (e.g., counseling of a client) only if participants were given the opportunity to explore characteristics of the assigned goal. The authors argue that goal imagery may help a person to realize positive affective experiences associated with goal striving and attainment and, thus, satisfaction of implicit motives. In a similar vein, findings reported by Job and Brandstätter (2009) point to the significance of sensory experience of affective incentives in the process of commitment to goals that fit one's implicit motives: In their studies (PSE-measured implicit motives), participants who were asked to imagine the intense positive feelings typically activated when successfully striving for a given goal (e.g., joy, happiness, and pleasure associated with affiliation-oriented strivings) set their goals in line with their implicit motive disposition. Further evidence in favor of the supportive role of goal imagery is provided

by Langens (2002). He reports that participants' positive daydreaming about progress towards the attainment of an achievement-related goal mediated the link between goal commitment and goal attainment for individuals characterized by a high implicit achievement motive.

Schultheiss and Brunstein (1999) argued that goal imagery enables people to translate verbal goal representations into nonverbal, perception-like representations and thus to understand and (adequately) respond to verbal stimuli by making contact with the experientially based implicit motivational system (Thrash et al., 2010; see also Schultheiss, 2001). While characteristics of the situation may generally define opportunities and constraints for individuals' engagement in referential processing, Schultheiss et al. (2011) report evidence that variance in the alignment between the explicit and implicit motivational systems can be explained by peoples' general referential competence defined as stable individual differences in the ability to quickly name nonverbally represented information. Across motivational domains (PSE measures of implicit needs for achievement, affiliation, and power), a more pronounced individual ability to translate nonverbal representations into verbal ones was associated with congruence between motive systems.

Apart from this individual competence linked to the processing of information, a number of other moderators of motive congruence were identified. Focusing on the motivational domains of agency and communion, Brunstein (2001) linked congruence between motives (PSE measure) and goals to self-regulation capacities of the individual: Individuals with a strong disposition of action control, that is, the ability to efficiently regulate negative and positive affects (Kuhl, 2001), are more likely to commit themselves to motive-congruent goals (see also Baumann et al., 2005).

Closely examining trait-like moderators within the domain of achievement motivation, Thrash and Elliot (2002) highlighted that a sense of self-determination, defined as an enduring aspect of personality that reflects being aware of the self's needs and grounding decisions of whether (not) to give way to behavioral impulses relating to this awareness (Sheldon & Deci, 1996), predicted a development of self-attributed achievement motives, which were well-aligned with their implicit counterpart (PSE measure). Support for the relevance of self-determination for the alignment of implicit and explicit achievement motives stems from a cross-cultural study that was conducted with adult samples from Cameroon, China (Hong Kong), and Germany (Hofer, Busch, Bond, Kärtner et al., 2010b). Despite highly divergent cultural orientations and behavioral norms, across cultural samples, achievement-related goals were more closely aligned with the implicit achievement motive (PSE measure) among individuals who reported a pronounced sense of self-determination, arguably because those participants are able to test personal goals for its fit with their deeply grounded implicit motivational needs.

Thrash and Elliot (2002) hypothesized that self-determination may foster motive congruence because self-determined people can use affect-based inclinations as a guide when developing explicit motives. In line with this suggestion, Thrash et al. (2007) found that private body consciousness moderated the relationship between the implicit (PSE measure) and explicit achievement motives: The two types of motives were more aligned among participants whose ability to perceive and correctly interpret bodily sensations was well pronounced. Two more personality traits were found to affect individuals' motive alignment: First, implicit and explicit achievement motives were more congruent among individuals characterized by a low concern with social appropriateness of one's attitudes and behavior (self-monitoring). Second, a higher preference for consistency, that is, an individual's concern to seek consistency among cognitions (here, between consciously represented explicit motives and assumed rudimentary knowledge of implicit motives), was positively associated with motive congruence in the achievement domain. In a wider perspective, these findings indicate that self-determination may generally play a pivotal role in the setting of consciously represented strivings that reflect the true self of the individual rather than reflect others' expectations, goals, and preferences that are mistaken as one's own (self-infiltration: Kuhl & Kazén, 1994; see also Brunstein, 2001).

