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CHAPTER

The Five Pillars of Self-Enhancement and Self-Protection

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Abstract
This chapter discusses two self-evaluation motives, self-enhancement (to pursue, maintain, or augment the positivity of self-views—more so than objective standards would warrant) and self-protection (to avoid, repair, or minimize the negativity of self-views—even at the expense of truthful feedback). Under the self-critically breed self-enhancement principle (i.e., self-enhancement and self-protection will be particularly influential in personally important domains), the chapter elaborates on five pillars of the two motives: self-serving bias, better-than-average effect, selective self-memory, socially desirable responding, and overclaiming. The chapter also considers other reasons for why self-enhancement and self-protection are motivated (e.g., fluctuations in motive strength as a function of self-threat and self-affirmation) and rules out nonmotivational explanations (e.g., expectancies, egocentrism, focalism). Self-enhancement and self-protection are worthy of a place in the pantheon of human motivation.

Keywords: self-enhancement, self-protection, self-serving bias, better-than-average effect, selective self-memory, overclaiming, socially desirable responding

Introduction
Social behavior is motivated. And much of it is motivated by the twin motives of self-enhancement and self-protection. First, we define those motives and touch on their psychological utility. In the second and main section of this chapter, we elaborate on five proposed pillars: better-than-average effect, self-serving bias, selective self-memory, socially desirable responding, and overclaiming.

Self-Enhancement, Self-Protection, and Their Functionality
We define self-enhancement as the motive to pursue, preserve, or amplify the positivity of one's self-views, more so than impartial benchmarks (e.g., standardized tests, peer performance, observers' opinions) would warrant. We define self-protection as the motive to eschew, restore, or lessen the negativity of one's self-views, even if this necessitates compromising their veracity (i.e., at the expense of accurate feedback). Broadly speaking, the two motives "push" for self-positivity or "pull" away from self-negativity to the extent that self-views can be positioned in the most favorable light that is credible to the person and to others—especially close or familiar others (Alicke & Sedikides, 2009; Gregg, Sedikides, & Gebauer, 2013).

Self-enhancement and self-protection often operate in tandem (Alicke & Sedikides, 2009; Sedikides & Gregg, 2008) in both Western culture (Hepper, Gramzow, & Sedikides, 2010) and Eastern culture (Hepper, Sedikides, & Cai, 2013). Yet, self-enhancement is more likely to be on routine patrol, that is, on the lookout for self-advancing opportunities, whereas self-protection is more likely to propel into action in response to situational demands and in particular self-threat (e.g., negative feedback, criticism, setbacks).

Besides guiding momentary or short-term thinking, feeling, and behaving, the two motives serve
three enduring psychological functions. First, through the construction of self-defeating narratives, they help to maintain an optimal state of positive emotions—a function we (Alickie & Sedikides, 2019) have labeled psychological immunity. Second, they contribute to the advancement and defense of psychological interests or goals, be it concrete (e.g., skills and abilities like intelligence, athleticism, and musicality) or abstract (e.g., popularity, social status, or seeking; Alickie & Sedikides, 2009). O’Mara & Gaertner, 2017). Last, they foster psychological and physical health (Alickie & Sedikides, 2011).

Sedikides, Gaertner, & Cai, 2015). It is for these reasons that an argument has been made for an evolutionary significance of the two motives, implicating them in species survival and reproduction (Sedikides & Skowronski, 2009; Sedikides, Skowronski, & Dunbar, 2006).

