Sedikides, C. (2021). The homeostatic model of identity protection: Lingering issues. *Psychological Inquiry*. Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1080/1047840X.2021.2007703

**The Homeostatic Model of Identity Protection: Lingering Issues**

Constantine Sedikides

University of Southampton

Constantine Sedikides  [0000-0003-3681-4332](https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3681-4332)

Corresponding author: Constantine Sedikides, Center for Research on Self and Identity, School of Psychology, University of Southampton, England, UK; E-mail: cs2@soton.ac.uk

**Abstract**

I clarify issues surrounding the homeostatic model of identity protection. These issues include the dynamic interplay between psychological homeostasis and environmental control; the relevance of interoception and nature of self-threat; the value of a single psychological immune system (rather than multiple ones); and the model’s applicability and implications. Various other observations the commentators made enrich aspects of the model.

*Keywords*: homeostasis, self, identity, self-protection, self-enhancement

**The Homeostatic Model of Identity Protection: Lingering Issues**

The commentators poked, challenged, disputed, extended—and occasionally petted—the homeostatic model of identity protection. Their thinking clarified and enriched my inquiries without (I hope) activating my psychological immune system. I thank them for their thorough and constructive feedback. I will address lingering issues.

**Psychological Homeostasis Versus Environmental Control**

According to the model, the effective regulation of one’s internal or affective states (i.e., homeostasis) facilitates environmental control. O’Mara Kunz and Gaertner (this issue) illustrate the point with examples from their work. They manipulated self-enhancement and measured creativity. Participants who self-enhanced on the domain of creativity (vs. an irrelevant domain, or who self-effaced, or who neither self-enhanced nor self-effaced, on creativity) generated a greater number of creative solutions (O’Mara & Gaertner, 2017). In related research, participants who received self-enhancing (vs. self-improving) task feedback—either sequentially (i.e., at each testing juncture) or cumulatively (i.e., at the conclusion of the testing session)—not only reported greater satisfaction, usefulness, optimism, self-efficacy, and self-esteem (i.e., homeostasis), but also intended to persist longer and performed better (i.e., environmental control; Sedikides et al., 2016). More generally, self-enhancement and self-protection conduce both to psychological health (i.e., homeostasis; Dufner et al., 2019; Zell et al., 2020) and to goal pursuit/attainment, leadership election, and sexual selection (i.e., environmental control; Ferris et al., 2018; Sedikides, 2020). This literature addresses the doubts expressed by Beer (this issue) that self-enhancement/self-protection can aid environmental control. In doing so, the literature bypasses earlier methodological problems (Heck & Krueger, 2015; Krueger & Wright, 2011; Kwan et al., 2004) to which O’Mara Kunz and Gaertner (this issue) alluded.

Yet, despite emphasizing homeostasis, the model also acknowledges the dynamic interplay between attaining homeostasis and maximizing environmental control. Often environmental control is compromised—as manifested by the enfeebled pursuit of accuracy or deviations from standards of accuracy in an effort to achieve homeostasis (Brown & Dutton, 1995; Sedikides, 2020). Alternatively, homeostasis can bend to accommodate situational demands for environmental control. Research on mnemic neglect offers an example of the latter. The psychological immune system is triggered upon reception of unfavorable feedback that contradicts one’s central or important self-conceptions (e.g., “You would make a rude gesture at an old lady” ≠ “I am kind”) resulting in relatively poor recall (Sedikides et al., 2000). Here, homeostasis is realized. However, for feedback which may help the individual accomplish future goals that are performative (e.g., do well ,on forthcoming tasks) or social (e.g., preserve a valued relationship; Green et al., 2009), homeostasis is compromised: in such instances, unfavorable feedback gets recalled relatively well. Environmental control gains precedence. Relatedly, I am not sure I would agree with the assertion by Vaz et al.’s (this issue, p. XX) that “the psychological immune system works best when its efforts at emotional homeostasis do not require ignoring, misremembering, or distorting concrete information … *that can be used to pursue one’s future goals*.” Consider the case of persons who are generally dysphoric, generally anxious, or socially anxious. They suffer from a malfunctioning homeostasis. By implication, as per the Vaz et al. argument, they would ignore, misremember, or distort unfavorable feedback on their central self-conceptions to a greater extent than their healthy counterparts. In fact, the opposite is true. Such troubled individuals fail to show mnemic neglect (Saunders, 2011, 2013; Zengel et al., 2015), seemingly for the sake of environmental control (e.g., to detect threat). So, the psychological immune system works well even when future goal pursuit becomes imperative: it flexibly trades short-term homeostasis disturbance for immediate environmental control. This exchange is likely to pay off with rewards (i.e., goal attainment) that will contribute to the system’s longer-term homeostasis (Sedikides & Strube, 1997; Sedikides et al., 2015).

