Ur cultures shape our selves, and our selves feed into the cultures of which we are a part. In this talk, Markus will focus on the social class divide in the United States. Working-class contexts give rise to a sense of self as interdependent, while middle-class contexts give rise to a sense of self as independent. Belongingness requires a match between one’s view of self and the contexts in which one lives and works. Most universities, for example, promote an independent view of self. Students from working-class backgrounds (first-generation-to-college students) with more interdependent selves can experience a lack of belongingness. Addressing this mismatch requires changes to selves and to cultures.

Markus’ research examines how the self is shaped by the social world and how the self organizes thought, feeling, and action. She received her BA from California State University at San Diego and her PhD from the University of Michigan. She was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1994 and in 2008 received the American Psychological Association’s award for Distinguished Scientific Contribution. She is the author of many articles and the co-author of Engaging Cultural Differences: The Multicultural Challenge in Liberal Democracies, Just Schools: Pursuing Equality in Societies of Difference, Doing Race: 21 Essays for the 21st Century; Facing Social Class: The Role of Societal Rank in Social Interaction, and the forthcoming Clash! 8 Cultural Conflicts that Make Us Who We Are.

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