The Five Pillars of Self-Enhancement and Self-Protection Motivation

Over 100 years ago, William James (1907) offered a remarkable insight (p. 31): “I, who for the time have staked my all on being a psychologist, am moreover if others know much more psychology than I. But I am contented to wallow in the greatest ignorance of Greek.” In contemporary vernacular, people value and accentuate those domains of knowledge, activity, or personality that are tethered to their self-esteem. Other humiliations, such as Rosenzweig (1965) and Rokeach (1973), expressed a similar idea, which has achieved the status of a psychological principle that underlies many showmen. It has long been known that a sense of self-worth is inextricably linked to psychological well-being (Pyszczynski, Greenberg, Solomon, Amsel, & Schimel, 2004), the contingencies of self-worth model (Crocker & Wolfe, 2001), and the self-concept enhancing tacit model (Sedikides & Strube, 1997). This principle, dubbed by Gebauer, Wagnon, Sedikides, and Neberich (2013) self-concept boosts self-enhancement, implies that the self-esteem and self-protection motives will be particularly influential in personally important (i.e., central) domains. Put otherwise, signatures of self-enhancement and self-protection will reflect striving to perceive oneself as a “good person” or a “good member of the category,” namely, to boost or guard one’s self-esteem.

We use the self-concept boosts self-enhancement principle as a unifying theme in discussing the proposed five key signatures (i.e., pillars) of the two motives. These pillars are the self-serving bias, the better-than-average effect, selective self-memory, socially desirable responding, and overclaiming.

The Self-Serving Bias

The self-serving bias (SSB) is aptly described by one of Murphy’s laws: “If more than one person is responsible for a miscalculation, none will be at fault.” In psychological terms, people attribute their failures (e.g., subpar task performance) to external factors such as task difficulty, harsh evaluators, or bad luck; however, they attribute their successes (e.g., effective task performance) to internal factors such as discipline, effort, or ability (B. Weiner, 1972). Crucially, the SSB is underlain by the self-concept boosts self-enhancement principle.

People eagerly take responsibility for successes that have serious implications for the kind of person they are (e.g., competent, intelligent, trustworthy) and promptly displace on others or situations responsibilities for failures that have grave consequences for them (i.e., depict them as incompetent, stupid, or untrustworthy).

The SSB is robust and pervasive. It is observed among, children, adolescents, and adults (Merrill, Abramson, Hyde, & Hrasko, 2004) and among organizational employees (Coit & Gray, 1996), athletes (de Michele, Gaeneader, & Solomon, 1998), college students (Zederman, 1979), drivers (Stewart, 2005), and individuals working on interdependent (i.e., dyad-based) tasks (Sedikides, Campbell, Reeder, & Elliot, 1998). It is also observed in both Western and East Asian cultures (Bird, Gaertner, & Cai, 2015; Merrill et al., 2004).

There are other reasons attributing to the motivational nature of the SSB besides the self-concept boosts self-enhancement principle. The SSB is definitively magnified as level of self-esteem rises. The more self-threat people experience, the stronger they will display the SSB (Campbell & Sedikides, 1999). Also, it is nondefensively articulated following self-affirmation: After writing about their important (vs. unimportant) values, people are far less likely to manifest the SSB, if at all (Sherman & Kim, 2005).

Two nonmotivational explanations for the SSB have been proposed (Sedikides & Bigbee, 2012). One refers to differential expectations for success and failure: Based on their personal histories, people simply anticipate more success than failures. However, the SSB is observed even when success and failure expectations are controlled for (Sedikides et al., 1988; see also Campbell & Sedikides, 1999; Weary, 1979). The other explanation refers to impression management, that is, strategic attempts to present oneself favorably to others. Impression management may reflect the self-enhancement motive itself (Sedikides, Houghten, & Dufner, 2015).

Regardless, the SSB occurs even when controlling for impression management (Greenberg, Pyszczynski, & Solomon, 1982; Sedikides et al., 1998).