The relation between homeostasis and environmental control has evolutionary undertones. Is the self an adaptation or is it a byproduct of other adaptations (e.g., cognitive abstraction, consciousness, language)? Skowronski and I addressed this issue in 1997 (Sedikides & Skowronski, 1997), speculating that the self itself is likely an adaptation. We speculated similarly for self-enhancement and self-protection (Sedikides & Skowronski, 2000), following up at regular intervals as more archeological evidence was unearthed (Sedikides et al., 2006, 2009, 2019). The evidence we presented backs up an adaptationist stance (see also: Johnson & Fowler, 2011; van Veelen & Nowak, 2011). In that regard, I would object to de Brigard and Stanley’s (this issue, p. XX) admonition:

“ …some of the evidence Sedikides adduces in support of his view comes from the fact that certain psychological tendencies and biases are conducive to beneficial behaviors for the organism. Since such individual benefits are taken to be adaptive, then the conclusion that the system that brought them about must have evolved for said purpose—i.e., psychological homeostasis—seems ineluctable. Unfortunately, the jump from ‘beneficial to me’ to ‘selected for’ or ‘having the function of’ is often an unwarranted line of reasoning ….”

de Brigard and Stanley refer to, but do not name, the naturalistic fallacy. In our foray into the evolutionary origins of the self, Skowronski and I (Sedikides & Skowronski, 1997, p. 84) explicitly draw attention to this fallacy, further stating:

… we do not wish to be misconstrued as advocating circular and logically flawed positions-such as the notion that, because the symbolic self is adaptive at present, human cognition must have evolved so that the symbolic self was adaptive. Nonetheless, the fact that a trait is widely held in a population and is currently adaptive constitutes a legitimate basis for exploring the possibility that the trait evolved in response to environmental pressures. Furthermore, it is undeniable that the symbolic self is a widespread human trait, and we argue that the symbolic self serves adaptive functions.

I hold the same position in regard to the role of the self, and self-enhancement/self-protection, within the homeostatic model of identity protection.

**On Interoception and Threat**

What is being regulated, according to the model, is internal states. These include interoceptive cues. Beer (this issue) challenge the relevance of interoceptive cues for emotional experience, citing articles published 20 to 30 years ago. My reading of recent advances in this area is different. Researchers have concluded in their literature reviews that interoception is fundamental to: emotion and affective experience (Critchley & Garfinke, 2020; Tsakiris & Critchley, 2016); the psychological sense of self (Bonaz et al., 2021; [Quigley](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0166223620302162#!) et al., 2021); the “regulation of behavioral, cognitive, and affective processes across conscious and nonconscious levels of processing” (Berntson & Khalsa, 2021, p. 17); and mental health generally (Khalsa et al., 2018). Some researchers have even derived a cartography of body sensations mapping different types of threats (i.e., death, freedom isolation, identity, meaning; Koole et al., 2006) to different bodily sensations, including self-reported emotions (Reiss et al., 2021), as Jonas and Stollberg (this issue) pointed out.

What is the nature of threat? Negativity directed at the hinterlands of the self may unsettle homeostasis (e.g., “you are complaining,” “you are unpredictable”), but it is negativity directed at one’s primary self-conceptions (e.g., “you are untrustworthy,” “you are unkind”) that will cause a major perturbation (Sedikides, 1993; Sedikides et al., 2016). Indeed, it is central (rather than peripheral) self-conceptions that people strive to shore up through self-protection or puff up via self-enhancement (Sedikides & Alicke, 2019; Gebauer et al., 2013). Central self-threat stings, upsetting one’s equanimity, and motivating a response.