The process of testing goals and values for personal fit is addressed in a study by Hofer, Busch, Chasiotis, and Kiessling (2006a). The authors report that motive congruence in the affiliation domain (PSE measure of implicit motives) was predicted by a more mature identity development that is typically considered to represent the main developmental task in adolescence (see also Hofer & Busch, 2011c). While both motivational systems were well aligned among identity achievers who made firm commitments to personal values, goals, and life plans after having explored potential alternatives, implicit and explicit affiliation motives were at odds with each other among

participants characterized by a strong element of identity foreclosures. Even if foreclosure identity is defined by a strong commitment to values and life goals, commitments are not tested for individual fit but rather result from an adoption of values and life goals from parents and other significant agents of socialization.

Thus, while experimental studies indicate that individuals benefit in their motive alignment from situational opportunities, evidence also suggests that motive congruence is predictable by relatively stable personality components that help individuals to achieve congruence between motivational systems that are not preprogrammed ontogenetically during the course of individual development. Thereby, self-regulatory capacities enable individuals to attune their motivational systems. For example, identity achievement that is linked to motive congruence is fostered by individuals' self-regulatory capacities (Busch & Hofer, 2012). Similarly, it seems convincing to conclude that self-regulation is closely associated with a sense of self-determination in life, that is, to be aware of and ground decisions on needs represented in the self.

5 | NEXT STEPS IN RESEARCH ON MOTIVE CONGRUENCE

Recent studies provided crucial evidence on antecedents and consequences of the (in)congruence of implicit and explicit motives. These studies suggest that individuals tremendously vary in their congruence of unconscious and conscious motives: While both motivational systems are largely unrelated among some individuals, motives are meaningfully interrelated among other individuals. Coming back to *Citizen Kane* as an example of a motive–goal incongruent person, there seems to be a fair number of questions you might want to ask to know why he became what he became.

Besides methodological advancements (e.g., implementation of a multimethod approach in motive measurements), Thrash et al. (2010) listed in their framework on implicit–explicit congruence a number of pressing topics to be focused on in future research: For example, it is vital to identify (additional) processes by which the gap between implicit and explicit motives can be reduced. That is, how would someone have been able to help *Citizen Kane* overcome his motive–goal incongruence? Studies on this issue may concern not only themselves with increasing individuals' access to the implicit motivational system but also their correct interpretation of hints at implicit motives (e.g., affective responses after goal attainment), and the subsequent reconciliation between motivational systems (Thrash et al., 2010). In fact, a reduction of motive–goal incongruence might even be relevant in psychotherapeutic settings as depressive symptoms were found to be increased among motive–goal incongruent psychotherapy outpatients (Pueschel, Schulte, & Michalak, 2011).

Another question is whether other individuals would have developed motive–goal incongruence, too, given a comparable life story. Probably, the process of reconciliation and the subsequent motive realization is conditioned by further decisive personality components. In this line, Winter, John, Stewart, Klohnen, and Duncan (1998) reported evidence that the trait of extraversion facilitates unconflicting motive realization, while introversion deflected implicit motives away from their characteristic goals resulting in difficulties in goal attainment. Likewise, high levels of neuroticism may negatively affect the formation of motive-congruent goals that facilitate motive satisfaction (Hofer, Busch, & Schneider, 2015).

Given that understanding human behavior represents a main scientific goal within psychology, future studies needs to examine in how far implicit and explicit motives – either well aligned to each other or not – conjointly shape peoples' behavior in situations they confront in daily living. The impact of the socio-cultural context on individuals' behavior is widely acknowledged. Thus, a cross-cultural focus of future research on the relationship between motivational systems and psychological and behavioral outcomes seems to be vital to develop more comprehensive models for explaining human functioning.

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