The Better-Than-Average Effect

Lake Wobegon is a fictional location where “all the women are strong, all the men are good looking, and all the children are above average.” Invented by Garrison Keillor, the location captures elegantly the human penchant for overestimating one’s strengths and understating one’s weaknesses in comparison to others. This penchant is known as the better-than-average effect (BTAE; Alickie, 1985). Critically, the BTAE is underlain by the self-concept boosts self-enhancement principle. People rate themselves above the average peer standing on positive and central (i.e., important to have) self-attributes or rate themselves below the average peer standing on negative and central (i.e., important not to have) attributes (Brown, 2012; Strever, Köntke, & Schäffler, 2016). Indeed, in the case of relatively unimportant or peripheral domains (e.g., juggling), people do not necessarily show the BTAE (Kruger, 1999). Interestingly, they take these social comparative ratings at face value, believing the BTAE is for real and willing to bet money on it (Williams & Gilovich, 2008). In an ironic twist, they also believe they are further than the average person (Pronin, Lin, & Ross, 2002).

The BTAE is robust, pervasive (Alickie & Goworov, 2005), and genetically influenced (Luo, Liu, Cai, Wai, & Zee, 2008). It is found among preschoolers (P. S. Weiner, 1964), elementary school children (Albery & Messer, 2005), high school students (Kurman, 2002), college students (Brown, 1998; Zeld & Alickie, 2011), and representative community samples (Heady & Wearing, 1988). A few examples will suffice. College students believe they are superior to their peers on complexity of personality (Chuang, Wildcarter, Sedikides, & Pinter, 2014; Sande, Goorah, & Radloff, 1988), as well as leadership skills, athletic prowess, and dating popularity (College Boards, 1976; Petrash & Alickie, 2009); drivers regard themselves as superior to their peers on driving ability, while they were hospitalized because of a car accident they caused (Pronin & Harris, 1960); college instructors consider themselves superior on teaching ability (Cross, 1977) and social psychologists on research talent (van Lange, Tarsis, & Vink, 1997). Christians consider themselves superior to nonbelievers on domains central to the Christian self-concept (e.g., adherence to commandments of faith or communion; Gebauer, Sedikides, & Schrade, 2017, Studies 1A–1B); and finally, rheumatoid arthritis patients consider their symptoms less severe than those of the average patient (Dévèllis et al., 1991) and elderly people estimate they are less at risk for age-related illnesses than their peers (Schulz & Fitz, 1987). Ironically, prisoners, most of whom had been convicted of serious crimes (e.g., violence against people), rated themselves superfluous on prosocial traits (e.g., kindness, morality, trustworthiness, compassion) in comparison only to the average prisoner, but also to the average community member, the one exception being that they rated themselves equal to the average community member on “law abidingness” (Sedikides, Meek, Alickie, & Taylor, 2010).

The BTAE is observed in both Western and East Asian cultures. As a reminder, the self-concept boosts self-enhancement principle predicts that individuals will claim superiority on their central attributes. In Western culture, individualism (e.g., competence, ambition, originality) is a central dimension, whereas in East Asian culture, collectivism (e.g., loyalty, compromise, respectfulness) is a central dimension. It follows that Westerners will exhibit the BTAE on individualistic attributes, whereas Easterners will do so on collectivistic attributes. Research has borne out these predictions (Gaertner, Sedikides, & Chang, 2008; Sedikides, Gaertner, & Topuchi, 2003; Sedikides, Gaertner, & Vevea, 2005).

Other empirically validated reasons point to the motivational character of the BTAE besides the self-concept boosts self-enhancement principle. One is attribute controlability (Alickie, 1985). People are more likely to manifest the BTAE on positive and central attributes over which they have high control (e.g., resourceful) than on those over which they have low control (e.g., moral). Alternatively, they are more likely to self-protect on negative and central attributes over which they have less control (e.g., unappreciative) than on those over which they have high control (e.g., humorless). Another reason is attribute verifiability (Damasio, Meyerson, & Holberg, 1989; van Lange & Sedikides, 1998; Zell & Alickie, 2011). People are more likely to display the BTAE on attributes that are ambiguous or difficult to verify (e.g., morality), thus allowing elbow room for maneuvering, than on attributes that are concrete or easily verifiable (e.g., arithmetic skills) to which they may be held accountable. A third reason is self-eval (Brown, 2012, Study 4). When people realize that their central traits (e.g., creativity) are under threat, as a result of substantial performance, they show an exaggerated BTAE. The fourth
and final reason is perceived threat immunity (Menon & Thompson, 2007): In a vintage self-enhancement move, team members believe that their superior performance poses more of a threat to others than does others' superior performance to them.