And this is a key point of the model: if they want to understand the self, researchers will need to take serious account of emotion and motivation. More than any other social object—even “best friend,” “romantic partner,” or “child” (Gebauer et al., 2012; Sedikides & Alicke, 2012)—the self is a source of sentiment and striving. de Brigard and Stanley (this issue) argue that people process information about others the same way they process information about the self, given that the cognitive system is one and the same. One could likewise argue for the equivalence of partners making love and autoerotic self-stimulation. Of course the cognitive apparatus is the same. Their argument reeks of the unproductive cognition-motivation debate of yore (Alicke & Sedikides, 2009, 2011). I simply contend that cognitive processes diverge depending on whether the target is the self or another, because the self is disproportionately freighted with emotion and motivation. As an aside, the studies that Brigard and Stanley cite as contradicting the model (e.g., Bell et al., 2014; Reczek et al., 2018; Shu et al., 2011) are actually consistent with it. These studies may lack the necessary controls (i.e., self-referent vs. other-reference processing; judgmental or memorial domain that is central vs. peripheral to one’s self-conceptions) but their results showcase the operation of the psychological immune system, and so does research on the fading affect bias (Ritchie et al., 2017)—

again contrary to de Brigard and Stanley’s claims.

**One Versus Multiple Psychological Immune Systems**

Some commentators proposed multiple immune systems. In particular, Jonas and Stollberg (this issue) argue for a social immune system, and Stinson et al. (this issue, p. XX) wonder whether a different system is needed “… for people who possess one or more intersecting identities that are subject to social devaluation, or *stigma* …”. Lastly, Tice and Baumeister (this issue) postulate different immune systems for relationships and groups.

My co-authors and I have introduced the tripartite self a useful heuristic framework (Sedikides et al., 2013). This framework differentiates between three self-representations: the individual, the relational, and the collective (i.e., group). The individual self, reflecting one’s subjective uniqueness, consists of characteristics (e.g., traits, goals) that differentiate oneself from others. The relational self, reflecting dyadic attachments (e.g., romantic bonds, friendships), consists of characteristics—including roles—that differentiate one’s relationship from others’ relationships. The collective self, reflecting membership in and identification with valued social groups, consists of characteristics—including within-group roles—that differentiate one’s group from relevant outgroups.

The homeostatic model of identity protection adopts the following different perspective. It posits an inclusive immune system, identity, which receives internal and external input relevant to all three selves. This input, then, can be failures or successes associated with one’s strivings, one’s relationships, or one’s group memberships. For example, the inclusive immune system copes with threats to a person’s integrity (Sedikides & Gregg, 2008; Sherman & Cohen, 2006), romantic relationships (Murray et al., 1996; Rusbult et al., 2000), or ingroup identifications (Rotella & Richeson, 2013; Zengel et al., 2021). It is more economical to propose a single immune system—identity—rather than multiple ones (Occam’s razor). The latter route invites additional complexity with little appreciable gain. This route is also consistent with the established notion of intersubstitutability of self-enhancement/self-protection processes (Steele, 1988; Tesser, 2000). In this connection, I concur with Zeigler-Hill’s (this issue) attempts to extend the unitary model to encompass narcissism, highlighting the relevance of status, as well as Jonas and Stollberg’s (this issue) attempts to expand the range of affective cues relevant to the unitary model.

**On the Model’s Applicability and Implications**

Stinson et al. (this issue) provide an authoritative account of the internal world of chronically traumatized individuals, questioning the homeostatic model’s applicability to it. However, the model’s account of identity protection does justice to the deleterious consequences of trauma. It would characterize it as a chronically disturbed homeostasis and a crippled psychological immune system—one that requires therapeutic intervention to be restored. There is no reason why the model, applicable to individuals who are anxious or dysphoric (Saunders, 2011, 2013; Zengel et al., 2015), should not extend to individuals who are more severely disturbed.