Five nonmotivational explanations for the BTAE have been proposed (Sedikides & Alicki, 2012). According to differential attribution, the self is compared with an abstract referent—average other—rather than a concrete peer. However, the BTAE is obtained, albeit attenuated, even when the self is compared with concrete others (Alicki, Kloer, Breitenbecher, Yurak, & Vredenburg, 1995). According to egocentrism, people think selectively about their own assets or about their peers' liabilities. However, this selective recruitment of one's assets or peers' liabilities is on its own a manifestation of self-enhancement or self-protection (Sanitioso, Kunda, & Fong, 1990). Further, the BTAE is obtained not only with direct measures (where participants compare the self to the average peer on a single scale), but also with indirect measures (where participants rate the self and average peer on separate, counterbalanced scales; Alicki & Gozvon, 2005; Gebauer, Sedikides, & Schrade, 2017, Studies 1A-1B). Moreover, egocentrism cannot account for why the BTAE is stronger on ambiguous traits, even when the BTAE is obtained not only with direct measures (where participants compare the self to the average peer on a single scale), but also with indirect measures (where participants rate the self and average peer on separate, counterbalanced scales; Alicki & Gozvon, 2005; Gebauer, Sedikides, & Schrade, 2017, Studies 1A-1B). Moreover, egocentrism cannot account for why the BTAE is stronger on ambiguous traits, even when the BTAE is obtained not only with direct measures (where participants compare the self to the average peer on a single scale), but also with indirect measures (where participants rate the self and average peer on separate, counterbalanced scales; Alicki & Gozvon, 2005; Gebauer, Sedikides, & Schrade, 2017, Studies 1A-1B). Moreover, egocentrism cannot account for why the BTAE is stronger on ambiguous traits, even when the BTAE is obtained not only with direct measures (where participants compare the self to the average peer on a single scale), but also with indirect measures (where participants rate the self and average peer on separate, counterbalanced scales; Alicki & Gozvon, 2005; Gebauer, Sedikides, & Schrade, 2017, Studies 1A-1B). Moreover, egocentrism cannot account for why the BTAE is stronger on ambiguous traits, even when the BTAE is obtained not only with direct measures (where participants compare the self to the average peer on a single scale), but also with indirect measures (where participants rate the self and average peer on separate, counterbalanced scales; Alicki & Gozvon, 2005; Gebauer, Sedikides, & Schrade, 2017, Studies 1A-1B). Moreover, egocentrism cannot account for why the BTAE is stronger on ambiguous traits, even when the BTAE is obtained not only with direct measures (where participants compare the self to the average peer on a single scale), but also with indirect measures (where participants rate the self and average peer on separate, counterbalanced scales; Alicki & Gozvon, 2005; Gebauer, Sedikides, & Schrade, 2017, Studies 1A-1B).

Selective Self-Memory Joah Billings had a point when he quipped, "It's not only the most difficult thing to truly know one's self, but the most inconsistent." People indeed often have a hard time knowing their true selves. Gottfredson (1987) offers a suggestive description of how self-knowledge is often an elusive goal. He explains that people often have a hard time knowing their true selves. Gottfredson (1987) offers a suggestive description of how self-knowledge is often an elusive goal. He explains that people often have a hard time knowing their true selves. Gottfredson (1987) offers a suggestive description of how self-knowledge is often an elusive goal. He explains that people often have a hard time knowing their true selves. Gottfredson (1987) offers a suggestive description of how self-knowledge is often an elusive goal. He explains that people often have a hard time knowing their true selves. Gottfredson (1987) offers a suggestive description of how self-knowledge is often an elusive goal. He explains that people often have a hard time knowing their true selves. Gottfredson (1987) offers a suggestive description of how self-knowledge is often an elusive goal. He explains that people often have a hard time knowing their true selves.

Self-enhancement and self-esteem: The more self-enhancing the feedback is, the stronger the self-esteem is (i.e., the more defensively participants process and recall the feedback). For example, mnemonic neglect is magnified when the unfavorable feedback is high on diagnosticity (e.g., "you would often lie to your parents") than low on diagnosticity (e.g., "you would forget for a week to meet a friend"); Green & Sedikides, 2004). Higher diagnosticity feedback is more threatening, because it can really tell whether the person possesses the underlying trait. Also, mnemonic neglect is augmented when participants believe that their traits are unmodifiable rather than modifiable (Green, Pinzer, & Sedikides, 2005). Unmodifiable feedback is more threatening, because it precludes possibilities for improvement. Indeed, when participants are granted an opportunity to improve on the feedback dimension, mnemonic neglect subsides (Green, Sedikides, Pinzer, & van Tongeren, 2009).

Of course, self-threatening feedback is not always recalled poorly. Traumatic events, for example, are well remembered compared to ordinary events (Bernstein, 2001; McNally, 2003). However, trauma, like neuroticism, can process and thereby activate mnemonic systems that are associated with better recall (Thompson, Skowronski, Larsen, & Bez, 1996), although event valence (i.e., negativity—positivity) predicts amount of recall independent of events' extremity (i.e., research on this topic has been controversial; Thompson, 1996, Chapter 4). Regardless, in mnemonic neglect research, behavioral feedback is moderate rather than extreme (Sedikides & Green, 2000), pilot subjects who are not given feedback are shown to benefit from feedback, and memory for feedback is not recalled better (Green, Sedikides, Larsen, & Bez, 1996).

Mnemonic neglect also varies as a function of self-enhancement, the more self-enhancing the feedback is, the stronger the mnemonic neglect is (i.e., the more defensively participants process and recall the feedback). For example, mnemonic neglect is magnified when the unfavorable feedback is high on diagnosticity (e.g., "you would often lie to your parents") than low on diagnosticity (e.g., "you would forget for a week to meet a friend"); Green & Sedikides, 2004). Higher diagnosticity feedback is more threatening, because it can really tell whether the person possesses the underlying trait. Also, mnemonic neglect is augmented when participants believe that their traits are unmodifiable rather than modifiable (Green, Pinzer, & Sedikides, 2005). Unmodifiable feedback is more threatening, because it precludes possibilities for improvement. Indeed, when participants are granted an opportunity to improve on the feedback dimension, mnemonic neglect subsides (Green, Sedikides, Pinzer, & van Tongeren, 2009).

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Two nonmotivational explanations for selective self-memory have been proposed. One, differential expectancies, states that people process unfavorable feedback (on personally important dimensions) shallowly and recall it poorly, simply because they do not expect to receive it. Judging from their past experiences, such feedback appears implausible. This explanation has been tested and normative (Nemerow & Nemerow, 1970; Sedikides & Green, 2004, Experiment 1). The other explanation, inconsistency between feedback valence and self-view valence, states that people process unfavorable feedback, particularly on personally important dimensions) shallowly and recall it poorly, not because it is negative, but rather because it is inconsistent with their (positive) self-view. This explanation has also been put to the test and refuted (Sedikides & Green, 2004, Experiment 2). In conclusion, neither explanation is sufficient to explain mnemonic neglect.

Socially Desirable Responding

"No matter what happens in life, be nice to people. Being nice to people is a peaceful way to live, and a beautiful legacy to leave behind." This quote, by Marcandangel (Practical Tips for Productive Living: http://everydayshouldbefun.com/marcandangel/ #123456789), implies that the reason to be nice is fundamentally self-serving. Responding in a socially desirable manner is what a good person does, one who wishes to have a fulfilling life and establish a positive reputation. So, responding in a socially desirable manner validates and bolsters central aspects of one's self, as the self-enhancement beliefs self-enhancement principle suggests.