Tice and Baumeister (this issue) draw attention to college students’ fragility in tending to regard new or challenging ideas as threatening (Lukianoff & Haidt, 2018). Indeed, in terms of the homeostatic model, this pattern would signify deficient inoculation due to overprotective parenting. A short-term solution would be to boost the robustness of the psychological immune system via self-affirmation ([Cohen](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=Cohen+GL&cauthor_id=24405362) & [Sherman](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=Sherman+DK&cauthor_id=24405362), 2004), self-esteem building (Niveau et al., 2021), or relationship-oriented interventions (Kumashiro & Sedikides, 2005; Walton et al., 2021). A long-term solution would be the abandonment of undue sheltering by permitting students to encounter problems and strive to solve them on their own, including through a process of painful trial-and error.

Koole (this issue) considers the proposal that the self, along with self-enhancement and self-protection, are evolutionary adaptations in light of recent movements to deconstruct the self (e.g., mindfulness). Koole ponders the potential futility of such movements. After all, self-deconstruction may have serious mental health consequences (Kaufmann et al., 2021), especially among vulnerable populations who need their psychological immunity boosted not busted. Advocating the deconstruction of the self is similar to legislating alcohol prohibition or encouraging sexual abstinence. The cure may be worse than the disease. I agree with Koole’s (p. XX) view that a more realistic and productive route would be to endorse the self but “channel the self-enhancement motive in ways that are edifying for both the person and the social environment” (Sedikides, 2020; Sedikides & Campbell, 2017).

**What Does the Future Hold?**

The commentators raised other issues that warrant empirical attention. For example, some commentators (Beer, this issue; Jonas and Stollberg, this issue; Vaz et al., this issue) called for greater specificity in detailing how the biological and psychological immune systems feed into each other. Koole (this issue) even provocatively suggested that the digestive system might constitute a more plausible analogy for the homeostatic model than the biological immune system, a proposal some may find hard to swallow.

Commentators also offered additional constructive suggestions for future research. For instance, Costabile and Boytos (this issue) refine the potential role of narratives in homeostasis. Beer (this issue), along with Jonas and Stollberg (this issue), elaborate on the nature of self-threat. Lastly, Vaz et al. (this issue) ask how much self-enhancement/self-protection would be regarded as adequate—that is, where the optimal balance between homeostasis and external control lies, in a given context.

Ultimately, the homeostatic model of identity protection aimed to address the question: “What are self-enhancement and self-protection *for*?”. Its answer is that these fundamental and universal human motives serve to maintain mental homeostasis while optimizing environmental control. The psychological immune system has the same utility for one’s psychological health at the biological immune system does for one’s physical health.

**References**

Alicke, M. D., & Sedikides, C. (2009). Self-enhancement and self-protection: What they are and what they do. *European Review of Social Psychology, 20*, 1–48. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10463283.2016.1183913>

Alicke, M. D., & Sedikides, C. (2011). Self-enhancement and self-protection: Historical overview and conceptual framework. In M. D. Alicke & C. Sedikides (Eds.), *Handbook of self-enhancement and self-protection* (pp. 1–19). Guilford Press.

Bell, R., Schain, C., & Echterhoff, G. (2014). How selfish is memory for cheaters? Evidence for moral and egoistic biases. *Cognition, 132*(3), 437–442. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cognition.2014.05.001>

Berntson, G. G., & Khalsa, S. S. (2021). Neural circuits of interoception. *Trends in Neurosciences, 44*(1), 17–28. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tins.2020.09.011>

Bonaz, B., Lane, R. D., Oshinsky, M. L., Kenny, P. J., Sinha, R., Mayer, E. A., & Critchley, H. D. (2021). Diseases, disorders, and comorbidities of interoception. *Trends in Neurosciences, 44*(1), 39–51. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tins.2020.09.009>

Brown, J. D., & Dutton, K. A. (1995). Truth and consequences: The costs and benefits of accurate self-knowledge. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 21*(12), 1288–1296. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01461672952112006>