Socially desirable responding (SDR) is indeed considered a signature of self-enhancement. As Paulhus and Holden (2010) put it, "in the context of questionnaire styles, self-enhancement is typically referred to as socially desirable responding and is tapped by items such as the Marlowe-Crowne Scale" (p. 221). High scores on this scale (Crowne & Marlowe, 1964) are linked to agreeable or approving behavior, which is the culturally normative behavior of a "good person" (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960; Paulhus, 1991). In addition, high scorers on this scale inflate their claims of friendliness, openness to experience, and psychological adjustment (McCrae & Costa, 1985; Paulhus, 1991). Last, experimental inducements of socially desirable self-presentation lead to increases in self-esteem (Upshaw & Yates, 1968).

Factor analyses of the Marlowe-Crowne Scale (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960), as well as other self-scales (Edwards, 1957; Eysenck & Eysenck, 1991; Wiggins, 1964), have yielded two factors. Paulhus (1984) showed that the factors represent self-deceptive positivity (reflecting a sincere but inflated self-presentation) and inflation management (reflecting self-presentation targeted at specific audiences). Later, in his Balanced Inventory of Social Desirability, Responding, Paulhus (1998) labeled the first factor as Self-Deceptive Enthusiasm (representing a non-conscious and self-deceptive response style) and the second factor Impression Management (representing a conscious and other-deceptive response style). Bell, Paulhus (2002; Paulhus & Trapnell, 2008) proposed that the Self-Deceptive Enhancement subscale assesses an agentic form of SDR, whereas the Impression Management subscale assesses a communal form of SDR. This reformulation established that SDR is an index of private self-enhancement (or self-protection). Indeed, both SDR subscales are positively correlated with conventional indices of self-enhancement, such as high self-esteem, high narcissism, or low social anxiety (Paulhus, 1988; Paulhus & Reid, 1993).

We will provide an empirical example in which SDR has been used as a signature of self-enhancement. It concerns a meta-analysis on the relation between self-enhancement and religiosity by Sedikides and Gebauer (2010). Their main finding was that religiosity, self-esteem, and self-esteem are important parts of your daily life" (Crabbe, 2009). Also, when surveyed, 95% of the U.S. population expressed a belief in God (Gallup & Castelli, 1989). Might religiosity feature in a conscientious question has a long history. It was posed first by (who else) William James (1902) and reposed by Gordon Allport (1950; Allport & Ross, 1967). The topic came to be a major area of study. The meta-analysis detection analysis, participants' knowledge accuracy and knowledge exaggeration. The latter reflects self-enhancement (in particular, deceptive self-enhancement, assuming the absence of social desirability beliefs).

Exaggeration is a unique pillar of self-enhancement, in the sense that it constitutes a coherence-discrepancy index. That is, it provides an objective measure of self-enhancement. The overclaiming task is well validated (Paulhus et al., 2003). For example, it is unaffected by instructions to "fake good" or by warnings about the foils. Also, it is positively related to other self-enhancement indices, such as self-esteem, narcissism, and self-deceptive enhancement. And it is positively associated with self-reported indices of psychological adjustment, such as resilience.

We will provide two examples from contemporary self-enhancement research that implicate overclaiming. One example concerns narcissism. Gebauer, Sedikides, Verplancken, and Maio (2012, Study 4) capitalized on narcissists' well-known tendency to engage in self-enhancement and that their self-enhancement is about them, not others. Narcissistic college students exaggerate their knowledge on academic topics (because they), but do not differ from their nonnarcissistic counterparts on knowledge accuracy (Paulhus & Harms, 2004; Paulhus et al., 2003). This finding, however, directly applies to agentic narcissists, who self-aggrandize on the ability domain. Another type of narcissist, communal narcissists, self-aggrandize on the prosociality domain, because it is central to them. Gebauer, Sedikides, Verplancken, et al. (2012) hypothesized that, although agentic narcissists exaggerate their knowledge (i.e., overclaim) on ability topics, communal narcissists overclaim on prosociality domains.