[Cohen](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=Cohen+GL&cauthor_id=24405362), G. L., & [Sherman](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=Sherman+DK&cauthor_id=24405362), D. K. (2004). The psychology of change: Self-affirmation and social psychological intervention. *Annual Review of Psychology, 65*, 333–371. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-psych-010213-115137>

Critchley, H. D., & Garfinke, S. N. (2020). Interoception and emotion. *Current Opinion in Psychology, 17*, 7–14. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2017.04.020>

Dufner, M., Gebauer, J. E., Sedikides, C., & Denissen, J. J. A. (2019). Self-enhancement and psychological adjustment: A meta-analytic review. *Personality and Social Psychology Review, 23*(1), 48–72. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1088868318756467>

Ferris, D. L., Johnson, R. E., & Sedikides, C. (2018). *The Self at work: Fundamental theory and research*. SIOP Organizational Frontiers Series. Routledge Press.

Gebauer, J. E., Göritz, A. S., Hofmann, W., & Sedikides, C. (2012). Self-love or other-love? Explicit other-preference but implicit self-preference. *PLoS ONE, 7,* e41789. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797611427045>

Gebauer, J. E., Wagner, J., Sedikides, C., & Neberich, W. (2013). The relation between agency-communion and self-esteem is moderated by culture, religiosity, age, and sex: Evidence for the self-centrality breeds self-enhancement principle. *Journal of Personality, 81*(3), 261–275. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6494.2012.00807.x>

Heck, P. R., & Krueger, J. I. (2015). Self-enhancement diminished. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, *144*(5), 1003–1020. <https://doi.org/10.1037/xge0000105>

Johnson, D. D. P., & Fowler, J. H. (2011). The evolution of overconfidence. [*Nature*](https://www.nature.com/)*, 477*(7364), 317–320. <https://doi.org/10.1038/nature10384>

Kaufmann, M., Rosing, K., & Baumann, N. (2021). Being mindful does not always benefit everyone: Mindfulness-based practices may promote alienation among psychologically vulnerable people. Cognition and Emotion, 35(2), 241–255.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/02699931.2020.1825337>

Khalsa, S. S., Adolphs, R., Cameron, O. G., Critchley, H. D., Davenport, P. W., Feinstein, J. S., Feusner, J. D., Garfinkel, S. N., Lane, R. D., Mehling, W. E., Meuret, A. E., Nemeroff, C. B., Oppenheimer, S., Frederike H. Petzschner, Pollatos, O., Rhudy, J. L., Schramm, L. P., Simmons, W. K., … & the Interoception Summit 2016 participants. (2018). Interoception and mental health: A roadmap. [*Biological Psychiatry: Cognitive Neuroscience and Neuroimaging*](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/journal/24519022)*, 3*(6), 501–513. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bpsc.2017.12.004>

Koole, S. L., Greenberg, J., & Pyszczynski, T. (2006). Introducing science to the psychology of the soul: Experimental existential psychology. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, *15*(5), 212–216. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8721.2006.00438.x>

Krueger, J. I., & Wright, J. C. (2011). Measurement of self-enhancement (and self-protection). In M. D. Alicke & C. Sedikides (Eds.), Handbook of self-enhancement and self-protection (pp. 472–494). Guilford Press.

Kumashiro, M., & Sedikides, C. (2005). Taking on board liability-focused feedback: Close positive relationships as a self-bolstering resource. *Psychological Science, 16*(9), 732-739. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9280.2005.01603.x>

Kwan, V. S. Y., John, O. P., Kenny, D. A., Bond, M. H., & Robins, R. W. (2004). Reconceptualizing individual differences in self-enhancement bias: An interpersonal approach. *Psychological Review*, *111*(1), 94–110. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.111.1.94>

Lukianoff, G., & Haidt, J. (2018). *The coddling of the American mind*. Penguin.