Gebauer, Sedikides, Verplancken, et al. (2012) created an overclaiming task that consisted of four prosociality topics: "humanitarian aid organizations," "child and animal protection organizations," "parenting and childcare," and "international health charities." Each topic had 17 items, and participants rated their familiarity with those items. Of the 17 items, 13 were real and 4 were foils. For the topic "humanitarian aid organizations," for example, the items "Red Cross International" and "Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières" were real, whereas the items "International Well-Being Fund" was a foil. Gebauer, Sedikides, Verplancken, et al. (2012) also created an overclaiming task comprising four ability domains: "International stock market," "chemistry & physics," "psychology," and "leading educational institutions." Examples of real items for the last topic are the "Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)" and "London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE)," whereas an example of foil items is "The Wall Institut Berlin (WIB)." Consistent with the hypothesis, agentic narcissists overclaimed (i.e., exaggerated their knowledge) on the ability domain, whereas communal narcissists overclaimed on the prosociality domain. (For another use of the overclaiming task in narcissism research, see Gross, Loesch, & Back, 2017).

An additional example from contemporary self-enhancement research that implicates overclaiming...
Concluding Remarks

In this chapter, we addressed two self-evaluation motives, self-enhancement and self-protection. We defined self-enhancement as the motive to pursue, maintain, or augment the positive sense of self-worth, more so than objective benchmarks would merit. We defined self-protection as the motive to avoid, repair, or diminish the negativity of self-views, even at the expense of verbal feedback. We argued that these motives manifest themselves clearly on five key pillars: SSB (putting oneself on the back foot through successives but abdicating oneself for failures), BTEA (deeming the self superior to peers), selective self-memory (selective amnesia for unfavorable information about the self), SDR (acting in a way that will elicit others' approval of the self as a good person), and overclaiming (exaggerating one's knowledge). Importantly, all these pillars are qualitatively different. One domain, the most central, was Christianity (sample topics: "stories of the New Testament," "Christian saints," "books of the Bible"). Another domain, less central, was prosociality (sample topics: "humanitarian aid organizations," "nature and animal protection organizations," "international health charities"). The third domain, least central, was being able (sample topics: "chemistry & physics," "international stock market," "leading universities"). In support of the hypothesis, Christians overclaimed on the Christianity domain the most, overclaimed on communication less, and did not overclaim on airport. Recently, the overclaiming task has come under some criticism. In a community sample, Ludeke and Makransky (2016) found that this task was unrelated to criterion-discrepancy indices, such as performance on a cognitive ability test and peer reports of personality. Further, the task was unassociated with self-enhancement (Sedikides & Gelfar, 2003), although it was moderately and positively associated with narcissism (like Paulhus & Hamre, 2004, and Paulhus et al., 2003). However, the only thing that could be said about the lack of correlation is that the task was not sensitive enough to detect the difference of careless responding (Mahalanobis distance: Meade & Craig, 2012), although statistically controlling for such links improved the task's convergent validity. There is no doubt, however, that this model could be applied to a domain that was central to participants. That is, the study relied on the academic domain for a community sample (instead of relying, for example, on the sports or music domains). Future research should use a domain that was central to participants. This is the study relied on the academic domain for a community sample (instead of relying, for example, on the sports or music domains). Future research should use a domain that was central to participants. From these findings, we conclude that self-enhancement and self-protection are not the same thing. They are distinct processes, each with its own set of neural mechanisms and cognitive processes. However, they are related in that they both involve the manipulation of self-image and self-esteem. In conclusion, we hope that this chapter has provided a useful overview of the literature on self-enhancement and self-protection, and has highlighted some of the key issues that remain to be addressed.

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