Murray, S. L., Holmes, J. G., & Griffin, D. W. (1996). The benefits of positive illusions: Idealization and the construction of satisfaction in close relationships. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *70*(1), 79–98. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.70.1.79>

Niveau, N., New, B., & Beaudoin, M. (2021). Self-esteem interventions in adults–A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Journal of Research in Personality, 94*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrp.2021.104131>

[Quigley](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0166223620302162#!), K. S., Kanoski, S., [Grill](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0166223620302162" \l "!), W. M., Feldman Barrett, L., & Tsakiris, M. (2021). Functions of interoception: From energy regulation to experience of the self. *Trends in Neurosciences, 44*(1), 29–38. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tins.2020.09.008>

O’Mara, E. M., & Gaertner, L. (2017). Does self-enhancement facilitate task performance? *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, *146*(3), 442–455. <https://doi.org/10.1037/xge0000272>

Reiss, S., Leen‐Thomele, E., Klackl, J., & Jonas, E. (2021). Exploring the landscape of psychological threat: A cartography of threats and threat responses. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, *15*(4), e12588.<https://doi.org/10.1111/spc3.12588>

Reczek, R. W., Irwin, J. R., Zane, D. M., & Ehrich, K. R. (2017). That’s not how I remember it: Willfully ignorant memory for ethical product attribute information. *Journal of Consumer Research, 45*(1), 185–207. <https://doi.org/10.10120>

Ritchie, T. D., Sedikides, C., & Skowronski, J. J. (2017). Does a person selectively remember the good or the bad from their personal past? It depends on the recall target and the person’s favorability of self-views. *Memory, 25*(8), 934–944. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09658211.2016.1233984>

Rotella, K. N., & Richeson, J. A. (2013). Motivated to “forget the effects of in-group wrongdoing on memory and collective guilt. *Social Psychological and Personality Science, 4*(6), 730–737. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1948550613482986>

Rusbult, C. E., Van Lange, P. A. M., Wildschut, T., Yovetich, N. A., & Verette, J. (2000). Perceived superiority in close relationships: Why it exists and persists. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 79(4), 521–545. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.79.4.521>

Saunders, J. (2011). Reversed mnemic neglect of self-threatening memories in dysphoria. Cognition and Emotion, 25(5), 854–867.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/02699931.2010.524037>

Saunders, J. (2013). Selective memory bias for self-threatening memories in trait anxiety. Cognition and Emotion, 27(1), 21–36.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/02699931.2012.683851>

Sedikides, C. (1993). Assessment, enhancement, and verification determinants of the self-evaluation process. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 65*(2), 317–338. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.65.2.317>

Sedikides, C., & Alicke, M. D. (2012). Self-enhancement and self-protection motives. In R. M. Ryan (Ed.), *Oxford handbook of motivation* (pp. 303-322). Oxford University Press.

Sedikides, C., & Alicke, M. D. (2019). The five pillars of self-enhancement and self-protection. In R. M. Ryan (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of human motivation* (2nd ed., pp. 307–319). Oxford University Press.

Sedikides, C. (2020). On the doggedness of self-enhancement and self-protection: How constraining are reality constraints? *Self and Identity, 19*(3), 251–271. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15298868.2018.1562961>

Sedikides, C., & Campbell, W. K. (2017). Narcissistic force meets systemic resistance: The Energy Clash Model. *Perspectives on Psychological Science, 12*(3), 400-421. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691617692105>

Sedikides, C., Gaertner, L., & Cai, H. (2015). On the panculturality of self-enhancement and self-protection motivation: The case for the universality of self-esteem. *Advances in Motivation Science, 2*, 185-241. <https://doi.org/10.1016/bs.adms.2015.04.002>

Sedikides, C., Gaertner, L., Luke, M. A., O’Mara, E. M., & Gebauer, J. (2013). A three-tier hierarchy of motivational self-potency: Individual self, relational self, collective self. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology, 48*, 235–295. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-407188-9.00005-3>

Sedikides, C., Green, J. D., Saunders, J., Skowronski, J. J., & Zengel, B. (2016). Mnemic neglect: Selective amnesia of one’s faults. *European Review of Social Psychology, 27*(1), 1–62. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10463283.2016.1183913>

Sedikides, C., & Gregg, A. P. (2008). Self-enhancement: Food for thought. *Perspectives on Psychological Science, 3*, 102-116. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-6916.2008.00068.x>

Sedikides, C., Luke, M. A., & Hepper, E. G. (2016). Enhancing feedback and improving feedback: Subjective perceptions, psychological consequences, behavioral outcomes*. Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 46*(12), 687–700. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jasp.12407>

Sedikides, C., & Skowronski, J. J. (2000). On the evolutionary functions of the symbolic self: The emergence of self-evaluation motives. In A. Tesser, R. Felson, & J. Suls (Eds.), *Psychological perspectives on self and identity* (pp. 91–117). APA Books. <https://doi.org/10.1037/10357-004>

Sedikides, C., & Skowronski, J. J. (2009). Social cognition and self-cognition: Two sides of the same evolutionary coin? *European Journal of Social Psychology, 39*(7), 1245–1249. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.690>

Sherman, D. K., & Cohen, G. L. (2006). The psychology of self-defense: Self-affirmation theory. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology, 38*, 183-242. <https://doi.org/10.1016/S0065-2601(06)38004-5>

Skowronski, J. J., & Sedikides, C. (2019). On the evolution of the human self: A data-driven review and reconsideration. *Self and Identity, 18*(1), 46–61. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15298868.2017.1350601>

Sedikides, C., Skowronski, J. J., & Dunbar, R. I. M. (2006). When and why did the human self evolve? In M. Schaller, J. A. Simpson, & D. T. Kenrick (Eds.), *Evolution and social psychology: Frontiers in social psychology* (pp. 55–80). Psychology Press.

Sedikides, C., & Strube, M. J. (1997). Self-evaluation: To thine own self be good, to thine own self be sure, to thine own self be true, and to thine own self be better. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology, 29*, 209–269. <https://doi.org/10.1016/S0065-2601(08)60018-0>

Shu, L. L., Gino, F., & Bazerman, M. H. (2011). Dishonest deed, clear conscience: When cheating leads to moral disengagement and motivated forgetting. Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 37(3), 330–349. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167211398138>

Steele, C. M. (1988). The psychology of self-affirmation: Sustaining the integrity of the self. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology, 21*, 261-302. <https://doi.org/10.1016/S0065-2601(08)60229-4>

Tesser, A. (2000). On the confluence of self-esteem maintenance mechanisms. *Personality and Social Psychology Review, 4*(4), 290–299. <https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327957PSPR0404_1>

Tsakiris, M., & Critchley, H. (2016). Interoception beyond homeostasis: Affect, cognition and mental health. *Philosophical Transactions B, 371*(1708): 20160002. <https://doi.org/10.1098/rstb.2016.0002>

van Veelen, M., & Nowak, M. A. (2011). Selection for positive illusions. *Nature, 477*(7364), 282–283. <https://doi.org/10.1038/477282a>

Walton, G. M., Okonofua, J. A., Cunningham, K. R., Hurst, D., Pinedo, A., Weitz, E., Ospina, J. P., Tate, H., & Eberhardt, J. L. (2021). Lifting the bar: A relationship-orienting intervention reduces recidivism among children reentering school from juvenile detention. *Psychological Science*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09567976211013801>

Zell, E., Strickhouser, J. E., Sedikides, C., & Alicke, M. D. (2020). The better-than-average effect in comparative self-evaluation: A comprehensive review and meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin, 146*(2), 118-149. <https://doi.org/10.1037/bul0000218>

Zengel, B., Skowronski, J. J., Valentiner, D. P., & Sedikides, C. (2015). Loss of mnemic neglect among socially anxious individuals. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology, 34*(4)*,* 322–347. <https://doi.org/10.1521/jscp.2015.34.4.322>

Zengel, B., Skowronski, J. J., Wildschut, T., & Sedikides, C. (2021). Mnemic neglect for behaviors enacted by members of one’s nationality group. *Social Psychological and Personality Science, 12*(7), 1286–1293. <https://doi.org/10.1177/19485506211021245>